

SECTION SIX– WELCOMING THE NEW PASTOR

Now that the successful candidate has been hired and appointed, it is important to introduce the pastor and his/her family to the congregation.

Here are a few tips that the Board can use to help introduce the new pastor to the church leadership team, the congregation and the community:

1. Assign a point person – someone to oversee all of the introduction activities. This could be the PLTF chairperson, the Board chair or delegate, or a church staff person.
2. Spread the big announcement – ideally the PLTF and the Board have communicated well with the staff and congregation all the way through the process. Once the official announcement letter from the Bishop has been read, you can use other sources of communication, ie social media, email, bulletin, church website, newspaper, etc., to spread the news. Include pictures of the new pastor and his/her family (with their permission) and a brief biography.
3. Hold an induction service – This is a time to give praise and thanks to God for the one whom He has brought to your church. The Manual of the Free Methodist Church in Canada has an Induction Service in Chapter 8, paragraph 877. The Bishop or other member of the National Leadership Team can be invited to come to the local church for this induction service.
4. Hold a special staff dinner – Host an event that will give your new pastor a chance to get to know the leadership team and church staff.
5. Offer to help the pastor and his/her family to get acclimated to your community – Provide the family with a list of local emergency numbers, recommend doctors, dentists, service providers (realtors, auto mechanics, hair stylists, lawyers, cleaning, etc.) .
6. When the new pastor and his/her family arrive at their new home, help them settle in quickly by stopping by with a welcome kit including a few household items (paper towels, toilet paper, soap, cleaning supplies), some snacks, a gift certificate for restaurants or some hot meals.

Here are some suggestions for helping the new pastor in the first few days and weeks on the job:

1. Communicate with the new pastor before his/her arrival. Make sure you share with the new pastor all the names and faces he needs to know.
2. Ensure everything is set up before his/her arrival. Make sure the office is set up, clean and in good working order. Make sure the computer is ready, with user IDs and email. Have keys ready and labelled.
3. Provide a copy of the Employee handbook, church policy handbook and church directory.
4. Set up meetings in the first couple of weeks for your new pastor to meet with other church staff, board members and key leaders.
5. If the pastor has a family, go out of your way to make sure they feel included and welcome. Connect them with ministry leaders in the church and help them get connected in the community as well.
6. Give your new pastor time to acclimate to the surroundings and get to know how your church operates. Most new pastors need at least six months, and sometimes more, in the new position to get up to speed.