



GUIDE FOR SECURING A LEAD PASTOR

Introduction

Your pastor has just resigned or your congregation voted to make a change in pastoral leadership. What should be done? This document has been prepared to serve as a guide for your church leadership in securing pastoral leadership.

First things:

1. Commit to pray for a smooth transition and the right pastor to be called.
2. Know that your Church Health Director will assist you as needed in the process of securing new pastoral leadership.
3. Consider administering a Church Health Assessment and/or other diagnostic tools provided by EFC-ER.
4. Consider an Interim pastor to allow adequate time for transition.
5. Explore various resources for identifying potential candidates.

The following items are included or a link is provided in this packet:

- A checklist to help you work through the process. We encourage you to follow through the checklist one step at a time.
- A Church Information Sheet (CIS) <https://efcer.breezechms.com/form/cif>
- Copy of a sample Ministry Agreement is on the website that can be used by your congregation after the call has been given and approved.

Digital copies are available on our website at <https://www.efcer.org/church-health-resources.html>. Feel free to copy any of the materials you might need.

You are involved in an important task for your church, EFC-ER, and God's kingdom. May God give you wisdom and blessing as you fulfill your role in this process.

Check List

1. _____ **Contact the Church Health Director.**
2. _____ Complete the Church Information Form (CIF) and return it to Church Health Director as soon as possible. The church is responsible to mail or e-mail a copy of the profile to any candidates with whom they are communicating.
3. _____ Select the Search Team. **A pastoral search team, composed of members in good standing, will be established by the elders to conduct the search process. Pastoral staff may not serve on the search team.** (Your church bylaws take precedence if they differ.)
4. _____ The Church Health Director will meet with the elders and/or search team and provide guidelines to begin the process.
5. _____ Establish a list of essentials you believe are needed for a “good fit” between the pastor and your congregation and community.
6. _____ Establish (or determine which existing) email address to use to receive resumes.
7. _____ Review pastoral profiles and resumes and select individuals for initial interviews.
 - a) EFC-ER will forward possible candidates on file.
 - b) Other potential candidates may be identified through other sources including but not limited to:
 - i) Known contacts of search committee or church members.
 - ii) Listing your opening on EFC-ER’s weekly email **Cross Road** (Please send your search team contact information to Sarah at shancock@efcer.org)
 - iii) <https://www.churchstaffing.com/> (Approx. \$450/3 months)
 - iv) <https://www.indeed.com/>
 - c) For non-EFC-ER pastors the Search Committee should conduct the preliminary screening. **All applicants proposed for pastoral candidacy** after initial interview(s) **must be vetted by the Leadership Development Team.** Send the resume(s) to the Church Health and Leadership Development Team Directors.
ewalsh@efcer.org dmercadante@efcer.org

8. _____ Conduct interviews. The interview process should build sequentially. For example:
 - a. *Review resumes* for initial screening and eliminate non-viable applicants. (This may possibly be done by a sub-team or point person.)
 - b. Notify applicants throughout the process as they are eliminated from consideration. (Samples are provided on page 8)
 - c. Conduct *initial phone interviews* with potential candidates. Questions should be more general in nature. (Samples are provided on page 7)
 - d. *View on-line sermons* by candidates you consider viable.
 - e. For those candidates considered viable after steps b and c, request the Leadership Development Director to “vet” non-EFC-ER candidates.

COMMENTS ON SALARY DISCUSSIONS:

Deciding **when** in the interview process is the appropriate time to discuss salary considerations can sometimes be a delicate issue. If the job is posted on a site such as churchstaffing.com, the salary may be disclosed and not be an issue. But there is wisdom in being proactive on this topic. For example, if after the initial interview the Search Team wants to proceed with the candidate, you may want to communicate to the candidate: *“After your initial interview, the Search Team is interested in proceeding to the next step in the process. To avoid any surprises, the salary for this position is approximately \$ XX and the benefits \$ XX, primarily for insurance and pension. Based on this information, are you still interested in proceeding in the interview process?”*

- f. Conduct *second interviews* with candidates either by conference call or in-person. Questions should become more specific. (Samples provided)
- g. In conjunction with elder input, schedule in-person interviews for your “narrowed” list of candidates.
- h. Schedule additional interviews/visits and/or concerted prayer as needed until consensus is agreed upon by the search team and elders.
- i. As part of your “due diligence” as a search team it is recommended you conduct a **background check**. Contact mhagin@efcer.org to request a search from HireRight. (Approx. cost \$50)

9. _____ Schedule the top candidate for a “candidating weekend”.
 - a. Hospitality for the candidate and any family members should be carefully planned. Remember, the candidate is also “interviewing” your church.
 - b. Prepare an agenda to allow maximum contact of the candidate with key influencers. Meetings should include time with the elders and also other key leadership teams.
 - c. The candidate should preach and a congregational gathering should be scheduled to allow for a “question and answer” time with the candidate.
 - d. The church is responsible for expenses related to travel, meals and lodging for the candidate.
10. _____ If you desire to recommend the candidate, before scheduling a called congregational meeting ask the candidate *“If we extended a call to you, how likely is it you would you accept the call? What hesitations do you have or questions do you still need answered? Is your spouse fully supportive of making this change?”*
11. _____ Schedule a called congregational meeting (normally a weekday or the following Sunday after the candidating weekend). **The pastoral search team** (and/or elders) **will recommend a pastoral candidate for approval by the congregation by ballot vote.**
12. _____ Upon approval, **issue an** initial 2-year **pastoral call agreement.**
13. _____ Provide a written ministry agreement.
https://www.efcer.org/uploads/1/3/3/2/133267097/pastoral_agreement.docx.pdf
14. _____ Send a copy of the signed ministry agreement to the Church Health Director.
15. _____ Notify the other applicants that the position has been filled.
16. _____ Introduce your new pastor to the community through social media, newspaper, and/or other appropriate means.
17. _____ Schedule an “installation service” with the Leadership or Church Health Director.

The difference between the "Pastoral call" and "Ministry agreement"

The congregation extends a **Pastoral Call** to the pastor. The initial call is for 2 years and renewed every 4 years after that per F&P 340-342.

Procedures for an **early termination** of a call are outlined in F&P 343.

The **ministry agreement** (see check list #13) should be *updated annually* and specify salary adjustments, vacation, etc... The elders should conduct an **annual performance review**. Two sample Lead Pastor Year-End Reviews (Long and Short) are available on ER's website.

First Interview sample questions

- 1) What hobbies or activities do you enjoy?
- 2) Share your testimony.
- 3) Describe your call to ministry.
- 4) Describe your personal devotional life.
- 5) What are your personal priorities?
- 6) How do you view your role as a pastor?
- 7) What is your philosophy of ministry?
- 8) How would you describe your preaching style?
- 9) Describe for us a typical worship service as you see it. What are the ingredients?
- 10) How do you approach evangelism and discipleship in the local church?
- 11) Where do you see your greatest opportunity for personal growth?
- 12) What have you found to be your greatest strength and weaknesses?
- 13) What is it about our church that appeals to you?
- 14) Why do you want to leave your present position?
- 15) Is there anything else we should know about you?

Second or third interview sample questions:

- 1) What passages of scripture have leapt off the page and enlightened your heart and mind during the last month?
- 2) Describe a time of brokenness in your life. Do you have any experiences of shattered dreams like Joseph? How did God use the “pit” and “prison” to develop you?
- 3) Who do you look up to? What Authors and/or ministry leaders mentor you?
- 4) Describe your prayer life. What role would prayer take in our church?
- 5) How do you personally engage in evangelism and equip others to witness?
- 6) What do you expect from church board members? ...for the laity?
- 7) What is your concept of pastoral care, calling, counseling?
- 8) How do you preach and teach on holiness?
- 9) Give us some idea of how you see the church being administered (financial, managing people, staff relationships and accountability, delegating).
- 10) What is your position on same-sex marriage? What is your philosophy of ministry for churches in navigating LBGTQ issues?
- 11) What are your theological convictions re the role of women leading in the church?
- 12) On a scale of 1-10, rate the health of your marriage. Are there issues we should be aware of? How does your spouse feel about possibly serving here? How does your family feel about adapting to a new location?

Sample rejection letter for those who are not interviewed

Dear <Mr. or Mrs. Last name>,

Thank you for taking the time to apply for the position of lead pastor at _____ Friends Church.

Regrettably, you were not selected by our team to go forward in the search process. It is often difficult to choose between many experienced and quality applicants, but we are trusting in God's guidance through this discernment process.

Many thanks again for your interest and application to our church and all the best as you seek to serve the Lord.

Regards,

Sample rejection letter for those who are interviewed

Dear <Applicant's first name>,

On behalf of the search team, I would like to say thank you for taking the time to apply and meet with our team regarding serving as lead pastor at _____ Friends Church. It was great to find out more about what you have achieved, as well as your skills and qualifications.

Regrettably, you were not selected by our team to go forward. It is often difficult to choose between many experienced and quality applicants, but we are trusting in God's guidance through this discernment process.

Many thanks again for your interest and application to our church and all the best as you seek to serve the Lord.

Regards,

How to post a job on Indeed

While many of the open positions that job seekers find on Indeed have been collected from around the web by our search engine, employers can also post jobs directly on Indeed. Jobs posted on Indeed are accessible to candidates from both desktop computers and mobile devices and can appear even if your company doesn't have a career site. It's easy to post a job in just a few steps.

Step 1: Visit "Post a Job" page

When you click the Post a Job button at [indeed.com/hire](https://www.indeed.com/hire), you'll be able to open an employer account, from which you can post a new job at any time.

Step 2: Enter the details of your job

Add a clear, concise title and job description, as well as the location of your job. The job details you provide will help match your job to relevant job seeker searches, so check out these tips for creating clear titles and compelling descriptions. Finally, choose the email address to which applicant resumes will be sent.

Step 3: Specify Job Requirements with Application Questions (optional)

If your ideal candidate needs to have certain experience, credentials or skills, you can specify these as Job Requirements. When applying, applicants will be asked if they have what you're looking for. Requirements can include location, years of specific experience, education level and language proficiency.

Step 4: Decide whether to sponsor your job for extra visibility

Sponsored jobs get more applications than *free job* posts. Sponsoring your job means applying a small budget to keep it prominently displayed. If you choose to post your job for free, it will be most visible to job seekers for the first 2 or 3 days after posting. After that, your job will fall behind newer relevant search results and candidates will have to scroll further back to find it. The application estimator tool will give you an idea of how many applications you can expect, based on the performance of jobs like yours. If you choose to sponsor your job, you will be prompted to add billing information.