

HOW A CHURCH RECEIVES A NEW SENIOR PASTOR

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The process of appointment making in the Global Methodist Church is thoroughly consultative (§610.7 BDD). In the Trinity Conference, we see this as a collaborative effort between the church and Cabinet to ensure each church can receive the best possible pastor.

According to §610.7 of the BDD, all appointments are to be made with consideration to the needs, characteristics, and opportunities of congregations and institutions, the gifts and evidence of God's grace of those appointed, and in faithfulness to our commitment to an open itinerancy. Open itinerancy means appointments are made without regard to race, tribal or ethnic origin, gender, disability, marital status, or age.

The general steps of the appointment making process are below. However, **Presiding Elders often customize the process for individual churches in a variety of ways.** Some of the common variations are listed below, but many others are possible.

Beginning the Process:

1. There are numerous situations that can prompt a Search Process:
 - a. When a pastor announces to the SPRC that he or she has accepted a new appointment, desires a move, or wishes to retire.
 - b. When the SPRC and Presiding Elder determine that a pastoral change is in the best interest of the church.
2. When a church learns that a search process is needed, the Chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) or equivalent contacts the Presiding Elder.
3. The Presiding Elder explains the process to the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) or equivalent, taking care to answer the SPRC's questions to make sure they understand the process. This is often done via phone, Zoom, or email, but may be done in-person.

Building a Church Profile:

1. The SPRC meets to fill out the Church Profile Form. Sometimes the Presiding Elder will meet with the church as they craft the Profile, but sometimes not. In some cases, the SPRC may decide to seek input from the rest of the congregation, but in all cases the SPRC will make the final decisions about the content of the Profile.

- a. The first section of the Church Profile allows the SPRC to share the current reality of the church and community with the Presiding Elder and any potential pastoral candidates. It includes information about what the church and community have to offer, what the congregation sees as their vision for ministry, and what the current and future goals of the church may be.
- b. With the current reality, vision, and goals of the church in mind, the SPRC will then determine the most important skills and characteristics the next pastor must possess to lead the church at this time. In some cases, the Presiding Elder will ask a church to wait on this part of the discussion until the Presiding Elder can be present with them.
- c. Before the Presiding Elder can begin the search for candidates, the SPRC must craft the total compensation package the church is willing to offer.
 - i. The total compensation package will include base salary and note whether the church offers a parsonage. It may include amounts for a housing allowance, health benefits, retirement benefits, a professional expense account, as well as other items as needed. The Trinity Conference has a Clergy Compensation Recommendation document available on the Conference website that may be useful in planning the total compensation package.
 - ii. Compensation packages may be listed as a range in order to give the church flexibility during discussions with the final candidate.
 - iii. Any compensation package needs to be competitive compared to churches of similar size in the Conference, the status of clergy desired (ordained, lay minister, etc.), and the desired experience level of the clergy.
 - iv. The total amount of any compensation package must be reviewed and approved by the Church Council or its equivalent.
2. The SPRC emails the completed Church Profile to the Presiding Elder.
3. The Presiding Elder reviews the profile and sets up an appointment to go over the form with the SPRC, line by line, to ensure the Presiding Elder understands the situation. Any changes and clarifications that come from this meeting are incorporated into the final version of the profile.

Identifying pastoral candidates

1. When the position is publicly announced as Open, the Presiding Elder posts a notice on the Trinity Conference website and begins soliciting potential candidates.
2. When the Profile is completed, the Presiding Elder takes it to the Cabinet for suggestions of candidates from around the Trinity Conference (or beyond).
3. If the SPRC desires to consider specific candidates, they can make requests to their Presiding Elder. Before any of these requests can be offered as a candidate to the church, however, they must be vetted and approved by the Board of Ministry and/or Cabinet.
4. For full-time churches, the goal is to find at least 2–3 candidates for the church to interview. For part-time churches, this may not be possible.

5. Once the Presiding Elder identifies potential candidates, he or she sends them the Church Profile and contacts them to confirm whether they are both a good match for the church and interested in being considered for the position.
6. When a candidate is interested, the PE sends the resume and a sermon link to the SPRC chair for review. The SPRC Chair then shares the resume and sermon link with the rest of the SPRC members (but not anyone else).
 - a. At no point should the SPRC communicate the names or details of the candidates to anyone else, unless specifically authorized by the Presiding Elder.
 - b. At no point should the SPRC communicate directly with the candidate or anyone at the candidate's current church, unless specifically authorized by the Presiding Elder.
7. After the SPRC has reviewed the resume and sermon, the Presiding Elder works with the SPRC and candidate(s) to schedule interviews.
8. Each interview is between SPRC members, the Presiding Elder, and the candidate, unless the Presiding Elder approves other arrangements.
 - a. Initial interviews are often conducted via Zoom. If any candidate is interviewing via Zoom in a round, it is recommended that everyone in that round be interviewed via Zoom.
 - b. When interviews take place in person, it is recommended that the church offers to pay for a candidate's travel expenses.
 - c. In general, pastors are not to be appointed or assigned until the church and pastor have met in person.
 - d. The SPRC must always remember that the interview process goes both ways. The SPRC and the candidates are interviewing each other.

Choosing a Pastor:

1. After the interviews, the SPRC may decide which of the candidates they would prefer to be appointed or assigned to their church.
 - a. Remember that the SPRC has the sole responsibility and authority to make the decision *for* the congregation. The choice of pastor is NOT subject to a congregational vote.
 - b. If none of the candidates are a good match, the SPRC may ask the Presiding Elder to continue the search for other candidates, recognizing that it may extend the process by weeks or even months.
2. When the SPRC decides they would like a candidate to be appointed or assigned, the Presiding Elder talks with the candidate to confirm the decision.
3. The candidate and SPRC Chair review the compensation package to negotiate any potential changes and then determine the official start date.
4. The Presiding Elder coordinates a communication schedule with the Cabinet, the SPRC and the incoming and outgoing Pastors in order to ensure the churches and pastors honor all parties involved in the transition.

Telling the Leaving Pastor Good-Bye

1. The SPRC leads the congregation in celebrating and thanking the leaving pastor for their service to the church. The Presiding Elder has resources for this, if needed.
2. If a pastor leaves a congregation and moves out of the community but is not moving to a new appointment (for example, moving into senior status) the congregation is encouraged to provide financial assistance for that pastor's move, as they are able. **

Receiving the New Pastor

1. The Presiding Elder, SPRC, and Pastor fill out the necessary paperwork to finalize the appointment or assignment.
2. The SPRC works with others in the church to plan the best way to welcome the new pastor, including taking intentional steps to set the pastor up for successful ministry with the congregation and in the community. The Presiding Elder has resources and suggestions for this, if needed.
3. If the new pastor is moving to the community, the church is encouraged to help the new pastor (financially) move into the parsonage or their new home. The Trinity Conference recommends that all reasonable moving expenses for full-time clergy up to \$6,000.00 be reimbursed by the congregation receiving the pastor. For part-time appointments, churches may choose to reimburse pastors for moving expenses at a mutually agreed upon amount. **
4. We recommend that the church offer a formal welcome during worship on the pastor's first Sunday (or soon thereafter). Churches are encouraged to invite their Presiding Elder, Connecting Elder, or a member of the Conference staff to be present for the welcome. The Presiding Elders have a sample "Covenant Liturgy for New Pastoral Appointment" that can be modified and used for the welcome.

** All payments for moving expenses, even if they are given as a direct reimbursement, shall be reported on the pastor's W-2 as taxable income above and beyond the base or cash salary listed in the compensation package, in accordance with IRS regulations.