# Pastoral Transition Communication Kit

### Clear words for a small church—from a pastor's departure through welcoming a new pastor.

A transition brings questions before a church has all the answers. These templates help leaders share what is known, name what is not yet decided, and say when the next update will come. They are starting points: use only statements your church has verified and is authorized to share.

### Inside this 12-page PDF

- A practical communication timeline and review checklist.
- Separate planned and unexpected departure announcements.
- A board handoff, search-committee announcement, congregation FAQ, and monthly progress update.
- A candidate-visit invitation, new-pastor announcement, first-Sunday welcome, and final handoff checklist.

### Start here

Choose one coordinator and a backup. Read page 2, then copy only the template you need into your own document. Replace each bracketed item, delete unused alternatives, and obtain the appropriate approvals before sharing. Your church's bylaws and actual decisions control the process.

### For sensitive circumstances

If a departure involves a safety concern, allegation, employment dispute, or investigation, do not use a generic reassuring template as a substitute for your church's safeguarding process. Protect affected people, make required reports promptly, and seek qualified advice about what can be shared. Do not promise secrecy or an outcome.

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# Monthly search update

A short update is useful even when there is no major change. Avoid candidate names, sensitive details, and exact counts when they could identify an applicant.

### Template

Subject: Pastor search update — [month and year]

Dear church family,

Here is where the search stands as of [date]. [Describe the current stage in one or two truthful sentences: for example, “The committee is reviewing the church profile and position description.”]

Since the last update: [One or two completed actions, or “We have continued the same work and have no decision to announce.”]

Next: [One realistic next task]. The timing depends on [relevant uncertainty, if known].

How you can help: [A specific appropriate request, such as praying for wisdom or submitting input by a stated date].

Questions: Contact [approved name and method]. For privacy, we are not sharing applicant identities or personal information at this stage.

Next update: [date or timeframe], through [channel]. Thank you for your patience and continued care for one another.

[Committee spokesperson]

### Two-minute review

- Is each statement current and true?
- Does it identify the next update and a working contact?
- Have names and candidate details been removed unless disclosure has been authorized?

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