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Church Leadership Connection

On Calling a Pastor



*A resource for
pastor nominating committees
and mid councils,
prepared by
Church Leadership Connection
and the Office of the General Assembly*



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On Calling a Pastor

A Manual for Churches Seeking Pastors

*This is what GOD says, the God who builds a road right through the ocean,
who carves a path through pounding waves,
The God who summons horses and chariots
and armies—they lie down and then can't get up;
they're snuffed out like so many candles:
"Forget about what's happened; don't keep going over old history.
Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand-new.
It's bursting out! Don't you see it? (Isaiah 43:16- 19 - The Message Bible)*

As you begin the journey to find new pastoral leadership, the next few months will be exciting, tedious, joyful, spiritually fulfilling, frustrating, inspiring, lengthy, and purposeful. The process is one of discernment and will challenge the congregation to listen closely for the will of God for its mission and ministry in this new stage of the congregation's life.

This is a new step of faith that will bring your congregation together around the common goal of identifying who God is calling to serve your congregation. This manual is designed to be a resource for those who are on this journey. We suggest that you use this resource to guide you through the call process. The policies and procedures of your presbytery will always take precedence over this manual. Therefore, it is important for the session, presbytery, and the PNC to stay in regular contact with one another so that everything may be done "decently and in order" from the time of a pastor's departure all the way through the calling and installing of a new pastor.

This resource is formatted into a PDF that may be read online or downloaded and printed. It also includes videos that expand several topics. Topics that include videos are indicated with an icon. Click on the icon to link to the video online at www.pcusa.org/clc. Web pages where appropriate are provided with helpful links for further resourcing. Leadership Competencies case studies are provided for group activity and discussions in Part Five.

Each section of the manual builds upon the next to walk you through the call process: demonstrating the denomination's theology of call and the role of each partner in the call process, inputting your form into the CLC system, and providing words of wisdom to increase the likelihood of you making the best ministry match possible.

Those who would benefit most from having this manual are sessions, presbytery liaisons, PNCs and others who support congregations in the midst of transition.

As you embark on this journey, we pray that you will know the power of God's presence each step of the way. When you finally find the person whom God has called to be your new pastor, we hope you will be a blessing to the world in your ministry together.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Office of the General Assembly
Church Leadership Connection (CLC)
Mid Council Ministries

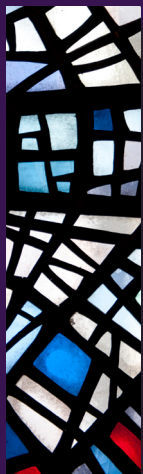
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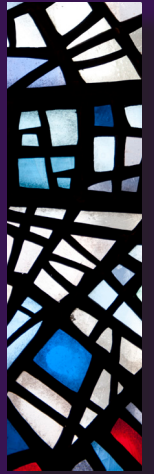
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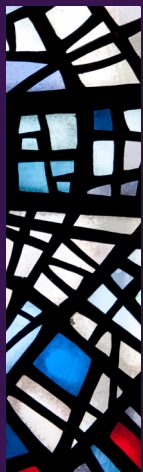
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PART ONE — Introduction to Calling a Pastor

Acronyms Used in This Resource

A number of acronyms are used in the call process. To help you become familiar with the most common acronyms, we have listed them below.

Book of Order

F — Foundations of Presbyterian Polity

G — Form of Government

W — Directory for Worship

D — Rules of Discipline

MIF Ministry Information Form

CLC Church Leadership Connection

EP/GP Executive/General Presbyter

PIF Personal Information Form

PNC Pastor Nominating Committee

COM Committee/Commissions on Ministry

CPM Committee/Commissions on Preparation for Ministry

Video Introduction

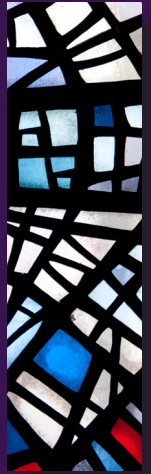
- ❖ On Calling a Pastor Video Introduction

<http://www.pcusa.org/ocap> 

- ❖ Spiritual Resources for the Journey

The most important resources you will need on this journey are the spiritual resources of Scripture and prayer. During this journey, be deliberate about spending time together with God's word and in prayer, not simply as bookends to a meeting but as an important part of listening for God's spirit. Here are a few resources that may be helpful on your journey:

<i>Scripture Passages About Call:</i>		<i>Other Scriptures:</i>	
Genesis 12:1–9	Abram	Genesis 32:22–32	Jacob wrestles with God
Genesis 24:1–61	Rebekah	Isaiah 52:7	The purpose of preaching
Exodus 3:1–12	Moses	Nehemiah 2:12	God's mission
1 Samuel 3	Samuel	Nehemiah 1:4–11	Bathe your work in prayer
1 Kings 19:1–18	Elijah	Ezekiel 37:1–14	The valley of dry bones
1 Kings 19:19–21	Elisha	Joel 2:28	Women and men are called
Esther 4:1–17	Esther	Matthew 20:26	Servant leaders
Isaiah 6:1–13	Isaiah	Matthew 22:14	Many are called but few are chosen
Jonah 1	Jonah	Matthew 28:16–20	The Great Commission
Matthew 4:18–22	The disciples	Matthew 6:25–34	Don't worry
Luke 1:26–55	Mary	Jeremiah 3:15	Pastors after God's heart
John 1:43–51	Philip and Nathanael	Acts 1:8	Empowered by the Holy Spirit
Acts 1:15–26	Matthias	1 Corinthians 12:4–27	Diversity of gifts
Acts 9:1–19	Paul	Ephesians 4:12	Equipping the church for ministry
Acts 16:14–15	Lydia		
Revelation 3:14–22	The churches		





Other Resources:

- ❖ The *Book of Order*, especially the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity, Chapters 1–3
- ❖ The *Book of Common Worship*, especially Daily Prayer

God Calls Women and Men to Serve as Pastors

“In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God’s image, male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community.”

(Book of Confessions, Brief Statement of Faith, 10.3, Lines 29–32)

“The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.”

(Book of Confessions, Brief Statement of Faith, 10.4, Lines 58–64)

Beliefs in Practice



Openness

F-1.0404 Book of Order

In Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all creation, the Church seeks a new openness to God’s mission in the world. In Christ, the triune God tends the least among us, suffers the curse of human sinfulness, raises up a new humanity, and promises a new future for all creation. In Christ, Church members share with all humanity the realities of creatureliness, sinfulness, brokenness, and suffering, as well as the future toward which God is drawing them. The mission of God pertains not only to the Church but also to people everywhere and to all creation. As it participates in God’s mission, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks:

a new openness to the sovereign activity of God in the Church and in the world, to a more radical obedience to Christ, and to a more joyous celebration in worship and work;

a new openness in its own membership, becoming in fact as well as in faith a community of women and men of all ages, races, ethnicities, and worldly conditions, made one in Christ by the power of the Spirit, as a visible sign of the new humanity;

a new openness to see both the possibilities and perils of its institutional forms in order to ensure the faithfulness and usefulness of these forms to God’s activity in the world; and

a new openness to God’s continuing reformation of the Church ecumenical, that it might be more effective in its mission.

Connectionalism

Presbyterians as members of the Body of Christ live out our faith through connectional polity. The polity of the church provides a denomination-wide PC(USA) framework in which we confess together our creeds and our acts of faith. In a connectional system, decisions made by one body affect the body as a whole. Each governing body supports, guides, and holds accountable the other bodies in a faithful attempt to live out our faith as confessed in scripture and our *Book of Confessions*.

Teaching Elder Defined

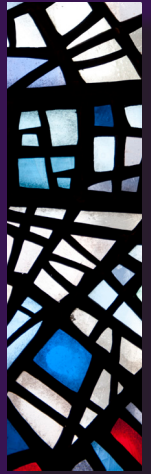
G-2.0501 Book of Order

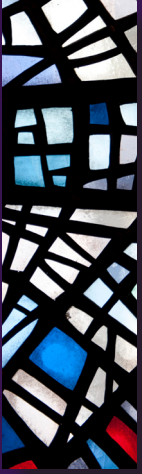
Teaching elders (also called ministers of the Word and Sacrament) shall in all things be committed to teaching the faith and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:12). They may serve in a variety of ministries, as authorized by the presbytery. When they serve as preachers and teachers of the Word, they shall preach and teach the faith of the church, so that the people are shaped by the pattern of the gospel and strengthened for witness and service. When they serve at font and table, they shall interpret the mysteries of grace and lift the people's vision toward the hope of God's new creation. When they serve as pastors, they shall support the people in the disciplines of the faith amid the struggles of daily life. When they serve as presbyters, they shall participate in the responsibilities of governance, seeking always to discern the mind of Christ and to build up Christ's body through devotion, debate, and decision.

Ordination Standards

G-2.0104b Book of Order

Standards for ordained service reflect the church's desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life (F-1.02). The council responsible for ordination and/or installation (G-2.0402; G-2.0607; G-3.0306) shall examine each candidate's calling, gifts, preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of ordered ministry. The examination shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the candidate's ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003). Councils shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates.







PART TWO — Teaching Elders as Pastors

Types of Pastoral Positions

The types of pastoral positions are pastor, co-pastor, and associate pastor. Pastoral relationships with congregations can be either “installed” or “temporary.”

Installed Pastoral Relationships

Installed pastoral relationships are typically for an indefinite period. However, an installed pastor may be called for a designated term as determined by the presbytery, in consultation with the congregation. Calls with a predetermined end date may be renewed for an additional designated term or changed, with the approval of the presbytery and congregation, to an indefinite call.

Temporary Pastoral Relationships

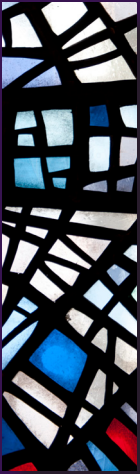
- ❖ Session invites for service with presbytery concurrence
- ❖ Teaching elder, PC(USA) or other; PC(USA) candidate, or ruling elder
- ❖ Titles determined by presbytery
- ❖ Up to twelve-month terms, but may be renewed

“Titles and terms of service for temporary relationships shall be determined by the presbytery. A person serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is invited for a specified period not to exceed twelve months in length, which is renewable with the approval of the presbytery. A teaching elder employed in a temporary pastoral relationship is ordinarily not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor.” (*Book of Order*, G-2.0504b)

Succession Restrictions

Ordinarily an associate pastor is not eligible to become the next installed pastor of the congregation he or she is serving. In the same way, a temporary pastor is not ordinarily eligible to become the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor (*Book of Order*, G-2.0504a-b). If a presbytery determines that in its mission strategy it is advisable for a teaching elder currently serving as associate pastor or temporary pastor, to be permitted to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor, the relationship shall be established by a three-fourths vote of the members of the presbytery present and voting (*Book of Order*, G-2.0504c).





Ministers of Other Denominations

The *Book of Order* affirms the ecumenical commitment of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), particularly in Chapter Five of the Form of Government: Ecumenicity and Union. This section outlines our relationships with other denominations and holds that the basis of these relationships is to give visibility to the unity that exists in Christ.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has authorized and directed the formation of covenants, agreements, and statements of purpose with other Christian bodies that address, among other things, the mutual recognition of baptism and the orderly exchange of ministers. Such agreements are said to place us in correspondence with one another.

The PC(USA) is in a relationship of correspondence, meaning the church maintains a relationship with the highest council or governing body with the following:

- ❖ Churches with which the PC(USA) has had historical relations outside the United States, as recognized by the General Assembly.
- ❖ Churches that are members of the ecumenical bodies (for example: the World Council of Churches, World Communion of Reformed Churches, National Council of Churches, Christian Churches Together, etc.) in which the PC(USA) holds membership.
- ❖ Churches with which the PC(USA) has formal ecumenical dialogue approved by the General Assembly.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is in full communion or covenant relationship with those churches so recognized by the General Assembly. These relationships exist as a matter of ecumenical agreement.

Covenant of Agreement Partners



A minister of another Reformed Church as a part of the Formula of Agreement may be permitted to serve a PC(USA) congregation under the Orderly Exchange Process. Ministers of Formula of Agreement denominations (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ) under “Orderly Exchange” may serve as an installed or temporary pastor of a PC(USA) congregation by invitation from a PC(USA) presbytery (regional mid council).

For more information see:

- ❖ Advisory Opinion for Receiving Ministers of Other Denominations <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/ecclesial-and-ecumenical-ministries/ecumenical-and-agency-relationships/correspondence-and-pcusa/>
- ❖ Formula of Agreement <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/ecumenical-formula-agreement/>
- ❖ Under Covenant Agreement Between the Korean Presbyterian Church Abroad and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/kpca_pcusa_orderly_exchange_w_out_pif_revised\[1\].pdf](http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/kpca_pcusa_orderly_exchange_w_out_pif_revised[1].pdf)
- ❖ Highlights to calling ministers under the Formula of Agreement (the Process for Orderly Exchange) <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/summary-guidelines-employment-ministers-other-deno>

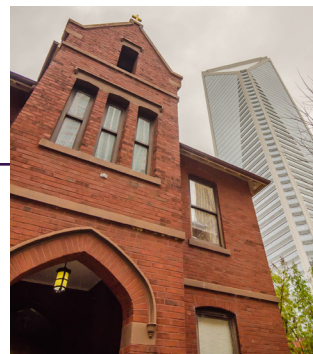
Ministers of Other Christian Churches

Ministers of other denominations that are not a part of the Formula of Agreement churches may serve PC(USA) congregations on a temporary basis if their service meets the mission strategy of the presbytery. Refer to your presbytery for guidance on this issue.

Immigrant Fellowships and Congregations

Immigrant fellowships and congregations often have particular needs for pastoral leadership that may be difficult to fill. When the presbytery determines that its mission strategy with one of these fellowships or congregations requires it, the presbytery may recognize the ordination of a minister in good standing in another denomination. If the minister lacks the educational history required of our candidates, the presbytery will then provide educational opportunities as necessary and prudent for the minister's successful ministry in the presbytery. Immigrant fellowships and congregations must work closely with the presbytery to secure appropriate pastoral leadership and to ensure that they are following the constitutional process described in G-20505a (1) for calling an immigrant pastor.

Leadership Options for Small Congregations



- ❖ PC(USA) Teaching Elders — Called to serve smaller congregations as part-time pastors in installed and temporary positions.
- ❖ Bi-Vocational/Tentmakers — PC(USA) teaching elders who serve as pastor and also work in other employment that may be ministry related or not. When considering a tentmaker pastor, it is important to remember that the person must divide his or her time among multiple employers. The pastor will be restricted in the number of hours he or she has available to work for the church. These individuals are members of the presbytery and serve as all other teaching elders except in their hourly commitment to the congregation.
- ❖ Supply/Temporary Pastors — Teaching elders and candidates serving as temporary supply pastors. The specific title of the position may differ among presbyteries. These contract positions are made with the session with the approval of the presbytery. The contract positions are for twelve months and can be renewed annually with presbytery approval. (For more information, see G-2.504b.)
- ❖ Small Church Residency Program — Open to first-call pastors who are PC(USA) candidates for ministry and have been certified by their presbyteries as ready to negotiate for service. This program pairs small, underserved congregations in a variety of ministry settings with recent seminary graduates who are interested in answering God's call to serve where there is need in the PC(USA), specifically in small-membership congregations. For more information see:

— <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/residency/about-program/>

— Video — www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/residency/videos/





- ❖ Ruling Elders Commissioned for Particular Pastoral Service (CRE) — Ruling elders may be commissioned to a particular congregation for a specified term that should not exceed three years. However, the commission can be renewed. Ruling elders who seek to serve as CREs must meet the training and examination of their presbytery. The commission of CREs is limited to their presbytery of membership. For more information, see G-2.10.

Raising Up New Leaders Video — <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/clp/> 



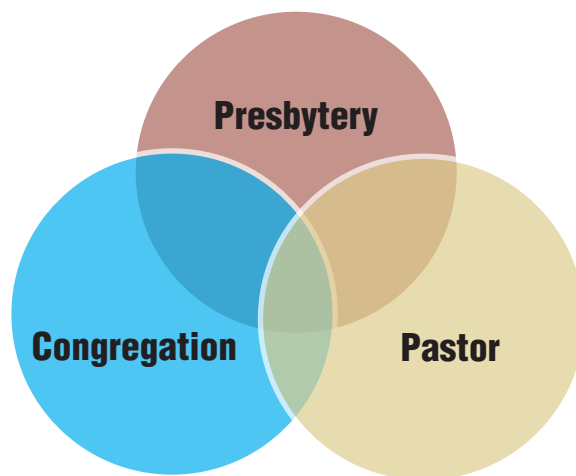
PART THREE — The Call Process

“...The question before us could be framed thusly: ‘God, whom are you selecting/calling at this time to lead in this church? Show us your choice.’”

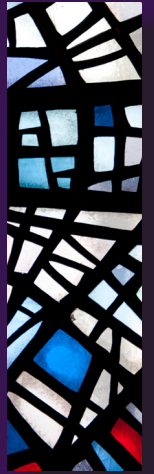
— Selecting Church Leaders,
The Alban Institute, 2002

“Christ calls the Church into being, giving it all that is necessary for its mission in the world, for its sanctification, and for its service to God. Christ is present with the Church in both Spirit and Word. Christ alone rules, calls, teaches, and uses the Church as he wills.” (Book of Order, F-1.0202).

Presbyterians believe that God uses committees, papers, procedures, and our polity, sprinkled with a generous measure of prayer, Scripture, and worship, to help you discern who it is that God is calling to be your pastor. This call is confirmed as the pastor, the church, and the presbytery each say “yes” to the relationship.



This three-way partnership is acted out throughout the pastoral call process, with the presbytery having the primary responsibility for oversight of the process. “... No pastoral relationship may be established, changed, or dissolved without the approval of the presbytery” (Book of Order, G-2.0502).



During the time of transition between pastors, a congregation is invited to engage in a spiritual discernment process to discover or reconfirm its call to ministry—what God wants the church to be and do in the next phase of the congregation’s life. Your presbytery may ask your congregation to engage in a mission study that involves Bible study, prayer, and an honest and thoughtful look at your congregation and community, as a way to discern the ministry direction in which God is leading you.

Once this becomes clear, the pastor nominating committee (PNC), in consultation with the presbytery, begins the discernment process of discovering who God is calling to be the pastor in this next chapter of your congregation’s life and ministry.

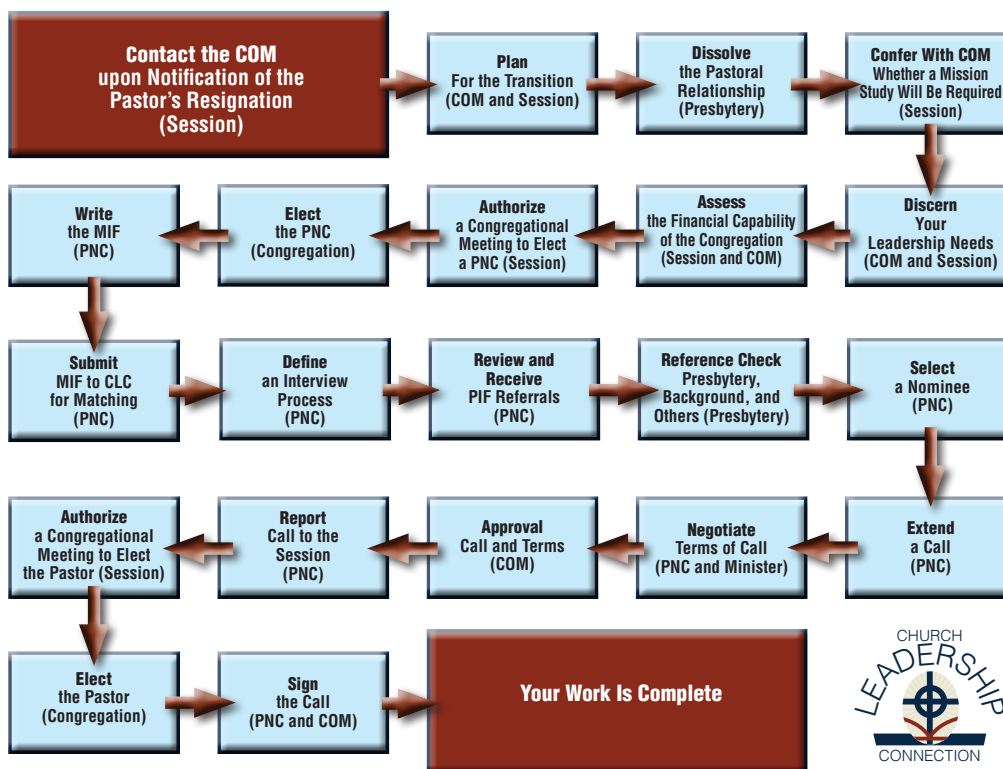
Polity and the Call Process



The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) call process reflects the way our ministry is governed today. Our church polity is representative, and this form of government is seen throughout the call process. To understand how our polity is distinct from that of other denominations, see this short video on Denominational Polities at <http://www.pcusa.org/ocap>.

Below is a suggested call process. It describes the role of each partner in the process: the presbytery, COM, session, PNC, pastor, and congregation. For additional information, view the video, The Call Process, at <http://www.pcusa.org/ocap>.

The Call Process



Book of Order References — Call and Installation

G-2.07	Ordination
G-2.0801	Pastoral Vacancy
G-2.0802	Election of a Pastor Nominating Committee
G-2.0803	Call Process
G-2.0804	Terms of Call
G-2.0805	Installation Service

Presbytery as a Participant in the Pastoral Call Process**Presbytery's Role**

The presbytery will be your companion in the search process, often through someone who will serve as your liaison. Your presbytery liaison will provide you with guidance, resources, and other services as you go through the pastoral search process. In many presbyteries, the liaison will help you to assess your leadership needs, financial health, and the type of pastoral leadership you need such as full-time, part-time, bi-vocational, installed, or temporary. It is wise to consult regularly with your presbytery liaison not only for advice and guidance but to keep him or her informed, especially at key times in your pastoral search process.

The presbytery will work closely with the pastor nominating committee (PNC), which has been elected to present a pastor or associate pastor nominee to the congregation. The presbytery has the responsibility to guide and participate in the decision of the PNC. The presbytery will provide the PNC “counsel on the merits, suitability, and availability of those considered for the call” (*Book of Order*, G-2.0803).

Each presbytery is unique and will have its own procedures and policies regarding the search process, which supersede any procedures found in this manual. Therefore, it is important for a congregation seeking a new pastor to be in regular contact with the presbytery.

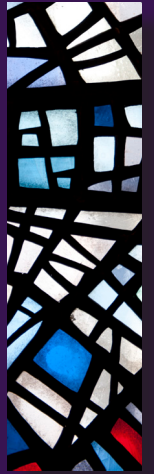
Key Times for Presbytery Involvement

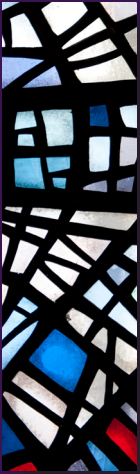
There are several key times in the call process when it is particularly important for presbytery to be involved with your congregation.

When Your Pastor Announces His or Her Departure. As your current pastor prepares to leave, presbytery has the responsibility to dissolve the pastoral relationship, appoint a moderator for your session, and provide you with guidance about pulpit supply.

During the Pastoral Vacancy. Presbytery has the responsibility to assist the session with issues related to pastoral vacancies, including securing temporary pastoral leadership; assessing congregational finances, including costs associated with a pastoral search and pastoral compensation; engaging in a congregational mission study (if required); approval of the Ministry Information Form (MIF); and nominating and electing a PNC.

Working with the Pastor Nominating Committee. Presbytery has the responsibility to guide the PNC through the pastoral call process, providing training, oversight, and assistance. Presbytery will also have a role in reference and background checks for the finalists being considered. Presbytery must examine the PNC's finalist for presbytery membership and concur with the PNC's final decision before a call can be issued.





When the New Pastor Is Called. Presbytery has the responsibility to ensure that the call to your new pastor is in order and that the appropriate actions are taken by the congregation and presbytery.

When Your Pastor Is Ordained and/or Installed. The call process for your new pastor is completed at a service of ordination and/or installation that is organized and conducted by the presbytery, often through the work of a presbytery-appointed administrative commission.

As Your Pastor Ministers with You. The presbytery remains your partner in this pastoral relationship. Some presbyteries assign a permanent liaison to each congregation in the presbytery who will visit often and participate in special occasions, while other presbyteries assign representatives to visit with you periodically. Don't hesitate to call your presbytery if you need extra support or guidance.

Other Participants in the Pastoral Call Process

The Session

The session's responsibility is to set a positive and reassuring tone during the pastoral search process. This includes assisting the congregation in coping with the departure of the pastor, carrying on with the ministry of the congregation, and looking forward to the next stage of the congregation's life together. During this process the session should meet regularly with the moderator appointed by the presbytery in order to continue to fulfill its responsibilities for the congregation's worship life, Christian education, pastoral care, fellowship, mission, and administration. Session responsibilities, in consultation with presbytery, include:

- ❖ Securing guest preachers and providing for pastoral care during the immediate vacancy;
- ❖ With concurrence of presbytery, finding and contracting with temporary pastoral leadership for the longer vacancy period;
- ❖ Providing for and participating in a congregational mission study, if appropriate or required by the presbytery;
- ❖ Providing a process for the congregation to elect a PNC, including suggesting the number of PNC members;
- ❖ Calling a congregational meeting for the election of the PNC;
- ❖ Budgeting funds for the PNC to cover search expenses;
- ❖ Determining the financial compensation available for your new pastor, including moving costs;
- ❖ Reviewing and approving the completed MIF in order that the clerk of session may attest to it in CLC;
- ❖ Praying regularly for the PNC;
- ❖ Calling a congregational meeting when the PNC is ready to present its nominee to the congregation;
- ❖ Preparing for the new pastor's arrival by attending to such details as manse renovation, moving, and welcoming;
- ❖ Arranging for the ordination and/or installation of your new pastor in consultation with the presbytery.

The Moderator of Session

During a pastoral vacancy, the presbytery will appoint someone to moderate the session and congregational meetings. In many instances, the temporary pastor working with the session will be appointed to serve as moderator. The moderator's responsibilities include helping the session fulfill its responsibilities for the congregation's life and ministries.

The Temporary Pastor

The temporary pastor provides pastoral leadership during the congregation's search for the next pastor. The presbytery can help the session determine if the church needs a temporary pastor and what responsibilities the temporary pastor will have. An interim pastor is a temporary pastor who has special expertise and training in working with congregations in the midst of a pastoral transition. The temporary pastor's responsibilities often include:

- ❖ Worship leadership, including preaching and administration of the sacraments;
- ❖ Providing pastoral care;
- ❖ Serving as moderator of session (when appointed by presbytery) and working with the session to provide for the life and ministry of the congregation;
- ❖ Administrative work, including supervision of other staff persons;
- ❖ Supporting the work of the PNC, but not being directly involved with their work;
- ❖ Assisting with the congregational mission study (with presbytery approval);
- ❖ Helping the congregation prepare to welcome the leadership of a new pastor.

The Pastor Nominating Committee

The pastor nominating committee (PNC), representative of the whole congregation and elected by the congregation, has the ultimate responsibility for nominating a minister to the congregation for election as the next pastor or associate pastor. Over a number of months, the PNC will journey through the pastoral search process, seeking to hear the call of Christ and "to participate in God's own choice" for your next pastor. In the pastoral call process, the PNC's responsibilities include:

- ❖ Completing the congregation's MIF and submitting it to session and presbytery for approval;
- ❖ Entering the approved MIF online with Church Leadership Connection (CLC);
- ❖ Receiving, reading, and evaluating Personal Information Forms (PIF) in a spirit of prayerful openness to the movement of God's Spirit;
- ❖ Regularly providing reports to the congregation on the pastoral search progress;
- ❖ Narrowing the field of prospective pastors through listening to sermons, reference checking (by both the PNC and the presbytery), and phone or video conference interviews—all while sharing, listening, and praying together;
- ❖ Interviewing face-to-face the "short list" of prospective pastors, providing for a welcoming and hospitable visit to your church community;
- ❖ Arranging with the presbytery for the necessary examinations and approvals of your finalists;
- ❖ Selecting one nominee to present to the congregation and negotiating the terms of call;
- ❖ Obtaining presbytery approval of the call;
- ❖ Presenting the nominee to the congregation for its vote;
- ❖ Following the affirmative vote of the congregation, signing the pastoral terms of call for the new pastor;
- ❖ Notifying Church Leadership Connection (CLC) when a call has been extended and accepted.





The Congregation

The responsibilities of the congregation, while few, are no less important than those of the other participants in the pastoral call process. The responsibilities of the congregation include:

- ❖ Continuing to support the ministry of the church through prayer, participation, and financial support during the time of pastoral transition;
- ❖ Electing the PNC;
- ❖ Praying regularly for the PNC;
- ❖ Electing the new pastor and approving the terms of call;
- ❖ Welcoming the new pastor as the ministry begins.



PART FOUR — The Transition



Dissolving the Pastoral Relationship

When a pastor announces his or her acceptance of another call for service or his or her retirement, the congregation often experiences a variety of emotions: sadness, anger, betrayal, or even relief. It is important that the exit of the pastor is handled well for the benefit of all concerned. Congregation members and the pastor need time and opportunity to celebrate their ministry together and say goodbye. It is important that the exit time be neither so short that goodbyes do not get said nor so long that everyone is ready to move on before the actual departure date. A good ending is the foundation of a good new beginning for the next pastor.

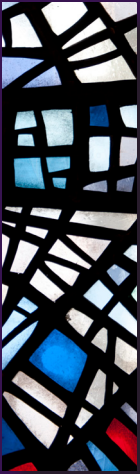
The minister will inform the presbytery and the session and shortly thereafter share the news with the congregation. The session calls a congregational meeting to act on the minister's request that the relationship be dissolved. The congregational action becomes a recommendation to presbytery, which will vote to dissolve the pastoral relationship. The pastoral relationship between a pastor or associate pastor and a church is dissolved only by presbytery.

Resources for Congregations in Pastoral Transition

Beginning Ministry Together: The Alban Handbook for Clergy Transitions. Roy. M. Oswald, James M. Heath, and Ann W. Heath, The Alban Institute, 2003.

A Change of Pastors ... And How It Affects Change in the Congregation. Loren B. Mead, The Alban Institute, 2005.





Planning for Transition

The transition between pastors is a valuable time for congregations. It is an opportunity to reflect on your congregation, its community context, and its ministry in the present and future. It may also provide the opportunity to experience different styles of pastoral leadership and to work on particular issues facing the congregation. The session, the presbytery, and the PNC (once it is elected) work together to make the transition time constructive. Plan your transition with your ministry context and vision for ministry in mind. Consult with your presbytery and other key leaders to discern how to use the transition period for spiritual renewal, understanding your call to ministry today, reorganizing, and future ministry planning.

Next Steps in Ministry

WHO ARE WE?

WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BE?

WHERE IS GOD CALLING US TO GO?

Having a good understanding of the above questions will help you decide the type of leadership you will need in your new pastor. The answers to the above questions will also help you communicate your ministry narrative to prospective pastors discerning a call to your congregation. For more information see the video on Mission Studies at

<http://www.pcusa.org/ocap> 

As presbyteries work with congregations during their search for a new pastor, the goal is to assist them in making the best match possible. Making a good match begins with having a clear picture of who the congregation is and who God is calling it to become. Presbyteries take a variety of approaches to what is often called a “mission study.” Some presbyteries use a particular approach that all of their congregations must follow. Others make suggestions with regard to several instruments that can be employed for this purpose. Still others recommend that, in most cases, it will be much more beneficial to wait until the new pastor arrives to do an in-depth study so that the new pastor can be a part of that process. In such cases, the presbytery may suggest a much shorter process than the traditional mission study.

Here are some questions that your presbytery committee, working with churches in pastoral searches, might want to ask as it determines what suggestions it might make.

1. How long has it been since the last pastoral search?
2. Have there been significant changes in the size or financial capabilities of the congregation since the last search?
3. Are there significant changes in the community the congregation serves? Are there new immigrants, has there been a gain or loss in population, has there been an economic boom or bust?
4. Does the congregation have the energy level to conduct an in-depth study?
5. Is there a trained interim pastor in place? If so, does this person do a mission study as a routine part of his or her service as an interim/transitional pastor?
6. Has there been significant conflict in the church?
7. Did the last pastorate end precipitously?

There may be other questions that your presbytery's committee would like to ask to help determine the kind of guidance it will give with regard to a mission study.

Research Services, a ministry of the PC(USA), provides helpful and free online resources to congregations engaging in a mission study. These resources are available at www.pcusa.org/research/help and include:

- ❖ *Research Strategies for Congregations.* A compilation of tools that can be used to help you understand the people in your church and community, including information on congregational surveys.
- ❖ *Ten-Year Trends in Your Congregation.* Data from your congregation's annual statistical report for the most recent ten years with graphs and comparisons.
- ❖ Zip Code Statistics — www.zip-code.com
- ❖ City Data — <http://www.city-data.com>

Assessing Your Finances



A critical step before searching for a new pastor is a financial assessment. The session, in conversation with the presbytery, should determine whether there will be sufficient funds to adequately support the pastor you call.

- ❖ It is important to not only to have the resources to call a pastor but to also have the financial resources to carry out ministry through education programs, mission outreach, per capita, presbytery missions, spiritual formation, building upkeep, and other personnel.
- ❖ Moving cost should be budgeted into your financial assessment.
- ❖ Cost for conducting your pastoral search (interviews, in person visits, and neutral pulpits) should also be included.





Compensation Package

Consider a compensation package that is appropriate for a pastor with the skills and experience you are seeking as well as for the cost of living in your community. A conversation with your presbytery, a review of the current Board of Pensions Clergy Effective Salaries, and a look at similar church positions listed on the online CLC “Opportunity Search” may be helpful in assisting you to make that determination. Most presbyteries have established minimum “effective” compensation guidelines that must be met for pastoral positions within the presbytery. Be sure you know the current presbytery guidelines.

The manse, if you have one, is an important part of the compensation package. On the Effective Salary Form, the value of your manse should be calculated into the Terms of Call.

See the Board of Pensions resource at <http://www.pensions.org/AvailableResources/BookletsandPublications/Documents/pln-103.pdf> for a full definition of Effective Salary.

The compensation package should also include a budget for medical, death, disability, and pension coverage for your pastor through the Board of Pensions. Most presbyteries also require that terms of call include continuing education allowances, SECA (social security off-set), and mileage reimbursement as minimum additions to the salary package.

For part-time calls, your obligation for effective salary and other benefits is determined by the number of hours worked and whether the pastor is in an installed call. Consult your presbytery COM (representative) for guidance in understanding your salary requirements.



Electing a Pastor Nominating Committee

In the PC(USA) call process, the congregation gives authority to search for a pastor to a pastor nominating committee (PNC). Once the PNC is elected, the other members of the congregation and the session have no role in determining who will be the next pastor until the PNC is ready to present its nominee to the congregation for a vote.

The presbytery has a responsibility to work with the PNC members, to advise them, and to evaluate the nominee they select to present to the congregation. The presbytery is authorized by our *Book of Order* to be partners with you in your discernment process.

The presbytery may have recommendations for the session regarding the number of members for a PNC and the process of electing a PNC. Often congregations will use the congregation's nominating committee to propose a slate of nominees for the PNC. In considering nominees for the PNC, the congregation's nominating committee should strive for a PNC that is representative of the whole congregation. It should consider church members of integrity who are

- ❖ knowledgeable about the church and community and about Presbyterian theology and government;
- ❖ spiritual leaders within the congregation and are active in the life and work of the congregation;
- ❖ able to make a significant commitment of their time, energy, and very best wisdom;
- ❖ willing to accept this as a task of spiritual discernment, not being easily influenced by personal desires or congregational politics, but rather listening for the voice of God
- ❖ able to honor confidentiality.

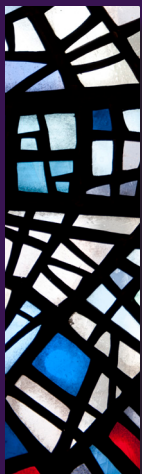
The congregation must give careful and prayerful attention to the election of persons to serve in this important role.

The Process for Electing a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)

Steps:

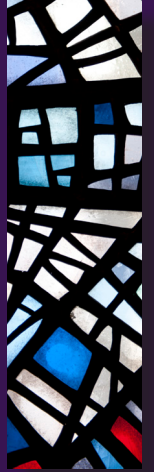
1. The presbytery authorizes the congregation to elect a PNC.
2. The session recommends the number of persons to serve on the PNC.
3. The nominating committee or another designated committee prepares a slate to be voted on by the congregation at a meeting called by the session.
4. A congregational meeting is held to elect the PNC.
5. The PNC is elected and commissioned for its work.







PART FIVE — Searching for a Pastor



The Work of the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)

Getting Organized

As members of the elected committee, get organized and map out what you will need, what you will do, and the timetable you hope to follow.

Scheduling PNC Meetings

In consultation with your presbytery liaison, plan for your first meeting. The presbytery liaison often leads this orientation meeting, so it will be essential for all of your members to be present. The presbytery may also ask the session to be present for the first part of the meeting.

Suggestions for Your Work

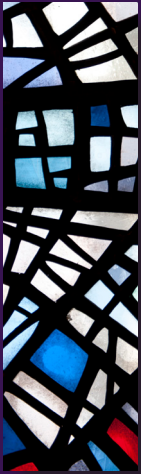


Plan to set regular meeting days, times, and places, making certain that all PNC members will be available and that your presbytery liaison will be able to attend. Many PNCs, wisely, decide to meet every week. Regular and frequent meetings are a major factor in helping to move the call process along. If you will be meeting at the church building, be sure the room in which you will be meeting is adequate for your confidentiality needs. Some PNCs choose to meet away from the church building due to the number of other church activities going on during their scheduled meeting time.

Understanding Your Work

As your committee begins working together, a number of points should be discussed by your committee:

- ❖ Set regular meeting times.
- ❖ Include time for prayer and scripture.
- ❖ Build consensus and unity.
- ❖ Gather materials, Bibles, and other resources.
- ❖ Review the video on the call process.
- ❖ Establish a covenant of agreement among the PNC and hold one another accountable to the terms of your covenant.



Confidentiality



Maintaining confidentiality within the PNC is of the utmost importance. Maintaining confidentiality ensures that the identities of the prospective pastors your PNC is considering are protected. Maintaining confidentiality within the PNC is an issue of integrity, trusting God in the process, and spiritual leadership.

It is often noted that the news that a prospective pastor is seeking or considering a new call travels fast. To respect the discernment of prospective pastors, work to uphold within the PNC a covenant of confidentiality that honors the integrity of the call seeker and the committee. This means that information about prospective pastors and all conversations, deliberations, and perceptions should not go beyond the members of the PNC, your presbytery liaison, and the EP/GP. Therefore, only certain people and groups have the right to know information about the pastors under consideration at specific times in the call process. As you maintain confidentiality in your process, you will ensure the integrity of the work of the PNC, keeping it free from outside influence or interference.

Selecting Leadership

You may find it helpful to identify leaders with specific responsibilities to help facilitate the work of the PNC. These leaders may include a chairperson or co-chairs, secretary, and/or Internet communicator.

The role of the chairperson or co-chairs might be to

- ❖ encourage discussion of various viewpoints rather than discourage them;
- ❖ delegate responsibility and see that tasks are carried out;
- ❖ ensure that decisions reached are the consensus of the group;
- ❖ communicate with the presbytery, CLC, candidates, and prospective pastors.

The role of the secretary might be to

- ❖ be responsible for correspondence to and from the committee;
- ❖ keep the minutes of meetings;
- ❖ perform other duties as determined by the PNC.

The role of the Internet communicator might be to

- ❖ enter your approved MIF online with CLC;
- ❖ send and receive confidential communication to and from prospective pastors;
- ❖ access and/or download from CLC all referred PIFs.

Ideally, the internet communicator would be your PNC chairperson or co-chair, but if she or he is not comfortable with the Internet, or if you just want to share the work of the PNC, another member of the committee could assume this role. Be sure that this person has access to the Internet on a regular basis and an e-mail account where confidentiality can be maintained. Access through a church office computer is not recommended unless complete confidentiality can be assured. All mailings and e-mails should go only to PNC members and not through others who are not PNC members. The church office address is not the best place to receive mail, so decide the primary mail and e-mail addresses your committee will be using for all communication.



Using the Church Leadership Connection (CLC)

CLC Mission Statement

To help search committees and call seekers with a high likelihood of “fit” to make an initial connection, relying on them to go deeper in exchange of information, conversation, and discernment.

Foundational Principles for CLC

- ❖ The call is a process of spiritual discernment that involves the call to an individual confirmed by a calling body
- ❖ CLC is a tool in this broader call process
- ❖ CLC is a web-based system that provides global access and visibility
- ❖ CLC policies are in compliance with the *Book of Order*
- ❖ CLC policies do not supersede the authority of mid councils but work in partnership to support presbytery mission
- ❖ CLC adheres to values of fairness and openness

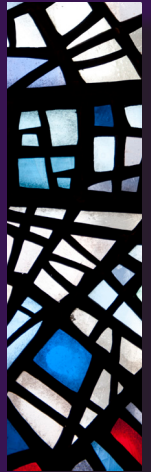
Who Can Use the System

Who May Enter a Personal Information Form (PIF)?

- ❖ PC(USA) teaching elders in good standing
- ❖ PC(USA) candidates for ministry who have been certified “ready for examination for ordination, pending a call”
- ❖ Christian educators, deacons, ruling elders, and lay professionals who are members of a PC(USA) congregation
- ❖ Ministers of other denominations who are transferring their membership to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and have completed the requirements for transfer except for the call

Who May Enter a Ministry Information Form (MIF)?

- ❖ PC(USA) congregations
- ❖ PC(USA) Joint Congregational Witness (Union Churches)
- ❖ PC(USA) educational and theological institutions
- ❖ PC(USA) conference centers
- ❖ PC(USA) General Assembly agencies
- ❖ Other entities, such as hospitals, nursing homes, and retirement facilities with official ties to the PC(USA)



Writing the Ministry Information Form (MIF)

Your Ministry Narrative Through the MIF



The congregation's Ministry Information Form provides a narrative picture of the mission and ministry of the congregation and its sense of call. Prospective pastors will use the form to help them discern whether God is calling them to serve your church. The MIF should be used to express your ministry context, demographics, history, theology, values, leadership needs, and expectations. Well written MIFs clearly communicate the above and will ensure the best referrals. Use the matching features of the forms to specify your requirements for the position. We highly recommend that you fully review the Calling Organization Tutorial at (<http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/clc/ministry-information-form2/>)  as a part of your PNC training.

The MIF consists of Part I and Part II. Part I asks for general information about your congregation. Each church is assigned a login and password. Your login will begin with a letter, followed by two numbers, then followed by your five-digit PC(USA) church PIN number (e.g., P0150639). Other information on Part I asks church size, racial ethnic composition, average worship attendance, church school attendance, curriculum, presbytery, community type, clerk of session contact information, and whether the congregation qualifies to participate in the Seminary Debt Assistance Program.

Part II of the MIF asks for more in-depth information about your congregation and includes narrative questions. *Responses to each narrative question are limited to 1,500 characters, including spaces and punctuation.*

In Part II you will need to select the following:

- ❖ Position type and experience requirements (*no experience, first ordained call, up to 2 years, 2–5 years, 5–10 years, or above 10 years*). Your MIF will be matched with all persons who have this level of experience and above.
- ❖ Employment status (full-time, part-time, open to both, or bi-vocational)
- ❖ Language requirements
- ❖ Statement of Faith (this is an optional requirement that will provide a written statement of a person's theology)
- ❖ Training/Certification (Interim/Transitional Ministry Training, Interim Executive Presbyter Training, Certified Christian Educator, Certified Business Administrator, Conflict Mediator, Clinical Pastoral Education Training, or Other)
- ❖ Deadline date (CLC does not recommend entering a deadline date unless you believe it to be absolutely necessary. If you enter a deadline date, know that ten days after that date your MIF will be purged from the CLC system. To continue your search process once your form is purged you will have to reenter your MIF)

The following information explains matching criteria, leadership competencies, call and fit, and other information that will help you in the search process. The following pages walk you through the MIF form and provide information on matching criteria, leadership competencies, call and fit, effective salary, narrative questions, and other information that is included on the MIF form.

Establishing Matching Criteria

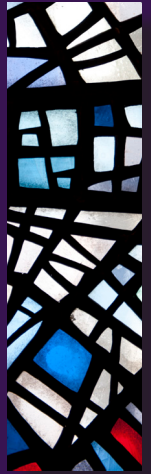
The CLC system matches for positions and not individuals. Matches are made based upon position type, experience level, salary, language, geographical choice, and leadership competencies. Optional matching criteria include statements of faith, being open to call seekers in your presbytery, and optional links (sermons, blogs, and education samples). The matching criteria you establish will be used to match the congregation with prospective pastors with compatible leadership competencies, theology, and gifts.

Additional Matching Criteria

Illustrated below is an example of the basic matching criteria you will establish in the MIF Part II. Your MIF will be matched with prospective pastors that have selected similar matching criteria.

Select a Position to be Filled:	Position Type * Head of Staff (who supervised one teaching elder and other staff)
Employment Status: *	--Select-- Youth Director (Non-ordained) Coordinator Solo Pastor Head of Staff (Multi-Staff Pastor, who supervised two or more teaching elders and other staff) Head of Staff (who supervised one teaching elder and other staff) Associate Pastor (Christian Education) Associate Pastor (Youth) Associate Pastor (Other) Pastor (church planter, new church development, new worshipping community) Pastor (Transformation/Redevelopment) Pastor Interim Pastor (for a designated term) Pastor (Other Temporary i.e. Supply, Student) Pastor, yoked/parish Bivocational/Tentmaker Co-Pastor Executive Pastor Evangelist or Mission Pastor Chaplain Certified Business Administrator Clinical Pastoral Education Training
Training/Certificate Requirements:	☐ Interim Minister ☐ Certified Christian Education ☐ Conflict Mediator ☐ Interim Executive ☐ Certified Business Administrator ☐ Clinical Pastoral Education Training
Other Training	
Language Requirements:	☒ English ☐ Spanish ☐ Korean ☐ Mandarin Chinese ☐ Japanese ☐ Cantonese ☐ Taiwanese ☐ French ☐ Arabic ☐ Armenian ☐ Creole ☐ Portuguese ☐ Russian ☐ Swahili ☐ Burmese ☐ Cambodian ☐ Indonesian ☐ Laotian ☐ Thai ☐ Vietnamese ☐ Twi ☐ Sign Language
Other Language	
Statement Of Faith Required:	☒ Yes ☐ No
Clergy Couples (are you open to a clergy couple?):	☐ Yes ☒ No
Deadline date for this MIF, if any:	 (Optional)

Example of the online MIF selecting the position title.



PART FIVE – Searching for a Pastor

Select a Position to be Filled:	Position Type * --Select-- Experience Required: --Select-- Specify title if appropriate:
Employment Status: *	☒ Full-time ☐ Part-time ☐ Open to both ☐ Bi-vocational (able to provide employment through outside partnership)
Training/Certificate Requirements:	☐ Interim Ministry Training ☐ Certified Christian Educator ☐ Conflict Mediator Training ☐ Interim Executive Presbyterian Training ☐ Certified Business Administrator ☐ Clinical Pastoral Education Training
Other Training	
Language Requirements:	☒ English ☐ Spanish ☐ Korean ☐ Mandarin Chinese ☐ Japanese ☐ Cantonese ☐ Taiwanese ☐ French ☐ Arabic ☐ Armenian ☐ Creole ☐ Portuguese ☐ Russian ☐ Swahili ☐ Burmese ☐ Cambodian ☐ Indonesian ☐ Laotian ☐ Thai ☐ Vietnamese ☐ Twi ☐ Sign Language
Other Language	
Statement Of Faith Required:	☒ Yes ☐ No
Clergy Couples (are you open to a clergy couple?):	☐ Yes ☒ No
Deadline date for this MIF, if any:	... (Optional)

Example of the online MIF selecting the experience requirements.

Optional Matching Criteria Example

Need to Match?	Criteria	Value To Match
☒ YES ☐ NO	Employment Status	Full-time
☒ YES ☐ NO	Experience Level	2-5 years
☒ YES ☐ NO	Maximum Salary	65,000
☒ YES ☐ NO	Language:	English
☒ YES ☐ NO	Statement Of Faith:	Statement of Faith is required
☐ YES ☒ NO	Narrative Search:	(enter phrase)
☐ YES ☒ NO	Optional Links:(i.e. sermons, lesson plans, articles, blogs, assessment results available, etc.)	Optional Links are required
☒ YES ☐ NO	Actively Seeking:	Actively Seeking is required

This is a screen shot from CLC matcher's page showing matching possible criteria.

Leadership Competencies



A competency is defined as a behavior or set of behaviors that describes performance in a particular working context. Competencies offer, make up, comprise a leadership blueprint that includes demonstrated ability, training, experience, measurable wisdom, and gifts and talents.

The MIF form includes competencies in four areas: Theological/Spiritual interpreter, Communication, Organizational Leadership, and Interpersonal Engagement. On the MIF form you are asked to select up to ten competencies as a part of your matching criteria. Definitions for the competencies can be accessed by clicking on the word as it is listed on the form.

In preparation for completing your MIF, we recommend that the committee use the case studies below to understand how leadership competencies contribute to the search process.

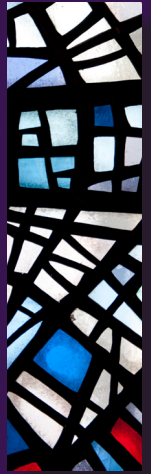
Case Study Exercise

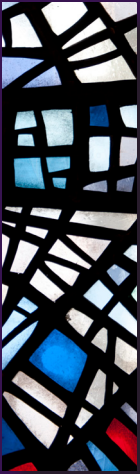
This exercise should be done in small groups. Each group should read the case study and decide, based upon the mission needs of the congregation, what leadership competencies are needed in the next pastor. Each group should choose up to ten competencies to be listed on the MIF. The exercise will provide practice in selecting competencies that are compatible with the values of the congregation and its mission for ministry. Choose a reporter to briefly explain the case study and your selected competencies to the larger group. You will have thirty minutes for this exercise.

Case Study One — Twenty-First Century Presbyterian Church

Mission Statement: *“Living out the love of Christ by embracing people where they are!”*

You are a member of the Twenty-First Century Presbyterian Church PNC. The committee was elected three weeks ago with nine members—four women and five men. The congregation is in a gentrified neighborhood in San Francisco. On average the congregation has 600 people in worship. Currently the congregation has three worship services on Sunday. Twenty-First Century Presbyterian Church is a forty-year-old congregation with a history of activism, justice-making, community witness, strong stewardship, and multiculturalism. The new head-of-staff pastor will supervise two other teaching elders, a Christian educator, and three musicians. The budget of the congregation is \$ 1,500,000. The former pastor was heavily involved in local politics, community development, and mentoring in underserved communities. Additionally, the congregation’s officers are actively involved in the ministry of the presbytery. The new pastor is expected to follow in the previous pastor’s footsteps. The Reverend Did Everything Right resigned after twelve years of service for medical reasons. Who should they call?





Case Study Two — Transitioning Presbyterian Church

Mission Statement: “Committed to Christ, Diversity, and Mission. Preparing people for a relationship with God, one another, and the community, sharing the word through scripture, worship, and fellowship.”

Transitioning Presbyterian Church is a congregation that is moving from a pastoral-size church to a program-size church. Over the last three years, the congregation has had a burst of new energy. The average worship attendance rose to 250 people. Last year thirty-five adults were baptized. Recently, the officers attended an Evangelism and Church Growth Conference and have been implementing a monthly “sharing your faith event” in the community. If the truth is told, it is the laity of the church that has inspired this grass-root change in the congregation. Unfortunately, the present pastor of twenty-five years could not keep up with the enthusiasm of the congregation. He announced last Sunday that he was resigning and moving on. With mixed feelings of excitement and grief, the congregation is ready to look for a new pastor. Members are hoping for a person who can share their vision and help them make the leap from a pastoral-size church to a program-size church. Who will God send? What gifts would they need to be effective in this call?

Case Study Three —Faithful Presbyterian Church

Mission Statement: “We are a community loving Christ, building disciples, serving all.”

Faithful Presbyterian Church is a congregation in a rural area. The congregation is 100 years old with many of the charter members’ families currently serving as officers. Ten years ago, the town almost died when the mill left the area. The residents that remained stayed because they could not leave. The congregation has some financial challenges, but they are able to sustain a pastor paying the minimum terms of call. Their last pastor left during the economic downturn in the area. The pastor’s family was a two-income household. However, finding full-time employment in the town is almost impossible. A couple of years ago two factories opened in a neighboring town, employing 2,500 people. The growth is just what the town needed. However, with the growth came different people: Spanish and African immigrants. Faithful Presbyterian Church is fifteen miles from this improving town. As they look for a new pastor, language fluency is important as well as a person who is comfortable working with different cultures. Who should they call?

Questions to consider:

- ❖ What leadership competencies did you choose?
- ❖ How do the chosen competencies address the leadership needs of the congregation in the study?
- ❖ How has this exercise helped you to think about your congregation’s leadership needs?

Effective Salary

On the MIF you will need to enter the minimum and maximum effective salary for this position. Effective salary includes salary and housing allowance/manse value combined (for pastoral positions). The minimum salary will be displayed on your MIF. The maximum salary is not displayed but is used for matching purposes only. For a full definition of Effective Salary see the reference below.

Board of Pensions Definition:

<http://www.pensions.org/AvailableResources/BookletsandPublications/Documents/pln-103.pdf>

Special Programs to Support Pastors with Educational Debt and Those Serving Smaller Congregations

There are special programs to support pastors with educational debt and those who are serving smaller congregations. On the MIF the COM should indicate when approving your form if your congregation is eligible to participate in the educational debt and special programs for those serving smaller congregations. For more information see the links below:

- ❖ Transformational Leadership Debt Assistance (TLDA) <http://www.Presbyterianmission.Org/Ministries/Financialaid/Transformational-Leadership-Debt-Assistance/>
- ❖ Seminary Debt Assistance and the BOP <http://www.pensions.org/plansandprograms/assistanceprogram/pages/pastors-vocational-leadership-needs.aspx#seminary>

Ministry Information Form Narrative Questions

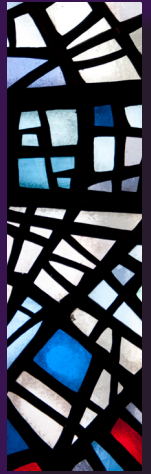
1. What is the congregation's or organization's vision for ministry? Additionally, describe how this vision is lived out.
2. How do you feel called to reach out to address the emerging needs of your community or constituency?
3. How will this position help you to reach your vision and mission goals?
4. Provide a description of the characteristics needed by the person who is open to being called to this congregation and/or organization.
5. For what specific tasks, assignments, and program areas will this person have responsibility?

Resources for writing and submitting the MIF can be found at <http://www.pcusa.org/clc> under Calling Organizations.

Instructions for completing the MIF

Users Guides for the PNC chair and clerk of session

Download forms in PDF and Microsoft Word formats



Choosing a Pastor

Call and Fit



The phrase call and fit refers to the person with the right experience, gifts, and credentials for the position. To say a person has the right fit for a position means that the person also has compatible theology, values, ministry goals, economic needs, and chemistry, as well as the right disposition to serve a particular congregation.

Choosing the right person to serve as pastor is the ultimate goal for the PNC. Making this choice will take patience, good process, and spiritual discernment. The person you might assume is the right person for the call could well be the wrong person to serve the congregation at this time. Understanding where the congregation is in its life cycle will help you discern the type of leader you need. Additionally, having a good understanding of the congregation's history, cultural context, demographics, finances, mission, and vision for the future is important in choosing new leadership. We strongly encourage you to be open to God's call as you make your choices among prospective pastors.

As you discern who God might be calling to serve the congregation, please keep in mind the biblical understanding of call. It is Christ who heads the church and calls women and men of various ages, backgrounds, and experiences to serve as pastor. For more information see the video *Call and Fit* at <http://www.pcusa.org/ocap>. 

Twenty-First Century Leaders

Twenty-first century leaders are often thought of as those who have prepared for doing ministry in this day and age. It means that leaders are adaptive, flexible, and prepared to lead the modern-era church into a postmodern ministry. Strong interpersonal skills, emotional and spiritual fitness, and the ability to communicate a vision, lead change, empower others for leading, and serve in the midst of ambiguity are some of the characteristics needed for twenty-first-century pastors.

Calling Candidates for Ministry

For information on calling a candidate for ministry as your pastor, see *Book of Order* requirements in G-2.0607. In summary, the *Book of Order* requires that the presbytery of care grant permission for candidates to begin negotiating for service. It is important to make sure that all requirements have been met and that the presbytery of care has certified a candidate ready for examination for ordination as a teaching elder pending a call. Evidence of readiness to begin ordered ministry as a teaching elder shall include: a candidate's wisdom and maturity of faith, leadership skills, compassion, spirit, honest repute, and sound judgment; a transcript showing graduation, with satisfactory grades, at a regionally accredited college or university; a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the presbytery, showing a course of study including Hebrew and Greek, exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek, satisfactory grades in all areas of study, and graduation or proximity to graduation; and satisfactory grades, together with the examination papers in the areas covered by any standard ordination examination approved by the General Assembly. Such examinations shall be prepared and administered by a body created by the presbyteries.

For more information see the video "Calling First Call Pastors" at <http://www.pcusa.org/ocap>. 

Receiving Referrals

Within the CLC system you can specify how you would like referrals to be received through the system and who receives the referrals. Some presbyteries require that referral reports are received by the executive presbyter (EP) and the committee on ministry (COM) moderator in addition to the pastor nominating committee (PNC) chair. Consult with your presbytery liaison concerning the protocol for your presbytery.

Members of your congregation and presbytery may suggest names of prospective pastors to the PNC. Communicate to the congregation the mechanism by which they can suggest names of prospective pastors to the PNC. Be sure to communicate to the congregation that while you appreciate their suggestions of prospective pastors, you will be unable to share with them the current status of any suggested prospective pastors in order to honor the confidentiality of the process.

Self-Referrals Through CLC — Individuals, through the CLC system, can self-refer their PIF to the PNC for consideration using the Opportunity Search List. These refers are from individuals who sense a call to your congregation. Some of the self-referrals will match your search criteria and others will not. The PNC should discern the merit of all refers and decide whether to engage in further conversation with call seekers.

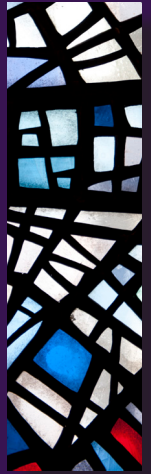
Attestation Assurance — When a PIF of prospective pastors or candidates for ministry comes through the CLC system, you can be assured that the PIF has been attested to by a teaching elder's presbytery stated clerk or a candidate's presbytery of candidacy. If you receive a PIF apart from the CLC system, you will need to ascertain whether that PIF has been attested to by the appropriate person. You should not consider a PIF until proof of such attestation is provided. It is the prospective pastor's responsibility to provide you with the attestation. Simply let the individual know that their PIF will not be considered until such attestation is provided and set the PIF aside. If you have any questions about whether a PIF you receive may be considered, check with your presbytery liaison or EP/GP.

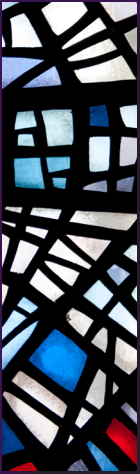
A Word About Possible PIF Differences — PIFs entered in the CLC system have limitations that PIFs completed outside of the system and then sent directly to you may not have. Note that within the CLC system, PIFs have character limitations. A PIF sent to you outside of the CLC system may have longer answers to the narrative questions than found on PIFs entered with CLC. Your PNC may have to deal with the issue of "comparing apples to oranges" if you receive PIFs with more lengthy answers and different format than those received through the system.

Acknowledging Receipt of a PIF — Prospective pastors whose PIFs have been matched with your MIF and those who have self-referred their PIF to you would like to know that you have received their PIF. Please acknowledge receipt of all PIFs and keep prospective pastors informed of their status, including whether they are being considered.

PNC Access to PIFs

A PNC chairperson or any other PNC member should never "pre-screen" or discard PIFs that have not been shared with the full committee. Determine how your committee will make available all received PIFs to PNC members.





Ministers from Other Denominations — Ministers from other denominations, including ministers from our Formula of Agreement partner denominations, have been known to send PIFs or resumés directly to PC(USA) PNCs for their consideration. If you receive a PIF or resume from a minister from another denomination, consult with your presbytery before considering the application or engaging in conversation with ministers of other denominations.

Reading and Screening Personal Information Forms

PNC Access to PIFs

Every member of the PNC needs access to every PIF received by the PNC.

Evaluating PIFs

All PIFs should be prayerfully considered and thoroughly evaluated. As you read each PIF, give attention to the source of the referral (matched or self-referred, suggested name from someone, etc.), to the “fit” of the prospective pastor to the church, and to God’s “still, small voice” speaking to you.

Your PNC will need to determine how you will evaluate PIFs. Check to see whether your presbytery has any recommendations. If your presbytery does not have a recommended process, you are free to create your own, making it as complex or as simple as you choose.

A Suggested Process:

- ❖ Each PNC member reads all the information in a PIF and ranks the PIF 1, 2, or 3:
 - 1 for those in whom you are very interested
 - 2 for those in whom you have some interest
 - 3 for those you do not want to consider further
- Keep in mind that PIFs referred through computer matching are selected based on the compatibility of the information your committee has submitted in the MIF and the statement of preferences, experience, leadership competencies, and financial needs of each person as submitted in their PIF. PNC members would be wise to keep notes to be shared with the rest of the committee about why they ranked a PIF a particular way.
- ❖ If your committee receives two copies of a PIF, take a closer look at this individual because these PIFs have come to you from two different sources: self-referral and computer matching. This means that from both the computer matching point of view and the prospective pastor’s point of view his or her skills, interests, and experience match those for which your church is looking.
- ❖ After all PNC members have had a chance to read and evaluate a PIF, carefully review and evaluate the PIF together as a committee. Allow each member to share reasons for the particular ranking and listen attentively to one another.
- ❖ Reach some kind of consensus on the PNC ranking for each PIF.
- ❖ If your PNC is interested in a prospective pastor who is unable to sign the PIF sexual misconduct statement in the affirmative, turn the matter over to your EP/GP (executive/general presbyter) or presbytery, who will provide you with guidance.
- ❖ Set aside those prospective pastors the PNC has rated 3. If you are sure that you will not be returning to these PIFs, notify them with an affirming letter that they are no longer being considered.

- ❖ Contact your higher ranked individuals to determine whether they are interested and available to consider your position.
- ❖ Repeat the process until all PIFs have been read and evaluated and the interest of your higher ranked prospective pastors has been ascertained.
- ❖ Once a prospective pastor's interest has been ascertained, you may want to move right into asking for a sermon and checking references. How many prospective pastors will this be? There is no magic number, although your presbytery liaison may have a suggestion. Much depends on your position, the prospective pastors, the consensus of your PNC, and the movement of the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ Share the names of those you are interested in with your presbytery liaison and EP/GP. Make sure you know and follow your presbytery's screening process for those under consideration.

Requesting Additional Materials

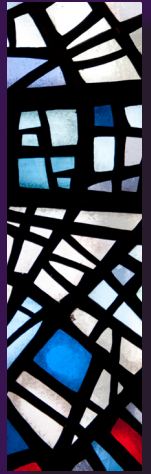
You may want to request additional materials from prospective pastors to help you in your discernment process.

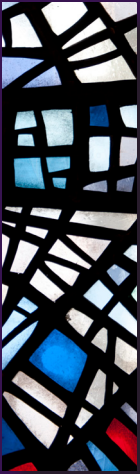
Sermon Videos. Most PNCs ask prospective pastors for a sermon video. For positions with primary responsibilities for preaching, viewing a sermon is a must. These may come to you in a variety of formats. In evaluating sermons, remember that you are evaluating the content of the sermon. Determine your process for viewing, circulating, and evaluating sermons.

Supplemental Questions. For positions in a unique ministry setting or situation, you may wish to make use of supplemental questions. Use supplemental questions if you need more in-depth and thoughtful answers to questions than can be adequately answered during a phone or face-to-face interview. If you use supplemental questions, ensure that all members of the PNC have access to a copy of each prospective pastor's responses.

Other Material. You may choose not to get bogged down in requesting other supplemental material but prospective pastors have been known to send — unsolicited — supplemental material that may include church newsletters, bulletins, published articles, and newspaper clippings. Decide how you will handle this material.

Web Sites. Some individuals you are considering may direct you to church or personal web sites for additional information. While you can get information about a prospective pastor this way, be careful that your impressions of an individual are not formed simply from the impressiveness (or lack thereof) of the web site. Remember that you are searching for a pastor with the gifts and skills listed on your MIF, and web design and technology might not be one of those skills.





Establishing an Interview Process

The PNC's interview process should be consistent to ensure fairness and due diligence. Interviews are an opportunity to learn more about the person to help you discern call, fit, and a shared vision for ministry. Questions used in the interview should be consistent for all candidates. Specific questions raised by the Personal Information Forms (PIF) should also be included in the interview process and may differ among candidates. Below is a list of potential questions you may want to use.

- ❖ Describe your passion for ministry.
- ❖ Tell us about your call to ministry.
- ❖ How do you achieve personal growth in ministry?
- ❖ How have you challenged the congregations you have served to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ?
- ❖ What feeds your soul?
- ❖ How would you describe your leadership style?
- ❖ What ministry situations frustrate you most?
- ❖ When facing a problem, what questions do you naturally ask?
- ❖ Describe your greatest strengths and abilities.
- ❖ How do you work with diverse theological perspectives within the congregation?
- ❖ How do you see the denomination's future? (Long-term and short-term.)
- ❖ Tell us about your family traditions as they relate to the faith.
- ❖ How do you prepare for weekly worship?
- ❖ What are your spiritual disciplines?

It is important to note that the purpose of interview questions is to gain the information needed to assess a person's fitness to serve. While any question may be allowable, you are encouraged to think deeply about what information is most pertinent for your discernment. For more information, see the video on *Appropriate Questions for Interviews* at <http://www.pcusa.org/ocap>. 

Reference Checks

Reference checks are a must in any pastoral search. Consult your presbytery for specific requirements before engaging in in-person interviews and moving too far along in your selection process. Below are the types of reference checks you will engage in during the search process. For more information, see the video resource, *Reference Checks*, at <http://www.pcusa.org/ocap>. 

- ❖ **Presbytery-to-Presbytery Reference Checks.** Your presbytery checks with the prospective pastor's presbytery of membership for additional information about his or her practice of ministry.
- ❖ **Primary Reference Checks.** Primary references are those references that a prospective pastor has listed on his or her PIF. There can be up to six references for each PIF.
- ❖ **Secondary Reference Checks.** Secondary references are persons who are not listed by the prospective pastor but are suggested by others or contacted because they are thought to have knowledge of the individual. Secondary references should only be contacted when the prospective pastor has given permission. Under no circumstances should a PNC contact members of a prospective pastor's present congregation without her or his permission to do so. Discuss with your presbytery liaison the presbytery guidelines for contacting secondary references.

- ❖ **Background Checks.** Background checks are assessments of a prospective pastor's character and fitness for employment. They may include checks of employment, credit, criminal, and motor vehicle records. Many presbyteries require background checks at certain times in the call process for the protection of the congregation. Check with your presbytery liaison to learn your presbytery's requirements. If this position will involve work with children, your state will probably require you or your presbytery to do a background check on the person you call. Check your state law.

Meeting Prospective Pastors Face-to-Face



It is in time spent with prospective pastors that PNCs recognize the experiential nature of the call process as they attend to “the chemistry between people” and the movement of the Holy Spirit.

In order for a PNC to evaluate prospective pastors fully, it is necessary to meet face-to-face, engage in conversation, and participate in worship together. It is in time spent with prospective pastors that PNCs recognize the experiential nature of the call process as they attend to the chemistry between people and the movement of the Holy Spirit. As PNCs meet prospective pastors face-to-face, they would be wise to remember the Presbyterian balance between “ardor and order” or “heart and head.”

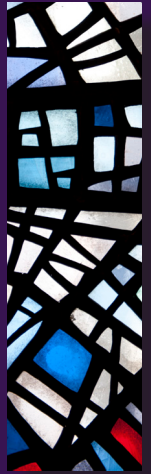
By the time you are ready to meet face-to-face with prospective pastors, you should be able to convey a sense of clarity and harmony as a PNC. If you are not able to do this, you may want to take some time as a committee to get to such a place.

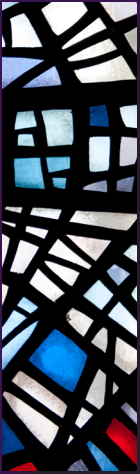
Visiting Prospective Pastors in Their Ministry Setting

Some PNCs, or a small delegation of the PNC, elect to visit prospective pastors in their current ministry setting, including attending worship. If your PNC decides to visit prospective pastors, do so only with the permission of the prospective pastor. If the prospective pastor feels it is unwise for you to visit the church he or she is currently serving, a face-to-face interview in your own area should be arranged.

When visiting the church of a prospective pastor, keep the following in mind:

- ❖ Before going, become thoroughly familiar with the prospective pastor's PIF.
- ❖ Confirm the time of worship and that the prospective pastor will be preaching that particular Sunday.
- ❖ Visit discreetly. Especially in smaller congregations, it is difficult to conceal the identity of a PNC. Do what you can to arrive, sit, and leave separately or in pairs. Do not introduce yourselves to church members as members of a PNC!
- ❖ Arrange to meet the prospective pastor in the afternoon if you want to hold an interview or have informal conversation at the time of your visit. Do not expect to do so immediately following the service.
- ❖ If only a portion of the PNC is visiting, engage only in an informal conversation rather than a formal interview. Take notes on your visit so that on your return you will be able to give a full report to the other members of the PNC.





Hosting Prospective Pastors in Your Community

Invite prospective pastors in whom the PNC is most interested to meet with you in or near your own community. This gives your committee extended time with prospective pastors so you can get to know them better and, continue to discern whom God is calling to be your next pastor.

If a prospective pastor should decline your committee's invitation, understand that this is part of the discernment process. You may need to hear a "no" from several prospective pastors in order to hear the "yes" from the one of God's own choosing.

When you extend an invitation to the prospective pastor to meet with you in your community, also extend the invitation to the pastor's spouse, if there is one. Most married prospective pastors wish to include a spouse in visiting a community and meeting with a PNC, because their spouse's impressions will be part of their own discernment process.

Always coordinate any prospective pastor's visit with presbytery. Your presbytery can help arrange a "neutral pulpit" somewhere in your area that provides an opportunity for the prospective pastor to lead worship while you are present without sacrificing the important confidentiality of the search. Your presbytery may also want to interview the prospective pastor while he or she is in the presbytery. If so, make sure to schedule this time with the presbytery.

The PNC should make the arrangements for the visit, in consultation with the prospective pastor and the presbytery, including arranging for transportation, housing, and meals. It is expected that the congregation will cover the costs of hosting a prospective pastor meeting with you in your community.

If at all possible, host prospective pastors in your community only one or two weeks apart. If too much time passes, both the PNC's memory of earlier interviews and the interest of an earlier interviewee may fade.

Practicing Hospitality

Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. (1 Peter 4:9-10)

PNC members, as "good stewards of the manifold grace of God," will need to use their gifts and talents to provide hospitality to prospective pastors who will be your guests during their time in your community. Such hospitality, which includes an availability and openness to your guests' needs, will need thoughtful and careful planning on the part of the PNC.

Hospitality is not about how lavish you are (first-class tickets and five-star hotels) but about all the ways you welcome and host a prospective pastor. The hospitality you show (or fail to show) will shape impressions of the kind of hospitality a pastor might expect from the congregation as a whole and will have a direct impact on a prospective pastor's discernment process.

Hospitality in the biblical sense raises the expectation that God will play a role in the guest/host encounter. Knowing this, PNCs should be ever attentive to God's presence in the midst of your time with your guests.



PART SIX — Calling a New Pastor

Choosing the Nominee and Extending the Invitation to Call



As your PNC prays together, shares perceptions and insights, and listens to one another, it will, hopefully, become clear to you who God is calling to be your next pastor. The PNC should strive to make this decision both unanimously and enthusiastically.

The entire PNC will want to look again at the financial information on the MIF and come to a preliminary decision on the total effective salary you are willing to offer your nominee. Be sure that the terms of call meet presbytery minimum requirements. The PNC cannot negotiate a total effective salary beyond the amount allocated by the session. If there is a need to do so, session approval must be obtained.

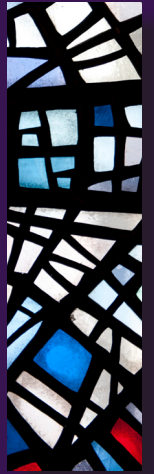
Extending the Invitation

Contacting Your Chosen Nominee. When the PNC has reached a final decision and has received presbytery approval to call your chosen nominee, the PNC chairperson should phone the chosen nominee and invite him or her to be the nominee presented to the congregation. Be sure that you let the person know why he or she was chosen by the PNC, and tell him or her about the enthusiastic response of the committee. You should also be prepared to share the amount of the total effective salary that you will be offering.

The person whom you have chosen may be ready to respond immediately, or he or she may need time to talk with family, spiritual advisors, and/or mentors to consider all of the aspects of this call and to listen again for God's voice. If he or she asks for this time, it is important to give it. If that is the case ask, "How soon can you let us know?" or "Would it be possible to hear from you by one week from today?" Except in unusual circumstances, one week should be sufficient time in which to expect a response.

When the Nominee Accepts the Invitation. When your chosen nominee accepts your invitation, notify your presbytery. Do not reveal your final decision to the session or congregation until the presbytery has given its final clearance. If presbytery has not already examined your selected nominee, they will need to do so before you present the nominee to the congregation. Confirm with presbytery your next steps so that they will be done "decently and in order."

Discuss with your chosen nominee the terms of call, effective date of the call, and the tentative schedule for the next steps, which will include approval by the presbytery, a congregational meeting to call the pastor, dissolution of the nominee's current position, and the installation service. Coordination with all the involved parties will be key. There are additional steps in the process if your chosen nominee is a candidate for ministry yet to be ordained. Your presbytery and stated clerk can help you work out a timeline in coordination with the nominee's presbytery of candidacy.





Negotiating the Terms of Call

When a nominee has accepted your invitation, you will need to negotiate with the nominee the specific terms of call. Once you have agreed upon the total effective salary, the nominee may suggest how he or she would like it to be allocated. Be sure that the terms of call include all other applicable items such as vacation, continuing education, all reimbursable expenses, moving costs, sabbatical leave, military service leave, and any other presbytery requirements. If you have questions about compensation, your presbytery liaison should be able to advise you.

These agreed-upon terms of call are necessary before your presbytery can approve the call of your new pastor. The congregation will also need to approve these terms of call at the time it calls the new pastor. Usually a “Pastoral Call Form” is provided by your presbytery stated clerk.

Examination for Membership in the Presbytery

Presbyteries differ in their process of examining ministers for membership in the presbytery. Consult with your presbytery to understand their specific guidelines.

Presenting the Pastor Elect

Preparing to Present Your Nominee to the Congregation

There are a few final details that must be arranged before you present your nominee to the congregation:



Step 1

Obtaining Presbytery Approval

As one of the partners in the call, the presbytery has a responsibility to examine and approve your nominee for presbytery membership and to approve the terms of call. Make sure that you have presbytery approval to present your nominee to the congregation.

Coordinating with Session

It is important for the PNC to coordinate with the session in scheduling the congregational meeting to call a new pastor. Session has the responsibility to call the congregational meeting to hear the report of the PNC, to give adequate notice to the temporary pastor for his or her departure, and to arrange for any pastoral coverage between the temporary pastor's departure and the arrival of the new pastor.

Step 2

Preparing a Report for the Congregation

The congregation needs to be informed about the nominee the PNC has selected. Your written report to the congregation might include something of the process the PNC followed including the number and kinds of PIFs reviewed. A brief biographical sketch of the nominee, taken from the PIF with revisions suggested by the nominee, will help the congregation to know the pastor elect more intimately. The terms of call should also be included. It is recommended that this report be mailed or e-mailed to members of the congregation a few days before the congregational meeting. Care should be taken to be sure that the identity of the proposed new pastor not be shared with the media and that the information is not used in a way that could compromise the pastor with his or her present congregation, which at this point will normally be unaware of the pastor's plan to leave.

Presenting the Nominee to the Congregation

Depending on the tradition and preferences of the congregation and/or presbytery, the PNC nominee may preach and conduct all or part of the worship service prior to the congregational vote, or the PNC may simply report and the congregational vote be taken with results being communicated to the nominee.

The PNC has the responsibility to share with the congregation what it has learned about the nominee. Generally speaking, the more you can do to facilitate these introductions the more enthusiastic will be the support of the congregation for the PNC's work, and the easier it will be for the pastor's transition as he or she begins ministry with you.

The PNC chairperson should prepare, in advance, the formal motion on the PNC recommendation for the congregational meeting, checking with the moderator and clerk of session to be certain it conforms to the presbytery processes and guidelines. During the congregational meeting, the PNC chairperson should make the motion and then be ready to speak to the motion by presenting personally or through members of the PNC the reasons for selecting this nominee. This should include something of the nominee's background, experience, and abilities. On occasion questions will be raised by members of the congregation. A PNC that has done its work well will be able to answer these questions with ease. After the PNC report and congregational discussion, the congregation should be ready to vote on whether to concur with the report of the PNC to call the pastor and to vote on the terms of call.

Step 3

Signing the Call

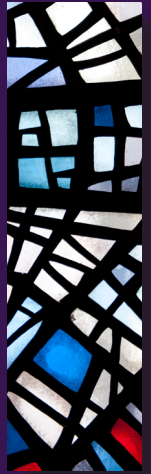
Following the election of the pastor, the call papers are signed by designated persons. The next steps in the process include the ordination and/or installation of the new pastor—a task of the presbytery—and the PNC's completion of its work.

Finishing Your Work

Following the election of the new pastor by the congregation, the PNC has a few last details to finish:

Notifying CLC of a "Call Pending"

The PNC chairperson needs to notify CLC of the call of your new pastor. This can be done through the CLC online system using the PNC chairperson's password and entering the information under "Admin. "Notify of New Call." Please provide the MIF number, the PIF number (if there is one), the pastor's full name, and the effective date of the call. The PNC chairperson can also notify CLC by phone, e-mail, or fax.





Notifying Remaining Prospective Pastors

If you have any other prospective pastors that have not yet been notified that they are no longer being considered, each one needs to be contacted, thanked for their consideration, and informed that a nominee has been chosen. This communication should be written with compassion and grace. If you are notifying prospective pastors electronically, remember to correspond with them individually rather than by mass e-mail messages. It is important to continue to honor confidentiality and good process.

Disposing of PNC Materials

Information and references regarding your pastor-elect should be sealed and kept in the church's personnel files. All remaining PIFs and supplemental material should be destroyed or returned to each prospective pastor. Any notes and references should be destroyed. These materials cannot be reused and should not be passed on to other PNCs.

Sharing Agreements with Session

The PNC chairperson should inform the session of any agreements the PNC may have made with the pastor-elect, such as starting date, moving details, financial arrangements, time away for prior commitments, travel expenses for house-hunting, or planning for renovation of the manse. Once this information is passed along, the session assumes the responsibility for the ongoing work with the pastor-elect.

Understanding Your New Role

Once the PNC has completed its work and has been dissolved by vote of the congregation, the PNC is no longer a committee. However, PNC members often find that the relationships forged during the pastoral search process turn into lifelong friendships. While you are no longer an official committee required to meet, you may wish to spend some time together to reflect on the journey you have been through and to celebrate and give thanks to God for the successful completion of your work.

With the dissolution of the PNC, there is no longer an official connection between you and the new pastor. Certainly, each member of the PNC will want to pray for the new pastor as he or she begins ministry with you. You will want to extend hospitality and provide for a ready welcome as he or she arrives in town. However, the new pastor's official relationship is now with the congregation and session.

The installation of your new pastor will complete the call process that has brought a new pastor to your congregation. Plan to attend this service of worship as your final act as a committee. Your presence will not only be a show of support for your new pastor, it can also be an opportunity to worship God, who faithfully guided your committee through the pastoral call process.

As all the tasks above are completed, the PNC's work concludes. Your good work will greatly impact the future of the congregation as it continues to fulfill God's call for its mission and ministry. With grace and joy the Church Leadership Connection office celebrates with you as you enter a new phase in your congregation's history. May God richly bless you and your new pastor!



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