

Pastor Search Process

First Baptist Church

Pflugerville, Texas

Recommendation for Business Meeting February 3, 2021

This process:

- Describes an approach that emphasizes the leadership of the Holy Spirit and encourages First Baptist Church Pflugerville and our future pastor in initiating and continuing a mutually healthy relationship.
- Helps First Baptist Church Pflugerville (the church) identify its own mission and find a pastor whose gifts in ministry will help the church fulfill that mission.
- Lists the steps in the selection of the Pastor Search Team.
- Provides the Pastor Search Team the framework for the search process including, conducting face-to-face dialogue to exchange adequate information and develop knowledge of the church and candidates. This will include discussion of dreams, leadership style, church core beliefs and needs. The process will lead the Pastor Search Team and candidate toward prayerfully informed decisions.
- Establishes that the Pastor Search Team will perform a national background check of the candidate to include criminal, sex offender, driving record and credit check without questioning their personal integrity.
- Establishes that a mutually supported covenant agreement between the church and the pastor will be written to create a healthy relationship.
- The Transition Team of First Baptist Church Pflugerville would like to acknowledge the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina for the use of their handbook, “Finding a New Pastor for Your Church; Updated 10.30.2014” as the basis for the development of this process.

Primary Concepts *to guide the work of the Pastor Search Team*

A process that affirms the autonomy of the local church.

This process was written for First Baptist Church Pflugerville using appropriate pastor search resources.

A process that involves the church.

Ask the church to be a part of the process by nominating the Pastor Search Team, providing names of potential pastors and prayerfully participating in the church's visioning process.

A process that respects the relationship of the pastor candidate with his current church.

Tremendous harm may be created when a Pastor Search Team comes to hear the minister preach in his own pulpit. It sends a signal that the pastor is seeking to move, causing questions of his commitment to his current church. Going to hear the minister in his own pulpit is a last step, not the first.

A process that encourages the church seeking a pastor to own their vision first.

The church must know who it is and what distinguishes it from other nearby churches. It does not work to expect the pastor to bring the vision to the people. The church's real concern should be whether the pastor's gifts in ministry match their perceived needs as they seek to be the people of God.

A process that encourages the Pastor Search Team to work with only one candidate at a time.

Unfortunately, pastor search teams are often tempted to consider several candidates at once and to choose the one that looks and sounds the best. However, the pastor search process is not an employment process; it is a spiritual process. The goal of the Pastor Search Team is to bring before the church the person whom they believe God has uniquely prepared to serve as their next pastor based on the vision established by the church.

A process where the Pastor Search Team must be unanimous in their selection of the pastor candidate to be presented to the church.

A process that allows the Pastor Search Team to do background checks.

There are appropriate ways to perform background checks on the candidate. These should be done only with his knowledge and authorization. The Pastor Search Team will utilize appropriate resources through Austin Baptist Association and Southern Baptist of Texas state convention or other reliable Baptist entities.

A process that encourages the church to have a covenant agreement that clarifies the expectations of both the church and the pastor.

This differs from a job description in that this process takes into account the uniqueness of the pastor and the changing needs of the church.

Timetable Guide for Search Process

Month 1 - Develop Search Process and Survey

- Conduct Listening Sessions on Pastor Search Process
- Conduct Church Survey for Pastor Profile
- Begin Listening Sessions on Pastor Profile Survey
- Update church on progress

Month 2 - Begin Implementing the Process

- Approve Pastor Search Process
- Select Pastor Search Team
- Study our church and community demographics
- Continue Listening Sessions on Pastor Profile Survey
- Update church on progress

Months 3 & 4 - Gather and Organize Prospective Names

- Get names from other sources such as state convention, national convention, Southern Baptist seminaries
- Get names from within the congregation using “Who Do You Know” cards
- Determine order to contact prospects
- Structure process
- Update church on progress

Month 5 - Set Up Files

- Document contacts with pastor
- Establish permanent paperwork files
- Update church on progress

Month 6 - Contact the Pastoral Candidate

- Explain background check process to pastor
- Request permission to check references
- Begin to write covenant agreement
- Update church on progress

Month 7 - Perform Final Background Checks

- Update church on progress

Month 8 - Visit the Pastoral Candidate’s Church Field

- Discuss salary and benefits
- Update church on progress

Month 9 - Call the Pastor

- Plan for pastor to visit church family
- Vote to call pastor under guidelines of the covenant agreement
- Plan installation service

Further Details Regarding The Process

Church Survey for Pastor Profile

- The Interim Pastor will provide to the church a survey to collect information for the profile
- The demographics of the church will be studied to assist in writing a profile.
- The Interim Pastor will schedule group meetings with church members to discuss the profile
- Individual meetings with the Interim Pastor can also be scheduled.

Selection Process for Pastor Search Team

- The Business Meeting for church members to make nominations will be on Livestream.
- While watching Livestream members will be given instructions on how to submit their list of names to nominate.
- Members are asked to give prayerful thought to who they will nominate before the time of the Called Business Meeting.
- Only people who have completed the Membership Process are eligible to vote.
- The process to membership is:
 - Requesting membership (usually during the Invitation at the end of the Worship Service).
 - Being baptized if you have not already done so previously to requesting membership.
 - Attending the Church New Members Orientation class for those who joined after July 2012.
 - Note: Someone who is only a Grow Group member is not considered a Voting Member.
- No Transition Team Member is allowed to serve on the Pastor Search Team.
- There cannot be more than one person from the same family on the Pastor Search Team.
- A Minister or anyone from his family cannot serve on the Pastor Search Team.
- The Interim Pastor will provide the Church with a list of tasks involved and the commitment requirements for being on a Pastor Search Team.
- Pastor Search Team member selection guidelines:
 - Nominee must be a church member regularly attending church activities and at least 18 years of age.
 - Each voting member will nominate up to 8 nominees. We ask that both age and gender are considered when making nominations.
 - Age groups: 18-30 31-45 46-64 65 plus
 - When nominating, please consider the nominee's desire and ability to meet the obligations of the Pastor Search Team (i.e. attendance at meetings, research, travel, covenant development, etc.) Members eligible to nominate Pastor Search Team members are asked to first ask the person if they are willing to serve before they nominate someone.
- On the day of the Called Business Meeting members present at church on-campus and watching Livestream will record and submit the names they are nominating according to the instructions given.

- The Transition Team will make a list of all the nominations and list them in order according to the number of the votes they receive.
- Per the guidelines of our Church Constitution and Bylaws, the Pastor Search Team will consist of at least 5 and not more than 7 members, both men and women, from the list of those nominated.
- Those who are selected for the Pastor Search Team will be announced to the church on the Pastor Search webpage as well as through email, Facebook, and Announcements at the worship services.

Steps to Calling the Candidate as our Pastor

- Complete work on the Pastor-Church Covenant Agreement.
- Decide on the weekend the minister will come and lead the church in worship.
- Develop a brochure on the pastor candidate, including highlights from his resume.
- Mail and/or provide a copy of the covenant and brochure mentioned above to each resident church family two weeks before the weekend.
- Plan the weekend schedule and events for the pastor candidate to meet members and leaders.
- Members will vote by secret ballot on whether to extend a call for the candidate to serve as pastor of our church.
- The Pastor candidate must receive at least a 90% acceptance before a “call” is extended.
- Current Church Bylaws say it is to be a three fourths majority vote of acceptance. If this process is approved, we will begin the process to amend the Bylaws accordingly.

During the weekend visit:

- The Pastor candidate will arrive on Friday and stay through Sunday night.
- The Church will have multiple opportunities to interact with the candidate and his family.
- Plan a time for the candidate to meet on Saturday morning with the Ministerial staff as well as a time to also meet with full and part-time staff.
- Plan a meeting of the candidate with the Deacons, Grow Group leaders, other Church leaders and other appropriate groups.
- Conduct multiple Q&As with small groups of church members.
- Plan for the pastor candidate to preach in the morning worship service.
- Enter into a Business meeting after the service to vote by secret ballot by only church members whether to extend a call to the candidate to be our Pastor.