

MISSION  
*POSSIBLE!*

The Pastoral Search Committee Handbook

A handbook  
to assist “Search Committees”  
in discerning and welcoming  
ministerial leadership for their church

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## INTRODUCTION

John Maxwell states, “Everything rises and falls on leadership!” Whether it is in the classroom, the corporate office, or a local congregation that truth is affirmed over and over.

You might assume that when I am talking about leadership, I mean clergy leadership. To a degree, of course, that is right. This manual, however, is directed to the leadership that is selecting a new pastor or staff member. **That is YOU!**

Since most lay leaders are neither experts in the search process nor in interviewing candidates, this manual is designed to help guide you through one of the most important processes a congregation can engage. It provides information and knowledge that will assist you in being a good, strong leader of that search and selection process.

This manual has been prepared by area administrators, senior pastors of large and small congregations, lay leaders, and North American leaders. While we have worked to keep the pages as few as possible, we need to give you the information you need for the process that is ahead of you.

In the Church of God, each congregation enjoys and operates with both autonomy and accountability in the selection of ministerial leaders.

- **Autonomy** – In the Church of God reformation movement, no state, province, or national office simply sends a person to you with a sign that says, Your New Leader! The responsibility, selection, and decision rests with the prayerful, thoughtful, and thorough processes of local leaders.

- **Accountability** – Each congregation has a heritage, a history, and a connection with other Church of God congregations in their region, the nation, and around the world. Each congregation is recognized and credentialed by the assembly in its region. There should be interaction and cooperation of ministry and support. Though the selection of ministerial leadership is yours to make, partnership and dialogue with your area administrator or Church of God Ministries in making that decision is of the greatest importance.

*Mission Impossible* voice ends with, “Good Luck.” I’m glad to tell you that as Christians we don’t depend on “luck.” The pages of this manual are meant to guide you in sound and practical steps from the moment your current minister resigns through the celebration of the new leader God has brought to you. The Holy Spirit will guide you in knowing the will of the Father. So, instead of luck, receive the blessing that comes with serving in this capacity and being God’s partner for this critical Mission Possible!

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Anderson, Indiana  
2004

## **SELECTING THE PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE**

By Sam Dunbar

Since choosing a pastor is one of the most important decisions a church will ever make, the selection of the pastoral search committee that provides leadership for calling a pastor is also a crucial matter. It is essential that the search committee be selected in a thoughtful, prayerful process that is clearly communicated to the entire congregation.

### **Committee Formation**

In many instances the church's bylaws will specify how the pastoral search committee is to be chosen. It should be noted here that the search committee might be referred to as a pulpit committee in some bylaws, especially if not recently revised. The church's bylaws should be carefully consulted and followed regarding their description of the process.

Some bylaws will call for the pastoral search committee to be made up of several persons who will serve by virtue of offices they already hold in the church leadership structure. For example, the committee may be designed to be made up of such persons as the chair of the church council, the chair of the board of trustees, the president of the women's fellowship, and so forth. Churches that operate with a board of elders may designate certain elders to serve. Many church bylaws, however, are less specific. They may simply state that the church council, trustees, or elders shall appoint or provide for the election of a search committee. Some church bylaws may provide for a pastor-parish relations committee that is assigned the search task. Whatever the bylaws prescribe should be carefully adhered to in the process.

Generally speaking, however, in assigning the pastoral search to a church leadership group with other responsibilities for the general operation of the church is highly inadvisable. Since church leaders are almost exclusively volunteers, and often people with many

responsibilities, even the most dedicated may be tempted to neglect the pastoral search in the face of many other pressing duties – or vice versa. Even if they make the pastoral search a priority, the search process can end up crowded onto other agendas. The risk is an almost inevitable degeneration of church life while a pastoral search languishes. It is in the best interests of the church's health to have a committee exclusively assigned to the pastoral search, even if some busy leaders also serve on the pastoral search committee. A pastoral search committee with the singular assignment of seeking new permanent, pastoral leadership best serves the church's needs.

If the bylaws do not specify the exact number of persons to serve on the search committee, it is recommended that the number be no fewer than five persons and usually no more than nine. Even in the smallest of churches the most representative group possible should pursue the pastoral search, and it is difficult to provide good representation with fewer than five members. Groups larger than nine tend to become unwieldy, find difficulty in achieving quorums, and often struggle to come to consensus. For the church that is concerned about combining adequate representation with a good functional committee size, an ideal number may be seven.

Some church bylaws will call for the search committee to be appointed by the appropriately designated leadership group with the church – council, trustees, elders, and so forth. Other bylaws specify that the search committee membership be taken to the congregation at large for an election or ratification vote. Whatever is specified in the bylaws, it is always advisable to seek the church's endorsement of the pastoral search committee by vote. Even if the bylaws do not specifically require it, how could an additional gesture of approval be considered anything less than appropriate and desirable? The more that can be done to bolster the church's confidence in an open process is commendable and considerate of the whole body of believers. It will cover the entire search process with an atmosphere of trust and confidence.

### **Primary Responsibilities**

What sort of persons should be appointed to a search committee? While many different desirable qualities could not be listed, of greatest importance is a deep and abiding faith in Christ and a demonstration of "thoroughly Christian attitudes and values."<sup>1</sup> If the early church chose persons "full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom,"<sup>2</sup> how could we do any less than choose persons to guide the church in the selection and call of a pastor? The church may be tempted to turn to persons with various kinds of expertise in secular personnel matters or psycho-social understandings, whose Christian commitment may be less than clear. In the final analysis, it is the genuine follower after the life of Christ who is most qualified to help find true spiritual leaders. Persons with knowledge in other areas whose spiritual ardor is less certain may be consulted for a certain type of input, but above all else, search committee members must be deeply committed and genuinely sincere Christians.

Beyond this most basic, spiritual test the members of the search committee should be persons with keen insight, proven commitment to the local church, a prayerful lifestyle, trustworthy conduct, and proven ability to maintain confidences. As Keith Huttenlocker wrote, they "should be persons of influence within the congregations."<sup>3</sup>

## **Diversity, Representations, and Membership**

It is wise for the church to seek balance in the pastoral search committee by choosing committee members who are appropriately representative of the church body itself. By this we mean that the makeup of the committee should reflect the ages, genders, spiritual giftedness and variant personalities of the congregation. While every particular variation of persons in the church may not be represented, the goal should be to assemble a committee that generally reflects a good cross section of the church body.

Once the search committee has been selected, another act toward strengthening the support of the committee by the entire church would be to conduct a dedication or commissioning of the search committee during the church's primary worship service. Here the search committee can be formally introduced, given a "charge" outlining its duties, and prayed over with appropriate laying on of hands. At this same time, prayer support from the congregation for the committee should be solicited and perhaps a carefully read statement of instruction about how the membership of the church can most appropriately communicate their concerns, interests, and suggestions to the committee could be offered. The committee might also indicate to the church how it plans to provide regular reports of its progress during the search.

## **Getting Organized**

Once the pastoral search committee is formed, its earliest task should be to determine how it will be structured and to clarify its duties. In some instances, church bylaws or the appointive body may have already determined who will serve the committee as chair. In most cases, the committee will elect its own chair.

As with many deliberative bodies, it is recommended that the pastoral search committee elect a chair, vice-chair, and secretary. The chair should be a person with good leadership skills who can diplomatically and skillfully keep the committee sessions on task while guaranteeing that all members have adequate opportunity to give input and "be heard." The chair should also be someone who "has the respect of virtually all members of the congregation, is a good process person, and is able to make an effective public presentation."<sup>4</sup>

The vice-chair would serve in the chair's occasional absence or perhaps take on the role of providing for certain committee functions, such as setting up conference calls when it comes time for interviews or making travel arrangements for out-of-town guests.

The secretary would keep an adequate, well-preserved, and confidential record of the committee proceedings and, perhaps, handle some correspondence for the committee – though this latter duty is sometimes assigned to other personnel.

Once the search committee has selected its officers, its first order of business should be to obtain proper training for the task that lies ahead. All the members should immediately commit themselves to faithful attendance at meetings as well as regular and steadfast prayer over their assignment. Beyond that, the committee should contact their state or district office of the Church of God or the credentials chair for their area to request consultation and training. They can also contact the Congregational Ministries Office of Church

of God Ministries in Anderson, Indiana, for assistance.<sup>5</sup> They should request that an advising or counseling minister be designated to meet with their committee on a regular basis. If no adequate state or district structure is in place to designate an advising pastor, in consultation with the other duly elected leaders of the congregation, the search committee should seek an advisor from among the most respected and highly regarded Church of God ministers in their area. This person will be able to answer questions that arise, clarify how the overall process works, and offer other sound counsel to guide them throughout the pastoral search.

### **The Committee and the Interim Pastor**

A clarification that will need to be obtained very early on in the process relates to the committee's duties regarding the current pastoral and pulpit vacancy versus the actual search process. When a pastor resigns and vacates the pulpit, in addition to seeking a regular, permanent pastor for the church, there is a need to have the church's pulpit filled each Sunday before a new regular pastor arrives. The search committee needs to know the answer to the question: whose responsibility is it to make certain that the pulpit is filled? In many churches this has been a responsibility assigned to the search committee, though it is highly recommended that this duty be assigned elsewhere.

The pastoral search committee, in order to focus clearly on its greatest assignment – the obtaining of a new regular pastor for the church – should make every effort to assure that interim pastoral care and preaching is assigned to provide for interim pastoral care and preaching duties, it may create a regular and often hindering distraction to its primary function. This is only one of the reasons that it is almost always in the best interest of the church to secure an interim pastor to serve the church until a regular, permanent pastor is called. As in the matter of obtaining an advisory or counseling minister, the search committee should consult its state or district office or the Congregational Ministries Office in Anderson for direction and advice about obtaining a qualified interim pastor. (See chapter 3, on *The Interim Pastor*.)

### **Team Building**

The final stage of readying the committee for the adventure may be referred to as “team building.” The pastoral search committee will have already initiated this process by electing officers and taking the other first steps of getting organized. Beyond these initial functional activities, the committee needs to spend some time praying together for and with each other as well as sharing their hopes, vision, even prejudices and fears about the pastoral search process.

It is beneficial for the pastoral search committee to spend some time – at least one meeting session – getting better acquainted with one person. Even if they assume that they are already familiar with each other's lives, they need to be updated about those interests and concerns that they will carry with them to the meetings that will occur throughout their time together in the search process. This kind of sharing will help the community to guard against interfering issues such as conflicts of interest or distractions that could prevent a member from giving her or his best service to the committee. There have been occasions where it becomes necessary for a committee member to resign before the search process is completed, due to ill health or other matters of grave concern. Such a departure is always eased and facilitated when the committee members have bonded well enough that



they can be supportive of, or even gently confrontational in helping to facilitate such a departure. Any search committee member who determines that he or she cannot continue to serve should only resign following consultation with the full committee membership.

### **Confidentiality**

Together, the committee needs to establish a covenant of confidentiality, including the commitment to confront lovingly but definitely those who breach their mutual confidence. The pastoral search committee needs to understand that when they discuss possible career changes and relocation with prospective pastors, they are engaging in discussion about life changes that profoundly impact not only pastors and their families, but also the lives, dreams, and emotional investments of brothers and sisters who make up the churches they currently pastor. A lack of sensitivity about confidential communications related to these issues can be damaging and even devastating to both individuals and congregations.

The pastoral search committee needs to understand the difference between secrecy and confidentiality. Further, the committee needs to communicate that difference many times to the congregation it serves. The maintenance of confidentiality in the pastoral search context has to do with gathering, evaluating, and guarding information until such time is as it becomes appropriate to communicate pertinent aspects of that information to the church's consideration of a pastoral candidate.

Secrecy, on the other hand, suggests gathering information that it never intends to share or portends some sinister use. As part of the process the search committee may learn much information that will never be appropriate to share in a public context, for instance information about prospective candidates that have been considered but will not be presented to the church. If any member of the search committee has a question about anything that is or is not appropriate to communicate, that matter in question is an item that should be discussed and decided upon by the entire search committee. In this regard, and many others, each member of the search committee needs to commit to be bound by the decision of the entire committee.

### **Consultants and Advisors**

Part of team building is deciding exactly what role the advising minister will play in the process. He or she will give you some guidance about this, but the committee should also be prepared to negotiate the advisor's role to some extent. Some committees call for an advisor to be present only occasionally for their meetings – bringing résumés, reporting on reference calls, and consulting about certain obstacles or difficult decisions. Some committees choose to treat the advising minister as a fully involved and participating member of their committee. In that case, the advisor would be notified and expected to attend each meeting, participate fully in discussions, and be completely involved in referencing and investigations – but not voting on the decision to recommend a final candidate for consideration by the congregation.

## Keeping the Church in the Loop

During the period of team building the search committee should plan for a regular process of communicating with the church about its work and progress. Notes in each issue of the church newsletter or bulletin are advisable. In addition to these, the committee may want to designate various members to provide brief, verbal reports to the congregation on a consistent basis. These should not be detailed reports but provide a summation of where the committee is in the process. Reporters might say something like: "We have received and are reviewing résumés and especially solicit your prayers for God's guidance as we begin evaluating just who it is God is calling to serve as our pastor."

## Deciding

Whenever possible, the pastoral search committee should be unanimous or virtually unanimous in recommending a candidate to the church for consideration as pastor. This will not always happen, of course, but it has a much better chance of occurring if the search committee has spent quality time together, earnestly sharing, praying, and deliberating over its task. Time spent building itself into a mutually supportive team will benefit God's church for years to come.

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1. Keith Huttenlocker, *A Handbook for Pulpit Committees* (Anderson, Ind: Warner Press, 1991), 8.
  2. New International Version (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1978).
  3. Huttenlocker, 8.
  4. Ibid, 9.
  5. Church of God Ministries, P.O. Box 2420, Anderson, Indiana 46018-2420. Telephone: (800) 848-2464. *Yearbook of the Church of God* (Anderson, Ind: Church of God Ministries, 2003), 37.

## THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF THE PASTORAL SEARCH

By Ryan Chapman

All the work done by the Pastoral Search Committee has a Kingdom focus. Because the search committee's work will be of enormous importance to the life of the congregation for years to come, the intentional development of a prayer covering – that extends throughout the entire search process – is vital. No matter how able the committee, “Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.” (Psalm 127:1, NIV).

Of all the input the committee will receive, God's wisdom is the most important. The Lord is quite willing to give direction if we desire it. “If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given to you” (James 1:5, NRSV). On behalf of the church in Colossae, Paul requested that God would fill them “with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding” (Colossians 1:9, NRSV).

The Search Committee's assignment is to try to find the right person for the unique work of pastoring. It's tempting to want a pastor like the one at the successful church down the road or to be overly impressed with the secular CEO model of leadership. A prayer covering will help focus the committee and the church on what it really means to identify and extend the call to *God's* person to become the new pastor.

What follows are important guidelines to consider as you develop a ministry of prayer focused on the pastoral search.

### **Be Comprehensive**

Ask for God's help with this search at all of your worship services, meetings, and gatherings. The pastoral search focuses on one of the most vital components of the church's life. It is important to have the benefit of the prayers of the whole church. When the new candidate is presented, those who have been in prayer during the search are more likely to sense a higher level of ownership in the process.

## Prayerful Steps for the Pastoral Search Committee

If the bylaws of your church do not define the membership of the search committee, pray for the selection of the right persons to serve. At the very beginning of the search process, call the pastoral search committee to the front of the church during a morning service, invite the congregation to gather around them, lay hands on them, and pray for them.

A search can take a long time, so it may be appropriate to call the committee members before the congregation at other times and, again and again, ask God to bless their efforts. In the regular Sunday morning pastoral prayer, the Pastoral Search Committee should always be among those for whom the pastor prayed. At the conclusion of the search, call the committee members before the church and offer a prayer of thanksgiving for their huge contribution.

### What to Pray for

Pray that the committee will fully understand the kind of person God knows to be best for the congregation. Wisdom may come from persons who are not on the committee. Pray that committee members will ask the right questions of other in the church – and that they will listen with open ears and hearts. Pray for upcoming pastoral search committee meetings.

### Guidelines for the Pastoral Search Committee

- **Discern** – The search for a pastor is essentially a matter of spiritual discernment. The gift of discernment is defined as the ability to distinguish between truth and error, to know when a person or act is of God (1 Corinthians 12:10). The Pastoral Search Committee carries the weight of a major responsibility – a task that can be lengthy and filled with temporary set-backs. Be sure that the committee does not get so caught up in the work at hand and the details that it fails to spend significant time in prayer during its meetings seeking God's will and insight. Should the group ever feel stuck, the members should be willing to stop and seek God's help.
- **Communicate** – The committee also acts as a major conduit of specific prayer requests to the church. While confidentiality in a search must be honored, the church must be kept informed of when the committee meets and in what ways they may be able to pray for the committee. Share as much specific information as is appropriate so that the church can pray in an informed way.

### The Word

The Bible is the invaluable resource in helping the committee focus on the spiritual dimension of its assignment. Allow the Scriptures to inform the process. For example, in one of your meetings, reflect on James 1:5, NRSV: "If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given to you." Spend time giving thanks for what God has already made clear. If any areas still seem unclear, ask for God's help. When there are areas where the prospective candidates need clarity, enumerate those areas and pray for them.

You may also find it helpful to think through the major biblical issues that illuminate what is important to God. Spend some time reflecting on the Jesus model of leadership: “Do you not know what I have done for you? You call me Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you” (John 13:12-15, NRSV). Which candidates seem most likely to minister effectively in these areas? Throughout the whole process, follow the command to “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Colossians 3:16, NRSV).

## **Fasting**

We know from the Scripture that there is the expectation that the church will fast. Jesus said, “*When* [not if] you fast...” (Matthew 6:16, NIV). Challenge the congregation to fast one meal a week until the new pastor comes. This will help create greater spiritual depth and also benefit the Pastoral Search Committee, not to mention the entire discernment process.

## **Praying for the Candidate**

Although early on you will not know the identity of the person who will become your pastor, pray that the future candidate will clearly discern God’s call.

- Pray for the candidate’s spouse and children. This is often a difficult time of transition – especially for children.
- Pray for the candidate by name once that individual is selected and an announcement is made to the congregation.
- Gather in the pastor’s study prior to the candidate’s preaching times and pray for God’s anointing. Instead of thinking about the “candidacy,” at that moment, focus on asking for a clear, powerful presentation of scriptural truth.
- Pray for the right employment opportunities, if needed or desired, for the prospective pastor’s spouse.

## **Pray for the Sending Church**

The new pastor may be coming from college, seminary, or another career. Most likely, your new pastor will be coming from another congregation. Pray for the church that the pastor is leaving. Pray for a positive exit; pray that God will give that congregation wisdom in its own pastoral search.

## **Praying for the New Pastor**

When the new pastor and family arrive to begin their ministry, during a morning service, gather around all of them for a time of prayer. Often a more formal installation service will be planned for a later date. This prayer experience, however, can take place immediately.

Many congregations already have a well-developed prayer ministry with a specific team praying for the pastor or pastoral staff. If your church does not have such a ministry, this would be a great time to help the pastor organize one. Two classic resources for a pastoral prayer ministry are *Partners in Prayer* by John Maxwell and *Prayer Shield* by C. Peter Wagner.

## THE INTERIM PASTOR

By Oral Withrow

Dave's telephone call came as Laura and I were doing the things we had promised ourselves during the first weeks of retirement – we intended to travel and relax for some time. He asked if I was open to serving as the interim pastor for the church he served as minister of music. I agreed a few days later to accept the responsibility. We enjoyed it; the congregation and, later, the newly called pastor, generously expressed appreciation for our ministry. Serving as an interim pastor has been far more fulfilling for me and, if I have heard correctly the reports from the churches we have served, more beneficial to the local church than they had anticipated.

There was a time in past generations when very little time elapsed between the departure of a former pastor and the arrival of a new pastor. For most congregations, that has changed. Persons who counsel congregations advise that the time it takes to consider the needs of the church, to consider candidates, and to call a pastor now usually takes at least a year. There are several reasons but the following will suffice for our understanding here:

- Increasingly congregations are more intentional and selective in the education and skills they seek in their new pastor – and are wisely using the transition time.
- Increasingly, pastors consider the school involvement and other priorities of the children in their family before considering a move.
- More so today, the pastor's spouse is employed in a significant vocation to which he or she senses a call and that person's sense of being released is an important factor in the potential pastor's move.
- Congregations are encouraged to do a self-study and then a profile of a pastor that could lead them most effectively.

- Very simply, a shortage exists in the Church of God, and in many church groups, of available qualified pastors.

Some church groups require an interim period of at least a year between pastorates. Information on interim pastorates in the Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Southern Baptist churches, for instance, is available on Web sites and can be studied by entering the name of the church group and then the words *interim pastor*. The material for the Presbyterian Church is informative but their governmental structure, and that of the Lutherans, is different from our congregational form of church government. In the Church of God, guidance and advice are the strongest counsel national and area organizations can offer a mature congregation.

**Available to be an interim pastor:** Experienced ministers have become increasingly aware that a personal ministry may be enlarged or extended through service as an interim pastor. Among those available for assignments probably two categories of pastors accept most interim assignments:

**Retired pastors:** Ministers serving full-time in higher education; they are limited by the travel time to the church and teaching schedule.

Many feel it is unwise to call a member of the congregation to be the interim pastor. A congregation, often influenced by a false economy, is tempted to ask an associate pastor to be the interim pastor. It is considered unwise because, for one thing, the regular responsibilities of the associate will be neglected as additional pastoral responsibilities are assumed. Another reason is that it is often difficult for the associate and some members of the congregation for that person to return to the associate's role – not a small consideration even for the maturest persons.

### **The Call of an Interim Pastor**

The local pastoral search committee obtains the names of possible interim pastors usually from the following person and sources:

- The state or area Church of God administrator or the chair of the area credentials committee; local church leaders may secure telephone numbers and addresses for these persons from the *Yearbook of the Church of God*.
- The administrators in the national Church of God Ministries office, 765-642-0256, ext. 2189, or 1-800-848-2464. ext. 2189. *Ohio Ministries number is 740-747-2916*.
- A well informed and respected senior pastor who for this purpose, and maybe other purposes, becomes a consulting pastor for the committee – a person recognized as a statesperson by his or her peers.
- The former pastor may make suggestions, but even the most mature may not be totally objective; the advice of a former pastor will best be augmented by counsel from other sources. Sometimes a search committee (as well as a possible interim) may wish an interim candidate to preach a couple of times before a decision is made.

**Covenant:**



A written agreement or statement of understandings is important. The covenant will clearly state the beginning and duration of the interim pastor relationship, responsibilities of the interim pastor and the congregation, mutual obligations in notifying each other if the relationship is to be discontinued, compensation, and so forth. The covenant will not presume to define pastoral prerogatives like the nature and content of sermons.

Samples of covenants are included in the appendix of this handbook; one is a standard and more formal covenant and the other is a more personalized statement. It may be stated in the covenant – and cannot be emphasized too often – that the interim pastor will not be a candidate to be the senior pastor. An interim pastor that is cordial and does the task well will be considered by some to be the one who is the obvious choice for pastor – it happens often. The interim pastor enters into a fellowship and intimacy with a congregation and his or her own needs may cause the interim pastor to aspire to be the senior pastor. Several negative situations can develop if either the church or the interim pastor allows this possibility to be considered. Church groups with vertical authority structures prohibit such possibility specifically. In the Church of God, with a congregational form of church government, rules cannot be handed down but this guidance needs to be honored by each congregation calling an interim pastor.

### **Compensation**

This is no place to economize; both the congregation and the interim pastor can err by agreeing to compensation that is not consistent with the ability of the congregation nor an adequate reward for the hours and efforts the interim pastor will give to the church. I know of no instance, by the way, when an interim pastor has asked for unreasonable reimbursement, but I do know of instances when the good work of an interim pastor was too modestly rewarded. Cheaper help may be available – it usually is – but the congregation needs the ablest communicator and leader it can find to help it prepare for its next era of ministry.

One person with a variety of experiences as an interim pastor asks the congregation to use the following formulae, for which he/she plans to work twenty-five to thirty hours per week. He/she suggests that they total the previous pastor's salary and benefits and then make his salary one-half of that amount, prorated by the week or other pay period. Another requests \$400 or \$500 per week for part-time assignment. (The amounts are considered adequate by this person for the year 2003 but may increase.) Persons serving as interim pastors have different financial needs and those needs should be taken into account. The committee determining compensation should include visionary and generous persons.

At least three other financial provisions will wisely be made: The **reimbursement** of travel expenses to and from the pastors out-of-town home; some interim pastors travel to their home weekly and others will make occasional trips. A standard business per mile rate reimbursement should be provided. A **discretionary fund** should be put at the disposal of the interim pastor to use in hosting associate pastors, leaders of the church, and for such other expenditures as he or she deems necessary. Naturally, a comfortable and convenient provision will be made locally for **lodging**.

### **Term**

The term of service for an interim pastor is usually six months to a year. Both parties may consider the assignment in three-month segments. The covenant will wisely indicate that the term is concluded when the new pastor is called, on a date decided by the congregation or the responsible committee. The church or the interim pastor may conclude the relationship at the end of any three-month period if either considers the relationship non-beneficial.

The term also includes the days involved in the assignment each week. An interim pastor may serve:

- **Sunday mornings only as the worship speaker.** It is probably best not to describe as an interim pastorate. The older phrase “filling the pulpit” would be more accurate.
- **Three or four days including Sunday, for approximately twenty-five to thirty hours per week.** Most interim pastorates are structured on this basis.
- **Full-time.** The interim pastor serves the same number of days per week with the same duties and compensation as the previous senior pastor. A few congregations use this plan.
- **An interim pastor may be called to serve a congregation during a leave of absence or sabbatical experience for the senior pastor.** Fred Shively, director of ministerial education for Anderson University, reports that he has enjoyed this somewhat different task four times.

### **Responsibilities:**

Generally speaking, the responsibilities of the interim pastor are those of the senior pastor, which may be summarized as preaching, teaching, pastoral care, and administration but will not include the visioning or futuring work that is expected of a resident pastor. The interim pastor will have a principal, if not the principal, responsibility to preach on Sunday morning during the worship service. It is an awesome task, preaching. Many persons reserve at least a half-an-hour each week to hear the pastor interpret the Bible and the implications for their lives.

The interim pastor may also meet weekly at a mutually convenient time with the associate pastors or, in a smaller church, the worship leadership group. The purpose is coordination of ministries and encouragement as well as conversation and fellowship.

The interim pastor will meet with the pastoral search committee at their invitation and serve as a resource person, being careful not to interfere with the pastoral selection process. The interim pastor may also meet with the church council, board of Christian education, board of trustees, and other ministry groups to serve as an informed resource. Some interim pastors have suggested the creation of a transition team to serve as a sounding board and evaluation group with the interim pastor.

The interim pastor may lead Sunday night services, Wednesday evening meetings, and Sunday school classes, as agreed upon in the written covenant. The pastor may offer his or her particular expertise as a special service; I served as a congregational consultant for many churches and made myself and the many materials I have available to the congregation as a gift.

Through sermons, meetings, and conversations, in an important enabling action, the interim pastor can call forth the spiritual gifts and skills of the church members, some gifts that may have been dormant for a time. In several ways the gifts may be re-energized and helpfully employed in the preparation time for the new pastor. Robert Reardon has been an interim pastor for several churches and advises, "Find out who the high trust leaders are and find a way to incorporate them into leadership; i.e. spiritual advisors. Get invited to eat in their kitchens.

It is appropriate to indicate in the agreement the tasks that the interim pastor will *not* do. For example, I have been fatigued by a demanding visitation schedule most of my pastoral ministry. I learned that many lay persons were more gifted than I for the visitation ministries and thus developed structures for a more expansive and intensive visitation. When I am called to be an interim pastor, therefore, I indicate that I will not do a major load of visitation but will help the associate pastors and lay leaders develop a schedule for visitations that may have positive implication for local lay ministers in the future as well as the present. This type of definition of responsibility may be possible in other areas, depending on the gifts and interests the particular person called as interim pastor. Jerry Grubbs says that he often will not accept any long-term counseling relationships, weddings, and similar responsibilities that create a bond with persons and families of the congregation.

Many persons in the state, area, and national administrative offices encourage the congregation to do a self-study and to develop a congregational profile during the interim. It is a most informative and rewarding exercise; a congregation can learn so much about itself. A statement about the type of pastor that will best serve the church in the future can then be developed – again, a rewarding experience. The interim pastor will accept as an important responsibility the task of both encouraging a congregational self-study and the preparation of a potential pastor profile.

Contacts with key leaders of the congregation are necessary. The contacts may be for lunches or dinners, as a guest in a home, or scheduled meetings with a stated purpose. The meetings can assist an interim pastor as he/she discerns the ministries with which/she may be most helpful and if any difficulties need imminent attention. An experienced interim pastor, Isham E. (Joe) Crane, says that contacts are informative and often lead to healing with persons who may have felt estranged from the congregation. In most contacts the role of the interim pastor is listener and learner.

Type of ministry gifts of potential interim pastor: interim pastors have a variety of strengths and gifts, as do other pastors, as do all of us. Most pastors have developed skills that permit them to work in varied situations and with multiple personality types. Even so, identifying an interim pastor known to have one or more of the following skills may be important for a congregation:

- **Communication** – Some congregations have become accustomed to a pastor with outstanding preaching skills; an interim pastor with average preaching each Sunday morning will be disappointing to that congregation. (By the way,

studies have shown that pastors do not do well at evaluating their own preaching, so it is best to get a third party opinion.)

- **Healing** – In previous assignments a potential interim pastor may have demonstrated an ability to help fractures in the fellowship. Jerry Grubbs indicates that he encourages appropriate expressions of grief at the loss of the previous pastor and the equally important task of creating “emotional space for the new pastor.”
- **Preparation** – Some persons prepare the congregation well for the beginning of the next pastor’s ministry. They awaken the church by calling attention to possibilities and encourage attitudes and actions of trust in leadership on the part of the people. Also, they may encourage building or staffing needs that are obvious and, thus, pave the way for the new pastor’s initiatives.
- **Visioning** – Pastors that have served with innovative churches will in obvious and subtle ways encourage a group of people to think about what the unique ministry their congregation might have as it embraces the future with courage.
- **Finances** – Many pastors have demonstrated skill at working with churches to increase their resources and on how to budget for ministry. Some churches need guidance in how to arrange for more adequate compensation for their pastor and associates.
- **Culture** – Culture specifications may be obvious, such as Caucasian, Hispanic, African-American, Indian, Korean, and so forth. Additional cultural factors that should be considered in determining who would best serve as interim pastor include the categories like the following: rural, inner city, suburban, factory workers, professionals, older, younger.

Of course, the congregation will want an interim pastor with all these gifts and then insist that he or she become the pastor.

### **Sermons:**

Sermons are at the center of worship in our tradition while communion is the focus in other traditions. It is in the sermon that the community of believers receives instruction and inspiration for the Christian life. The sermons of the interim pastor are vital to the health of the community and individual believers during the transition period in the church’s leadership. The needs of the congregation will be assessed through inquiry and prayer by the wise interim and sermons will be thoughtfully prepared and delivered. Observations made about the sermon by experienced interim pastors are:

**Affirming** – It is the one description used more than any other term in speaking of the sermon. The opposite would be condemning, implying blame, or preaching guilt.

- **Lay gifts and leadership** – Lay persons are urged to exercise their gifts and to respond to opportunities for leadership. This time has a potential for a new beginning for persons who have been neglecting their gifts, for whatever reason.
- **Fresh** – Canned sermons are boring to the deliverer and the listener. This does not suggest that all sermons should be from new outlines or manuscripts; many experienced interim pastors have excellent sermons that any church in transition should hear. It is suggested that each sermon be tailored for the present congregation. I did this by demanding of myself the preparation of a new series of sermons based on one of the New Testament epistles; one series that was profitable for me in the context of a specific congregation, was a study of Philippians.

- **Biblical** – It is assumed that all sermons are biblical. In the case of an interim, however, I suggest that Bible stories and the teachings of Jesus be emphasized in order to stress the simple fundamentals of discipleship and church life.
- **Share the leadership** – The interim pastor will preach, but it will be best to insist that lay persons participate in worship leadership, as illustrations in the sermon or, if possible, as participants in the sermon.

### **The Interim Pastor is *Not* the Pastor:**

It takes discipline to avoid this. The interim pastor is sort of a John the Baptist – a forerunner. The interim is there to prepare the way for a good beginning with a new pastor. Don't carry the metaphor too far, however, the new pastor is not a savior. The roles are different, and the most helpful interim pastor will constantly be conscious of that fact and remind the leadership committee when necessary. Experienced interim pastor Dan Harman says, "I try not to change anything but to help all existing programs, celebrations, and so forth."

The interim pastor will be aware of and refuse to develop a personal following. All of us like to be liked and appreciated. The relationship to avoid is a personal or group attachment; that should be reserved for a resident pastor.

Creative persons, as most experienced pastors are, tend to see things that can be begun, particularly edifying ministries. The interim pastor will avoid building programs, establishing ministry priorities, or creating organizational structures.

Maintaining linkages is a key task of the interim pastor during the transition. It is a responsibility to encourage good and honest relationships with area, state, and national Church of God agencies, as well as participation in local ecumenical fellowships.

The Interim Ministry Network "provides some excellent materials and lead good workshops," says Fred Shively. Fred has served as interim pastor for nineteen congregations and has been a member of the Network for several years. Additional information maybe obtained by entering the Web site of a denomination like the Presbyterian Church and key in *interim pastor*; another covenant form is available on that site that may be adapted. An interim pastor's Training Manual (Rev. Ed.), estimated cost twenty dollars, is one of many resources listed on the Internet under interim pastor Bibliography.

## **ASSESSMENT: RESOURCES FOR CONGREGATIONAL EVALUATION**

**By Robert Moss**

It is wise for the pastoral search committee to work in cooperation with other congregational leaders (in compliance with the church's constitution and bylaws) to evaluate the health of the congregation and to assess its readiness to follow the leadership of a new pastor. It is dangerous to sidestep the process of a congregational self-study because the conversations with a pastoral candidate may be based more on opinion than on documented research. Far too many pastors and congregations have experienced disappointment in the eventual realization that the relationship between the congregation and new pastor was based more on assumptions than on information and expectations gathered in a systematic manner.

In most cases, congregational leaders are not prepared to ask the most insightful questions to make these assessments. Happily state and district leaders often have access to tools to help the leaders of the congregation in making assessments. These self-studies can provide invaluable help in identifying the key strengths of the congregation. They gather information to prepare for transitions in leadership, to create a climate in which congregational members feel appropriately included in the search process, and to reach conclusions about the general health of the congregation as it approaches the future.

Another helpful resource is the TAG Corporation, which serves as a consulting firm aimed at helping both businesses and churches. The organization's Web site [www.877tagline.com](http://www.877tagline.com) states: "We see a shift away from the mechanistic view of organizations toward a view that sees organizations as living human systems. This has an incredible impact on the way that we do business."

For a reasonable fee, this organization will help a local church with a congregational survey tool. This tool was developed by TAG, dozens of church leaders, and a leading professor from the McDonough School of Business (Georgetown University). The online capabilities provide for easy assess to your congregation's perceptions around twelve critical factors – factors that will allow your church to fulfill its mission and experience healthy growth.

With typically ten questions per scale, your church will be benchmarked against national norms on:

- **Church Code** – Do your members know and support your church’s vision, values, and mission?
- **Equipping the Members** – Do your members feel that the church meets their practical needs and leads them toward spiritual maturity?
- **Communication** – Do your members receive information in a helpful way? Does your church communicate its message to the surrounding community effectively? Do people communicate with each other in healthy ways?
- **Boundaries** – Are roles and expectations clear for lay people and staff? Are pastors supported in having a life outside of work?
- **Outreach and Evangelism** – Does your church effectively reach out to your local community?
- **Leadership and Assimilation** – Does your church’s leadership effectively set the vision for the church? Are lay people effectively assimilated into real leadership positions?
- **Member Satisfaction** – Are your members satisfied with your youth program? Worship services? Facilities? Other ministries?
- **Church as Community** – Do your members connect with small groups within the church? Do they feel like the church is a healthy community?
- **Trust in finances** – Do members have a sense of trust in the way finances are handled?
- **Trust in Direction** – Do members trust and support the current direction of the church?
- **Managing Change** – Do members feel that the church keeps up with the changing needs of your community? Is change managed in a proactive and healthy manner?
- **Church Involvement** – Are members involved in giving of their time and talents at the church?
- **Church Type** – How do members perceive the style of your church?

## **ISSUES A SEARCH COMMITTEE MAY FACE**

By Robert Moss

### **Divorce / Remarriage in the Life of a Pastoral Candidate**

While the breakdown of a candidate's previous marriage relationship is not to be treated as the unforgivable sin, it does cause a serious concern for the search committee. The local church is made up of relationships and the failure of a leader's marriage relationship may be the harbinger of other relational problems that could follow him or her into the pastorate.

A candidate may simply offer that the divorce is a "past issue" under the grace of God's forgiveness. No one should dispute God's amazing grace and forgiveness. We gladly acknowledge this grace. Yet no one on a search committee should casually accept such an answer without a more complete explanation. Careful conversations, therefore, should be pursued with a pastoral candidate who has marital divorce in his or her background. The conversations should determine the candidate's response to questions like these: what caused the divorce? Who sought the divorce? What avenues of reconciliation were explored? What is the candidate's view of divorce for Christians and non-Christians?

Since the breakdown of a marriage is such a serious concern in the Christian community, it is recommended that the search committee take steps to investigate carefully the circumstances of the divorce. These careful conversations should include:

- Pastoral colleagues
- A leader (or leaders) from a previous congregation
- A Christian counselor as a consultant
- The state or district minister
- Other references given by the candidate

### **Considering a Non-Church of God Candidate**

Extreme caution should be used in considering a candidate who is not credentialed through the Church of God. This is not meant to be a sectarian statement implying that the leadership of persons outside of our tradition has no merit. Many years of history have demonstrated, however, the dangers inherent in such a consideration.



These dangers include:

- **Doctrinal Clarity** – There may be an erosion of theological teachings or traditions usually associated with Church of God congregations. Different traditions and perspectives may become apparent in the observance of communion, baptism and the washing of feet, all of which have particular traditions within the Church of God. In some cases, a non-Church of God candidate may bring to the congregation a theological mindset that, for example, reflects a Calvinistic rather than a Wesley-Armenian tradition.
- **Collegial Relations** – There may be a reluctance to participate in state or district functions as a minister because of a lack of connectedness with Church of God colleagues. This may be further expressed as the new leader fails to encourage the local congregations to participate in state or area Church of God activities. It is important for each local congregation to recognize that the Church of God does not consist of a loosely affiliated group of independent congregations. Instead, we must maintain our identity as a *fellowship* of congregations and leaders based upon common beliefs and objectives for the kingdom of God.
- **Loyalty Concerns** – A non-Church of God pastor may have a lack of loyalty to important traditions of the Church of God, e.g., the annual Christ Birthday Observance.

If the local pastoral search committee persists in believing that God is leading them to consider outside of the Church of God, it is strongly recommended that each of the considerations listed above be thoroughly examined and discussed before the call is extended.

### **Considering a Non-Credentialed Candidate**

We welcome new ministers into the Church of God. National leadership of the Church of God is working diligently to encourage women and men to answer God's call to ministry. Every minister who is presently credentialed in the Church of God, at one time in his or her ministry, entered into the process of becoming a recognized minister. Typically, non-credentialed ministers are those who are just entering into ministry and many of them are newly discovered treasures of the gifts of Christian leadership. Since Christian ministry is not to be fulfilled in isolation or in relationship to one congregation alone, we encourage the search committee to consult closely with state or district leaders to ensure that the candidate under consideration is one for whom credentialing is in process.

### **Considering a Female Candidate**

It is not the intention of this manual to make a theological case for the validity of God's call to women in ministry. It is, however, its intention to declare that the Church of God tradition embraces women ministers as biblically qualified to serve as leaders in the Kingdom of God. With that said, we present to you a few statements for the search committee of a local church to consider.

The Church of God is actively encouraging women to hear God's call to ministry. It is the responsibility of local congregations to provide the opportunity for these called and gifted ministers to serve God's church.

We see strong biblical evidence of women serving God's church and believe that part of God's intention is for the complimentary roles of men & women serving together in his Kingdom.

***We strongly discourage local churches from disqualifying candidates simply because of gender. It is the responsibility of the pastoral search committee to seek the very best candidate to serve a local congregation based upon the minister's spiritual gifts and qualifications – regardless of gender.***

### **Relating to Existing Church Staff When Considering a Candidate**

Church staff and associate pastors share a very deep interest in the choice of the congregation in selecting a new pastor. When the search is for a senior pastor, the result of the selection process will have a deep effect on the daily work of the church staff as the leadership style of the new pastor is established in the congregation.

Thus, it is wise for the search committee to consult with existing staff in the selection process while at the same time being careful not to allow the perception – or the reality – that the church staff has undue influence in the process. Existing staff (both pastoral and non-pastoral staff) will provide valuable input through their assessment of congregational needs, the leadership challenges facing the church, and their own unique feelings about the type of leader needed.

The most common complaints heard from church staff during the work of a pastoral search committee are the lack of informative updates and the failure of the committee to seek the input of existing staff. While it is difficult to balance the needs of confidentiality for the candidate and the needs of communication from the congregation and staff, the committee is well advised to seek ways to accomplish both.

### **The Search Committee's Relationship to the Departing Pastor**

When the departure of a pastor is congenial, the search committee may greatly benefit from the insights shared by the pastor in an exit interview. Caution must be exercised, however, to assure that the responses of the departing pastor do not overly influence the agenda and process of the search committee. Members of the committee must keep in mind that the perspective of a departing pastor is unique to him or her. No one else will see things from the same vantage point. Thus, the sharing of that perspective will give helpful insights to the committee as it tries to establish a profile of the kind of leader needed next to fulfill needs unmet in the now vacant pastoral role.

#### ***Sample exit interview questions:***

- What do you perceive to be the strengths of this congregation?
- What do you perceive to be weaknesses in our ministry as a congregation?
- What particular gifts does the leader we seek need to be effective here?
- Can you think of colleagues whose gifts may be a good fit with this congregation?
- What do you see as challenges this congregation faces?
- Do you have any other suggestions for the pastoral search committee?

### **The Search Committee's Relationship to the Family of a Pastor who Tragically Departs**

Among the reasons for the tragic departure of a pastor from a local congregation are disability or death. Sometimes, unfortunately, it is because of the moral failure of the leader. Each of these is devastating to the congregation, and each bears with it distinct emotions for the family members left behind.

In the event that the family of a departed pastor remains in the local congregation, there is another level of responsibility for the search committee that is charged with seeking someone else to fill the pastoral vacancy. Because it is an emotionally charged issue, the search committee will be wise to seek divine wisdom in doing their work while at the same time remaining sensitive to the remaining family. The greatest sense of loss for a ministry family can come in feeling that they are merely “swept aside” or ignored in the process of searching for a new pastor.

*Suggestions for honoring and loving the family of a tragically departed pastor:*

- Involve the remaining family in a special prayer time as you begin your work.
- Express your love and compassion by verbally acknowledging how hard it must be for the family to see that a “replacement” is being sought for the role once held by their family member.
- Give the family an opportunity to share with the committee insights about the church from the perspective of a staff family.
- Ask questions that may provide insights.
- Continue to express appreciation for the ministry of the departed pastor.

### **PASTORAL ETHICS: How a Resigning Pastor Should Relate with the Former Congregation**

A widely recognized principle of ministerial ethics requires the departing pastor to maintain a posture of non-interference with his or her former congregations. When a pastor chooses to remain connected with a congregation that he or she formerly served, there are several things that can result – most of them negative.

A new pastor can feel intimidated by the presence of a former pastor.

The people in the congregation may remain emotionally connected to the departing pastor creating a disadvantage for the incoming minister. This is evidenced in times of great joy or grief (i.e. weddings and funerals) when congregants seek the participation of the former pastor at the exclusion of the incoming pastor.

Invariably a new pastor will discharge the duties of the pastor in a manner different from the departing pastor. The continued presence of the former pastor causes a sense of constant comparison and contrast, often at the expense of the new minister.

The departing minister may find it too hard to resist the temptation to make comments about the style of the new pastor. The failure of an outgoing minister to conduct himself or herself ethically in this regard puts the minister subject to discipline from the state or district organization.

Finally, and on rare occasions, there may be a harmonious relationship when a pastor decides to remain in close association with the former congregation. Since the risk of calamity is so high, however, it is strongly recommended that the departing minister worship elsewhere and sever his or her professional relationship with the former congregation.

### **CONGREGATIONAL ETHICS: How the Congregation Should Relate to the Departing Pastor**

The greatest responsibility lies with the departing pastor in establishing the relational boundaries with a former congregation (see previous section). It is, however, also the responsibility of congregational leadership, including the pastoral search committee, to remind the congregation that while the leadership of the former pastor is to be gratefully appreciated, it is also the responsibility of the congregation to emotionally prepare themselves for the new servant that God is preparing to come into their midst.

When the separation is congenial, the search committee should make a public expression of gratitude for the ministry of the outgoing pastor and offer a public prayer asking the Lord to prepare hearts for the arrival of a new leader. The pastoral search committee is given the unique opportunity to help people make the emotional transition by reminding the congregation that they have a responsibility to “let go” of their relationship with the outgoing minister. The committee can help them to realize that the relationship has changed from “pastor” to “friend.” It is recommended that these reminders be given several times during the time of transition in both public form (e.g., worship services) and in printed form (e.g., bulletins and newsletters).

## THE SELECTION PROCESS

By Sam Dunbar

The heart of the work of a pastoral search committee is the process of determining whom it will recommend to the church as a candidate for call to fill a pastoral vacancy. What follows is a detailed description of that crucial process.

### Preliminary Preparation

There are four key activities that should precede the search committee's actual assessment of prospective pastoral candidates.

1. First is the development of a **position description** for the prospective pastor. This document should be received by the search committee from the church's official key leadership group—church council, board of directors, or board of elders. If such a document is not forthcoming, it should be developed by the search committee in careful consultation with the appropriate congregational leadership group. The position description should be the church's best projection of what it understands to be the duties and responsibilities of the pastoral position it is seeking to fill.

Some position descriptions may be quite general and broad in nature and others may be more detailed. This document should be fluid in nature, meaning that it should be somewhat open to negotiation and modification based on discussion with finalist candidates. It is the duty of the search committee to make it clear to any prospective candidate with whom it shares the position description that this document is, at best, a starting point for discussion about its expectations regarding the pastoral position it is seeking to fill.

In some congregations there may be a sense that it is somehow inappropriate or undesirable to create a pastoral position description. In such a case, the search committee should develop - for its own use - a written list of "pastoral expectations" that to a large degree expresses its understanding about what the church expects of someone who will fill the pastoral office. The church that refuses to understand that it possesses such a list of expectations - written or unwritten - is only denying these expectations. The pastoral office is filled by flesh and blood human being who works in a real world with other flesh and blood human beings, all of whom possess ideas about what a good pastor is and how a good pastor functions in the real world. Failure to address these issues forthrightly and prayerfully only creates an atmosphere for inevitable conflict in the life of the church.

Once the search committee states its “expectations,” the document becomes the basis for positive and creative discussions with the future pastor for developing a pastoral position description. Whether or not a position description is ever developed, the expectations document will provide a valuable discussion piece in the interview process with prospective pastoral candidates – and a touchstone for developing ministry. (See Appendix for one congregation’s version of this document.)

2. The second preliminary activity of the search committee should be to determine what its **operating budget** will be. This will likely be determined in consultation with the key leadership unit of the church, but the search process does require a budget to cover communication and travel expenses, to name two. No church should undercut a healthy and thorough search process by failing to provide adequate budgeting for phone calls, interview meetings, and so forth. It is undesirable for a search committee to begin making contacts, setting appointments, and planning travel visits before it knows its operating budget. Failure to take care of this practical detail will prove embarrassing and a hindrance to both the committee and any prospective candidate – as well as for the entire church. It would be unfortunate to short circuit an otherwise promising relationship with a prospective pastor by failing to deal adequately with appropriate funding for the search process.

3. The third step of preliminary planning is the development of an adequate **prospect pool**. This begins by building a list of names of prospective pastoral candidates. In most instances, this is initiated through a contact with the state or district office or the credentials chair of the Church of God. These resources will provide the search committee with a list of possible candidates. The office of Congregational Ministries in Anderson<sup>1</sup> will also provide names and, in virtually all instances, has already developed a working system with your state or district leaders to facilitate this process.

Many times members of your local church will have names to suggest and, in fact, may be ready to offer names long before your committee is ready to receive them. Individuals on the committee should receive suggestions graciously, but always make it clear that the committee as a whole will evaluate names and that the committee or a committee member cannot “campaign” for any one person’s recommendation.

Ministers who know about your church’s search may offer suggestions and may do this at their own initiative. Others will recommend persons who have requested that they do so. Your committee or individuals in your congregation may even want to invite respected pastors to offer suggestions. College or church officials may also recommend names. All of these are legitimate sources.

Some prospective candidates will write or call on their own behalf. While this is not improper, the search committee needs to be very cautious about those who present themselves as eminently qualified, especially if they are assertively insistent of being considered. While it goes without saying that any candidate should be thoroughly researched and referenced, it is especially important for self-recommended candidates – although it is possible to receive a viable name by this means.

**Current employed pastoral staff:** It is not at all unusual for a church to have full or part-time associate ministers already on staff, one or more of whom may want to be considered

for the vacancy. It is wise to deal with the question of whether or not a staff person may be seriously considered for the pastoral position before moving on.

If a current staff associate desires to be considered for the search, and if the search committee determines in the pre-screening process that she or he is a viable possibility, then that associate should submit a resume or application in the same manner as other candidates are required to do.

Sometimes there is a tendency on the part of some search committees to give preferential treatment to a current staff person. There are some cautions that need to be considered.

“We already know this person and he (or she) already know us.” The trust is that the church knows this person in the role they have been filling. They do *not* know that person in the new role being considered.

Some search committees will turn to a current staff person out of convenience, as a shortcut to a thorough and effective search. This is a mistake. Any staff person who is actively considered should be taken through the complete process of submitting materials, being interviewed, referenced, and candidated. Failure to complete the entire search process with a known staff person is to short circuit an effective search, cheat the candidate of the opportunity to fully express himself or herself regarding the open position, and, potentially, leave the church blinded to important considerations and assessments that it would otherwise consider in a complete search.

There is also the serious ethical question of fairness toward other viable candidates.

On the other hand, it should also be noted that the search committee who immediately dismisses the potential candidacy of a current staff person might also be courting disaster. If that staff person has a group of loyal supporters in the congregation ready to champion a particular candidacy, the search committee should be able to report confidently to them: “We carefully considered that candidacy and as a group decided it was not God’s direction for us.” If the committee does decide to recommend current staff for consideration, that will become known to the church in due time.

If a current staff associate becomes a serious candidate and is not selected by the search committee or congregation as the pastor, in all likelihood that associate will need to relocate.

The fourth and final preliminary step before actual assessment is **pre-screening**. By the time the search committee is actually ready to look at prospective candidates, they will usually have gathered a considerable pool of names, ranging anywhere from fifteen to eighty, perhaps more. Some of these names can be eliminated almost immediately through the process of pre-screening. Pre-screening is the step in the search process when the committee looks at the broad qualifications of a candidate, seeing if there are any obvious reasons to move a person into a holding file or a no longer interested file.

Some general criteria, based either on the position description or the list of expectations, will eliminate the obvious mismatches: for example, those who are not properly creden-

tialed with the Church of God; those who are considered to be obviously unqualified professionally; or those who are known to have defaulted morally or ethically.

There may be other disqualifying local factors that are considered in pre-screening. If your church's leadership has determined that it must acquire a bi-vocational pastor, it would be a waste of time to consider full-time candidates. If your preparation had indicated that the church is ready for a vigorous, full-time pastor, there is little use in considering someone who is seeking to be semi-retired. In each case, the committee will be aware of those situations where a complete mismatch is glaringly apparent.

## **Evaluation and Assessment**

Now the search committee enters into the most crucial phase of its work: the evaluation and assessment of prospective candidates with the goal of finding the one whom God desires for your church. It is during this time that the committee most greatly needs its prayer partners to undergird them (see the section in chapter 2 on prayer and pastoral search).

As the search committee sits down to this task, it will no doubt be looking at an array of documents. Prospective candidates will develop their own resumes in their own style and format. Since this can be a little confusing, it is always best to receive initially information on the standard forms that are available from the Congregational Ministries Office of Church of God Ministries.<sup>2</sup> These standard forms are the "Minister's Information Form" (MIF) with evaluations.<sup>3</sup>

The MIF provides a concise overview of each minister and the attached "summary" offers a condensed compilation of evaluations that have been made about the minister from persons who best know his/her ministry. An MIF for each person you are considering can be obtained through your state or district office or directly from Congregational Ministries.

The matter of a minister's credentials and good standing in ministry should be of paramount concern to each and every congregation. Your church should desire to call a pastor who has undergone the careful scrutiny of his or her fellow ministers and received their endorsement and blessing in ministry. For this reason, your church should only consider candidates who can be verified to be in good and regular standing with the Church of God. Careful consultation with your advising minister or your state or district office of credentials is essential. On occasion, you may encounter a seemingly qualified pastor who is just entering the credentialing process or does not possess current Church of God credentials. Extreme caution is advised in such a case, and you should only proceed with such an individual if your Church of God state credentials agency has been thoroughly consulted and is in complete agreement with your proceeding to consider such an individual. If you cannot contact your state authority, be certain to consult with the Director of Congregational Ministries at Church of God Ministries in Anderson, Indiana.

As your committee considers each person, the fundamental question to ask is: "Is this the person God wants to serve our church?" as Keith Huttenlocker said, "The issue is not availability but suitability."<sup>4</sup> Your committee is trying to determine which person most completely and clearly matches the needs that you have for a minister. You will want to keep the results of any congregational survey you have keenly in mind as you read through MIFs and resumes. As you work remember that: "Perfect compatibility is probably unobtainable and unnecessary. Yet a likeness should be sought insofar as possible."<sup>5</sup>



Each search committee will devise its own method for narrowing the list of persons it is interested in pursuing. One approach might be to ask each member of the committee to take home the MIFs and resumes to study privately and personally, pray over, and review. Great care should be taken to remember the need for confidentiality and in fact, all MIFs and resumes should be returned by committee members after their careful review. After each member of the committee has prayerfully evaluated each name, he or she could privately make a list of their top three choices. When the committee reconvenes as a group, compile the individual priority lists to see the results. This is one way that the committee begins to come to consensus as to which one candidate they will recommend to the church for consideration.

The initial contact that the committee makes with finalists is important. The contact should be in the nature of a personal inquiry as opposed to a generic and impersonal letter. An initial phone contact or letter stating that your search committee has been reviewing names of persons whom they are considering for a pastoral position and are willing to consider prayerfully discussing the possibility of their interest. This is much better than a generic letter to a candidate stating, "Our church is seeking candidates for pastor and wondered if you would be interested in submitting a resume." The former conveys personal, prayerful interest. The latter suggests a general, impersonal process.

Your initial contact with prospective candidates will tell you whether or not they are interested and willing to have further discussion with you about the possibility of considering your pastoral opening. In making a call, take care to phone a pastor at home or, if speaking with a secretary, to identify yourself by name only and state that you wish to speak with the pastor about a personal, private matter. Always identify yourself immediately to the pastor and ask if he or she is free to speak with you or if there is some better time or way for you to make contact. Always inquire regarding the best way to make contact. If prospective candidates indicate that they are not interested, courteously thank them and conclude the conversation.

If the prospective candidate is interested, request that a resume be sent to you as well as an MIF from Church of God Congregational Ministries. At this point, you should also offer to send information about your church and community to the prospective pastor.<sup>6</sup>

Make certain to secure a comfortable setting for an interview with special attention to confidentiality. You may choose to meet at a church facility, at a more neutral setting, or even at a search committee member's home. Always begin the meeting with prayer and introductions. The prospective candidate will be better known by the committee than the candidate will know the committee. Take some time for each committee member to introduce himself or herself, to tell a little about whom they are, and to describe how they are involved in the life of the church.

While a time for spontaneous, impromptu questions and answers may arise during an interview, the committee should always be prepared to begin the interview with previously composed and well-considered questions. Interviews should include some consideration in each of the following areas:

- The *mission* philosophy of the candidate. What does he or she believe the mission of the church is or ought to be?
- What kind of *vision* would this person bring to your particular situation? What sort of goals would they suggest the church needs to adopt for its future ministry?
- What is their own *faith* perspective? Ask about their conversion and personal doctrinal positions especially relating to salvation, the work of the Holy Spirit and eschatology.
- What *social and political issues* do they care deeply about? This would include views about abortion, homosexuality, ecology, conscientious objection, and similar other matters.
- *Leadership style* is a critical area of consideration. Is the candidate more directive and assertive or more committed to group process and consensus building? Whatever a pastor perceives his or her leadership style to be, some time spent in dialogue about various issues will help to reveal to the committee the individual's actual leadership tendencies.
- Expectations about a *spouse's involvement* and role in the life of the church should be examined. (See appendix for one spouse's ideas in this area.)
- Always ask a pastor to share his or her *philosophy of ministry*. What does he or she understand to be the role and function of the pastor in the life of the church as well as the role and function of the laity?

There should be a meeting with the search committee at the beginning of the visit. Here the itinerary can be reviewed and details clarified among persons the candidate has already met previously. The committee can make certain that the accommodations are satisfactory. If the committee has not previously met or interviewed the candidate's spouse, this might be a good occasion to do so.

A meeting with the official church council, board of directors, or eldership is essential. In this setting specific financial issues related to compensation may be discussed and other aspects of how a working relationship would unfold may be examined.

A time of public worship with the entire congregation in which the prospective pastor may be invited to lead in prayer or read scripture as well as preach should be included.

Near the conclusion of the candidating visit, the search committee should again meet with the candidate and spouse to explain what the next steps are in the decision making process, answer lingering questions and openly share any impressions.

Following the candidating visit the church will vote on whether or not to call the candidate to serve as pastor. Church by-laws vary about when the vote will be taken and what the exact requirements are for a satisfactory call. Usually the decision will be made within one week. If the church by-laws require a one or two week notice to call a business meeting,

the search committee should work carefully with the church leadership structure to make certain the proper announcement is made in a timely manner so that a final decision can be made within one week of concluding the candidate's visit. In the actual meeting where a pastoral call is voted on, the chair of the search committee should be prepared to state the committee's favorable endorsement of the candidate to the church and offer the appropriate motion. Another member of the search committee should have agreed prior to the meeting to stand ready to second the motion. If there is any discussion on the motion, the entire search committee should be prepared to speak supportively of the motion and to answer any questions about the search process, except of course the revealing of confidences such as the attaching of a reference person's name to some particular statement.

Some churches will plan a vote to take place on the same day that the candidating visit concludes. While the advisability of this practice has been debated, it is unlikely that a longer lapse between visit and vote will change the results. In some instances an immediate vote maximizes participation and avoids vote influencing, which may be a desirable outcome in some potentially polarizing environments.

### **Follow Up**

Once a church has voted on a pastoral candidate, the search committee still has some important work to do. No matter what the results, it is their duty to help the church absorb the outcome.

If the church has called a new pastor, the search committee will usually work with the other church leaders to plan for a smooth transition and a dignified and appropriate installation service. The committee should immediately notify the candidate of the call and ascertain acceptance. It does happen occasionally that even after receiving a favorable vote a candidate will decline the call. If the pastorate has been filled, the search committee should also write a letter to all other interviewees, informing them that the process is complete and thanking them again for their interest.

If the church has voted not to call the recommended candidate or the candidate declines the call following a favorable vote, then the search committee returns to the assessment and evaluation process until it has another person ready to recommend.

If your work begins anew because of an unfavorable vote, the search committee needs to do some assessment. Why did the church not support your recommendation? If the answer is that the candidate faltered in some way – e.g., poor preaching, personally unappealing, some other unattractiveness – then the committee has to accept the situation and move on.

In some cases there are other reasons why the church votes negatively on a candidate such as:

There was distrust of the process. Persons think that the search committee was improperly formed, the congregation was uninformed, or they felt pressured to accept a candidate. There is a group within the church who supports a favored candidate – e.g., an interim pastor, a staff associate, a relative or locally popular independent minister – and they are determined to block a call to anyone else.

If one of these situations exist, the search committee should approach the church leadership. Together they should devise a plan to deal with resolving the matter that has created the obstacle. Until this conflict is resolved the pastoral search should be postponed. While this may prove discouraging, the committee should enter into earnest prayer, confident that in his time God will work out the difficulty and the church will move forward to call a new pastor.

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1. Credentials Office, Congregational Ministries Team, Church of God Ministries, 1-800-848-2464, ext. 2109, or [credentials@chog.org](mailto:credentials@chog.org)
  2. Church of God Ministries, P.O. Box 2420, Anderson, Indiana 4601-2420. Telephone: (800) 848-2464. *Yearbook of the Church of God* (Anderson, Ind: Church of God Ministries, 2003) 37
  3. See appendices for examples.
  4. Keith Huttenlocker, *A Handbook for Pulpit Committees* (Anderson, Ind: Warner Press, 1991) 28.
  5. *Ibid.*, 28
  6. See Appendix for a suggested "Congregational Resume."
  7. *Op cit.*, 30

## **THE BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION PACKAGE**

By Susan Tatarka and Jeff Jenness

### **Introduction and Key Concepts**

This chapter is a resource, intended to provide recommendations and guidance for the pastoral search committee responsible for setting benefits and compensation for pastors.

Knowing the pastor's financial needs is very important; striving to provide the best compensation package and structure is vital. Inadequate compensation and benefits may discourage the prospective candidate. A well-planned and structured package can bless and release the pastor to excel in ministry.

An important distinction between the "cost of a minister" and the "cost of ministry" is essential for a committee to provide adequate funding for a healthy minister and healthy ministry. Differentiating between these two concepts makes it possible for ministry expense to be properly covered and, at the same time, the minister's benefits and compensation package is fairly evaluated.

There are many aspects to the benefit/compensation package not the least of which is being aware and informed of the IRS regulations set aside for clergy. (Resources to help in this arena are listed at the end of this chapter.)

### **Guidelines**

The following are helpful guidelines relative to benefits and compensation for your church to consider when calling a pastor.

### **Who Is a Minister—According to the IRS**

To begin, it is important to understand who a minister is from the perspective of IRS rules – and why it matters. The following five factors are used by the IRS in determining if a person is a minister for federal tax purposes. For the IRS a minister is one who

- Is licensed, commissioned, or ordained,
- Administers the sacraments,
- Conducts religious worship,
- Manages responsibilities in the church,
- Is considered to be a religious leader in the church.

The first factor—**licensed, commissioned, or ordained**—it seems to be required by the IRS with additional emphasis on at least a majority of the other four factors. Clearly, the greater the number of factors met, the stronger the case is that the person deserves ministerial status. This is an important issue as it determines the person's eligibility for the housing allowance. Additionally, a person who is a minister as established by the above factors is considered self-employed for Social Security purposes. (An eligible minister can also exempt him or herself from Social Security coverage under a very narrow set of guidelines, should they choose.)

### **Benefits/Compensation**

With that background, let's now address the areas of benefits and compensation.

Churches should clearly approach the task of evaluating the pay package and benefits as "cost of the minister" as opposed to "cost of ministry." These two categories should be kept distinct and separate from each other for proper planning and church budgeting. Separating these two concepts will assure fair evaluation of the minister's pay package and benefits.

All too often churches lump together into a single concept or budget line item the pastor's salary and benefits as well as those professional/ministry expenses related to the work of ministry. When a church gives a minister a "lump sum" from the budget and says, "break it down as you wish," it has made assumptions that the amount is adequate with little or no evaluation. Often, this "lump sum" approach includes "costs of ministry," such as business mileage expense and expenses related to conferences, the purchase of certain ministry items that benefit the church, and hospitality expenses. Such ministry expenses should be separated into an administrative area of the budget and evaluated yearly for its adequacy relative to carrying out ministry functions.

The minister's compensation and benefits evaluation is a process separate from the work of ministry (professional and business) expense area and should always include discussion and review of providing the following:

- Fair and adequate pay
- Attention to a portion of the salary designated as a *minister's housing allowance*
- Health insurance coverage
- Pension/retirement benefit
- Vacation and paid time off

In addition, benefits such as life insurance and disability coverage's should be considered as finances permit.

In establishing the pastors' compensation package, the committee should evaluate several key areas:

- Suggested salary ranges for churches of similar size and budget. (The *Compensation Handbook for Church Staff* is updated annually by Church Law and Tax Report (704-821-3845) and is a very helpful resource.)
- The pastor's job description and the breadth of responsibilities.
- Compensation of professionals and clergy in the geographic area.
- Proper business/ministry expense coverage established independent of compensation.

The guiding question for the committee should be, "Is the compensation structured in a way so as to be fair and attractive, and will it be an inducement for the pastor to stay?"

Before setting the base wage and housing allowance, the board or committee should consider proper coverage of business/ministry expense areas and benefits. By leaving the cash compensation elements to the end of the evaluation, the review of such is more likely to be careful and comprehensive.

It is always appropriate to consider other benefit areas, such as life insurance, disability insurance, and paid time off for such things as preaching or leadership opportunities outside the local church. When considering benefits it is helpful to acquire information from employers in the area in which the church is located. Occasionally churches make a comparison of benefits and compensation packages of local educational personnel.

It is always helpful to obtain outside survey data from churches of similar size and budget. The Board of Pensions of the Church of God (800-844-8983) can help you secure this data.

### **Stumbling Blocks**

There are key areas that often become stumbling blocks for lay leaders. One of the easiest for a board or committee to stumble over is thinking about the pastor's compensation structure in the same way they think of their own situation. This is a real danger; there are significant differences in the pastoral compensation package versus a secular position. Here are three important examples:

1. **Social Security.** Lay leaders who work for a local employer have one-half of their Social Security/Medicare tax paid by their employer under the law. The other half is a required deduction from salary; hence, it is not seen. As a result lay leaders may forget that a minister is considered self-employed for Social Security purposes and must pay 100% of the tax. If this is not carefully considered and a proper offset provided, the minister's pay is negatively impacted.
2. **Business Expenses.** Most secular employers cover the costs employees incur in carrying out their work on behalf of the company. Rarely does a company expect employees to cover work expenses out of their own pockets. When a church provides only a single budget area of dollars for the pastor and expects the pastor to break down the package, including ministry expenses, the process is faulty. It does not enable the board or committee to analyze the components of the compensation package to assure that they are adequate. Expenses should be evaluated and,

perhaps, identified in the administrative area of the church budget, away from the compensation area of the budget in order to avoid confusion.

- 3. Housing Allowance.** Board and committee members should have a working knowledge of the minister's housing allowance rules in the IRS Code. If the church provides a parsonage, the value of the "free" residence to the minister is not subject to federal income tax. Keep in mind, however, that the parsonage value is subject to Social Security tax. Fewer churches today provide a parsonage and many ministers own their own homes. If this is the case, the church may designate a housing allowance for the minister. It is helpful for the minister to provide a dollar estimate of housing expenses to the board for the coming year for the housing allowance designation. Under the Clergy Housing Allowance Clarification Act of 2002, ministers may claim as housing allowance the least of three thresholds: (1) the amount designated, (2) actual housing expenses, or (3) an amount not to exceed the fair rental market value of the home, fully furnished, plus utility costs. It is the minister's responsibility to keep good records relative to the housing allowance.

Fair and attractive pay plus a good benefit package helps free ministers from financial struggle and allows them to concentrate on ministry. When lay leaders care enough to take the extra time to research proper pay and benefits under these suggested guidelines, the result is most often appreciated by the minister.

The church should pay moving expenses, if at all possible. If handled properly under an accountable expense plan, most costs of moving a pastor can be paid by the church without tax implications to the pastor.

When the pastor is called, and compensation and benefits are structured and agreed upon, the church needs to have in place a consistent process that bridges the changing members of boards and committees. It is recommended that an annual review process of the pastor's performance be made and proper attention be given annually to the compensation package. It is appropriate to provide salary increases based on cost of living adjustments along with merit (i.e. good performance and years of service).

## **Resources**

There are some helpful resources that can assist the church in these areas:

### ***The Compensation Handbook for Church Staff***

Updated annually, this inexpensive publication provides national survey findings for churches of various sizes and demographics. It can be ordered from: Christian Ministry Resources, P.O. Box 1098, Matthews, NC, 28106.

### ***Church of God Compensation Guidelines***

Updated annually, this is a general guide to stimulate lay-leaders and church board members in their thinking relative to compensation packages for ministers. Contact the Board of Pensions for a current copy (800-844-8983 or email: [info@cogpension.org](mailto:info@cogpension.org)).

### ***Hey Lay Leader ... Let's Talk Some Hard-nosed Business!***



This narrative written by the executive secretary of the Board of Pensions of the Church of God speaks in a heart-felt way from one layperson to other laypersons serving the local church. It addresses our responsibility as lay-leaders to provide for our pastors.

***Ministerial Salary Breakdown and Taxes***

Daniel D. Busby publishes annually two helpful guides: *Preparing Your Minister's Tax Return* and *Reporting Procedures for Churches*. These guides, in limited quantities, are made available each year at no cost by the Board of Pensions.

***Helpful Web Sites***

[www.cogpension.org](http://www.cogpension.org) (Board of Pensions of the Church of God)

[www.newminister.com](http://www.newminister.com) (Helpful information on clergy issues and taxes)

[www.clonline.com](http://www.clonline.com) (Web site of Christian Ministry Resources)

## **PASTOR AND FAMILY ASSIMILATION**

By Rebecca F. New-Edson

### **Caring for the New Pastor's Family**

The new pastor's family may truly feel as Moses did when he said, "I am a stranger in a strange land." No matter how convinced they were about God's will in the move, some doubt and uncertainty about the rightness of their decision is predictable. This is particularly true in the first few weeks after the move to a new pastorate – whether it is the position of senior or associate pastor. A thoughtful congregation can do much to alleviate those fears. A few simple gestures of kindness will facilitate the transition. The following suggestions may help generate creative ways of helping the new pastor's family as they adjust to relocation.

### **Prayer**

A calendar of prayer will under gird the family and help them to know they are being supported during this exciting but anxious time. A few weeks before the pastor arrives, allow members of the congregation to covenant to pray for the family on specific days of the first month the family is there. As the parishioners dedicate themselves to this task, they will be reminded of their responsibility in helping the family make a smooth transition. When the family arrives, present them with a list of names and photographs of people who will be praying for them each day of that first month they are with their new congregation.

### **Getting Off on the Right Foot**

It is critical that the new pastor's family feels welcome from the first day they set foot in their new surroundings. Arranging and paying for the move, making sure electricity, water, and telephone are all on when they arrive, and that garbage and recycling removal are arranged are thoughtful provisions.

A floral arrangement or new plant is a welcome sight for the new family as they enter their new lodgings. Whether they are in a parsonage, renting for a short period of time, or buying a house, a basket of fruit is also a well-received statement of thoughtfulness.

A kitchen stocked with basic perishable and nonperishable foods helps the family as they adjust to their new surroundings. It is a greeting to a tired family that has spent the last few

weeks preparing physically and emotionally for a new environment. It is also a thoughtful idea to arrange dinner to be brought to the family during the first week after the move. Providing meals shows sensitivity to their needs. Once the family has been greeted and the food dropped off, however, thoughtful parishioners will allow them some privacy to begin to settle in. It would be thoughtless to plan to stay for the evening.

Allow the pastor and family a chance to settle in and unpack their belongings. There will be time for fellowship at a later date, but the first month should give the family space to empty boxes, get children settled in school, and arrange the other details that are inherent in a move.

Inviting the staff and family to individual houses for a meal is often a welcome gesture of respect and appreciation. Assure the family, however, that if they need to stay only a short time it will not be taken as an offense.

### **The Single Pastor**

Treat the single pastor with the same respect and thoughtfulness. Do not be afraid of welcoming the single pastor—either associate or senior pastor. Treat the person with the same respect you would a married pastor. Many people presume a single person has a more flexible schedule than a married person. Do not assume the single pastor will babysit or do other tasks you would not ask a married pastor to perform.

Often the single pastor is a younger clergy member, just entering the ministry. This young pastor is still deserving of the deference you would give to an older, married pastor. Do not presume to try to arrange a date for your pastor.

### **Helping the Pastor's Family Settle In**

#### ***Welcome and Befriending the Pastor's Family***

It is difficult to relocate. Many pastors and their families indicate that the first five or six weeks after a move are very stressful in the life of the new pastoral family. Anything that can be done to alleviate this stress will endear the congregation to them. If the church has a pictorial directory and a telephone list, provide one for the pastor. If a history of the congregation is available, the provision of one is also very helpful.

#### ***Welcome Packet***

Once the pastor has accepted the call to a specific congregation, send a well-prepared welcome packet to the family. This will familiarize them with the community and allow them time to plan their impending move. (Often Chambers of Commerce in local communities have just what you need for this packet.)

A list of several real estate companies in the area is helpful to the family who must buy a new house or rent an apartment. This gives the opportunity to choose carefully their neighborhood and the school where they will send their children, if applicable. Be aware some families prefer to be in the same neighborhood as the church, while other families prefer the privacy of locating a few miles from the church.

A well-stocked community portion of the packet will have a city map, library brochure, information regarding hospital and post office locations. If the family has chosen a residence, include such things as garbage removal day and time, banks, local schools and day-care centers (as appropriate). Passes to local golf courses, area parks, and a family membership to the YMCA communicate to the pastor that the church is both supportive and committed to holding the pastor accountable for taking care of physical exercise and alleviating stress.

It helps to provide a city magazine, if available. Even smaller towns occasionally publish a local journal. If there is a local newspaper, secure a subscription for the first year to be sent to the pastor's family. Also, include in this packet gift certificates for local businesses, such as restaurants, bakeries, and florist shops.

### ***Child Care Needs***

Often the new pastor and spouse are invited to many functions the first few weeks in the new community. Pastors with small children have a difficult time finding child-care in a new location. Provide a list of congregational and non-congregational babysitters and child care centers, as well as adequate references for the family. Include in this list, telephone numbers and locations, as well as ages of the individual babysitters. Also provide fees for service, if available.

### ***Physician and Professionals Recommendations***

A thorough list of physicians, dentists, and optometrists is helpful to the new pastoral family. Include specialists in the medical field (e.g., chiropractor, pediatrician, gynecologist, orthopedic specialist, podiatrist, and ophthalmologist).

It is also good to recommend a plumber, electrician, and heating and air-conditioning company. Some congregations are blessed to have many small business owners or local professional people. If this is the case, make sure the pastor is aware of these people. If not, it would be helpful to compile a list of local services and introduce the pastor to a few of the community businessmen and women. Also, remember that some pastors may feel uncomfortable contacting those within their own congregation.

### ***Introductions***

If there is a multiple-staff ministry, an early responsibility of the congregation is to make sure the pastor or associate pastor has plenty of opportunities to get acquainted with the rest of the staff. A reception for the staff and spouses, or a dinner in a private room, is necessary during the candidating weekend. Although a senior pastor may prefer to choose the staff, each church has different guidelines. If there are other staff members, therefore, it is critical to the process of adjustment to provide occasions for the whole staff and their families to make initial acquaintances.

Make it a point to introduce the new pastor to other area pastors, both within the Church of God and in surrounding denominations. Encourage state involvement by introducing your new pastor to the state coordinator and office staff members.

### ***Helping the Pastor Care for Self***

New pastors are particularly vulnerable to trying to settle in so quickly that they neglect to take their days off or to have a date night with their spouse. It is the responsibility of the congregation to insist that the pastor do self-care on a regular basis. The pressures of pastoring are of such a nature that if the congregation does not require the pastor to take care of the whole self, physical, mental, emotional, then spiritual health will suffer.

This is not only biblical, it is necessary for the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health of the pastor. A weekly day off, a monthly prayer day away from the church facility, a quarterly weekend away, and a yearly vacation of at least four weeks should be written into the job description of the new pastor or associate pastor. This also serves the congregation. Since the demands of ministry are often constant, the congregation that is selfish with these benefits is cheating itself as well as its pastor.

A minimum of two days away every quarter for study and prayer is necessary if the pastor is to keep up with the administrative tasks of pastoring and to be consistent in quality of sermons. It is also the wise congregation that insists the pastor takes a week away each year as a study retreat. To insure adequate provisions are made, planning for a sabbatical during the seventh year of a pastorate is the congregation's responsibility from the first year.

It is not the responsibility of the pastor to fill the pulpit every Sunday of the year. The church must make it possible and easy for the pastor to arrange time away. The church budget should provide monies for pulpit filling for those times when the pastor is gone.

### ***Continuing Education***

The pastor must continue to seek continuing education in order to have an effective ministry. Adequate funds for professional development should be provided in the benefits on a yearly basis. This will include money for conferences or retreats, including mileage and accommodation, and a library fund.

### ***The Pastor's Spouse***

It is critical to note here that unless the pastor's spouse has also been hired, she or he is *not* a member of the staff. Although a pastor's spouse often takes a very active role in the ministry, it should not be assumed that the church is getting "two for the price of one." Just as every pastor is unique, so every spouse has a different philosophy of their personal role in ministry. To presume that the spouse will fill in any gaps is to demean that person and the ministry to which God has called him or her.

### ***Benefits***

The Church of God has a pension plan that is second to none in retirement planning for a minister. The church should participate with the Church of God Board of Pensions by including in their salary package a monthly payment to the pastor's pension fund.

Medical costs are perhaps the most worrisome part of any family's benefits. Provide adequate insurance for the new pastor's family. To lessen that anxiety by providing health insurance appropriate for the size and age of the pastor's family is to care for that family. A comprehensive health package will include dental, optometric, and mental health care. It may be possible to provide a medical remuneration in the budget, to be used to provide for costs not covered by the health insurance. For churches with limited financial resources, a major medical plan should still be a minimum provision.

### ***Pastoral/Advisory Team***

Most churches will benefit from the presence of a pastoral advisory team (PAT). This team of three to five people is formed for the purpose of providing emotional and spiritual support for the pastor. The team is comprised of both men and women of varying ages, who are respected by the congregation as spiritually mature individuals of integrity. Having spiritual gifts of discernment, faith, prayer, and/or exhortation, they exist to meet on a regular basis to pray for and with the pastor, and gently confront the pastor on issues of concern. While the PAT has the ear of the congregation and is able to communicate to the pastor situations it deems potentially explosive, its main role is to encourage the pastor and act as prayer warriors for the shepherd of the congregation. The first PAT for a new pastor will probably be chosen by the congregation for a term of one year. After that time, the pastor and leadership team or council should ratify a new PAT, which may or may not include any of the original members. This team and subsequent teams would serve for approximately three years.

It is important to note this is a spiritual position and not a governing team. They are to be the Aaron's and Hur's, holding up the pastor's arms as the spiritual battles are fought through the year.

### ***Pastor's Appreciation Sunday – Remembering the Family too!***

Most churches feel they are not able to remunerate the pastor with a salary as large as the congregation would like. There are, however, times of the year that they can show their love and appreciation. Even a small, financially challenged church can think of ways to celebrate the Pastor's Appreciation Month each October. Watch for mailings from Church of God Ministries about this event; but do not expect the pastor to take the lead in his or her own appreciation.

- A night away at a local motel or bed and breakfast
- A reception or dinner in honor of the pastor's family
- Baked goods
- Symphony or theater tickets
- A gift to a Galatians 6:6, Intimate Life Retreat
  
- Gift certificates to the local mall or bookstore
- A card shower
- A wheel of prayer for the pastor and family for the next year
- Paid reservation to the pastor's wives' retreat

Pastor's spouses are often the most overlooked – and the loneliest – people in the congregation. Do not forget the pastor's spouse!

Hundreds of other suggestions are available on the web by searching for pastor's appreciation month (e.g., [www.chog.org/EVENTS/Clergyappreciation.asp](http://www.chog.org/EVENTS/Clergyappreciation.asp), Parsonage.org, pastorappreciation.org, and so forth).

## A GOOD START

By John Boedeker

These suggestions are simply thought-starters for the congregation. Each congregation is unique, but a smooth transition is more likely if the congregation plans ahead to make the pastor and family feel welcome, not just at the beginning of the pastorate, but throughout the year.

In his book, *The Church of God at the Crossroads*, Dr. Gilbert Stafford discusses a fundamental choice that we are making about our future. Will we be a Church of God group of independent churches with little connectivity or a group of interdependent churches, partnering together to advance the kingdom of God?

One key area in which that question is regularly answered is in the selection process of a new pastor for a local church.

In the Church of God we have emphasized the call of God on the life of a pastor and believed that the Holy Spirit would bring called pastors and seeking churches together. We also realize, however, that God uses human instruments in the search process and this most often takes the form of a pastoral search committee.

But even beyond the search committee, there are many persons and offices that can facilitate the process and help to insure a successful search. It is important that partnerships become resources for the very best pastoral leadership for the local church.

- **National:** The Congregational Ministries Team of Church of God Ministries can provide resumes, some screening of candidates, and wise counsel about the process.
- **State and regions:** States that have a coordinator/state minister offer pulpit and search committees valuable assistance. They can help you particularly in two important ways: in understanding the “search process” and with recommendations and reference checks. There are some states that are now conducting criminal checks, and psychological tests for potential pastors. All of this is to protect and help the local church find a pastor who is God’s person for the church. In some areas these are credentialed coordinators and committees. If a state is not organized with a state coordinator office, check with the state credentials chair for assistance in the process.
- **Wise counselors:** You might also be greatly helped by an experienced pastor who is credentialed in the Church of God and is geographically close enough to be a consultant to your search committee.



Selecting a new pastor is a God-directed process but your partnership with others can make or break the process.

# APPENDICES

## **Advice from a Pastor's Spouse**

**By Judy Mishler**

- After the initial call to a pastoral candidate who has expressed interest in the position, send an information packet about the church, the town, and the region, a church pictorial directory is nice, too.
- Be sure that the spouse is invited to the meetings.

- Meeting at a nice restaurant at a somewhat secluded table is nice – especially if it is a “halfway” spot between where the search committee and the prospective pastor live.
- If it is too great a distance to drive, flight arrangements should be extended to the spouse as well.
- If a meeting is set up at the church, make sure the room is ready: comfortable setting, comfortable temperature, and refreshments available.
- The kindness of paying mileage is always appreciated.
- Before or after the meeting, take the couple on a tour of the facility.
- Talking about salary is always difficult. Committees should be sensitive to the comfort level. Many, on both sides of the table, are uncomfortable talking about salary, but it must be included as a part of the earlier “information package” or given as early as possible. Some candidates wish to discuss finances later in the process so that their call is not based on financial considerations.
- Smile a lot when you talk!
- Be sure to ask the spouse what her or his interests in ministry are.
- Make it clear when the meeting is over that the candidate knows he or she will be contacted in a specific period of time – then, be sure to do it.
- If a parsonage is part of the package, a tour would be appreciated.

## **Caring for Your New Pastor – A Checklist**

**By David I. Shroul**

*Your new pastor will be here soon; here is a checklist for the church leadership to consider in anticipation of your new pastor's arrival:*

- Learn the names of your new pastor's family.
- Begin to pray for your new pastor's spouse, and children by name

## **CHURCH PREPARATION**

- Church clean up
  - Pull the weeds
  - Paint needed areas
  - Replace light bulbs
  - Complete work projects
  - Clean parking lot
  - Replace, repair, and fix anything that needs it

## **PASTOR PREPARATION**

- Clean up the pastor's office
- Are all of these necessary items ready for your pastor?
  - Desk
  - Phone/fax
  - Computer/printer
  - Bookshelves
  - Secretary – your pastor is too expensive to be a secretary
- Pastor's pay package
  - Base salary set
  - Insurance – health, dental, vision
  - Pension – 11% of base salary
  - Travel and meeting expense (state camp meeting, annual state association meeting, ministers retreat, regional ministerial meetings, North American Convention)
  - Educational opportunities, conferences, and seminars
- Time off
  - Vacation (four weeks)
  - Days off (two a week)
  - Home phone calls
- The care of your pastor
  - Sometimes call your pastor as a friend
  - Invite the pastor's family to join your family on fun outings
  - When they arrive, let them be friends and not just the "pastor's family"
- The responsibilities of your pastor's spouse
  - To support the pastor
  - To raise godly children
  - To be an active layperson
  - *Not* to be an unpaid member of the pastoral staff

## **REMEMBER, by the Holy Spirit –**

- You reviewed the resumes.
- Your search committee selected a candidate.
- You called your new pastor.
- God called this pastor to your congregation.

Therefore, receive your new pastor as your spiritual leader and shepherd – not as your employee.

- Pray for your new pastor and family.
- Help them to get settled into your community.
- Realize that your church is going to change.
- Commit yourself to follow your new pastor's leadership.

### **Congregational Résumé**

Name of Church \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Web site Address \_\_\_\_\_

This congregation was started in \_\_\_\_\_(year).

The following pastors have served this congregation:

Name	Served From	To
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

(If more space is needed, complete the list on a blank sheet of paper.)

Population of our city (community, if rural) \_\_\_\_\_

Facilities:

- (A) Sanctuary seats \_\_\_\_\_ people.
- (B) Sunday school space for \_\_\_\_\_ people.
- (C) Parking space for \_\_\_\_\_ cars.
- (D) Church site is approximately \_\_\_\_\_ acres.

Average Sunday Morning Worship Attendance for the past 10 years.

19\_\_ 19\_\_ 19\_\_ 19\_\_ 19\_\_ 19\_\_ 19\_\_ 20\_\_ 20\_\_ 20\_\_  
\_\_\_\_

The number of regular attendees who live within the following distances from our church building are:

\_\_\_\_ 0-3 miles      \_\_\_\_ 3-5 miles      \_\_\_\_ 5-10 miles      \_\_\_\_ 10+ miles

Number of people baptized in the past five years: \_\_\_\_\_

Demographic Profile

Age	Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Male	Female
Under 5	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5 – 9	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10 – 14	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
15 – 19	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
20 – 24	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
25 – 34	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
35 – 44	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
45 – 54	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
55 – 65	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
65 +	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Our congregation supports:

(A) World Ministry Advance (at what level) \_\_\_\_\_

(B) State Ministries (at what level) \_\_\_\_\_

The following program ministries are presently being carried out in our congregation:  
(Example: Sunday school, youth, and so forth)

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(Feel free to attach further explanations to this document.)

Our congregation has a vision to:

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(Feel free to attach further explanations to this document.)

Enclosed you will find:

- Current church budget
- Current financial report
- Past year's financial report
- Past year's annual report
- Church bylaws

References (three ministers and three laypersons who do not worship presently at our church):

**MINISTERS**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

**LAYPERSONS**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Covenant Sample #1  
Covenant for Interim Pastoral Ministry**

\_\_\_\_\_ (name of congregation) covenants with \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (name of interim pastor) to serve as interim senior pastor with the following  
conditions and covenants:

The time period begins \_\_\_\_\_ (date) and ends \_\_\_\_\_ (date). This time period  
is negotiable with the mutual consent of the congregation and the interim pastor. It is un-



derstood that at such time as the congregation secures the permanent services of a senior pastor, the services of the interim pastor will end.

***Together We Will –***

- Seek to maintain stability within the mission and ministry of this congregation;
- Come to understand and appreciate the history and heritage of this congregation and its unique call to be God's people in this place;
- Seek to identify who we are now and what it is we understand God is calling us to be in the future;
- Empower the present lay leadership for their ministry, and nurture and welcome leadership gifts from all members of the congregation;
- Strengthen the congregation's link locally, to the state office, and to the national office in order that we might have access to necessary resources for ministry and for seeking God's person for senior pastor;
- Prepare for the call and arrival of a new pastor.

***The Interim Pastor Will –***

- Study carefully and preach and teach the word of God faithfully and, with the pastoral staff, arrange for pulpit supply in the event of an absence;
- Work with the staff in planning and conducting regular services of public worship;
- Provide pastoral care, both personally and through involvement of lay members, to persons of the congregation according to needs;
- Give pastoral support to boards and committees and to organizations and activities of the congregation, as time allows;
- Work in a team ministry with other members of the pastoral staff and lay leaders;
  
- Officiate at communion, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and other services as appropriate and requested;
- Represent this church in the wider community.

***We, the Congregation, Will –***

- Receive our interim pastor, uphold him in prayer, love, respect, and good will;
- Commit ourselves to the gospel of Christ by faithful participation in worship, learning, and fellowship activities;

- Commit ourselves to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ and agree to speak the truth in love in every situation;
- Work diligently toward the call of a new senior pastor;
- In honor of \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate full time, three quarter, or half time service or another description) service, we will support the ministry of the interim pastor financially in the following ways:
  - A. Pay a weekly salary of \$\_\_\_\_\_;
  - B. Pay a housing allowance of \$\_\_\_\_\_ or provide appropriate housing;
  - C. Pay a weekly expense allowance or reimburse professional expenses;
  - D. Provide for employee benefits including: \_\_\_\_\_;
  - E. Grant one week of paid vacation for each three months of interim service;
  - F. Provide one week of travel or study time per six months of interim service;
  - G. Provide up to two weeks or paid sick leave, if needed.

This covenant is subject to regular review by the parties involved and may be modified or changed by mutual consent.

AGREEMENT ISSUED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Legal name of congregation)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of church official)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

AGREEMENT ACCEPTED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of interim pastor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of interim pastor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

(This form is used by Jerry Grubbs; reproduced with slight editorial changes.)

**Covenant Sample #2  
Interim Ministry –  
A Personalized Statement of Understandings**

Date

Mrs. Josaphine Doe, Chair  
Pastoral Search Committee  
Trinity Church of God  
Centerville, USA

Dear Josaphine:

Thanks for the invitation and opportunity to serve with the Trinity Church of God of Centerville. Please express to the pastoral search committee our appreciation for the thoughtful way you have related to us.

As you have suggested, it is best for the church and all of us to have some written statement of understanding about the responsibility Laura and I will assume with your congregation. I do not recall that we spoke of a title for the assignment but interim pastor is often used and that will be sufficient for this statement, though you may choose some other designation.

The elements of the interim pastor ministry, as I understand them and which I have agreed to meet, are:

We will be in Centerville three days and three nights each week. The options may be kept open at the discretion of the committee, but for now we will usually plan to travel to Centerville on Friday morning and travel back to Anderson on Monday morning. Options include travel to Centerville on Thursday evening and back on Sunday evening and an extension of the time to four overnight stays if it is determined by the committee that, on occasion, an extended stay would be beneficial.

- The interim pastor will speak for the Sunday morning worship service.
- Laura plans to accompany Oral nearly all weekends but may have different obligations on a few weekends.
- The interim pastor will be available for, and may initiate, meetings with the other member of the pastoral staff. This may occasionally take the form of a dinner at a local restaurant on Friday or Saturday evening. A Monday morning breakfast with the pastoral staff would be desirable.
- The interim pastor will be available for meetings with the pastoral search committee, at their discretion. The interim pastor will meet with other leadership groups of the congregation as needed and as schedule permit.
- The interim pastor will be available to lead a consultation and visioning session for leaders of the congregation, if needed and requested.
- The interim pastor will speak for or teach in a Sunday evening service, class, or welcoming class, as requested and scheduled to do so.
- Oral and Laura will often accept invitations to visit socially in homes or to dine out with members of the congregation but prefer to make their own social schedule.
- When a prospective pastor is present to speak on a weekend, the Withrows will not travel to Centerville.

- The pastoral search committee and the interim pastor will be mutually responsible to notify each other two weeks in advance if any changes are made in the speaking schedule, the worship services, or other weekend meetings.
- The interim pastor will be available for conversations with pastors or lay leaders during the week by telephone (765-000-000) or e-mail ([XXX@aol.com](mailto:XXX@aol.com)).

The Centerville Church will provide comfortable lodging for the Withrows for the nights of their assignment in Centerville.

The Centerville Church will provide an honorarium of \$XXXX for each Sunday that the Withrows are in Centerville. Also, travel mileage between Anderson, Indiana, and Centerville, and while in Centerville, will be reimbursed at \$0.XX per mile.

The Centerville Church through its treasurer will designate the honorarium as housing allowance in keeping with the provisions for parsonage allowance in the income tax laws.

The assignment as interim pastor will begin the weekend of June 3 and will continue for successive weekends. An exception: the Withrows are hosts for a family gathering on Sunday, June 17. (The Youth Fellowship is responsible for the worship service on that weekend.)

The committee and the interim pastor assume that a call will be given to a senior pastor by the end of the summer. When a senior pastor is called the committee and the interim will plan for the termination of this temporary relationship. If a senior pastor is not called before the fall months, the committee will have the option of securing other persons for interim leadership.

Josaphine, I think that the statements above cover the understandings expressed in our meeting on Sunday, April 15. You will, of course, add statements if any of the understandings you have are not included.

Our final decision has not been made about the class reunion picnic in Charleston, West Virginia. It is probably that we will not go to the meeting; if we do, we will arrive in Centerville Saturday evening, June 9, and stay until Monday, June 11.

We look forward to an enjoyable time in your fellowship and an effective ministry.

Sincerely,  
Oral Withrow

### **Congregational Profile (Model)**

*The following is an actual congregational profile used in pastoral searches at Park Place Church of God, Anderson, Indiana. It is used with permission.*

#### **The Position of Senior Pastor • Park Place Church of God • Anderson, Indiana**

*Park Place Church of God, Anderson, Indiana, invites applications for the Senior Pastor position on its church staff. The sections of this Search Packet include (1) information about the position, resources available, a statement of desirable characteristics as well as a listing of primary responsibilities and activities; (2) a "Snap Shot," containing information about Park Place Church of God – its roots, organizational structure, staff, present ministries, and aspira-*

tions for the future; and (3) the method by which an application may be submitted. This Search Packet was initiated by the Senior Pastor Search Committee, supported by the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, and approved by the Church Council.

### **Desirable Characteristics and Abilities**

The Search Committee, with the support of the Church Council, has established the following listing of characteristics and abilities desired for the Senior Pastor position. These characteristics and abilities are understood best within the context of the “Snap Shot” document attached.

**Personal Character and Commitment** – Possesses a steadfast devotion to the person, principles, and lifestyles of Jesus Christ evidenced by consistent Christian conduct; the practice of the disciplines of faith; growth in biblical understandings; and a demonstrated commitment to the Church as the Body of Christ. Balances professional obligations with personal and family time.

**Ministry Vision** – Possesses a ministry vision consistent with the vision and core values of Park Place Church of God and with the teachings, practices, and values of the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana).

**Worship Leadership** – Is able to offer consistent high quality preaching that is intellectually challenging and focused on spiritual formation; is willing to invite guest speakers into the pulpit.

**Academic and Personal Preparation** – Undergraduate degree required; Master of Divinity or other appropriate graduate degree is strongly desired. Gives evidence of ongoing preparation and growth in intellectual and spiritual life.

**Leadership/Management Style** – is an energetic, sensitive, and confident person who views him/herself as a team leader with both staff and congregation. Demonstrated management style is that of enabling, equipping, and motivating others to participate in ministry. Displays understanding for and commitment to listening and building trust and credibility with the congregation before suggesting major change.

**Caring/Relationship-Oriented** – Views self as a co-walker on the path to spiritual maturing and aspires to work and live in community with others. Functions as shepherd, providing guidance, encouragement, and comfort. Recognizes and empathizes with the diverse needs of the congregation coupled with the ability to call the congregation to unity. Ability to act as bridge-builder within the congregation.

**Outreach** – Demonstrated commitment to global and community outreach, including support for missions projects. Committed to joining the church in proactive partnership with the Park Place community and in finding ways to serve it.

### **Responsibilities and Activities Presently Envisioned**

The Search Committee, with the support of the Church Council, has established the following listing of responsibilities and activities desired for the Senior Pastor position. These responsibilities and activities are understood best within the context of the “Snap Shot” document attached.

- Prepares and delivers sermons.
- Coordinates leadership of public worship experiences.
- Assigns or invites other staff ministers or guest speakers to preach or otherwise participate in leadership of worship.
- Coordinates the work of both pastoral staff and managers of clerical and property services.
- Leads the meetings of the pastoral staff.
- Participates in meetings of Church Council, Staff-Parish Relations Committee, and other boards/committees as needed and mutually agreed.
- Encourages participation of the congregation in community service, and in local, state, national, and international ministries.
- Leads in the initiation and implementation of long-range planning.
- Engages in continuing education in consultation with the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.
- Assumes responsibility, in concert with other pastoral staff, for visitation, weddings, funerals, baptisms, baby dedications, personal counseling, and other special events.
- Participates in budget development and management.

### **OUR ASPIRATIONS – *A Traditional Church; An Aspiring Church***

Park Place Church of God has a distinguished heritage, a challenging present, and a hopeful future. For over ninety-three years our people have served Christ faithfully in the Anderson area, and, through its ministries and stewardship, around the world. We are a gathering of persons committed to becoming God’s people in the world and to continual transformation, renewal, and ministry to a needy world.

**Our Mission** – Park Place Church of God seeks to be God’s covenant people, an inclusive fellowship under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, who:

CELEBRATE the presence and love of God in worship  
NOURISH persons in faith and discipleship; and  
REACH OUT to people with Christ’s love.

**Our Vision** – As a celebrative, nurturing, and compassionate people, we seek

to introduce new persons to Christ (Evangelism)  
to create a Christian community that nurtures a sense of belonging  
(Fellowship/Hospitality)  
to prepare persons to follow Christ (Discipleship)  
to offer Christ-centered congregational worship (Worship)  
to encourage a variety of ministries united under a common purpose  
(Ministry/Service/Missions)

**Our Aspirations for the Future** – The congregation’s corporate aspirations are difficult to catalogue in brief. The following expressions, however, encapsulate a portion of our hopes and dreams and further elaborate the church’s vision.

We aspire ... to bring people into initial relationship with Jesus Christ and disciple them so that they might become mature Christian servants.

We aspire ... to deepen the prayer lives and enhance the biblical understanding of those to whom we minister.

We aspire ... to offer ministry that is comprehensive so that each person will have access to the spiritual resources needed to experience joy and fulfillment in Christ, faithfully follow the Lord in true discipleship, and helpfully respond to a world in need.

We aspire ... to develop care and support-giving systems for persons, especially those whose lives are coming apart.

We aspire ... to develop creative, meaningful expressions of worship that effectively speak and minister to all generations.

We aspire ... to be a high-commitment church in which believers willingly give of themselves and their resources to make mission and ministry possible.

We aspire ... to enhance our hospitality and our ability to effectively attract, welcome, care for, and assimilate newcomers.

We aspire ... to conscientiously revisit and evaluate our mission statement, organizational structure, and methods, exposing programs and activities to critical self-examination in order to help ensure that all efforts are integrity-based, on-target, and effective.

#### **THE HISTORY OF PARK PLACE**

In 1906 the Gospel Trumpet Company came to Anderson. Soon after, 170 of its workers established what would become Park Place Church of God. This pioneering fellowship met in several rented facilities until 1917 when a domed sanctuary, designed to hold 800 people, was built on the corner of Eights and Union Avenue (now College Drive). In 1960 the congregation moved into its present facilities at 501 College Drive.

Guided by a succession of gifted lay and pastoral leaders, Park Place has often been a congregation of firsts – a trailblazing community modeling strong conviction in the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Park Place was among the first in the Church of God to use Sunday bulletins, to conduct vacation church school, to develop a hand bell choir, and to utilize an organ in worship services. It was the very first, and thus far the only, local church in the country to reach the \$4 million mark for giving to Church of God world missions. For forty consecutive years it ranked number one in support of united Church of God mission outreach, and continues annually to rank among the top three or four churches in the movement.

While meeting congregational needs, the church has also pioneered many creative approaches to Christian ministry. In 1952 the Park Place weekday nursery school began. In 1968 the church helped establish Contact-Help telephone ministry and Big Brothers. The congregation began a counseling center in 1974, a service now sponsored by Anderson area churches. The church was instrumental in beginning Harter House, which provides suitable living quarters for seniors, and Women’s Alternatives, a shelter for battered women and their children. Park Place has also helped sponsor new local congregations such as Fishers and Carmel in the Indianapolis area and East Side in Anderson.

Blessed by the Holy Spirit, the seed planted in Anderson's soil more than ninety years ago continues to grow as a vibrant, caring, loving people of faith reaching up to God, out to each other, and beyond to a needy community and world.

### **THE CORPORATE REALITIES OF PARK PLACE**

The current organizational design for Park Place Church of God was approved by the congregation and implementation was initiated in November, 1985. A primary intent of the design was to create enhanced lines of communication and more effective organizational linkages among the pastoral staff and the various standing boards and committees of the church. At its core, it conceives of a polity based on broad congregational ownership and involvement, the principle of mutual support and common mission, and the power of spiritual gifts. The structure assumes that the people are the church.

The Church Council is the primary directional and policy agency where strategic planning occurs, and delegates to other units the implementation of strategic decisions. The chairpersons of the following groups serve on the Council: Board of Trustees, Board of Worship and the Arts, Board of Congregational Mission and Lay Ministries, Board of Christian Education, Staff-Parish Relations Committee, and Bylaws Committee. Along with others not specified here, the Council also counts among its members a Council Chair, a Council vice-chair, and five additional persons – all ratified by the congregation.

Various paid staff members are non-voting ex-officio members of specific boards and have direct working relationships with these bodies. For example, the Minister of Music and Worship has a direct working relationship with the Board of Worship and Arts, and the ministers of youth, university students, children, and adults have a direct working relationship with the Board of Christian Education.

The Staff-Parish Relations Committee facilitates the development of effective congregational ministry by actively listening to the concerns of staff members and congregants. It works to create and maintain a climate of trust, openness, and honesty between the staff and the church, and within the staff itself. This body conducts regular performance evaluations of pastoral staff members and is charged with organizing the search process when pastoral staff vacancies occur.

The congregation has been blessed with senior and support ministers respected throughout the movement and beyond. Some of those who have served Park Place in ministerial roles include **Mabel Hale, J.T. Wilson, E.A. Reardon, W. Dale Oldham, Gertrude Little, Marvin Hartman, Hillery Rice, Arlene Hall, Don Collins, Keith Huttenlocker, Ron Duncan, Don Johnson, Anita Womack, David Coolidge, and Ed Nelson**. As with any church, the positions represented on the called pastoral staff – as well as their job descriptions and duties – have undergone alteration and revision through the years in response to the changing needs of the congregation. Such dynamic changes can be expected to continue in the future. Below are the names of the current pastoral staff members and the positions of the congregation has called them to fill:

**Called Staff:** **Dwight and Sylvia Grubbs** – Ministers of Prayer and Pastoral Care; **Jennifer S. Talbot** – Minister of Christian Education: Children and Adults; and **J. Curtis Walters** -- Minister of Christian Education: Youth and University Students.

**Interim Staff:** Currently, **Don Collins**, formerly on the pastoral staff at Park Place and most recently campus pastor at Anderson University, is serving a six month term as Interim Senior Pastor. In addition, **Ronald C. Smith** is employed as the Interim Business Administrator. **Greg McCaw** is serving as Interim Music Assistant, with responsibilities for the Sunday 8:30 A.M.



contemporary service. **James Martin** is planning and leading the Sunday 10:45 A.M. traditional service, and **Robert Nicholson** in Interim Director of the Sanctuary Choir.

**Present Ministries:** The following list of ministers is not comprehensive. It represents just a portion of the programs and efforts that are a part of Park Place Church of God.

**Sunday Church School** – Classes for all ages and many interest areas meet each week at 9:40 A.M. and are staffed with competent, caring teachers. Children’s classes are biblically-based and developmentally appropriate. **Sundays at Six** -- A regular Sunday evening service features a variety of learning and worship experiences in a more intimate, informal setting. Worship leaders and speakers are usually layperson from the congregation or special guests. **Body Life** – This program, conducted on Wednesday evenings from 5:15—7:30 P.M. brings the church family together for fellowship and teaching. Each week begins with a buffet meal and features church family fellowship and worship followed by hour-long classes that offer multiple options for Christian study and learning. **Family and Community Events** – Occasions are planned throughout the year to build relationships in the church family and to provide an opportunity for inviting neighbors and family friends. **Children’s Center** – Beginning in 1952, the Children’s Center has grown into an all-day child care program with a nursery school program and classes for kindergarten age through five-year olds; it is open to the Anderson community. **University Ministry** – “Open Door,” a Sunday evening service planned and led by Anderson University students in collaboration with pastoral staff, regularly draws large crowds to its energetic services of music, public testimony, and sharing. **Youth** – A wide variety of experiences are offered, including weekly youth fellowship, small group Bible studies, group-building retreats, state and national youth conventions, international work camps, local service opportunities, and Sunday school classes.

**Men’s and Women’s Groups** – The women of Park Place seek to grow in their personal lives, in relationship to others, and in service to the community and the world. Mission, study, and prayer groups meet regularly for study and fellowship. The men sponsor retreats and special work projects and are involved in CHURCHMEN, a network of men who serve and fellowship in Church of God congregations. They also participate in Habitat for Humanity. **Prayer Focus** – The prayer ministry is designed to assist persons in making connections with and developing their relationship with Jesus Christ. Prayer guidance is offered utilizing written materials, small groups, and larger corporate settings. **Outreach Ministries** – Park Place is committed to serving the community where it is located. A few current examples will illustrate this commitment. A food pantry serves hundreds of families every year. Each week a group of persons gathers to visit the Pendleton Reformatory as part of a prison ministry. During the school year After School Fun provides wholesome experiences for neighborhood children. We participate in Habitat for Humanity and sponsor InAsMuch food kitchen which offers one hot, nourishing evening meal, six days a week, to hungry adults and children of all ages. In much of the recent past the congregation has also counted a Minister of Outreach among its staff. **Music Ministries** – Always central to the life of Park Place, the worship experience seeks to be innovative in music and worship. The physical setting for worship is beautiful and traditional; the Casavant Organ, along with a seven-foot grand piano and synthesized keyboard, are significant in worship; a sanctuary choir of forty to forty-five adult singers offers a wide assortment of choral music for worship, in addition to seasonal and other musicals, festivals, and concerts; graded choirs and hand bells are also provided for children and adults; additional instrumental resources are used frequently to enhance worship and provide for special musical events; and additional leadership resources are available within the congregation. Drama, liturgical dance, and other fine arts enrichment have been led by trained lay leadership. **Coolidge Chancel Music Series** – The church has maintained a concert series for over thirty-five years, involving organists, vocalists, and dramatists. There usually are six to eight concerts annually.

## **OUR CHALLENGES**

The contemporary church that seeks to realize more fully the biblical ideal of the body of Christ will be no stranger to conflict and challenge. Park Place is no exception. While we are confident that with nurturing preaching and quality pastoral leadership trends can be reversed; while a freshly energized and committed congregation is ready to participate in the reversal; nevertheless, significant challenges facing the congregation and our pastors continue. Four of these challenges are:

***An Aging Building*** – Our Georgian Colonial church plant is surely one of the most elegant structures dedicated to God’s glory and the ministry of the gospel in the Midwest. Its assessed value is approximately \$12 million. It is a forty-year old building, however. We do not have central air, and most of the plumbing and wiring is original.

***Attendance and Finances*** – We have experienced a steady decline in Sunday morning attendance and are presently experiencing below budget income. We are, however, managing our expenses so that they are less than income and cash flow remains healthy.

***Congregational Polity*** – Currently the church is structured organizationally for wide involvement from the congregation in the governance and work of the church. It is based on a philosophy that assumes that the work of the church is conducted in committee and board so that the ministry of the church is a ministry of the people. While this design has served the congregation for roughly a decade and a half, considerable discussion is taking place regarding the need to redesign how the church organizes itself to accomplish mission and ministry.

***Worship Preferences*** – Park Place has had full-time music and worship leadership since 1953. Most of those years the church has been well-served through the combined music and worship ministry of David and Shirley Cooledge, both of whom retired in 1999 and continue to be members of the Park Place parish. Park Place has always been innovative in music and worship, often introducing new music ministries to the church at large. It is, however, a congregation that values traditional worship and excellence. In the last few years, the church began a second, more contemporary service. While many at Park Place value the two services and their distinct styles as appropriate to an outreach-minded congregation, others sense that it separates us as a people and contributes to a lack of focus and a divided congregation.

## **THE SPIRIT OF PARK PLACE**

*All congregations carry an atmosphere which, though intangible, is nonetheless very real. In large measure, this atmosphere determines the effect a congregation has on the people who belong as well as on the community around it. Perhaps Park Place gains its special tone not from the presence of any one dominant group or interest but from a distinctive blend of persons from many different and widely varying walks of life whose deepest motivations are set toward creating a Christ-centered community. The presence in the worshiping congregation of*

*persons who have traveled or lived abroad, for example, has enriched Park Place with a world-wide outlook. The contributions Anderson University faculty and staff make to the church's pulpit and teaching ministries, to its worship life, and to many other aspects of our congregational life impart a rich and special flavor. Church of God agency staff, local business people, factory workers, medical professionals, homemakers, young people, retired persons – all these work, pray, worship, even play together in fellowship and out of a concern for one another that makes membership in Park Place a privilege and a responsibility for which to be deeply grateful.*

### **Applying for the Position**

Park Place Church of God invites persons who have an interest in the position of Senior Pastor, or who wish to engage in dialogue with the Search Committee, to direct inquiries to:

Chair  
The Search Committee  
Park Place Church of God  
501 College Drive  
Anderson, IN 4601-3499

Messages and inquiries may be directed to chair at (765) XXX-XXXX or Email to \_\_\_\_\_ . A letter of application should be accompanied by a resume or vita, and should be submitted as early as possible.

***All correspondence and dialogue will be considered strictly confidential by all parties.***

## **Our Pastor Has Resigned – What Do We Do Now? Questions and Answers**

*Communicating with the congregation is central to the process of searching for and selecting a new pastor. No where is this more true than in the period immediately following the resignation of a pastor – regardless of the timeline between the resignation and the pastor's actual exit. It is vital for the church to be reminded that they are prepared for this; that policies and practices are in place; and that a process is already established to begin the search for a new pastor.*

*What follows is an example of one way to communicate – up front – with the congregation in the period immediately following a resignation. This is a model; not all questions may apply to your church; it should be adapted to fit the reality of your congregational policies.*

After receiving the pastor's resignation a few days ago, many of us are asking a number of "what happens now" questions. While some questions cannot be answered at this time, it may be helpful to share what we do know. Periodic updates in different formats will be forthcoming. Here are some of your questions; here are answers that can be provided now.

**Q. What do we do now?**

A. Our church bylaws give instructions on how to form a search or pulpit committee.

**Q. Is there anyone to help us?**

A. Explain here the assistance available at the state, district, or regional levels. Example: "The state ministries office is willing to give assistance and guidance as desired by our church leaders."

**Q. Will other staff also resign?**

A. There is no anticipation of that. This transition involves Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ only.

**Q. How will we find a new senior pastor?**

A. Whatever the bylaws say. Example: "The Church Council will appoint seven members of the congregation to a search committee. That process is beginning."

**Q. When will we know who is on the search committee?**

A. The Church Council is prayerfully considering who will serve in the process. Once those contacted have agreed to serve, names will be announced. Those serving will be commissioned during a worship service.

**Q. How will we choose a new senior pastor?**

A. The search committee will conduct a search through a variety of means and recommend a person who will be voted on by the congregation.

**Q. Will we have an interim pastor?**

A. The search committee, working with the board of staff relations, will be asked to make recommendations on a person.

**Q. How can I have input into the process?**

A. The search committee will be actively soliciting congregational input in a variety of ways. More details will be forthcoming.

**Q. Will the church have a reception for Pastor \_\_\_\_\_?**

A. A celebration of our pastor's faithful years of service is in the planning stages. Details will be announced when they are settled. (Date may be shared if known.)

**Q. How long will we be without a senior pastor?**

A. This is not fully known, but we do want to take our time for a thorough search as we allow God to give his leadership in the process.

**Q. What can I do now?**

A. PRAY for Pastor \_\_\_\_\_, our church leaders, the search committee, and the church as we all serve in this time of transition.

Signed,  
(Name)  
Chair of the Board/Council or other appropriate lay leader

## Pastoral Installation

The installation day should be a celebration that is both personal and relevant. This event is often planned as a last responsibility of the pastoral search committee because they are the group that has had the greatest opportunity to know more about the pastor and family. Some congregations install all new pastors that come on staff. Whatever the practice, the new pastor or associate should be made aware of the local custom of the congregation.

It is appropriate to schedule the installation service for a Sunday. Afternoons or evenings are more often used, however, some pastors prefer to use the morning service for such a celebration. This may become problematic if other local pastors are invited. Local dignitaries and regional pastors should be notified and, if possible, be given a role in welcoming the new pastor. The state coordinator or area administrator should also be encouraged to take part in the service. If the presence of the state coordinator is desired, it will be necessary to check his or her schedule very early in the process.

This is a special day for the congregation and the pastor's family. Make sure to provide opportunities for special friends and relatives of the pastor to be invited. Plan the day far enough in advance to allow for special guests to arrange their schedules. Lodging may be needed for the speaker and other guests.

The pastor will possibly prefer to have a voice in the agenda for the installation service. Pastors have different preferences and while one may prefer a formal installation, another may choose to use a very informal approach to the day. It is traditional to ask the pastor to choose a speaker for the service.

A general order of service would include a welcome and opening prayer, a greeting from the mayor or a local dignitary, a greeting from the local ministry association or Church of God fellowship, a welcome from the chairperson of the council or governing board, a welcome from the state coordinator or area administrator, a charge to the pastor as well as the congregation, and an installation prayer, which normally includes the pastor and spouse (if appropriate). Be sure to include an opportunity for the pastor to respond. Special music by the choir or an individual(s) within the congregation would be appropriate. Introduce the pastor's family and formally welcome them as well. (Most state/provincial or district offices will have sample copies of installation services.)

Provide boutonnieres and corsages for the family on the day of the installation. A reception after the service may be as lavish as the participants wish.

## **MODELS OF VARIOUS INSTALLATION SERVICES AND COMMISSIONINGS**

*What follows are actual installation services and model commissioning and covenant statements that you may find helpful as you plan for your own.*

### **A model of a service of installation during the Sunday morning worship time**

**Date and Time**  
**Family Worship Hour**

Welcome and Introductions (Lead by search committee chair, church council chair, or other church leader)

Greetings from Indiana Ministries (A representative of the state office)

Song

Hymn

Time of Fellowship

Hymn

Special Music

Song

Pastoral Prayer (Guest, other area pastor, significant national or local leader)

Offering

Hymn

Message (Guest, other area pastor, significant national or local leader)

Charge to the Pastor, Staff, and Congregation (Often a representative of the state office)

Prayer of Installation (Guest, other area pastor, significant national or local leader)

Song of Unification

**A Service of Installation**  
**For *Name of Pastor***

Date and Time

Prelude

Congregational Welcome: (Chair, Search Committee, and Board of Trustees)

Invocation: (Guest, other area pastor, significant national or local leader)

Congregational Hymn:

Scripture Reading: (Guest, local congregational leader, other area pastor, significant national or local leader)

Community and Ministerial Welcome: (Guest, other area pastor, significant national or local leader)

Recognition of Visitors: (Local church leader)

Congregational Hymn:

Scripture Reading: (Guest, local congregational leader, other area pastor, significant national or local leader)

Words of Challenge and Encouragement to the Congregation: (Guest, other area pastor, significant national or local leader)

A Covenant of Installation: (Often a representative of the state office)

Prayer of Installation: (Often a representative of the state or national office)

Comments from Pastor being installed:

Congregational Hymn:

Benediction: (Guest, local congregational leader, other area pastor, significant national or local leader)

## **COMMUNITY CHURCH OF GOD Service of Installation**

### **AS WE GATHER**

“Christians are quite serious in believing that when they gather together for worship and work, God is present and sovereign...God creates and guides, God saves and heals, God corrects and blesses, God calls and judges. With such comprehensive and personal leadership from God, what is the place of human leadership? Quite obviously, it has to be sec-



ond place. It must not elbow its way to the front, it must not bossily take over. Ego-centered, ego-prominent leadership betrays the Master. The best leadership in spiritual communities formed in the name of Jesus, the Messiah, is inconspicuous, not calling attention to itself but not sacrificing anything in the way of conviction and firmness either." As we gather to call for God's guidance and blessing upon the new pastoral leadership of this congregation, let us also affirm our common desire to see souls won to the Kingdom, and pledge our mutual servanthood to the Lord and to one another.

WORDS OF WELCOME      Pulpit Committee Chairperson

WE PRAISE THE LORD      Hymn

INVOCATION PRAYER      Guest, local congregational leader, other area pastor,  
significant national or local leader

WORDS OF GREETING      Guest, local congregational leader, other area pastor,  
significant national or local leader

THE SCRIPTURE READING      Guest, local congregational leader, other area pastor,  
significant national or local leader

GOD'S WORD REVEALED      Guest, local congregational leader, other area pastor,  
significant national or local leader

MINISTRY IN MUSIC

COVENANT AND PRAYER OF INSTALLATION      All Present  
(Please refer to back of worship sheet)

PASTORAL RESPONSE

HYMN OF BENEDICTION

THE BENEDICTION

May the Lord who changed water into wine, blindness into sight, trembling efforts into deeds of strength, and personal poverty into acts of mercy enable you today. May he guide our journeys of ministry into the city community. May the Spirit bless the pastoral leadership of the (*pastor's name*) family. May s/he enable us to be a faithful people.

### COVENANT OF INSTALLATION

**Leader:** You have come together in worship this afternoon to consider your common mission and ministry as God's chosen pastor and people. You have heard the Scriptures and the message of challenge. I now invite you to enter into a covenant of installation. Will the members of this congregation please stand and responsively repeat your covenant with your pastor?

**Pastor:** I have been called by God to be a minister of the Gospel, and I come to you, ready to be your pastor in his behalf.

**Congregation:** We are called by God to be the church, the body of Christ, and we welcome you and your family to this congregation. We receive you as both Christ's minister and our pastor.

**Pastor:** I covenant with you to be your preacher and teacher, to speak to you the Word of God as it comes to me through the scriptures and reason, through my experiences in the community of faith and the community of humankind, and as it comes to me by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

**Congregation:** We covenant with you to be seekers after the Word of God, to be earnest hearers and diligent students, searching always for God's will in our lives, believing always there is yet more truth to come from his living Word.

**Pastor:** I covenant with you to be your pastor and your friend, your counselor and companion in both the agonies and the ecstasies of life, the sorrows, and the joys, the defeats and the victories, sharing regularly with you in the ministry of prayer.

**Congregation:** We covenant with you, and with one another, to share with you and to support you in our common ministry and pastoral concern for our members and all others such as God would lead to us. We will pray regularly for you, your wife and children, and for one another.

**Pastor:** I covenant with you to teach you of the grace and acceptance of God, to speak not only the prophetic word of law and judgment, but to speak even more the word of love and forgiveness. I will, God helping me, encourage you to maintain all faith, hope, and love in your personal lives, and to strive for the love and justice of the kingdom of God in your life, in your family, and in the community.

**Congregation:** We covenant with you to strive, God helping us, to be a community of grace, to receive God's word of judgment, as well as his word of mercy and forgiveness. We will support you in our common cause for love and justice in our community and our world, striving always to be a mission-minded people, upholding wherever we have the opportunity, the cross of Christ.

**Pastor:** With a heart filled with thanksgiving, I accept my call from you as a call from God. I regard it as a great honor and high privilege to enter into this covenant and relationship with you. My spouse joins me in this affirmation of ministry. I humbly present myself to you, in the name of Christ our Lord, for formal installation as your pastor for as long as it seems good to all of us and the Holy Spirit.

**Congregation:** After careful consideration and much prayer, we have called you to leadership. We sincerely believe this is the call of God. For our common mission and ministry, we pledge our faithful support with our prayers, abilities, spiritual gifts, and money. Therefore, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we do hereby formally install you as our pastor for as long as it seems good to us and the Holy Spirit. May God bless you and us as we serve Him together.

**Leader:** Let us now pray the Prayer of Confirmation and Installation.

**CHURCH OF GOD**  
**Service and Celebration of Installation and Ordination for**  
**New Pastor**  
**Date and Time**

**Prelude** (followed by choruses, hymns, special music, and so forth)

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:**

**Leader:** Throughout history God has called workers to carry out his will. Righteous Noah was chosen to survive the flood and save his family through building the ark. Abraham, the man of faith, was selected to be the forerunner of God's holy nation, Israel. Moses, the man of God, was called to deliver his people from bondage. Mary, called by God to be the means by which God came among us. Jesus personally chose the twelve to be his apostles. The early church set apart those called to special work through prayer and the laying on of hands. We come today formally to bless our brother/sister, *Name*, to work for which God has called him/her. We seek to honor only Christ, and this one is being set apart for that purpose. Let us now ask God's blessing upon this occasion.

### **EXAMINATION OF THE CANDIDATE**

**Leader:** Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are ripe for the harvest.

**Congregation:** Already he/she who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal. That he/she who sows and he/she who reaps may rejoice together.

**Leader:** The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

**Congregation:** Therefore, we ask the Lord of the harvest, to send out workers into his harvest.

**Leader:** Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

**Candidate:** I have heard the call of Christ, and in the words of Isaiah, I respond, "Here am I. Send me."

**Leader (to candidate):** Have you, *Name*, prayerfully considered the responsibility of living and preaching the Gospel, and have you weighed the work involved and the sacrifices you may be called upon to make?

**Candidate:** I have.

**Leader:** Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God to make us wise unto salvation through faith in him?

**Candidate:** I do, with all my heart.

**Leader:** Are you motivated, not out of a desire for position or earthly gain, but by a genuine love for God and your fellow human beings?

**Candidate:** I am.

**Leader:** Is it your desire to be an enabler, to diligently aid in all people's pursuit of the truth and to gently, fervently and patiently instruct them that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and to preach to them the good news of salvation?

**Candidate:** Yes, it is.

**Leader:** Will you strive to build up the church, the body of Christ, to prepare God's people for works of ministry, to labor for the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God?

**Candidate:** I will, as God gives me strength.

**Leader:** Will you endeavor to live a life of love within your family and in the community, and so draw others to Christ through your example as well as by your word?

**Candidate:** I will make it the purpose of my life to live for Jesus Christ, and I ask your prayers, and the prayers of this church, to assist me in this ministry

**Leader (to the congregation):** Have you, members of *the Church name*, carefully considered the qualifications of *Name* as minister to this assembly of Christians, the community, and overall as a servant of Christ?

**Candidate:** We have.

**Leader:** Are you satisfied that he/she will be a worthy messenger and representative of the Lord Jesus Christ?

**Candidate:** We are.

**Leader:** Are you willing that he/she should be blessed into the ministry within this community and to the *Church Name*?

**Candidate:** We are.

**Leader:** Do you as members of this congregation promise to be honest with and supportive of *Name of pastor, spouse, and family* (as appropriate) as they have been called into the ministry of this church?

**Candidate:** We do.

**Leader** (to spouse of candidate): Having heard the charge placed upon your spouse, his/her words of devotion, and the promised words of cooperation given by the congregation, will you, *spouse (and children)*, vow to be supportive and understanding of your husband (and father) / wife (and mother) during those difficult times in which he/she seems to be growing weary with the great task which lies before him/her?

**Spouse of Candidate:** I will.

### **THE LAYING ON OF HANDS:**

**Leader** (to candidate and spouse): You have declared your purpose to give up your life and live in the service of Jesus Christ, and have received the approval of this church. In order that you may be formally set apart for this holy calling, will you now kneel and receive the laying on of hands as we ask the blessing of God upon this ministry.

(The candidate and his spouse kneel as the leader, board member, ministers, family and friends lay their hands upon their heads.)

### **THE INSTALLATION PRAYER:**

#### **HOLY COMMUNION:**

#### **MINISTRY OF MUSIC:**

#### **PASSING ON THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD:**

(Turning over of the tasks involved in the ministry of the Word by placing an open Bible into the candidate's hands and giving a special charge.)

#### **SPECIAL MUSIC:**

**HYMN:** (Or Chorus – congregation stands)

**MINISTRY OF THE WORD:** (Guest, local congregational leader, other area pastor, significant national or local leader)

#### **HYMN OF CHRISTIAN PURPOSE:**

## **A CHARGE TO THE PASTOR: (An example of a pastoral charge)**

The church is the family of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. All saved people are called to make Christ known as Savior and Lord, and to share in the re-

newing of his world. Now you, *name of candidate*, are called to serve as the *XXth* pastor of *Name of Church of God*. You take your place in the line of pastors who have served this congregation since the year of the church's founding: *names of previous pastors*.

As pastor, you are called upon to *be* something and to *do* something. There are these two aspects of ministry: *being* and *doing*. Of the two, *being* is more important than *doing*. *Who you are* is infinitely more important than *what you do*. The most effective pastors are those who walk close to God, whose hearts are clean, whose motives are pure, whose lives are characterized by integrity. I have no way of knowing why any member of this congregation voted to call you as pastor, but I do know why I voted that way. I cast my ballot to call you as my pastor because I have known your heart for almost thirty years; I know *who you are*. *Who you are* is more important than *what you do*. In the few weeks you have been with us, you have already demonstrated *who you are* by the support you've given our youth by going to their swim meets and basketball games. You went, not because it was a good thing to do, but because of who you are. *Being* is more important than *doing*.

Having said that, I move on to consider some of the *doing*. It is your duty to proclaim by word and deed the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You are to love and serve the people among whom you work, caring alike for young and old, strong and weak, rich and poor. You are to preach, to declare the whole counsel of God, to pronounce God's blessing, to teach the people of God, and to support the leaders of this congregation's various ministries. In all that you do, you are to nourish Christ's people from the riches of his grace, and to strengthen them to glorify God in this life and in the life to come.

The most public aspect of your ministry as our pastor will be the sermons you bring on Sunday morning. We anticipate that your presence among us will continue to attract a growing number of worshippers. Help us to help them worship God in spirit and in truth. As they continue to come, may it be to worship and serve the Lord, and not to suit their own desires, hearing what itching ears want to hear. Knowing your heart as we do, we invite you not to preach to us, but to preach among us. The best preaching is that which arises out of the life of the people. It's not just what you say, but what all of us together say.

You have heard the promises made by the members of this congregation. We believe that God has called you to be our pastor at this particular time in our history. We pray for you as you commit yourself to this trust and responsibility. We ask you to respect and be guided by the wisdom that God has already given to members of this congregation. We expect you to continue diligently reading and studying the Holy Scriptures, seeking the knowledge of such things that will make you a stronger and more able minister of Christ. We invite you to proclaim the Word of God so that the reconciling love of Christ may be known and received by all. We ask you to be a faithful pastor to all whom God has called you to serve, laboring together with us to build up the body of Christ. We give thanks that you pattern your life in accordance with the teachings of Christ, so that you may better lead us in being holy examples to this community. We need you to persevere in prayer, both in public and in private, asking God's grace, both for yourself and for others, offering all your labors to God, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, and in the sanctification of the Holy Spirit.

May the Lord who has given you the will to do these things give you now the grace and power to perform them.

## COVENANT OF INSTALLATION

**Assembly or State Representative:** You have come together in worship this afternoon to consider your common mission and ministry as God's chosen person and people. You have heard the Scriptures and the message of challenge. I now invite you to enter into a covenant of installation. Will the members of this church please stand and responsively repeat your covenant with your minister.

**Pastor:** I have been called by God to be a minister of the gospel, and I come to you, ready to be your pastor in his power and strength.

**Congregation:** We have been called by God to be the church, the body of Christ, and we welcome you and your family and receive you as Christ's ministers and as ours.

**Pastor:** I covenant with you to be your preacher and teacher, to speak to you the Word of God as it comes to me through the Scriptures and reason, through my experiences in the community of faith and the community of humankind, and as it comes to me by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

**Congregation:** We covenant with you to be seekers after the Word of God, to be earnest hearers and diligent students, searching always for God's will in our lives, believing always there is yet more truth to come from his living Word.

**Pastor:** I covenant with you to be your pastor and your friend, your counselor and companion in both the agonies and the ecstasies of life, the sorrows and the joys, the defeats and the victories, sharing regularly with you in the ministry of prayer.

**Congregation:** We covenant with you, and with one another, to both share with you and to support you in our common ministry and pastoral concern for our members and all others such as God would lead to us. We will pray regularly for you, your spouse, your children, and for one another.

**Pastor:** I covenant with you to teach you of the grace and acceptance of God, to speak not only of the prophetic word of judgment, but to speak even more of the word of love and forgiveness. I will, God helping me, encourage you to maintain all faith, hope, and love in your personal lives, and to strive for the love and justice of the kingdom of God in your life, in your family, and in this community.

**Congregation:** We covenant with you to strive, God helping us, to be a community of grace, to receive God's word of forgiveness. We will support you in our common cause for love and justice in our community and our world, striving always to be a mission-minded people, upholding wherever we have the opportunity, the cross of Christ and his reconciliation.

**Pastor:** With a heart filled with thanksgiving, I accept my call from you as a call from God. I regard it as a great honor and high privilege to enter into this covenant and relationship with you. My wife supports me in this affirmation of ministry. I humbly present myself to you, in the name of Christ our Lord, for formal installation as your pastor for as long as it seems good to all of us and to the Holy Spirit.

**Congregation:** After careful consideration and much prayer, we have called you to leadership. We sincerely believe this is the call of God. For our common mission and ministry we pledge our faithful support with our prayers, abilities, and money. Therefore, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy spirit, we do formally install you as our pastor for as long as it seems good to all of us and to the Holy Spirit.

**Pastor and Congregation:** May God bless all of us, enlarge our territory, may his hand be with us, and may he keep us from doing evil so that we will not cause pain. Amen.

**Assembly or State Representative:** Please remain standing for the Prayer of Confirmation.

## **CHARGE TO THE PASTOR**

To accept a call to serve as pastor is to accept a call to serve as shepherd. It is a call to lead. It is a call to protect. It is a call to courage. And to love.



It is a call to sacrifice.

It is a call, like no other – to reflect the very Person and Spirit of Christ. To accept the call to serve as pastor is to accept the highest calling.

Such a call cannot be fulfilled without standing by three primary commitments, each in turn, each following the other.

**First, a pastor must walk with Christ.** He/She must be absolutely and unequivocally devoted to standing in the shadow of the Master. A pastor must tune his/her heart to hear the Lord's voice and fix his/her gaze on Jesus only. A pastor must embrace Jesus as both Lord and Savior, as Teacher and Friend, as Companion and Captain. About this there must never be a question.

*Do you, pastor's name, reaffirm here today your commitment to Christ?*

**Second, a pastor must love his/her spouse as Christ loved the Church.** He/She must honor his/her family and provide for his/her children both a model of Christian personhood and a home that remains always a sanctuary. He/She must devote himself/herself to being the husband/wife and father/mother God has destined him/her to be:

*Do you, pastor's name, reaffirm here today your commitment to prove your love to Christ by the way in which you love your family?*

**And third, a pastor must love his/her people.** He/She must watch over them and guard them. He/She must stand up for them and defend them. He/She must challenge and provoke them to good works and faithfulness. He/She must walk ahead of them and, at the same time, walk with them. He/She must always draw them near to Christ and cause them to ask, "What would Jesus do?" He/She must pray for them, care for them, and love them; he/she must be willing to deny himself/herself for them. He/She must help them to see themselves by heaven's light and inspire them to see the world as God purposed it to be. He/She must be devoted to his/her wholeness by the witness of his/her own holiness.

*Do you, pastor's name, here today accept such a call and promise to serve this wonderful people of God as their pastor?*

Well, then, I charge you this day, *date*, as a fellow minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and on behalf of the Church of God, to be faithful to your calling. May God hold you close, always, prosper the work at name of church, entrusted to your care, and give you peace and wisdom, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

## **CHARGE TO THE CONGREGATION**

Having called *pastor's name* as pastor, we as a congregation now have the solemn and joyous responsibility to be joined in partnership with him/her, having confidence that God will carry forward the good work now initiated in this new relationship.

*I charge us, therefore, as the church's name congregation...*

- To pledge to *pastor's name* our prayerful interest, our sympathetic understanding, and our faithful support
- To promise to hear attentively his/her preaching of the Word.
- To share with him/her in the responsibilities of teaching and learning
- To participate reverently in the services of worship
- To counsel with him/her concerning the welfare of the church
- To receive him/her and his/her family into our hearts and homes
- To encourage him/her in his/her stand for the right
- To forgive him/her when he/she makes mistakes
- To follow his/her leadership as he/she follows Christ.

*I further charge us...*

- To consecrate our time to the teaching of Jesus' way of life
- To consecrate our talents to the leading of children, youth, and adults to the knowledge of the love of Christ
- To consecrate our service to the healing of broken bodies and the soothing of troubled minds
- To consecrate our strength to the caring for helpless persons and the relief of all who look to this congregation for help and hope
- To consecrate our possessions, our efforts, and our lives to the evangelization of the community and the worldwide extension of the Kingdom of God

Response: We, *the church's name, congregation, respond joyfully to this charge and strongly affirm our partnership with pastor's name and family.*

To these ends, may the grace and peace of God be abundantly ours.

## CHARGE TO THE COMMUNITY

The scriptures of the church reveal and the church's mission indicates God's connection and engagement with his creation – God's compassionate love extending to every dimension of human affairs, renewing and restoring all those created in God's image.

As *pastor's name* and the *church's name* Church of God embrace the godly vision that every believer be *connected, empowered, and engaged*, we welcome opportunities therefore to participate in acts of compassion in the world. While the church locates its ultimate loyalty in the Lord Jesus Christ – as his ambassadors in the world – we gladly affirm an openness to others in our community as being fully consistent with God's loving and transforming mission.

Therefore,

**To other Local Congregations and their Leadership:** We pledge to you, brothers and sisters in the Lord, our willingness to experience with you the unity of all believers -- fulfilling Jesus' prayer that we all may be one.

**To the numerous Social Agencies in this City:** We offer our continued cooperation in joining with you in meeting the needs of broken humanity, intervening in redemptive ways to both young and old, poor and the wealthy, the sick and the healthy, and to all ethnic groups and nationalities.

**To our Political Leaders and Governmental Units:** We also affirm our promise to support all causes that promote justice for and solidarity with all persons in this community. And, above all, we accept our responsibility to pray for all leaders of our government and other institutions.

**To the Members of the Educational System:** We intend to discover creative and faithful ways to make a difference in the lives of our young people and their families, and to the teachers and administrators.

Hence, we, *the church's name*, will earnestly seek your cooperation. We invite you to participate with us in our desire to dream again – to live out the vision of God for the world right here in the city community.

Will you who are present today, as community representatives, accept our invitation to join us in ministry to this community? Will you also consider us to join you in those areas for which we share similar concerns?

**Response:** We will.

## **CHARGE TO THE PASTOR AND THE CONGREGATION**

Scripture informs us of the awesome responsibility for pastoral leadership within the life of the Church of God. *Pastor's name*, you have been called by God and affirmed by your colleagues in ministry. Today, we have gathered at the *name of Church of God* to celebrate your call to pastoral ministry in this community.

## **Charge to the Congregation**

Today's installation is actually that of a partnership in service. You are a congregation of ministers and your charge is to accept your individual responsibilities to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. Striving for the exemplary Christian experience is not exclusive to the position of the pastors; it is a charge for all. Avoid pedestals by acknowledging the humanity of your pastoral team. Expect great things from them, yes, but from yourselves as well.

## **To the Pastor and the Congregation**

As pastor and people, we charge you to affirm your commitment in the presence of God and with the people of the name of church. *Name of pastor*, if it is your intention to provide pastoral servant-leadership, and members of the congregation, if it is your intent to unite yourselves under the leadership of *Name of pastor*, please answer, **I WILL**, to the following questions.

### ***Pastor's name:***

Will you reverently and sincerely commit yourself to serve this church and this community in such a way that the Holy Spirit will be honored, Jesus Christ will be proclaimed, and God will be glorified?

**Pastor:** I will.

### ***Congregation:***

Will you reverently and sincerely commit yourselves to serve this church and this community in such a way that the Holy Spirit will be honored, Jesus Christ will be proclaimed, and God will be glorified?

**Congregation:** We will!

### ***Pastor's name:***

Will you sincerely endeavor to maintain a Christian home, live an exemplary family life, and challenge the families of this church to walk with Christ?

**Pastor:** I will!

### ***Congregation:***

Will you sincerely endeavor to maintain your home as Christian, live an exemplary family life, and challenge the members of your family to walk with Christ?

**Congregation:** We will!

***Pastor's name:***

Will you study to show yourself approved unto God, to meditate regularly, to preach the Word, and to teach the truth so the people may be protected from false doctrine and error?

**Pastor:** I will!

***Congregation:***

Will you endeavor to be students of the Word, to meditate regularly, to frequent the worship services, and to submit to pastoral instruction so as not to be tossed about by winds of false doctrine and error?

**Congregation:** We will!

***Pastor's name:***

Will you faithfully and diligently perform your pastoral duties to equip the people of this church for the work of service, the task of ministry, and the call of mission?

**Pastor:** I will!

***Congregation:***

Will you be open and responsive to pastoral ministry, the equipping and training ministries of the church, for the work of service, tasks of ministry, and the involvement of cross-cultural mission?

**Congregation:** We will!

***Pastor's name:***

Will you protect your own person as a citizen in the kingdom of God by paying attention to physical relaxation, intellectual stimulation, emotional well-being, social engagement, and moral stability?

**Pastor:** I will!

***Congregation:***

Will you give timely affirmation to the protection of your pastor by support and encouragement of his attention to physical relaxation, intellectual stimulation, emotional well-being, social engagement, and moral stability, while recognizing these same needs for yourself?

**Congregation:** We will!

***Pastor and Congregation:***

May the Almighty God who has called you to the ministry of his Word and the service in his church grant strength and wisdom for the task. As God has given you the will and desire for ministry, we, your brothers and sisters in Christ, pledge to you our support and prayers. Amen.