



A Guide to Pastoral Search Committees in EMMC Congregations

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Congratulations!

You have been chosen to be a member of the **Pastoral Search Committee (PSC)** for your congregation.

Now what?

The work you have been called to is a very important one in the life of your church. Your goal is to match a new pastor with your congregation, with the view toward establishing a long-term relationship. Poor matches result in short pastorates in which case everyone suffers, including the pastor's family and all members of the congregation.

But where do you start? What steps should one follow? What are mistakes to avoid? How do we know what kind of a pastor will suit our congregation? Where do we start looking? What questions should we ask a candidate when we first contact them? How can the conference help the process? When and how should the candidate be introduced to the congregation? And there are many more questions!

It is recommended that the entire Committee review and discuss the contents of this guide near the outset of your search process.

May your search be successful!

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I. Ways of Choosing a Pastor - The EMMC Option

There are various ways in which churches and denominations choose pastors and maintain them in that role. In some cases pastors are appointed by a Bishop or Superintendent of the conference to whom they are directly responsible. In other cases a conference official preselects a list of candidates from which the local congregation chooses a pastor. In other denominations congregations have total autonomy and make their own choice of a pastor without contact with or accountability to the denomination.

Within the EMMC, a congregation searching for a new pastor is expected to take the initiative in the pastoral search. However, the Pastoral Search Committee is recommended to work together with the EMMC Conference Pastor throughout the search process.

- The *EMMC Conference Pastor* should be notified when the congregation actively begins searching for a pastor.
- Our *Conference Pastor* will be willing to meet with the Pastoral Search Committee to review appropriate procedures and make recommendations regarding possible candidates for that congregation.
- Our *Conference Pastor* would like to be represented at the covenanting service between the congregation and the new pastor and maintain a *connectional oversight* of the ministry of the pastor chosen by the congregation.

How do you find God's will when searching for a pastor? One view suggests that God has chosen one person to be the next pastor of the congregation, and if we miss that person we will miss the *perfect* will of God, and the congregation will miss out on God's blessing. This view is comparable to thinking that there is only one person in the entire world whom you are free to marry - the one God has chosen for you. If you miss that one, your marriage is destined to be second rate at best.

The Wisdom View is probably much more helpful. This view suggests that we are free to choose any pastor who fits the criteria found in I Timothy and Titus. While God would bless any number of choices we could make, our goal is to make a *wise* choice - and that takes spiritual discernment. For example, it is wise to choose a pastor whose gifts complement the pastoral needs of the church. It is wise to choose a pastor whose expectations of the pastoral role are close to the expectations of the majority of the church members. May God help you to be wise.

II. General Guidelines - Avoiding Common Mistakes

We do well to take into account the lessons others have learned who have gone before us. Many of the guidelines listed below have grown out of what other Pastoral Search Committees have learned. We trust you will find that following these guidelines will be beneficial for you as a committee.

1. **Be sure the Pastoral Search Committee is representative of your congregation.** A good committee composition includes older and younger persons - male and female - and a representative cross-section of majority interests and views within the congregation. If you feel the committee is not representative enough ask the congregation for additional members.
2. **Make sure PSC members have in mind a genuine concern for the whole church.** Members of the committee must not simply lobby for personal preferences, but keep in mind the needs of the whole church community during deliberations.
3. **Do a congregational self-study near the beginning of the pastoral search.** If you want to find a pastor that *fits* the congregation, it is good to have in mind what the needs and visions of the congregation are. It will help to avoid making the choice of the next pastor based on reaction to the last one. This will also help the Congregation to discern the need for a transitional period (#21). You may want to use the *Congregational Self-study Form* in this packet.
4. **Develop a careful Pastor Profile.** Based on the needs and expectations within the congregation it is important to develop a clear and realistic profile of the kind of pastor you are looking for. This will facilitate decision making further on in the process because applicants will be evaluated against this profile and not simply against personal preferences. Keep in mind that this is only a guide for your search process since none of your applicants will likely fit the profile perfectly.
5. **Respect needed confidentiality.** From the outset, committee members must adopt an explicit code of confidentiality. Such a code should include confidentiality about the identity of applicants the committee is considering, the status of any particular applicant, and

the specific reasons for disqualifying a candidate. This is important in order to protect the self-esteem and ministry of persons the committee is considering and to avoid unnecessary anxiety and campaigning within the congregation.

6. **Set a clear mandate regarding the charge to the PSC.** Usually the committee is a nominating committee, with the charge to bring a good candidate to the congregation for consideration, not to actually call a pastor. Have a clear understanding of the salary and benefit range within which to work, always aware that final financial arrangements will be made by others. Also be sure there is an understanding of how expenses for committee members will be reimbursed by the church.
7. **Organize the process clearly from the beginning.** Designate someone, either the chair or another member of the committee, to communicate directly with all applicants, using **Pastoral Information Form: Step 1**. This provides a standard method of gathering the required information from the applicants. The designate will distribute these applications to committee members.
8. **Remember that an interim pastor should not normally be considered as an applicant.** During an interim/transitional period people are usually somewhat anxious because they don't know who their next pastor will be. So they will often choose the security of a known relationship even when this relationship is not optimal, over the insecurity of an unknown one.
9. **Provide applicants with a profile of your congregation, including its history, positive characteristics, and congregational problems.** The more an applicant knows about your congregation, the better will be the decision making process. A good candidate will prefer hearing about your problems from you rather than from someone else. If the applicant is not familiar with the EMMC, a short profile of the conference should be shared as well.
10. **Check references thoroughly.** As Christians we want to believe the best about others, particularly those in ministry. Most people listed as references by candidates do not want to reveal unpleasant things about their friend or associate, so you will need to ask specific questions. You should feel free to check with persons other than the ones listed by the applicant. You may want to use the *Pastoral Applicant*

Reference Form in this packet, emailing it to the reference or checking off the answers if you are doing a telephone interview.

11. **Prepare well for interviews.** While you don't want face-to-face interviews to come across as rehearsed, it is important to know ahead of time what kind of questions you plan to ask and who will ask them. This will avoid long periods of awkward silence and a focus on elementary and incidental topics.
12. **Assessing candidates from other denominations.** A person may cross over a denominational line for more than one reason. The stated reason may not be the only one or the most significant one. This should be checked out carefully with denominational officials. A person may believe that denominational differences will not bother him when he views the EMMC from a distance, but they may in fact do so when involved as a participant and leader.
13. **Include consideration of the spouse and children in the recruitment process.** Failure to address needs and aspirations of the applicant's family may short-change the process. The spouse should be part of the interview with an opportunity to answer questions and voice reservations.
14. **Be discreet when visiting another church to view an applicant in their present pulpit.** If you choose to check out a candidate by visiting the present church, make sure that you are sensitive to that congregation. It can be awkward for both the pastor and the congregation if the purpose of your visit is known to the congregation.
15. **Do not over-emphasize pulpit skills.** While preaching is an important part of pastoring, it is not the only one. Considerations should also be given to communication skills, emotional health and interpersonal, motivational and administration skills.
16. **Be sure to schedule enough time for the candidate and the congregation to meet.** The candidating process should involve various opportunities for the members of the congregation to meet the candidate in a variety of settings. It is not enough to have them preach one Sunday with a handshake with members after the service.
17. **Never present more than one candidate at a time to the congregation.** It is not wise to have two or three candidates preach on successive Sundays and then have the congregation choose from

among them. The PSC should screen the applicants until they have identified the person they believe could best meet the needs of the church and then present this person to the congregation as a candidate. Only if the congregation rejects this person should a second candidate be presented.

18. **Don't make a quick decision on a rebound.** If a candidate is either not accepted by the congregation or for some reason withdraws from the process, avoid making a quick decision on another candidate. There may be considerable disappointment among members and this should be given time to heal.
19. **Keep the interim pastor and other staff informed of the process.** If they are left out of the picture totally they may feel that they are not important. Remember that this is an important transition period in their lives as well.
20. **Keep the congregation informed regarding developments** at least once a month even though there is little or no progress being made. Prolonged silence breeds mistrust.
21. **Allow enough grieving time.** Especially if the former pastor has had a long tenure, or if there were tensions with the departure, the congregation needs some time to grieve. In that case the congregation should function for a time without a pastor or engage an interim pastor. If the former pastor has had tenure of ten or more years, a one year waiting period before hiring a new long-term pastor is advisable.
22. **Communicate adequately with applicants.** It is a frustrating and demoralizing experience to make an application and not receive any communication back. If something is missing, let the applicant know. A periodic communication of where the process is at is appropriate, even if there have been no new developments.
23. **Consider the process *from the perspective of the applicant*.** In other words, if you were the applicant, what kind of information and process would you be looking for. Then proceed to provide it to your applicant.
24. **Don't send mixed messages to candidates.** Be careful not to leave the impression with the candidate that the decision has basically been made when the congregation has not yet voted on the candidate. If the

vote is negative, it will be harder for the candidate to recover if he was sure that he was already in.

25. **Get all agreements in writing.** There are many opportunities for verbal understandings to become distorted in a person's memory and for verbal agreements not to be passed along to the appropriate person or committee. Such a situation can easily take the joy out of a positive beginning.

*Let the wise listen and add to their learning
and let the discerning get guidance ...
Preserve sound judgment and discernment,
do not let them out of your sight.*

II. Working Together as a Pastoral Search Committee

A good way to build morale and cohesion in the PSC is to make sure that every one feels valued and included in the discussion process. Here are some good things to consider when working together as a committee.

You can do your part to make the committee dynamics positive.

1. **Give everyone the opportunity to contribute.** One or two persons should not dominate the group.
2. **Allow persons to choose how they are going to share.** People should not be pressured to share when they are not ready or comfortable doing so.
3. **Every person's perspective should be valued even if not all agree with it.** Care should be taken never to ridicule or ignore the ideas of others.
4. **The group should develop new insights and perspectives.** Don't just reiterate the same perspectives over and over again.
5. **Come prepared to work with necessary data or preparation done ahead of time.** Don't come together unprepared and simply pool your ignorance.

6. **Stay on one topic until there is some sort of closure before moving on to another.** Don't wander from topic to topic without any closure.
7. **Focus discussion on meaningful, answerable issues.** Don't digress to unanswerable questions or issues of questionable relevance.
8. **Everyone should feel free to reach their own conclusions and to hold differing opinions.** People should not be pressured to agree with others.
9. **Show an interest in the ideas of others.** Avoid trying to impose your ideas on others with monologues and mini-lectures.
10. **Express your ideas tentatively.** Avoid stating your ideas in a dogmatic way.
11. **Allow a freedom to be in process.** Build on ideas in process instead of criticizing them.
12. **Keep the group atmosphere casual, friendly and involved.** Try to avoid an atmosphere marked by tension, anger, or indifference.

IV. Developing a Pastor Profile

In developing a **Pastor Profile** the PSC seeks to define more clearly the kind of pastor that would best suit your congregation. There are three basic areas that should be examined when developing such a profile. First would be the *biblical qualities* you are looking for according to I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Second would be the *psychological qualities* in which you define the type of leader you want. Third would be a *congregational self-study* giving the congregation and the future pastor a clearer idea of the present and future realities of your church.

A. Biblical Qualities: The following 12 points summarize biblical qualities required of pastoral leaders as found in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

1. Personal character above reproach from within and without the church.

One against whom it is impossible to bring any charge of wrong doing.

2. Thoughtful, dignified, and self-controlled. One who is in control of his mind and emotions so that he can act rationally and discreetly.

3. **Not a new believer.** Too rapid promotion of a young Christian can easily lead to pride. A recent convert should not be promoted to the position of pastor.
4. **Not a drunkard.** Substance abuse and substance addiction would be the contemporary technical terms that indicate this disqualification.
5. **Not violent, quick-tempered, quarrelsome, arrogant, or overbearing.** One who does not arrogantly disregard the interests of others to please himself.
6. **Not a lover of money or a pursuer of dishonest gain.** While pastors should provide for their families, money should not be a motivation for ministry.
7. **Gentle in his dealings with others.** One who is gracious, kind, considerate generous and congenial.
8. **Upright and holy in his life before God.** An inner attitude of conforming to what is felt to be pleasing to God.
9. **Loves what is good.** One who is an ally and zealous supporter of all that is good.
10. **Holds to faithful monogamy.** If married must have a well-ordered home with disciplined children.
11. **Hospitable.** One who enjoys the company of others.
12. **An apt teacher who has matured in his knowledge of the faith, holds firm to sound doctrine and can impart it to others, and can refute those who oppose it.**

B. Psychological Qualities: Even though a pastor may pass all the biblical qualifications, his personality, vision of ministry, and leadership style may not meet the expectations of your congregation. Therefore it is important to define what kind of person would best meet the needs and expectations within your church. You may, for example, want to make the following distinctions:

1. **Pastor as Leader or Manager:** Ask yourself whether you are looking for an assertive leader or one who manages existing programs well. A pastor who thought he was being hired to be leading the congregation will be discouraged to find out he is asked to simply manage what exists. Similarly, a pastor who expects to be a manager and finds out he is expected to be an assertive leader may not feel qualified to meet these expectations.

- Leaders develop new visions for the congregation. Managers strengthen and maintain visions already there.
- Leaders are willing to take risks. Managers are cautious about taking risks.
- Leaders are initiators of new ideas. Managers respond to new ideas of others.
- Leaders have a high emotional involvement in the ministry. Managers have moderate emotional involvement in ministry.
- The biggest risk for leaders is that people will not become excited about his new ideas. The biggest risk for managers is that people will become bored or self-centered because of not being sufficiently challenged.

2. **Leader as Hero or Developer:** The leader-as-developer is healthier for the congregation than the leader-as-hero. However it will be wise to recognize tendencies for one or the other in both the pastoral candidate as well as in the expectations of the congregation.

- **The leader-as-hero** rides to the rescue when there is a problem. He gives answers and assumes personal responsibility for the success or failure of an organization. He prefers to be the initiator and organizer of church events, encouraging passivity among church members. Such leaders are candidates for frustration and burnout and frequently are impressed with their own importance.
- **The leader-as-developer** wants to get the job done but seeks to engage others in a way that stimulates them to grow and take responsibility. He learns to have an impact without exerting total control. He learns to be helpful without having all the answers. His approach develops high morale since he works with people and things as they are and seeking to win loyalty and love by giving them first.

C. Congregational Self Study: A self-study will aid the pastoral search process in three ways. **First** it can be an excellent introduction to the church for applicants and candidates. **Second**, the Pastoral Search Committee can translate the needs of the church that they identify during the self-study into qualities needed by their next pastor. **Third**, the self-study enables the committee to involve the entire congregation in the search process early and very meaningfully. You may want to use the ***Congregational Self-Study Form*** supplied with this packet to conduct a self-study in your congregation. You may choose to send a selective summary of the self-study to all

applicants and a more comprehensive report to the candidates you work with directly.

A *comprehensive self-study* should address the following nine areas. (Information for items 4 - 9 can be taken from the self-study forms completed by members.)

- 1. A general description of the church in its community context.** Include number of members and attendees, age groupings, career and educational level, annual budget, description of buildings, a list of salaried staff, and names of last three pastors.
- 2. A general description of the community.** Include the type of community around the church, racial composition, ages, educational levels, occupations of the community, and educational, recreational and medical facilities available.
- 3. The history of the church.** Identify significant dates and events that have contributed to the church the way it is today.
- 4. Strengths of the church.** It is important to be positive about what the church has going for it. A new pastor must have some positive foundations on which to proceed.
- 5. Weaknesses of the church or challenges facing the church.** Discretion must be used what to share with whom. Do not withhold weaknesses to candidates you are working with seriously.
- 6. Challenges of the next five to ten years.** The church should have a sense of what it is facing in the coming years.
- 7. Church members' thoughts on priorities.** If members' priorities are scattered this needs to be communicated as well.
- 8. Qualities the next pastor should possess.** This is particularly important in helping to identify the strengths you are looking for in the next pastor.
- 9. Salary and Benefits.** This should be stated in general terms, mentioning whether you are considering a full or a part-time position.

V. Finding and Contacting Pastoral Candidates

As a committee you have now completed much of the foundational work required to make your pastoral search successful. While it may seem that a lot of the work has not been directly related to finding a pastor, rest assured that your diligent efforts will pay off in the long run.

So far, you have...

- Organized as a committee.
- Invite the EMMC Conference Pastor to be a part of your process.
- Reviewed the procedures and suggestions in this guide.
- Clarified your mandate as a committee and developed a procedural plan.
- Conducted a self-study in your congregation.
- Developed a Pastor Profile, both a selective summary to send to all applicants,
and a more comprehensive version to send to candidates that you will work with directly.

And now you are ready to find and contact pastoral applicants!

What steps should we now follow?

1. Look inside your congregation to see if one of your members meets the expectations outlined in the **Pastor Profile** you have developed. If there is, invite them to submit an application.
2. Advertise in the **Recorder** and other periodicals of denominations you are comfortable with inviting applications from interested persons. EMMC home office can assist in connecting with other periodicals.
3. Remind each other of the significance of confidentiality. No one is to share the name or status of an applicant until and unless the committee recommends that person to the congregation.
4. Brainstorm for possible names and referral sources. Call referral sources to get names of possible applicants.
5. Contact all possible applicants to see if they would be willing to receive information about the church and a **Pastor Information Form: Step 1**.

6. Send a personalized letter on church stationery from the committee chair, together with the selective summary of the **Pastor Profile & Job Description** and the **Pastor Information Form: Step 1** to all persons who have shown an interest in applying.

VI. Screening and Selecting Pastoral Candidates

Now that you have a number of applications before you as a committee, you have the task of screening them in order to come up with the name of one person to recommend to your congregation. If you only have one application, you must still pursue the interview process as thoroughly as when you have more to choose from. Care should be taken not to hire someone simply because they are the only candidate available. It is better not to hire anyone than to hire a pastor who is not suitable for your congregation. In that case you will soon be going through the pastoral search process again.

A. Develop a Short List

- Every member of the Pastoral Search Committee should receive copies of the **Pastor Information Form: Step 1** from each applicant.
- Based on the information on these forms, the applications should be divided into three categories - those who are clearly **unacceptable**, those who are **unlikely**, and those who **possibly** meet your criteria.
- Send non-acceptance letters to all unacceptable and unlikely applicants, unless you only have a few applications, in which case you may only send letters to the unacceptable candidates. You may want to use a sample non acceptance letter found in this packet.
- Contact references for possible candidates either by email or telephone. You may want to use the ***Pastoral Applicant Reference Form*** found in this packet. You may also want to visit services where these applicants are preaching or listen to tapes of his sermons to determine their suitability for your congregation.

- Determine which of the applicants you wish engage in further dialogue. You may want to use the *Applying for Pastoral Candidacy: Step 2* found in this packet. Provide these completed forms to the members of the PSC committee.

B. Interview the Applicants- Using Pastoral Candidate Questionnaire: Step 3

- Determine which of the applicants you wish to interview face-to-face. Schedule a three-hour meeting with each candidate, preferably not more than two a week. Offer to pay travel expenses for the applicant and his spouse.
- **Involve an EMMC Regional Council:** It is preferable to involve an EMMC Regional Council at this point in the process. Notify the EMMC Conference Pastor that you have selected a candidate. The Conference Pastor will organize an interview committee, including one or two member from your church, to meet with the candidate as soon as possible. The interview is designed to help determine the suitability of the candidate for ministry in your particular church.
- **Review the Pastoral Candidate Questionnaire: Step 3.** Together with the interview committee prepare the questions you want to ask the applicant. Without preparation interviews will be unfocused and disorganized. Every member of the Pastoral Search Committee will asks some of the questions.
- Within a week following the interview, the chair of your church board will receive a letter from the EMMC Conference Pastor outlining their view of the candidate's strengths and weaknesses with relation to suitability for ministry in your church. The Conference Pastor will meet with the PSC and the Church Board to discuss the findings and next steps to take in proceeding or terminating the process with the candidate.
- An alternative to face-to-face interviews is to conduct a conference call with the applicant. In such a case you may want to request a video of a sermon. Use this approach only if there is no way of meeting face -to-face.

VII. When You have Selected a Candidate

Once you have agreed upon a candidate, you must now begin the process of helping the congregation discern whether this is the candidate of its choice. If the congregation approves of the candidate your work will have been completed. Normally the church leadership is responsible to formalize the agreement and plan for a positive entry for the pastor and his family into the church. However, since the Pastoral Search Committee has worked so closely with the candidate, it should make sure that all appropriate steps are taken. If the church rejects the candidate you have suggested, you must return to your short list, choose another candidate, and go through the interview process. The PSC should not present a candidate to the congregation unless it is quite certain that the vote will be positive.

A. Inform Your Church Leaders and the Candidate:

Your first action after selecting a candidate is to inform your church leadership group to which the PSC is responsible, usually the Church Board, that you have selected a candidate. Supply this leadership group with a one page biographical sketch of the candidate, summarizing his education, experience and special gifts and qualities. The statement should include some of the reasons why the PSC believes he is a good match for the church. The Church Board may request a further interview with the candidate, although this is not required if the Board feels comfortable with the choice of the PSC.

Unless this leadership group has fundamental objections to your choice, you should now inform the candidate of your choice and make preliminary arrangements for visiting the congregation to meet the people. This information should not be broadcast widely, especially if the candidate is currently a pastor of a church. He will likely prefer that his members are not aware of his candidating in your church.

B. Present the Candidate to the Congregation:

An ideal time for the candidate to spend with the congregation is from Wednesday evening through Sunday evening. By using days and evenings well, the pastoral couple can get an opportunity to interact with many congregational members and also see the community to consider whether they would be comfortable there.

A week in advance distribute the one-page biographical sketch you prepared earlier to present to the leadership of your church. This will help your people prepare for the visit.

Plan a variety of special events where different groups in the church can meet the candidate. Regular weekly activities will likely not be sufficient for this purpose. One member of the PSC should accompany the candidate at all events to introduce him and provide a sense of connection.

Keep the tone of the meetings positive and friendly. They should not have the air of interrogation. The PSC has already screened the pastor's application for any negative qualities.

- C. Conduct a Vote:** Within a week of the visit, the congregation should be given an opportunity to conduct a vote. Before the vote is taken opportunity may be given to ask questions of clarification, but it should not become a lobbying session with some arguing for and others against his coming. It should be clearly stated before the vote is taken what percentage of positive votes is required to call the candidate to become the new pastor. The candidate may have expectations of a certain percentage; that should be respected. In no case should the candidate be called if the vote is under 80% of a quorum of members present at the time of voting.
- D. Formalize the Agreement:** If the congregation calls the candidate to be its pastor, a contract signed by the church board chair should be sent to the candidate as soon as possible.
- E. Bring Closure to the PSC:** Once it is certain that the candidate will be coming to your church your work is almost done. Praise the Lord! There are, however, a few things the committee still needs to do.
- Send a personally addressed non-acceptance letter to each applicant to whom you have not already sent one.
 - Send thank-you letters to all those people who have helped in your pastoral search.
 - Notify the EMMC Conference Pastor that your vacancy has been filled.
 - Have a debriefing time in which you talk about your experience as a committee, including the various feelings that emerged

during the process. You may wish to write down some of the things you learned during this process to leave as a legacy for the next Pastoral Search Committee.

- Together with the church board, plan how you will welcome the new pastor into your church and community.
- Have a special time of celebration and thanksgiving. Go out for supper or plan a barbeque to bring formal closure to your work as a committee.

F. Welcome the New Pastor: There are many things the church can do to welcome the family into your church and community.

- Renounce unrealistic hopes that the new pastor will be able to solve all the problems of the church. Remind each other that new pastor is human and fallible.
- Provide help with finding housing in your community and be sure to provide assistance in the moving process. Meals and childcare on moving day are much appreciated.
- Introduce the pastor and his family to all the major locations in your community such as shopping centres, supermarkets, dentists, doctors, mechanics, hairdressers, etc.
- Provide a grocery shower for the pastoral family. Finding their pantry stocked with staples required for the first few weeks or months is a meaningful expression of love, especially when they are often grieving the loss of relationships from their former congregation.
- Introduce children of the pastor to their peers, making sure that they feel welcome as well.
- Make a big deal of welcoming the new pastor into the community. Put up a welcome banner at the church or even in the community. You may invite the local newspaper to interview the pastor. In any case, a picture with a short article should be sent to the paper for publication.

G. Plan a Meaningful Covenanting Service:

Sometime within the first month or two of the arrival of the pastor, plan for a special service in which the congregation and the pastoral family covenant to work together in mutual love and respect in your church. We prefer the term **Covenanting Service** over the traditional Installation Service because it better expresses a two-way commitment. The focus is as much on the congregation as on the

new pastor. We all commit ourselves in a new way to make the new arrangements work for the glory of God. Be sure to notify the Conference Pastor of the date and time of this service and plan to involve a representative of the EMMC Regional Council in the service.

- H. Get Set for the Long Haul:** Having made a good beginning, do all you can as a congregation to ensure that this new arrangement will be long-term. Take good care of your new pastor and his family. Pray for them regularly and offer regular encouragement.
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Note: The focus in this guide has been on choosing a senior pastor for a church. If your church is looking for an associate or youth pastor you will find this guide useful as well. However, some of the specific comments and suggestions may not apply directly in such a case. Feel free to adapt the suggested procedures to meet the needs of your congregation.

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Priorities

Pastors are called on to do many more things than their time allows them to do. As a consequence, they have to make decisions about priorities. In this process, it is helpful for them to know what their congregations view as priorities. Please look through the following list and do the following:

- Circle the **1** beside the three or four activities you think are the **most important** for your pastor to do.
- Go through the list a second time and circle the **4** beside those activities you believe are the **least important** for your pastor to do (You may use **4** as many times as you wish)
- Circle either **2** or **3** (indicating moderate priority) beside the remaining activities
- You may add your own priorities if they are not listed below.

1. Preparing for and leading corporate worship	1	2	3	4
2. Preparing for preaching and teaching	1	2	3	4
3. Congregational home visitation	1	2	3	4
4. Hospital and emergency visitation	1	2	3	4
5. Counseling	1	2	3	4
6. Training members in and doing personal evangelism	1	2	3	4
7. Planning a balance of worship, teaching, and fellowship for the church	1	2	3	4
8. Encouragement of international mission work	1	2	3	4
9. Involvement in mission to the local community	1	2	3	4
10. Oversight of the educational program of the church	1	2	3	4
11. Administrative leadership of church staff	1	2	3	4
12. Ecumenical and interfaith activities	1	2	3	4
13. Involvement in the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference	1	2	3	4
14. Providing oversight for all activities and committees of the church	1	2	3	4
15. Providing oversight of building programs as needed	1	2	3	4
16. Encouraging the development of small groups within the church	1	2	3	4
17. Dealing with people who might cause division	1	2	3	4
18. Monitoring and guiding church expenditures to stay within budget	1	2	3	4
19. Conducting weddings, baptism, baby dedications and funerals	1	2	3	4
20. Providing leadership when church discipline is needed	1	2	3	4

Qualities Our Next Pastor Should Have

Based on your knowledge of our church, of its present strengths and weaknesses, and the needs we may have in the next five to ten years, please identify the qualities that you think are important for our next pastor to have.

Thank you for your time and input. Your responses will be considered carefully by the Pastor Search Committee.

(signature optional)

Pastoral Applicant Reference Form



Name of Applicant _____

The person named above has applied for the position of _____

at the _____ Church. Would you be so kind as to complete this reference form to the best of your ability and return it as soon as possible to the address noted at the bottom of the form. Thank you.

Your Name _____ Phone _____

For how long have you known this applicant? _____ Email _____

In what capacity? _____

Please rate the applicant named above on the following twenty categories using the key given below. Use space on the right to make written comments where appropriate.

5 - Exceptional, 2 - Below Average,	4 - Above Average, 1 - Serious Deficiency,	3 - Average, 0 - Do Not Know	Comments
1. Preaching ability		0 1 2 3 4 5	
2. Worship-leading ability		0 1 2 3 4 5	
3. Teaching ability		0 1 2 3 4 5	
4. Ability to develop a vision for a church		0 1 2 3 4 5	
5. Ability to communicate that vision to a congregation so that it becomes theirs also.		0 1 2 3 4 5	
6. Ability to motivate others in healthy ways		0 1 2 3 4 5	
7. Ability to translate vision into concrete plans		0 1 2 3 4 5	
8. Ability as a church administrator		0 1 2 3 4 5	
9. Ability to encourage others to develop their gifts		0 1 2 3 4 5	
10. Earns loyalty of staff and congregation		0 1 2 3 4 5	
11. Cares deeply about congregation		0 1 2 3 4 5	
12. Is available and visible to staff and congregation		0 1 2 3 4 5	
13. Works comfortably with church board and denominational staff.		0 1 2 3 4 5	
14. Can supervise others effectively		0 1 2 3 4 5	
15. Gentleness		0 1 2 3 4 5	
16. Dignified, good self-control		0 1 2 3 4 5	
17. Hospitable		0 1 2 3 4 5	

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18. | Ability to work without supervision | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. | Open-mindedness, tolerance for reasonable differences of opinion. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. | Capacity for objective evaluation of his own strengths and weaknesses. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
-

Possible Problem Areas: *Circle either Yes or No. If yes explain in the space provided on the right. Use extra paper if necessary.*

				Comments
1.	Unfaithfulness or any questionable behaviour with the opposite sex?	Yes	No	
2.	Failure to discipline children?	Yes	No	
3.	Difficulty handling anger or frustration?	Yes	No	
4.	Any evidence of alcohol or drug abuse by either pastor or spouse?	Yes	No	
5.	Failure of self-discipline in any area that significantly hinders role as pastor?	Yes	No	
6.	Spending beyond one's means in either personal or church situations?	Yes	No	
7.	Low energy level?	Yes	No	
8.	Anxious or fearful?	Yes	No	
9.	Dependent?	Yes	No	
10.	Low self-esteem? Unusual need for approval?	Yes	No	
11.	Manipulative?	Yes	No	
12.	Hostile, Angry?	Yes	No	
13.	Tends to get into power struggles?	Yes	No	
14.	Shy, overly sensitive to criticism?	Yes	No	
15.	Pushy, aggressive?	Yes	No	
16.	Impulsive, hasty?	Yes	No	
17.	Is there anything else in this person's history or personality that might affect his ability to pastor?	Yes	No	

Please indicate the strength of your overall endorsement of this person for pastor:

___ Highly recommended, ___ Recommended, ___ Recommended with some reservation, ___ Not recommended

Please return completed reference form by email:



Step 1:

PASTORAL INFORMATION FORM

FOR THE POSITION OF _____
of the (name of church) _____

This form is to be used by the Pastor Search Committee inviting individuals to make application prior to anyone being invited to candidate.

Please answer the following questions directly on this format using Microsoft Word, and e-mail the completed document to _____ (ENTER AN E-MAIL ADDRESS) _____ as an attachment.

None of this information will go beyond the committee without permission.

1. a) **Name of Applicant:**

Postal address:

e-mail address:

Phone Number:

Bus.:

Home:

2. **Ordination:** Are you ordained within the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference?

Yes _____

No _____

Date and place of ordination:

If ordained under another denomination, what denomination:

Date and place of ordination:

Address of denominational Head Office:

3. Spouse's Name:

Names of Children:

4. Education: List your educational experience, including schooling, the number of years, degree/diploma, and date completed.

5. References: List the names, addresses and phone numbers of five people (see categories below) **who know you well and would be willing to serve as references.** (It would be wise to notify each of these persons that we may be contacting them in the next while.)

a) Denominational contact:

Name:

Postal Address:

Phone No.:

e-mail address:

Context in which you have known this person:

b) Academic contact:

Name:

Postal Address:

Phone No.:

e-mail address:

Context in which you have known this person:

c) Three pastoral/congregational contacts:

i. Name:

Postal Address:

Phone No.:

e-mail address:

Context in which you have known this person:

ii. Name:
Postal Address:

Phone No.:
e-mail address:
Context in which you have known this person:

iii. Name:
Postal Address:

Phone No.:
e-mail address:
Context in which you have known this person:

6. **Life Story:** Provide a sketch of your life story, including particulars that you feel would be important for our church to know about you, should we consider asking you candidate for this position.

7. **Personal Christian Experience:** Identify and discuss those experiences that you view as having been especially important in the development of your own Christian faith and life.

8. **Christian Service:** Discuss your previous pastoral or Christian service experience. For each experience, discuss what your responsibilities were, how long you served, the most important contributions you believe you made, and your reasons for leaving. If you have had a long pastoral career, focus on your last two or three pastorates.

9. **Philosophy of Leadership:** Discuss your personal philosophy of leadership. What do you see as the role of a pastor in a local church, especially as it relates to other leadership persons in the congregation?

10. **Strengths and Weaknesses:** Identify areas of what you consider to be personal strengths that facilitate your pastoral ministry and weaknesses that tend to hinder your effectiveness as a minister.

11. **Study the EMMC Confession of Faith carefully. Visit it at: emmc.ca or click [here](#)**
Comment very briefly (in a separate document) on each of the twelve points, indicating to what degree you are in agreement with them. Feel free to state some of the questions they raise in your mind.

If there is general agreement with the *Confession of Faith*, the successful candidate will be required to either provide satisfactory validation to transfer their existing ordination; or as in the case of non-ordained candidates be willing to submit to the EMMC process of ordination immediately after commencing pastoral duties.

NOTE: As a condition of employment, and prior to pursuing any hiring arrangement, the Pastoral Search Committee will require permission to conduct a Police record check.

Thank you for your time in completing this Pastoral Candidate Information Form. In addition to this form, please send us two audios of sermons you have preached recently, if possible via an e-mail attachment, or mail a CD to the following address:

Name :

Address:

Please take note, that in e-mailing or mailing the above information to the Pastoral Search Committee you are giving your consent to them to contact your references and to verify the information given in this application.



Step 2:

APPLYING FOR PASTORAL CANDIDACY

FOR THE POSITION OF _____

of the (name of church) _____

After the screening of applicants (Step 1) this questionnaire will be sent to those applicants whom the Pastoral Search Committee wishes to engage in further dialogue. Take note that at this stage the Pastoral Search Committee shall be free to share this completed document with the EMMC Conference Pastor for the purpose of discernment and feedback.

Please answer the following questions directly on this format using Microsoft Word, and e-mail the completed document to [\(ENTER AN E-MAIL ADDRESS\)](#) as an attachment.

Name of Applicant:

Mailing address:

e-mail address:

Phone Number: Bus.:

Home:

1. Describe your sense of God's "call" on your life for pastoral ministry.
2. How do you attend to your own spiritual growth and health apart from your responsibilities as a pastor (preaching/teaching preparation)?
3. List three books that have you read in the last year, and describe what impact, if any, they are having in your life and ministry.

4. What are your unique ministerial interests, spiritual gifts and strengths?
5. Describe your computer skills, and the programs you use frequently.
6. What web sites do you frequent that are most helpful in ministry?
7. What media/technology do you currently use as part of the life of the church? In worship?
8. Describe your philosophy of ministry.
9. Describe yourself as a preacher.
10. Provide a brief statement of your “philosophy” of worship. Describe your “approach” to worship, including a description of your preferred “style” of worship.
11. Regarding Ordination, comment on either a. or b.:
 - a. If you are ordained by another denomination, and in general agreement with the EMMC Confession of Faith, are you willing to submit the proper documentation for consideration in transferring this ordination to EMMC.
 - b. If you are not already ordained, and upon assuming pastoral duties, would you be willing to work with the church and EMMC conference in beginning the process of applying for ordination.

12. Describe your activities in the area of discipling of believers.

13. Describe your activities in your development of prayer ministry.

14. Strengths and Weaknesses: Identify areas of what you consider to be personal strengths that facilitate your pastoral ministry and weaknesses that tend to hinder your effectiveness as a minister.

15. What is the most significant trend you see in our society today?

16. What, in your opinion, is the greatest challenge facing the evangelical church in Canada today?

17. What kind of changes do you believe will be necessary for the church to make in order to effectively reach this rapidly changing North American culture?

18. Have you been involved with “small groups” as part of the church’s ministry? If so, briefly describe the experience.

19. Have you ever had to manage other staff in pastoral or other employment?

20. Describe your leadership style.

21. What has been most fulfilling for you in your pastoral ministry so far?

22. What do you most love to do in the pastoral role?

23. What do you least like to do in the pastoral role?

24. How do you keep a local church focused on missions?

25. Describe your conflict management style.

26. What have been the major changes in your thinking and perspective in the last few years?



Step 3:

PASTORAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

To be used as a guide during a personal interview

FOR THE POSITION of _____

of the (name of church) _____

NAME OF APPLICANT: _____

It is suggested that the persons involved in this interview be comprised of members of the Pastor Search Team, key leaders of the local church, two other leaders from the Region, and where possible EMMC Conference Pastor or EMMC Staff member. It is recommended that if the candidate is married, their spouse be in attendance during this interview.

It is assumed that the candidate has filled out the Step 1 & 2 forms. These documents and any notes made by the Pastor Research Team should be distributed prior to the interview to all those involved.

The Pastoral Candidate SHOULD BE ADVISED IN ADVANCE of the nature of the questions to be discussed during this interview. Here is a suggested outline to be sent to the candidate:

TOPICS TO BE ADDRESSED AT THE INTERVIEW

- Family background and personality
- Spiritual giftedness, history and development
- Leadership philosophy and style
- Preaching/worship styles and preferences
- Excerpts of leadership experiences and activities
- Church personalities and employment practices (these would include questions to the interview team from the candidate)

The team conducting the interview will consist of persons from the local search team, church leadership, plus regional and conference reps.

Family Background & Personality

1. Tell us about your family of origin ... your mother, father, siblings. What was life like growing up at home? In what specific ways did your parents/upbringing shape you into the person you are today?
2. If you had three words to describe yourself, what three words would you choose? Why did you choose those specific words?
3. What three words would your past congregations use to describe you?
4. Describe the similarities AND differences between your personality and your spouse's personality. How are you alike? How are you different?
5. What role does your spouse play in your ministry to the body of Christ?

Spiritual History & Spiritual Development

1. Describe for us the circumstances surrounding your salvation experience, your sanctification experience, and your call to full time ministry.
2. In what area(s) of your life has God brought you the farthest in terms of spiritual development? In what specific areas do you still have a ways to go?
3. What do you see as your dominant spiritual gifts? Do those around you agree with this assessment? Why or why not?
4. Describe specific ways that you are currently using your spiritual gifts.
5. What is your definition of "holiness?" Using your definition, describe some of the ways that you foster holiness in your own life, in the lives of your family members, and in the lives of your congregation.
6. Besides the Bible, what 2-3 books have impacted your spiritual life the most?

7. Have you ever read the Bible cover to cover, Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21?

Leadership Philosophy

1. In your opinion, what would be the ideal mission statement and/or core values for an evangelical church like ours situated in _____ (FILL IN LOCATION OF YOUR CHURCH)
2. How would you define church "growth?"
3. Give us some specific examples of things that you have done that have contributed to the growth of your current church.
4. In terms of small group ministry, which do you prefer? a) a church WITHOUT small groups, b) a church WITH small groups or, c) a church OF small groups? Why?
5. What standards would you use to measure success in youth ministry and small group ministry?
6. Respond to this statement: "A Pastor's primary responsibility is to recruit, mentor, and train believers to be disciple-makers." Agree? Disagree? Why?
7. In your understanding, what is the primary role of the Senior Pastor? How does this intersect with the role of the church board?
8. Which statement do you prefer?
a) The church staff have strong input in vision setting and administration. OR
b) Vision setting and administration are directed primarily by church board. Why?
9. Do you believe the laity is called to ministry just as paid clergy are called to ministry? Why or why not?
10. Respond to this statement: "Every believer is called to be a pastor to those in their sphere of social influence." Agree or disagree? Why?

Leadership Style

1. What leadership/administrative style have you been using in your most recent assignment?
2. Every week is different, but tell us what a typical week would look like for you. Please include an average of how many hours you spend in prayer, scripture reading, sermon preparation, office hours, training believers, and visitation.
3. Which phrase describes you best:
 - a) A dreamer/visionary, big picture style of thinker who leaves the details to others who have the gift of administration;
 - b) A detail oriented leader who encourages others to do the dreaming?
4. Describe your philosophy of managing and overseeing staff and how that philosophy works its way out into day-to-day practice.
5. Describe how you encourage staff members to grow, set and reach new goals, and how you hold them accountable spiritually and for job performance.

Preferences and Style of Preaching/Worship

1. Describe your preaching philosophy and preaching style. What techniques or technologies do you use to effectively communicate God's word to members of contemporary society?
2. What are your feelings about sharing the pulpit with other gifted speakers/preachers in the congregation?
3. Describe what you consider a "contemporary" worship service.
4. What is your preferred style of worship?
5. In your opinion, how can the church best communicate Christ to the lost of today?

Leadership in Action

1. Describe a time when you dreamed a BIG dream with God, cast a BIG vision for your congregation, and then tried a BIG thing that required a lot of faith. What happened? How did it turn out?
2. What are you doing now in your current church to develop and cast a vision of where you would like your church to be in 5 and 10 years? What specific things are you doing now to help your church get there?
3. How many people have you personally witnessed to and led to Christ in the past year?
4. Describe how you have been personally involved in duplicating leaders in your previous church assignments.
5. How does your current church follow up on visitors and assimilate new believers into the body of Christ?
6. A Youth Pastor from a local Lutheran Church contacts and wants your Youth Pastor and the youth of your church to participate in a local inter-denominational youth rally. How would you respond?
7. Christians sometimes disagree with each other. Describe a time of conflict in your most recent congregation. How did you handle it? What were the results?
8. Describe a time when you had to administer discipline to a church member or staff member. What was the issue? How did you handle it? What was the result?
9. Not everyone ascribes fully to our Anabaptist based Confession of Faith. Can you think of a time when a church member, teacher, or staff member questioned church doctrine? How did you react? What did you do? How did it turn out?

10. Have you ever felt compelled by the Holy Spirit to preach a message that you knew would be unpopular? Describe the situation. What did you do? How did you make sure of the Spirit's direction? How did it turn out?
11. Tell of a time when your family became stressed or hurt because of your ministry. What did you do to resolve it? How did it go?

Closing Questions

1. List 3 specific characteristics you are looking for in your next church assignment?
2. What are 3 things you wish to avoid in your next church assignment?
3. If you were to consider a new assignment, how soon might you be available to assume this new role?

QUESTIONS REGARDING HIRING DETAILS

Below are some suggested questions that need to be addressed, should this interview team be making a positive recommendation to continue pursuing the hiring of this candidate. It may be wise to have someone on the interview team to have some of this information on hand to give at least an overview, as it is very likely that a serious candidate will already be asking at this stage.

However, prior to engaging in hiring details, it would be wise to first consider the review and recommendation of this interview team. The Conference does have some guidelines in place to assist the local leaders in negotiating a hiring arrangement.

Here is a suggested list of questions to consider:

1. Annual salary and benefits (vacation, sick leave, pension plans, health insurance, disability insurance, etc.)
2. Desired starting date.
3. Ministry expense policy (mileage, lunches, books, etc.)
4. Leadership development options (ongoing education, seminars, regional and conference events and meetings, etc.).

5. Housing arrangements and possibilities.
6. Schooling options if they have young children.
7. Moving costs and resettlement provisions.

Be sure to allow time for the candidate to ask questions pertaining to the church's unique personality, and employment policies and practices.