

Help is on the Way

By Gene Roncone



If you're reading this, your church is experiencing a pastoral transition and you may be wondering what steps, resources and coaching your board or search committee will be utilizing. I am pleased to inform you they are using the *Rise Up* pastoral transition resources which are currently the most researched, comprehensive, and practical resources available. Let me answer a few questions you may have.

- 1. Who will decide who our next pastor will be?** If your church is like most churches, the official members of your church are the only group that can officially elect a pastor. Your church bylaws will prescribe specific qualifications, as well as how the screening process and election will take place.
- 2. Who will be screening candidates?** Your bylaws will outline how the church board or pastoral search committee will screen and recommend one candidate to be voted upon by the church members. Their job is not to pick the next pastor, but to recommend to the official members one person who is the most qualified, willing, and available candidate to serve as your new pastor.
- 3. What resources will the search team be using?** Your team will be using the *Rise Up* pastoral transition resource. *Rise Up* is currently the most researched, comprehensive, and practical reference work on pastoral transitions available. It has become a game-changer for many churches and includes:
 - **Rise Up Reference Manual.** A 220-page reference manual containing practical steps, the latest thinking, and best practices in pastoral transitions. This work is also updated annually.
 - **Sustainability initiative.** A church-wide initiative to prepare your people for the journey and to fortify attendance, participation, and giving through the entire transition.
 - **Teaching and small group curriculum.** A sermon series and Bible study to help your church better understand God's purpose behind leadership transitions and the spiritual growth awaiting them on the other side of this journey.
 - **Coaching.** Board/search committee will have unlimited access to coaching and problem-solving from Gene Roncone, the Network Superintendent and author of the *Rise Up* family of resources.
 - **Podcast.** A podcast to coach your board/search committee through important topics and phases of the search process.
 - **Book.** *Defying Gravity, How to Thrive in a Pastoral Transition* is a 70-page paperback book that was written for normal church folks about how to grow spiritually during a pastoral change.
 - **Online survey.** An online congregational survey that gives your people the opportunity to provide input and insight into the needs of your church and traits of your future pastor.
 - **Refresh Devotional.** An online devotional to provide encouragement, pastoral care, and direction for your board/pastoral search team along the journey.Your board will decide which of these resources can best serve your church.
- 4. What steps will the search team be taking?** The *Rise Up* pastoral transition resource contains 13-steps ranging from the moment a resignation occurs to the new pastor's arrival. Some take hours to complete, and others require weeks. It is important to understand that some steps will overlap instead of being confined to neat and tidy compartments of time. Because the search team will be meeting regularly, it is also possible for several stages to be happening at the same time. The size and complexity of your church will also influence the scope and timeline of each step. Following is a graphic summarizing each stage of the process.



5. **How long will this process take?** Most pastoral searches in America take 12-24 months from start to finish. However, churches that use the *Rise Up* pastoral transition resources usually take between five and eight months. It is important to remember that every pastoral transition has unique circumstances that may influence the length and complexity of the transition. The journey has its own share of ups and downs, and it is hard to predict with accuracy this early in the process.
6. **How will we get updates on the search?** In most cases, your board/search committee will be giving weekly updates in church or through letters, emails, or the church website.
7. **How can I help make a positive contribution during this time?** There are several specific ways you can help the board/search committee. These three are the most important.
 - **Pray.** Use our prayer guide at: http://www.agspe.org/Rise_Up_Prayer.pdf.
 - **Read.** The book, *Defying Gravity, How to Thrive in a Pastoral Transition*, will help you tremendously. It's only \$6 and available on Amazon at www.amazon.com/dp/B0B3YSS1YF/.
 - **Listen.** Listen to an audio interview on six positive things you can do to help your church in this pastoral transition at www.agspe.org/RUready.mp3.
8. **How can I best pray for our church during this time?** Next to the Spirit's divine leading, prayer is the most important resource for a successful pastoral transition. Your church will be using a 40-day prayer guide with a daily focus to unite your people in prayer. The 360° prayer guide helps you provide a spiritual covering over every stage and person involved in your pastoral transition. You can download this prayer guide at: http://www.agspe.org/Rise_Up_Prayer.pdf

I'll be praying for your church,

Gene Roncone
 Author of Rise Up Transition Resources