

## NWYM Pastoral Search Process Considerations

Northwest Yearly Meeting is committed to assisting our local churches in the process of finding healthy, faithful pastoral leadership. Our aim is to provide support and resources to the local church, as well as connect congregations with candidates who match their pastoral needs. In addition, NWYM works hard to insure that candidates are well suited to serve within the overall mission and vision of Friends in the Northwest.

Several questions ought to be considered by the elders of the local church both before and during the pastoral search process:

- Do we know who we are as a church?
  - This is an opportunity for change—regardless of the reason for the pastor leaving. Are we ready to change? Why or why not?
  - Where are we headed? Do we have a clear, mutually shared mission/vision?
  - Is it time to refocus or renew our sense of vision?
  - Have we completed a Church Information Sheet provided by NWYM and submitted it to the NWYM superintendent?
  
- What do we need right now?
  - Do we need an intentional interim pastor to help us through this process?
  - Are their needs for conflict resolution/grief recovery in the congregation?
  - Do we need pulpit supply?
  - Have the elders considered a plan to oversee the pastoral needs of the church during the transition time?
  - Do we need to change the responsibilities of existing staff in the interim?
  - Have we determined a plan for other existing staff when a new pastor is called?
  - What is the budget we are working with for the search process?
  - Is it time to refigure our compensation package?
  - Have we contacted the NWYM office or looked at the NWYM website for resources ([www.nwfriends.org](http://www.nwfriends.org))
  
- What type of pastor is God leading us to call to our church?
  - Have we called the Body to pray? Is there a plan for focused prayer?
  - Have we developed steps for gathering input from the congregation
  - Have we developed a clear job description
  - What will be the relationship of the new pastor to existing staff?
  - What is the relationship with the local elders?
  - Are we looking for a person with a “vision” or someone to help facilitate “our vision.” Or is it both?
  - What spiritual gifts, experience, education, etc, are we looking for?
  - Do they “fit” with the mission/Faith & Practice of NWYM?

- What is our process?
  - Have we established clear goals, duties, and an appropriate timeline?
  - Has this been clearly communicated to the whole congregation? Do we have a plan in place for regular updates?
  - Have we received appropriate approval from the business meeting regarding the process and the responsibilities and authority given to each group?
  - Who will be the search team?
    - What is their responsibility & authority in this phase?
    - When/how often will we meet?
    - Do they have a plan for communication?
    - Do they have timeline?
    - How will we communicate the opening beyond through the NWYM office and the NWYM website?
    - Will we approach people who have not applied?
    - Do we want resumes and/or the NWYM Ministry Information Sheet from each candidate?
    - What will be our interview procedure?
      - First round phone or personal interviews?
      - Speak with references before or after interview?
      - Input from the NWYM superintendent at what point?
      - Will we request audio/video taped sermons?
    - What criteria will we establish for narrowing our candidate pool?
  - For final candidates...what next steps will we take?
    - Second interview?
    - Who on the search committee will be responsible for reference checks?
    - Is our plan to focus on one candidate in order to discern whether he/she is called or will we consider introducing several candidates to the whole congregation by hosting them and asking the person to preach?
      - NOTE: Please agree that the search committee will only bring one name to the business meeting as a recommendation.
    - For candidates who come to meet the congregation, are we prepared to host them well? Where will they stay? What venues (small groups, home meetings, Q&A, etc) can we create where people can interact with the person? How can we get useful feedback from members of the Body?
- Other considerations for the search team:
  - Identify the following roles/duties:
    - Clerk
    - Recording clerk
    - People to do reference checking
    - Someone(s) to write letters/make calls to candidates no longer being considered

## How the search team will work together (examples for a covenant)

- a. Our search is based on prayer and trust. We commit to daily personal prayer for this search process and to make prayer a focus of our work together.
- b. We commit to pray for each other, the church, and the candidates we will contact.
- c. Our meetings will start on time and end on time.
- d. We will each be responsible to complete assigned tasks.
- e. Decisions will be made by spiritual consensus. We agree to move forward when we are united in leading of the Holy Spirit.
- f. Confidentiality will be kept.
- g. We will do our work as a group rather than acting as individuals. When we are asked by others how the process is going, we will communicate what the search team knows and agrees on to that point, rather than our individual preferences or perspective at that moment.
- h. We will update the congregation regularly, communicate often & listen well to their concerns and questions. We will not respond defensively. We will seek to be an non-anxious presence in this time of transition.
- i. Committee members will act with trust, integrity, tact and honesty with each other, even when there is disagreement.
- j. When/if conflict arises, we agree to responsible for any inappropriate words or behavior. We agree to confess our faults and we agree to forgive each other, just as Christ has forgiven us. We seek to model love and reconciliation in this process and as a group we will hold one another mutually accountable in this work.
- k. Decisions on which pastoral candidate to call will not proceed until all information (references, profiles, etc.) has been gathered on all potential candidates. (We won't leave people behind)
- l. References and profiles will be thoroughly checked.
- m. The search committee will not rush the process and we will move forward in a timely way.
- n. If we cannot get clear at some point in the process we will gather people to pray & wait.