

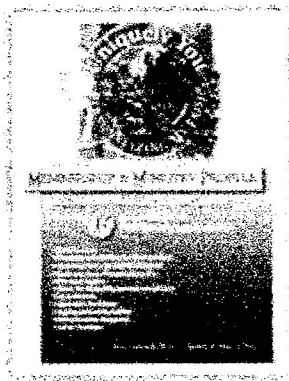
POA POLICY FOR SEARCH COMMITTEE PREPARATION

Once the Search Committee is selected, there should be a time to become prepared to begin the search. Below is a suggested detailed approach in preparing the members to be most effective in the search process.

This information is provided as a supplement to the Pastoral Search Process Stage 3 – Orienting the Search Committee and Stage 4 – Conducting the Search included in Chapter 5 of the *EPC Procedure Manual for Ministerial and Candidates Committees* (see attached sections).

Things to prepare:

1. General data/information:
 - “Community Packet” – information and details on schools, housing market, community demographics and characteristics, main businesses and organizations, community identity. Etc.
 - Church history
 - Church vision statement, including core values, guiding principles, outreach focus (who you are trying to reach and how you are trying to reach them), discipleship process, etc.
 - Church website
 - Church profile (EPC CIF)
 - Church statistical information – financials, budget, membership, average worship attendance, officers, staff (include job descriptions), etc.
2. Group “Uniquely You” *Membership and Ministry Profile* – one for each committee member. You can order at: (<http://www.uniquelyyou.org/catalog/paper-profiles/combined-profiles>). It is very helpful for the team to understand how each member is uniquely gifted and predisposed so they can work more effectively as a team.
3. You will want to have the candidate complete a *Membership and Ministry Profile* as well
4. Candidate’s Strength Analysis – this will help identify objectively who you are looking for (*see worksheet*)
5. Questions to ask the candidate (*see samples included herein*)
6. Questions the Search Committee needs to prepare to answer (the candidate will be interviewing you as well) (*see samples included herein*)
7. Determine how you will rate/score the candidate
8. Determine the process for communicating with the candidate – and let the candidate know



Membership and Ministry - Combining 16 SGs & 4 DISC Profile - Personalizing My Faith Plan

Featuring the popular 16 Spiritual Gifts Survey and Uniquely You DISC Questionnaire, the Member's Guide identifies members' primary and secondary spiritual gifts and personality types.

The Member's Guide also demonstrates how spiritual gifts and personality types relate to each other, and where they fit best in the ministries of your church. Once each member's giftedness is identified and fitted for ministry, the Member's Guide also focuses on Biblical Conflict Resolution. This is so important! Most people get uninvolved and resist involvement in ministry because of misunderstandings and abuses. Most of the problems in the church today are not theological. They are relational & personality clashes and spiritual gifts conflicts with other church or staff members.

This Self-Assessment Includes:

- Spiritual Gifts Profile Questionnaire & Descriptions
- Historical Background (DISC) Personality Types
- Uniquely You (DISC) Questionnaire
- Interpretation . . . DISC Model of Human Behavior
- Discovering Your Behavioral Blends
- Combining Spiritual Gifts & Personalities
- Involvement / Spiritual Gifts & Personality Perspective
- Fitly Joined Together
- Leadership Insights
- How to Handle Conflicts
- Spiritual Gifts & Conflicts
- Biblical Resolution Management
- Joy & Giftedness
- Opportunities for Ministry
- Biographical Survey
- My Action Plan

16 SPIRITUAL GIFTS LISTS

(Romans 12, Ephesians 4 & 1 Corinthians 12)

- Administration / Ruling
- Apostleship / Pioneering
- Discernment
- Encouraging / Exhorting
- Evangelism
- Faith
- Giving
- Hospitality
- Knowledge
- Leadership
- Pastor / Shepherding
- Prophecy / Perceiving
- Teaching
- Serving / Ministry
- Showing Mercy
- Wisdom

Go to <https://www.uniquelyyou.org/content/membership-and-ministry-combining-16-sgs-4-disc-profile-personalizing-my-faith-plan> to order online

Candidate's Strength Analysis

This is an exercise to determine what you are looking for in a pastoral candidate. It can also serve as a way to compare candidates with each other. It can then be used latter as a tool when you interview potential candidates.

Initially, the Search Committee should rate the importance of each of the 20 categories (1 being least and 10 being very important). This will become your “standard”. You should focus on those categories ranked 7 or higher. Later, you can use this to rank each candidate against your “standard”. There may be other categories the Search Committee wants to include – feel free to make changes.

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QUESTIONS FOR THE SEARCH COMMITTEE TO BE PREPARED TO ANSWER

The candidate will be interviewing you as well. It is very helpful for the Search Committee to be prepared to answer the candidate's questions and to be in agreement on the responses to be offered. Honesty is always best. Below are a list of sample questions to consider.

1. Give me a 10 minute summary of the history of your church
2. What do the members of your church get most upset about?
3. What are the 3 greatest successes of your church in the past 3 years?
4. What has been the tenure of your last 3 pastors? Have the departures all been good? Why or why not?
5. What would someone on the street of your community say about your church?
6. What is the overall health of your church right now?
7. What is the single biggest problem your church is facing right now?
8. How long has this problem existed? What has been done to try to fix the problem?
9. What are 2 other lesser problems?
10. How do you see issues from your past informing the future of your church?
11. Why would you say your church exists?
12. Who are you trying to reach? How are you trying to reach them?
13. What do you want this church to look like in 5 years? Why?
14. Where do you see God at work in your community?
15. What one major thing that you think your church needs to do next? Why?
16. Tell me about your community in 5 minutes.
17. What are the most popular programs in your church?
18. What do the members of your church get most upset about?
19. What have been the longest term successes of the church?
20. What kind of candidate are you looking for? Why?
21. What is the most important gift that your next pastor must have?
22. How are you going to evaluate the candidate?
23. What do you not want in your next pastor?
24. What is the role of the pastor's family in church life?
25. What is the process you are using to arrive at your decision on who to call?
26. Who controls the finances of your church? Why?
27. How do elders get elected?
28. Can I call previous pastors for their opinions of your church?
29. Can I call current presbytery officers for their opinion of your church?
30. Can I visit a worship service unannounced and anonymously?
31. May I have a copy of your budget?
32. May I have a copy of your church by-laws?

Pastoral Search Process

The Congregation has the irrevocable right to call its own pastor provided that the presbytery concurs (G.6-6). It does so through an elected Search Committee (G.10-4A).

Stage 1 – Preparatory work by the Session

One of the distinct advantages in having an interim or stated supply pastor is the assistance that person can give in this preparatory work. Additionally, the presence of the interim or stated supply pastor removes the need for the Session to manage day to day functions of the church so it can focus on these critical tasks, giving the Search Committee a solid foundation on which it can work. The Ministerial Committee may also be aware of resources within the Presbytery or General Assembly to assist with these tasks.

1. Review and modify (or develop if none exists) the vision and mission of the church.
2. The Session or the Search Committee (in consultation with and approval of the Session) completes the Church Information Form (CIF; p. 173).
3. The Session or the Search Committee (in consultation with and approval of the Session) completes a Pastor's Position Description. Those responsible for developing the Position Description should carefully consider how much detail should go into the document. If it is overly detailed, it may be too limiting. If there is not enough detail, important expectations may not be well communicated and be the source of problems in the future. The Position Description should be flexible enough to provide adaptability to changing congregational circumstances and needs, and prevent a candidate from simply giving lip-service to a static document.
4. The Session determines a range of compensation it believes the congregation will support as terms of call for the new Pastor (G.18.3H). The Session should factor in required EPC items such as medical insurance and pension, and normal reimbursements for expenses (see Terms of Call – Minister, p. 117). In establishing those parameters, the Session should be sensitive to offering a level of compensation influenced by the previous Pastor's package as well as a particular candidate's education, training, experience and other accomplishments. Ministerial Committees should have access to annual publications such as *The Compensation Handbook for Church Staff*, Richard R. Hammar (published annually by Christianity Today International) as a resource for their work with Sessions and Search Committees.

Terms of call should include salary, housing (02-4.3) (or a statement like, "housing allowance included in salary and will be specified when housing has been secured"), EPC Medical Insurance, Retirement 10% (minimum), two weeks' study leave, and four weeks' vacation (81-04; 81-05; 81-06; 82-07.34, 5.4). Terms of call should also include appropriate accountable plans (e.g., mileage, books/study. Accountable reimbursement plans are recommended instead of "allowances," that which are paid regularly without requiring documentation. A "reimbursement" paid in accordance with a properly formed policy, is not taxable to the minister whereas some a portion of the "allowance" could be.

Stage 2 – Formation of the Search Committee

On the basis of experience, this Manual recommends extensive involvement of the Session in forming and preparing materials for the Search Committee and strong representation on the

Chapter 5: Process of Pastoral Search and Call

Search Committee. At the same time, the irrevocable right of the congregation to elect its pastor must be preserved (G.6-6). Ultimately, the Search Committee is formed by and responsible to the congregation, not the Session.

1. The Session, as the elected leadership of the church, should take the responsibility allowed in G.10-4A and nominate members for the Search Committee. The congregation has the right to determine the size of the Search Committee (G.10-4A). In making its recommendation, the Session should consider that experience has shown that seven members is optimal. A good composition for the Search Committee is:
 - a. Two or three Ruling Elders serving on Session. The new Pastor will work directly with the Session as its Moderator (G.18-2A), so the Session should be adequately represented. The Search Committee will be dissolved, but the new Pastor's relationship with the Session will be critical to a fruitful, long-term ministry.
 - b. One from the Board of Deacons, if the church has this Board (G.6-4). Often the Pastor is the Moderator of the Board of Deacons (G.17-4A) and, if not, the Pastor is an advisory member (G.17-7). Therefore, the Deacons should be represented in the pastoral search.
 - c. Three or four spiritually mature, discerning members of the congregation, who are not new to the church. These qualities are more important than electing people to represent various constituencies or interest groups in the congregation. Search Committee members are to represent the mind of Christ on the Search Committee. .

It is common to think that staff members should be on the Search Committee. Having staff members on the Search Committee is not recommended due to the inherent conflict of interest in hiring the person to whom one will report in an employment setting. The Search Committee should consult with staff in the process for an understanding of the needs of the church's ministry, and the prospective Pastor should meet with staff, but it is unwise for staff members to serve on the Search Committee.

2. The Session calls a congregational meeting to elect a Search Committee (G.10-4A; G.7-1, 2, 3) and presents its recommendation for the size of the Committee and its nominees for the Committee. The congregation has the right to amend the size of the Committee and the floor must be opened for additional nominees (G.10-4A).

Stage 3 – Orienting the Search Committee

It is common for this to be the first involvement in a pastoral search by most members of a Search Committee. Some members may have Human Resources experience in their professions. There is common wisdom from that profession that transfers to the pastoral search process, but there is a unique additional dimension that must be considered. The Search Committee, on behalf of the congregation, is seeking to understand the mind of Christ about whom He has called to be the pastoral leader of this congregation. Additionally, most Search Committee members have had little or no exposure to the EPC form of government and **Book of Order**. Many may carry assumptions from other churches with a different form of government where they have been active. For these reasons, it is imperative that the Ministerial Committee (probably through its appointed liaison) meet with the Search Committee shortly after it is elected to orient them to the process.

1. Preliminary Responsibilities of the Session

Chapter 5: Process of Pastoral Search and Call

Communicate the items developed in Stage 1 to the Search Committee and the Ministerial Committee:

2. Joint meeting of Session, Search Committee, and Ministerial Committee representative
 - a. The Session, Search Committee and Ministerial Committee representative should review/discuss the CIF and make any necessary adjustments, corrections.
 - b. The Search Committee should be in complete support of the church's vision and mission, and agree to accurately represent it to candidates.
 - c. The Ministerial Committee representative should outline the constitutional requirements for the pastoral search and requirements that pastors must meet to become a member of the Presbytery, as well as any Presbytery-specific requirements for the Search Committee process. There should be clear agreement as to the expectations each party has of the others and establish communication channels and timetables between the Search Committee and Ministerial Committee.
 - d. The Ministerial Committee representative should communicate the Presbytery's policy on background checks for ministers (98-15).
 - d. The Search Committee and Session should agree on a suitable timetable of reporting to both the Session and congregation, and announce the schedule to both bodies.
 - e. In its initial meetings on its own, the Search Committee should:
 - (1) Agree on praying regularly for God's guidance and direction in the selection.
 - (2) Schedule regular meetings.
 - (3) Elect a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary.
 - (4) Establish a covenant of confidentiality with clear boundaries for the Committee. It is highly recommended that names of individuals be kept confidential, even from family members and church officers until the final stages of the search process.
 - (5) Decide the method of voting, type of majority needed to select a pastor-nominee, and how decisions are to be made. Although unanimity is not essential, the Committee should strive to receive unanimous and enthusiastic support in the choice of the nominee.
 - (6) Decide on who will speak for the Committee.
 - (7) Set up systems whereby it will:
 - i. Keep the Session and the congregation informed of the Search Committee's progress,
 - ii. Keep the Ministerial Committee fully informed of progress.
 - iii. Keep clear and accurate files of ministers under consideration, including their Personal Information Forms with the dates it was requested and received, correspondence with persons, decisions made concerning each Candidate.

Chapter 5: Process of Pastoral Search and Call

- iv. Keep Candidates still under consideration informed of the Committee's progress.
- v. Promptly inform Candidates when they are no longer under consideration.

Stage 4 – Conducting the Search

1. Announce pastor vacancy

The Search Committee, in consultation with the Session, will announce the open position. Typical channels are the EPC General Assembly Office (epchurch@epc.org), through the Ministry Staff Opportunities published on www.epc.org, Presbytery meetings, and General Assembly meetings. The Ministerial Committee should be actively involved in referring ministers to churches with vacancies. Search Committees have also posted positions through placement offices at seminaries and through online services like ChurchStaffing.com. It is common for Search Committees to ask congregation members to submit names. If so, the congregation should also be informed of EPC qualifications for ordination. There is a growing trend to use search organizations like Vanderbloemen Search Group (www.vanderbloemen.com) or McGowan Search International (www.mcgowansearch.com).¹⁹

2. Communication

Periodic updates (monthly recommended), from the Search Committee are critical, even if there is no progress (e.g., “The Search Committee continues to meet, pray, read Personal Information Forms, and listen to CDs/DVDs of candidates’ sermons. Please keep us in your prayers as we proceed.”).

3. Preliminary Screening/Interviewing

a. Communication with Candidates

- (1) Acknowledge receipt of candidate’s Personal Information Form shortly after it is received.
- (2) Advise the candidate of his/her current status shortly after decisions are made to continue or end consideration.

b. Considering Associate Pastors and Interim Pastors as Candidates

Sometimes it is appropriate to consider an Associate Pastor as a candidate. The Committee should be mindful that their familiarity with the Associate Pastor or Interim Pastor is both positive and a negative. For some, serving as an Associate Pastor is excellent preparation for serving as Pastor. However, for many the specific calling of an Associate Pastor is the position for which the Teaching Elder is best suited. Unfortunately, it is also an opportunity for “politicking” by the Associate or Interim Pastor in order to gain a position to which the Lord may not be calling. For these reasons, there are special stipulations for considering Associate and Interim Pastors as Candidates. In both cases, the Search Committee must obtain a three-fourths vote of the Session and the Ministerial Committee in order to proceed (G.10-

¹⁹ At the time of publication, the Ministerial Vocation Committee is in active conversation with these two agencies with possible recommendations forthcoming.

Chapter 5: Process of Pastoral Search and Call

4D; G.10-7B)

As Assistant Pastor, serving on the staff when the pastor position becomes vacant, is not eligible under any circumstances to be a Candidate (G10-4E).

c. Reviewing Personal Information Forms (PIFs)

The Search Committee should receive many of these, both from within and outside the EPC. Review, study, and most importantly pray over the PIFs in light of the agreed upon vision and mission, the position description, and the requirements for ordination in the EPC. At some point, at least three or four candidates should constitute the Committee's "short list." The Search Committee should then very prayerfully agree to list these as "First preference," "Second preference," and so on.

Remember to communicate decisions with all candidates (see section 3 above)

d. Check references

It is unlikely anyone would list someone who would give a bad reference. The Search Committee should seek out references in addition to the ones listed in the PIF, such as the Stated Clerk and/or Ministerial Committee Chairman of the Minister's Presbytery, General Assembly Stated Clerk or executive staff, or friends from the candidate's church and/or place of residence. If a candidate is currently serving a church, be quite cautious in contacting people in that church, as the candidate's interest in another position may be confidential, and this kind of "leak" could prove detrimental to the minister and church.

The Chairman should communicate the "short list" to the Ministerial Committee liaison, giving an opportunity for the liaison to note any concerns that should be taken into account. A common concern is "ordainability." If a Search Committee is considering a person from outside the EPC, there could be extra requirements to be met before the person is eligible for examination and ordination by the Presbytery. For example, a person who is a candidate for ordination in another denomination may have to first be a member for six months in an EPC local church before being eligible to be endorsed by the Session and received as a Candidate Under Care of the Presbytery (G.11-2A; G.11-2J).

Some candidates may be eliminated during this phase. Remember to communicate these decisions to the candidates (see section 3 above).

e. Sample Sermons

Those remaining on the "short list" should provide the Search Committee with recorded sample sermon(s). It may be appropriate for the Search Committee to attend a service where the minister is preaching. If so, the visit should be discreet (e.g. don't enter and sit together as a large group).

The following suggestions are offered for guidance when listening to a sermon:

(1) Reread the person's PIF

(2) Have the following questions in mind

i. Does the person read the Scripture well and carefully?

Chapter 5: Process of Pastoral Search and Call

- ii. Is the sermon faithful to the scriptures?
- iii. Is the pulpit manner compelling?
- iv. Are the prayers helpful?
- v. Is the sermon easily followed, well organized, and applicable to life?
- vi. Is the congregation attentive?
- vii. Is the person's custom at the close of the service acceptable?

Once all members of the Search Committee have heard/seen the candidate's sermon, the Search Committee should also decide whether to pursue one candidate at a time from this point forward, or to conduct preliminary interviews with all those on the "short list" first, and then review/re-arrange that list before the next step.

f. Initial interview

Teleconferencing or videoconferencing are encouraged at this stage of the process. Otherwise, the Search Committee Chairman and the candidate(s) must arrange a suitable time and place to meet face to face. It is best to select one member of the Search Committee to lead the interview. The leader should announce at the beginning that time will be provided for questions from the PSC members and from the candidate. A preliminary interview usually consists of the following (but is not limited to):

- (1) The candidate's testimony, call to ministry, brief description about the candidate and candidate's family.
- (2) What led the candidate to be interested in your church?
- (3) The candidate's initial vision/impression of ministry for your church based on the CIF.
- (4) Ask about his particular ministry strengths, weaknesses. In other words, what part of the ministry does he have a passion for and feels he is best suited for (and vice versa for weaknesses).
- (5) Probe to discover if the candidate seems prone to enlist help from others in his admitted weak areas and how he would go about that.
- (6) Make sure you understand what the candidate is saying. If a statement is unclear, vague, be sure to ask for clarification (e.g., "What did you mean when you said ...?").
- (7) Preliminary interviews should not last beyond two (2) hours (you may return to a particular candidate in a future interview).

Many Search Committee members are inexperienced at interviewing. An audio training resource "Biblical Interviewing Skills" is available at www.epc.org/ministries/minvo/interviewskills.

Chapter 5: Process of Pastoral Search and Call

4. In-depth interviews and calling

a. Reconsider the "short list"

Once the first round of interviews is concluded, the Search Committee should review its "short list" for modification or change(s). After prayer individually and together, one candidate may emerge as the first preference and the first candidate to pursue for calling as Pastor.

b. In-depth face-to-face interview with the first preference Candidate

The Search Committee should strongly consider arranging time for the Candidate to meet with the Session so that the two parties can discern whether or not there is a "fit." From this point on, it is recommended that this candidate is the only candidate considered, taking the attitude by faith, "This appears to be God's choice as our Pastor" until it is obviously evident otherwise.

c. Vote on the first preference candidate

After completing the in-depth interview phase and following adequate time for prayer, the Chairman calls for a vote of Search Committee members.

If the vote is favorable for the candidate, the Search Committee, having information from the Session in hand, agrees to the terms of call to be offered to the prospective new Pastor and informs the candidate of their intent to recommend him/her as the new Pastor with the terms of call stipulated. There may be some questions, discussion of the terms of call offered (which is appropriate), as the candidate may have special needs, concerns, circumstances the Search Committee may not be aware of. It is most desirable for the Search Committee and candidate to agree on terms of call prior to informing the Session. If the Search Committee feels the candidate's requests are unreasonable or unworkable the candidate should be made aware of the Search Committee's concerns, and that the congregation and/or Session may or may not agree to them. The Search Committee should not inform the Session of its candidate choice if terms of call become a serious point of contention, as this revelation may be grounds for the Search Committee's reconsideration of a candidate.

Stage 5 - Concluding the Search Process

1. Informing the Ministerial Committee

The Search Committee must seek the consent of the Ministerial Committee before the next step. Normally, the Chairman contacts the Ministerial Committee liaison. The liaison informs the Ministerial Committee Chairman who polls Committee members on their advice and/or consent regarding the Pastor-nominee. If the Ministerial Committee does not give its consent, the Search Committee may still continue with the Pastor-nominee, but should be aware that there could be difficulties with Presbytery approval as the process moves forward (G.10-4C).

2. Informing the Session

After receiving input from the Ministerial Committee, the Search Committee Chairman contacts the Clerk of Session (if verbal, it must be followed up in writing)