

# SEARCHING FOR PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

## *Foreword*

The International Council of Community Churches is comprised of congregations whose customs, bylaws and organizational insights vary widely. No one work could hope to encompass all the diverse ways in which our congregations and centers find and call dedicated individuals to positions of pastoral service. You should always consult your own congregation's formative documents, and then adapt the suggestions in this booklet as seems wise.

The process described in this booklet may appear tedious at first reading. However eager you may be to "skip over" various steps in the process and bring your search to an end, remember that your congregation is relying on you to be prudent and discerning – and neither prudence nor discernment can be rushed. Your patience will be rewarded as you seek God's guidance in finding and calling your next pastor.

I want to acknowledge that the Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Newhall produced the original version of this manual for pastoral search committees for ICCC congregations, and the Rev. Don Ashmall, Council Minister Emeritus updated this manual in 2011. I want to thank the Rev. John Woodcock, pastor of Church of the Loving Shepherd in working with me to provide you with this updated manual. As you employ this manual, please share your discoveries and insights so that we can make any necessary changes in this manual in the future.

May God bless you in your searching, your discovering, and in your serving together.

Rev. Phil Tom  
Executive Director  
International Council of Community Churches  
March 2019

## SEARCHING FOR PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

If you are reading this document, you may be a member of a pastoral search committee (sometimes called a pulpit committee.) Your committee has been organized to recommend an individual to become your congregation's next pastor. Yours is an important task that will require patience, diligence and a great deal of prayer. Are you ready for it? If so, let's get started.

### **Organizing Your Committee**

Many churches have some mention of a pastoral search or pulpit committee within their constitution and bylaws. Please study your church's formative documents carefully and adjust the recommendations in this booklet to fit your situation.

Some churches have no established method for organizing a pastoral search committee. If this is the case, your church's council, deacons or other responsible group should nominate the members of the pastoral search committee, and the congregation should give final approval to those who will serve.

Ideally a pastoral search committee will consist of between five and eleven individuals. Generally, less than five cannot fairly represent the entire congregation. More than eleven becomes a crowd. Those who serve should represent the various age and interest groups within the church and should include roughly equal numbers of men and women. A pastoral search committee will be strengthened by the varied experiences and perspectives of all its members; for this reason, it is not necessary that the committee be filled with people who are personnel or human resources experts.

Committee members may be required to travel to other parishes to hear prospective applicants for the position. They certainly will spend considerable time over a period of several months reviewing information about various applicants. The committee may need to meet as often as two or three times per month during some points in its search. While most church members can serve effectively on a pastoral search committee at some point in their lives, 'some point' is not 'any time.' Factors such as family needs, career challenges and health concerns may mean that this time is not the best for you. Please consider carefully and prayerfully if you will be comfortable fulfilling your committee responsibilities during the next year or so. If your answer is 'no' you should not be embarrassed to withdraw from the committee in favor of another church member whose personal situation is different from your own.

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## Your First Committee Meeting

Your first act as a committee should be to commit the work of your committee to God in prayer. Pray for the health, unity and witness of your church. Seek God's wisdom and guidance in your appointed task. And pray for patience for yourself and for your congregation as you undertake a disciplined search for new pastoral leadership. The business agenda for your first meeting will look like this:

- Election of a committee chairperson. It is appropriate for your church's moderator or other officer to convene your first meeting and conduct an election of a chairperson. Unless the moderator or other officer is a committee member, she/he should depart as soon as the election is completed. The newly elected chairperson will preside over the balance of the meeting.
- Election of a vice-chair, recording secretary and/or corresponding secretary. The vice-chair will preside at any meeting which the chairperson cannot attend. The recording secretary will coordinate the assembly of information you want to send to applicants and the distribution to committee members of information you receive from applicants. Preferably this should be a person who is comfortable working with email, word processing and spreadsheet programs. The corresponding secretary will work with the recording secretary and be responsible for sending the appropriate emails, letters, and documents to applicants, receiving mail from applicants to be passed on to the recording secretary, and setting appointments with applicants for interviews and other contacts. Familiarity with computer-based database and calendar programs will be helpful for this individual.
- Review and signing of the Pastoral Search Committee Covenant. (Appendix A.) Each committee member should sign the document and a copy of the signed document should be given to each member.
- Assignment of tasks for the Church Self-Study. (Appendix B.) Each committee member should volunteer to gather a part of the information described in the Self-Study appendix, and to bring it to the next committee meeting. Remember: this is a working committee. Every committee member will be responsible for helping to get the work done.
- Arrangement of a schedule of committee meetings. Consider meeting every two weeks for the next month or two. You will need time to do your 'homework' between meetings, but since the task is urgent you do need to meet frequently.

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## **Your Second Committee Meeting**

Start this meeting and every subsequent meeting with a time of prayer and meditation. If your committee is like most, you'll be anxious to "get on with it" and you may want to make this a brief and perfunctory exercise. Don't give in to the temptation to minimize prayer. You need it and your church needs it if you are going to approach the issues you'll face with insight, wisdom and patience.

You'll spend the rest of this meeting and possibly one or two additional meetings completing your self-study (Appendix B). Your first response may be that the study isn't necessary. But do you really know who you are as a congregation? Have you looked at yourself lately? You may know how many members your church claims, but how many are "core" disciples; how many are fairly regular attendees at worship; how many come occasionally; how many say they belong but remember where the church building is only at Christmas and Easter; how many say they belong but don't even attend worship on those "high holy days"? What kinds of ministries/programs/activities do you as a congregation sponsor and/or host? How do you really organize yourself (which may or may not be the way your church bylaws say you operate)? Do you have a mission statement and if so, does the statement really reflect who you are and what you are about? Where do you as a congregation stand in relationship to the great ethical issues of the day? You will be gathering all this information both for your own understanding, and for the benefit of your applicants.

At some point, you may question whether you really want the applicants for your pastorate to have so much information about you. The answer is: "yes, you do." When one of the applicants becomes your pastor, he or she will need to know all this information and more in order to be effective in service to your church. Remember that when you are interviewing applicants you will be asking yourself "Is this applicant a good 'match' with our congregation?" Your applicant will be asking a similar question about you, and the information you provide will be a major factor in providing the proper answer.

After you have all the self-study elements assembled and (you think) ready for viewing, it may be helpful to you to bring in an "outsider" to review your handiwork. This should be a person who is adept at interpreting documents, who is familiar with organizations and how they function, and who won't be so concerned about offending that she/he would hesitate to tell you about gaps in the information or awkward prose in the materials you have written. Ask this individual to be brutally honest with you about the materials you have assembled, and then don't be offended by the brutality. You're new at this process, and there is a learning curve. When you're advised that you've done it wrong, take the advice and do it right. Of course your reviewer of information must understand the need for confidentiality in her/his dealings with your committee.

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## **The Matter of Money**

So far you probably haven't spent any money as a committee. That will change as you exchange information with applicants; as you travel out of town to meet with them and to attend worship services at which they preach, and eventually as you bring an applicant to your church for a "candidating weekend." Now is the time to review what budget has been allocated to you. If your church has not yet established a budget for your committee, now is the time to seek an allocation large enough so that you can do your work.

Some of the items that will require expenditures include the following: Postage. This amount will be less if you use email for the exchange of information with applicants.

- Conference/Zoom calls. You will be making calls to applicants, and you may need to arrange conference or Zoom calls. While you may make some calls from your church that can be absorbed within your church's office budget, you should not expect that all calls will be funded in this manner.
- Transportation costs for the committee. You will want to carpool as you travel to meet with applicants out of town. It would be unfair to expect your driver to pay for fuel and highway tolls while providing transportation for the committee. If you are unable to reimburse drivers for their full expenses (see IRS figures for business driving), you should at least cover the cost of fuel and tolls.
- Transportation, lodging and meal expenses for applicants. Your committee will be responsible for such expenses.
- Credit and criminal background reports. These are not free.

Since you have no history of expenses to use as a guideline, you will need to estimate your committee's needs in each area. Estimate high; you are not obligated to spend your entire allotment, and it's easier to report that you have completed your mission and are "under budget" than to have to return to your funding source for another allotment.

Now is also the time to begin to discuss with the appropriate board or committee of your church, the compensation package you will be offering to the successful applicant. (Appendix C.) Of course, a budget for a part-time or bi-vocational pastor may display lesser amounts, but you should still consider each budget item listed in the appendix.

"We'll just pay the same as we have been paying" is not an answer to the questions surrounding a compensation package. The board that approves budgets (or that proposes budgets to the congregation for approval) needs to be just as serious as you are in dealing with the issues that relate to calling a new pastor into your midst.

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### **Subsequent Meetings – Pastoral Talents Survey**

Now that you have answered the question “who are we?” the next question that needs to be answered is “who/what do we want in a pastor?” All pastors are not equal. Some are better preachers; some are better teachers; some are better administrators; some are better evangelists; some are better community organizers; some are better worship leaders. And if some are better in each of these areas, it follows that some are worse. What talents do you prize more highly in a pastor, and which are less important to you?

Ask every member of the congregation to complete and return the “Pastoral Talents Survey” (Appendix D-1.) These are your congregation’s priorities in searching for a new pastor.

In addition to helping you determine priorities, the participation of the congregation in completing the survey will inject a note of realism into your congregation’s expectations. We would all like to dream of a pastor who can pray like Peter, preach like Paul, and walk on water like Jesus. Since this combination of talents is in short supply, it is helpful for the entire congregation to confront the reality of human limitations and to struggle with you in discerning what specific talents will be most needed in your next pastor.

You should ask each applicant to complete the survey (Appendix D-2) based on her/his own talents **before** sharing your congregation’s rankings. You should not expect to find a perfect match between your rankings and those of any applicant, but you should look for a reasonable correspondence between your highest priorities and the talents possessed by an applicant.

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### **Subsequent Meetings – “Due Diligence” and Preparation**

Your first response to the suggestion that you perform criminal background and credit checks on your applicants may be one of surprise. Surely anyone who wants to serve your church as pastor must be a person of impeccable background and sterling character! Today, that's not necessarily the case. Certainly, you don't want to imagine a future church business meeting in which you are explaining how you came to recommend a repeat offender to be your church's pastor. The simple fact that you require a background check may discourage an opportunist, which is good for your church.

You will want a great deal of information from applicants, all of which needs to be reviewed by every member of your committee. One convenient way to keep track of “who's seen what” is to place all the materials you receive from each applicant in a separate large envelope (10” x 13” or larger), and to ask each committee member to enter his/her name, the documents reviewed, and the current date on the face of the envelope after reviewing the contents. Many committees find that their church office is the most convenient repository for the envelopes. If this is the case, you will want to arrange for a place in the office that is accessible to your committee members but not available to casual visitors to the office. Does the office have a locking file drawer to which your committee members could have keys for the duration of your work? You may also want to store this information on a hard drive or the cloud in case the paper documents get damaged. Speak with the appropriate church officers or board about the possibilities. Remember: you will be handling confidential items such as criminal background and credit reports. These and other documents must be kept private.

Decide the address to which all applicant mail will be sent. For many churches this will be the church office. For some it may be appropriate to rent a box at the local post office. Whatever your decision may be, use one address consistently throughout your life as a committee. The committee chair or her/his appointee should “check for mail” daily, even at times when you may not be expecting incoming mail.

As you prepare to contact possible applicants for your pastorate you will need to “walk through” the process of contact, interview and follow-up at least once. Ask the pastor of a nearby community church or another trusted individual to be your stand-in, taking the place of an applicant. Prepare the same complete set of materials you intend to send to applicants, and deliver or mail the materials to the stand-in. Prepare for a mock initial interview with your stand-in. Decide what questions you will ask of your stand-in, which committee member will ask each question, and in what order the questions will be asked. Conduct the mock interview. Invite the stand-in to propose to you the sorts of questions she/he would ask of your committee if he/she were an actual applicant. Ask your stand-in to evaluate your committee's questions and answers, and to make suggestions about handling an interview. Review with your stand-in how you will deal with applicants' references. Then, change your plans based on what you have learned from this experience.

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## **More Preparation**

You will expedite your work if you as a committee have a page on your church's website, Facebook, and other forms of social media. If your church does not have a website or Facebook page, you should consider creating one. The process of page or site development is less difficult and less costly than you may think. Someone in your congregation knows how, (or at least knows somebody who knows how.) It's a fact that youth and young adults tend to be more comfortable with technology than their elders, so it may be worthwhile to ask some of your youth or young adults to help you in developing your website or Facebook page. Essentials for the page or site is an announcement that you are searching for a pastor; a brief history of your church and its current life; a list of the documents you want to receive from each applicant; and the mailing address to which applicants' materials are to be sent. Photos of the church building (both interior and exterior), of various boards and groups in action, and of your congregation at worship will be instructive, and will relieve the eye from long paragraphs of text.

You can offer to receive applicants' materials via email, provided that a member of your committee is comfortable in downloading the materials and will check your email in-box daily. For the sake of privacy your email address should be specific to the committee. Do not use your church's general email address.

Now is the time – before you begin creating and reviewing any documents -- to remind one another that federal and state anti-discrimination laws do apply to your church. For example, it may be your opinion that an applicant is "too old" or "too young" for the position. Be that as it may, do not under any circumstance express that opinion in writing on any document supplied to an applicant, or on any record created by the committee, or on anything that is kept in the files of the committee. We live in a society that loves lawsuits, and you do not want to be the reason why your church was successfully sued by an unsuccessful applicant. Don't assume that could never happen to a church. It has happened, to the dismay and the financial pain of congregations.

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## **Applicants and Applications**

After so much preparation, you are ready to start your search for applicants. You'll begin by developing a "help wanted ad" for the position of pastor. Decide what you will say about your church in the limited space available to you in the various venues. Choose a few words about what sort of pastor you are looking for. Include your website link and provide the postal mail or email address to which applicants will send their requested materials.

Then, contact the office of the International Council of Community Churches (ICCC) with your ad materials. The ICCC address is:

21116 Washington Parkway, Frankfort, Illinois 60423  
Phone 815-464-5690 Fax 815-464-5692  
[www.icccnow.org](http://www.icccnow.org)

The ICCC will place a notice of your open position in its newsletter mailed to ICCC pastors, churches, key lay leaders and donors of record. There is no fee to ICCC member churches for this service. ICCC has established an account with [churchstaffing.com](http://churchstaffing.com). Using this website, we can post your job description on this website and provide you with prospective candidates that are seeking a new calling in your geographic region.

See the following internet website for help in locating other venues in which to advertise your church's open position such as [churchjobs.net](http://churchjobs.net) or [Indeed.com](http://Indeed.com). The Christian Century magazine is read by many clergy and can be a productive source of applicants.

You will also want to contact the "placement office" at one or more seminaries in your state or region. A geographical index of seminaries that are accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) – including links to the schools' internet websites – may be found at [www.ats.edu](http://www.ats.edu). Most seminaries that are associated with main line Protestant denominations now consider themselves to be "ecumenical" and will list your open position through their placement offices even though your church isn't of their denomination.

You may receive unsolicited recommendations about applicants from church members and friends. Give to each person who has a recommendation a copy of your "help wanted" ad. Make it clear that if the individual being recommended really is interested in applying for the position, she/he will need to contact your committee and provide you with the same personal data and documentation anybody else does.

Because you are advertising in public venues, you will receive inquiries from people with a variety of outlooks, styles and educational backgrounds. Some applicants will immediately appear to be unsuitable because of their employment history. Some applicants may forcefully voice opinions that you find obnoxious. Some may express themselves in ways that indicate a lack of mental balance. Despite all this, treat every applicant with respect and kindness. Remember that you represent your church and its witness and mission. And then decline the unsuitable applicants in a kindly and respectful manner. (Appendix I.)

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## **Committee Discussions; Committee Decisions**

At this stage in your search process you need to take time for an honest consideration of committee discussions and decisions. Ideally you will make all decisions by consensus, but few committees manage that feat all the way through the process. You may discover that your various perceptions about an applicant are very different. Generally, committees like yours have found that a two-thirds majority vote is a workable requirement for decisions about applicants. Those members of the committee who are naturally assertive will need to exercise self-discipline and not try to impose their views on the rest of the committee. Those who are naturally shy will need to speak their minds for the integrity of the process and the good of the church.

If at any time you discover that tempers are growing short, or that committee members are becoming impatient with one another, or simply that committee members seem to be speaking at cross purposes, it is appropriate for any member of the committee to invoke the two “Iron Rules” of effective communication. These are:

Understanding. When the “iron rules” have been invoked, before I can make any comment of my own, I must repeat back what the previous speaker has said, in my own words. If my words do not communicate complete understanding of what the previous speaker has said, she/he must rephrase his/her statement, and then I must repeat it again in my own words, until it is clear to both the previous speaker and I that I have a good understanding of the previous speaker’s intent.

Affirmation. After I understand what the previous speaker has said, I must tell the group two benefits/virtues/”good things about” the statement of the previous speaker before I can offer any criticism of the statement.

You should agree as a committee that the way to invoke the two “Iron Rules” of communication is for any committee member simply to proclaim: “Iron Rules!” At that point the two Iron Rules will be in effect and must be observed strictly by all members of the committee for the next thirty minutes. Follow this suggestion and you will discover that though you may not achieve total consensus, you will develop a more complete mutual understanding and respect for all your opinions and viewpoints. If each committee member will always try to follow the Iron Rules , your discussions as a committee will be more productive.

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## Getting Acquainted with the Applicants

You will need to “open a file” on each applicant as her/his initial inquiry arrives. Use the form found in Appendix F to track your contacts with applicants – one form per applicant. Upon receiving the initial inquiry, you will need to send each applicant a package of materials about your church.

Each packet should include:

1. a cover letter (Appendix I);
2. a copy of your self-study report (if published on your web page or website, directions to the page or site will suffice);
3. a recent worship bulletin;
4. a recent newsletter (if your church publishes an electronic version of its newsletter on the church website, directions to the site will suffice);
5. the most recent booklet of your church’s annual reports (if published on your web page or website, directions to the page or site will suffice);
6. an authorization form for credit report and criminal background check (Appendix E);
7. a blank Pastoral Talents Survey (Appendix D-2).

Your cover letter to each applicant should request that the applicant supply your committee by postal mail or email within two weeks of receipt of your packet:

1. a resume;
2. a short autobiography including significant moments of spiritual growth and the applicant’s understanding of her/his “call” to pastoral ministry;
3. a signed authorization form for credit and background checks;
4. a completed Pastoral Talents Survey form;
5. a video (preferred) or audio recording of a recent worship service which the applicant led and at which she/he preached;
6. the names and complete contact information (mailing address, phone, email address) for five references.

You will want to require that at least one reference be a colleague in pastoral ministry who has had the opportunity to see your applicant “in action” in a leadership capacity, and that at least one reference be a member of a church the applicant has served in a pastoral capacity, or for applicants who have no history of pastoral service that the applicant has attended as a regular worshipper.

You will want to keep detailed records of what follow-up contacts you have made with each applicant. In addition to the form in Appendix F, you will want to retain copies of all letters and other materials sent to and received from the applicant.

After all committee members have had opportunity to review the materials received from an applicant, you will need to make a collective decision about the application. Do you want to pursue further conversation with the applicant? Do you wish to reject the application? What information in the materials you have received has convinced you that yours is the correct decision?

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## **Unsuccessful Applicants**

As you cull the list of applicants you have assembled, you will want to notify each unsuccessful applicant of your decision by letter (Appendix I.) Do not neglect this act of courtesy, because your handling of each application reflects on the collective ministry of your church. Also, it really is a small world and at some future date you may find yourself in contact with the applicant in circumstances you cannot predict. At each step in the process, you also will want to notify applicants who are still “in the running” about the next step in the process, so that they are aware of their status with you. (Appendix I.)

It may be that a rejected applicant contacts you to ask the reasons for your decision. While you may be tempted to offer counsel to an unsuccessful applicant regarding some aspect of her/his writing, theological positions or other such, you should reject that temptation.

- First, the factors that moved you to decide to reject an applicant may be the very ones that make him/her attractive to another congregation. Who are you, to tell the applicant that she/he should change?
- Second, there are a variety of temperaments among applicants, and while some individuals may genuinely be looking to grow from the experience, others may be looking for an excuse to denigrate your church in a public forum, or even to bring legal suit against your church because of your decision. You and your committee have given the application considerable thought and prayer. Your prayerful decision was that your church and the applicant are not a good match currently. That is enough. No further reason or justification for your decision needs to be provided.

Do not discard documents or other materials that relate to any applicant. Federal law requires that records related to employment applications from rejected applicants be retained for a minimum of one year. State laws vary and may require longer retention periods for records. While it can be argued for a variety of reasons that records retention requirements do not or should not apply to churches, discretion suggests that you should keep the records for at least a year anyway.

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## **Initial Interviews**

Though some applicants may live nearby and be available for a personal appearance for your committee, most initial interviews will take place by conference call or Zoom. For your side of the conversation you will want to arrange a private location at which all committee members may have access to their own telephone handset, or alternatively can both hear and speak into a speakerphone. If you will be interviewing during evening hours you may be able to borrow a suitably equipped business office and/or company conference room. (Be sure to send the appropriate individuals a note of thanks for the use of the company's facilities after each such use.) If you are using multiple telephone handsets, be sure you understand fully how to link the phones so that all may participate in the conversation. If you are using a speakerphone, be sure to test the equipment in advance for clarity and volume.

In your initial interview some questions will be inspired by the materials an applicant has provided. Does the applicant's employment history raise questions? Is there a gap in the applicant's educational history that is not covered by employment? (A normal full-time course of study for a bachelor's degree is four years; a normal full-time course of study for a Master of Divinity degree is three years.) Does the applicant's autobiography cause concerns? The initial interview is the time to obtain clarification.

The applicant's responses to the Pastoral Talents Survey (Appendix D-2) will give you the opportunity to ask questions that further explore her/his pastoral interests and emphases. Remember: the interview is not the occasion to debate pastoral priorities with an applicant. You may have opinions that differ from those of an applicant, but an interview is not a disputation. Instead, as you ask questions you will be encouraging the applicant to share his or her own experience and outlook.

In general, the best interview questions are open-ended. In addition to the content of the answer, note what each response says about the style, leadership ability, maturity and judgment of the applicant. A list of general questions to ask of applicants is in Appendix G. Be aware that similar lists of questions may be found in any number of "how to" books and internet websites consulted by those seeking employment. You will want to be alert to answers that are too glib or that sound rehearsed. While it certainly is fair play for an applicant to prepare for an interview and to anticipate your questions, you will not learn as much from scripted answers as from spontaneous responses.

You will want to generate your questions ahead of time. Just as it is fair play for an applicant to prepare for an interview, it is both fair play – and essential – that you do so. Plan both your questions and which committee members will ask what questions. You should use the same set of opening questions for all your applicants. If the applicant's response suggests a follow-up question, try to keep that question open-ended as well. If the applicant makes a statement with which you disagree, don't debate the issue. A better course is to ask the applicant to tell you how he/she came to her/his conclusions about the issue.

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## **More on Initial Interviews**

Whether in person or by Zoom/conference call, do not plan an initial interview to last longer than one hour, including at least fifteen minutes or so for the applicant to ask questions of you. Some of the applicant's questions may surprise you. Each will tell you something about the applicant and his/her outlook and style. Remember that you sent the applicant a great deal of information about your church. If many of the applicant's questions simply ask you to repeat the same information, that may reveal something about the applicant's attention to detail.

In answering applicants' questions the committee chair or her/his appointee should delegate responsibility for answers as the questions are asked. [Example: *"That's a good question. Committee member Ada Baker probably knows the most about that. Ada, will you respond?"*]

Be forthright and honest in your responses to the applicant's questions. Naturally you will want to speak about your congregation's strengths and hopes. But if the applicant asks about a crisis or conflict in your congregation's history, be candid in your response. If the applicant's question about some past incident is at all pointed, she/he probably knows at least part of the story anyway, possibly in a way that would surprise you. If the applicant's questions touch on some current issue or debate within the congregation, don't be defensive. Simply give the facts without referring to individuals. Be "upbeat" of course, but never hide facts or pretend that that any situation is other than what it truly is.

A further word about anti-discrimination and fair employment practices laws: they do apply to you and to your committee. Certainly, it seems absurd that you might meet, interview and finally call somebody as your pastor without knowing if he/she is married or has a family, but the law says you can't ask. Realistically, the applicant will tell you about these matters, and you wouldn't call somebody to be your pastor if she/he made it a point to be secretive about his/her family relationships. But do not forget that the law applies.

During each interview, each committee member should take written notes. Try not to get so involved in writing about one question and answer that you do not hear the next. Do remember to listen not only to the content of answers but to the tone and the level of maturity, judgment and insight that an applicant's responses display.

Be prepared to spend time after every interview reviewing the conversation and the impressions you gained from it. Whether immediately following the interview or after reflecting on it for a day, you will need to decide if you want to pursue the process further or send the applicant a letter of rejection (Appendix I). If you wish to proceed further, you should notify the applicant of your intention and indicate your next step is to secure credit and criminal background reports, and to seek information from references. Both you and the applicant should know that this may take as much as two to four weeks, depending on how fast the responses arrive. By keeping the applicant informed about your process you will not leave her/him in limbo and wondering if you'll ever be in touch again.

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## **References and Reports**

If you intend to proceed with an application after the initial interview, you will secure credit and criminal background information on the applicant. Speak with your local police department if you are unsure about how to proceed with this step. Remember that the information you will receive in these reports is confidential and sensitive, and should be kept private, accessible only to members of your committee.

You will send or email to each applicant reference a Pastoral Talents Survey (Appendix D-3) accompanied by a cover letter (Appendix I). If you mail this information, please include a self-addressed, stamp envelope.

You will review the information as it arrives. Nearly all criminal history and credit reports will show the applicant to be a responsible individual. Otherwise, you will have a decision to make. If at this point you decide to reject an application send the same letter you would have if you had decided simply that he/she and your church are not a good “match.” (Appendix I.)

Compare the Pastoral Talents Survey responses of each applicant’s references to those of the applicant and those listed as priorities by your church. Don’t expect a complete correspondence between the responses of the applicant and those of her/his references. Perceptions do vary from one individual to another. A glaring disparity between the responses of the applicant and those of his/her references may be a cause for concern. On the other hand, unanimous agreement from an applicant’s references on all questions is troubling since it raises suspicions that the applicant “coordinated” the answers of her/his references.

Follow-up phone conversations with references could include the use of questions like those in Appendix G. Simply re-phrase each question so that the query refers to the applicant. Try to keep faith with your printed promise in the Pastoral Talents Survey form (Appendix D-3) not to extend your phone conversation with the reference beyond 30 minutes.

Once again, the entire committee will need to review the impressions each of you has gained from the information you have received. Once again you will decide either to proceed to the next step with the applicant, or to reject the application. Once again, rejected applicants should receive a letter informing them of your decision, and those who have “made it through” thus far need to be notified regarding the next step in your process.

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## **Follow-Up Contacts**

For those applicants who have “made it through” the initial interview and the review of reference responses, and criminal background reports and credit checks, the next substantive step will be a follow-up contact. This should be a “face to face” meeting.

It may be that when you contact an applicant regarding a follow-up interview, she/he tells you that he/she is no longer interested in the position. This may happen for a variety of reasons, and it’s normal that one or two applicants will withdraw at some point. In the unusual case that most of your applicants start looking elsewhere, you will want to conduct a general review of your committee’s work. Call the offices of the International Council of Community Churches and share your experience and concern. You may be asked to discuss your situation with a representative of the Council (most often an experienced pastor or a layperson skilled in personnel matters.) That individual may have specific recommendations for your committee to assist you in your work.

For applicants who want to pursue conversation with your committee, one possibility for follow-up is an “on site” visit. If the applicant is presently serving a church, a delegation from your committee may want to attend a worship service there and see the applicant lead worship and preach. Not more than four or five persons should attend worship at an applicant’s church on any given Sunday. Remember: at this point neither you nor the applicant can be certain that God is calling her/him to your church. You do not want to upset the applicant’s relationship with his/her current parish, particularly if you and the applicant ultimately decide that you are not a good match.

Don’t imagine that your appearance as visitors at worship will go unnoticed by members of the applicant’s current parish. Should members there inquire as to what brings you to their neighborhood and to their worship service you will want to indicate simply that you are in their community that weekend on a business matter. This type of answer, while honest in what it reveals, keeps your explorations with the applicant confidential.

If you wish to speak with the applicant following worship at her/his current church, arrange a time and place for the conversation in advance of your visit. Be sure to schedule enough time between the close of worship and the beginning of your conversation so that the applicant will not feel rushed or under pressure.

Another possibility that will allow adequate time for follow-up conversation is a “neutral pulpit” experience. You will decide for the applicant to be a guest preacher and worship leader at a “third party” church on a given Sunday. Your entire committee can attend the worship service and take as much time as needed for conversation with the applicant after worship. For reasons of prudence, the “neutral” church should be not less than a thirty-minute drive by automobile from your church’s place of worship.

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## Follow-Up Contacts - 2

It is customary and appropriate for a pastoral search committee to cover “out of pocket” expenses related to follow-up interviews for an applicant and her/his spouse. If you are interviewing the applicant after a Sunday morning worship service, your committee should invite the applicant and spouse to a restaurant meal at which the committee is responsible for the cost. What you gain in insight during your informal interaction during the meal with the applicant will be well worth the cost. If the applicant needs to travel to a “neutral pulpit” appearance your committee should pay for transportation costs, meals and, where applicable, overnight lodging.

If you are interviewing an applicant away from her/his home and he/she will be accompanied by a spouse, provide a comfortable space or the names of nearby restaurants or coffee shops where the spouse/partner may go while the interview takes place. There’s nothing more certain to ruin your relationship with an applicant than his/her discovery that her/his spouse/partner has been abandoned in an unfamiliar location with no firm assurance as to when the interview will end.

If your congregation offers use of a manse, you will want to take the applicant and his/her spouse/partner on a tour of the manse.

Never ask an applicant to lead worship and preach at your own church unless and until you are proposing her/him as your next pastor. Otherwise you’ll be setting up a situation for conflict within your own congregation.

What questions will you ask an applicant during the follow-up interview(s)? You’ve moved beyond a simple exchange of information. Now you will want to inquire about: the applicant’s self-understanding including her/his understanding of his/her role as a pastor; how the applicant relates to individuals; how she/he functions with church boards and committees; what is his/her level of sensitivity in counseling and dealing with individuals and families during the crucial passage points of life such as births, deaths, marriages, divorces, new jobs, layoffs, retirement, and long-term and short-term illnesses. You will want to explore how the applicant responds to today’s “hot button” issues in society both in terms of her/his own opinions and how he/she relates to those church members who may disagree with her/his deeply felt convictions. Does the applicant understand and feel comfortable with what a community church is, how your community church functions, how you relate to other community churches, and how your church relates to congregations related to other communions? You will want to discover how the applicant maintains personal perspective and balance. Does she/he have hobbies? Does she/he customarily schedule specified times away from parish duties to build and strengthen relationships with spouse and family? What is the schedule for a “typical” work week for the applicant?

There is no pre-set list of questions that you will need to ask in a follow-up interview. Your questions will emerge from what you have learned about the applicant and her/his character, and what are your priorities as a committee and as a church. Think deeply about what you will ask, how you will ask it, and which committee members will ask what questions. Try to make your questions open-ended so that you can experience the spirit of the applicant.

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### **Follow-Up Contacts - 3**

What questions will the applicant ask of you during the follow-up interview(s)? Many of the queries may be in the nature of “Tell me more about....” Some questions may be mirror images of your queries. Just as you are trying to gain an in-depth understanding of the applicant, she/he is attempting to comprehend the character and the collective “atmosphere” of your congregation. Answer the applicant’s questions honestly and as completely as you can, and do not forget that the applicant’s questions may tell you more about the applicant than she/he may realize.

After the experience of one or more follow-up interviews with an applicant, you as a committee will need to review in depth all that you have discovered about him/her. The question to be answered is: “Is this the individual whom we believe God would have our church call to become our next pastor?” The answer to this question requires prayer. If upon prayerful reflection you decide that the application must be rejected, be sure to send a gracious letter notifying the applicant of that fact (Appendix I). If the answer to your question is “yes,” you have decided that the applicant is the candidate you will present to your church.

A word about candidacy: at no time and under no circumstances should you present to your church more than one person as a candidate for pastor. To do so is to fail in your task as a committee. As a practical matter, imagine a scenario in which two candidates are vying for the position of pastor. This would result in a division of the house, political intrigue, and a split in your church that would take years to heal. If under the guidance of the Holy Spirit your church rejects the candidate you recommend, you’ll need to go back to the first step in your process and start all over again, working toward the day when you can present another candidate. That would be painful to you as a committee, but it would be less painful than the conflict within the church that would result from a political contest to decide who your next pastor will be.

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### **The Applicant Becomes the Candidate**

As soon as possible, inform the applicant that with her/his approval, you will propose to your church that she/he become your next pastor. Now is the time to share with the applicant complete information about “conditions of employment” including all the cited in Appendix C.

The applicant may request time to consider your proposal and to make it a matter of prayer. This is appropriate. However, in fairness to your church you will need to require a reply in a reasonable period. Most committees will consider a week to be reasonable, barring some extraordinary circumstances in the applicant’s life. Be sure that the applicant knows about your expectations regarding a reply when you offer the proposal.

When the applicant says “yes,” he/she becomes your candidate for pastor. As soon as possible notify the appropriate officers of your church so that the process of call can be expedited. You as a committee will need to supply information about the candidate for distribution to your congregation. A one-page biography of the candidate is essential. Church bylaws and customs vary, but a typical scenario includes leadership of a worship service and a “sample sermon” by the candidate, followed by a business meeting on the same day or soon thereafter at which the congregation votes on whether to extend a call to become the church’s next pastor. Be sure to read, understand and follow all provisions of your church bylaws in dealing with this matter.

The minimal scenario required by most church bylaws is necessary, but as a way of introducing the candidate in preparation for voting on her/his candidacy, it is lacking. An alternate method is a “candidating weekend.” Bring the candidate (and spouse/partner) if there is one) to your church for a full weekend beginning Friday afternoon. Provide the candidate and spouse/partner a guided tour of your community. A supper with the church council and/or church boards followed by informal conversation (terminating not later than 9:00 p.m.) should end the day. Breakfast the following morning with the paid staff of the church could be followed by mid-morning, luncheon and early afternoon gatherings with specific boards, committees and/or fellowship groups. The period from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday should be reserved as time when the candidate and spouse/partner can “de-compress” and rest. An all-church supper followed by an informal question and answer session should terminate by 9:00 p.m. The candidate will lead the worship service and preach at Sunday worship. The chair of your committee will want to introduce the candidate and her/his spouse/partner at the start of the worship service(s).

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## **Decision Time**

Some churches convene a business meeting immediately after worship and vote on the candidacy at that time. If your church follows this custom, you will want to plan where the candidate is to wait during the meeting. If a successful candidate is expected to address the meeting following the vote, some room in the church building may be a suitable place, if voices from the meeting cannot carry into the waiting room. It is your responsibility as a committee to make advance plans for a luncheon for key church officers and the newly-called pastor following the meeting.

Some churches decide on a pastoral candidacy only after a waiting period of a few days. While this custom may not encourage peace of mind for a candidate, it does give more time for the congregation to pray about the candidacy. If your church follows this custom, make advance plans for a luncheon for the candidate and your committee after the worship services at which the candidate preaches. Then, notify the candidate regarding the results of the meeting as soon as it takes place.

During the weekend there may be occasions when the candidate is engaged with specific groups and after suitable introductions the candidate's spouse/partner is not involved. Make specific plans for those periods, with backup plans and backup personnel in case of unforeseen circumstances, to host and entertain the spouse/partner. If the candidate will be arriving for the candidating weekend by air or train, make specific arrangements in advance to provide transportation to and from the various events.

Do not ask the candidate and spouse/partner to lodge at a church member's home this weekend. The candidate will need privacy and quiet time to process all that is happening and to prepare for Sunday worship, and that is best found at a hotel. Your choice of hotel should consider not only price and distance from your church building, but the general atmosphere, quiet and comfort of the accommodations. Ask the hotel what special events are planned for your chosen weekend before you make room reservations. Housing your candidate at a hotel that will be hosting "Spring Break" parties all that weekend is not a good idea!

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## **After the Decision**

The candidating weekend went well. Your church has decided to extend a call to your candidate to become your next pastor. Now what?

Your first step as a committee is to obtain a formal acceptance of the call. Hand-deliver or mail to the candidate two signed copies of the letter of call (Appendix C), one of which is to be counter-signed by the candidate and returned to you. If the letter is sent by mail, include a self-addressed stamped envelope with the letter. Receipt of the candidate's acceptance signifies the beginning of her/his new pastoral relationship with you. The letter of call with signed acceptance is an important document that should be retained in the appropriate files of the church.

In cooperation with your church's Pastoral Relations Committee, you as the Pastoral Search Committee should recommend to your Church Council or its equivalent a series of welcoming and orientation events and activities for your new pastor. (Appendix H.)

Your committee has assembled a great deal of confidential personal information about applicants. Follow the laws regarding records retention but determine as a committee the best location for record storage until such time as the documents may be destroyed. You may consider saving this information on a hard drive or the cloud. Never under any circumstances should records related to specific individuals be discarded as trash before being shredded and/or burned.

Each member of your committee may have accepted responsibility for keys and other items of church property. Now is the time to relinquish these responsibilities. The committee chair should take responsibility for collecting keys and other items and delivering them to the appropriate church officer or employee.

No later than 30 days after the candidate begins service as your pastor, you should submit a final written report from the committee to your church or to the church body that formed your committee. Your final report should include: a list of those who served on the committee; a statement regarding how long your committee has been in existence, the number of formal meetings held, the number of applicants who received your introductory packet of information (but not the names of the applicants); the number of interview sessions you conducted; and an estimate of the number of hours you have invested in the search. Your final report should be accompanied by a request that, its work having been completed, the committee should be discharged and thanked; and a request that the final report of your committee be among those printed in next year's booklet of your church's annual reports.

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**A Reminder**

Pray! Pray before each meeting, each contact and each interview. Pray during these events. Pray afterwards. And don't stop praying for and with your new pastor after he/she is in place.

**Final Reflections**

In many respects your search for a new pastor has been like a secular corporation's search for a new Chief Executive Officer. You have defined who you are as a body; you have reviewed your corporate vision; and you have determined what kind of servant-leader you are looking for. You have sorted through all the possible choices, and on your recommendation a decision has been made.

That relationship of partnership with your church as a matter of Divine stewardship, is at the heart of what your pastor is and does. As you and your new pastor seek to be faithful stewards of the gospel in partnership with one another, know that the members and pastors of the International Council of Community Churches are praying for you and with you.

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**APPENDIX A  
PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE COVENANT**

We who are members of our church's Pastoral Search Committee have been given an important task: to seek out and to recommend to our church our next pastoral leader. We will recommend the individual whom we believe God is calling into our midst as servant-leader. As members of the committee, we covenant among ourselves, with our church, and with our loving God:

- ❖ To pray daily for our fellow committee members, for our church, and for the individual whom God will call into our midst as our pastor.
- ❖ To be diligent in carrying out the tasks each of us assumes as a member of the committee, and to make these tasks a priority for the sake of our church.
- ❖ To speak the truth in love within our committee, knowing that God will reward our patience with the process of our search, and our patience with one another.
- ❖ To keep confidential any and all conversations and communications that relate to the individuals we deal with as a committee, both during our search and after its completion, in the service of the unity of Christ's church.
- ❖ To be understanding of the yearnings of our congregation for settled pastoral leadership, and to communicate regularly about the process of our search, while respecting the need for confidentiality regarding names and personalities.
- ❖ To seek God's will rather than our own in all things related to the work of the committee.
- ❖ To be supportive of the individual we recommend to the church as our new pastor and to be supportive of our nominee's spouse and family.

In witness of this covenant we have affixed our signatures this \_\_\_\_\_ day

of the month of \_\_\_\_\_ in the year of our Lord \_\_\_\_\_.

*(Each member of the committee should sign this covenant and a copy be given to each committee member)*


## **APPENDIX B CHURCH SELF STUDY**

As you pursue your church's self-study, place all materials on a hard drive or cloud or print out all material and place it in a binder for photocopying.

### **History**

Assemble a history of your congregation. Include: important "milestone" dates; membership trends; dates of building and building renovations; a list of pastors and the beginning and ending dates of their pastorates; and information about church groups and programs. Aside from the list of pastors, try to keep the narrative to five pages or less in length. Be factual. Try not to produce a "public relations" piece that ignores any times of trial in the church's past, or to insert your personal interpretations or judgments about any chapter in your church's past.

### **Identity**

If your congregation has a formal mission statement, provide that. Otherwise, develop as a committee a one or two paragraph summary of why you exist as a congregation and what you see as your reason for being/mission/purpose. Develop a statement that, taking your history into account, describes how your congregation sees itself in relation to the community where your church building is located. Develop a statement that describes the place of your congregation in the county, state, nation and world – beyond the local community. Develop a statement that describes the place of your congregation in the wider church, locally and world-wide.

### **Doctrine and Practice**

Describe the core beliefs and values of your church. Describe where you place your congregation in the broad array of theologies, emphases and distinctives of Christendom. Which doctrinal distinctives mark you as a congregation? Describe the rites your church observes, and the manner, frequency and style in which they are practiced. Are there particular theological or social issues about which your church has produced a statement or acted? If so, describe your statement or action. What are the opinions of your membership about the various "hot button" issues that appear on television and in newspapers? Are there other features of your life as a congregation that the wider community recognizes as distinctly yours?

### **Building and Grounds**

Describe the size, seating capacity and type of construction of your building(s). Seating capacity should be provided for the worship space(s), any large fellowship areas, and each classroom, choir rehearsal space, parlor or other public space. Describe the church office(s), including what office equipment is present. Provide an illustration or diagram of the church's grounds showing building(s) and parking areas. "Google Earth" on the internet may provide you with a reproducible aerial view of your grounds.

### **Organization**

Provide a copy of your church's constitution and bylaws or equivalent documents. In a separate document describe how decisions are reached and who reaches the decisions and implements them. Provide an organizational chart for your church. If the bylaws are obsolete (many church bylaws are) and you as a church really operate in some ways that vary from the bylaws, describe the difference between the bylaws and actual practice. Describe all church groups, noting the number of average number of attendees and the purpose of each group. Include: choirs; youth groups; Sunday school (describe each class by ages of students and average number of attendees); all auxiliary groups; any groups that meet seasons of the year



(such as Vacation Bible School, church camp, retreats and others); and prayer, study or other groups that meet at locations other than the church building.

### **Membership**

Prepare a chart showing the following figures for each of the last seven years: number of members or regular participants; average number of attendees at each regular worship service; average weekly or monthly attendance (depending on their frequency of meeting) at education classes and auxiliary groups; number of persons joining your congregation; number of persons who departed your congregation through transfer out, death or other reason; number of infant and adult baptism or infant dedication rites. If your church has not kept detailed records, provide estimates based on the best memories of long-time members.

Now that you have the basic membership statistics in hand, estimate how many individuals are “core disciples” (attend on average three times per month or more); how many are regular attendees (average attendance one to two times per month); how many are fringe (attend more than 3 times per year up to 11 times per year); how many are “C&E” members (only attend at Christmas and/or Easter); and how many claim membership but attend very rarely or never.

### **Budget and Finance**

Submit a copy of your annual budget for the last three years. Submit a copy of your end-of-fiscal-year reports of income, expenses, assets, investments and any other financial transactions for the last three years. State when your fiscal year begins and ends. Without providing names, list the average annual giving from your top ten givers during each of the last three years. List the average weekly gift per giving unit (individual or family) received from all participants for each of the last three years. In the past three years have you raised funds for any special purpose other than the general budget of the church? If so, for what purpose, how much did you raise, and how did you raise the funds? Do you have any regular/annual fundraising events aside from regular offerings? If so, what are the events, when and where are they held, and how much did you raise annually in each of the last three years? Do you have an endowment? (Endowment is defined as one or more funds that produce income; the income is used but the principal is retained and not invaded.) If so, what is the amount of the principal in each fund; how/where is it invested; what has been the usable income to the church in each of the last three years, and is the income used for general church purposes or specific purposes—and if the latter, for what specific purpose?

### **Community**

In narrative form, describe the community in which your church building is located. Include a paragraph or two each on: the history of the community; its population and population trends; its income and educational levels; its social, ethnic and religious diversity; its age distribution; current issues facing the community; and other relevant facts that are affecting or soon may affect your life as a church. (Some of this information is likely available from the most recent US census; ask at your local public library or Google it.) Describe the area around the church building out to one mile. Are there particular industries or corporate activities in your area that are growing or shrinking? What is happening to the housing stock in your area? Are there other local or regional events or trends that are impacting your congregation?

### **Self-Perception**

Ask your fellow members about the strengths and weaknesses of your church. An easy way to get this information is by asking everybody who attends worship on a given Sunday to record their answers on a form pre-printed with three questions, and to place their completed

form in a box next to the exit door after worship. A sample form follows. Be sure to publish a summary of the responses for the entire congregation to read.

ANYWHERE COMMUNITY CHURCH  
"WHO ARE WE?" SURVEY

Your Pastoral Search Committee is assembling information about our church to share with those who may consider a call to become our Pastor. Will you help us? Please complete the following TODAY and drop your answers in the boxes provided near the exit doors of the church. PLEASE DO NOT SIGN THIS FORM.

Circle one: My age is:

(under age 21) (21-30) (31-40) (41-50) (51-60) (61-70) (71-80) (81-90) (91 and over)

Circle one: My gender is:

(female) (male)

The three greatest strengths of our church are: *PLEASE PRINT!*

The three greatest weaknesses of our church are: *PLEASE PRINT!*

Three positive changes I would like to see in our church are: *PLEASE PRINT!*

*Your Pastoral Search Committee will soon be asking you about  
the talents you want our new pastor to possess.  
Watch for our communication!*

### **Publishing the Results**

A summary of the congregation's responses to the survey can be published in your Sunday worship bulletin, church newsletter and/or website. An additional or alternate way to share the results is to print out the various responses on large sheets of newsprint, and to post these in the area(s) where your congregation gathers before and after worship.

A copy of the entire file you have compiled should be provided to each pastoral applicant. If you choose to compile the information in a computer file, it is recommended that you convert all information to "pdf" format before you send it to the applicant.

## APPENDIX C LETTER OF CALL

[The letter of call should be on church letterhead. If no letterhead is available, the full name of the church and its mailing address should appear in the appropriate location at the top of the first page of the letter. The letter should be dated.]

To: [Name of Minister]

Having sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit and believing that God has called us to share in a mutual ministry, the people of [name of your church] voted on [date of vote], at a regularly called meeting, to call you to become our pastor, effective [starting date].

We pledge you our respect, trust, and fidelity and will support you with prayers, loving criticism, and stewardship of time and talents. We ask your respect, trust, and fidelity as well as your supportive prayers, loving criticism, responsible leadership, and adherence to the content of the document "*A Code of Ethics for Professional Church Leaders of the International Council of Community Churches*" which appears below and which we as a church affirm.

We extend to you in compensation for your services in our midst:

**A. Cash Salary \$\_\_\_\_\_**

Salary arrangements will be reviewed annually prior to the drafting of the church's annual budget, considering length of service, effectiveness of leadership, and increase in the cost of living.

**B. Housing Allowance \$\_\_\_\_\_**

In addition to this amount the pastor may designate a portion of her/his cash salary to cover housing expenses in accord with IRS guidelines.

OR

**B. Parsonage**

The church will pay all utilities, property taxes and assessments for, and will be responsible for maintaining and keeping in good repair the house and property located at \_\_\_\_\_.

**C. Retirement Plan \$\_\_\_\_\_**

[The ICCC makes available a retirement plan through the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board. The agreement with the Board calls for a monthly retirement premium of ten percent of the pastor's compensation (cash salary, housing allowance or fair rental value of parsonage, and Social Security Offset.) Some clergy who come to the ICCC from other communions may have an existing retirement plan. The letter of call should specify the plan to which premiums will be directed. It is essential that the church's financial officers receive the mailing address and other contact information for the chosen plan in timely fashion. Generally, pension plans require monthly premiums.]

**D. Health Insurance \$\_\_\_\_\_**

[A health insurance plan is available for those enrolled with the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board retirement plan. The incoming pastor may have an existing health insurance policy. The letter of call should specify the plan to which premiums will be directed. It is essential that the church's financial officers receive the mailing address and other contact information for the medical insurance plan chosen, in timely fashion. Generally, medical insurance plans require monthly premiums.]

**E. Self Employment Tax (Social Security) Offset \$\_\_\_\_\_**

Because clergy serving ICCC churches are self-employed regarding matters of Social Security, the church will compensate you for the amount equal to the employer's portion of

Social Security tax for a lay employee. This amount is to be applied to your self-employment tax obligation and will be recorded as taxable income on your W-2 Form.

We further extend the following considerations:

#### **F. Work Week**

[Clergy require a Sabbath as much as laity do. Pastors are often called upon to meet with church boards and counselees in the evening. Dividing a day into three units – morning, afternoon and evening, a pastor should not be expected to work more than 12-13 units per week on average. There are exceptional weeks of course, but you don't want to "burn out" your pastor. At a minimum, you and the incoming pastor should establish one full day per week as the pastor's Sabbath when – real emergencies being the only exception – the pastor will be absent from church duties.]

#### **G. Service to and Fellowship with the Wider Church and Community**

We recognize that your ministry extends beyond service to the members of this congregation. We expect that you will give a portion of your work time to the International Council of Community Churches, to interchurch and interfaith contacts, and to ministry within our community.

#### **H. Vacation**

[Vacation time does not include attendance at continuing education courses or annual conferences of the ICCC, both of which strengthen your pastor's ministry. Though it should be obvious that there are certain church seasons during which vacation should not be taken, it never hurts to state the obvious. The length of annual vacation time should be stated in days.]

#### **I. Continuing Education Time**

[You will need to specify if continuing education time can be accumulated from year to year, and what the maximum amount of accumulated time shall be. Do you also want to allow the accumulation of unused annual budget amounts for continuing education expenses, placing the amounts in escrow against a longer and/or costlier seminar or course?]

#### **J. Disability**

In case of disability because of sickness or accident, the church shall be responsible for the pastor's full salary and benefits for [specify number of days.]

#### **K. Moving Expenses**

The church agrees to pay moving expenses from your present location, \_\_\_\_\_, to \_\_\_\_\_, including cost of meals, transportation, and lodging for you and your family en route up to a maximum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per day for meals and lodging.

#### **L. Professional Expenses**

The church agrees to provide in its annual budget reimbursements for professional expenses as follows.

Travel – reimbursement for automobile and travel expenses at the rate allowed by the IRS up to a maximum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per year.

ICCC Annual Conference and other conferences and retreats – reimbursement for travel to and from the site, conference registration fees, and for meals and lodging during the event, up to a maximum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per year.

Continuing Education – reimbursement for travel to and from the site, registration, tuition, books and materials, and for meals and lodging during the event; and/or reimbursement for "distance learning" expenses, up to a maximum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per year.

Books, Subscriptions, Computer Software, etc. reimbursement for expenses up to a maximum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per year.

To disburse reimbursement for professional expenses, the church must receive receipts or other proofs of purchase. Alternatively, the pastor may arrange for the church to pay the provider of goods or services directly, using the requisition and purchase order forms customarily used by this church.

#### **M. Pastoral Relations Committee**

The Pastoral Relations Committee consisting of \_\_\_\_ members of the church will meet with you regularly to support you in your ministry and to advise you regarding issues and concerns of the congregation.

#### **N. Annual Review**

You and the church agree to an annual review of priorities and expectations, and to an annual review of your performance based on those priorities and expectations. This review will be conducted by the Pastoral Relations Committee [or specify another committee.]

#### **O. Prayer**

We as a congregation pledge our prayerful support for your ministry, and we solicit your prayers for each of individually and for us corporately as a church, that we may be effective in faith, hope and love.

#### **P. Ethics**

You agree and subscribe to the following Code of Ethics.

### **A CODE OF ETHICS FOR PROFESSIONAL CHURCH LEADERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY CHURCHES**

*Having been called by God to be a minister in the Church of Jesus Christ, I will seek to be faithful to that calling in my witness, in my preaching and teaching the gospel without fear or favor, and by speaking the truth in love.*

*I will recognize the priesthood of all believers within the Church, and I will seek to nurture the gifts of others and join their gifts with mine for the sake of the mission and health of the Church.*

*I will pray for and seek to promote the unity of the Church throughout the world and participate in those activities which strengthen its witness and mission.*

*I will seek to understand, support and interpret the diverse ministries of the International Council of Community Churches and I will not accept a position in a church affiliated with the Council unless I am in accord with its traditions and practices; nor will I use my influence to alienate a congregation from its relationship and support of the Council. If my convictions change, I will resign my position.*

*I will seek to grow in faith, knowledge and the practice of ministry by disciplined prayer, study and devotion, endeavoring to maintain wholesome relationships, sexual integrity, financial responsibility, continued professional development, and by seeking to maintain good health habits.*

*I will hold in confidence any privileged communication received by me during the conduct of my ministry. I will not disclose confidential communications in private or public except when in my practice of ministry, I am convinced that the sanctity of confidentiality is outweighed by my well-informed belief that the parishioner/client will cause imminent, life-threatening or substantial harm to self or others, or unless the privilege is waived by those giving the information.*

*I will, upon my resignation or retirement, sever my professional leadership relations with my former parish or center, give due regard and respect to my successors, and not make professional contacts in the field of another professional church leader without his/her request and/or consent.*

*I will regard all persons with equal respect and concern and seek justice for all who experience discrimination.*

*I will seek to support colleagues in ministry by building constructive relationships wherever I serve, both with the staff where I work and with colleagues in neighboring churches.*

*I will seek to serve God with purity, integrity and truthfulness.*

Signed:

[The letter of call should be signed by the chair of the pastoral search committee, the moderator (or equivalent officer) of the church, and by the clerk (or equivalent officer) of the church. Duplicate copies of the letter (both signed) should be sent to the applicant so that she/he can retain one copy while returning the other copy to the church. A pre-stamped and addressed envelope to contain the applicant's response should be a part of the mailing.]

+++                      +++                      +++

### **RESPONSE**

This letter of call is effective for thirty days beginning [date]. Within that time please return one signed copy of this letter with your indication of response to: [church name and mailing address, or the name and mailing address of the church officer selected to receive the response].

Please check one:

After prayerful consideration I accept the call to serve [name of your church] as your pastor.

After prayerful consideration I decline the call to serve [name of your church].

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

PRINTED NAME \_\_\_\_\_

TODAY'S DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX D-1**  
**PASTORAL TALENTS SURVEY FOR THE CONGREGATION**

Please complete this survey and to return it to the church before [date].

Please rank 1-10 the ten talents that you believe are important for our next pastor to possess.  
(1= most important)

---

- Lead worship that provides a meaningful experience of God in a traditional style.
- Lead worship that expresses the Gospel in contemporary language and forms.
- Help members understand their use of time, talents, and money as expressions of Christian stewardship.
- Lead the congregation in supporting the global mission of the church.
- Help members discover their own gifts for ministry and service.
- Lead the church in providing Christian education for children and youth.
- Lead the church in providing Christian education programs for adults.
- Personally teach/lead Bible study groups.
- Personally lead meditation/prayer groups.
- Help church boards and committees to function effectively.
- Personally share the good news of the Gospel with the un-churched.
- Encourage members to share the good news of the Gospel with the un-churched.
- Personally engage in acts of charity and service to persons in need.
- Encourage members to engage in acts of charity and service to persons in need.
- Personally take action on the relationship of the Christian faith to public issues.
- Encourage members to act on the relationship of the Christian faith to public issues.
- Lead the church in providing fellowship opportunities for members.
- Participate in activities and programs with other local religious groups.
- Represent the church in community and civic organizations.
- Spend time in personal prayer and Bible study.
- Visit the sick, shut-ins and the bereaved.
- Visit parishioners in their homes.
- Provide pastoral counseling to help members deal with personal problems.
- Preach in a style that relates scripture to itself in teaching Christian truths.
- Preach in a style that relates enduring Christian truths to contemporary situations.
- Be available to officiate at weddings and funerals for members of the church.
- Be available to officiate at weddings and funerals for non-members.
- (Other; please describe here) \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX D-2**  
**PASTORAL TALENTS SURVEY FOR PASTORAL APPLICANTS**

Please rank 1-10 the ten talents that you feel are your greatest strengths or interests.  
(1= highest strength or interest)

---

- \_\_\_ Leading worship that provides a meaningful experience of God in a traditional style.
  - \_\_\_ Leading worship that expresses the Gospel in contemporary language and forms.
  - \_\_\_ Helping members understand their use of time, talents, and money as expressions of Christian stewardship.
  - \_\_\_ Leading the congregation in supporting the global mission of the church.
  - \_\_\_ Helping members discover their own gifts for ministry and service.
  - \_\_\_ Leading the church in providing Christian education for children and youth.
  - \_\_\_ Leading the church in providing Christian education programs for adults.
  - \_\_\_ Personally teaching/leading Bible study groups.
  - \_\_\_ Personally leading meditation/prayer groups.
  - \_\_\_ Helping church boards and committees to function effectively.
  - \_\_\_ Personally sharing the good news of the Gospel with the un-churched.
  - \_\_\_ Encouraging members to share the good news of the Gospel with the un-churched.
  - \_\_\_ Personally engaging in acts of charity and service to persons in need.
  - \_\_\_ Encouraging members to engage in acts of charity and service to persons in need.
  - \_\_\_ Personally taking action on the relationship of the Christian faith to public issues.
  - \_\_\_ Encouraging members to act on the relationship of the Christian faith to public issues.
  - \_\_\_ Leading the church in providing fellowship opportunities for members.
  - \_\_\_ Participating in activities and programs with other local religious groups.
  - \_\_\_ Representing the church in community and civic organizations.
  - \_\_\_ Spending time in personal prayer and Bible study.
  - \_\_\_ Visiting the sick, shut-ins and the bereaved.
  - \_\_\_ Visiting parishioners in their homes.
  - \_\_\_ Providing pastoral counseling to help members deal with personal problems.
  - \_\_\_ Preaching in a style that relates scripture to itself in teaching Christian truths.
  - \_\_\_ Preaching in a style that relates enduring Christian truths to contemporary situations.
  - \_\_\_ Being available to officiate at weddings and funerals for members of the church.
  - \_\_\_ Being available to officiate at weddings and funerals for non-members.
  - \_\_\_ (Other; please describe here) \_\_\_\_\_
-



Please describe your view of the mission/purpose of a local church.

Please describe your view/vision/understanding of pastoral ministry.

Please PRINT your name \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX D-3**  
**PASTORAL TALENTS SURVEY FOR APPLICANT REFERENCES**

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_

To: \_\_\_\_\_

[Applicant's name] is being considered as an applicant for the pastorate of [name of your church] and has listed you as a reference. Thank you for taking the time to respond to this inquiry, which has two parts. The first part gives you an opportunity to reflect on the interests and strengths of the applicant. The second part asks some general questions about the applicant. Feel free to extend your answers to Part Two's questions by using additional pages if you wish.

**PART ONE**

Please rank 1-10 the ten talents that you believe are the applicant's greatest strengths and interests. (1= highest strength and interest)

---

- \_\_\_ Leading worship that provides a meaningful experience of God in a traditional style.
- \_\_\_ Leading worship that expresses the Gospel in contemporary language and forms.
- \_\_\_ Helping members understand their use of time, talents, and money as expressions of Christian stewardship.
- \_\_\_ Leading the congregation in supporting the global mission of the church.
- \_\_\_ Helping members discover their own gifts for ministry and service.
- \_\_\_ Leading the church in providing Christian education for children and youth.
- \_\_\_ Leading the church in providing Christian education programs for adults.
- \_\_\_ Personally teaching/leading Bible study groups.
- \_\_\_ Personally leading meditation/prayer groups.
- \_\_\_ Helping church boards and committees to function effectively.
- \_\_\_ Personally sharing the good news of the Gospel with the un-churched.
- \_\_\_ Encouraging members to share the good news of the Gospel with the un-churched.
- \_\_\_ Personally engaging in acts of charity and service to persons in need.
- \_\_\_ Encouraging members to engage in acts of charity and service to persons in need.
- \_\_\_ Personally taking action on the relationship of the Christian faith to public issues.
- \_\_\_ Encouraging members to act on the relationship of the Christian faith to public issues.
- \_\_\_ Leading the church in providing fellowship opportunities for members.
- \_\_\_ Participating in activities and programs with other local religious groups.
- \_\_\_ Representing the church in community and civic organizations.
- \_\_\_ Spending time in personal prayer and Bible study.
- \_\_\_ Visiting the sick, shut-ins and the bereaved.
- \_\_\_ Visiting parishioners in their homes.

- \_\_\_ Providing pastoral counseling to help members deal with personal problems.
- \_\_\_ Preaching in a style that relates scripture to itself in teaching Christian truths.
- \_\_\_ Preaching in a style that relates enduring Christian truths to contemporary situations.
- \_\_\_ Being available to officiate at weddings and funerals for members of the church.
- \_\_\_ Being available to officiate at weddings and funerals for non-members.
- \_\_\_ (Other; please describe here) \_\_\_\_\_

**PART TWO** *Enter your answers on additional pages if you wish. Please print or type.*

Describe as specifically as you can, the leadership abilities of the applicant.

Describe as specifically as you can, the applicant's manner of relating to people.

Describe as specifically as you can, the applicant's approach to problems and challenges.

Please tell us anything else about the applicant that will help us to get acquainted with him/her and that will assist us in deciding about her/his candidacy.

Please return this form within ten days of receipt to: Pastoral Search Committee, [name of your church], 123 Main Street, Anywhere 12345. May we speak with you by telephone about the applicant? The conversation will not extend beyond 30 minutes. If we can call you, please supply your phone number with area code, and let us know what day(s) of the week and what hours are best for contacting you. Thank you!

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Best days, times to call \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX E  
CONSENT FOR INFORMATION VERIFICATION,  
CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK,  
AND CREDIT REPORT**

In consideration of review of my application for employment, I consent to and authorize [name of your church], or its authorized agents bearing this release or copy thereof, to obtain reports on the following for employment purposes.

Personal Identity Verification, Employment and Past Employment Verification,

Education Verification, Credentials Verification, Reference Checks

Criminal Records, Civil Cases Records, Motor Vehicle Records

Credit Report

I authorize any and all persons and organizations that may have information relevant to any of the above listed items to disclose such information to [name of your church] or its authorized agents. I hereby release [name of your church], its authorized agents, and all persons and organizations providing information from all claims and liabilities of any nature in connection with this research. I hereby further authorize that a photocopy of this authorization may be considered as valid as the original. I hereby certify that I authorize all such disclosures voluntarily and without coercion.

I understand that I have specific rights as a consumer under the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act and that I may have additional rights under relevant state law.

---

Applicant's Signature

---

Applicant's Printed Name (first, middle and last)

---

Applicant's Maiden Name and/or Aliases

---

Applicant's Date of Birth

---

Applicant's Social Security number

---

Applicant's Drivers License – State of Issue and License Number

## APPENDIX F APPLICANT CONTACT CHECKLIST

Use a separate checklist for each applicant. Do NOT simply “check off” when various steps have been taken. Instead, enter dates and, where appropriate, the name or initials of the individual(s) who completed the listed item.

NAME OF APPLICANT \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ CELL PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Initial indication of interest received.

\_\_\_\_\_ Initial letter and info packet sent to applicant. Include copies of self-study, recent worship bulletin, recent newsletter, most recent annual reports; authorization form for credit report and criminal background check (Appendix E; blank Pastoral Talents Survey (Appendix D-2)

\_\_\_\_\_ Initial materials received (note date each that has arrived):

- \_\_\_\_\_ Resume
- \_\_\_\_\_ Autobiography
- \_\_\_\_\_ Signed Authorization Form
- \_\_\_\_\_ Five references with complete contact information
- \_\_\_\_\_ Recording of worship service.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Completed Pastoral Talents Survey

\_\_\_\_\_ Initial materials reviewed by committee; decision was to

- \_\_\_\_\_ reject applicant
- \_\_\_\_\_ letter sent (end checklist here.)
- OR
- \_\_\_\_\_ proceed with applicant
- \_\_\_\_\_ letter sent (checklist continues.)

\_\_\_\_\_ 1<sup>st</sup> interview (phone) is scheduled with applicant for (time and date: ) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Post-Interview committee review; Decision was to  
 \_\_\_\_\_ reject applicant  
 \_\_\_\_\_ letter sent (end checklist here.)  
 OR  
 \_\_\_\_\_ proceed with applicant  
 \_\_\_\_\_ letter sent (checklist continues.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Criminal background request sent out to appropriate agencies.

\_\_\_\_\_ Credit report request sent to appropriate agencies.

\_\_\_\_\_ Pastoral Talents Survey sent to applicant's references. (Appendix D-3)

\_\_\_\_\_ Committee review of documents; Decision was to  
 \_\_\_\_\_ reject applicant  
 \_\_\_\_\_ letter sent (end checklist here.)  
 OR  
 \_\_\_\_\_ proceed with applicant  
 \_\_\_\_\_ letter sent (checklist continues.)

\_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> interview (in person) is scheduled with applicant for (location, time and date: ) \_\_\_\_\_

*Checklist continues on the next page.*

Post-interview committee review  
Decision was to

\_\_\_\_\_ reject applicant  
\_\_\_\_\_ letter sent (end checklist here.)

OR

\_\_\_\_\_ proceed with applicant as the  
committee's recommendation  
for call to the pastorate.  
\_\_\_\_\_ letter sent (checklist continues.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Finalization of details regarding content  
of a letter of call and dates for the  
"candidating weekend" through  
conversation with the applicant,

\_\_\_\_\_ Notification to church and/or board  
regarding the committee's  
recommendation.

\_\_\_\_\_ Lodging and meal arrangements for  
the candidate and spouse/partner for  
the candidating weekend established  
and communicated to the applicant in  
writing. Lodging is at \_\_\_\_\_  
Append list of meal times, locations,  
hosts.

\_\_\_\_\_ Schedule of events for the candidating  
weekend established and  
communicated to all parties. The  
weekend schedule will include:

\_\_\_\_\_ meeting with church council or  
equivalent scheduled for (time, date  
and place) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ meeting with other paid staff  
scheduled for (time, date and place)  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ informal meeting(s) with small  
groups of church members scheduled  
for (times, dates, places) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ worship service at which the  
applicant will lead worship and preach  
scheduled for (time, date and place)

\_\_\_\_\_ business meeting at which the  
church or board will vote on the  
candidacy (time, date and place)

\_\_\_\_\_ Letters sent to each of the above  
persons and groups announcing the  
events and providing a full schedule for  
the weekend.

(Copies of all letters should be  
circulated among the committee, if for  
no other reason than to assure that all  
groups and individuals have been  
contacted. The candidate must be  
given a copy of the schedule too.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Letter sent to the entire church mailing  
list, giving information about the  
candidate and providing the schedule  
for the "candidating weekend."

\_\_\_\_\_ Committee has arranged for the  
spouse/partner of the candidate to be  
entertained during any periods when  
the candidate is involved in meetings  
and the spouse/partner will not be  
involved. (hosts, times, places: )

\_\_\_\_\_ If necessary, committee has arranged  
for the candidate and spouse/partner  
to be accompanied and/or entertained  
during the time when the church or  
board business meeting is taking  
place. (hosts, times, places: )

\_\_\_\_\_ If the vote is in favor of extending a  
call, the letter of call with agreed-upon  
conditions sent to the candidate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Letter of call received and acceptance  
or rejection of the call conveyed to the  
appropriate church officers and to the  
congregation.

*NOTE:*

*A separate appendix suggests possible events  
that may follow the acceptance of call.*

## **APPENDIX G**

### **SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW WITH APPLICANT**

You will want to plan your list of interview questions for each applicant in advance. If an applicant is relatively new to pastoral ministry, you will want to adjust some questions to include experiences with former secular employers.

You can use similar questions in interviewing references. Example: when speaking with a reference change question 1 to “how would you describe the applicant?”

---

1. How would you describe yourself; how would a good friend describe you?
2. Why are you seeking a new pastorate at this time?
3. What are your three greatest strengths as a person; what are your three greatest weaknesses?
4. What specific goals – other than those related to your ministry – have you established for yourself for the next ten years?
5. What specific goals do you have for your ministry for the next ten years?
6. Why did you choose a career in parish ministry?
7. Do you have any hobbies? What do you do in your spare time?
8. What non-fiction book (other than the Bible) did you read most recently, what was it about, and what is your response to it?
9. What major problems have you encountered in your life and how did you deal with them?
10. What are the most important attributes of a good pastor?
11. What two or three accomplishments in your life have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
12. What’s one of the hardest decisions you’ve ever had to make?
13. Have you ever experienced conflict in a church you have served; what did you do about it?
14. What do you want your greatest legacy to be?
15. You have read our material describing this church and its community. Based on what you have read, what do you see as two or three needs you can help meet?

## **APPENDIX H POST-CALL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES.**

The following list of possible events and activities is intended to inspire your own creative ideas for welcoming your new pastor and orienting him/her to the community.

### Office/Parsonage Decoration and Clean-up

As you prepare to welcome your new pastor, pay a visit to the room(s) she/he will use as his/her office at the church building. If your church owns a parsonage, visit the home. As you enter each room, note its décor, suitability for its purpose and cleanliness. Is this the sort of room that you personally would be pleased to occupy? Would you feel that you could welcome others into the room without embarrassment over its condition or style? Is the room up-to-date? Rooms should have electrical outlets located on every wall in enough to accommodate today's electronic equipment and/or appliances. Kitchen appliances should be of recent vintage and not simply "vintage." Lighting should be appropriate and enough for the room's purposes. Walls should be freshly painted or feature fresh wall coverings. Flooring materials should be fresh and not looking worn. Above all else, the room should be sparkling clean in every regard.

Plumbing, heating, air conditioning and electrical upgrades may require professional assistance. Be sure to observe all local building code regulations in your upgrades. Cleaning, painting and the like can be done by church members. Ask your new pastor to select paint colors, wall covering patterns and floor covering styles. You may not agree with every style choice the pastor makes but remember that you won't be occupying the room – he/she will. All the renovations and cleaning need to be completed before the new pastor begins her/his tenure with you.

### Get-Acquainted Coffee Hours

Divide the congregation into groups of 15 persons or less, depending on the space available in the places of meeting. Ideally, members of each group will be within ten years of each other in age and will include both core members and occasional attendees at church activities. For each gathering, members should be enlisted to host at her/his/their home and to provide beverages; two or three others should be enlisted to bring light refreshments. Begin the gathering with refreshments. An evening event suggests desserts and non-caffeinated beverages, while a Saturday morning gathering might enjoy bagels and pastries. After everyone has had opportunity to sample the goodies, seat them (preferably in a circle), and let the new pastor lead them in informal conversation, asking such questions as: "How did you come to join this church; what was your religious background before you joined; what about the church is most meaningful to you; and what are your hopes for the church in the next five to ten years." Close the gathering with prayer after no more than two hours.

### Navigation to Shut-Ins and Healthcare Institutions

Provide a list of key addresses for your new pastor that he/she may put these addresses in his/her GPS/google map system. If the pastor is receptive to the idea, arrange for church members who know the community well to accompany her/him in his/her first "round" of visits to hospitals, nursing care facilities and homes of shut-ins. The members can act as navigators, pointing out shortcuts and routes to avoid, while demonstrating by their presence that the entire congregation and not just the pastor consider those being visited to be important and worthy of attention.



### Introductions to Community Leaders

Church members who are personally acquainted with leaders in the community can be enlisted to arrange introductory meetings between the new pastor and the leaders. Community leaders may include city or town council members; city or town manager; county clerk; fire and police chiefs; superintendent of schools, local high school principal; leaders of community organizations; and pastors of other churches in your community.

State laws regarding officiating at weddings vary; for obvious reasons it may be advantageous for appropriate governmental officials to brief the new pastor on the details of state law very early in her/his pastorate.

### Expressions of Hospitality

Many church members will want to welcome the new pastor by bringing prepared meals, cookies, cakes and the like. Can the church arrange a schedule for the deliveries so that the pastor is not overwhelmed by such offerings during her/his first week in the community, only to receive no such gifts in future weeks? As the new pastor settle in as part of your community, he/she will be unpacking many corrugated cardboard cartons. Can church members assist by transporting these items to a recycling center? Can church members invite the pastor and his/her spouse/partner and family to accompany them to festivals, cultural events and seasonal civic celebrations (and to provide tickets to same if there is a fee involved)? Can church members invite the pastor and spouse/partner to meals at the members' homes purely as an expression of hospitality and without a personal "agenda" related to the church?

### Referrals to Personal Service Personnel

One series of tasks that must be accomplished upon moving into a new community is locating a doctor, a dentist, a barber and/or hair stylist, an auto mechanic, and other such professionals who provide personal services. Members of the pastoral search committee are the people the new pastor and spouse/partner have met first in the community. It should be no surprise that committee members will be among those asked for recommendations. Committee members should be prepared to provide names, addresses and other contact information. Do not be surprised or offended if the pastor and spouse/partner "try out" your recommendations and then in some cases shift to another provider. Perceptions about personal services and those who provide them are based not only on competence but on such intangibles as style and personal compatibilities.

### Service/Ceremony of Installation

The beginning of a new pastorate deserves to be celebrated in worship. Most services of installation take place at a time other than during Sunday morning worship. While the new pastor appropriately will take the lead in arranging the worship event, it is fitting that the members of the Pastoral Search Committee have a role in organizing a post-ceremony reception and assisting in arranging housing and meals for visiting dignitaries who participate in the event. Typical invitees to such an event will include family of the new pastor, one or more representatives from the ICCC, clergy from other churches in the area including pastoral leaders of nearby ICCC-member churches, and colleagues of the new pastor from out of town. If the new pastor invites visiting clergy to wear robes or vestments in the service, the clergy will need a convenient room for vesting prior to the service and for storing vestments during the reception. The members of the Pastoral Search Committee may want to take the lead in arranging for a suitable gift from the congregation to the new pastor to be presented during the service or at the reception. Such a gift might include some item useful in the pastor's ministry. The pastor's spouse/partner may be a source of information about what sort of items the pastor already owns, and what items she/he would value most as a gift from the congregation.

### Congregation Family Tree

Congregations contain extended families within their memberships, so much so that in some churches it seems as though “everybody is related to everybody else.” In any case, pastoral care becomes easier if the new pastor knows who is related to whom, and what the relationships are. Several church members who are well acquainted with the congregation can review the list of members with the new pastor.

### Pastoral Appreciation Month

The month of October is “pastor appreciation month” in many churches. (If your church prefers, choose a different month for your observation of Pastor Appreciation Month.) Invite church members to send the pastor cards and letters of thanks and appreciation during this time.

Within your board, committee or church group, “brainstorm” other ways in which your church can support your pastor throughout the year.

## APPENDIX I SAMPLE LETTERS

---

### Initial Letter to Applicant

[On church letterhead]

[Business letter-style, including inside address]

Dear [Applicant name]:

Thank you for your interest in the position of pastor of [name of your church]. As a way of introducing this congregation to you, I am enclosing with this letter

1. a copy of a report on our recently completed self-study [if published on your web page or website, directions to the page or site will suffice].
2. a recent worship bulletin.
3. a recent newsletter [if your church publishes an electronic version of its newsletter on the church's website, directions to the site will suffice].
4. the booklet containing the most recent year's annual reports to our church [if published on your website, directions to the site will suffice. ]

You will also find enclosed:

1. an authorization form for credit report and criminal background check.
2. a blank Pastoral Talents Survey.

If after reviewing this material you wish to pursue conversation with our committee, please supply us with the following: [if applicant has already supplied one or more of the following, delete the item(s) from your list.]

1. your resume.
2. a short autobiography including significant moments of spiritual growth and your understanding of your call to pastoral ministry.
3. a video (preferred) or audio recording of a recent worship service which you have led and at which you preached.
4. the names and complete contact information including mailing address, phone number(s) and email address for five references. At least one of these references should be a colleague in pastoral ministry who has had the opportunity to see you "in action" in a leadership capacity, and at least one of these references should be a member of a church you have served in a pastoral capacity.
5. a completed and signed authorization form for credit and background checks.
6. a completed Pastoral Talents Survey form.

Please return the above-mentioned documents within two weeks. We will review these materials as soon as possible and be in touch with you without delay. Please pray, as will we, that God will grant to you and us the gifts of wisdom and discernment.

Cordially,

[signature, typed name and title]

---

## **Letter Notifying Applicant That Process Will Continue**

[On church letterhead]

[Business letter-style, including inside address]

Dear [Applicant name]:

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us [date of interview]. This note is to inform you that we as a committee wish to pursue further conversation with you. Please be in prayer, as you may be sure we are, that you and we may be open to the leading of God's Holy Spirit in our explorations.

Our next step as a committee will be to [specify what you as a committee intend to do next – obtain credit and criminal background reports, contact the applicant's references, schedule another meeting with the applicant, or whatever. If the process will involve other people, as in obtaining information from references, tell the applicant approximately how long you think the process will take.]. We will be in touch with you as soon as possible.

Thank you for your continuing patience with our careful process. Please feel free to contact me at any time should you have any questions or concerns. My telephone number is 123-456-7890; I am most easily reached at that number [hours of day and days of week].

Cordially,

[signature, typed name and title]

---

## **Letter of Rejection of Application**

[On church letterhead]

[Business letter-style, including inside address]

Dear [Applicant name]:

Thank you for your interest in the position of pastor of [name of your church]. We are deeply grateful for the information you have shared with us and for the time you have invested in assisting us in our process of search.

While after extended and prayerful consideration we as a committee feel that we are being led in another direction, we do want you to know that we pray for you every blessing and success in your future ministry.

May God bless you.

Sincerely,

[signature, typed name and title]

---

## Letter to Applicant's Reference

[On church letterhead]

[Business letter-style, including inside address]

Dear [Reference name]:

[Full name of applicant] is being considered by the Pastoral Search Committee of [name of your church] as a possible candidate to become our pastor. She/he has listed you as a reference.

Would you be so kind as to complete and return the enclosed Pastoral Talents Survey in reference to [name of applicant]? You will note that in addition to ranking [name of applicant]'s pastoral skills and interests, the questionnaire asks some open-ended questions. Feel free to supply your answers to the open-ended questions in more extended form by using additional pages. Should you wish to supply additional comments we would be pleased to receive them.

So that we may expedite the process would you be kind enough to return the survey and your comments within ten days of receipt of this letter?

Thank you for your kindness.

Cordially,

[signature, typed name and title]