

Pacific Southwest Conference Forming a Pastoral Search Team

A Pastoral Search Team (PST) is a representative group of trustworthy women and men who work together to discern God's leading and provision for leadership of His Church and to make a recommendation to the congregation for hiring.

- The PST should be a *representative* group – a group of church members that reflects the diversity of the current congregation as well as desired demographics, and a group that represents the theology and ethos of the Evangelical Covenant Church.
- The PST should be a *trustworthy* group – a group that the congregation trusts to act on their behalf because they are spiritually mature, of good character, committed leaders and humble servants.
- The PST should *work together* – not coming with personal agendas, but in mutual submission to God and one another, working through conflicts and complementing one another in their leadership skills to make wise decisions.
- The PST acts to *discern*, not simply to compare qualifications and choose the most impressive prospect, but to prayerfully seek God's will and direction, even if it is surprising. In doing so, the PST acknowledges that the local church is under the leadership of its head, Jesus Christ.
- The PST *makes a recommendation* to the congregation, either directly or indirectly through its recommendation to the church Leadership Team, Board or Council (depending on constitutional requirements). The ultimate responsibility for pastoral selection is with the congregation, which votes on the pastoral candidate recommended by the PST.

Church leadership should establish a process for forming a Nominating Committee for members of the Pastoral Search Team. The Nominating Committee might be a combination of the Pastoral Relations Committee (or PRPC, MMC, etc.) and Church Council/Board/LT, or a committee chosen and convened just for this purpose. Check your constitution and bylaws to see what guidance and requirements they contain regarding Nominating Committees for Pastoral Search Teams. Communicate this process to the congregation.

Before forming a Pastoral Search Team, encourage all members of the church to prayerfully consider their role in the search process. Some may be led by God to be willing to be nominated for the PST, and if voted in and confirmed by the congregation, to serve on the PST until the conclusion of its work (which may take 1-3 years). Before consenting to be nominated for the PST, an individual should prayerfully review and commit to the expectations of PST, including time and confidentiality commitments and ECC theological affirmations. Those not called to serve on the PST are nonetheless called to pray and support the work of the PST and church leadership.

The Nominating Committee should work with the Transitional Pastor to vet individuals for the Pastoral Search Team. In addition to confirming that each individual meets the specific requirements for the PST (e.g., member of the church, demonstrated leadership, spiritual maturity, etc.), the Nominating Committee should meet with PST prospects to inquire about their interest and ability to serve on the PST and their willingness to abide by the guidelines and expectations for PST members. Those who meet these requirements are able to take

the next step of being considered by the congregation and formally voted into the PST at a congregational meeting.

Once formed, the PST will meet with a Pacific Southwest Conference staff member to undergo training. A PST Chair will be identified and chosen from the PST after the training has occurred.