

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Forming Your Call Committee**

The congregation's constitution may prescribe appointment or election of a call committee. It is recommended that most of the members of the call committee will be persons not currently serving on the congregation council. The committee should intentionally reflect the makeup of the congregation regarding gender, age, and ethnic/racial identity, as well as various segments of the ministry of the congregation – worship, youth, seniors, school/preschool families, education, evangelism, missions, etc. The committee should include no more than 9 or 10 people.

Because of additional demands on the lay president of the congregation council during a pastoral transition, it is recommended that the lay president not be the chair of the call committee. It is a good practice, however, to have the president sit on the committee as an ex officio member and act as a liaison with your governing board or council.

#### **Questionnaire**

You may find it helpful to use a questionnaire when selecting possible call committee members (see sample below). In addition to helping you ensure the committee reflects your congregation as much as possible, it is helpful in gathering information on previous and current involvement in the congregation, perspectives on congregational health, and the gifts needed in your next pastor.

Importantly, a questionnaire is also useful as an aid in discovering potential hidden agendas. Be very cautious about members who eagerly volunteer to serve on the call committee as they may have ulterior motives that aren't in alignment with seeking God's will for your congregation. You may also want to interview potential call committee members after receiving questionnaires to further delve into their viewpoints.

#### **Prayer**

Prayer is a critical activity for the call committee and the entire congregation throughout this process. Call committee members should commit themselves to pray for one another and for the work of the Holy Spirit among them as they seek to discern God's will for their congregation. Special prayer at worship and during other meetings of the congregation is encouraged. When the call committee is selected, the names of the members are made public, with request that special prayers be made on their behalf.

#### **Committee Structure**

The call committee chair can be appointed by the congregation board or council, or be elected by the committee itself. Committee leaders and roles include:

- Chair - convenes meetings, sets meeting agendas, primary contact with candidates, single point of contact with the District office, oversees the call process and keeps it on-track.
- Recording Secretary - keeps minutes of call committee meetings for future reference, may be responsible for final preparation of the call documents.
- Communications - responsible for written communication between candidates and committee, sends copies of correspondence to the District office, may write newsletter articles, notes for bulletins, etc., to keep the congregation informed of the committee's progress.
- Hospitality – manages logistics and volunteers related to meals and activities during meetings, candidate visits, etc.
- Data Analysis – a person or team that leads analysis and findings from the self-study activities, including surveys, interviews and focus groups.
- Prayer – gathers and manages the call committee prayer list

#### **Salary and benefits matters**

The congregation's governing board or council will need to provide the call committee salary and benefit possibilities that the congregation can offer. Salary and benefit considerations are not matters to be negotiated between the candidate and call committee. The board or council also needs to authorize funding to the call committee for its use in carrying out its responsibilities. This is discussed under "Call Committee Budget" below.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality in the call committee discussions should be clearly agreed upon at the first meeting. It is recommended that your committee members sign a covenant that details the need for confidentiality, prayer and support for one another. Issues that are discussed about candidates need to be open and forthright among the members of the committee; however, these discussions should be kept in confidence among the call committee members.

***Confidentiality cannot be overemphasized in the task of calling a pastor.*** Mention of specific candidates outside the call committee is inappropriate until the committee is ready with its recommendation to the congregation's board or council. It is important to keep all names and both verbal and written information about prospective candidates within the confines of the committee. This means committee members will need to establish ground rules and boundaries, not only with the congregation at large, but also with those in their household or place of work.

### **Call Committee Budget**

One of the first tasks of the call committee is to establish a budget with the congregational board or council. Although some of these expenses are difficult to accurately determine ahead of time, every effort should be made to set aside the needed finances for the call process. Items to include in the budget:

- Travel/meal expenses for committee members
- Travel/meal expenses for candidate(s)
- Office expenses (i.e., photocopying, data entry, postage, etc.)
- Miscellaneous expenses

Note: Although the moving expenses for your newly called pastor will not be the responsibility of the call committee, it should be noted to the congregational board or council and your congregation's finance committee that the congregation is responsible for the moving expenses of your new pastor.

### **Openness vs. Holding Confidence**

Reporting regularly to council and congregation helps keep everyone on the same level of understanding about the process. As noted above, the call committee must keep all verbal and written information about each and every candidate strictly confidential. However, ***communication is very important!*** With the exception of confidential materials, there is no such thing as too much information.

Some options to be utilized to keep the members of the congregation informed about the call committee's work and progress include:

- Newsletter articles explaining the call process to the congregation, with follow-up articles each time another stage in the process is reached.
- Notes in the Sunday bulletin announcing that the call committee is meeting, reporting progress, communicating what will happen next, etc.
- Periodic talks or announcements by a member of the call committee, even if the report is that there have been no changes since the last report, "Nothing has changed from last week." Remember there will likely be multiple audiences in your congregation who you will need to provide updates to at different times, i.e. multiple worship services, those who receive congregational emails and those who don't, etc.

Points to include in communications:

- Description of process
- Status of progress, including what's been done, what you're currently doing, and what happens next
- List of actions taken
- The preferred process for communicating with the members of the call committee

Planning a comprehensive communications strategy and consistently communicating to the congregation will deliver many benefits, including:

- The congregation will clearly understand the process, including the roles of the Circuit Visitor, District office, congregation boards or council, call committee, and congregation.
- Clear identification of the members of the call committee.
- Congregation members will have a clear understanding of the proper process for communicating with the members of the call committee.

### **Point of Contact with the District**

It is important that there is only one point of contact between the District office/District President and the call committee. This should be the call committee chairperson. A single point of contact ensures clear, efficient lines of communication throughout the process.

### **The Right Question**

It is not appropriate for a call committee to be guided chiefly by such questions as these: Will the congregation like this pastor? Will it approve of the call committee's choice of candidates? Will people feel good having this pastor around on Sunday morning? Will this person do for now until a better pastor comes along?

***The foremost question for the call committee always is whether this is the person God desires this congregation to have as its pastor.*** Human preferences and personalities never come before the mission to which God calls his church. That is why every meeting of the call committee will include prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the work that is being done.

### **The Significance of Service on a Call Committee**

Many people report that serving on a call committee turned out to be one of the most important things they ever did as members of the church. It allowed them to experience firsthand how the Holy Spirit works through committed Christians to help the church be faithful to its calling. It gave them an opportunity to see how the local church is vitally connected to the whole church. It let them participate in opening a new chapter in the life and ministry of their church as part of the history-long, worldwide Church of Jesus Christ.

## SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR POTENTIAL CALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Name:

Preferred Email:

Preferred Phone:

1. How long have you been a member of this congregation? Which worship service do you normally attend? How many times per month, on average?
2. In what types of church activities/service have you participated? Any previous call committee experience?
3. What do you think are the 3 best qualities of this congregation? How would you assess the current health of the congregation?
4. How would you describe this congregation's mission today and for the future? How would you describe the most important role of the next pastor, and the most important gifts or attributes that person will need?
5. In finding the next pastor, what do you think the primary focus of the call committee should be?
6. What do you think would be your most important contribution(s) in serving on the call committee? Any other comments you'd like to add?