LEADERSHIP / TEAM GUIDE

Pastoral search committee

A prayerful path to your next pastor.

Bring your search team together around biblical qualifications, a clear church profile, and a thoughtful review process.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Use at the first search committee meeting. Work through the guide together, then assign an owner and date to every next step.

1 Begin with Scripture and prayer

Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 together. Discuss character, family life, teaching, and care for people. Agree on a regular time to pray for the congregation and candidates before reviewing resumes.

2 Describe the church honestly

Write down your doctrine, attendance, community, ministry strengths, finances, and current challenges. Clarify the role, compensation range, housing expectations, and decision process. Share an accurate picture rather than a sales pitch.

3 Use one review process

Ask each candidate the same core questions. Review doctrine and preaching samples before interviews. With permission, contact references who have observed the candidate over time. Keep notes factual, restricted to the search team, and relevant to ministry.

4 Move forward with clarity

Explain the next steps and expected timing. Arrange visits and conversations with appropriate leaders. Complete background checks and safeguarding review before a final recommendation. Follow the church bylaws and congregational decision process.

CONVERSATION WORKSHEET

Listen. Discuss. Write it down.

Complete together or type into the fields before your next meeting. Save a copy for your team.

01 What biblical qualifications will guide every review?

02 What does our church most need from its next pastor?

03 What must candidates know about our current challenges?

04 Who is authorized to communicate with candidates?

KEEP THE CONVERSATION FOCUSED

- Tell us how you prepare and preach a passage of Scripture.
- How do you shepherd people through conflict or suffering?
- What would your first 90 days of listening and ministry look like?

NEXT STEPS / TAKE IT BACK TO YOUR TEAM

Make the next step clear.

Choose one priority you can act on. Assign responsibility and agree when you will review it.

Our next ministry priority

Responsible leader

Review date

Three practical actions / person responsible / target date

People, supplies, budget, or support needed

BEFORE WE MOVE FORWARD

- [ ] Church profile and role expectations are written.
- [ ] Doctrinal priorities are clear and shared with candidates.
- [ ] Interview and reference questions are consistent.
- [ ] Background checks and safeguarding review are planned.

Prepared for local church ministry. Adapt this tool to your congregation. Partnership and search decisions remain with the local church; this guide is not a contract or professional advice.