

Pastoral Change & Transition Process

One of the benefits of being part of a denominational family like the Church of the Nazarene is a clearly defined and structured process for the selection of a new pastor. We are guided by the Manual of the Church of the Nazarene in this journey.



1. Thank and Bid Farewell to Our Departing Pastor—Because we are praying and trusting God and because the board and district superintendent are hard at work on our behalf, we as a congregation can focus on our departing pastor, who has served us faithfully and sacrificially, expressing to him our love and gratitude as well as covenanting to pray for him and his family as they obediently follow God’s leading for their lives.

2. Establish Interim Arrangements—The district superintendent will meet with the church board and staff to explain the transition process. Then, the board and district superintendent will establish interim arrangements to maintain as much continuity as possible. A regular and effective system of communication to the congregation will be established in order to provide opportunities for input and participation in the search process. We will use the worship folder and information from a board member from the pulpit.

3. Assessment of Church Status—The board and district superintendent will review membership, attendance, and financial records. Physical plant will also be inspected assessed. Interviews with staff will seek their input. Congregational input will be sought by various means.

4. Development of Profiles for Church and Potential Pastoral Candidates—Based on information gathering in step 3, the board and district superintendent will develop a local church profile, which will include expressions of the vision and the mission of the local church. The board and district superintendent will also develop a profile for potential pastoral candidates.

5. Identification of Potential Pastoral Candidates—the district superintendent develops a list and researches potential candidates based on the local church profile. All candidates should be ordained elders in the Church of the Nazarene. The board and district superintendent will review profiles of the church and potential pastoral candidates comparing the profiles with the names collected in order to refine the list of names. A short list of candidates will be created, and candidates will be prioritized.

As we enter Step 5, the pastoral search process moves from open congregational dialogue to a very confidential and guarded consideration of prospects by the church board and district superintendent. This is not an attempt to be secretive and hide the process from the church. Rather, we believe we have an obligation to the pastoral candidates to be responsible with the future of their ministries. Most, if not all, of our prospects will have active, current pastoral assignments, and we would not want to unduly disrupt those ministries.

Second, the church has asked the board to lead this process, and the board will need to focus on research, prayer, interviews, and decision-making without undue distractions. Please feel free to communicate new names and information to the board. But know that the board will not be releasing a list of the names submitted, nor will it disclose information on the names until we are ready to submit a name to the congregation for consideration as pastor. Please do not ask board members to inform you of the list of names being considered, nor would it be appropriate to lobby or campaign in any way for any prospect.

Step 5 may take several weeks. It is obviously a critical step, and we want to do it properly. We ask the church to join the board in prayer as we gather names of prospects and do the appropriate and necessary research on them. Your board is meeting in prayer each Sunday during this process to seek God's will for the church and for Him to begin preparing the person He has in mind for your church.

What you can do:

1. Spend time in prayer asking the Lord for guidance as we continue through the pastoral search process.
2. Express your thanks and appreciation for our existing pastoral team and their ministry in the midst of our transition.

6. Interview Process—Because most, if not all, of the candidates will be involved in current ministries, we will conduct this part of the process with great attention to confidentiality and sensitivity so as not to distract from or damage the current ministry of a candidate. The district superintendent alone will be responsible for contacting candidates, leading research efforts on those candidates and extending invitations for interviews. Interviewing begins with the first on the prioritized search list. A decision is made after the interview whether to present the name to the congregation or to release the name from the process and move on to the next name on the list. The candidate will be invited to visit your church and will meet with the congregation so we both have an opportunity to get to know each other. The candidate will then meet with the board to continue the interview process.

7. Board Nomination of a Candidate to the Congregation for a Vote—Two-thirds vote of the church board by ballot is required. Results are reported to the district superintendent who communicates the vote to the candidate. Candidate accepts or declines to allow his/her name to be presented to the congregation for a vote. The decision to let the congregation vote does not bind the candidate to accept an affirmative vote.

8. Congregation Vote—Announcement of the vote will be made in two regular services prior to the vote. Communication about the candidate will be given to the congregation so that they vote knowledgeably. Two-thirds favorable vote by ballot of church members of voting age (15 and older), present and voting, is required to extend a call.

9. Response of the Candidate—the candidate has 15 days to decide whether to accept the call. His/her acceptance will serve as the final confirmation that we have been lead by God in our decision. A declined invitation will indicated God calling us to make a correction in our decision, and the process will go back to the church board to interview another candidate.

10. Arrival of a New Pastor—The board and district superintendent work on the details of the new pastor's move and starting date. The announcement of our new pastor is communicated to the community and broader Nazarene family. The district superintendent will conduct a formal pastoral installation service. We celebrate God's continued faithfulness to His Church. We make our new pastor and family feel very welcome and help make their transition as smooth as possible. We begin this new chapter in the life of the church with a spirit of joy and anticipation.

NOTES:

- *1. With confidence in God, in our local and district church leadership, we must continually bathe this process in prayer. Suggestions for the nature and content of our prayers are provided as we progress along the journey.*
- *2. The board and district superintendent will provide official communications regularly regarding our process and interim arrangements. Please do not expect the staff to be able to answer questions about the process. In fact, they are asked simply to refer to official updates from the board.*
- *3. Please do not contact the pastors and ask them to submit resumes.*
- *4. If you have question about the pastoral search process within the Church of the Nazarene please contact a member of the church board*