

A Just Peace, Open and Affirming Conference

FIVE COMMITMENTS FOR SEARCH COMMITTEES

A Faith Commitment . . . *The task of the Search Committee is very simple and very complex. Initially the task is spiritual. Search Committee members make a faith commitment to develop as faith-centered, prayer-directed people of God willing to listen to God in the process of seeking a new pastor. Search Committee members engage in a 4-Way Covenant—a Covenant with their prospective pastor, the congregation, the Conference and Association, and the Holy Spirit.*

A Time Commitment . . . *Search Committee members make a time commitment. By the time the search process is completed (from first organizational meeting to the calling of a new pastor) the committee may have been working together for as little as 9 months or as long as 18-24 months. Initially most Search Committees meet weekly. Once committees begin considering pastoral profiles and scheduling interviews, the frequency of meetings increases. At times the Search Committee must travel to hear prospective pastors preach. All in all, it is a significant time commitment.*

A Commitment to Confidentiality . . . *Search Committee members make a commitment to confidentiality. Members must not talk about the content of their work. That is to say, the sharing of names of individuals under consideration is a serious breach of process. Even to speak in generalities about location or experience or gender can risk folk guessing who the committee is considering. The congregation must be kept informed at every step of the process. Sharing where the Search Committee is in the process is critical. However, until a final candidate is presented, all conversation about any candidates is closely guarded.*

A Commitment to Openness . . . *Search Committees make a commitment to genuine consideration of all candidates. The commitment involves understanding that the gifts, skills, and experience of candidates are primary in determining their ability to serve the congregation.*

A Commitment to Consensus . . . *Finally, Search Committee members make a commitment to consensus. Members need to be of one mind in recommending their prospective pastor to the congregation. Any unreadiness on the part of any member of the Search Committee can and often does spell disaster down the road. Everyone must be able, with a clear and positive conscience, to support and endorse the individual presented before the congregation.*