

INVESTING WELL IN CROSS-RACIAL/CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY: LAITY & CLERGY

PREPARATION

When preparing for the appointment to begin, the core leadership team of the congregation must make concerted efforts to speak frankly about the social norms of the congregation sharing that change may be necessary for all. The assumption or the unrealistic expectation that the clergy person will just “fit in” is self-centered and does not equate to being faithful Christ-followers. Discussing and documenting these concerns will be helpful in the information provided below to the incoming clergyperson for their further discernment and inquiry when arriving. The core leadership team should convene honest conversations, within the congregation using the questions below, to identify to prepare for the success of the appointment:

- What are our sacred rhythms?
- What are our annual events and projects?
- What traditions do we hold in high regard?
- What will cause major conflict in our congregation if ____ was changed?

Additional insights include:

- What will occur if there are any barriers to understanding language?
- How will members of the committee hold honest conversations about those potential challenges? Please know that the clergyperson is aware and should not be reminded of this matter.
- What would it take for members of the congregation - especially leaders of the core leadership team - to begin finding resources in the new clergy persons' native language to begin training the listening ear for a new dialect?
- What would it take to prepare to receive the Proclamation of the Gospel Message in different ways (i.e. through a translator, an outline of the sermon, or the distribution of the sermon manuscript)?

The core leadership team and incoming pastor must have an honest conversation about the above questions to celebrate the diverse gifts and culture of the incoming pastor and think about any challenges that may arise. The core leadership team can begin sharing resources with the members of the congregation for how they can begin opening their hearts and minds to the new possibilities that will emerge from the cross-racial or cross-cultural appointment. Resource examples can include:

Vital Conversation Series

<https://www.r2hub.org/vital-conversations-series-home>

Implicit Bias Workbook

<http://www.gcorr.org/implicit-bias-workbook/>

CELEBRATION

When the appointment begins, it is suggested that within the first thirty days of the appointment, there should be the coordination of a Celebration of Appointment. This celebration is a public acknowledgment of the commitment to receiving a CRCC appointment. The celebration should be done during a regularly scheduled worship experience.

The Celebration of Appointment services can be found here:

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/an-order-for-the-celebration-of-an-appointment>

You may also use the Great Thanksgiving liturgy below to celebrate the gift of a new pastor if the celebration is scheduled for the first Sunday:

[Gift of a New Pastor.pdf \(transformingcommunion.com\)](#)

CONNECTION

When the appointment begins, it is imperative that the core leadership team of the congregation coordinate means for relationship-building to begin for the incoming CRCC pastor and their family, if applicable. The coordination of introductions at small groups, Sunday Schools, community gatherings, and informal settings with influencers will be important. Additionally, if in a smaller community, the congregation can begin broadly sharing information with others in the community about the new cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment, and what it means to “welcome the stranger.”

The responsibility for relationship-building rests with the leaders of the congregations as the facilitators - not the incoming CRCC pastor who may not know the cultural norms or processes in the community. Maintain a standard set of questions to ask the incoming pastor to get to know them. Please refrain from asking about “their vision for the church”, as these are not helpful during initial meetings and conversations. Example questions could include:

- What is your “call” story?
- What have been your past vocational experiences?
- What brings you joy and sadness in ministry?
- What are your celebrations, or reservations about this cross-racial or cross-cultural appointment?

MEETINGS

When the core leadership team, along with the clergyperson, curates a brave space for leaders to address their fears and biases, this sets an expectation that the congregation is committed to discussing these in healthy ways.

When the appointment begins, it is imperative during the first ninety (90) days that a Leadership Covenant is created and executed, as means for how the core leadership, congregational leaders, and the incoming pastor will lead together in this new appointment.

The core leadership team of the congregation must ensure the Leadership Covenant is recited and referenced at each meeting as a reminder of how to be in relationship and service with one another.

COMMUNICATION

When the appointment begins, the core leadership team and incoming pastor need to consider processes for establishing consistent communication with the congregation.

One example: In an initial meeting, someone asked the pastor how they would like to be addressed. Some might assume that calling a person by their first name is normal. However, to truly celebrate the full humanity and culture of the incoming pastor, inviting them to share their response and respecting their answer is necessary. It is the responsibility of the core leadership team or staff-pastor parish committee to communicate this information with the entire congregation. Communication channels decided on by the incoming pastor and core leadership can be engaged (e.g. the worship bulletin, a newsletter announcement, or the church website). An announcement or insert example could be: "We have met with our new pastor and these are some of the things you should know about him/her/them..."