



## Developing a Job Description with a New Pastor

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### OVERVIEW

By the time that a call has been extended, the candidate has read the congregational profile and is aware of the congregation's priorities for a pastor's ministry among them. That will form the framework of any job description.

The pastor's Pastoral Relations Team of three-four individuals may take that framework and together with the pastor review the sixteen core activities of ministerial practice as articulated by the General Commission on the Order of the Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). (In some cases, the Search Team will have worked with the pastor to develop that job description in advance of providing a letter of call.

That review provides an opportunity for pastor and congregational leaders to remember what ministers are trained and equipped to do in addition to the two or three highest congregational priorities. A well-rounded, well-grounded, sustainable ministry will exercise each of the sixteen core practices – even in smaller congregations where a part-time call is extended.

- **Biblical Knowledge:** Be rooted and grounded in scripture and able to interpret and apply the scriptures in ways that are appropriate to original and contemporary contexts.
- **Church Administration and Planning:** Be able to practice the principles of good administration, planning and implementing short- and long-range goals to enhance Congregational life in collaboration with teams and committees.
- **Communication:** Be an effective communicator and be able to facilitate effective communication within and on behalf of the church.
- **Cross Cultural and Anti-Racism Experience:** Be sensitive to the different manifestations of racism and prejudice in the culture and be committed to confronting and overcoming them.
- **Ecumenism:** Exhibit a commitment to working with other Christians and denominations and with other faiths in programs of common witness and service, and to articulating the vision of the ecumenical and global church as a starting place for mission.

- **Education and Leader Development:** Know the foundations of Christian education and the principles of leader development. Show competency in teaching children, youth, and adults, including lay leaders and staff.
- **Ethics:** Be able to help parishioners think critically about the relationship of their faith to issues of justice, ethics and morality
- **Evangelism:** Be able to motivate Congregational members to share their faith through word and action.
- **Mission of the Church in the World:** Be able to understand and articulate the centrality of the call to mission given by Jesus Christ and the prophets. Be able to empower congregations to engage in mission from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth.
- **Pastoral Care:** Be able to engage other persons with empathy and assess situations and relationships with the compassion of Christ, with sensitivity to culture and context. Be able to convey the healing power of God to those who suffer.
- **Proclamation of the Word:** Know the practice and theory of Christian preaching. Be able to proclaim the Word of God, share the Good News of Jesus Christ, and help Congregational members apply their faith to daily life.
- **Spiritual Development:** Establish and maintain spiritual disciplines that lead to personal growth and help others develop a rich spiritual life.
- **Stewardship:** Be able to develop and encourage healthy stewards who recognize and share generously God's abundant gifts for all creation.
- **Theology:** Be able to articulate a coherent view of God's nature and activity in relation to the Christian tradition, to critically engage human situations from a perspective of faith, and to help persons recognize theological issues in their daily lives.
- **Understanding of Heritage:** Have knowledge of and appreciation for the history and thought of Christianity and of the history, structure, practices, and ethos of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- **Worship:** Know the purpose and elements of Christian worship. Have the ability to plan and lead meaningful worship by working with the worship team, musicians, and Congregational members.

Following this review, pastor and Pastoral Relations Committee or Search Team may want to consider the following questions:

- Are there recurring tasks that need to be accomplished regularly? What are they and how much time out of the normal work week for the pastor is usually required to accomplish these? (Congregations of different sizes and situations will answer differently).
- How about short-term priorities? Are there situations that require extra effort and focus on the part of the pastor over the next few months?
- Are there long-term projects, missions, or transitions that the pastor will help to prepare and lead?

How many days hours will the pastors be expected to give each week on average?

- Pastors called to full-time ministry seldom work fewer than forty hours a week, but they risk burnout and less effectiveness if they put in over 60 hours a week regularly.

- Pastors should be expected to take at least one scheduled day per week (two is better) for rest, time for families, household maintenance and sustaining relationships with friends, prayer, additional study, recreation, and hobbies
- Pastors should take periodic retreats and a sabbatical leave every 5-7 years if they are to sustain a long-term ministry (which has proven to be in the best interest of the congregation).

### **A Word About Office Hours**

Since the COVID 19 pandemic began to change church life in March 2019, we have realized that there are many ways for a pastor to be “present” and available.

The best pastors spend little time in the office and more time connecting with parishioners, partners, and other pastors. This is an era characterized by discontinuous change – change from life as we knew it in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to a vastly different way of living in the 21<sup>st</sup>. Much of the administrative work that the pastor oversees is done online these days and time in the office is limited to what is necessary to see that the essential administrative is done well by administrative staff and volunteers.

As churches begin to make adaptive changes: becoming more intentionally multi-cultural, engaging the community in mission, and creating new streams of income (sometimes through for-profit enterprises), the pastor spends more time with people than with paper. Less energy is given to keeping things comfortable and more to keeping the congregation faithful to its calling as the Church which means that the new pastor will build networks among non-profit leaders, ecumenical and Regional colleagues, and civic and school administrators to help the Church make greater, more credible impact in the community and thus open new portals for connection among those seeking the kind of Church that the congregation is called to be. Evangelism today happens very differently and often it is these network connections of pastors and congregational lay leaders that connect people of uncertain faith to discipleship in Jesus Christ and thus create the context for sustainable ministry.

This is not to say that pastors no longer spend significant time with parishioners. They most certainly do. In those first few months as trust builds and congregation members experience the love, care, and integrity of the new pastor, it will matter less about how man hours are spent behind a desk and more about the growth in Christ-likeness among members and lives changed and systems impacted for good in the community..

### **HOW DETAILED SHOULD THE JOB DESCRIPTION BE?**

Unless the pastor called has extraordinarily little experience in ministry and is a little unsure of how to organize ministry in this new context, the description should be no more than a single page of outlined points and general requirements. The called pastor of a congregation should be a spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually mature person who will likely develop a work rhythm that will meet or exceed fair expectations. It should begin first with a brief list of the highest priorities, then from there some bullet points of weekly and monthly tasks that the pastor will oversee and/or carry out.

Here is an example of a Job Description for a Long-term Pastor: *(Another example for part-time or interim follows this one below.)*

## **Job Description for the Pastor of New Hope Church (Disciples of Christ)**

\_\_\_\_\_ *New Hope Church (Disciples of Christ) in partnership with our pastor offers these initial guidelines for the ministry of the pastor we are calling/have called within the larger context of the servant-leadership we as a Church will do together.*

*We have discerned that we are called to engage more deeply, effectively, and sustainably in the following priority areas:*

- *Developing ways to make and equip new disciples of Jesus Christ*
- *Find creative ways to become a more sustainable Disciples of Christ congregation*
- *Expanding welcome and services to the most vulnerable in our local community*
- *Welcoming and serving in ministry with people of every age, ability, ethnicity, gender identity in full partnership to better reflect the diversity of this community that we serve*

*We share responsibility for these ministry goals with our pastor and specifically we ask that Rev. \_\_\_\_\_:*

- *Be present serving and leading in this \_\_\_\_\_ community an average of at least 20 hours per week*
- *Oversee planning and provide support for lay leaders who organize and carry out:*
  - *Our missional outreach in the community*
  - *Worship*
  - *Discipleship formation for aspiring, maturing, and new disciples of Jesus Christ*
  - *Pastoral care of members and their immediate families*
  - *Our partnership with our Region and the wider Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and ecumenical and interfaith colleagues*
- *Help us to communicate more effectively including evaluating and using the technology we have and/or need*
- *Be present at major mission and ministry events of the congregation*

*We anticipate that the pastor will participate at these essential regular gatherings:*

- *Worship*
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### **BE CREATIVE**

There is no one-size-fits-all job description that works well. Following the steps above, the pastor and Pastoral Relations Committee or Search Team will be well equipped to develop a job description that assures that congregational priorities are met and enough latitude is given the pastor to exercise her/his professional judgement about best use of time and energy in service to the congregation, the community, and the wider Church.

*Other job descriptions follow:*

**Job Description for the *Interim* Minister of New Hope Church (Disciples of Christ)**

\_\_\_\_ New Hope Church (Disciples of Christ) in partnership with our interim minister offers these initial guidelines for the ministry of the interim minister we are calling/have called within the larger context of the servant-leadership we as a Church will do together.

We have discerned that we are called to engage more deeply, effectively, and sustainably in the following priority areas:

- *Help this congregation to prayerfully navigate this in-between time by offering pastoral care and leadership.*
- *Help us come to terms with our history (the good, the bad, the still unhealed wounds)*
- *Assist us as we continue to sharpen our focus on what God is calling us to be and do in the future*
- *Work with us to evaluate our leadership model and our leaders to assure that we are better prepared for a sustainable, vibrant ministry that inspires and equips new and existing disciples of Jesus and makes a welcome place for the spiritual gifts and skills of all members*
- *Rediscover and reclaim our covenant connections with the wider Church and opportunities for mutual support*
- *Committing to the ministries needed to accomplish the mission and make real the vision that God is giving to us*

We share responsibility for these ministry goals with our pastor and specifically we ask that Rev. \_\_\_\_\_:

- *Be present serving and leading among us an average of at least \_\_\_\_ hours per week*
- *Oversee planning and provide support for lay leaders who organize and carry out:*
  - *Tasks we have listed above*
  - *Our missional outreach in the community*
  - *Worship*
  - *Discipleship formation for aspiring, maturing, and new disciples of Jesus Christ*
  - *Pastoral care of members and their immediate families*
  - *Our partnership with our Region and the wider Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and ecumenical and interfaith colleagues*
- *Help us to communicate more effectively including evaluating and using the technology we have and/or need*
- *Be present at major mission and ministry events of the congregation*

We anticipate that the pastor will participate at these essential regular gatherings:

- *Worship*
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Job Description for the Pastor – PART-TIME - of New Hope Church (Disciples of Christ)**

\_\_\_\_\_ New Hope Church (Disciples of Christ) in partnership with our pastor offers these initial guidelines for the ministry of the pastor we are calling/have called within the larger context of the servant-leadership we as a Church will do together.

We have discerned that we are called to engage more deeply, effectively, and sustainably in the following priority areas:

- *Developing ways to make and equip new disciples of Jesus Christ*
- *Find creative ways to become a more sustainable Disciples of Christ congregation*
- *Expanding welcome and services to the most vulnerable in our local community*
- *Welcoming and serving in ministry with people of every age, ability, ethnicity, gender identity in full partnership to better reflect the diversity of this community that we serve*

We share responsibility for these ministry goals with our pastor and specifically we ask that Rev. \_\_\_\_\_:

- *Be present serving and leading in this \_\_\_\_\_ community an average of at least \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week*
- *Oversee planning and provide support for lay leaders who organize and carry out:*
  - *Our missional outreach in the community*
  - *Worship*
  - *Discipleship formation for aspiring, maturing, and new disciples of Jesus Christ*
  - *Pastoral care of members and their immediate families*
  - *Our partnership with our Region and the wider Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and ecumenical and interfaith colleagues*
- *Help us to communicate more effectively including evaluating and using the technology we have and/or need*
- *Assist us with exploring options for partnership with neighboring congregations where collaboration would result in offering better service*
- *Be present at major mission and ministry events of the congregation*

We anticipate that the pastor will participate at these essential regular gatherings:

- *Worship*
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_