**Internal and External Communication**

**Within the Committee** – Ample time should be taken early in the process to build a bond of trust among the members of the Committee. Some committees have solidified relationships of trust through the development of a Pastor Search Committee Members’ Covenant. A weekend retreat would contribute significantly, not just for training only, but also for building trust.

There must be a climate in the Committee that encourages honest and forthright communication among all the members of the Committee. The chairman can do a lot to facilitate dialog among the members simply by inviting them to express their opinions and by stating and restating the value of everyone’s thoughts, ideas and opinions. It is only in a non-threatening atmosphere that a Committee can expect to maximize the Holy Spirit’s leadership.

Taking time at each meeting to share what members are hearing from the congregation, then agreeing on a common response will reduce confusion. Regularly posing the question, “how will we respond if someone asks this….” and then determining a common response is also a best practice for effective communication. Beware of church members who tell you that “everyone is saying……” Follow the recommendations in the handout on how best for committee members to respond to such comments.

**To the Congregation** – Many pastor search committees are inclined to foster the perception that they are acting in secret. This is not healthy and should be intentionally countered. Appreciating the fact that certain information should remain within the Committee, there is, nevertheless, a strong rationale for sharing pertinent information regularly with the congregation. The value of doing this is that it keeps church members engaged and helps them to know that the Search Committee feels a responsibility to the congregation. A periodic report on Sunday morning is a courtesy to the church. A congregational email can also be used. The report may include announcements as simple as:

1. We have met and elected officers
2. We have received a good number of resumes to date
3. We have met for training with:
4. Explain the search process the Committee has adopted
5. So far, we have prayed over all the resumes we have and have come up with a short list of five
6. We are currently checking references of those persons who have made our short list

Another best practice is to establish a PSC landing page on the church’s website and use it to feature the bios of members of the PSC and to allow each member to share how the congregation can pray for them. The page should feature the job description and profile. The page can also be used to make periodic written reports to the congregation and to address frequently asked questions. Also, use this page to provide contact information for interested candidates and for member questions and suggestions. The key is consistency. Update the page regularly. Once a candidate is asked to come in view of a call, this page can be used to introduce the prospective pastor and his family to the church.

The primary thing is to keep the membership informed. The congregation will appreciate timely reports, both orally and in writing, and will be encouraged to know that progress is being made. Each report is also an excellent time to reiterate the importance of congregational prayer for the Search Committee and the process.