**CHECKING WITH REFERENCES - *Sample #1: Brief Form***

As a committee, develop a list of questions you would like to ask a candidate’s telephone references. It is best to have one committee member speak with all references for any single candidate. There may be a new question that grows out of one conversation that requires follow up or clarification with the other references. Take careful and extensive notes on each conversation in order to report back to the Search Committee.

1. Create a connection.
   1. Introduce yourself and your reason for calling.
   2. Ask if it is a good time for an extended conversation of about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_minutes. If not, set up another time.
   3. Briefly describe your church setting and your pastoral needs.
2. Seek specifics – for instance . . .
   1. How closely have you worked with or known this person?
   2. What do you most like or appreciate in this person?
   3. In what kind of congregation do you think this person would be most effective?
   4. Can you tell me of a time when this person had to handle conflict in his/her ministry?
   5. What are this person’s strengths . . . weaknesses . . .? Give me some examples.
   6. These are some of our pastoral needs . . .. These are some of the things our congregation values. What do you know of this person’s experience and skill in these areas?
   7. Is there anything else you want to tell me about this person?
3. Thank the reference for their time. Ask if you might call again if more information is needed or another question arises.
4. Trust your instinct if there appears to be any hesitation or lack of enthusiasm on the part of the reference. Follow up.