

Evaluation Essentials for Congregational Leaders

Setting the Table for Healthy Conversations



Sustaining Pastoral Excellence
in the Christian Reformed Church in N.A.
2850 Kalamazoo Avenue SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49560

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Pastoral
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Evaluating pastors is simple / impossible /

He couldn't administer his way out of a paper bag.

Only pastors can evaluate pastors.

The job description is

- key
- worthless
- a *pretty* thought
- all of the above

It's as easy as riding a bike . . .
. . . across Niagara Falls.

I'M JUST NOT BEING FED!

Many voices, messages, and perspectives

come into play in evaluating pastors and/or church staff. And there may well be no “right” answers. But there are helpful practices born of thoughtful deliberation. This training tool is intended to help church leaders have a fruitful conversation about evaluation in their local setting—and to strengthen the local church by blessing its staff with timely, effective feedback.

The children’s ministry coordinator is so caring.

She just needs thicker skin.

Why are you evaluating the pastor now?

Let’s get Mikey to evaluate the youth minister. He’ll do anything!

How to Use This Training Tool

The format of this training tool has been intentionally designed for you, the reader. Our desire is for you to move from reading to understanding, to doing. The subtitle, “setting the table for healthy conversations,” aims to help you visualize setting the table in a way that fits your specific situation. Thus many of the graphics in this booklet suggest a table-setting theme. The side of each page offers you a place to make notes as you read, and it often includes comments or questions to help bring out a response or thought. Our intent is that this training tool produces rich conversation, similar to what happens in the best gatherings of family and friends. And, as in any such gathering, we both seek and acknowledge the guiding presence of God.

Collaborators

This training tool is a publication of the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE) initiative of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA). The people responsible for putting together this booklet are staff of the Office of Pastor-Church Relations: Rev. Norm Thomsma, Rev. Cecil Van Niejenhuis, and Mrs. Jeanne Kallemeyn. They were assisted by an SPE peer learning group of which Norm and Cecil are members. The other members are Rev. Jim Pot, pastor of Bethel CRC in Waterdown, Ont.; Rev. John Terpstra, pastor of Immanuel CRC in Fort Collins, Colo.; and Rev. Mark Vermaire, pastor of Crossroads CRC in San Marcos, Calif. SPE’s Lilly Implementation Team also gave valuable input.

Introduction

How Should We Evaluate Ministry Staff?

Evaluation is a familiar word to many North Americans. But what it means varies from the business world, to the academy, to the trades, and, certainly, to the church. In fact, many of the evaluation practices in vogue within our culture do not easily translate into the life of congregations. Nor should they. Some sorting out needs to happen. *An uncritical importing of business practices in the process of evaluation can have a significant negative impact.*

Still, congregations have learned from their members' valuable experiences in the business and working world. We live in a world that belongs entirely to God, and our Reformed theological tradition is hospitable to the knowledge and wisdom gained from the many arenas in which Christians interact with the world. However, the church has its own unique character, and evaluating ministry staff has its own unique challenges.

Lyle Schaller, a sage of congregational life in North America, is quoted as saying that "90% of what pastors do is invisible to 90% of the congregation 90% of the time." The dynamics for church staff are often similar. Additionally we need to ask about the origin and nature of the church as opposed to a business. Unlike a business, the church is described as "the body of Christ" and "the family of God." Within a congregation, relationships take precedence over a "bottom line" of strictly financial concerns. Importing business practices *carte blanche* can erode the essential character of the church. Consider the following from Roy Oswald, senior consultant for Alban Institute, in regard to assessing clergy:

Clergy assessment is one area where we at the Alban Institute believe secular technologies do not belong. Congregational members with confidence in their evaluative skills may volunteer to set up processes for the assessment of their pastors. They may then proceed to objectify the roles and functions of clergy on the assumption that

What does the word "evaluation" mean to you?

What unique challenges might the church have in evaluating church staff?

Do you agree with Lyle Schaller? Why or why not?

these factors are quantifiable. But how do you measure the quality of an interaction between a pastor and a parishioner?

Many such assessments oversimplify the pastoral role. I do not believe that a quantifiable assessment can ever get at the essence of that role. . . .

. . . The Alban Institute constantly receives calls and letters requesting forms and procedures for clergy assessment. To date we have resisted putting into print one recommended process. . . .

—*Getting a Fix on Your Ministry*, p. 4

Oswald recognizes the intensely relational element of work within a congregation. “Productivity” is less about work accomplished (though it is important that work is accomplished) and more about the quality of the community in which Christ has first place, where courageous love finds expression, and where the stewardship of gifts is understood as a grateful response to God’s gracious, creative call. With this in mind we suggest that helpful evaluations within congregational life involve a **gracious, candid, ongoing conversation**. (By *candid* here we mean “sincerely open and honest.”) Many variables must be accounted for if this conversation is to happen. What follows are perspectives and guidelines to improve the likelihood of this happening well. Though it’s not the final word on evaluation, we hope it is a helpful word.

Note: Most conversations about evaluation relate to people who are paid for their work within the congregation. This training tool focuses primarily but not exclusively on paid congregational staff.

An Invitation: Adapt Current “Best Practices” to Your Context

The CRCNA is now a diverse family of congregations drawing from a rich variety of cultures and traditions. Each congregation is prompted to develop culturally relevant ways in which the leaders of the church experience a vital “feedback loop” within their context. This may involve wise counsel from senior leaders of the church, intentional conversations with select individuals and groups, or other creative efforts to ensure that leaders gain a sense of the effectiveness of their work and of the impact they are having on the people they serve. In short, in every context there is significant value in finding ways to have **gracious, candid, ongoing conversations**.

We think Oswald’s statement has some bearing on the evaluation of church staff as well. What do you think?

What would a **gracious, candid, ongoing conversation** look like to you?

What are some “best practices” you can adapt to your context?

Comparing Terms: *Evaluation* and *Assessment*

In some circles the terms *evaluation* and *assessment* are seen as identifying a similar or identical function. (The preceding quote from the Alban Institute is an example.) In this training tool *evaluation* and *assessment* are seen as quite different. Evaluation has to do with a person's performance, attitude, productivity, relationships, and other dimensions of how that person is doing in a particular role.

Assessment has more to do with a person's make-up, capacity, temperament, and wiring. It is directed more toward determining a person's *fit* and capacity for a given role rather than a person's performance at a certain time and place. Generally assessment has more to do with determining a vocational call and understanding the level of fit an individual will have or does have in a given role.

Evaluation and assessment are related. For example, a person whose performance in a role is considered exemplary would likely be assessed as a good fit for that role. On the other hand, if a person's evaluation repeatedly indicates deficits, an assessment may be in order to determine the person's fit for that role.



Does this comparison of evaluation and assessment sound right to you? Explain.

Chapter 1

The Church And Evaluation Of Paid Personnel

A. The Biblical Basis

The Gifts of God for the People of God

Evaluations find their place within the context of our deepest and richest spiritual desire: to honor and bless the God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! We are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139:14)—gifted by God for service! (See 1 Cor. 12.) As Paul says in Romans 12:5, “each member belongs to all the others.” And then in Romans 12:7-8 Paul says that “if your gift is to lead, do it diligently.” Evaluation is about encouraging and ensuring that leadership gifts are being exercised faithfully and fruitfully. Because we belong to each other, we have reason and responsibility to hold each other accountable! And because we belong to our faithful God, we are accountable together, to our Lord!

The Gifts of God for the Mission of God

Accountability is an essential aspect of knowing ourselves to be alive by the grace and power of the living God. All that we are and all that we have belong to our Lord. And, as Jesus made clear when he told the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30), God gives talents and expects that we will use them faithfully. There is both a promise of fruitfulness and the certainty of accountability. This is not intended to inject our lives with fear, but—as the writer of Ecclesiastes makes clear—accountability is intended to infuse all of our activities with meaning! (See Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.)

Evaluations are part and parcel of the longing shared by every believer and every believing community: to use the resources God gives as wisely and as fully as possible in the work of his coming kingdom. The stories of our lives and our communities find their meaning and purpose within the contours of the great story of

Leadership and service in the church are great responsibilities. How can we know when someone is leading and serving well?

How can evaluations help us serve faithfully?



Scripture—that story in which God makes his appeal to the world through us. So the ongoing question is “How are we doing?”

Shaped as a Covenant Enterprise

There’s an Old Testament story that gives us a helpful point of reference when we consider the relationship between pastors, staff, and the church. Do you remember Boaz? The story tells us that when Boaz arrived in his fields, he greeted the harvesters by saying, “The LORD be with you!” And they called back, “The LORD bless you!” (Ruth 2:4). Here is a model relationship that is so much more than merely that of an employer and employees. It’s a relationship that speaks of more than mere contract—it speaks of covenant.

Covenants are relationships built on promises and enriched by trust. They are relationships tilted toward the flourishing of the other and anchored in mutual respect and unconditional love. Contracts are business relationships in which services are purchased and renewal is conditional upon customer satisfaction. Contracts do not have much room for grace. Covenants do.

A healthy concept of employer-employee relationships in the church recognizes legitimate contractual elements and intentionally sets them within the framework of a covenantal relationship. Undertaking an evaluation as simply a matter of meeting measurable goals and performance standards reduces the council to the role of employer and the role of ordained and un-ordained personnel to that of employee. But in the church the relationship is much more than that—it is also and more deeply a relationship of brothers and sisters in Christ, God’s family, and partners in the gospel—all of whom are *called* to use their gifts in the service of God.

Leadership in a Covenant Community

This covenantal framework is exemplified in a previous training tool, *Effective Leadership in the Church*. That tool emphasizes that in the faith community effective leadership involves qualities in relationship rather than traits of an individual. These qualities are *character, conviction, competence, and confluence*—all of which, when present in the leader, inspire reciprocal qualities in those who follow. Note the following paragraph from *Effective Leadership in the Church* (p. 20):

In what ways are relationships and responsibilities in your church shaped by a sense of covenant?

What are some examples of contractual relationships in your church? Are they framed within a sense of covenant? Explain.

What qualities do you think make for effective leadership?

Four factors (the four “Cs”) seem ever-present in situations of effective leadership:

- **Character** in the leader (which generates trust in the followers).
- **Conviction** in the leader (which helps the congregation discern its **purpose and vision**).
- **Competencies** in the leader (which help a congregation function as a **healthy system**—i.e., deal with the normal anxieties and conflicts of communal life in healthy and productive ways).
- **Confluence** of leader, congregation, time, place, ministry, opportunity, and resources—all as **gifts of God’s Spirit** enabling a leader and congregation to work joyfully together in realizing God’s purposes.

(Note: We encourage you to read *Effective Leadership in the Church* as you consider the evaluation of your pastor or church staff. Free copies are available from Faith Alive Christian Resources 800-333-8300.)

Effective evaluation practices honor the relational dynamic of leadership. At a minimum, wise evaluation practices require buy-in from those being evaluated and those administering the process. The most helpful evaluations are those welcomed, or even initiated, by the persons being evaluated.

B. The Wisdom of the Years

What Does the Church Order Say?

Regular evaluation is a normal and healthy way of experiencing community within the church of Jesus. This is true for pastors, for elders and deacons, and also for councils. *The willingness to engage, consider, and submit to the judgments of others is a part of the humility with which leaders are clothed.*

Pastors are accountable to their calling church in matters of doctrine, life, and duty (Church Order, Art. 13¹). In instances of employment outside a parish setting (for example, chaplaincy), this accountability may need to be shared in some fashion. Note also that pastors are accountable to the council (elders and deacons together) and not only to the body of elders. If a church

¹ The Church Order is specific to the CRCNA. See bibliography for more information.

Are there other factors you might add here? Explain.

How does this discussion mesh with the idea of a *gracious, candid, ongoing conversation*?

What practices of accountability are you familiar with in your church?

establishes a personnel committee (as described in Appendix A, p. 41), it is important that the council retain its “original authority” for the leadership of the church and the supervision of the ordained staff.

Give an example of how mutual censure has benefited your council and church.

Elders and deacons are to hold each other accountable by way of a traditional practice called “mutual censure” (Art. 36). This is intended to be a rich experience of candid conversation and evaluation in which elders and deacons together ask themselves, “How are we doing? What are we doing that we should continue doing? What are we not doing that we might consider doing? What are we doing that we should decrease, or stop?” Note that this kind of healthy conversation surrounding matters of accountability is prescribed a minimum of four times per year. In the church of Jesus, accountability is always in season.

In what ways have church visitors helped your congregation stay healthy?

Not only are pastors, elders, and deacons to regularly hold each other accountable—the Church Order also prescribes a means for church councils to be held accountable. Article 42 describes the practice of church visitation by representatives of classis. Visitors are pastors and/or elders who are to be both competent and experienced. Their role is to encourage, to advise, to assist and, if necessary, to admonish. Church visitors can offer the helpful vantage point of outside eyes and ears, and they can do so at early stages of concern or conflict. Note that these visits are prescribed once every year. In the church of Jesus, accountability is a regular spiritual discipline that fosters the health of the body.

Holding each other accountable by way of encouragement and admonition is a practice that can be traced all the way back to the apostle Paul as he suggested to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing” (Acts 15:36). Paul later “went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches” (15:41). And of course the apostles wrote letters to the churches and to individuals when face-to-face visits were not possible.



C. Recognizing the Times

Leading in Today's World Is Difficult

All documents are written within a specific time and space. This training tool is no exception. At this time in North America, sociologists are noting a pervasively toxic attitude toward leadership. Respect for the offices of President and Prime Minister has diminished. Professional sports coaches are tenured only as long as they are winning—and winning at a level that meets the expectations of team owners and fans. Superstars are seen as flawed even when a little compromising information has been published. In a similar way, pastors can shift from hero to scapegoat in a matter of months. It is not easy to be a leader in today's world.

Within this context, many people avoid seeking leadership roles. The reluctance of some to enter professional ministry, serve as an elder or deacon, or lead a ministry in the local church can be observed in many circles.

The World Is Becoming Smaller

Another contemporary phenomenon is the merging of global and local. The Internet and real-time communication have blurred the boundaries between what is happening down the street and what is happening across the ocean. A technician in India can tell us how to fix our modem in Prince Edward Island. A technician in Colorado can pilot a drone in Afghanistan. Though our children or other loved ones may live across town or across the globe, we can often communicate with them instantaneously.

So the standard of comparison has changed. Thirty years ago, a pastor may have been the most respected preacher in town. Today, the pastor gets a C+ compared to the stars on the flat screen or on the video feed from the mega-church two hundred miles away.

Recent Insights on the Church's Family Dynamics

In recent years, students of congregational life have been recognizing the value of noting similarities between congregations and families. This insight fits well with the biblical "family of God" metaphor commonly used in the church. Sometimes referred to as *Family Systems Theory*, this perspective of study emphasizes the emotional connections among all members of the church family and the way each member's behavior influences

Is avoidance of leadership an issue in your church? What reasons would you give for this situation?

How have recent cultural changes affected your church's ability to do ministry? Cite positive examples as well as negative ones.

What similarities have you observed between congregations and families?

and is influenced by the behavior of others. From this perspective effective leaders of a congregation are

- able to remain less anxious (more calm) than others in the group.
- able to stay connected to people even when people are upset.
- able to stick with the vision/mission of the church even when the emotional pressure of the group might tempt them to abandon the church's strategic goals.

There is much that resonates with biblical themes and with the Reformed faith in family systems theory, and many seminaries are introducing it as a way to think about the church and people's behavior within the church. This theory can be helpful in considering the evaluation process. Here are some ways it can be useful:

- It can help evaluation teams recognize that the pastor is not the only person responsible for the growth and effectiveness of the congregation. In evaluations that see the pastor as the "identified patient," most of the energy is focused on fixing the patient and little energy is focused on the congregation's responsibility for its actions or lack thereof.
- It can help the leaders of the church recognize that a key aspect of leadership is to tolerate the personal relational pain that comes from being a leader. Leadership will often involve change, and resistance to change is inevitable.
- It can help to provide ways to "graciously marginalize" some of the louder voices in the congregation, voices that may arise not from a deepening walk with God but from heightened anxiety and resistance to change.

When evaluated with sensitivity to family systems theory, pastors and church staff will be encouraged to

- lead from a principled position based on personal convictions and the agreed-upon direction forward.
- develop connections with the most thoughtful mature members of the congregation who can help read what is happening and help to maintain the direction seen as appropriate for the future.

What benefits do you think this theory can bring to the table in the evaluation process?



- stay connected to “squeaky wheels” (those who may often appear to be upset with how things are going) without caving in to their reactivity or attempts to intimidate.
- recognize the complexity of a congregation’s situation and the many factors that contribute to its health and life. *For example*, a congregation that is losing members may be tempted to hold the lead pastor responsible even if the causes of the membership loss, such as the departure of major industry from the town or city, are unrelated to the pastor’s performance.
- manage their own responses through self-care that involves attending to their personal, spiritual, relational, and physical well-being.

(*Note:* In most congregations there will be people who sometimes exhibit immature behavior. In fact, most of us can probably say this is also true of us. But there is value in considering how that behavior might appear from a family systems perspective. You may want to read Appendix B, p. 46, which describes this behavior.)

Possible Misapplications

There are also ways in which family systems theory can be *misapplied*. The following are some dynamics that can be misused to leverage this perspective for personal advantage.

- pastors and staff persons can try to evade personal responsibility by claiming “identified patient” status.
- as a way to stay calm, pastors or staff persons can tend to distance themselves from others in the congregation and follow their own interpersonal style while justifying this behavior as responding thoughtfully to the system.
- pastors, church staff, and other leaders can apply family systems theory to the congregation without owning the reality that this theory begins with the leader’s personal work—especially as related to one’s own family of origin.
- pastors, church staff, and other leaders can attempt to read everything through a family systems perspective and fail to realize the accumulated wisdom that comes from many other valid approaches.

Are there other examples you’d like to add here?

Have you seen misapplications like these, or perhaps others, in your church? Explain.

Chapter 2

Key Questions

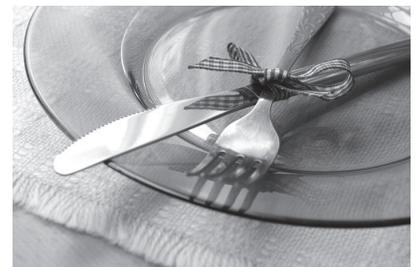
A. The “Why?” of Evaluation

Many Legitimate Reasons

There are many good reasons to provide careful, thoughtful evaluations of congregational personnel. We mention a few to illustrate:

- Evaluations can become a way to encourage a person’s growth and maturation by enhancing that person’s strengths and shoring up weak areas that cannot be delegated to others.
- Congregations demonstrating health, vitality, and growth are generally congregations who pay attention to their staff and provide regular evaluations as a way of encouraging and refining their work.
- Regular evaluations can also provide an opportunity to celebrate how God has used individuals to bless his church. Celebrating ministry that has been done well is an encouragement not only to the pastor or staff person but also to the congregation, whose partnership is also being affirmed.
- Evaluations become a place where the *gracious, candid, ongoing conversation* provides a measure of accountability. As mentioned in the introduction, much of a pastor’s work, and also that of some staff, is not seen by many. For members of the congregation and its leaders to know that ministry is being observed and evaluated increases trust and encourages ownership of the church’s vision and goals.
- Finally, there are strategic reasons to make evaluation a regular part of the congregation’s ministry. A congregation’s pastor and staff represent a large investment of relationship, trust, and financial commitment. Evaluations provide a way for the congregation to say that God has called them

List the reasons why your church has done or aims to do evaluations.





Have any “hidden agendas” affected your church’s ministry? Have they affected an evaluation process? Explain.

Can you cite any examples of poor timing for an evaluation?

into being for purposes that are greater than merely their own existence. The pastor and staff are servant leaders who are being paid to help the congregation fulfill those purposes. Evaluations of pastor and staff become one way of considering how the work of the congregation, pastor, and staff together is a faithful and fruitful response to God’s call.

Some Illegitimate Reasons

Christian congregations are not always arenas in which *gracious, candid, ongoing conversations* easily happen. This can complicate the good practice of evaluating pastors and church staff. In some congregations, there are *unwritten rules* that suggest it is not possible to be both gracious and candid. *Gracious* can mean “glossing over” problems. And *candid* can mean “not sugar coating, but telling it like it is” (verbal blunt force). However, more often these dynamics are characterized by more subtle dynamics of “hidden agendas.”

Hidden agendas include desires and intentions hidden behind a person’s or a group’s stated intentions. Some examples of hidden agendas in doing an evaluation:

- An evaluation can be used to crystallize opposition to a pastor or staff person with the intention of persuading or forcing a person to leave. This makes the “who?” of evaluation crucial.
- An evaluation can be used to justify an inadequate salary or an increased salary.
- An evaluation can be used to load an inordinate amount of responsibility on a pastor or staff person for the ineffective ministries of the church. (See “Recent Insights on the Church’s Family Dynamics”, p. 17)

B. The “When?” of Evaluation

When an evaluation is performed, timing can make the difference between a helpful evaluation and an unhelpful one. Timing can also determine the type of evaluation that is conducted.

- **How long has the pastor/staff person been in this position?**

The process and schedule for evaluations is articulated as a person begins in a position. One wise option is to conduct frequent and brief but strategic evaluations within the first year. Roy Oswald’s three questions (following) are particularly helpful.

A new staff person or pastor could introduce a “light” process of evaluation to see what kinds of responses are given. These questions by Roy Oswald present one good option:

- *What am I doing that you would like me to do more of?*
- *What am I doing that you would like me to do less of?*
- *What am I not doing that you would like me to start doing?*

- **How long has this person been doing this type of work?**

The evaluation of a twenty-year veteran will look quite different from the evaluation of a person in the first five years of professional ministry. *Gracious, candid, ongoing conversations* are still needed after many years, but their content will shift as the pastor or staff person will have typically mastered many of the basics of ministry and yet may now want to have a deeper or more focused conversation. (Note the example in the following box.)

An Experienced Pastor’s Request for Feedback

The Alban Institute has produced a document called *Getting a Fix on Your Ministry*. This process guided an experienced Christian Reformed pastor as he asked for an in-depth evaluation of his ministry. He writes,

“Seven years into my ministry, I wondered what was happening. The fire and passion for ministry were not what they had been. Was it a classic case of “burnout”? Or was it something else? I decided to face the challenge and “get fixed.” Five things went into my Ministry Renewal Bucket List:

- Read about leadership burnout and renewal.
- Request a performance appraisal from the elders using Alban’s *Getting a Fix on Your Ministry*.
- Join a Peer Learning Group as part of the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence initiative.
- Attend an Alban Institute conference, *Effective Pastoring of the Medium-Sized Church*.
- Request a 20-week sabbatical.

“Reading, sabbaticals, conferences, and support groups are familiar to many. But the performance appraisal was a new but important wrinkle. What was unique about the pastor performance process was that it was pastor-led. I set up and led the process. I identified two areas in which I felt particularly vulnerable: leadership and preaching. I asked for input from the church family. With the assistance of a five-person team, we invited a random group of members to a meeting. I asked them to critique my preaching and leadership skills. The ground rules were simple: *If I judge your comments are more hurtful than helpful, I will ask you to reframe them or leave—or I will reserve the right to leave the room myself.*

“After explaining that I was sincere in asking for input, they offered numerous suggestions for ways I could more effectively lead our ministries and more effectively communicate in preaching. The team then assisted me in processing what we heard, and together we developed an action plan, a plan that has guided me and, I believe, has blessed the church.

“This process, in concert with the other strategies identified, has been an important element in renewing my sense of call and the passion and sense of connectedness I bring to my ministry.”

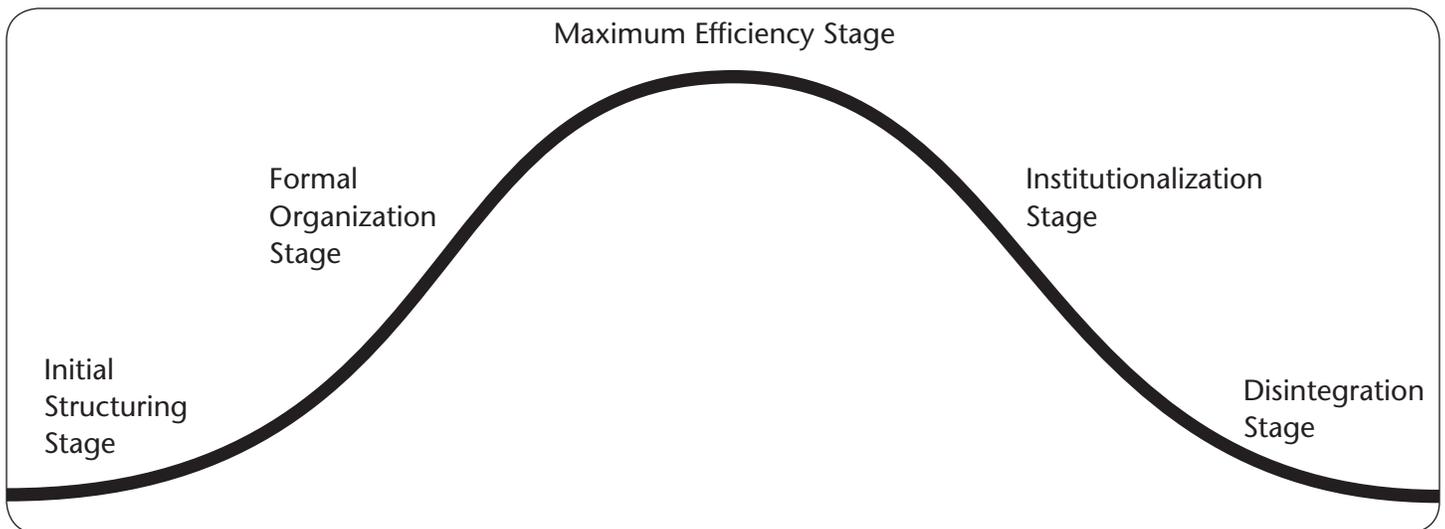
Jot down your own observations about where your church may be in the life cycle chart below.

- **How do the age and the life cycle of the congregation come into play?**

We believe “a holy catholic church,” a people called into community and destined for eternity through the amazing grace of God. Believing this truth helps us face the reality that, like our physical lives in this world, specific congregations often have beginnings, periods of growth, times of decline, and even endings.

Students of congregational life note patterns of congregational history. These are descriptive (not prescriptive) seasons of the life of many congregations. Having some sense of where your congregation might fit on the life-cycle bell curve (see below) is worth considering—along with how this understanding may affect the process of evaluation.

Stages In The Life Cycle Of Congregations



The following are some possible *temptations* and *opportunities* that may relate to each stage:

Temptation: In the *initial structuring stage* there may not be time for evaluations. There is so much to do—so much that is more urgent and necessary.

Opportunity: This is a great time to plant within the DNA of the congregation a pattern of helpful evaluation.

Temptation: In the *formal organization stage* the organization is gaining strength. A temptation may be to base the evaluation pattern too much on the character and style of the lead pastor.

Opportunity: This is a great time to strengthen evaluation processes and ensure they are integrated with the mission and vision of the congregation.

Temptation: In the *maximum efficiency stage* the temptation is to assign evaluation to a standing committee and allow it to become calcified and resistant to innovation.

Opportunity: This may be a fitting time to revisit the founding vision, refresh the vision, and adjust the staffing structure and assignments to the refreshed vision.

Temptation: In the *institutionalization stage*, while doing evaluations as part of the routine practices of the church, the temptation is to ignore the need to root evaluations in the large biblical/ ecclesiastical vision or the particular needs of the congregation. This is not unlike the temptation in the previous stage.

Opportunity: The opportunity at this stage is to face this season of congregational life courageously and to ask if this congregation needs to be “recalled” communally to a new mission for a new time.

Temptation: In the *disintegration stage* the temptation may be to neglect important congregational functions like evaluation for lack of energy or sense of purpose.

Opportunity: The opportunity at this time may be to reflect together on your congregation’s life and ask what is needed to finish that life together well. This may include consideration of the legacy you may leave. The evaluation process could then focus on the competencies and priorities of the pastor and staff and how they fit into this challenging but hopeful reality in the life span of this church.

- **How often should evaluations be conducted?**

There are a number of factors to consider when asking how often to conduct evaluations. And no one answer will fit all situations. These guidelines may provide a benchmark from which to address the question.

A pastor new to a church and to pastoral ministry should receive significant feedback within the first year of ministry. Roy Oswald’s three questions (see box, p. 23) can help to get that conversation going. And, generally, staff persons should receive some type of evaluation annually.

Which, if any, of the temptations and/or opportunities here have you observed in your church? Can you list others? If so, what are they?

How often are evaluations conducted for your pastor(s)?
For other staff?

In your church, how could a pastor's evaluation include a focus on the church's strategic vision? What would such an evaluation look like?

Has your church had to work through situations like these? Were the results helpful? Explain.



But there are some creative variations to consider. For example, a seasoned pastor long in his or her church may not need an annual evaluation. But when an evaluation is conducted, it may help to have that evaluation be more focused or synchronized with the strategic vision of the church. For example, there may be value in having the evaluation of a lead pastor focus on describing the relationships that are key to the pastor's ministry. (See Appendix F, p. 55 for an example of this type of evaluation.) Or there may be value in creating an evaluation that links the efforts of the pastor with his or her role in the congregation's achieving agreed-upon strategic objectives.

- **Other factors to consider**

- An evaluation that is conducted while a staff person or pastor is going through a personal or family crisis is not likely to yield a fair or helpful outcome. At a time like that, the evaluation process may need to be replaced with a gracious, candid conversation that addresses some of the challenges the pastor is facing and how the leaders can be helpful.
- Thoughts about "doing an evaluation" arise when there is tension relative to the person whose evaluation is suggested. The tension may be related to this person's work, or it may arise out of other aspects of the church's life. When an evaluation is attempted at such a time, the results will usually be negative and unhelpful. (See the section on family systems theory, p. 17)
- Special situation: Evaluations that pertain to a pastor's continuation in the position need to be handled far differently than routine evaluations. There may be legitimate questions posed either by the pastor or by members of council about the wisdom of the pastor remaining at this church for the foreseeable future. When this is true, special provisions for evaluation need to be made. Assistance for this process can be obtained through the Office of Pastor-Church Relations.

C. The “Where?” of Evaluation

Every evaluation happens within a context—at a specific place and time. The uncritical importing of practices from other congregations or other settings can fail to account for important differences of time and place in which evaluations are undertaken.

What’s Typical in the Surrounding Community?

Key leaders of a congregation are often informed about evaluation practices from their work environment. Small business owners, family business owners, corporate managers, academics, hourly and salaried workers, and homemakers may have different perspectives on evaluation. All of these arenas can *inform* a congregational process, but none of these are well placed to *dictate* a congregational process.

Noting the Congregational Culture

Church as Family Business

Some congregations are places where the gathered people share a lot of history—not just as a church but also as an established community and as extended biological family. Other congregations are places where everyone is a transplant and the church has become for many their “spiritual family.” Still other congregations recognize that on some levels there are “insiders” who share history or biological family connections and “outsiders” who have not been part of the history and are not related to many of the congregants. In these situations, it will make a difference if the pastor or staff person is seen primarily as an “insider” or “outsider.”

When the congregation has many *extended family relationships* or much shared history, *greater attention should be given* to the wisdom and formal protocols informing the evaluation process. (This would also be the case for hiring and termination.) In all situations, care must be given to minimize the number of dual relationships that could result in conflicts of interest. For example, it is complicated for a brother to evaluate a sister-in-law or for a charter-member deacon to evaluate a charter-member ministries coordinator. The summary note here is that evaluation processes must be *sensitive to the culture of the congregation*, or they will prove to be either ineffective or disruptive for the congregation’s life.

Have any evaluation practices in your church been imported? If so, how were they used? And how did that work?

Does your church include large extended families? If so, how does that affect the church’s dynamics? List possible pros and cons.



A Fable

Taking a more reflective approach to evaluations of pastors or staff can help a congregation's leadership group gain greater clarity in discerning the unique nature of congregations in general and your congregation in particular. This fable is intended to help begin a conversation that will enhance your evaluation process in your congregation.

For Discussion: Prior to beginning the evaluation process, read the fable. In small groups consider the questions that follow the fable.

Jim and Marge Smith converted a hunting lodge into a bed and breakfast, enjoying great success in their start-up years. The "Gazelle & Egg" became a popular getaway for many middle-aged and senior couples. Their children—Tracy, Stacy, and Casey—began helping with the project. Expansion happened, and the business grew.

So did the family. Stacy married Doug, an MBA accountant; Casey married Susan, a wedding coordinator; and Tracy married Cono, a rising singer-entertainer. As the business grew, Doug began doing the books half-time, and Cono started impromptu sing-alongs around the piano in the lodge's lobby twice a week. The customer base grew immensely. Often the guests would gather for a time of fun, song, and frivolity. Increasingly Cono would provide background music for weddings that Susan coordinated to be held at the lodge. As the business expanded, Jim and Marge hired Gus, a big-city master chef whose entrees were characterized by colorful combos and unmatched flavor.

Eventually Marge and Doug, the "organized" ones of the family, determined that employee evaluations should take place to maximize profitability, so they designed a state-of-the-art process. (Also, in the interest of fairness, Cono was put on the payroll on a part-time basis.) A year later, the tranquil bed and breakfast business became the center of a family feud. Cono left, Doug and Marge began tweaking the evaluation process, and guests seemed to be finding other venues for their getaway weekends. Susan continued to coordinate weddings, but fewer of them took place at the Gazelle & Egg. Gus, fearing the business might not support him, began checking online for another job.

For Consideration/Discussion

- How do family businesses create special challenges for evaluation? How is your congregation like a family business? What features of a family business are apparent in your congregation?
- In your church, how do you define productivity? How is productivity informed by "value to the organization"? How are relationships part of the productivity question?
- In your congregation, to what degree are the people in relationships—as family, as in-laws, and as professional service providers?
- What advice would you give to Jim and Marge about personnel evaluation? How might that advice apply to your church?

Recognizing Dominant Biblical Metaphors

In the book *Images of the Church in the New Testament*, Paul Minear identifies over 100 images or metaphors for the church. Some are major, common metaphors like “family of God,” “army of God,” and “shepherd and sheep.” Others are less obvious. Congregations tend to form around one or two of these metaphors, and that can affect the evaluation process. For example, congregations in which the “shepherd and sheep” metaphor is dominant may have a difficult time with evaluating pastors. How do sheep evaluate their shepherds? And, if there are issues in the flock, isn’t it the shepherd’s responsibility to fix them?

Interestingly enough, initiating an evaluation of pastor or staff can trigger significant reflection about the congregation itself. In a “shepherd and sheep” congregation, the church may need to consider other biblical metaphors with which they identify, so that the evaluation process is informed by a larger movement of congregational reflection and conversation.

What metaphor would most of your congregation use to describe your church?

What other metaphors might you want to consider?

Thinking about your own congregation and its culture

Congregations who perceive themselves as, for example, children or sheep may have a difficult time with the notion of evaluating their spiritual parent or shepherd. If a child is to honor a parent, and a sheep is to obey the voice of a shepherd, then the task of evaluation can be awkward and produce high anxiety.

If the congregation’s identity is shaped more by metaphors like “body of believers” or “coworkers and partners in the gospel,” evaluation and ongoing conversations relating to job descriptions will more likely be fruitful.

And how do council members in these settings perceive themselves with respect to pastors and staff? Do they align themselves with the congregation or with those paid leaders with whom they are engaged?

It may be helpful to have a few discerning members consider the following:

- Appoint a task force to research how evaluations are effectively accomplished in contexts that are relatively similar to your context.
- Spend some time discussing these questions: How can a **gracious, candid, ongoing conversation** happen within our context? Do we struggle more with the gracious part or the candid part of the conversation?
- Precede evaluations with broad congregational participation in a discussion about biblical metaphors that inform the relationships of the congregation, staff, and pastors. Paul’s emphasis on “partnership” could be one of these metaphors.

To what extent do you think the size of your congregation may affect pastor and staff evaluations?

In the experience of your church, what are its memories of evaluation processes—whether positive or negative?

Size of the Congregation

Pastors and professional staff can suffer from what in the business world is called “CEO disease”—the difficulty of obtaining accurate and objective feedback. Evaluations that fail to provide for gathering relevant and objective data will be flawed and ineffective. The larger the congregation, the more likely this difficulty is to occur. The pastor of a church averaging 125 people in worship will more likely have a personal relationship with each parishioner than the pastor of a church averaging 750 in worship. This probability needs to be accounted for in the evaluation process, especially if many people in the congregation remember when it did number 125 and each of them had a closer connection with the pastor than they do today.

The same is true of church staff. A children’s ministry coordinator in a church of 250 will be known by a higher percentage of the congregation than in a church of 800. The processes and instruments used in evaluation may need to adapt to these size considerations.

One common factor is that even though the congregation does not need to be informed of the evaluation’s content, it is wise to make sure the congregation is confident that *gracious, candid, ongoing conversations* are happening with the pastor and each of the staff.

Other factors of culture may also need to be considered. For example, an urban congregation that includes many mid-level managers of large corporations will be accustomed to regular, formal evaluations, while a rural congregation in an agricultural environment may be more comfortable with a less formal evaluation process. In either case, some degree of intentionality and planning is merited.

Noting the Congregation’s History

- Congregations have memories that continue to inform current practices and experiences. These memories need to be recognized, especially with regard to pastors/staff and any previous experiences with evaluation.
- A congregation with no history of evaluating a pastor or staff person will need a thoughtful process of introduction to move into the practice of evaluation.
- An evaluation process that worked well with a former staff person may not work as well with a new one. Changes in personnel and relationships make a difference.

- Proponents of evaluation could listen to stories of the congregation to discern what history may affect evaluation processes.

Where to Have Evaluation Conversations

The impact of the place setting for the evaluation conversation should be acknowledged. Whether the conversation takes place in the council room or in a fireside lounge, in someone’s home or office, or even in a public setting such as a restaurant—each of these locations contributes to the atmosphere of the conversation and can contribute to the balance of power and level of openness. It is important that the person being evaluated choose the place.

D. The “Who?” of Evaluation

Who Should Receive an Evaluation?

The tendency in many churches is to provide evaluations for paid staff. Most of this training tool anticipates that reality. However, some recognition of the crucial role of non-paid leaders in the church is also appropriate. For example, there is an increasing number of “baby boomers” spending significant time and energy in the ministry of the church. They may be functioning as “staff” or as highly active office-bearers. And they may not be aware of their level of influence in the congregation. Their presence needs to be accounted for.

The extent of evaluating unpaid leaders will likely need to be customized for every situation. *But if the influence of these individuals is overlooked, it is inevitable that the leadership of the church will focus too much on the pastor and/or paid staff.* Overlooking this factor will intensify the potential for “hero” or “scapegoat” status among paid personnel and distort the evaluation process. As modeled by mutual censure (see Church Order, Art. 36), all key leaders need to be included in the *gracious, candid, ongoing conversation.*

Who Should Lead the Evaluation Process?

It is important to differentiate between leading the evaluation and initiating the evaluation. Wise-practice evaluations are often initiated by the person being evaluated and led by persons who are appropriately gifted. The important dynamic is that helpful evaluations are not primarily done **for** others, and certainly not **to** others, but mostly **with** others. So who should lead the evaluation process?

What other aspects of your church’s history might affect the way it conducts evaluations?

List the positions in your church that you think should be regularly evaluated, and why.

Who leads the process in your church setting? Do you think this works well? Explain.

People have different gifts. Wise, trusted and gifted people need to be the primary people involved in evaluation processes. These people need to be both gracious and candid.

Some personnel may be evaluated by a lead pastor or another staff person. The following observations can be noted:

- Senior pastors who are gifted at some aspects of ministry may not be gifted at or trained for supervision or evaluation of staff. In the context of growing a church and adding staff, struggles can arise if a “solo pastor” is asked to supervise and evaluate other paid personnel.
- The most difficulty occurs when such evaluations take place in a vacuum—without objective input from others and without the oversight of a personnel or executive committee.
- Some congregations hire full- or part-time administrators whose tasks include the development and oversight of helpful evaluation processes.

When councils are inattentive to who is selected to lead the evaluation process, the following can easily happen:

- Persons selected do not have the gifts or wisdom for the task. They are willing but not able.
- Persons are handed an “agenda” by someone else in the congregation, and they advance that agenda in the context of evaluation.
- Persons are not supportive of the person or position being evaluated, and they use the evaluation process to undermine rather than encourage.
- Highly goal-oriented individuals are selected. They “get the job done,” but there is little relational traction or awareness of the complexity of the staff person’s work or the context of the congregation.
- The council unloads too much of their role and responsibility for the life, doctrine, and ministry of the ordained staff.

Observations from your perspective:



Case Study: Change Can Bring Challenges

Over a period of some years, the staff at Covenant Church had grown to include the equivalent of three full-time pastors and three part-time administrative assistants. The pastors were directly accountable to the church council, and those relationships seemed to work well. The matter of holding the part-time administrative staff accountable was proving more challenging.

Each of the part-time staff had distinct responsibilities in worship, administration, and finance, but lines of accountability were unclear. A church administrator was hired, and part of his job was to supervise the office staff.

Existing staff resented and resisted this new arrangement. At the same time, the council appointed new members to the personnel committee. Two individuals volunteered to serve, and the council was happy to have them serve. But their prior relationships to the original office staff led to a skewed evaluation of the new administrator and, within a short time, his position was eliminated.

Outside Consultants Can Be Helpful

There are times when it may be wise to use an outside consultant for the evaluation process. Input can still be solicited from within the church, but the consultant can guide the process, compilation, and feedback.

Some situations in which an outside consultant may be helpful are

- with pastors of large churches where the competencies required to lead a large church can best be gauged by someone familiar with large churches and able to discern objectively what the necessary competencies might be.
- when there is significant or chronic conflict in a congregation and objectivity is difficult to find.
- when there are so many dual relationships that finding unbiased people to do the evaluation is nearly impossible. This is illustrated in the Fable (p. 28) in which employees are also siblings, in-laws, and parents.
- when a more comprehensive evaluation is desired.

What kinds of outside expertise has your church used before? Were the efforts worthwhile? How might using a consultant for evaluations be similar or different?

Are there other reasons a consultant might be helpful in your church? Explain.

What do you think an evaluation should focus on? Why?

Do you agree with the observations here? Disagree? Explain.

Whose Input Is Sought for Evaluation?

This is a strategic question. Input should generally be limited to people who have some working relationship with the person being evaluated. A helpful practice can be to have half of the persons providing input selected by the staff person and half selected by the supervising body. The person being evaluated should also provide input (a self-evaluation), preferably in a way that is complementary to the method others are using for the evaluation. Or a separate self-evaluation could be done (see Appendix C, p. 47).

Some examples of persons whose input could be sought:

- Current council members
- Former council members
- Fellow staff members
- Laypersons who work closely with the person being evaluated
- Some of each
- 360-degree review: includes those the person supervises, those the person works with, and those who supervise the person

E. The “What?” of Evaluation

One important aspect of effective evaluation is *focus*. What behaviors, competencies, and outcomes should an evaluation focus on? This section describes five various approaches:

(1) Broad-based Survey

Many evaluation instruments in use today include a broad-based survey of competencies. They tend to list the *ten to fifteen key competencies* for a given position, such as pastor, and then score the person in each of the competencies. Although this approach may have occasional value, many pastors have found that these surveys, when repeated year after year, *tend to be demotivating*. The response to pastors sounds something like this: “On these you do pretty well, but you could do better; on these you do OK, but you could do better. In these other areas you aren’t good at all, and you’d better do better!” Broad-based surveys have occasional value when they help develop a *gracious, candid, ongoing conversation* (see Appendix D, p. 48).

(2) Crucial Areas of Ministry

A legitimate question pertains to whether evaluations should focus on the strong areas of a person or the weak areas. With Gallup's development of a *strengths-based* understanding of competencies, there is a refreshingly helpful recognition that most workers will accomplish more by excelling in and building on their strengths than in shoring up their deficiencies. And church workers, whether pastors or church staff, are generally selected because of their evident strengths.

However, there also must be room for recognizing and discussing areas of deficiency, especially when those areas show potential of sabotaging the good work this worker is otherwise doing.

Considering a combination of strengths and weaknesses may be one helpful approach. For example, an evaluation could focus on two to four aspects of the person's work and provide an opportunity to celebrate them and consider how they could be utilized even more.

The evaluation could also focus on one or two aspects of the person's work that cannot be delegated and that, if left unaddressed, could result in diminishing the person's overall effectiveness. For example, a staff person could be loved and appreciated by many in the church, but the lack of timeliness in completing necessary work could create significant frustration with other staff and the lay leaders with whom the person works. The timeliness of work completion must then be noted and addressed (see Appendix E, p. 51).

(3) Relationship-based

The church is part of God's family, and family is about relationships. A highly productive worker who remains relationally disconnected or unaware will not thrive in a local church. Focusing on key relationships and how the worker could address them may be a strategic and valuable focus for one of that person's evaluations (see Appendix F p. 55).

How would you balance evaluating strengths and weaknesses in your pastor or staff?



Which of the five approaches might be most helpful in your situation?

(4) Priorities-based

There are times when assessing a pastor's/staff member's contribution to the overall mission/vision of the church can best be addressed by considering the position priorities. Although these priorities cannot be measured with the percentage of time allotted to each, there can be a helpful appraisal and discussion of the priorities of the employee and the resulting effect on the church's achieving its agreed-upon objectives (see Appendix G, p. 56).

(5) Job Description-based

Generally it is a "best practice" to provide job descriptions at least for pastors, staff and all paid employees. Like everything else, these need to be done well. Job descriptions can sometimes be so vague that they provide little guidance, or they can be so specific that some will attempt to micromanage the employee based on the job description. *Helpful job descriptions describe major areas of responsibility but do not break them down into a weekly "punch list" of tasks.*

A good job description can be helpful in preparing for an effective evaluation process. In turn, an effective evaluation process may contribute to the altering or rewriting of a job description. The *gracious, candid, ongoing conversation* will inform not only the person being evaluated about his or her work, but also the church about its efforts, strategies, and structures (see Appendix H, p. 58).

NOTE: In the Appendices you will find partial examples of these evaluation instruments. You are invited to complete any of them for your use or to contact the Office of Pastor-Church Relations to discuss this process.

This training tool is intended to generate healthy and helpful conversation. It is not the final word although we hope it is a helpful word. The conversations intended will happen within your congregation but they will also happen in the larger church. In fact, we invite your conversation with us at the Office of Pastor-Church Relations. As you develop processes and instruments in the evaluations of your pastor(s) or staff, we would like to hear about them. And, when you observe that a process or instrument has worked well, we invite you to share it with us. We will both collect and share these resources thereby strengthening evaluation processes throughout the larger church world.



Chapter 3

The “How?” Of Evaluation

Step 1: Getting Started

As with many aspects of life, effective evaluations are not suited for “plan as we go” approaches. Begin by asking for God’s wisdom and blessing as you engage in this process. The six questions in this training tool (the why, when, where, who, what, how of evaluation) provide a helpful template for planning an evaluation process that will be effective in your church. The basic flow of this manual is recommended.

First, determine **why** you are doing the evaluation(s). There may well be multiple legitimate reasons to provide these important processes.

Second, consider what time it is (**when**) for the employee and for the church. Timing is an important aspect of any evaluation process. And what will be the timeline within which the key components of the process are completed?

Third, **where** are you? How might the culture of your congregation affect the evaluation process? What is fitting for First Urban Church may not be fitting for Second Suburban Church or Grace Rural Church.

Fourth, consider **who** is to be evaluated, who is best suited to lead the evaluation, who should be consulted, and who will facilitate the compilation and feedback. Again, the best evaluation processes are often started by the person being evaluated, especially in the case of the pastor.

Fifth, **what** will be the shape and process of the evaluation?

Sixth, **how** will the evaluation be accomplished, and what will be done with the results of the evaluation?

Your thoughts about:

The “why”:

The “when”:

The “where”:

The “who”:

The “what”:

The “how”:

Step 2: Planning the Process

Pastors and staff are sometimes called or hired without provision for ongoing evaluation. Evaluation processes may be considered long after the person starts his or her work. Situations like this tend to increase the likelihood of “surprises.”

Communication is critical in the evaluation process. All parties involved must be made aware of what is happening and when it is happening. This works best when a point person is assigned to administer the process. The process should also include a timeline that lays out what steps happen when. If the evaluation process coincides with the church’s annual budget process, alignment of the two processes will benefit all.

Step 3: What to Do with the Results

Churches will need to decide how they are going to safeguard records of employee evaluations. In most cases, a locked file drawer at the church is effective. But it is the council’s responsibility to see that these records are safeguarded and available to authorized people for future use.

Well-managed evaluations provide some direction and wisdom for future approaches and activities. So, what are some of the outcomes that may arise from an evaluation? Here are some possibilities:

- an intentional and articulated shift in the person’s priorities
- some educational objectives responding to one aspect of the evaluation’s findings
- changes made to the job description after taking a careful look at it
- a change in the administrative structure that better honors the gifts and tasks of the pastor and/or staff
- a more intentional communication strategy that helps the congregation understand the roles and responsibilities of the staff person
- some learning objectives agreed upon for the coming year
- some task objectives agreed upon for the coming year
- clearly stated affirmation of how the person is contributing to the life of the congregation and the mission of the church

What strikes you as important in this step?

How are you safeguarding these records?

What are some other possible outcomes for your church and staff?



Evaluations are opportunities for intentionally *gracious, candid, ongoing conversations*. Effective evaluations also look to the future and provide clarity as to what might enhance the shared future of pastor or staff and congregation.

Step 4: Evaluating the Process

Evaluating the process includes noting what has gone well. For example, Was communication effective? Did the parties involved have the right information? Was the timeline appropriate? Evaluation also includes noting what could be done better next time, and then making sure the notes are available to inform future evaluation conversations.

Sometimes the evaluation process ends in disagreement or differences of perspective. This can lead to feelings of powerlessness in pastors or staff. It is important that such feelings be addressed. It may be helpful to establish a grievance procedure that anticipates this possibility. For further conversation about this, please contact the Pastor-Church Relations Office.

How would you answer these questions?

Any final thoughts?

A Final Word

When done thoughtfully, prayerfully, and well, evaluations are an important facet of developing a healthy congregation, a congregation in which individuals in community discover and learn the rich and textured life that God desires for his family. Evaluations honor our role as stewards of God's gifts and can help us focus on the purpose for which God calls his people. The blessings we experience in each other as members of a covenant family are intended to bless beyond us. Conversations that are *gracious, candid—and ongoing!!*—these are expressions of a community that is growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus. These are expressions of a community that exists not for itself but as a testimony to the mission of God in the world.



Appendices

Appendix A

Ministry can be greatly strengthened when there is an effective committee which meets regularly with the pastor. A rationale and design for such a committee has been helpfully outlined by RCA Pastor Philip J. Schuiling within a D.Min. dissertation entitled "Taking Care of the Shepherd: A Guide to Pastoral Well-being." Since his manuscript is not available in published form, we are grateful to have permission to include the section regarding the personnel committee here.

(You may want to rename this committee to recognize the context in which it is formed and to respect the primary lines of authority and accountability. Whatever its name, this committee should function on behalf of and under the authority of the church council. Having council representation on this committee is encouraged.)

A Personnel Committee In The Local Congregation

Form a personnel committee. Already the question arises, "Who is going to do this?" Who is going to try to understand, to listen, to care, to be an ally? The answer cannot be "the whole church." When we believe a task is important, we assign it to a group, make the task clear, provide time, money, and resources and evaluate to see that the job gets done. The task of providing help for the pastor to stay well is so important it must be planned for. It must be worked at. The personnel committee is the group for the job.

My brother-in-law, who works for a furniture company, once asked me, "How do you know if you aren't doing a good enough job?" I replied, "Well, sometimes someone will write you a note, or make a comment at the door. Often you hear of someone's displeasure secondhand or through the rumor mill. You get a clue if you don't get a raise or a member just quits coming to church. Stuff like that." "That's interesting," he replied. "If I'm not doing a good job, I know because I am below quota. If I don't improve, my supervisor tells me to my face during a job review and he also tells me what I need to do to improve and we set a date to discuss whether I have improved." But it was his last comment that got me thinking. "I get treated better as an employee in a secular company than you do in a church," he said. While there are many churches that treat their pastors in a thoroughly professional and competent manner, sometimes church employees of all kinds are treated shabbily simply because it is no one's job to treat them well. Custodians miss their annual

raise because someone forgot. The secretary is asked to do more work for no additional compensation because no one thought about her. The pastor is the last one in the church (literally) to know about their pay for the next year because no one thought to call. Someone needs to pay attention. That group is the personnel committee.

A personnel committee provides a number of important functions for the paid staff (pastor, associate pastors, custodians, secretaries, directors of ministries, etc.) of a church.

First, they pay close attention to compensation issues. They annually review compensation, relate it to performance, communicate about compensation issues with those concerned staff, and, simply put, talk to the pastor about money. There must be a set group and time for the pastor to talk about money. Talk about it, settle it, and move on.

Ironically the best way to get your pastor to be preoccupied with financial concerns is to avoid talking about it.

Second, through annual performance reviews, they provide the pastor with honest, objective feedback regarding his/her performance. It is difficult for a congregation to review the pastor's performance and it becomes harder the longer a pastor is at a church. Hopefully the longer he/she is there, the more he/she is loved and appreciated, and it is hard to criticize people that we love. Also, some people believe they have no right to criticize this servant of God in any way. Regardless of this difficulty, the pastor does need clear, objective, and honest performance feedback. Denominational offices can be helpful in providing models for performance evaluation. Done objectively, lovingly, and confidentially, performance evaluations can help pastors deal with the non-measurable nature of ministry.

Third, personnel committees encourage pastors to write out clear and obtainable work and lifestyle objectives each quarter. Included in these quarterly objectives are not only the routine work and major projects of the quarter, but also a plan for time with spouse, children, spiritual renewal, exercise, and emotional health. By presenting this plan to the personnel committee, they begin to understand the pastor's work, life, and priorities and can give helpful feedback. This conversation gives them a prime opportunity to come alongside the pastor and hold him/her accountable for his/her life plan that leads to productive work and a healthy life. An example of ministry goals would be:

Ministry Goals: June-August

1. Lead the transition to the new worship schedule (working with accompanists, greeters, nursery, and children's ministry personnel).
2. Work with the music ad-hoc committee to review our music program, including finding leadership for the senior choir.
3. Provide storytelling, leadership, and presence for daily vacation Bible school.
4. Participate in the senior high youth's mission trip.
5. Work with the Christian education commission to redesign the adult Sunday school programming.
6. Officiate at two weddings.

7. Provide leadership for the search for a director of youth ministries.
8. Complete my doctor of ministry independent study.

Personal

1. Take a two week vacation with my family.
2. Exercise at least twice per week: racquetball and one other activity.
3. Take one day for spiritual retreat each month.

Reflections and Looking Ahead

I am consciously “clearing my plate” of responsibilities by declining an additional term as seminary trustee, finishing my dissertation, and concluding the supervision of a pastor. I am greatly looking forward to having a little more “breathing room” for focused ministry and time with God and my family.

Another advantage of reviewing the pastor’s quarterly goals: should criticism of the pastor’s work arise, the personnel committee is one group in the church that actually knows what the pastor has been doing.

Fourth, the personnel committee can help the pastor and spouse sort out conflicting roles and expectations. Open conversation can take place comparing the pastor’s stated goals and objectives versus the many needs and spoken desires of the congregation. Frustration and confusion can be verbalized and often the personnel committee can objectively offer creative solutions as to how conflicting expectations can be resolved. During this discussion, pastor and committee can identify those things that need to be routinely done “to pay the rent,” but they can also allow the pastor to specialize in some area of interest and expertise, encourage intentional change, and encourage the pastor to continue to learn.

Fifth, the personnel committee can be a great source of encouragement to the pastor’s family. Annually the committee can sit down informally with the pastor’s spouse and children and listen to them, care for them. Simply to have some leaders of the congregation genuinely care enough to ask them how they are doing is a positive, caring experience for the family. Family members often have important information to share that the pastor is unable or unwilling to give. I remember my personnel committee once asking me whether there were any repairs needed at the parsonage. “Why no,” I replied, “everything is just fine.” Wisely, the staff committee asked my wife the same question. Although it was a beautiful home we were living in, she mentioned a half dozen repairs that needed to be made. The committee just smiled at me, confirming their decision to speak with all the members of the family. If the committee is reluctant to speak with the pastoral family out of fear of “getting an earful,” perhaps that is exactly what needs to be done to begin to bring church and pastoral family back together.

One of the most important functions of the personnel committee is to build bridges of trust and communication before conflicts arise. By organizing this committee, holding quarterly meetings in which ministry objectives, roles, life balance, and a variety of other

topics are raised plus creating annual feedback on performance, honest communication, even on sensitive subjects, becomes a way of ministry. Should conflicts arise, they may well have already been raised in regular meetings, plus the trust and communications bridges are in place to begin to resolve the conflict. The members of this committee will also have the trust of the pastor to deal with the conflict in a confidential manner.

Forming a personnel committee takes some careful planning. It must be done before difficulties and conflicts arise. It must be created out of care for the pastor and family and for the welfare of the church. Above all, the pastor must be convinced that the personnel committee is being created not to control, criticize, or remove the pastor, but to treat the pastor professionally and lovingly and to become an ally in the pastor's work and life. This intention for the personnel committee must not only be carefully communicated, it must be meant.

The makeup of the committee is crucial. Since in many polities the personnel committee is acting as overseer of the pastor on behalf of the church board (elders, trustees, board members retain ultimate power but trust the committee to act on their behalf except in unusual circumstances), this is a powerful and influential committee and must be chosen carefully. Characteristics needed in committee members are: objectivity, positive regard for pastor and family, and confidentiality. It is desirable to have some members with personnel administration skills and all must have a balanced love for the pastor and the church. Positive members who are highly thought of and have formal or informal power in the church are essential. It is good to have a balance of male and female, some newer members, and a representative of the church board. We have as stated positions the vice president of our board who is an elder and the chairperson of our deacons. A seven person committee makes a good sized working group. Since conflicts usually have a history, it is good for the committee members to have longevity as well. Our committee has three year terms renewable once. It is also wise to discuss the make up of the committee with the pastor. While a good committee is never stacked with all of the pastor's cronies, neither is it helpful to have a member with a grudge against the pastor. Love and objectivity are what are helpful.

I have found my personnel committees to be wonderful allies in ministry. I need someone to encourage me (o.k. force me) to plan out my work, examine my use of time and priorities for the coming year, and hold me accountable for this plan. I appreciate the accurate feedback I get once a year during my performance review. I like being treated professionally when it comes to salary and benefits. I really like the opportunity to air out my concerns and frustrations and also share good news with people who will genuinely celebrate my ministry joys with me. They have become my friends as well as my confidants, true allies in my work and desire to stay well. They have also become allies with my family. Often, as they examine my quarterly goals, they push me to balance my time with family, leisure, and God, along with work.

Having experienced such positive results from the formation of personnel committees, I wish all pastors and churches could have the same experience. Often, however, there is great resistance from pastors when the subject arises. Sometimes the resistance is passive, they just never get around to it. Sometimes the resistance is active. The resistance seems

to be the result of fear or distrust. Fear that this committee is going to seek to control, intimidate, criticize, or even remove the pastor. Distrust comes from simply not being able to imagine a group of lay people that would love, encourage and help a pastor live a chosen life of balance and health. Sometimes this fear and distrust is well founded. Perhaps a personnel committee, properly chosen, would be the beginning of healing a broken relationship.

CAVEAT: Tying compensation to evaluation is believed, by the writers of this training tool, to be more problematic than valuable.

Appendix B

Understanding Poorly Differentiated Church Members and Pastors (noted on p. 19)

1. React automatically and defensively rather than respond intentionally and thoughtfully.
2. Easily and quickly hurt.
 - Collect injustices.
3. Focus on the failures of others.
 - By over focusing on others, we picture the trouble as external and cannot see our own role.
4. Cannot think systemically.
 - Can't look in more than one direction when we sense a problem.
5. Our perspective shrinks.
 - Find it hard to be objective or even-minded.
 - Lose the imagination to see other views or solutions.
6. Think in all or nothing, yes or no, win or lose terms.
 - "You're either with us or against us."
 - Our tendency is to compete, not collaborate.
7. Lose a sense of humor, and can't relax.
 - Direct sarcasm at others.
 - Adopt a "worry wart" role.
8. Engage in willfulness.
 - "If it's not done my way, I'll show you."
 - Make hostages of our gifts and participation.
9. Have a low tolerance for pain or uncertainty.
 - Long for quick fix solutions and immediate relief.
10. Are less open to influence through reasonableness or friendliness.
 - Tend to engage in emotional cut-off.
11. Work outside of established congregational structures and procedures.
 - Opt for secrecy.
 - Uncomfortable with openness and inclusiveness.
12. Triangle extensively.
 - Threatened by direct communication.
13. Vulnerable to group-think.
 - Easily stampeded.
14. Can engage in hurtful behavior in the name of beautiful values and just causes.
 - The problem is not in their values, but in their functioning.
15. Are apt to become too remote from or too entangled with others.
 - Are lacking in "self-differentiation," the capacity to define oneself while staying in touch with others.

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Appendix D

Broad-Based Survey (noted on p. 34)

Sample 1

Pastor Evaluation

Please rate the importance of the following propositions in terms of their importance to you personally:

Importance

(Circle one)

4 = very important

3 = important

2 = fairly important

1 = unimportant

Please rate the quality and effectiveness of your pastor's performance regarding the propositions below:

Quality/Effectiveness

(Circle one)

4 = outstanding

3 = above average

2 = average

1 = below average

n/a = not applicable

I. Areas Of Ministry

A. Public worship ministry: the way the pastor ...

4	3	2	1	conducts public worship, in general	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	prepares sermons	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	addresses the needs of hearers	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	bases sermons on Scripture and Confessions	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	conducts public prayers	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	makes visitors feel welcome	4	3	2	1	n/a

B. Pastoral ministry: the way the pastor ...

4	3	2	1	relates with the members	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	ministers to those with needs and problems	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	ministers to the marginalized	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	ministers to those contemplating marriage	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	deals with conflict situations	4	3	2	1	n/a

Examples of Other Categories:

- Education Ministry: the way the pastor ...
- Outreach and community ministry: the way the pastor ...
- Organizational and administrative aspects of ministry: the way the pastor ...
- Personal and professional development: the way the pastor ...

II. Summary Comments

A. In what area(s), according to your judgment, lie the pastor's greatest strengths and abilities?

B. What are some things you would suggest that the pastor work on?

Sample 2

Annual Performance Evaluation

1. Job Knowledge: Consider the person's understanding of duties and procedures necessary for satisfactory job performance.

_____ Has complete mastery of all phases of the job.

_____ Knows major phases of the job.

_____ Lacks knowledge of some important phases of the job.

_____ Has trouble grasping the job's duties.

Comments And Goals:

2. Quality Of Work: Consider thoroughness, accuracy and orderliness of completed work.
(Disregard amount of work handled.)

_____ Quality exceptional in all respects.

_____ Work is complete, accurate and presentable.

_____ Quality is occasionally unsatisfactory.

_____ Work is usually lacking in thoroughness, accuracy or neatness.

Comments And Goals:

3. Quantity Of Work: Consider the amount of work completed; volume of output in relation to the nature and condition of work performed. (Disregard quality of work.)

(Develop appropriate questions for each category providing lines for comments and goals.)

Examples of Other Categories:

- **Judgment:** Consider this person's to recognize problems and make appropriate decisions, and the employee's judgment in situations where discretion is required.
- **Attitude:** Consider attitude as it affects this person's function in the job.
- **Dependability:** Consider follow-through reliability; is work completed on time and deadlines met; how much supervision is necessary to achieve desired performance.
- **Cooperation:** Consider extent to which this person works harmoniously and effectively with fellow workers, supervisors, client and other.
- **Effectiveness Under Pressure:** Consider ability to work under pressure; to cope and deal effectively with pressure/stress situations.
- **Punctuality:** Consider attendance and the observance of starting and quitting times, breaks, and lunch breaks.

Appendix E

Crucial Areas of Ministry Survey (noted on p. 35)

(Similar to broad-based survey but with a more targeted focus)

Sample 1

Youth Pastor Evaluation

Indicate which group you are in:

Youth Group _____

Parent of Youth _____

Youth Group Leader _____

Other _____

Importance

4 = very important

3 = important

2 = fairly important

1 = unimportant

Quality/Effectiveness

4 = outstanding

3 = above average

2 = average

1 = below average

n/a = not applicable

A. Personal and professional development: The way the youth pastor

4 3 2 1 values personal godliness 4 3 2 1 n/a

4 3 2 1 evidences a sense of calling the ministry 4 3 2 1 n/a

4 3 2 1 takes time for reflection and study 4 3 2 1 n/a

4 3 2 1 avails himself of opportunities for continuing education 4 3 2 1 n/a

4 3 2 1 values listening skills 4 3 2 1 n/a

4 3 2 1 cultivates good working relations with youth leaders 4 3 2 1 n/a

4 3 2 1 relates well to other area youth pastors 4 3 2 1 n/a

Comments on above items: _____

In consultation with the supervising body and the youth pastor, add some additional categories – the following are some examples:

- **Relates to young people:** The way the youth pastor ...
- **Organizational and administrative aspects of ministry:** The way the youth pastor...

II. Summary Comments

1. In what area(s), according to your judgment, lie the youth pastor's greatest strengths and abilities. Also, in what area(s) is there room for improvement?

2. General Comments: _____

Sample 2 – Taken from *Effective Leadership in the Church* p. 59-60

(This instrument addresses both the crucial areas and some key relationships for ministry.)

Pastor Evaluation

Purpose

Effective Leadership in the Church can be used as part of a pastor evaluation process, as described below. The intent is to encourage and motivate the pastor in specific leadership areas. The evaluation will be the most effective if it focuses separately on particular relationships in which the pastor plays a strategic part. For example, it could focus on "how the pastor provides leadership to the elders" or "how the pastor provides leadership to the congregation."

Preparation

An evaluation team will need to be selected (we suggest five persons). The team will need to agree on a process in which the pastor has significant input and some veto power. In addition, it's assumed that both the pastor and the team have read *Effective Leadership in the Church*.

Suggested Process

Please note that this is a sample process; many alternatives could be created.

1. Pastor and committee discuss the process, agree upon its particulars, and determine what the goal of this process will be. The team should summarize this conversation in writing and retain it for future reference.
2. Team members individually complete a questionnaire that assesses the four C's of leadership and the reciprocal dynamic within the congregation. A worksheet such as the one on page 60 will serve this purpose (the focus of this sample worksheet is on the pastor as a leader for the elders).
3. The team shares the information on their worksheets with the pastor, who then writes a paragraph summarizing what he or she heard and understands about the state of the relationship. The committee writes a similar paragraph.
4. The paragraphs are shared and a composite descriptive essay is written.
5. The pastor and the evaluation team evaluate how the process worked. What improvements could be made? How does this process encourage and motivate? How does it provide helpful indications as to areas of focus for the future? How does it honor the reciprocal nature of the leadership dynamic?
6. A designated spokesman for the evaluation team provides a summary report to stakeholders, a report that has been agreed upon by the entire team.

Worksheet for Pastor Evaluation

Focus: How the pastor provides leadership to the elders.

Character

The pastor

- Describe ways in which the pastor's character generates trust and buy-in among the elders.
- Describe ways in which the pastor's character raises questions among the elders.

The elders

- Describe ways the elders create a context in which the pastor's character finds expression.
- Describe ways the elders create a context in which the pastor's character does not find healthy expression.

Conviction

The pastor

- Describe ways in which the pastor's conviction helps the elders discern their purpose and vision.
- Describe ways in which the pastor's conviction does not help the elders discern their purpose and vision.

The elders

- Describe ways the elders create a context in which the pastor's conviction finds expression.
- Describe ways the elders create in a context in which the pastor's conviction does not find healthy expression.

Competence

The pastor

- Describe ways in which the pastor's competencies help the elders function as a healthy system.
- Describe ways in which the pastor's competencies do not help the elders function as a healthy system.

The elders

- Describe ways the elders create a context in which the pastor's competencies find healthy expression.
- Describe ways the elders create a context in which the pastor's competencies do not find healthy expression.

Confluence

- What signs indicate that this relationship is creating a context in which good leadership is happening?
- What signs create questions as to the timing and fit for this leadership relationship?

APPENDIX F

Relationship-Based Tool (noted on p. 26 and 35)

One sign of health in congregations is the tendency to diagnose relationships rather than people or groups. Diagnosing relationships recognizes the multi-party dimension to relationships and creates a context in which productive conversations can happen.

Individually: Using the sample words provided below select two words that describe each relationship identified. Do not worry about getting exactly the right word. Close is good. Feel free to use words not on the list.

affectionate – growing – adversarial – hesitant – warm – trusting – uncertain – disintegrating – distant – estranged – apathetic – puzzled – awkward – honest – respectful – fractured – rebuilding – inviting – challenged – engaged – irrelevant – spiritual – apprehensive – hopeful – important – stale – energized – anxious

Relationships:

Pastor & Congregation: _____ & _____

Pastor & Elders: _____ & _____

Pastor & Deacons: _____ & _____

Pastor & Staff: _____ & _____

Pastor & _____ : _____ & _____

To broaden the conversation you may want to add some additional relationships such as:

Council & Staff

Council & Classis

Council & Congregation

Deacons & Elders

Congregation & Community

Congregation & Denomination

Other _____

Possible Process: In groups of three compare notes and identify two relationships characterized by positive energy and engagement. Also, identify two relationships that could use some improvement. Please note if a particular relationship requires some focused attention. Provide each small group opportunity to share their relationship descriptors with the larger processing group.

APPENDIX G - Pastor's Priorities Evaluation

How to Conduct a Pastor's Priorities Evaluation (noted on p. 36)

An *ad hoc* committee of 3 to 4 people is established consisting of the following:

- the pastor
- people who are able to think clearly and calmly about various issues and are recognized as people of wisdom and maturity in the congregation
- half of the committee is selected by the pastor and half by the executive committee of elders.
- all of whom would be approved by the pastor and elders.
- some of whom would be on council, some of whom would not be on council

This team would meet at least bi-weekly (1 hour) to provide a forum in which the pastor can think and process strategically in terms of such topics as:

- ministry priorities – sorting out what's urgent and what's important
- congregational awareness – helping the pastor be aware of strategic and pastoral developments within the congregation
- processing with the pastor strategic approaches to
 - leadership
 - pastoral care
 - pastor's personal renewal
 - dealing with chronically anxious people
 - administration
- thinking about the long range and short range implications of pastor, council, congregation ministry patterns for the church

This group would be advisory only and would not be making strategic decisions for the church.

Reports of this team to the elders would consist of:

- schedule of meetings
- a general listing of topics discussed

(This may be negotiable – both the accountability of the group value and “safe” place for the pastor value would need to be honored.)

Sample of Pastor's Priorities Evaluation

Priority: 1 = low 5 = high

Area of Ministry

(A variety of other areas could also be included.)

Current Priority

Desired Priority

Preaching: Preparing and delivering sermons during Sunday worship and at other special services.

Worship: Planning and leading corporate worship

Member Visitation: Conducting regular and intentional visiting of members.

Council Leadership: Providing leadership to the Council in all its activities.

(Other categories that are selected)

APPENDIX H

Job Description-Based Tool (noted on p. 36)

Sample job description

Ministries Coordinator

Description

The Ministries Coordinator is responsible for assisting the Pastor of Worship and Administration and the Administrative Team by providing leadership, organization, coordination, and evaluation of the various ministries of _____ Church within the policies and guidelines established by the Administrative Team and Council.

Qualifications

1. Gives evidence of a sincere commitment to Christ and a dedication to the advancement of the kingdom of God.
2. Is committed to the Reformed faith.
3. Is committed to _____ Church, its core values, and long term goals.
4. Has strong gifts in the areas of administration and leadership.
5. Has excellent organizational skills and the ability to help facilitate the activities of multiple ministries and programs.
6. Has the necessary human relationships skills to motivate lay leaders and staff, and to effectively communicate with a wide range of people and groups.
7. Has significant leadership, management, and human relations experience outside the church in business or other organizations.
8. Is not an elder or deacon at _____ Church.
9. This position requires a high school diploma. Additional education and/or experience in areas such as church administration, management, human resources or other related fields is desirable.

Responsibilities

1. Assists the Pastor of Preaching and Worship in providing leadership and over-all coordination for the ministries and staff of _____ Church.
2. Serves as a primary contact person for the various ministries of _____ Church, providing the appropriate direction, leadership, adherence to budget and coordination, for these ministries.
3. Implements policies and guidelines established by the Administrative Team and Council.
4. Assists with the evaluation of ministries and makes appropriate recommendations for future planning.
5. Provides oversight of the church's budget, and promotes financial stewardship by staff and other leaders.
6. Is Chairperson for staff meetings, and attends the Administrative Team meetings; and, as needed, Council and Elders' meetings.

Reporting

This position will be filled via appointment by the Administrative Team with approval by Council. The Ministries Coordinator is responsible to the Administrative Team and will report monthly.

It will be for a one-year term, to be evaluated annually in May. The performance evaluation will be conducted by the President of Council, the Pastor of Preaching and Worship, and two others appointed by the Administrative Team.

Compensation

Compensation will be _____ an hour and additional allowance will be made for certain expenses and continuing education.

Corresponding Evaluation for Ministries Coordinator

Responsibilities:

Assists the Pastor of Preaching and Worship in providing leadership and over-all coordination for the ministries and staff of _____ Church.

Identify ways in which the MC is doing well with this.

Identify any areas that need attention.

Serves as a primary contact person for the various ministries of _____ Church, providing the appropriate direction, leadership, adherence to budget and coordination, for these ministries.

Ways the MC is doing well with this.

Areas for increased attention?

Implements policies and guidelines established by the Administrative Team and Council.

(With all responsibilities that follow, pose similar questions as above.)

Assists with the evaluation of ministries and makes appropriate recommendations for future planning.

Provides oversight of the church's budget, and promotes financial stewardship by staff and other leaders.

Is Chairperson for staff meetings, and attends the Administrative Team meetings; and, as needed, Council and Elders' meetings.

Annotated Bibliography

Summaries of references referred to in this training tool and other valuable resources

Article

Oswald, Roy. *Getting a Fix on Your Ministry*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute.

Available as a download from the Alban Institute website (www.albaninstitute.org). This paper presents the essential ingredients for making the performance appraisal a worthwhile experience: who conducts it, who the client is, how to proceed. Report format.

Books

Buckingham, Marcus, and Donald O Clifton. *Now, Discover Your Strengths*. New York: The Free Press, 2001.

Based on years of research by the Gallup Organization, this book is a refreshingly sensible and user-friendly way to assess your psychological assets and build on them.

Gilbert, Roberta M. *Extraordinary Relationships: A New Way of Thinking About Human Interactions*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1992.

This important and penetrating book offers practical and authoritative family therapy advice that has helped thousands of people. It is a blueprint to better relationships that tells how the principles of family systems theory can be used in all arenas of life.

Hamman, Jaco J. *Becoming a Pastor: Forming Self and Soul for Ministry*. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2007.

The author describes how one becomes a pastor by nurturing and growing six core competencies. He identifies and defines these skills and offers practical strategies for developing these competencies within one's own context of ministry.

Herrington, Jim, Robert R. Creech, and Trisha Taylor. *The Leader's Journey: Accepting the Call to Personal and Congregational Transformation*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, Inc., 2003.

This book provides a blueprint and the practical tools needed to transform the lives of pastors and congregational lay leaders so they can become truly effective leaders. It also examines the life of Jesus and reflects on the living systems of which he was a part, observing his ability to know and do the right things despite enormous pressure to do otherwise.

Hudson, Jill H. *Evaluating Ministry: Principles and Processes for Clergy and Congregations*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1992.

The author explores a new approach to evaluation as total appraisal of congregational ministry, not just the pastor's ministry. She grounds evaluation in the theological and organizational context of mission (everyone a minister), provides case studies of four successful models, and suggests how "whole church" reviews might result in stronger pastoral ministry and new directions for congregational mission.

Hudson, Jill M. *When Better Isn't Enough: Evaluation Tools for the 21st Century Church*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2004.

Approaching the postmodern era as a tremendous opportunity, Jill Hudson identifies 12 characteristics by which we can measure effective ministry and offers tools to help congregations evaluate their work in this new era. Her instruments for evaluation of lay leaders and her adaptations for smaller congregations make this book extremely useful for any church seeking to provide effective ministry.

Steinke, Peter L. *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times: Being Calm and Courageous no Matter What*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2006.

Practical wisdom. That is what Peter Steinke offers readers in *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times*. Throughout this book, Steinke is faithful to Scripture, conveys deep insight into the human condition, provides a clear exposition of systems thinking and Bowen theory, and offers a look at some of the fascinating situations he has seen in his years of consultation with congregations and church leaders.

Steinke, Peter L. *How Your Church Family Works*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2006.

Clergy and lay leaders will gain valuable insights into their congregation's life and discover why their relationships have been "stuck" in certain behaviors. They will learn how to deal in new and effective ways with such issues as the roots of church conflict, the role of leadership, dealing with change in the congregation, the encouragement of responsible behavior, and the significance of family of origin in current relationships.

Woods, C. Jeff. *User Friendly Evaluation*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1995.

Woods helps congregations evaluate themselves in light their own mix of gifts, background, talents, and opportunities in a way that is practical, exciting, and not overwhelming. He creatively blends theory with practical applications.

Manuals

Borgdorff, Peter. *Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government*. Grand Rapids: Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2008.

This revised edition of the Church Order for the Christian Reformed Church in North America incorporates decisions made by the synods of the CRCNA through Synod 2007.

Sustaining Pastoral Excellence. *Effective Leadership in the Church*. Grand Rapids: Christian Reformed Church in North America, 2005.

This is a training tool to help congregations, pastors, and other church leaders effectively work together to accomplish God's mission. It includes the four "Cs" that seem ever-present in situations for effective leadership: Character, Conviction, Competencies, Confluence.

Organization

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center

The Lombard Mennonite Peace Center (LMPC) is a not-for-profit organization that offers education and consultation services to church leaders and congregations. The LMPC is directed by Rev. Richard Blackburn whose training includes three years in the "Post-Graduate Clergy Seminar in Family Emotional Process," under the tutelage of the late Dr. Edwin Friedman, author of *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*. Many church leaders in the CRCNA have benefited from the ministries of the LMPC. For information about LMPCs training programs for pastors and others, see their web site: www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

