

Pastoral Review Process

Purpose:

The intent of this process is to provide a formative rather than summative process of review and evaluation for our Senior Pastor. This process occurs alongside scheduled reviews of the church board and the church as a whole. Regular planned reviews of functioning have three purposes:

1. To provide support, care and encouragement in leadership, ministry and personal development.
2. To provide a constructive means of feedback and appropriate processes of accountability in areas of change and growth.
3. To enable collective reflection on the pastor's implementation of the church's vision, core values, objectives and goals.

Guidelines:

These guidelines outline the process of review approved by the Church Board:

1. A three year review schedule

To be effective and of maximum value, reviews will occur regularly over the period of appointment rather than as a once off summative process. As our pastor is appointed on the basis of a three year term, there will be six-nine review meetings over the term, i.e. approximately every four-six months. The Board believes that this allows enough time for change and development without being overbearing for the Senior Pastor, the review group and others who may be consulted as part of the process.

2. An equipped review group

In order to provide objectivity and communal insight to the process, a review group with skills and wisdom will be appointed by the Church Board. This comprises people from inside and outside the congregation. The Chairperson of the Church Board in conjunction with the Senior Pastor will approach the members of the review group. Ideally the group will include both women and men.

The group will comprise:

1. a Church Board member, nominated by the Board who is the chair and convener of the group,
2. a lay ministry leader from within the church who works closely with the pastor, nominated by the Board,
3. a family friend from within the church with a pastoral interest in the Senior Pastor and his/her family, nominated by the pastor and
4. another pastor (external to the congregation) who has a position or role in ministry and leadership that equates with our Senior Pastor, agreed by the Board and the Pastor.

Meeting Agenda

The review process is primarily pastoral and formative and meetings need to have this character rather than an evaluative or summative character. Meetings are convened and chaired by the Board representative. Meetings of this group are confidential and only what is agreed by all is included in the report and recommendations given to the Church Board. The agenda includes:

a) Storytelling and sharing

Open discussion and sharing the story - This is the opportunity for the Senior Pastor to share openly the encouragements, challenges and concerns of ministry and life. There is opportunity for the review group to ask generally and also specifically how things are going.

b) Personal Development Plan Review

Each year the Senior Pastor is invited to document some specific goals for life and ministry and reflect on how these might be achieved. These are included in a Personal Development Plan. Areas for goal setting include at least one goal related to ministry leadership, at least one goal related to personal growth and one goal for something the Senior Pastor would like to achieve 'for the fun of it' - unrelated to ministry and leadership. Goals should be clear and achievable with some action planning and timetabling linked to them. A pastor may also work on these with a mentor external to the group. Reflection on the implementation of this plan and running adjustments to it are part of the meeting. Focus here is on the personal dimensions of ministry.

c) Review of functioning against a clear position description

A review of the Senior Pastor's functioning against his/her position description is an important part of the process. This position charter or description provides a statement of the areas of responsibility and ministry. The group talks through issues and concerns relating to effective functioning in this role and provides considered feedback. This aspect of the review process is concerned with the pastoral role and leadership and ministry tasks.

d) Feedback from congregation, staff and lay leaders.

It is valuable to use appropriate and well thought through means of gaining and processing objective feedback from people who work closely with or to whom the pastor is ministering. This can be done through carefully designed surveys or interviews. It is not necessary for every review session but should be sought once every year in some form. This needs to be planned by the review group in a session prior to when it will be needed. The group should take initiative in gathering, validating and processing this information. A simple six question survey is attached.

e) Standardised appraisal

The final basis for review is accessing and using any standardised appraisal tools the review group thinks might be appropriate for the Senior Pastor and benefit his/her self-understanding, functioning and leadership development. These are secondary to the process of review and may be used as determined by the group and the Senior Pastor together.

f) Discussion and agreement on Recommendations to go to the Board

The group along with the pastor, spend some time prayerfully considering the main observations and recommendations that need to be communicated to the church board. Some of these may include adjustments to terms and conditions, professional development needs, support needs, issues to do with manse, etc, etc.

g) Prayer

Schedule of meetings

As a guide, the Review group should plan to meet about 6 weeks prior to key church board gatherings in order for reporting to the board to be up to date. The Review Group should include the Senior Pastor's spouse in every second meeting. The meeting schedule is outlined below.

Session	Meeting	Implementation
Feb Year A	Review group meets before March Board Meeting. Identification of issues to work on and goals for development, PDP developed and agreed by group. Report to Board	SP follows up on goals Review group reflects on support, accountability and development needed
August Year A	Review group meets with pastor and spouse Accountability and development of goals as agreed in the first meeting PDP reviewed. Review group and pastor agree on what feedback from staff, leaders and congregation would be helpful for Feb meeting.	SP follows up on goals Review group reflects on support, accountability and development needed. Data gathered and processed from staff, leadership and congregation. Informal update to Board chair
Feb Year B	Meeting with Review group Accountability and development of goals as agreed. Discussion of feedback. Recommendations agreed.	SP follows up on goals that arise from meeting. Review group reflects on support, accountability and development needed. Review group chair reports to Board.
August Year B	Review group meets with pastor and spouse Accountability and development of goals as agreed in the first meeting PDP reviewed. Review group and pastor agree on what feedback from staff, leaders and congregation would be helpful for Feb meeting.	SP follows up on goals Review group reflects on support, accountability and development needed. Data gathered and processed from staff, leadership and congregation. Informal update to Board chair
Feb Year C	Meeting with Review group Accountability and development of goals as agreed. PDP reviewed. Group begins process of discerning the future with pastor and whether to recommend re-appointment.	SP follows up on goals Review group reflects on support, accountability and development needed Review group chair reports to Board
August Year C	Meeting with Review group and spouse Accountability and development of goals as agreed. Discernment process. Recommendation re: reappointment for a further term.	SP follows up on goals Review group reflects on support, accountability and development needed Recommendation to Board.

Reporting

The review group reports to the board of the church annually at a time determined by the board. The report is not to include information shared with the group in confidence. Issues and plans to address them may be outlined in general terms. Recommendations for changes to the Senior Pastor's terms of service, working conditions, professional development and processes of support are welcome. The board then follows up on any recommendations presented from the group which are adopted.

Release of the Group

The review group should be thanked and released from their commitment at the end of the term. A new group may be appointed for the next term. If some members are willing to serve again this can be very helpful in providing perspective. Conversely some new ideas and insights can be equally beneficial to the group.

Useful links and resources:

[An outline of pastoral review processes and procedures from a congregational governance and Anabaptist theological perspective.](#)

[Mennonite Church of Canada Pastor and Congregation Evaluation Pack Website](#)

[Appreciative Inquiry and Pastoral Reviews](#) (One part of the above)

[Roy Oswald's article from the Alban Institute](#)

[Link to Jill Hudson's useful book - downloadable resources for people who purchase this.](#)

[Church and Pastoral Evaluations](#)