SECTION ONE - FIRST STEPS IN THE CHURCH TRANSITION PROCESS

The Pastoral Leadership Task Force (PLTF)

Once your local church goes into transition, the Director of Leadership Development will guide the local church in choosing members for Pastoral Leadership Task Force (PLTF). This consists of five to seven people, including the Delegate, who:

- are members and/or preparing for membership, and who have had significant involvement in the local church for at least a year
- fairly represent the demographic of the congregation and are committed to finding the best person to led the church through the next chapter (a person with Human Resources experience who meets these qualifications could be a helpful resource)
- are spiritually mature and committed to involvement that may last several months.
- have a reputation of being able to keep information confidential
- are willing to work in co-operation with the Bishop, Director of Leadership Development and the MEGaP committee.
- are not local church employees, Ministerial Candidates or Lay Ministers who are tracking for ministry within the FMCIC, ordained members of conference or located ministers.

It is vitally important to choose people who are agenda-free, who can set aside what they personally want in their next pastor, and who can think about the big picture and the good of the whole church. It is also wise to make sure the number of committee members is an odd number of people, to prevent stalemates when taking any votes.

As a PLTF member, you have the responsibility of working with the Director of Leadership Development, the Bishop and the Ministerial Education Guidance and Placement (MEGaP) Committee of The Free Methodist Church in Canada in a search for the person who will give pastoral leadership to the next stage of your church's development. This is an important responsibility and will likely involve hours of dedicated committee work, prayer, communication and interviewing.

In this Handbook, you will learn how to:

- identify the anxiety often experienced by churches in transition and how to address that in your congregation.
- minimize the painful loss of momentum your church will experience without a pastor;
- recognize the specific stage of pastoral transition the church is in;
- form a customized timeline and communication plan for your unique search situation;
- use the tools necessary for creating an effective job description, church profile, compensation package, interviewing guidelines and communication plan, as well as for conducting interviews with prospective candidates.

At the end of the process, you will have a person to recommend to the Bishop and MEGaP as your next pastor.

It is suggested that the members of the PLTF sign a covenant agreement which outlines clearly what they are committing to and giving a written word of their dedication to see the pastoral search process through. (see Appendix "A" for a sample covenant agreement)

Dealing with the emotional feelings of the congregation.

When a minister announces an intention to leave a current appointment, some members of a congregation may feel betrayed or deserted. Others may feel sorrow, guilt and self-doubt. Some think the church will fall apart. A few will feel relief that a change is about to happen. These are all normal feelings that accompany this kind of transition.

It is right to understand and expect feelings that are similar to those experienced during periods of loss and grief. These include denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and finally acceptance. It is important that while many in the congregation will go through these various stages, they will not necessarily happen at the same time so patience and understanding will be required. Some members of the congregation will require extra care. The Pastoral Leadership Task Force (PLTF) can help the process by providing opportunity for these feelings to be expressed.

Since the pastor and family may also struggle with feelings of loss, it would be helpful for the PLTF to invite the departing minister to meet with them for an "exit interview" to share thoughts, concerns, and hopes for the local church. This could provide a healing moment that helps the minister "let go" and express feelings about leaving. An exit interview guide is found in Appendix "B". If the pastor departs before the PLTF is formed, then an exit interview will not be possible.

Pastoral transitions require a fresh start. It is, therefore, wise not to invite the previous minister back to do weddings, baptisms, funerals, or other pastoral involvements. An outgoing pastor should consult with the new pastor before returning for any pastoral involvement.

Spiritual leadership of the congregation through the time of transition

The average church transition takes twelve to twenty-four months. Regardless of where the church finds itself during this transition time, we need to remember that this is God's church and that He still has a plan for the things He wants to accomplish. Transition time is not simply a human resources exercise. It is a spiritual discernment exercise of listening to God's voice, seeking His wisdom and obediently following His direction. When you keep the Holy Spirit as a guide through the process, you'll be able to see God's hand through each step. The best way to do this is to make this transition time and the search for a new pastor a matter of prayer for the entire congregation, not just the Board and the PLTF.

Some matters to pray about during this transition time:

- needs of the congregation including things that may need to change or heal
- for the outgoing pastor and his/her family
- wisdom and guidance for the leadership
- unity for the church
- unity and discernment for the PLTF
- patience, wisdom
- that God would begin working in the heart of your next pastor

Some suggestions for prayer: (see prayer calendar template in Appendix "C" for other ideas):

- pray intentionally and expectantly
- use specific prayer – ie. a commissioning prayer for the PLTF
- have special times of prayer for the entire congregation (including times of fasting)

Is this the time for a transition pastor?

A transition pastor is a member of the conference (or a supply) who is appointed to a local church for a period of time BEFORE the search process becomes active. This appointment is not intended to provide a temporary stand-in but to serve a particular need in the church during the transitional period. A transition pastor will have clearly defined goals to accomplish BEFORE the search process becomes active and will have expertise and training to give guidance and coaching to the search process. (see Appendix "D"-Transition Pastor Job Description template)

There are times when the possibility of a transition pastor should be considered:

- when there has been a long term pastoral relationship (10 or more years)
- when the community of the local church has undergone drastic changes and the conference needs to assess the changing role of the local church in the community
- when a minister has died while serving the local church
- when the last minister has had an authoritarian style of leadership and the congregation wants to build greater lay participation in the church's ministry
- when there has been conflict in the local church, the congregation is polarised, the minister was asked to leave, and there needs to be healing in the congregation
- when there are reasons to extend the transitions process and it would be wise to wait for up to a year before appointing the next lead pastor

Transition pastors bring special gifts to the task. They may assist the local congregation:

- to develop a vision for ministry
- to deal with conflict
- to heal divisions
- to provide new models for ministry and mission
- to assist with transitioning to a board model of leadership that is a better fit for the church
- to serve as a resource to the PLTF
- to make the transition to new leadership

Please contact the Director of Leadership Development to discuss how a transition pastor would be valuable in your situation.

What happens if the Transition Pastor wants to apply for the job?

If the church engages a transition pastor, then the transition pastor becomes interested in applying for the permanent position, the following steps needs to be taken:

- The transition pastor needs to declare his/her intention to apply for the position to the PLTF and to the Director of Leadership Development.
- The transition pastor is made aware that his/her interest does not halt the process. S/he now submits to the application process by sending a resume and cover letter for consideration along with any others that are received.
- S/he also steps back from any coaching/resourcing work with the PLTF.

Meeting pastoral needs in an interim period (while the search is underway).

The process of searching for a new pastor will likely extend beyond the time when the previous pastor has left. This can be a difficult time in the life of the church. It may also be a time when lay leaders feel free to come forward to exercise spiritual gifts for the benefit of the whole congregation.

It is important that the Board makes provision for the ongoing ministry during this time, even when a transition pastor has been appointed. Care must be taken not to fall for the temptation to "coast" until the new pastor is engaged.

Who will do the work of the lead pastor during this time? Here are some possibilities:

- A transition pastor (see above).
- An interim pastor hired to provide basic pastoral functions during a transition time (preaching, visiting, etc.).
- Lay persons from within the local church could do some pastoral visitation, lead worship, or co-ordinate the small group or Christian Education program. Some could occasionally preach.
- There may be a number of ordained persons who could supply the pulpit if/when the transition pastor is not available. They may be retired ministers without regular Sunday responsibilities, or for whatever reason they are currently without an appointment at a local church. Ministerial Candidates or Commissioned Ministers may be able to help out once or twice. Check the weekly Bishop's notes for a list of available pulpit supply pastors or contact the Director of Leadership Development.
- One person might become a regular pulpit supply. This may be a student, a Ministerial Candidate, a retiree, a professor in a Christian college or a minister who is in special relationship with the Conference. There are a number of persons who have expressed an interest in this type of work within a given distance from their home.
- A minister in a neighbouring church may be willing to help out for crisis pastoral care, weddings, funerals, and the administration of the sacraments.

Communication with Congregation:

Regardless of how long the process takes, clear, consistent and appropriate communication from both the Board and PLTF to the congregation are essential. Regular updates informing the congregation as to where the PLTF is in the transition process, and regular prayer updates need to be communicated. Be consistent – the Board and PLTF need to work together.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Large portions of this process are confidential, so part of the communication plan is to remind the congregation of the confidential nature of the process. It is very important that the PLTF covenant together to keep the process confidential. Information cannot be shared with anyone, including the spouses of PLTF members. While this level of confidentiality is necessary for everyone involved, it is particularly important for those candidates who have applied and who are currently serving as pastors under appointment in another church.

Communication with the Outgoing Pastor:

Here is some guidance about the local church's relationship with the outgoing pastor if s/he is staying in community:

- The denomination communicates to the pastor that s/he is not to attend the local church for a minimum of six months after the new permanent pastor has started.
- It is not recommended that the previous minister be invited back to do weddings, baptisms, funerals, or other pastoral involvements. There are however some special circumstances and situations, so a clear process of communication for special requests (ie baptisms, funerals, weddings, attending special church functions, etc.) needs to be established through the Board. An outgoing pastor should consult with the Board and the new pastor before returning for any pastoral involvement.
- As the six months is drawing to the end, the Board and new pastor need to communicate with the previous pastor as to whether a return is appropriate or whether more time is needed, and in either case, that needs to be clearly communicated to the previous pastor.

What about current pastoral (appointed and/or employed) and other staff members during the transition and when a new lead pastor is hired?

That process is guided by existing church policy. If no policy is currently in place, the Board will need to establish an understanding with current staff as to what the process will be, such as:

- The transition pastor's role with existing staff (ie, is the transition pastor the supervisor of the staff, or is the Board chair?).
- Letters of resignation are submitted to the board by all staff.
- Regular staff performance evaluations continue to be done during the transition period up until new pastor arrives.
- Discuss with the new pastor a reasonable probationary period for him/her to work with current staff to determine whether the staff will remain or the resignation letters will be accepted.

There are no promises made about employment/appointment status for any staff once a new lead pastor is employed. The Board needs to have conversations with the current staff about additional expectations during transition time (ie, Associate/Assistant Pastor preaching more, visitation, etc.)

POLICIES FROM *THE MANUAL OF THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH IN CANADA*

¶875 POLICIES FOR PASTORAL TRANSITIONS AND APPOINTMENTS IN THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH IN CANADA

The Free Methodist Church in Canada, through the ministerial education, guidance and placement committee, appoints pastors to local churches. While the appointment of pastors by the conference is a historical distinctive of Methodism, the process of making appointments has been modified from time to time to meet the changing needs and expectations of pastors and local churches throughout the history of the denomination.

In keeping with the expressed core values of The Free Methodist Church in Canada and the commitment to empower the local church, the process of appointment has been further modified to involve the local church in a greater and more responsible manner.

1. The bishop declares a pastoral transition through a letter sent to the church and pastor when:

    a. The bishop agrees in writing to a pastor's signed request to be released from the present appointment. The bishop will advise the director of *leadership development* and the church. The church is to receive at least sixty days' notice unless modified by an agreement signed by the director of *leadership development*, the pastor and the delegate(s).

    b. The bishop agrees in writing to a signed letter of request to the bishop from the chair of the official board and delegate indicating that a strong majority (75%) of the official board has expressed in a recorded vote that they have lost confidence in the pastor's capacity to lead the congregation

    c. If a performance appraisal of the pastoral leader (see ¶335**)**, based on the current official board approved job description (built locally and reflecting the current vision and stated mission) results in an overall average score below 5.5, the results will be referred to the bishop and the ministerial education, guidance and placement committee (MEGaP) who may declare that the church is in transition. The pastor is to receive at least sixty days notice unless modified by a salary continuance agreement as outlined in ¶880.

    d. Disciplinary action of the bishop and MEGaP committee necessitates a transition in leadership.

    e. After an appraisal, it is the opinion of the conference, through the MEGaP committee, that a transition is necessary for the health of the church, the pastor or both.

    f. At the discretion of the MEGaP committee, the conference appoints a pastor to another charge. The vacancy created by such action places a church in transition.

2. Once a church has been declared in transition:

    a. The local board will be instructed by the director of *leadership development* to establish a pastoral leadership task force (PLTF) of at least four persons who:
        - are members and/or preparing for membership, who have had significant involvement in the local church for more than a year.
        - fairly represent the makeup of the congregation
        - are committed to involvement that may last several months.

- are willing to work in co-operation with the bishop, director of church health and the MEGaP committee.
- are not local church employees, ministerial candidates or lay ministers who are tracking for ministry within the FMCIC, members of conference or located ministers.

b. The delegate(s) shall be a member of the pastoral leadership task force.

3. The director of *leadership development* or a designee will be assigned to guide the pastoral leadership task force.

4. The first task of the pastoral leadership task force (PLTF) is to develop a church profile to be given to prospective candidates which should include:

   a. A clear job description based on the current vision and stated mission approved by the official board. The Job Description Performance Appraisal System (JDPAS), a resource available from the conference at the expense of the local church, is recommended for use in evaluating the present condition of the church's ministry and for communicating the role of the pastor to the MEGaP Committee for presentation to prospective pastors.

   b. If the JDPAS process is not used, the profile must include the church's present vision, mission, core values and pastoral job description. The pastoral job description should be built on biblical, community and congregational research**.**

   c. A profile of the local church will also include:
   - local church description (i.e., building, pastoral history, finances, staff)
   - community information describing the positive life of the village, town or city
   - the preparation of other proposals for pastoral leadership with supporting rationale (For example, a church may need to face the reality that they can only recommend a bi-vocational pastor to give leadership at this time.)

5. *The profile is posted and resumes are submitted to the Leadership Development office.* The *PLTF in consultation with the director of leadership development,* and using the summary of the profile, will develop a short list of potential candidates. When a transition pastor has been appointed, he/she should not assume that he/she will be recommended as the new lead pastor. He/she may, however, be considered for short lists *by appropriately engaging in the process. Ideally* the short list will contain no more than three names. Short-listed pastors will be informed by the PLTF that they are on a short list.

6. The PLTF will limit its consideration of candidates to the short list. The PLTF will develop an appropriate interview process in consultation with the director of leadership development. (See the "Transitions Handbook" available from the director of leadership development office.) All candidates on the short list will have a first interview by telephone or in person, depending on travel distance. Further interviews, after the initial interview, may be limited to only one candidate, and not necessarily extended to all short-listed candidates. An invitation to participate in a worship service at the local church may be offered to only the final candidate.

7. During this process the chairperson of the PLTF needs to maintain clear and current communication with the candidates and the director of leadership development or designate.

8. The PLTF process will eventually result in the preparation of a recommendation to the bishop for action by the MEGaP committee. A Letter of Understanding (¶879) will have been drafted

and signed by the candidate prior to the recommendation being sent to the bishop. The PLTF will notify unsuccessful candidates in writing.

9. The recommendation should use the following wording: *The PLTF and Board of Name Free Methodist Church, City , Province recommends to the Ministerial Education Guidance and Placement Committee that Candidate's Name be appointed to Church name as Title of Position effective date that the appointment should start.*

   Note: The assigning of a pastor's title is the responsibility of the local church. (See Par. 374.4.) If, in the future, an appointed pastor's title is changed because of a job description change, the local church will inform the *Credentialing Coordinator* of the FMCiC of the new title. The only exception to this is in the case of a staff pastor becoming a lead pastor (including assuming a transition lead pastor role). In this case, an appointment recommendation needs to be made to MEGaP.

10. When the MEGaP committee approves the recommendation from the PLTF, the bishop will announce the new appointment, thus completing the process. The PLTF will disband.

11. The receiving church will be responsible for the expenses incurred in the recruitment and moving of a new pastor.

***Note*:** These are the first pages of a document that is used to coach local churches when they go into transition. These pages summarize the policies and process of pastoral transitions as practiced in The Free Methodist Church in Canada. The complete *Transitions Handbook for Churches* is available from the FMCIC website. The chart on the following page summarizes the whole process.

*MEGaP
Revised January 26, 2014

Establishing a Timeline

While the pastoral search process is a spiritual endeavour, you will need to establish a timeline or schedule (see chart below). Some key points in planning a timeline:

- When will PLTF meet with the Director of Leadership Development or his designate?
- When will the local church do the Life Plan?
- When will the church profile be done?
- When will the final job description be done?
- After receiving resumes and creating a short-list, when will the first phone/video conferencing interviews be completed?
- When will the first in-person interviews happen?
- When will the second interviews happen?
- When will the on-site visit take place?
- When will an offer be extended?

BISHOP Declares church as "in transition" ↓		
DIRECTOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (DLD) Guide entire transitions process (12-24 months) ↓		
LOCAL CHURCH BOARD		**PASTORAL LEADERSHIP TASK FORCE (PLTF)**
meets with DLD to establish PLTF and decides on whether to seek a transition or interim pastor, establishes PLTF	← As soon as possible after transition is announced	
	→ Once PLTF is established	meets with DLD for orientation to process and elects chairperson
participates in Life Plan guided by DLD and shares data with PLTF	← (3-6 months)	
	→ (2-4 months)	guided by DLD, uses Life Plan data to prepare Church Profile and job description
prepares remuneration package, refines and approves Job Description	← (1 month)	
	→	uses Board approved Job Description to form part of Church Profile
	→ (job posted for 4-8 weeks)	Chair submits completed Church Profile to DLD for posting (requests for profile are sent to DLD/resumes are received by DLD)
	→	Chair receives resumes from DLD
	→ (within 2-3 weeks)	creates short-list of candidates
	→ (1-3 months)	interviews candidates
	→	chooses successful candidate and Chair informs Board
informed by PLTF Chair of successful candidate	←	
Board chair negotiates and signs Letter of Understanding (¶879) with successful candidate and informs PLTF chair when completed (Board chair informs treasurer to be in contact with candidate to complete payroll documents)	← (1-2 weeks)	
	→	Chair sends request for appointment to Bishop
↓ Bishop sends appointment request to the regional Ministerial Education Guidance and Placement (MEGaP) committee by email to vote for approval of appointment. ↓ (1 week)		
Bishop sends letter to delegate announcing the appointment. Letter to be read by delegate to congregation the following Sunday. Bishop announces new appointment in next issue of the Bishop's Notes.		

Appendix "A" - FMCiC Church Transition Handbook (used with permission)

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Pastor Search Committee Member Agreement

By Vanderbloemen Search Group
www.vanderbloemen.com

Electing members to your Pastor Search Committee is an extremely important decision for any church. Your Pastor Search Committee will shape the future of your church and its Kingdom-impact as they seek the next pastor God is calling to lead your congregation.

Because serving on a Pastor Search Committee is such a significant contribution to the future of your church, it's necessary that the members be completely dedicated to their role on the committee. Their earnest commitment to prayerfully and steadfastly seeking the best candidate for your church staff is vital.

Many Pastor Search Committees require their members to sign an agreement or a covenant that fleshes out the specifics of their commitment. But it can be difficult to discern everything that should be included in such an agreement.

Our goal at Vanderbloemen Search Group is to equip churches to find the best leaders possible. We're delighted to provide free resources to assist you in your pastor search, and if we can further help you in your pastor search, let us know.

Feel free to use and customize the Pastor Search Committee Member Agreement Template on the following page.

For more resources to aid your Pastor Search Committee, check out these articles:

- Pastor Search Prayer Calendar
- The First 5 Commandments Of Pastoral Succession Planning
- 13 Ways To Sabotage Your Senior Pastor Search
- How To Keep Christ The Center Of Your Pastoral Search Process
- 5 Common Pitfalls of Pastoral Nominating Committees
- What To Do When Your Pastor Search Committee Can't Agree

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Pastor Search Committee Member Agreement

I, _____, a member of the Pastor Search Committee of _____ Church, agree wholeheartedly to serve the committee and my church by prayerfully seeking the next _____ that God is calling to lead our congregation. Along with my fellow Pastor Search Committee members and relying on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I commit to the following (please initial):

_____ We will pray earnestly and seek God's direction in this hire.

_____ We will agree on clear roles and responsibilities for the Committee Members.

_____ We will set a goal timeline for the search process and strive to stay on task.

_____ We will set a meeting schedule for our Committee and hold to that schedule.

_____ We will decide on how our final agreement and hire is to be made, be it unanimous, consensus, majority, etc.

_____ As needed, we will seek input from the church staff and congregation as we develop the qualifications and traits desired in this hire.

_____ We will create a clear job description for our ideal candidate, striving for high but realistic standards.

_____ We will examine our hearts and seek the best candidate for this hire, free of any individual agendas.

_____ We will be intentional, thoughtful, consistent, and honest in our communication with the congregation, the church staff, the candidates, and each other.

_____ We will uphold the highest levels of respect and confidentiality, and we will clearly define what is to be kept confidential.

_____ We will agree to a vetting and interviewing process and stick to it, putting all final candidates through the same process.

_____ We will not delay in our communication with candidates.

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_____ We will conduct background and reference checks of our final candidate(s) with all due diligence, notifying our candidate(s) if/when we are conducting said checks and upholding our candidate(s) confidentiality.

_____ We will clearly and honestly present to our final candidates: our church's history, mission, vision, current financial situation, decision-making processes, team dynamics, organizational structure, limitations, challenges, and plans for our future.

_____ We will strive for peace, cooperation, respect, and unity in our discussions and decisions, eschewing conflict and, if it occurs, addressing it with prayer, humility, and love.

_____ We will hold one another accountable to this agreement, speaking the truth in love.

_____ _____

Name (please print) Date

_____

Signature

Vanderbloemen Search Group is a pastor search firm that helps churches and faith-based organizations find great staff. To find out how we could help you find your next team member, contact us at info@vanderbloemen.com.

Appendix "B" - FMCiC Church Transitions Handbook (used by permission)

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Exit Interviewing 101 For Church Leaders

By William Vanderbloemen, CEO
Vanderbloemen Search Group
www.vanderbloemen.com

Losing team members hurts. Whether you're losing a valuable player who is taking another opportunity, releasing an employee due to budget cuts, or firing someone who has colored outside the lines, losing team members is always hard.

When the pain hits, most church leaders miss the opportunity to learn from the loss. They simply try to move on without talking to the departing employee again. They don't realize that performing an exit interview is an invaluable opportunity to learn how their church and staff could develop and grow.

Keeping proper expectations, conducting an exit interview the right way (and yes, there is a right and a wrong way), and asking effective questions are vital if church leaders want to optimize this rare chance to improve their team.

A word on expectations regarding exit interviews: Expectations are the first key to a successful exit interview. On one hand, this is a chance for an employee to give blunt, even critical, advice to you. Thus,

Expectation #1: This might sting a little (maybe even a lot).

On the other hand, most smart employees won't over share during the exit interview. Dumping needless criticism isn't going to change the way they are leaving, and sharing too bluntly might hurt them should they ever want to return to the team. That leads to,

Expectation #2: What you hear probably isn't the whole story.

Regardless of the mixed feedback that you'll receive from the exit interview, you will get valuable information if you follow these four cardinal rules.

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1. Keep it in the vault.

The only way an employee will open up is if they know that you are keeping the information they share confidential. Remind the interviewee that you are legally bound not to talk about this interview or their performance in a future reference call. Encourage them to be honest and assure them of your confidentiality.

2. Put it in neutral.

A neutral third party should conduct exit interviews. The employee's immediate supervisor should never do them. In a large organization, the Human Resources Department usually runs these, but chances are your church doesn't have one of those. If you oversaw the team member who is leaving, consider having someone else on your team do the interview. Trusted board members or volunteer leaders are a good resource if you're on a very small church team. If the end of this person's employment is heated or politically charged, consider bringing in an outside third party to conduct the interview. In any event, find an interviewer that will engender trust and calm for the outgoing employee. That will foster a "safe" environment and give you the best chance at getting real, honest, and helpful feedback.

Related Article: 3 Reasons Churches Need Objective Eyes

3. Set the table.

When the interview starts, let the employee know that this is not about them, but about you. This is not a look at their work, but a chance for the team to learn how to do a better job. You're not going to criticize their work or anything they say, but you want to see what working on your church team was like from their perspective.

4. Keep it short.

Exit interviews do not need to be (nor should they be) lengthy. There are a few important and to-the-point questions that need to be asked (keep reading), and the time spent on them shouldn't be more than an hour. Don't draw it out.

Now that you have the right expectations and the four rules, here are five questions you can ask during the exit interview to make it as effective as possible.

1. Did you feel recognized?

Every article and study I've read on company culture and employee retention consistently lists employee recognition as a key factor of employee satisfaction. Like any personal relationship, when people don't feel that their work (or presence) is noticed or appreciated, they become dissatisfied and might begin looking for a new job. Ask your outgoing team member if they felt recognized and appreciated for their work, both from their immediate supervisor and the church leaders over them, if applicable.

Related Article: 10 Ways To Lose Great Staff Members

2. Did you know what to do?

People love having goals. When goals are absent, dissatisfaction sets in. Over and over, I hear candidates who I interview tell me that they didn't have a clear set of goals and expectations put before them. Ask your departing employee if they felt they had clear, attainable goals and knew what was expected of them.

3. Did the job you interviewed for match the job you found yourself in?

Far too often, recruiting feels like a fraternity rush, only to have the first day on the job feel like the first day as a lowly pledge. There's a war for talent out there, and that leads many church leaders to try hard to put a good first impression forward in interviewing that they don't represent the reality of the workplace or its culture. The best employers I know match the interview process with the real work environment.

Also, sometimes employers depict job responsibilities unrealistically. Did the job description say that this employee would have teaching opportunities, only for that employee to find those opportunities were years away and they didn't have a chance to grow into new roles? Ask your departing team member if the job they interviewed for was what they expected, and if it wasn't, was it positive (their role grew) or negative?

4. Can you name three cultural values of the company and give an example of each in real time?

If your exiting employees doesn't know your church's or ministry's values, then chances are a lot of the other teammates don't either. Take this opportunity to see if the culture you're trying to instill through your team's values is getting through to your staff and sticking.

Related Article: 3 Ways To Create Contagious Staff Culture

5. Did we equip you with the tools you needed to do your job?

Asking people to do a job and not giving them the tools to perform makes for unhappy campers. If the leadership at your church isn't equipping and

empowering your church staff members, this is something you need to know and correct. Ask your outgoing employee for specific examples if they felt they were not empowered or given the tools to do any part of their job.

When you have realistic expectations, conduct exit interviews properly, and ask straightforward and effective questions, you'll find that exit interviews are invaluable for getting honest feedback on what it's like to work on your church team, enhancing your church staff culture, and ultimately improving employee satisfaction and staff retention long-term.

Vanderbloemen Search Group is a retained executive search firm that helps churches and faith-based organizations find great staff. For more insights on helping you build and maximize your staff, visit our blog at www.vanderbloemen.com/blog. If you're interested in staff consultation or need help finding a high-capacity team member, let us know here.

Appendix "C" - FMCiC Church Transitions Handbook (used with permission

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The Pastor Search Committee Prayer Calendar

The pastor search process can be a stressful and anxiety-filled chapter in a church's history. Here at Vanderbloemen Search Group, we've helped hundreds of pastor search committees discern whom God is calling to their church.

Our team has created this prayer calendar to help you and your church pray through this crucial time in your church's life. While your church's pastor search process is unique, we hope this six-month, congregational prayer calendar acts as a guide to help you know how to pray for your church leaders and congregation during this exciting time.

Month One – True Needs Of The Congregation

This month, your pastor search committee will be creating a timeline and a pastoral profile for your church's ideal candidates based on the church's ministry needs, vision, mission, and values.

Pray that the true needs of the congregation will come to surface as the church staff and committee seek the Lord about what is next for your church. Pray that no personal agenda would surface but only the will of the Lord as the search committee and staff seeks what He has next for the congregation.

Ephesians 1:22-23 "And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way."

Month Two – Clarity On Job Description

This month, your pastor search committee will be writing the job description for the pastor profile based on the needs of your church.

Pray that the pastor search committee will have clarity as to the characteristics, goals, and key result areas that should be included in the job description for the church's next pastor. Pray that the committee would not settle for too little or aim too high, making the job description unreasonable or unattainable. Pray that the committee would agree upon the background and experience needed in the next pastor.

1 Timothy 3:1-2 "The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach..."

Month 3 – Hearing God's Voice

This month, your pastor search committee will begin receiving and evaluating applications from candidates.

Pray that the committee would hear God's voice with clarity and feel peace as they discern whom they should interview. Pray that as they read applications, listen to sermon samples, and talk with candidates, they place the church's needs and desires before their own.

John 10:14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep, and they know me."

Month 4 – Asking The Right Questions

This month, your pastor search committee will begin interviewing candidates with the most promise to be your next pastor.

Pray that the pastor search committee will know the right questions to ask as they represent the church through the interview process. Pray that they would represent the church accurately and attractively. Pray that they would have clarity as they interview candidates, eliminate candidates, and move forward with candidates throughout the interview process.

Matthew 5: 16 "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

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Month 5 – Peace For Future Pastor's Family

This month, the pastor search committee has likely narrowed the pool of candidates down to a few finalists and is praying over whom God has called to lead your church. This might mean that the committee has a finalist who is currently in view of a call.

Pray that the future pastor, the spouse, and family would feel the same peace and excitement that the pastor search committee feels about the candidate. Pray that the candidate and their family will have clarity during their visits with the church and know whether or not this is the next step in ministry to which God has called them.

Philippians 4:7 "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Month 6 – Peace For The Congregation

This month, the pastor search committee will likely be submitting an offer to your church's next pastor.

Pray that the entire congregation would feel a sense of peace and confirmation as the pastor is confirmed through congregational meetings and/or a congregational voting process. Pray that there is unity among the search committee, church staff, and congregation. Pray that no one person would have an agenda that would cause a distraction or deterrent from God's work throughout the pastor search process. Pray that the new pastor and their family have a smooth transition into their new church and community.

Colossians 3:14 "Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which ties everything together in unity."

Vanderbloemen Search Group is a pastor search firm that helps churches and faith-based organizations find great staff. If you are interested in conducting a compensation analysis for your church, consulting about your staffing or church development, or hiring us to find your next team member, contact us at info@vanderbloemen.com.

APPENDIX "D" - FMCIC CHURCH TRANSITIONS HANDBOOK

TRANSITION PASTOR JOB DESCRIPTION

Position	**Church**
Transition Pastor	
Name (or Incumbent)	**Location**
Reports to	**Date of last Revision**
Network Leader: _____ The Official Board of _____ The Free Methodist Church in Canada	
Peers	**Team (Ministry Leaders/Staff)**
The _____Network led by _____	

Position Overview

In a process, empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit, the transition pastor leads the church to grow in health and spiritual renewal. Then the church from this place of health is ready for a new lead pastor, who fits the congregation's vision and mission, to be appointed and employed.

Minimum Education and Experiential Standards

Formal Education	**Job Related Experience**					
	No experience required	< 1 year	1 -3 years	4 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	10+ years
No educational requirement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Some High School or equivalent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
High School Diploma or equivalent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
High School Diploma + job related courses or equivalent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Community College or equivalent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technical trade	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bachelor's degree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Master's degree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Professional Designation (e.g. CA, P. Eng., C.H.R.P., M. Div.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Doctoral degree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Minimum Past Career Experience:

Preferred Education and Experiential Standards

Formal Education	**Job Related Experience**					
	No experience required	< 1 year	1 -3 years	4 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	10+ years
No educational requirement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Some High School or equivalent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
High School Diploma or equivalent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
High School Diploma + job related courses or equivalent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Community College or equivalent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technical trade	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bachelor's degree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Master's degree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Professional Designation (e.g. CA, P. Eng., C.H.R.P., M. Div.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Doctoral degree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Ideal Past Career Experience:

The incumbent would possess

- transitional leadership training
- credentialled with the FMCiC
- substantial lead pastoral experience, ideally including previous transition pastor experience

Other important Information about this position:

NOTE: If a transition pastor is a potential candidate for the permanent position, s/he must declare that possibility at the onset, and if s/he decides to apply, s/he cannot continue to be part of the PLTF, but can still help keep the PLTF on track and ensure the congregation remains informed.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES

The prioritized **major responsibilities, percentage of time, key activities** and **standards of performance** for this position are listed below:

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES
(Suggested percentage of time allocated to each area of responsibility)

Major Responsibility	Overall Percentage of Time
1. Vision Renewal or Creation	25%
2. Preaching and Communication	25%
3. Pastoral Care	20%
4. Short term Administration	15%
5. Pastoral Search Process	15%

KEY ACTIVITIES

1. Major Responsibility: Vision Renewal or Creation

Key Activities	Standard of Performance
• Life Plan Process	• Lead the congregation through Life Plan, as needed • Ensure results of Life Plan process are incorporated into the new pastor's JD
• Organizational Structural Renewal	• Assess church governance model and adjust as necessary • Review local church policies and adjust as necessary

2. Major Responsibility: Preaching and Communication

Key Activities	Standard of Performance
• Preaching	• planned messages relevant to people's needs and the transition process • using other methods (eg. Dwelling in the Word) to bring God’s people together • involved in facilitating worship
• Communication/ Conversation	• Communicate the FMCiC transitions process • Ensure the congregation is updated regularly through town hall meetings, reports from the board, reports from the PLTF, etc. • One-on-one conversations • Ensure Directors of Church Health and Personnel are updated regularly

3. Major Responsibility: Pastoral Care

Key Activities	Standard of Performance
• Identify transitional issues to be resolved	• using an "Appreciative Inquiry" process and other tools such as church timeline, healing and forgiveness services: • help the congregation accept the past, face the present reality and decide to move forward
• One on one meetings	• Active listening • Intentionally initiate conversations
• Responding to crisis needs	• Create a sense of approachability and caring
• Passages of life ministries	• Baptisms, weddings, funerals, etc., as required
• Providing positive and healthy closure	• deal with any unresolved relational and/or structural issues • facilitate an exit interview with previous pastor, if possible
• Relationship renewal/restoration	• Teach and facilitate conflict resolution and management • Facilitate intercultural conversations and relationships

4. Major Responsibility: Short -Term Administration

Key Activities	Standard of Performance
• Facilitating leadership teams	• Regular board meetings, staff meetings, ministry team meetings, society meeting • Ensure effective ministry continues according to current vision and mission

5. Major Responsibility: Pastoral Search Process

Key Activities	Standard of Performance
• Coaching	• Using the Church Transition Handbook, resource the PLTF to create the Church Profile • Coach the PLTF through the interviewing process • Ensure regular, effective communication to the congregation

CORE COMPETENCIES
The operationalized core competencies which the incumbent must demonstrate in order to be effective in this position are listed below:

Core Competency	Operationalized Competency "What does this look like on the job?"
Communications – Spoken and Written	Able to clearly present information through the spoken word; influence or persuade others through oral presentation in positive or negative circumstances; listen well: able to write clearly and effectively present ideas and to document activities; to read and interpret written information
Leadership	Able to influence the actions and opinions of others in a desired direction; to exhibit judgment in leading others to worthwhile objectives.
Decision Making and Problem Solving	Able to take action in solving problems while exhibiting judgment and a realistic understanding of issues; able to use reason, even when dealing with emotional topics.
Reading the System	Able to recognize and use information about organizational climate and key individuals to accomplish legitimate organizational goals; be aware of the importance of timing, politics and group processes in managing change.
Energizing / Interacting	Able to create positive energy (motivation/encouragement) in both individuals and groups. Able to communicate with others in a warm and helpful manner while simultaneously building credibility and rapport.
Organization and Planning	Able to organize or schedule people or tasks; to develop realistic action plans while being sensitive to time constraints and resource availability.
Team Building	Able to work with people in such a manner as to build high morale and group commitments to goals and objectives.

OFFICIAL BOARD APPROVAL

This is to certify that the Official Board of _____ Church has approved the Job Description of Pastor _____ and will:

a.) send an electronic copy of the approved Job Description to the Superintendent of Personnel within thirty days of approval.
b.) recommend that the 360 team participate in the Performance Appraisal training in six to nine months when offered in the area.
c.) have the Performance Appraisal completed within one year of this Official Board recommendation and send a copy of the results to the Superintendent of Personnel.

Done by order of the Official Board of the _____Society of The Free Methodist Church in Canada at _____ this _____ day of_____, 20____.

_____*Pastor*

_____*Secretary*