

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES FOR THE SEARCH COMMITTEE / CANDIDATE

I. INTRODUCTION

These suggestions are offered to help make the interview a productive time for the search committee and the candidate. A goal of the interview is to discern whether a congregation and the pastoral candidate have common expectations and values. The interview is used to gather information to assist the committee in learning more about the candidate. The interview assists the candidate in ascertaining his/her interest in the pastoral position in that congregation. It is helpful for the spouse (if applicable) to be present for the interview. *Emphasize that information shared is confidential and should be shared only with the search committee.*

The interview process should begin in an informal manner. Remember, you are seeking to learn to know about each other. Someone suggested courtship might be a helpful model to keep in mind during the interview period. Mutual self-disclosure is an effective method to gain knowledge and understanding about one another. A well-lighted and ventilated room where everyone can be comfortable is important. It may be helpful to be seated around tables.

II. PROCESS

- A.** Arrangements for the interview are usually made by the District Executive/Minister. In some situations, the search committee chair makes the interview arrangements.
- B.** Time allotted for the interview itself should be between 1½ to 2 hours, not including a meal and tour of the facilities and area.
- C.** Interviews are usually conducted in the local church. Occasionally, to maintain confidentiality, the interview is conducted away from the church location.
- D.** Plans should include time for the candidate to tour the church building, parsonage (if applicable), and the local area.
- E.** Meal arrangements are made by the search committee. Some committees join together for the meal and find this informal time of sharing meaningful.
- F.** Sometimes a candidate leads in a time of devotion.
- G.** When small children are involved, child care should be secured to care for the children during the interview.

- H. When overnight accommodations are required, the committee makes the arrangements. It is helpful to ask the candidate about preference, if they would be comfortable staying in a home, etc.
- I. The congregation reimburses all expenses connected with the interview(s). When travel arrangements are made, they should be mutually agreed upon by the candidate and the search committee. The candidate needs to keep a record of expenses (miles, tolls, meals, etc.).
- J. The District Executive/Minister will continue to update the candidate and search committee until negotiations are completed or dialogue is discontinued.

III. INTERVIEW

A. Introduction of Search Committee Members

1. Name
2. Present or former occupation
3. Present role(s) in congregational life
4. Your hopes/dreams for pastoral leadership for the next five/ten years
5. Your hopes/dreams for the congregational leadership for the next five/ten years

B. Candidate Shares Personal Story and Faith Journey

- C. **Conversation.** This is an important part of the get-acquainted process, and preparations need to be made prior to the interview time.

D. Search Committee

1. Specific questions can be asked by reading and studying the profile.
2. Questions that can be answered by yes or no are not the most helpful.
3. Design questions that will encourage thoughtful responses. Sample questions for the candidate include the following:
 - a. Tell us about your goals and priorities in visitation.
 - b. How would you define pastoral care?
 - c. What are your goals for worship, and how would you work at developing them?
 - d. Describe one or two strengths, and identify areas where growth is needed.

- e. Assuming you have read the congregational profile, what would be your goal(s) for the next five (5) years if you were called as our pastor?

E. Candidate

1. Describe your leadership style and how you work with others.
2. Ask specific questions of the search committee members developed from reviewing the congregational profile. Sample questions for the candidate to ask the search committee might include the following:
 - a. What is your “vision of ministry” for this congregation in the next five (5) years?
 - b. How would you describe one or two strengths of the congregation and one or two areas that need strengthening?
 - c. Why did the previous pastor leave?
 - d. What were the most recent misunderstandings/conflicts in the congregation, and how were they handled?

IV. FACILITATOR

The District Executive/Minister (or a designee) is the facilitator during the interview. The facilitator keeps the process moving and asks follow-up questions for clarity. Additional suggestions are provided here:

- A.** Reasonable attempts should be made to treat all candidates equally.
- B.** Act as gatekeeper for out-of-bounds questions.
- C.** Make sure the committee and candidate have opportunity to ask pertinent questions.
- D.** When conversation is near its end, clarify the next steps for the committee and candidate.
- E.** Take time for candidate and committee members to say good-bye.
- F.** Follow up with the candidate and the search committee in a timely manner.

Affirmed by the Council of District Executives 7/96. Revised by CODE 7/99.
1/2000

Office of Ministry
Church of the Brethren General Board
1451 Dundee Avenue
Elgin, Illinois 60120-1694