



Information for Teaching Elders Considering a Pastoral Call in The Presbytery Of Donegal

Greetings! We are delighted that you are considering whether God is calling you to a congregation in the Presbytery of Donegal. Here is some information that will be helpful to you in a pastoral search. Congregations call or contract with pastors in partnership with the presbytery Connecting Our Ministry Commission (COM). All documents referred to in these guidelines may be found on the Presbytery of Donegal Website at this address (or search for “Entering the Presbytery”):

<http://www.donegalpby.org/docs-forms/com-documents-forms/entering-the-presbytery/>

For a complete overview of the search process, please read the Presbytery of Donegal Vacancy Handbook, which describes all stages in the search process.

In the PC(USA) pastoral positions are either Installed Pastorates (for an unlimited term or a designated term) or Non-installed. Non-installed positions include Interim Pastorates, Temporary Pastorates (for positions expected to last less than a year) and Covenant Pastorates (long-term non-installed positions.)

Steps in the Call Process under COM oversight:

1. **Submission of PIF:** The call process begins with the submission of a Personal Information Form (PIF) either to a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) or to a search team for non-installed positions. Formula of Agreement pastors submit the ministry profile developed by their denomination.
2. **Reference Checks:** If there is mutual interest after preliminary conversations, the PNC or search team requests that the Executive Presbytery-to-Presbytery Reference check be conducted. This reference check is conducted by the Executive Presbyter and/or the Stated Clerk, following the questions outlined in the Executive Reference Check Process. The PNC/Search Team also conducts reference checks with previous employers.
3. **Com “Fit Between Person and Position” Conversation:** The COM Fit Between Person and Position Conversation is scheduled when a PNC/Search Team brings an applicant for a site visit as a significant next step. This visit is often held in conjunction with scheduling a “Neutral Pulpit” for the applicant to demonstrate how they preach and lead worship. The Purpose of the COM Fit Conversation is to talk with the applicant about the ways their gifts and skills and the potential congregation seem to be a good match, and to talk about areas that raise questions about whether this is a suitable call. This conversation is conducted for both Installed and Non-Installed positions. The PNC/Search Team will work with COM to schedule the conversation, generally on Monday mornings, if a Neutral Pulpit/Site Visit has been conducted on a weekend. No call may begin without this meeting and the endorsement of COM.

4. **Faith Statement and Biography of Faith Journey:** At both the COM Fit Between Person and Position Conversation and the meeting with the Examination Commission, some of the required materials include a Faith Statement and a brief "Faith Journey Biography." Guidelines for the Faith Statement are on the Entering the Presbytery page.
5. **Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Required Clearances:** Pennsylvania requires a State Criminal History Background check, a Child Abuse Clearance, and an FBI Background check with fingerprinting. By law, no clergy position may begin until the clearances are on hand. Even if clearances have been on file, they must be completed again, unless they were completed in 2016 or later. The instructions are on the Entering the Presbytery page, and should be followed to the letter, as the state systems are cumbersome. If you will be potentially be coming to the presbytery from out of state, it is a good idea to obtain the FBI fingerprints while here for a site visit, as it can take some time to receive the FBI clearance back in the mail. Be sure to request a receipt when providing the fingerprints at an authorized location.
6. **Examination Commission:** Examination as a teaching elder member of the Presbytery of Donegal is accomplished through the Examination Commission. All teaching elders accepting calls in the presbytery must become members of the presbytery with one exception: teaching elders who live in a contiguous presbytery, and who will be commuting to an interim or temporary call in the Presbytery of Donegal may remain as members of their home presbytery, if the COMs of both presbyteries agree that the pastor will labor outside the bounds of their presbytery in Donegal temporarily. Any other exceptions need special approval from both COMs. See the Examination Commission information for more information.
7. **Boundary Training:** All teaching elders who accept pastoral positions in the presbytery of Donegal must participate in the presbytery Boundary Training, which is held several times per year. The training includes peer-based conversation on boundary issues in ministry, and includes training in policies on Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response, Child/Youth Protection training, and Social Media training.

If we can be of any assistance to you as you consider a call in the Presbytery of Donegal, please feel free to be in touch.

Erin Cox-Holmes, Executive Presbyter

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