**Determine How You Will Make Decisions**

When you vote on candidates, or any decision you will make, how will you make the decision? It is vital to establish this at the outset of the search process. Options include:

**Unanimous**: A unanimous vote requires all members to be in strong agreement.

**Consensus:** A consensus vote means that everyone consents to the decision, even if it isn’t their preferred decision.

**Majority:** If you opt for a majority vote you must establish how much of a majority of votes win: 4, 5, 6?

None of these approaches means there should be no disagreement among the committee members during the process. It is to be emphasized that members of the Committee should feel the freedom to express contrary views. There may be a point in the process when one or more members say, “I have reservations about this person or this decision.” In that case, the process should invite and encourage honest discussion regarding feelings and opinions. Enough time should be taken to allow either a meeting of the minds on the candidate being considered or a change of course. Some options for weighing options include:

1. From the Jesuit practice of rigorous and vigorous mental examination (pros and cons)
2. From the biblical witness, which choice will nurture the fruit of the Spirit in our committee and church? Which is the most loving and unifying option?
3. From the Quaker tradition, place each option near the heart.
4. Is there consolation – as sense of peace and movement toward God?
5. Is there desolation – a sense of despondence and movement away from God?
6. From Henry Blackaby’s “Experiencing God” question, where is God working?

**Voting:** When it comes time to vote it is recommended to provide options beyond a straight yes or no. With the approach below each member holds up 1,2,3, or 4 fingers to express their vote.

1. I agree with the option/motion as stated
2. I agree with some reservation, however, I have expressed my reservations and have been heard, so I can move forward in peace
3. I don’t agree, but I feel comfortable in standing aside and deferring to those who are most affected and who have greater clarity
4. No, I don’t agree and cannot go forward

In rare instances one contrary Search Committee member may try to high-jack the process by voting in opposition to a candidate whom the other members of the team categorically support. Unless a reasonable case can be built for this member’s opposition, the team should move ahead and the member should either support the decision or resign from the Committee. The Search Committee, as a whole, must be cautious not to allow the will of God to be thwarted by an illogical member of the Search Committee even if it is agreed that the goal is unanimity.