

Southern Florida District Church of the Nazarene



Steps in the Pastoral Search 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* (our ByLaws) in this journey.

Pray and Trust

Our prayers at this stage express our understanding that the church is the Lord's. We express our trust in Him. He has led us thus far, and He will lead us into our tomorrow as a church as well.

1. Establish Interim Arrangements

The District Superintendent (DS) will meet with the local church board and staff to explain the transition process. Then, the board and the District Superintendent will establish interim arrangements to maintain as much continuity as possible. A regular and effective system of communicating to the congregation will be established in order to provide opportunities for input and participation in the search process.

2. Thank and Bid Farewell to Our Departing Pastor!!

Because we are praying and trusting God, and because the board and the district superintendent are hard at work on our behalf, we as a congregation can focus on our departing pastor(s) who has served us faithfully and sacrificially, expressing to him/her/them our love and gratitude, as well as covenanting to pray for him/her/them and our pastoral family(ies) as they obediently follow God's leading for their lives.

Pray and Trust

At this stage of the process our prayers express our understanding that during transition the church does not cease to be the church. We continue to minister in our community, care for one another, be faithful in attendance and stewardship, and encourage one another in the Lord. We especially pray that God would grant wisdom, insight and boldness to our church board and district superintendent as they carry out important assessments of the church and develop profiles for the next steps in the process. We pray that God would also begin to work in the heart of the pastor he is preparing for us. We pray for former pastors as they transition to new ministries.

3. Assessment of Church Status

The board and District Superintendent will review membership, attendance and financial records. Physical plant will also be inspected and assessed. Interviews with staff will seek their input. Congregational input will be sought by various means. Conversations will take place with the various constituencies of the church.

4. Development of Profiles for Church and Potential Pastoral Candidates

Based on information gathered in Step 3, the board and District Superintendent will develop a local church profile, which will include expressions of vision and the mission of the local church. The board and District Superintendent will also develop a profile for potential pastoral candidates.

Pray and Trust

At this stage, our prayers express gratitude to God for the congregation we have become, and remind God that He is not finished with us yet. We recognize He has plans for us that are greater and grander than anything we have dreamed. We trust Him to lead our board and district superintendent in developing a list of candidates that reflect what we believe God wants to do in us and through us as a congregation in the coming years.

5. Identification of Potential Pastoral Candidates

The District Superintendent develops a list and researches potential candidates based on the local church profile. Congregational input will be asked for in developing a list of potential candidates. 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.

Pray and Trust

At this stage of the process, our prayers express our desire that God would lead our board during the interview process, that He would give them discernment as they make judgments about character, ministry strengths, leadership capability, and compatibility with the community and mission of our local church.

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 name 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.

7. Board Nomination of a Candidate to the Congregation for a Vote

A 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. The 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.

Pray and Trust

At this stage of the process, our prayers express our gratitude that God has brought us to this important step where the congregation expresses what it believes to be the leading of the Holy Spirit. We ask God to give us a sense of unity as the Body of Christ and a sense of anticipation that God is preparing us for a new and exciting chapter in the life of the church. We ask that God would guide the candidate being considered, and give full assurance of divine direction. We express our full confidence in the God of the church. While we may not know what tomorrow holds, we know **WHO** holds tomorrow.

8. Congregational 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 may vote knowledgeably. Two-thirds favorable vote by ballot of church members of voting age (15 years and older), present and voting, is required to extend a call.

Pray and Trust

Our prayers at this stage express our desire that God would make His will clear to the candidate on which we have voted.

9. Response of the Candidate

The candidate has 15 days to decide whether or not to accept the call. His/her acceptance will serve as the final confirmation that we have been led by God in our decision. A declined invitation will indicate 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 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 to the broader Nazarene church 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.

Pray and Trust

At this stage our prayers are prayers of gratitude to God for leading us through the search process and providing us with a new pastor. We pray for the new pastor and family in their transition, and we covenant to do our part in making their ministry among us an effective one and a journey of joy.

NOTES:

1. With confidence in God and in our local and district leadership, we 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 progress and interim arrangements. Please do not expect 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 pastors and ask them to submit résumés . Congregants may submit names to the board secretary and District Superintendent, but please allow the District Superintendent to initiate contact with the candidates eventually selected for consideration.
4. If you have questions about the process within the Church of the Nazarene, please contact a church board member.