Commissioning a Pastoral Search Team

***Words to be spoken:***

We are all called as followers of Christ, to rely on his Spirit in serving, and in the mission of God. The call of God is both gift and task. It comes from the depths of God’s love for the world, and he asks us to join with Him in the work of redeeming the people he made and loves. We stand on the heritage of the past but in face of an unknown future, we are called to trust and obedience. The church is not the building but us, the people. We all have a role to play, we all are part of the local Baptist church here at (insert church name). We each respond to the call of Jesus and what he asks according to our giftings and our call.

Join me in this responsive Scripture from 1 Corinthians 12: 4 – 7. You read the parts in bold.

There are different gifts,

**but it is the same Spirit who gives them.**

There are different ways of serving God,

**but it is the same Lord who is served.**

God works through different people in different ways,

**but it is the same God who achieves glory through them all.**

Each one is given a gift by the Spirit,

**to use it for the common good.**

**Let us serve God in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of love.**

Today we acknowledge the amazing Pastoral Search Team who have responded to the call of God to serve by leading us in our journey to find us a pastor. Please could the Pastoral Search Team join me. (Introduce the team. If some cannot be present put a photo on the screen)

During our search for a pastor we will go through a seven stage process. This includes:

1. Church leadership conducting the tasks of getting things in order, selecting a Search Team and providing them a brief.
2. The Search Team meet and begin their work.
3. Research and background information collection happens.
4. All of this work culminates in looking at actual people suitable for the role.
5. Possible candidates are interviewed and selected.
6. A pastor is a called.
7. Finally, a strong partnership is built through welcome, commissioning and kai, the sharing of food.

It is the Search Team’s role to select and present to our church membership a pastor who will lead, support and guide (insert church name) in its ministry for and with Christ, to each other, our community and the world.

This team have been selected because they exhibit characteristics of spiritual and emotional maturity, they are prayerful, Holy Spirit led, respected, committed, confidential, positive, humble, impartial, expectant and they fully understand the vision of (insert church name).

**Ask the team:**

Do you accept the responsibility of being part of the search team, gifted by Holy Spirit to perform this task as part of and on behalf of (insert church name)? **I do**

Do you promise to abide by the ethical guidelines and conduct of a search team as outlined by the (insert church name) Leadership Team and Baptist Churches of New Zealand? **I do.**

Will you work together as a unified team for (insert church name) and God, committing to understand each other’s views, valuing your differences, encouraging each other strengths and working towards understanding?
**We will.**

**Prayer for the Team**

I am going to pray for the team then we will finish with a blessing that we can all pray together.

Loving God, we wonder at the way you call women and men into partnership with you for the sake of your saving purposes for the world.

You call us in Christ and empower us by your Spirit, so that your church may be built up and your gospel proclaimed and lived.

We thank you for these sisters and brothers whom you have called to serve you as our Pastoral Search Team.

We give you thanks for all you give us through them, for their following of Jesus and their willingness, by your grace, to serve together.

As we commission them for this ministry, we ask your blessing on them.

May God bless each one as they take up this task and lead us on this next part of our journey.

Guide and equip them by your Spirit that your church may grow in wisdom, love and unity. Through all their words and deeds, may your name may be glorified, and all honour and thanks be given to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*The congregation says:*

**The Lord bless you and keep you;**

**the Lord make his face to shine upon you,**

**and be gracious to you;**

**the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.
Amen**