



LEAD PASTOR EMERGENCY SUCCESSION PLAN

The Board of Elders of _____ recognize that this is an emergency plan for contingencies due to the unplanned sickness, disability, death, or departure of the Lead Pastor. If the organization is faced with the unlikely event of an untimely vacancy, it has agreed upon the following emergency succession plan to facilitate the transition to both interim and longer-term leadership.

This plan serves only as a temporary plan until either the Lead Pastor is able to fully function and return to his position as Lead Pastor as defined below, or in the event of a sudden death.

In the event of a sudden death, the Eldership has guidelines to appoint a new long-term Lead Pastor as defined by the church By-Laws, and this agreed upon process will only serve to ensure there is temporary oversight until the Lead Pastor selection process is complete. This document does not replace any process as defined in the By-Laws but works to support the need for temporary leadership in an unplanned circumstance.

SUCCESSION PLAN IN EVENT OF A TEMPORARY, SHORT TERM UNPLANNED ABSENCE

A temporary short-term absence is one of less than three months in which it is expected that the Lead Pastor will return to their position once the events precipitating the absence are resolved. An unplanned absence is one that arises unexpectedly, in contrast to a planned leave, such as a vacation or a sabbatical. The Eldership is authorized to implement the terms of this emergency plan in the event of the unplanned absence of the Lead Pastor.

In the event of an unplanned absence of the Lead Pastor, the Lead Pastor and/or Executive Pastors are to immediately inform the Eldership of the unexpected absence. As soon as it is feasible, the Executive Pastors are to convene a meeting with the Elders to affirm the pre-approved procedures prescribed in this plan or to make modifications as deemed appropriate.

In the event that this scenario eventuates the eldership will have full authority to make this decision. At the time that this plan was approved by the Elders, the position of Interim Lead



Pastor is intended to be _____. The Elders will also have the authority to activate one of the following options:

1. _____ Name (Eldership to decide)
2. Co-Lead by Vision Leadership Team, VLT to appoint Lead-Facilitator.

The Eldership may also consider the option of splitting executive duties among the designated appointees.

The person appointed as Interim Lead Pastor shall have the full authority for decision-making and independent action as the regular Lead Pastor. Due to the short time frame of their interim role, change in vision, direction and ministries should be discouraged.

The Eldership will be sensitive to the special support needs of the Interim Lead Pastor in this temporary leadership role and may suggest temporary help due to increased workload.

A Communications Plan will be immediately developed upon transferring the responsibilities to the Interim Lead Pastor to notify staff members, leadership, and congregation.

The decision about when the absent Lead Pastor returns to fully function as the Lead Pastor should be evaluated and proposed by the Vision Leadership team and voted on by the Eldership. They will decide upon a mutually agreed upon schedule and start date. A reduced schedule for a set period of time can be allowed, with the intention of working their way back up to a full-time commitment.

SUCCESSION PLAN IN EVENT OF A TEMPORARY, LONG TERM UNPLANNED ABSENCE

A long-term absence is one that is expected to last more than three months. The procedures and conditions to be followed should be the same as for a short-term absence with one addition: The Eldership will give immediate consideration, in consultation with the Vision Leadership Team to temporarily fill the existing position left vacant by the Interim Lead Pastor. This is in recognition of the fact that for a term of more than three months, it may not be reasonable to expect the Interim Lead Pastor to carry the duties of both positions.



A Communications Plan will be immediately developed upon transferring the responsibilities to the Interim Lead Pastor to notify staff members, leadership, and congregation.

In the event that this scenario eventuates the eldership will have full authority to make this decision. At the time that this plan was approved by the Elders, the position of Interim Lead Pastor is intended to be _____. The Elders will also have the authority to activate one of the following options:

1. _____ Name (Eldership to decide)
2. Co-Lead by Vision Leadership Team, VLT to appoint Lead-Facilitator.

The Eldership may also consider the option of splitting executive duties among the designated appointees as suggested by the Vision Leadership Team.

The decision about when the absent Lead Pastor returns to lead should be determined by the Vision Leadership team and confirmed by the Eldership. They will decide upon a mutually agreed upon schedule and start date. A reduced schedule for a set period of time can be allowed, by approval of the Eldership, with the intention of working the way up to a full-time commitment.

SUCCESSION PLAN IN EVENT OF A PERMANENT CHANGE

A permanent change is one in which it is firmly determined that the Lead Pastor will not be returning to the position due to a sudden death, permanent disability, or long-term illness.

The procedures and conditions should be the same as for a long-term temporary absence with one addition: The Eldership will meet and develop an immediate plan to follow By-Laws in the search for a new permanent Lead Pastor. Until this process is finalized, the Interim Lead Pastor will fulfill the function of the Lead Pastor, but not in title.

The Eldership may also consider seeking outside assistance depending on the circumstances of the transition and the Eldership's capacity to plan and manage the transition and search.

In the event that this scenario eventuates the eldership will have full authority to make this decision. At the time that this plan was approved by the Elders, the position of Interim Lead



Pastor is intended to be _____. The Elders will also have the authority to activate one of the following options:

1. _____ Name (Eldership to decide)
2. Co-Lead by Vision Leadership Team, VLT to appoint Lead-Facilitator.

The Eldership may also consider the option of splitting executive duties among the designated appointees.

Once the new permanent Lead Pastor has been selected and starts their role, the Interim Lead Pastor will move back to their original position. In the event the Interim Lead Pastor is selected as the new permanent Lead Pastor by the Eldership, their original position may be open for replacement.

Date of Eldership Approval: _____.

Elder to First Submit: _____.

Elder to Second: _____.