

Search Committee Sample Packet



Department of the Ordered Ministry
The Evangelical Covenant Church
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Part 1 – Overview

Typical Pastoral Search Process

1. The congregation elects the Pastoral Search Committee.
2. Pastoral Search Committee Responsibilities include:
 - a. Prepare church/community information packet/CovConnect position profile.
 - b. Meet with the Superintendent to receive names of pastors.
 - c. Review and prioritize names of potential pastoral candidates.
 - d. Make telephone contacts with potential pastoral candidates.
 - e. Conduct telephone interviews with potential pastoral candidates.
 - f. Invite potential pastoral candidates to visit the community and meet with the pastoral search committee.
 - g. The Pastoral Search Committee identifies and invites one pastor for a candidating visit with the congregation.
 - h. The Pastoral Search Committee recommends one candidate to the congregation to extend a call to.
3. The congregation votes to extend a call to a new pastor.
4. The pastor accepts the call to serve your church.
5. The new pastor is installed at a worship service.

Typical Search Committee Budget Considerations

(Budget needs to be approved by congregation.)

- 1. Preparation of church/community packets**
(surveys, copying of reports, brochures, videos, mailings)
- 2. Long distance telephone calls, conference calls**
- 3. Visits by potential candidates and spouses to the community**
(airfare, meals, motel lodging, rental car, meals with committee)
- 4. Visit by candidate and spouse to the church.**

Estimated costs for Search Process \$5,000 to \$7,500

- 5. Moving expenses of pastor and family**
(commercial move or self-move, mileage, motel and meals in route to the church, additional days at local motel until able to move into home).

Estimated costs for Pastoral Moving Expenses \$6,000 to \$12,000

Total Estimated Search and Moving Expenses \$11,000 to \$19,500

Suggested Timeline and Congregational Process

A Pastoral Search Committee has a singular task: to identify and recommend a candidate to the congregation for approval. Ultimately, the pastoral search committee must establish a process by which both the potential pastoral candidate and the congregation can discern whether God is calling them to partner for ministry. After a search committee has been formed, there are basically seven distinct phases to the call process:

1. **Search Committee Organization Phase** – Organize as a committee and meet with the conference superintendent.
2. **Information Gathering Phase** – Survey congregation, gather information, complete CovConnect position profile.
3. **Contact Phase** – Contact potential candidates, identify a candidate to recommend to congregation for approval.
4. **Candidating Phase** – Clarify terms of call with candidate and communicate this to the congregation. Prepare candidate and congregation to discern God's call.
5. **Call Phase** – Pastoral candidate and congregation answer, "Is God calling us together?"
6. **Commitment Phase** – Both congregation and pastor say "yes" to the call.
7. **Ministry Phase** – Pastor is installed and pastoral relations committee begins regular meetings with pastor.

PHASES	SEARCH COMMITTEE AND CHURCH RESPONSIBILITIES	SUPERINTENDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS
<p>STEP ONE:</p> <p>PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Congregation elects committee ▪ Committee members identify prayer team ▪ Committee organizes for ministry ▪ Contact conference office to arrange meeting with superintendent <p>Goal: This should be done within the first two weeks of being elected.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet with committee to outline process and guidelines. ▪ Meet with staff, church leaders and congregation to outline process. ▪ Provide resource manual to committee.
<p>STEP TWO:</p> <p>INFORMATION GATHERING PHASE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and develop self-study survey • Survey congregation regarding perceived needs and preferences. • Collect information about community. • Prepare position profile with description of congregation on CovConnect. <p>Goal: This should be done within 1-2 months.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide on-going coaching and consultation to the search committee and church leaders.
<p>STEP THREE:</p> <p>CONTACT PHASE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and prioritize names ▪ Make telephone contacts with potential candidates ▪ Invite potential candidates to meet with the committee and visit the community <p>Goal: Identify a candidate to recommend to the congregation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet with committee provide names of potential candidates. ▪ Provide on-going coaching and consultation to the search committee and church leaders.

PHASES	SEARCH COMMITTEE TASKS	SUPERINTENDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS
<p>STEP FOUR:</p> <p>CANDIDATING PHASE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secure commitment from pastor to candidate ▪ Clarify terms of call and salary package with candidate and church leadership (i.e., council board). ▪ Inform congregation of recommended candidate and proposed terms of call ▪ Schedule a weekend visit for pastor and family to candidate <p>Goal: Prepare pastoral candidate and congregation to discern God's call.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist with clarifying terms of call and proposed salary package. ▪ Provide on-going coaching and consultation to the search committee and church leaders.
<p>STEP FIVE:</p> <p>CALL PHASE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pastor and family visit church to candidate. ▪ Schedule a special congregational business meeting to vote on recommended candidate <p>Goal: Congregation votes to extend a call to pastor.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide on-going coaching and consultation to the search committee and church leaders.
<p>STEP SIX:</p> <p>COMMITMENT PHASE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pastor accepts call ▪ Start date is identified ▪ Pastor is installed at a worship service <p>Goal: Pastor is installed and begins ministry with church.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participate in the installation service for pastor. ▪ Assist church with transfer of pension and health care benefits
<p>STEP SEVEN:</p> <p>MINISTRY PHASE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Congregation establishes a Pastoral Relations Committee ▪ Committee begins regular meetings with pastor <p>Goal: Healthy effective ministry for pastor and church.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide resources and training for Pastoral Relations Committee. ▪ Provide on-going coaching and consultation to the pastor and church leaders.

Understanding the “Call” Process

1. There are two ways of understanding the “call” process and either approach is appropriate. (Even various members of the committee may approach the “call” process differently.)
 - a. God has “a” person for the church.
 - b. God has called a person into ministry and that person could serve in a variety of churches, not just this one.

While the process may at times feel somewhat “managerial” and “human” as we candidly discuss individuals and their giftedness for ministry, it is done within a spiritual mindset. We will use all the resources that God has given us in order to discern His leading.

2. The goal of the search committee is to ultimately present one candidate to the congregation for approval. While several people may be considered, interviewed by phone, and visit the church and community, only one candidate will be presented to the congregation for its vote.

General Guidelines

1. The committee must be committed to strict confidentiality. Don't share information about potential candidates with anyone in the church. In some cases the fact that a church has been in conversation with a pastor has gotten back to the pastor's church and it has effectively ended his/her ministry.
2. Let the congregation know you are open to receiving names of potential candidates from them, but are under no obligation to report to them on what the committee did with that name.
3. The search committee must decide what will constitute a decision by the committee to extend an invitation to a candidate as well as a decision to make a recommendation to the congregation. Avoid a call for a unanimous decision, but look to a majority of the committee (i.e., 5 of 7, 7 of 9, etc.).

Avoid the situation of having to dissolve the committee because of its inability to make a decision. The call for a unanimous decision also empowers the minority to bring a search process to a close. (There are occasions when committee members may be divided between candidates. Establish "decision" criteria to resolve this tension. Once criteria have been established, stick to them.)

4. Choose an individual (or individuals) who will be responsible for communicating with the congregation. It is good to have a person write a monthly column in the church newsletter to inform the congregation of the committee's progress. Use the weekly bulletin to include a sentence or brief paragraph about the committee's work. On occasion have the chair of committee bring a verbal update at the worship services.

Keep the congregation informed as to the progress of the committee ***without sharing names***. (i.e., use a poster, "What Progress Are We Making in the Search for a New Pastor?")

Part 2 – Role of the Superintendent

The Superintendent's Relationship to the Pastoral Search Committee

The superintendent **will**:

- Serve as an advisor, resource and consultant to the committee.
- Assist the committee in determining how it chooses to function.
- Provide names and profiles.

These names come from several sources:

1. Your Conference Superintendent(s), who may receive names by running a “match” on CovConnect, the online database tool which matches open churches with pastors seeking a call.
 2. Church recommendations/recommendations by other people and pastors.
 3. Self-referral (Individuals who have asked that his/her name be submitted).
- Some names may not be available because they are not active in the Covenant Ministerium or because of other extenuating circumstances.

The superintendent **will not**:

- Participate in the selection of potential candidates or the interviewing of candidates.

The superintendent **requests**:

- That the Search Committee keep the superintendent's comments about potential candidates confidential. There needs to be a

relationship of openness and trust, both with the committee now and in any future relationship with the pastor.

- That the Search Committee keep the superintendent informed of its progress and its conversations with potential candidates. Let the superintendent know the individuals that are not being considered so that their names may then be released to other churches.

Agenda for the Superintendent's First Meeting with the Pastoral Search Committee

1. Get acquainted with committee members.
2. The committee will share information from the position profile it has prepared on CovConnect.
3. Determine pastoral expectations of committee members.
4. Review pastoral search process and committee guidelines.
 - A. Confidentiality
 - B. Outline the Search process:
 - 1.) Prepare church/community information packet/position profile.
 - 2.) Review and prioritize names.
 - 3.) Make telephone contacts with potential candidates.
 - 4.) Conduct telephone interviews.
 - 5.) Invite potential candidates to meet with the committee and visit community.
 - 6.) Identify and invite a candidate to visit with congregation.
 - 7.) Present a recommended candidate to the congregation to vote.

Agenda for a Subsequent Meeting With The Superintendent and the Pastoral Search Committee

1. Review search committee budget and proposed salary, benefit, and professional expense package for pastor.
2. The superintendent will share names of potential candidates.

Part 3 – The Seven Steps

Summary of Timeframe and Action Steps

STEP ONE – ORGANIZE AS A COMMITTEE

- Organize as a committee, choosing a chair, secretary, and a communications person.
- Decide how you will develop a prayer base for your ministry, i.e. a prayer team, personal prayer partners, etc. **Note:** when you involve others in the ministry of prayer, maintain strict confidentiality. Share information & requests for the process, do not disclose names.
- Determine how you will inform the congregation of your work.
- Determine how you will receive names from the congregation of persons that they would like the pastoral search committee to consider.
- Determine how you will involve in the congregation in sharing their opinions and preferences with the committee. (i.e. a survey to be distributed to the congregation.)
- Begin to work on the church profile and/or position profile that will be sent to potential pastoral candidates.
- Begin to collect information and materials about the church and community that can be sent as a packet to potential candidates.
- Establish a job description and criteria for pastor.

STEP TWO – INFORMATION GATHERING PHASE

- Contact the superintendent to arrange a meeting to receive the names and profiles of potential candidates.
- Meet with the superintendent to receive names.
- Within one week of the meeting with the superintendent, meet as a committee to review names.
- Identify potential candidates to be contacted for interviews.

STEP THREE – CONTACT PHASE

CONDUCT TELEPHONE & ON-SITE INTERVIEWS

- Schedule and conduct telephone interviews with several potential pastoral candidates.
- Determine whom you will invite for an on-site visit.
- Conduct on-site interviews.
- Decide how to proceed. If you have identified a candidate you wish to present to the congregation, proceed to step four. If you decide not to proceed with any of the potential candidates you have interviewed, contact the superintendent to request additional names and repeat steps 2 and 3.

STEP FOUR – CANDIDATING PHASE

PRESENT A CANDIDATE TO THE CHURCH

- Secure commitment from pastor to candidate.
- Clarify terms of call and salary package with candidate and church leaders.
- Inform congregation of recommended candidate and proposed terms of call.
- Schedule a weekend visit for pastor and family to candidate.

STEP FIVE – CALL PHASE

CALL PACKAGE APPROVED BY CHURCH AND ACCEPTED BY PASTOR

- Schedule and announce a business meeting to coincide with the candidate's visit according to the provisions of your church's constitution.
- Recommend terms of call and salary package to church board or council for approval.
- Pastor accepts call. Start date is identified.
- Contact superintendent to schedule installation service.

STEP SIX – COMMITMENT PHASE

PREPARE FOR THE MOVE AND INSTALLATION OF THE PASTOR

- Installation service has been scheduled with superintendent.
- Make sure that the church board or council has appointed a committee to assist the pastor with the move.
- Make sure a “welcoming committee” is formed to prepare for a housewarming and reception for the pastor.
- If the pastor has a spouse and children, make sure that they are recognized and affirmed with gifts at the reception.

STEP SEVEN – MINISTRY PHASE

BEGINNING MINISTRY TOGETHER

- Congregation establishes a Pastoral Relations Committee.
- A member of the Pastoral Search Committee serves on the committee for the first year of the new pastor’s ministry to help clarify expectations and bridge the relationship.
- The Pastoral Relations Committee begins regular meetings with the pastor.
- Consider inviting the superintendent to attend a meeting with the Pastoral Relations Committee and the new pastor sometime within the first 4-6 months.

Part 4 – Resources

- 1) Sample Senior Pastor Job Description
- 2) Suggestions for forming a Pastoral Search Committee if not in church constitution or bylaws
- 3) Church Position Profile (please find this on the web at covconnect.covchurch.org)
- 4) Letter of Call (please find this on the web at www.covchurch.org)
- 5) Current Pastoral Compensation Report (please find this on the web at www.covchurch.org)

SAMPLE

SENIOR PASTOR POSITION DESCRIPTION

The senior pastor is called to provide pastoral leadership and care to our congregation through preaching, teaching, administration of the sacraments, discipleship/spiritual guidance, participation in the government of our church, and visitation. The senior pastor will also provide leadership to the pastoral, ministry, and preschool staff, and will offer support and guidance to the Council, Commissions, and committees of our church.

Ministry Responsibilities

The senior pastor:

...will faithfully preach the Word of God through Spirit-filled, educational inspirational, and evangelistic sermons. The senior pastor will have primary responsibility for the planning and implementation of all worship services and experiences.

...will be a competent teacher of the Bible. The senior pastor must possess a firm foundation in the Word of God and be able to build a philosophy of ministry within our church based on Biblical principles.

...will ensure that prayer (both individual and corporate) is the foundation of our personal growth and ministry.

...will work to equip and motivate the congregation to spread the Good News to their families, their communities, and the world by word and deed.

...will seek to develop mentoring relationships as opportunities allow, and will be active in the development of other people's spiritual gifts.

...will administer the sacraments of Baptism and Communion. In keeping with the Evangelical Covenant Church policy, the senior pastor will faithfully administer **both** infant and adult baptism. To the extent practical, the senior pastor will also be available to members for officiating at weddings and funerals.

...will ensure that all persons in our congregation receive pastoral care and visitation as needed.

...will participate administratively in our church government, providing pastoral leadership while still respecting our congregational polity, and the elected authority of our Council. The senior pastor will be responsible for the day to day supervision and team-building of the pastoral, ministry, and preschool staff, providing direction, feedback, and spiritual nurture. The staff will report to the senior pastor, who will in turn delegate responsibilities as appropriate.

Senior Pastor Expectations

The senior pastor:

...must demonstrate a personal commitment to Jesus Christ and must have a strong personal faith grounded in a life of prayer, a study of the scriptures, and a close community with other believers.

...will be ordained in the Evangelical Covenant Church, be a member of the Covenant Ministerium, and follow the Rules for the Ordered Ministry of the Evangelical Covenant Church.

...will have a broad understanding and sympathetic appreciation of the various faith traditions within Christianity and the various ways Christians worship, including an ability to participate enthusiastically in both traditional and contemporary worship forms.

...will be committed to outreach and ministry to our community and the world. The senior pastor will be open and sensitive to the Holy Spirit in discerning a vision for the outreach and ministry of our church.

...will demonstrate an exemplary Christian life, modeling the attitudes, feelings, values, enthusiasm, and dedication, which he/she seeks to develop in all persons within our congregation.

...will demonstrate spiritual and emotional maturity. The senior pastor must be sensible and emotionally balanced, possessing the qualities to which persons in our church and in the community respond with respect.

...will express, and will seek to cultivate in our congregation, a real love and sympathetic understanding for all people regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or socio-economic status.

...will have strong teaching, counseling, organizational, management, and communication skills. The senior pastor also should have interpersonal skills that relate to people of all ages plus a good sense of humor.

...will allocate sufficient time for personal spiritual health and growth.

...should have at least 10 years of pastoral experience, including experience supervising a staff.

...must be supportive of and committed to the ministries of the Evangelical Covenant Church and the Conference.

Suggestions for Forming a Pastoral Search Committee

If a church's constitution and bylaws don't provide for the establishment of a pastoral search committee, the congregation could consider the following guidelines.

Have the Pastoral Relations Committee or Executive Committee form the core of the Pastoral Search Committee.

Most model constitutions for Covenant churches have a provision in the bylaws for a pastoral relations committee. In the event that the church doesn't have a functioning pastoral relations committee the congregation may consider having members of the executive committee serve as the core of the pastoral relations committee. The following paragraphs are from the Bylaws for the "Model Constitution for Local Covenant Churches – Council Form," Article V, Sections 1 and 3.

Section 1. Executive Committee

The executive committee, consisting of the church chair, the secretary, and the treasurer, together with the senior pastor of the church, shall strive to promote effective working relations and communication in the church. The committee shall have no legislative power, but shall function in an advisory capacity to the council, unless specific responsibilities shall have been assigned to it by the council or the church.

Section 3. Pastoral relations committee

The pastoral relations committee shall consist of the members of the executive committee and shall meet at least semiannually in keeping with the program and purpose of the Covenant Commission on Pastoral Relations as adopted by the Annual Meeting.

Consider forming a Pastoral Search Committee as a special committee.

If your church's bylaws have no provision for establishing a pastoral search committee, the church may consider forming a special committee for that purpose. For example, the Bylaws for the "Model Constitution for Local Covenant Churches – Council Form," Article V, Section 4 states:

Section 4. Special committees and task forces

Special committees or task forces for specific purposes may be appointed by any duly constituted business meeting of the congregation or by the council according to need, but shall be automatically terminated at the next annual meeting unless specifically extended by said annual meeting.

Have the congregation adopt a resolution outlining the procedure for forming the pastoral search committee.

A possible motion for adoption by the congregation could be:

It is moved that,

“The Pastoral Search Committee consist of the Church Chair, the administrative chairs of Christian Education, Diaconate, and Worship committees. Additionally, at least three people shall be elected by the congregation to serve on the Pastoral Search Committee.”

Establish a process for forming a nominating committee for members of the pastoral search committee.

A possible motion for adoption by the congregation could be:

It is moved that,

“The Church Council will serve as the Nominating Committee for the Search Committee. After carefully and prayerfully reviewing all names submitted to them, the council will prepare a ballot with at least three names to be submitted to the congregation for approval.”

Establish a process for receiving nominations from the congregation to serve on the Pastoral Search Committee.

A possible announcement to be mailed to members and included in a bulletin or newsletter could be:

“Our congregation has decided that the Church Council will serve as the Nominating Committee for the Search Committee. They are looking for active, committed members of _____ Covenant Church who are respected in the congregation. They will also be seeking to establish a

committee that is comprised of a broad cross-section of the congregation so that there is balanced representation.”

“If you are interested in being considered to serve on the Pastoral Search Committee or would like to recommend someone to serve on that committee, please speak with a member of the Church Council. After carefully and prayerfully reviewing all names submitted to them, the council will prepare a ballot with at least three names to be submitted to the congregation for approval.”

Elect Additional Members of the Pastoral Search Committee

When the council has prepared a ballot for additional members of the search committee, the ballot should be presented to the congregation for approval. The council should present 3 or more names to be elected to the Pastoral Search Committee, (in addition to the Executive Committee members) so that the committee has between five and nine people.

The Bylaws for the “Model Constitution for Local Covenant Churches – Council Form,” Article II, Section 4, states:

Section 4. Call

The pastor(s) shall be called at a regular or special congregational business meeting, the purpose of which shall be announced two weeks in advance. The pastor(s) shall be nominated by a pastoral search committee. This committee shall be elected by a congregational business meeting. It shall be representative of the congregation and have five (5) to nine (9) members and shall work closely with the regional conference superintendent. The pastor(s) shall be called by ballot with a two-thirds vote required for a call. The call shall be for an indefinite period of time with a minimum of six weeks notice required by the church or the pastor(s) for termination of pastoral duties.

Additional names could be offered from the floor of the congregational business meeting according to the provisions of the church’s bylaws or *Robert’s Rules of Order*. The number of persons to be voted on must be established in advance of the election. In other words, if ultimately three people are to be elected and two additional names were nominated from the floor, then five names would be voted on with the three persons receiving the most votes elected to serve on the pastoral search committee. In the event of a tie, there would be a run-off for the remaining position.