LEAD PASTOR SUCCESSION PLAN

A Suggested 18-Month Framework for Healthy Leadership Transition

EQUIPPING HEALTHY LEADERS.
STRENGTHENING THE CHURCH.
ADVANCING THE GOSPEL.
EFCAEAST.COM

PURPOSE

To provide a prayerful, intentional, and biblically faithful pathway for Lead Pastor transitions across EFCA East churches, ensuring leadership continuity, protecting unity, and advancing the mission of making disciples.

"Entrust to faithful men who will *BE ABLE TO TEACH OTHERS ALSO.*"
- 2 Timothy 2:2

THE 5 WINS

SPIRITUAL HEALTH MAINTAINED
The church remains unified, prayerful and mission-focused.

LEADERSHIP CONTINUITY ESTABLISHED
A qualified, prepared, and affirmed Lead Pastor steps in.

MISSION UNINTERRUPTED
Ministry momentum continues without disruption.

CONGREGATIONAL CONFIDENCE SECURED
Clear and consistent communication builds trust.

BIBLICAL INTEGRITY UPHELD
The process reflects Scripture, EFCA theology, and elder-led governance.

18 MONTH SUCCESSION FRAMEWORK

PHASE 1

DISCERNMENT & ALIGNMENT
Months 1 - 3

FOCUS
Prayer, Clarity, Identification

- Elder Team aligns on need, timing, and process
- Define Lead Pastor profile (biblical + leadership)
- Identify potential internal successors)
- Engage EFCA East District for counsel
- Establish prayer rhythm and confidentiality

PHASE 2

DEVELOPMENT & EVALUATION
Months 4 - 9

FOCUS
Development, Exposure, Assessment

- Increase preaching and leadership opportunities
- Provide coaching and theological development
- Conduct structured evaluations (quarterly)
- Assess readiness and church alignment
- Decide: internal successor or external search

PHASE 3

AFFIRMATION & PREPERATION
Months 10 - 14

FOCUS
Confirmation, Visibility, Readiness

- Successor steps into expanded leadership role
- Elders finalize recommendation
- Conduct doctrinal and leadership assessment
- Begin congregational communication + Q&A
- Prepare for affirmation process (as applicable)

PHASE 4

COMMUNICATION & TRANSITION
Months 15 - 18

FOCUS
Clarity, Transfer, Instalation

- Staff communication (Mo. 15)
- Congregational announcement (Mo. 16)
- Gradual transfer of leadership responsibilities
- Outgoing pastor publicly affirms successor
- Installation Service and formal transition (Mo.18)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **CLARITY** over ambiguity
- **UNITY** over preference
- **PROCESS** over personality
- **PRAYER** over pressure
- **MISSION** over transition

EFCA EAST PARTNERS WITH LOCAL CHURCHES BY PROVIDING:

- Leadership Coaching and Counsel
- Process Alignment and guidance
- Support For Emerging Leaders
- Framework and Tools for a Healthy Transition

Strengthening Churches For Greater Gospel Impact