

# STEP 2 | PASTORAL SEARCH PROCESS

In this second step, your search process begins. The PNC will need to meet with the session and receive the Pastor Job Description. [Here is a link to an example](#), or go to the [ECO Job Board](#) for ideas on how to create a Pastor Job Description that suits the needs of your church.



It is not enough to simply receive the document from the elders. Spend time with them and ask them what their desires and expectations are for the next pastor. This will help you get a more robust understanding for your search, and it will help the session grasp the variety of hopes and expectations for the qualifications and characteristics of the incoming pastor.

It is also recommend that you do likewise with the staff. Oftentimes the staff is not involved in the hiring process, it is vital that they feel valued and heard throughout the pastoral search process. This will ultimately help with the transition when the new pastor arrives. Listen to the staff and aim to discover what their expectations and desires are. You can do this at the same meeting with the session if that is feasible.

Finally, post the job description and your Church Profile on a multitude of websites after receiving approval from your presbytery MPT. A great place to start is on [ECO's Job Board, found here](#).



We have also found success posting jobs on:



- [Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary](#)
- [EPC's Ministry Opportunities page](#)
- [Church Staffing](#)
- [Fuller Theological Seminary's Job Board](#)

Do not forget to add the job posting to your own webpage and share it on social media as well. Be sure to include clear instructions for how people should apply and a deadline for applications. We recommend requesting a resume, cover letter, at least three recorded sermons, and at least three references. Have them submit these materials via the email address specifically created for the PNC.

Before you move to Step 3, take some time to talk about the following topics that are integral to the PNC's success: trust, confidentiality, and communication:

- **How will you cultivate trust among committee members?**
- **How will you maintain the trust of the congregation throughout your entire search?**
- **Will each PNC member commit to confidentiality for the benefit of the process and the candidates who are applying?**
- **How will you handle conflict among committee members during the search?**

Finally, you will need to create communication plans for both the candidates and the congregation. Your committee alone should know the names of the candidates. But when will you communicate milestones to the session? What about the congregation and staff? What types of things will you communicate?

As you think through the answers to these questions, let us offer up a suggestion. If the PNC knows 100% of the information, then the session should know 80% (perhaps everything except the names of the candidates), the staff should know 70% (which may or may not include when a candidate may be interviewing at the church), and the congregation should know 60% (where the PNC is in the process, but not necessarily when a candidate may be visiting the church). These levels of communication will help build and maintain trust, transparency, and confidentiality.

## PASTORAL SEARCH ASSISTANCE



The ECO Synod has created a [Pastoral Search Assistance](#) resource that can help your session and any subsequent search committee best locate your next pastor. If your church decides to use this search assistance tool, the assigned navigator will use assessments and surveys to share additional information to better align the job description and the leadership attributes best suited for the next pastor (as the PNC works through the phases of the search process). We realize that some churches will hire an outside consultant, but we recognize that many churches cannot afford this service. Pastoral Search Assistance is a cost-effective tool that will enhance your search process. To find more information on this resource, [click here](#).



If cost is an issue for your church, we recommend contacting your presbytery in order to ask for financial assistance. Most of our presbyteries know how vital this tool is for the success of our local churches and are more than willing to subsidize the costs. In some cases ECO can also establish payments and installments based on levels of need.

Whether or not you choose to utilize the Synod's tool, this guide will be helpful for your session and PNC. If you are unable to engage with the Synod through ECO's Pastoral Search Assistance process or you want some more guidance, please contact your presbytery's MPT.