

Candidate Communication Templates

Full-size companion resource • Print additional copies as needed. Keep candidate-specific information in restricted, secure storage.

Purpose: Send accurate, timely, dignified messages that reflect actual status. Assign one communication coordinator and adapt wording to your church's process.

1. Application Acknowledgment

Subject: Senior Pastor Application Received | [Church Name]

Dear [Name],

Thank you for your interest in serving as Senior Pastor at [Church Name]. We have received your [complete application / listed materials] and appreciate the time you have invested in sharing your ministry background. Our search team is reviewing applications under the position's approved requirements. We expect to provide an update by [date], or sooner if we need more information.

Thank you for your interest and ministry service.

[Name], Candidate Communication Coordinator

2. Initial Interview Invitation

Subject: Invitation to a Conversation | [Church Name]

Dear [Name],

After reviewing your submitted materials, our team would like to invite you to an initial conversation about the Senior Pastor opening. We hope to learn more about your calling, ministry background, and questions about our congregation.

Proposed date/time and time zone: [Details]

Format and duration: [Details]

Please let us know whether this works for you. This conversation is part of the evaluation process and does not imply a final decision.

[Name], Pastor Search Team

3. Search Status Update

Subject: Update on Our Pastoral Search | [Church Name]

Dear [Name],

I wanted to let you know that our team is continuing its review and has not yet reached a decision about the next stage. We appreciate your patience and recognize that considering a pastoral transition involves serious commitments. Our next planned update is [date]. If your circumstances change, please feel free to contact me.

[Name], Pastor Search Team

4. Reference Permission Request

Subject: Reference Authorization | [Church Name]

Dear [Name],

As part of the next stage, we would like your permission to speak with the following references: [names and relationships]. We also want to understand any confidentiality concerns, particularly involving your current church. We will not contact current church leaders without your explicit authorization. Please review the proposed contacts and required authorization forms before we proceed.

[Name], Pastor Search Team

5. Respectful Decline

Subject: Update on Your Senior Pastor Candidacy | [Church Name]

Dear [Name],

Thank you for your interest in [Church Name] and the time you invested in our process. After consideration under the position's established requirements, our team has decided not to advance your candidacy for this particular opening. We appreciate your service to Christ and His church and wish you well in your continuing ministry.

[Name], Pastor Search Team

6. Finalist Process Invitation

Subject: Next Stage of Our Pastoral Search | [Church Name]

Dear [Name],

Our team would like to invite you to the final stage of consideration for the Senior Pastor position. The proposed next steps are [specific meetings, evaluations, or authorized congregational introduction]. We will agree with you in advance on confidentiality and any public communication. This invitation is not a formal pastoral call, which remains subject to the church's governing approval process and your acceptance.

[Name], Pastor Search Team

7. Candidate Withdrawal Acknowledgment

Subject: Thank You for Letting Us Know | [Church Name]

Dear [Name],

Thank you for informing us that you are withdrawing from consideration for our Senior Pastor opening. We respect your decision and appreciate the conversations and time you shared with us. We will update our search records accordingly and handle your materials under our applicable confidentiality and retention policy. We pray for God's wisdom and grace as you continue in ministry.

[Name], Pastor Search Team

Message Release Checklist

- ☐ The candidate's status has been verified in the tracker.
- ☐ The sender is authorized to communicate this decision.
- ☐ The message accurately states the next step and any date promised.
- ☐ Confidential details about other candidates or references are excluded.
- ☐ Actual send date, sender, and next follow-up are recorded in Appendix E.