

# BRETHREN PASTORAL TRANSITIONS GUIDE

*2022 Edition*



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## *Get Oriented*

This resource is an overview of the important, intentional steps necessary to make a pastoral transition as healthy as possible. Before looking into the detailed steps and practical helps included in this packet, it is important to understand the major parts of the journey in order to launch the right conversations about receiving guidance and exploring options along the way. In part, the journey reframes basic questions of ministry identity, vitality, purpose and direction, such as:

Who are we? Whose are we?

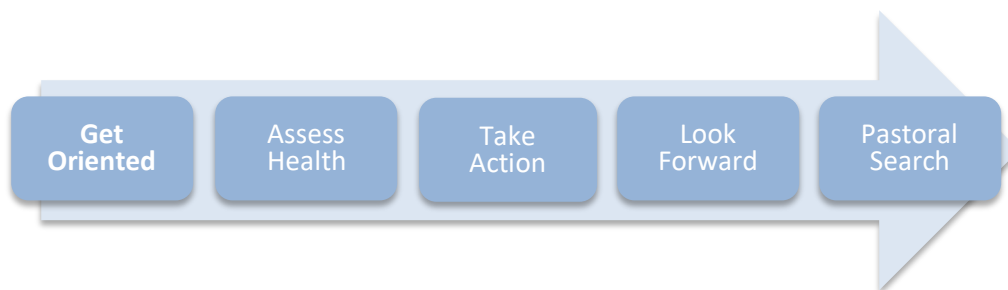
Why are we here? What is God calling us to BE and DO?

Who are we here to touch is Jesus' name?

Where is Jesus taking us? How will we get there?

What kind of leader do we need for the next part of that journey?

Developing healthy self-awareness and forward thinking are vitally important for the departing pastor, the congregation and the next pastor. Intentionality and guidance prepares us well for the next season.



The arrow above, adapted from Interim Pastor Ministries (IPM), outlines the key steps congregations should take once an event has triggered a change in pastoral leadership. Whether the decision toward transition was expected and mutual or unexpected and initiated by one party, following these basic steps can aide your congregation in making the healthiest transition possible. Remember that you are not in this alone! Regional and National leadership are available to help you navigate this journey.

## **Essential Steps Along the Transition Journey**

### **1. Get Oriented**

Familiarize the leaders and congregation with these 5 stages for healthy, intentional transition. Identify a **Transition Team** to guide the congregation through a healthy transition process (see p 5-8). Determine the level of need for outside guidance from an intentional interim pastor (see **Intervention Intensity Scale**, p 8).

### **2. Assess Health**

Gain a healthy self-awareness within the congregation by reflecting on what has brought you to this point. Conduct an **Exit Interview** with the former pastor, when appropriate. Create a map of your **Corporate Story**. Assess your congregation's current vitality with the **Natural Church Development (NCD)** tool.

### **3. Take Action**

Discern what actions need to be taken to conclude this current chapter and act upon them. Celebrate God stories from your past. Grieve that which has been lost or must be left behind. Seek healing and forgiveness to address wounds that will keep you from moving forward.

### **4. Look Forward**

Determine what God wants your congregation to BECOME and DO in your next season of ministry. Identify your strengths and weaknesses. Compile a **Congregational Profile** including important details about your church body. Learn what needs are present in the community around you. Reflect upon those people groups that God is already softening your hearts toward. Articulate who you are where you believe God is taking you next.

### **5. Pastoral Search**

Identify, equip and launch the **Pastoral Search Team**, utilizing coaching from outside resources as necessary. Create and post a **Job Description** through available sources. Evaluate candidates against actual needs of congregation and the direction of your ministry. Partner with Regional Leadership for examination and ordination recognition. Extend a call to the individual God leads you to and hand off the baton. Celebrate, and keep moving forward on Kingdom mission together!

## **Identify a Transition Team\***

### **1. Understand Purpose**

The Transition Team is a group appointed to guide the congregation spiritually and strategically through pastoral transition. Their work has two phases. Phase 1 is *corrective* – visiting the congregation's past to celebrate, grieve, and work through unresolved issues. Phase 2 is *directive* – seeking God's plans and future for the church. The Transition Team will work with the church leadership and Interim Pastoral leader to discover a unified vision for the church that is God-inspired and congregationally-owned.

### **2. Who Selects the Transition Team?**

If an Interim Pastor is determined necessary for the transition, it would be highly valuable for the IP to have input into the selection of the Transition Team. Otherwise, Transition Team should be selected by official leadership of the church.

### **3. Characteristics of an Ideal Transition Team Member**

- Spiritually mature & respected leaders or workers from within the church.
- Positive attitude, hopeful, full of faith and the Holy Spirit.
- Clear, wise thinker who responds, doesn't react and can make good decisions.
- Wants what is best for the church and doesn't have a personal agenda.
- A team player who works well with others.
- Able to maintain confidentiality.
- Represents the broad spectrum of the current congregation.
- Willing to be trained and led by the Interim Pastor.
- Willing and able to commit the time to the process.

### **4. Possible Approaches for Selecting Transition Team**

- Select a team of at least 3, but not more than 7 members.
- Include the church board or a good representation of the church board.
- If you invite staff members, do so with discernment and caution.
- Prayerfully look for other key leaders and workers in the church.
- Represent as many segments of the congregation as possible.
- Give initial invitation in writing followed by personal invitation & application.

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\* Adapted from Interim Pastor Ministries (IPM) Roadmap, p 59-60

## **SAMPLE LETTER FOR POTENTIAL TRANSITION TEAM MEMBERS\***

We are pleased to inform you that you have been nominated as a member of the Transition Team at \_\_\_\_\_ Church. The nomination indicates the positive impact you have had on people's lives and the ministry here. This form provides you with the objectives of the team and a self-evaluation process to help you evaluate your responsibilities of serving as a member.

### **Objectives of the Transition Team:**

- To experience personal & corporate spiritual renewal; to vitalize our spiritual passion.
- To heal the hurts and restore unity to our Church; to provide a Biblical process of conflict resolution that is known and practiced by all.
- To work through the transitional tasks.
- To mentor new leaders for the church's ministries.
- To discover and implement God's vision and direction for our church.
- To maintain a close working relationship with the congregation to ensure good communication, efficient administration and mutual accountability.

### **Leadership of the Transition Team:**

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_, Interim Pastor

Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_, To be determined

### **Meeting Dates and Times:**

Each \_\_\_\_\_ beginning on \_\_\_\_\_: from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
(Maximum two-hour limit)

### **Discernment and Self-Evaluation:**

This task may seem impossible, but our Lord has given us supernatural resources to accomplish His Mission for the church. The work of this interim leadership team is paramount in the strengthening of our Church. Please prayerfully consider answering the call to help us on this journey. Included you will find a questionnaire for self-evaluation. All responses will be kept in confidence. We ask also that, until the process moves to a formal invitation, you keep your consideration in confidence. Please answer the questions candidly and honestly and return to the Interim Pastor.

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\* Adapted from Interim Pastor Ministries (IPM) Roadmap, p 61-62

Following the completion of the evaluation, the Interim Pastor and the Leadership will review the responses and contact you. Please note that submitting this form is not an indication of a position as a member of the Transition Team. Your application and responses will be reviewed and our Interim Pastor will contact you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

"I have been a member of our Church since" \_\_\_\_\_.

*(If you are not a member, please indicate reason)*

What are your Spiritual Gifts?

What ministries (please describe) have you served in the past? Currently?

Please indicate and evaluate your personal strengths and weaknesses.

Do you think you will be able to make objective decisions and be openly honest in your relationships with other members of the team? Explain.

Do you sense a personal calling to join the Transition Team?

The Transition Team will be an integral part in the development of our church. Can you work toward total health for all relationships: spiritually, mentally, and emotionally?

How can you assist in this process?

## **SAMPLE TRANSITION TEAM COVENANT\***

Before the Lord and together with my fellow TRANSITION TEAM members, and with the intent to strengthen our church, I solemnly enter the following covenant:

### **A COVENANT OF TEAM UNITY**

I now commit to being loyal to my fellow team members. When the group has made a decision, I will support it although I may have voted against it. I will not criticize the activities of the team or any individual member unless it is face-to-face. If a problem develops between another Transition Team member and me, I will faithfully follow the steps set forth in Matthew 18:15-17.

### **A COVENANT OF OPEN, LOVING COMMUNICATION**

I now commit to speaking in love and acting with grace toward my team members. I recognize the importance in this group of speaking openly and honestly. I will model vulnerable communication, and extend the same privilege to others without taking offense. I will interact with members of the congregation without gossiping, sowing discord or speaking negatively about any person in our Church, nor will I be a part of a group where this occurs.

### **A COVENANT OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

I now commit to holding in confidence the privileged information I receive because of my position on Transition Team. This includes the discussions in team meetings. I understand that I may share privileged information with my spouse only if they also are committed to this standard of confidentiality.

### **A COVENANT OF FAITHFULNESS**

I now commit to serving faithfully on this Transition Team. I will arrange my schedule as best I can so that I can attend meetings regularly. If something should arise that will keep me away, I will notify the leader.

### **A COVENANT OF INTEGRITY**

If the time comes when I can no longer carry out this covenant, I will resign from Transition Team without causing strife and dissension.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

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\* Adapted from Interim Pastor Ministries (IPM) Roadmap, p 65



## Intervention Intensity Scale

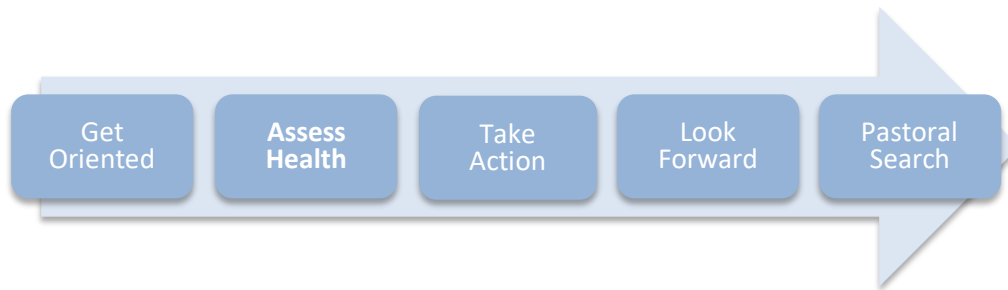
Determining the level of intentionality required for church in transition (from least to greatest).

Category	1 (low need)	2	3	4	5 (high need)
<b>Pastor &amp; Leadership Relationship</b>	Harmony and Mutual support	Normal give-and-take	Characterized by tension; attempts at reconciliation	Tension without reconciliation	Open accusation
<b>Reason for Pastor's Departure</b>	Pastor retired out of this ministry	Pastor called to another ministry	Pastor left without having another ministry	Pastor was asked to leave	Pastor was dismissed for cause
<b>Length of Service &amp; Regard for Ministry</b>	6-12 yrs, well regarded by most	4-8 yrs, well regarded by most	4-8 yrs, mixed reviews	>8 yrs, well regarded OR <4 yrs not well regarded	>12 yrs, highly regarded OR >2 yrs not well regarded
<b>Location of Former Pastor</b>	More than 100 miles away	More than 25 miles away	Still in community, looking to move	Still in community, no plans to move	Still in the church OR planting church in same community
<b>We expect to lose this percent of people</b>	0-5%	5-10%	10-20%	25-40%	>50%
<b>Maturity of Leadership</b>	Mature, trained, rotational turnover	Some maturity, no training, unplanned turnover	No training, some unplanned turnover	No training, high unplanned turnover	Elected leaders have resigned due to conflict
<b>Nature of Leadership</b>	Healthy turn-over; former leaders good followers	Elected & non-elected leaders aligned	Same people always elected	Elected leaders afraid to lead	Non-elected leadership in charge
<b>Leadership meetings</b>	Prayer & vision dominate agenda	Short-range goals dominate agenda	Business dominates agenda	Problems & discipline dominate	Survival dominates agenda
<b>Clarity of Vision</b>	Vision clear & agreed upon	People cannot articulate vision	Vision exists but little agreement	Old documents, disagreement	No vision, evidence of conflict
<b>Congregational Meetings</b>	Helpful, prayerful	Mostly business	Considered Irrelevant	Unaddressed tension	Open hostility
<b>Annual Growth rate past 5 years</b>	15%	10-15%	1-10%	0 or stagnant	Declining
<b>Annual conversion growth rate past 5 years</b>	10%	5-10%	<5%	Occasional	0

**Using this grid:** For each category on the left, place an X over one of the five boxes that most accurately describes your church. Do that in each category and observe where your "X"s fall. If most are in columns 1-2, your church is fairly healthy. If most are in 4-5, you have serious health issues that need outside intervention. The Brethren Church thanks Dr. Ken Moberg for his permission to use this version of the grid from his book "HELP-We Just Lost Our Pastor!" (Minneapolis, EFCA Publications, 2013)

## *Assess Health*

Assessing the current health of your congregation is a crucial step before moving forward. Beginning the transition process without a healthy understanding of how you got to this point will likely lead your congregation into trouble further down the road. The resources in this section of the guide will help your congregation answer the questions, “Who are we and how did we get here?”



After orienting your congregation and leadership to the transition process, there are some clear steps to take before creating an action plan.

- ☐ Conduct an exit interview with the departing pastor, if possible, to gain insights and a sense of closure.
- ☐ Create a Corporate Story Map to discover the unique joys and pains that exist in your congregation.
- ☐ Use some objective tool to assess the current health of your congregation in key areas of ministry. Our denominational leadership recommends the Natural Church Development (NCD) assessment, as it has proven to be an effective assessment tool to many of our congregations over the years.

The Transition Team may wish to consult regional or national leadership, especially if an Interim Pastor has not been selected to aide through the transition process.

## **Exit Interview**

The Regional Resource Coordinator, exiting Pastor, representatives of the Pastoral Care Committee and/or Official/Executive Board will participate in an exit interview. The Exit interview provides the following opportunities:

- To take a final look at "how things have gone" To bring meaningful closure prior to the pastor's departure.
- To enhance future ministry and congregational life.
- In the case of a pastor leaving under strained or difficult circumstances, to follow biblical principles to talk with each other and begin healing some of the wounds and hurts. The Bible commands no less than to speak the truth in spoken in love, to honor Christ, to be ambassadors of reconciliation and to work at the process of forgiveness.

### **Questions:**

Each person is encouraged to share his or her opinion – speaking the truth in love.

1. What words of thanks would you each like to share?
2. What has gone well during Pastor \_\_\_\_\_'s ministry at our church? Both pastor and congregational representatives should respond.
3. Why do you think these things went well?
4. As we look at future ministry at our church, what could have been done better?
5. Which group(s) of people were most invested in the ministry?
6. Which group(s) may have been neglected or untapped for ministry?
7. What do you see as needs or issues to address in the near future?
8. Do you, pastor, feel you and your family were appropriately supported – financially, spiritually or emotionally? What do you feel could have been done better?
9. Also, under most situations, organizing a farewell meal and giving people an opportunity to say thanks in their own way is definitely encouraged. Discuss a date and format that best fits the situation and the pastoral family's desires. This allows the congregation and the pastor to say their good-byes.

## **Corporate Story (Journey Wall)**

The purpose of conducting a Journey Wall experience is to engage the people and leaders of a congregation in creating a visual representation of their collective story. It can be a valuable method of addressing important foundational questions like: *Who are we? Where have we been? What happened along the way that shaped us? Where are we today?* It also serves to help those newer to the congregation hear and visualize many significant elements of the congregation's journey and understand their story more fully.

The shared experience is a way to build shared language—in their own words—which cultivates a shared understanding of the significant people, events and perceptions that have shaped their shared culture. It is a way to identify points of joy and pain, recall influential individuals and eras, as well as recognize issues from the past that may still have the potential to hinder forward progress, wholeness and healthy ministry relationships.

The following outline shares the story, the process and the intentional elements of an actual Journey Wall (a.k.a. timeline, history, etc.) workshop conducted with a rural congregation in Ohio.<sup>1</sup>

### **JOURNEY WALL EXPERIENCE AT XYZ BRETHREN CHURCH**

Everyone connected with the congregation who was interested was invited to participate, whether they were actual members or occasional attenders. They gathered in the Fellowship Hall in groups of six seated at round tables. A long, blank section of newsprint was taped to one wall so everyone could see it. Each table was equipped with pencils, some blank notebook paper and 2 stacks of blank green and pink Post-It Notes, approximately 35-40 of each color.

#### **1. PLOTTING THE TIMELINE**

After sharing light refreshments, a short devotional and some guided, focused prayer, we began by drawing a vertical line at the left end of the newsprint on the wall with the year the church was founded – 1892. Another vertical line was drawn at about 8-12 inches from the right end of the newsprint to represent the current year. A long, third line was drawn a few inches from the top of the paper from the left edge to the right edge, with the point of an arrow drawn at the right end.

The oldest participant in the group who actually attended the church in childhood was about 87, so we asked him about his first memories of the church. He vividly recalled standing up backward in

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<sup>1</sup> **Note:** The setting for this shared experience is very important. The room should be as casual and comfortable as possible, arranged so participants can see each other AND the resulting visual Journey Wall diagram. The experience SHOULD NOT BE RUSHED. It must be given adequate time for the process to unfold, usually about 3 to 4 hours depending on the size of the entire group and the number of subgroups.

a pew and watching out the door for his grandfather because he knew he would get candy. When asked if he recalled the pastor's name, he answered "Reverend Byers!" with enthusiasm.

Estimating his possible age at the time of his memories and knowing his birth year meant that his personal memories began somewhere around 1929-30-31. We drew another vertical line a bit to the right of the line representing the launch of the church and labelled it 1930-ish, just to represent the beginning of the current "collective" memory in the room. From there we drew enough parallel vertical lines to depict every 10 years through to the present day, leaving significant space between each line.

The entire group then engaged in brainstorming the names of any pastor or preacher they could remember. The years they were there were added next to their names on the list when that was known. Those names were then transferred to the newsprint roughly around the timeframe they were part of the church.

## **2. CELEBRATE**

The next exercise challenged each table group to talk among themselves about their good recollections, the happy times, the times of joy and vibrancy in their experiences as a congregation. They were encouraged to specifically note any names of people they remembered who had a positive impact on them or the church, as well as noting any events they could recall that were lively and exciting. Someone at each table was designated to write down the names and events being shared on the blank notebook paper. They then transferred each of the names and events noted individually onto one of the green Post-It Notes.

Those green Post-Its were placed on the large newsprint somewhere near the timeframe of their remembering. A spokesperson from each table shared with the larger group what items they placed on the newsprint and why. After the first table shared, each successive table shared any additional names or events they put onto the wall until all had opportunity to share. Open conversations and questions about stated memories were encouraged so that those who did not have first-hand recollections of those identified individuals or events could hear directly from those who did have them.

## **3. MOURN**

The next table group exercise was like the first one, but this time they were instructed to share with each other any events, circumstance and people they associated with a point of pain in the life of the congregation. Examples given were the sudden death of someone influential in church life, the abrupt departure of a pastor, a well-known moral failure, or some sort of criminal accusation or behavior involving someone of influence. As before, those names and events were noted as shared, transferred to the pink Post-It Notes individually, then placed onto the Wall at about the time they occurred. The same kind of dialogue, interactions and questions about these points of pain were encouraged from everyone.

#### 4. REVIEW

Now the emerging Journey Wall visually depicted the flow of time and a number of significant markers for points of both Joy and Pain, stated in the language of those in the room. The names and dates of service of any pastors that were missing were added. From available reported statistics, the average worship attendance values or trends were also noted.

Several significant outcomes resulted from this exercise. First and most importantly, the people in the room talked with each other and were able to process those points of joy and pain together. Significant moments, events, eras and people were remembered and re-celebrated. Hard things were named and the pain they caused was mourned. Repentance, forgiveness and grace were shared openly by some. Misperceptions and misunderstandings were worked through, or at least recognized as potentially hurtful to healthy relationships. Several healing journeys were begun or took a few big steps forward.

The shared Journey Wall allowed the entire group to visually see how several significant points of pain impacted the vitality of the congregation. This experience helped the congregation better position themselves to: **(a)** celebrate their heritage and legacy together, **(b)** recognize what they still needed Jesus to heal, and **(c)** let go of the paralyzing hold several pain points still had on their ability to move forward together.

## **Natural Church Development Survey**

The Natural Church Development (NCD) Survey is an excellent resource to assess the health of your congregation. The NCD process involves leadership in your church selecting thirty individuals who are engaged in church life and represent the diversity of perspectives in the church. Their survey results will measure your congregation's strengths and weaknesses in eight essential areas of church health: Empowering Leadership, Gift-oriented Ministry, Passionate Spirituality, Effective Structures, Inspiring Worship, Holistic Small Groups, Need-Oriented Evangelism, and Loving Relationships. The results received will help you identify your "minimum factor" – or growth area – as well as some guidance on discerning *why* it is an area that could need attention.

### **WHO SHOULD USE THE NCD SURVEY?**

This is a useful tool for building an ongoing culture of self-reflection and growth within any congregation, and it is most effective when used on a regular basis over several years. Even when an individual is in good health, it is always advisable to seek annual medical check-ups! It is the same with a congregation's spiritual health. However, it is a vital resource during a transition period! Some may well ask whether or not this process should wait until after a new pastor has been selected. There are two important reasons NOT to wait:

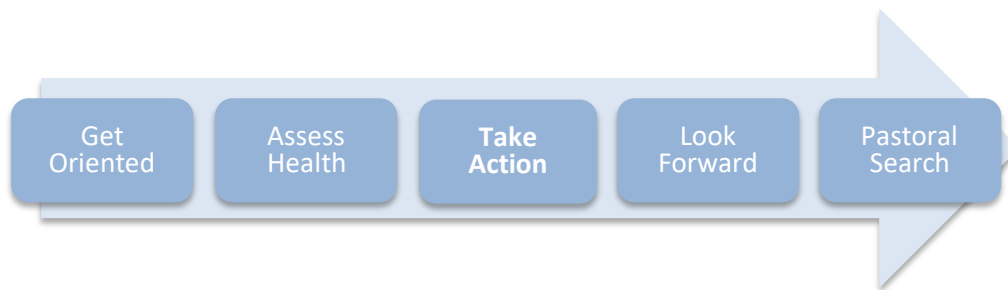
1. Seasons of transition are particularly appropriate times for self-reflection. The vulnerability naturally associated with transition allows us to be more honest.
2. The insights gained from self-reflection will help you determine the best fit for your next pastor. Identifying the strengths most needed for your church helps determine the kind of leader you ought to seek. Furthermore, articulating those needs helps prospective pastors determine whether or not they are an appropriate fit for your congregation.

### **WHERE SHOULD WE BEGIN?**

Regardless of whether your church is in transition or blessed by a long-term pastor, it is beneficial to have an outside perspective to guide you through this process. Contact your regional or national leaders to inquire about NCD coaching assistance today.

## *Take Action*

After assessment, it is time to move forward in action. Intentionality in this process will likely reveal that there are some important steps to take prior to beginning the formal pastoral search process. What God stories need to be celebrated and remembered? What losses or wounds need to be grieved and healed? Where do you need to seek reconciliation and mediation?



Every congregation is different. Consequently, it is impossible to standardize resources for this step of your congregation's transition journey. However, there are some principles that can guide you through these important next steps.

- ☐ Identify what and how to celebrate God's blessing in your community over the years.
- ☐ Create space and opportunity to grieve both positive and negative changes.
- ☐ Identify wounds and seek intentional ways to invite Jesus to heal.

As you discern what actions need to be taken to conclude this current chapter, pay close attention to how God is forming and healing you as a people. The degree to which your congregation embraces these actions well will have an immense impact upon the next stages of your journey.



## **Celebrate**

The best celebrations are personal and unique to the community. You may want to celebrate significant role-models of faith in your community, significant events, and/or mile-markers in your ministry journey. Share memories. Be intentional in your planning. Make it a big deal. Utilize the gifts and talents within your congregation and network to create videos or picture galleries to highlight significant events and people in your history. If possible and appropriate, create opportunities for transitioning leaders to “hand off the baton.”

### **How to celebrate when it’s hard...**

If your congregation is in such a dark period that it is difficult to find something worth celebrating, take the opportunity to see where God is still at work in your midst. An exercise some groups have found valuable is called *The Jesus I See in You*. Have one individual serve as a scribe to record the encouragements spoken and give them to each individual. Let each person take a turn in the circle (or in front of the group) while others take a moment to pray and then offer words of affirmation. Others should take note to acknowledge the unique gifts and passions that the individual displays, with intentional care to identify how they draw others to Jesus. Once all have finished, offer a prayer and celebrate together Christ at work in your midst.

## **Grieve**

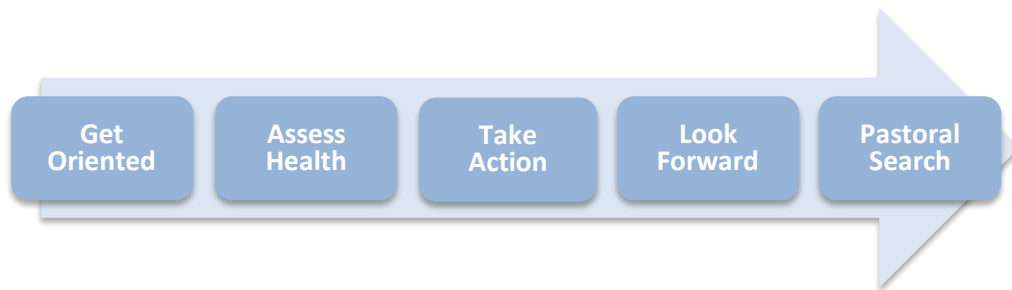
One of the largest barriers to overcoming grief is the temptation to hide the pain away. Grief must be confronted and brought to light in a safe environment. Latent grief in a congregation is complicated by the fact that not all have experienced traumatic events the same. Newer members may not even be aware a traumatic event has occurred. As you identify wounds and loss, it may be helpful to gather small groups together to process through lament. Give time and space for those grieving to share pain without judgment. Do not rush people to a place of resolution, but continue to meet until the group can come to a place of praise, identifying the ways God has been and continues to be good throughout the trial and loss.

## **Heal**

The need to heal is universal, but what and how we heal will be different depending upon the wound. If your congregation needs further advice about addressing wounds to seek restoration or reconciliation, please reach out to your Regional and National leadership.

## *Look Forward*

This is where things begin to get exciting. If all has gone well, your congregation has emerged from the stages of reflection and action with a renewed sense of unity and hope. Now you are ready to begin visioning for the future by examining how God can use your unique gifts and resources to reach the community around you.



Looking forward begins by evaluating what God is already doing.

- ☐ Complete Congregational Profile to gain a sense of your basic information as well as your strengths and weaknesses as a congregation.
- ☐ Complete the Community Profile to gain a greater awareness of basic information for your surrounding community and its needs as a mission field.
- ☐ Revisit your values, mission, and values statements and revise as necessary in light of shared insights.

The resources in this section will aide you in the process of articulating your congregation's gifts and resources, the needs and opportunities present in your community, and a vision for where those meet.

## **Congregational Profile**

### **1. Information**

Name of Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Telephone: \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Pastoral Search Team: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Year church was established: \_\_\_\_\_ Average Sunday Worship Attendance: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Current Members: \_\_\_\_\_ Non-member regular attendees: \_\_\_\_\_

### **2. Demographics (give rough percentage of congregation)**

#### **Age**

0-12 \_\_\_\_\_ 19-30 \_\_\_\_\_ 46-64 \_\_\_\_\_ Shut-in (home): \_\_\_\_\_

13-18 \_\_\_\_\_ 31-45 \_\_\_\_\_ 65+ \_\_\_\_\_ Shut-in (nursing): \_\_\_\_\_

**Gender** Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Occupational Profile**

Business \_\_\_\_\_ Homemaker \_\_\_\_\_ Education \_\_\_\_\_ Clerical/Sales \_\_\_\_\_

Craftsmen \_\_\_\_\_ Medical \_\_\_\_\_ Farming \_\_\_\_\_ Other Professional \_\_\_\_\_

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Retired \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Adult Educational Level**

High-school \_\_\_\_\_ Some College \_\_\_\_\_ College Grad \_\_\_\_\_ Graduate School \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Race/Ethnicity**

White \_\_\_\_\_ Black \_\_\_\_\_ Latino \_\_\_\_\_ Asian \_\_\_\_\_

American Indian \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Church Administration

#### Leadership

Name of Board/Committee	Meeting Frequency	#Men/#Women	Average Age
1. _____	_____	____ / ____	_____
2. _____	_____	____ / ____	_____
3. _____	_____	____ / ____	_____

#### Staff

Name	Title	Status	Start of Service (MM/YY)
1. _____	_____	Full / Part-time	____ / ____
2. _____	_____	Full / Part-time	____ / ____
3. _____	_____	Full / Part-time	____ / ____

### 4. Core Ministries

Briefly describe activities in the following ministry areas of your church. If you do not maintain an active ministry in that area, simply write "N/A".

**Adult Discipleship:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Children's Ministry:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Youth Ministry:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Small Groups:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Outreach:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Worship Music:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other (please describe):** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### 5. Strengths & Weaknesses

Top three-to-five spiritual gifts present in congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

Top three-to-five spiritual gifts lacking in congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Community Profile**

### **1. Information**

Name of Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Which designation best describes the community where your congregation serves/is located?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Village/Rural (< 2,500)       | <input type="checkbox"/> Large City (50,000-100,000) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small Town (2,500-25,000)     | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban (> 100,000)           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mid-size City (25,000-50,000) |  |

Which best describes this community:      ☐ Growing      ☐ Stable      ☐ Declining

Describe the ethnic/racial composition (percentages) of the community served by your church:

White \_\_\_\_\_ Black \_\_\_\_\_ Latino \_\_\_\_\_ Asian \_\_\_\_\_

American Indian \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

List 2-3 primary businesses/industries in the community.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### **2. Reflection**

Identify significant issues or the greatest needs confronting your community:

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Describe the basic spiritual climate of your community: \_\_\_\_\_

In what ways does your church participate in the community through outreach efforts (evangelism/service) and cooperative ministry (partnering w/ other organizations)?

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## **Crafting a Values, Mission, Vision Statement**

The process of articulating shared mission, vision, and value statements can be a lengthy, and sometimes frustrating experience. The reward is in generating greater clarity of purpose and identity, which can be a valuable aide when searching for the right “fit” in a new pastor. However, there is also wisdom in waiting to allow your next pastor to be a part of that process alongside your congregation. In the interim, it may be best to focus on identifying key values within your congregation and allow mission and vision statements to remain vague or limited to the short-term future.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Values** – This statement answers the *who* question of your organization’s identity. It can be tempting to list aspirational or vague items (i.e. prayer, scripture, community), but such a list says very little about how your congregation actually operates. It is better to evaluate and articulate the core convictions and attitudes of your congregation.

**Mission** – This statement answers the *why* question of an organization’s existence. For all churches, this should rearticulate the Great Commission that Jesus has given the church in some shape or fashion (Matthew 28:18-20). How you choose to articulate this will depend upon how you contextualize the Great Commission for your community.

**Vision** – This statement answers the *what* question of how your organization will effect change in the world around it. Vision statements can be short-term or long-term, but they should be regularly changing based upon the way your mission interacts with the world around you.

**Strategy** – This answers the *how* question for your organization. Strategies are by-nature short-term and should flow out of your values, mission, and vision.

### **VALUES EXERCISE**

Make enough copies of the exercise on the following page to distribute to leadership at their church. Have them follow instructions to circle 5 words that they think describe your congregation (actual, not aspirational) and return. Select an individual or small group to record responses and look for patterns (Which words come up frequently? Which terms are similar but give a fuller picture?). Identify 4-5 key themes from the group responses and attempt to articulate as best you can the values that emerge. Share with participants in a follow-up meeting and listen for feedback on what needs clarified, explained, condensed, or expanded.

## Values Exercise

Circle FIVE words that you think describe our congregation (actual, not aspirational). You may add your own if not listed.

Abundance	Awareness	Community	Dependability	Entertainment	Fluency	Impact
Acceptance	Awe	Compassion	Depth	Enthusiasm	Focus	Impartiality
Accessibility	Balance	Competence	Desire	Ethics	Fortitude	Independence
Accomplished	Beauty	Competition	Determination	Excellence	Frankness	Individuality
Accountability	Being the best	Concentration	Devotion	Excitement	Freedom	Influence
Accuracy	Belonging	Confidence	Devoutness	Expectancy	Friendliness	Ingenuity
Achievement	Boldness	Conformity	Dignity	Expediency	Friendship	Inquisitiveness
Activeness	Bravery	Congruency	Diligence	Experience	Frugality	Insightfulness
Adaptability	Brilliance	Connection	Directness	Expertise	Fun	Inspiration
Adoration	Calmness	Consciousness	Discipline	Exploration	Generosity	Integrity
Advancement	Candor	Consistency	Discovery	Expressiveness	Giving	Intelligence
Adventure	Capability	Contentment	Discretion	Extravagance	Grace	Intensity
Affection	Care	Continuity	Diversity	Extroversion	Gratitude	Intimacy
Affluence	Carefulness	Contribution	Dominance	Fairness	Growth	Introspection
Aggressiveness	Celebrity	Control	Dreaming	Faith	Guidance	Introversion
Agility	Certainty	Conviction	Drive	Fame	Happiness	Intuition
Alertness	Challenge	Coolness	Duty	Family	Harmony	Inventiveness
Amazement	Change	Cooperation	Dynamism	Fascination	Health	Involvement
Ambition	Charismatic	Correctness	Eagerness	Fashion	Heart	Joy
Amusement	Charm	Courage	Ease	Fearlessness	Helpfulness	Justice
Anticipation	Chastity	Courtesy	Education	Ferocity	Heroism	Kindness
Appreciation	Cheerfulness	Creativity	Effectiveness	Fidelity	Holiness	Knowledge
Approachability	Clarity	Credibility	Efficiency	Fierceness	Honesty	Leadership
Artistry	Cleanliness	Cunning	Elegance	Financial	Honor	Learning
Assertiveness	Clear-minded	Curiosity	Empathy	independence	Hopefulness	Liberty
Assurance	Cleverness	Daring	Encouragement	Firmness	Hospitality	Lightness
Attentiveness	Closeness	Decisiveness	Endurance	Fitness	Humility	Liveliness
Attractiveness	Comfort	Deference	Energy	Flexibility	Humor	Logic
Availability	Commitment	Delight	Enjoyment	Flow	Imagination	Longevity

## Values Exercise

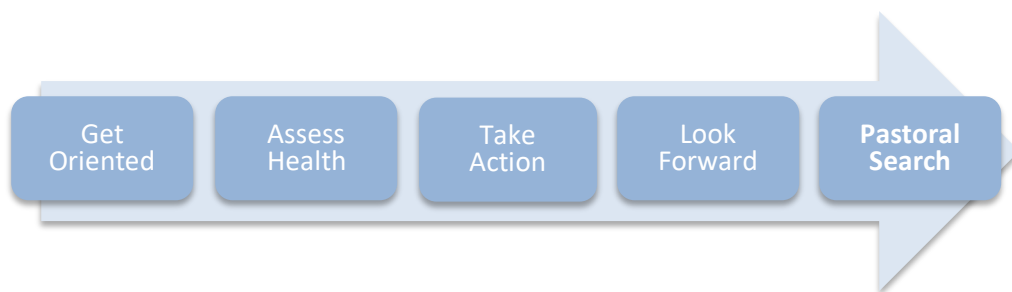
Circle FIVE words that you think describe our congregation (actual, not aspirational). You may add your own if not listed.

Love	Patience	Realism	Selflessness	Success	Virtue
Loyalty	Passion	Reason	Self-reliance	Support	Vision
Majesty	Peace	Reasonableness	Self-respect	Supremacy	Vitality
Making a difference	Perceptiveness	Recognition	Sensitivity	Surprise	Volunteering
Marriage	Perfection	Recreation	Serenity	Sympathy	Warmhearted
Mastery	Perkins	Refinement	Service	Teaching	Warmth
Maturity	Perseverance	Reflection	Sharing	Teamwork	Watchfulness
Meaning	Persistence	Relaxation	Shrewdness	Temperance	Wealth
Meekness	Persuasiveness	Reliability	Significance	Thankfulness	Willfulness
Mellowness	Philanthropy	Relief	Silence	Thoroughness	Willingness
Meticulousness	Piety	Religiousness	Silliness	Thoughtfulness	Winning
Mindfulness	Playfulness	Reputation	Simplicity	Thrift	Wisdom
Modesty	Pleasantness	Resilience	Sincerity	Tidiness	Wittiness
Motivation	Pleasure	Resolution	Skillfulness	Timeliness	Wonder
Mysteriousness	Poise	Resolve	Solidarity	Traditionalism	Worthiness
Nature	Popularity	Resourceful	Solitude	Tranquility	Youthfulness
Neatness	Power	Respect	Sophistication	Transcendence	Zeal
Nerve	Practicality	Responsibility	Soundness	Trust	
Nonconformity	Precision	Rest	Speed	Trustworthy	
Obedience	Preparedness	Restraint	Spirit	Truth	
Openness	Presence	Reverence	Spirituality	Understanding	
Optimism	Pride	Richness	Spontaneity	Uniqueness	
Order	Privacy	Sacredness	Spunk	Unity	
Organization	Proactivity	Sacrifice	Stability	Usefulness	
Originality	Prosperity	Saintliness	Status	Utility	
Outdoors	Prudence	Satisfaction	Stealth	Valor	
Outrageous	Punctuality	Science	Stillness	Variety	
Partnership	Purity	Security	Strength	Victory	
	Rationality	Self-control	Structure	Vigor	



## *Pastoral Search*

Congratulations! After completing the rewarding intentional work of assessment, healing, and visioning for the future, your congregation is now ready to begin searching for the right pastoral leader to guide you in your next chapter of ministry. Here you will begin clarifying what kind of leader you need to search for and how best to equip a Pastoral Search Team to do their job well. We suggest asking candidates to complete the "Know Yourself" assessment found at, <https://churchanswers.com/solutions/tools/knowyourself/>. This will help you understand the precise wiring and abilities of your candidates to ensure that they are a fit for what your church needs to bring a secure future.



The resources available in this section will provide detailed guides for identifying and equipping a search team, creating and posting job descriptions, navigating examination and ordination processes for potential pastors, and extending the call to your new leader.

## **Identify Pastoral Search Team**

The individuals on the Pastoral Search Team may or may not be the same as those recruited for the Transition Team, but the qualifications are much the same. This is the team that will handle creating your Job Description, navigating the recruiting process, evaluating applicants, and presenting findings.

(Photocopy for each committee member and send copies to relevant guides and advisors.)

Confirmed Search Committee Members	Phone	Email
1. _____ (chair)	____ - ____ - _____	_____
2. _____ (secretary)	____ - ____ - _____	_____
3. _____	____ - ____ - _____	_____
4. _____	____ - ____ - _____	_____
5. _____	____ - ____ - _____	_____
6. _____	____ - ____ - _____	_____
7. _____	____ - ____ - _____	_____
8. _____	____ - ____ - _____	_____

Creating a Phone chain or Email chain from this list can serve to facilitate: meeting date reminders or changes, specific issues related to receiving resumes, upcoming interviews, or personal concerns of committee members.

**Suggestion:** Create a communication chain to organize contacting the committee. The chairperson can email each search committee member; or, the chairperson calls half the committee and the secretary the remainder. Be creative and frequent in communicating with each other.

## **Considerations for Job Posting and Job Description**

Creating a job description can be a daunting task, but it is crucial for congregations in the pastoral search process to make information accessible and attractive to potential candidates. These are some quick and easy templates congregations can use as tools to put their best foot forward to find qualified leaders with integrity.

Consider the following options for making information available:

### **Job Post**

A short, attractive, and information dense preview of the position advertised. This should include: job title, location (city and church), hours expected (full/part-time), short description of essential purpose, link to your website, and details for application process (contact info, deadline). You may consider the following avenues to make your job posting public:

[www.brethrenchurch.org](http://www.brethrenchurch.org) - The Brethren Church National Office provides a database for denominational job listings. This is a go-to resource for any elders within our denomination. Send in your job post information along with any other PDF files if available. Contact the BCNO at 419-289-1708 for more information on how to make job posts available.

[www.seminary.ashland.edu/services/opportunities/jobs-internships](http://www.seminary.ashland.edu/services/opportunities/jobs-internships) - Ashland Theological Seminary similarly provides a database for job listings. This is a helpful resource for congregations seeking ATS alumni. Even if they are not Brethren students, they would have been steeped in an atmosphere that promoted Brethren values during their academic years. Contact information for submitting job postings is provided through the same webpage.

**Your church's website** - If you do not have a website, you need to make one! Organizations like Weebly and Squarespace provide low-cost solutions with very intuitive features to design your own website. Even if you only create a 1-page site to provide essential information, it can be edited later.

**Websites of denominations and seminaries with similar faith traditions** - You may find it helpful to branch out to pastoral candidates from denominations not dissimilar from our own. In these situations, it will be all the more important to discern differences in theology and to educate on the proper next steps should they seek ordination within our tribe.

## **Job Description**

A detailed summary and outline of the position's responsibilities and expectations. This should include: church name, church mission statement, position title, who they report to, hours of work expected, 1 paragraph summary of position (may be same as job post), outline of major duties and responsibilities in bullet list, application details (contact info, deadline, documents requested - resume, pastoral profile, etc.). A good job description will be no longer than 1-2 pages.

## **Congregational Snapshot** (include with job description on church website)

Some congregations may find it helpful to include a brief snapshot of their congregation and surrounding community using information gleaned from their Congregational and Community Profiles (p 18-20). This is particularly helpful for those seeking pastors outside their region. Ideal pastoral candidates will do their research ahead of time, but this gives your search team the ability to highlight what is desirable about serving in your particular context.

This should include 1-2 paragraphs that describe your context for ministry - city population, percentage of "unreached", comments on demographics/values of surrounding community, congregation size, comments on demographics/values of congregation, specific ministries emphasized within the congregation. Better to be humble than to give an over-inflated picture of your ministry, but do not shy away from celebrating what your congregation does well.

Remember that there *are* pastors who want to find you and learn about you. The degree to which you make information available and how you make it available will communicate as much as the content itself. For example, a congregation that provides little up-front information about a posted position communicates that they do not know what they want OR they have something to hide. Likewise, a congregation that has little-to-no online presence (website or social media) communicates that it does not desire to reach their community OR they have no one able or willing to learn how to do so effectively.

The realities are often instead that congregations DO have an idea of what they want and DO desire to reach their community, they have just been under-resourced and do not know who to ask. Please ask your regional and national leadership for help!

## **Job Description Example**

### Community Brethren Church

*“Loving God, Loving Others, Making Disciples”*

**Title:** Lead Pastor

**Reports to:** Official Board

**Hours of Work:** Full-Time

**Summary of Position:** The Pastor is responsible for oversight of the church body by providing spiritual instruction and strategic leadership to the members, staff and ministries of the church. The Pastor is not responsible for doing all the work, but for seeing that it is done and done properly.

#### **Duties and Responsibilities:**

- Plan and conduct worship services, developing sermons, planning with music leadership and leads in the observance of ordinances.
- Leads the congregation in effective programs to fulfill the Great Commission with vision, purpose and priority.
- Leads and demonstrates effective ways to witness and win the lost to salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Provides for visitation and ministry to members and prospective members in homes, nursing care facilities and hospitals.
- Conducts counseling sessions, performs wedding ceremonies and conducts funeral services.
- Works with key leadership to carry out the mission and purpose of the church.
- Cooperates with regional and national denominational leaders in matters of mutual interest and concern.
- Serves as Overseer/Administrator of paid church staff supervising and evaluating the tasks assigned to each.
- Serves to recommend and advise committees and teams as an ex-officio member.
- Oversees, along with Deacons, all church discipline matters and the management of conflict issues in the church.
- Communicates with the congregation through articles or announcements, written and spoken using church newsletter, bulletins and worship services.
- Maintains a vital and wholesome personal relationship with the Lord through daily Bible study and prayer.
- Maintains proper priorities at home with his wife and children.

**Biblical References:** Acts 20:28-32; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4

## **Sample Job Posting**

Community Brethren Church (Community, ST) seeks a full-time lead pastor.

The Pastor is responsible for oversight of the church body by providing spiritual instruction and strategic leadership to the members, staff and ministries of the church. The Pastor is not responsible for doing all the work, but for seeing that it is done and done properly.

Applications should be submitted digitally via email to [office@communitybrethren.org](mailto:office@communitybrethren.org) or direct mailed to Community Brethren Church 123 Street Ave Community, ST 12345

**Application deadline:** Month DD, YYYY

**Church Website:** [www.communitybrethren.org](http://www.communitybrethren.org)

## **Sample Congregational Snapshot**

Community, ST is a small but thriving town of about 15,000 in northeastern State. Although Christianity remains a dominant presence, only about 30% of the population claim Christian as their faith.\* Community Brethren Church seeks to bridge that gap by empowering disciples who model the way of Jesus and transform the community through Gospel witness. Our congregation is small but faithful. At around 45 members, our congregation manages to serve our community in powerful ways through partnerships with our local elementary school and food pantry. We are passionate about Bible study and service, and we are eager to find a leader who will help guide us into the next leg of our journey of faithfulness.

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\* You can find census data on [www.city-data.com](http://www.city-data.com)

## **Extending a Call**

Once the Pastoral Search Team has made a selection, the next step is to bring the candidate before the congregation. Section 5 Article 4 of the Manual of Procedure states:

Churches recognized according to Chapter One, Section 1, Article 4, shall elect and call a pastor in the following manner: After due public notice the church shall convene at the place of public worship. The election of a pastor shall proceed by ballot. It shall require a majority of votes cast to constitute a call, unless the church shall have previously determined that a two-thirds or three-fourths vote is necessary.

Churches may move through this process in a number of creative ways. Some simply invite the prospective pastor to preach and hold a brief question and answer time after the service. Others may opt to extend the occasion to a weekend or week-long event, including opportunities for the pastor and their family to meet with several smaller groups in the congregation. It would scarcely feel like a Brethren gathering if food were not involved. Regardless of the process, an environment of both celebration and discernment is appropriate.

Once a vote has been made to affirm a new pastor, and the offer is accepted, it is time to celebrate! An installation service is a perfect time to tell stories that celebrate the past, share hopes and aspirations for the future, and pray for your new pastor.

## **Examination/Ordination Considerations**

The congregation should also recognize that the calling of a pastor fits into the Brethren Church's licensure and ordination process as outlined in the Manual of Procedure. In short, this involves Calling, Licensure, meeting the requirements of Ordination, and the official Ordination itself. The local church itself should affirm and encourage their candidate in this process. Alternatively, if the individual does not desire official ordination, the commissioning option is viable. For help navigating this process, do not hesitate to contact your Regional Resource Coordinator.