

Search & Call

Pastoral Candidate Interview Questions

These questions are not intended to be exhaustive, but to stimulate thinking. The questions are designed to enable you to learn enough about a candidate so you can determine if the candidate meets the needs of your congregation. Adapt or change them as needed.

Ministry

1. What strengths, skills, talents, do you see yourself bringing to our church and its stated needs and challenges?
2. What is your weakness? The most difficult thing for you to do?
3. What has been your most challenging experience so far? Most rewarding?
4. What is your favorite part about ministry?
5. What are some of the most important things to do when arriving in a new church?
6. How might you go about (building a stewardship program) (managing church conflict) (participating in Christian education programming) (supporting lay leadership) (pastoral visitation)?
7. What stirred your interest in our congregation? Why does it seem to be a good fit for your skills and gifts?

Worship in the Church

1. What subjects have you dealt with in sermons in recent months?
2. How do you determine subjects for sermons?
3. What is your style of preaching?
4. How would you describe yourself as a worship leader?

Pastoral Ministry

1. In what ways do you seek to provide pastoral care for individuals?
2. How much of the responsibility for visitation should be shared with trained groups of laity?

Christian Education

1. Reflect on your understanding of the teaching role of pastor.
2. How do you view the role of Christian Education in the church?
3. What are your views on training, assisting and supervising the teaching staff?

Administration

1. How do you allocate your time as a pastor? What takes priority?
2. How do you deal with persons who fail to fulfill the tasks or responsibilities they have accepted? If they are paid staff? If they are volunteers?

3. Describe the administration of your present church; for example, committee structure, evaluation processes, setting of goals, program planning, budgeting.

Community and Denominational Relationships

1. What involvements have you had beyond your local church? (in the secular world, ecumenically and within the United Church of Christ)
2. How have you encouraged/supported Association, Conference and Denominational involvements?
3. Describe your understanding of your responsibility to the UCC.
4. What issues are important to you?
5. What is your concept of the pastor's role in the community?

Continuing Education

1. What experiences have contributed most to your growth as a pastor in the past five years?
2. What book or books have you read recently that have challenged you the most?
3. What plans do you have to continue to remain fresh and current in your ministry?
4. How have you integrated your new learnings into the life of your church?

Personal Life

1. Do you have regular times for relaxation, play and rest? What are your hobbies?
2. Does your vocation as pastor enhance or strain your family?
3. What prompted you to say "yes" to the call to become a pastor? What keeps you at it?
4. Who ministers to your needs? How do you tend to your spiritual life?

Miscellaneous

1. What experiences in your present call have you found satisfying?
2. How do you deal with religious or social extremists of any kind?
3. How would you describe God? What is your favorite image of God in scripture?
4. Name a "great idea" you have had. If it was brought to fruition, what were some best practices of the process? If not, what are some lessons learned from the experience?
5. What opportunities do you hope to have in this position?
6. How do you handle conflict with lay leaders?
7. How do you handle conflict with members of the staff?
8. What commitments do you make to yourself concerning your health and well-being?

9. In part-time ministry, what tasks do you believe are the pastor's responsibility and what tasks are the congregation's responsibility?

Here is a list of questions that you cannot ask, it includes anything that can be seen as a basis for discrimination:

- Age
- Sex/Gender/gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Marital status
- If they're pregnant, or plan to be
- If they have children
- Where they were born/country of origin