**Sermon Ranking**

It will be helpful to the committee members to use some kind of guide for viewing and evaluating the sermons.21 At this point, you are not eliminating the candidates on your short list. Rather, listening to sermons is one aspect in the process of helping the Committee decide who will be its number one candidate. The sermons should be listened to at a time when the entire Committee can be present.

There are two schools of thought about how best to accomplish this task. On the one hand, there are those who believe the ideal arrangement is to schedule sufficient time to review the sermons in one sitting. Assuming you will be reviewing a sermon from each of five candidates, you can figure on about six hours. The rationale for reviewing the sermons in one sitting is that you will be more likely to make better and fairer comparisons. However, the other school of thought is that the sermons should be reviewed in at least two sittings. The rationale for this is that by the time you review two or three sermons, you become mentally tired and, therefore, those reviewed last do not receive a fair hearing. Another possibility is to review two sermons in one sitting and decide which sermon is the stronger of the two. Come back as soon as possible thereafter and review two others and decide which of those two is stronger. Assuming you started with five, you now have one that you have not reviewed and two that you have judged stronger than two others. Take those three, review them and decide how you would rate them in terms of their strength. So, you have reduced the resumes to a short list of people who have been contacted, and you have received, reviewed and made decisions about the sermons. You are ready to move to the next step.

You are still working with the short list. Based on two considerations—the resumes and the sermon evaluations. the members are ready, **independently**, to rank the candidates. Each member should order and rank the short list according to whom he/she judges to be the best fit for the church’s next pastor so that the first choice is number five, the second is number four, and right on down the line. When the committee members come back together to compare their work, the next step will be to come up with a consensus short list that will be used by the committee to move forward in the process. The Chairman of the Committee may go around the table and let the members of the Committee identify their number 1 choice and assign it a number value, say 5 if your goal is to arrive at a short list of five. After each member has identified her/ his number 1 choice, go to number 2 and assign it a value, in this case 4. Continue that process until every resume has been assigned a value. Add the numbers and the resume with the highest number becomes your number 1 candidate; the one who receives the second highest number becomes your number 2 candidate, etc. Once you have identified your number one candidate, it is suggested that the Committee deal with that person exclusively.