

## Receiving Ministerial Profiles

Pray. Ask the congregation to be praying with and for you during this phase and commit to praying together as a Search Team.

After completing the Congregational Profile and any other materials recommended by your Regional Consultant<sup>1</sup>, contact him/her to receive specific instructions for receiving profiles. Follow regional recommendations for considering candidates and, as mentioned above, stay open to all possibilities, at least in the initial review of candidates.

## Initial Interview

Best practices suggest that the committee develop two sets of questions, one for the initial interview and another for the face-to-face interview.

When preparing to interview candidates, compile a list of questions to ask of each candidate and decide who will ask which questions during the interviews. Keep in mind that the interviews are not comprehensive examinations.

The initial interview is focused on getting to know the personal characteristics, her/his call to ministry, the candidate's family, reasons for entering search and call, her/his devotional life, etc. What questions did the ministerial profile leave unanswered?

Before concluding the interview allow time to ask, "What questions do you have for us?" The

questions a candidate asks can give valuable information to the Search Committee. Be sure to build time for the candidate's questions into your schedule.

## Second Interview

As previously stated, when preparing to interview candidates, compile a list of questions to ask of each candidate and decide who will ask which questions during the interviews. Keep in mind that the interviews are not comprehensive examinations.

Develop interview questions that will stimulate creative conversation about mission, ministry, and leadership for both the church and the candidate.

The interview questions should be consistent with your answers in Section XI of the Congregational Profile. Your Regional Consultant can help you develop interview questions and may have samples of questions to share.

When you are ready to invite one or more candidates to visit, be clear on the expectations for the visit and communicate them to the candidate. (e.g. the candidate is one of several or the final candidate)

Are you interviewing more than one in person? If so, the candidates should not be meeting the congregation as a whole during this initial visit (second interview) as this can set up conflict within the congregation about favored candidates. Save the meeting with the

congregation for the visit of the one final candidate.

## Some Dos and Don'ts

Do check references. Call each one. Include a question like, "What else do we need to know or what would you like to tell us about the candidate that we didn't ask you?" Some references will give more information over the phone than they will in written form.

Do not call the congregation where the pastor is currently serving. Assume that the congregation does not know their pastor is seeking another position. Contacting the present congregation may jeopardize the search process for the candidate.

Do contact the candidate's current regional minister and previous regional minister if the candidate has only recently moved to the current region.

Throughout the process, do keep all candidates informed of your progress and where they stand. If you are no longer considering a candidate, it is courtesy to inform them by phone or email that they are no longer under consideration. If you are very interested in a candidate, letting him/her know that she/he is still under consideration can be an encouragement and keep the candidate interested in you!

As you are narrowing the search down to the final candidates, do contact your Regional Consultant and ask him/her to contact the

---

<sup>1</sup> The Regional Consultant refers to the Regional/Area minister or designee.

region where the candidates are currently serving to see if there is any new information that might have arisen (positive or negative) about the candidate that you should know before going forward.

Sometimes it takes a while to discover the right match between pastor and congregation. Throughout the process, do stay in touch with your Regional Consultant and seek help, encouragement, and direction as needed.

### The Chosen One

The committee should arrive at complete consensus before recommending the final candidate to the Board/Council and then to the congregation.

Negotiating the contract: When you have agreed upon a final candidate, contact the final candidate to let him/her know that pending approval of the Board/Council and Congregation, you would like to extend a call and ask if he/she would accept. If the answer is yes, you can begin negotiating the details of the call including compensation and benefits. At this point, you are committed to each other for the duration of the process until it either leads to a call by the congregation or one or both parties end the discussions. You should cease conversations with other candidates and the candidate should cease conversations with other congregations. Your Regional Consultant can discuss this further and offer help in navigating the negotiation phase.

Presentation to the Board/Council and Congregation: Prepare a brief history of the search process, number and range of

candidates, why this candidate was chosen and the gifts she/he brings.

Be cautious about announcing the name of the candidate on Facebook or in written publications unless you have the permission of the candidate. It is amazing how connected we are as Disciples and how quickly information travels.

Schedule a visit for the candidate and family to come and meet the congregation prior to the final vote. During this visit, the candidate may meet with the Board, Elders or other leadership groups in addition to the congregation. Allow room in the schedule for the candidate and family to explore on their own and investigate housing options.

### After the Search

Congratulations! Your work is almost done! First, give thanks to God for Spirit's guidance during the process.

Contact any candidates who might still think they are under consideration.

Begin planning for the transition to the next pastor. This can include: planning a celebration for the interim minister, offering support and resources for the physical move of the new pastor and family, preparing to welcome the new pastor and family to the community, and scheduling and planning the Installation service.

Resources for welcoming and installing a new pastor can be found in a document called: Beginning a Pastoral Ministry. It can be found at <http://disciples.org/gcom/resources/>

# Search and Call Guidelines for Search Committees Interviewing and Calling

Prepared by the General Commission on Ministry, 2017.