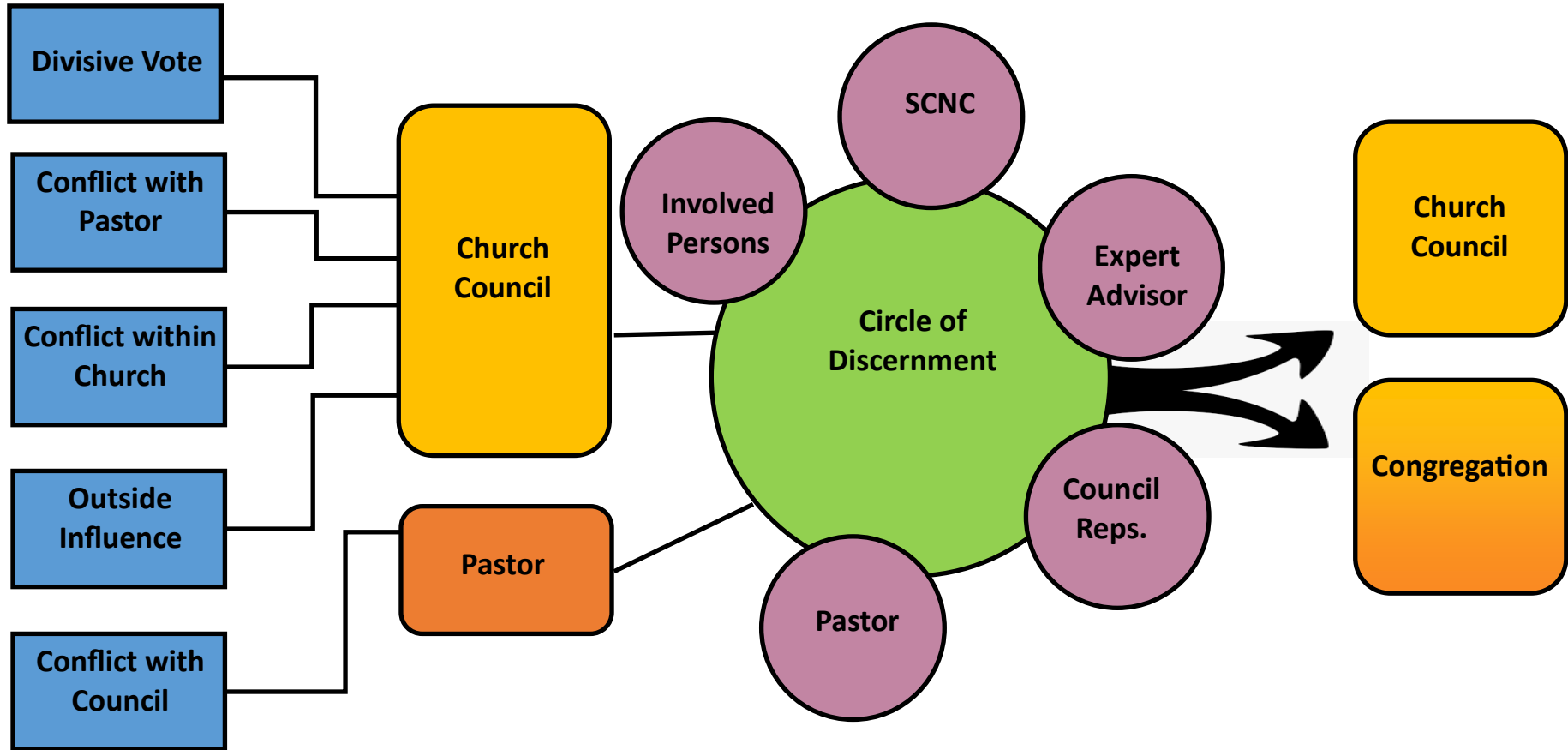


## Responding to Conflict and Resolving Difficult Decisions

In congregational decisions that seem likely to result in a close vote, in cases of conflict within the Church, or if there are concerns about an outside entity trying to impact the Church in a negative way, a “Circle of Discernment” may be instituted.



In the case of a potentially divisive vote, the Moderator and Pastor, if in agreement, may relegate an issue to a Circle of Discernment, preempting a congregational vote. This may also occur by a majority vote of those present without the Pastor or Moderator’s endorsement

In the case of a conflict with the Pastor, the Council may refer the issue to a Circle of Discernment. The Pastor may also request this process be initiated. In either case, members of the Council and the Pastor should both be part of the Circle of Discernment.

In the case of a conflict within the Church, Council may form a Circle of Discernment to address the issue and seek resolution. All involved persons should be included in the process and outside experts or support drawn upon as the Council deems necessary.

In the case of a conflict that involves trust or transparency with the Church Council, the Pastor may initiate a Circle of Discernment and should include SCNC Conference leadership in the process. Results may be presented directly to the Congregation if deepened appropriate.

Should the Church Council or Pastor believe an outside entity is attempting to influence the congregation by sending new participants with an agenda of changing the church, a Circle of Discernment may be created to deal with the concern. SCNC leadership should be involved.