



The Presbytery of
DONEGAL

Process for the Meeting of the Congregation to Call an Installed Pastor

This is the process for a congregation to elect an installed pastor. There are various titles for installed pastors including: pastor (solo and head of staff), associate pastor, designated pastor, and designated associate pastor. This is the process to call any pastor with any of these titles.

Some congregations have pastors who are not installed. These titles include interim pastor, temporary pastor (short term), or covenant pastor (longer term). They are called by a covenant between the session and the pastor, with the oversight of the presbytery. This process is not used for calling non-installed pastors.

1. The Moderator opens the meeting with prayer.

2. Organization of the Meeting

- a. The Moderator announces that the Clerk of Session shall serve as secretary of the meeting. If the Clerk is not present, a secretary pro tem is appointed with congregational approval.
- b. The Moderator determines whether a quorum of the congregation is present. (The quorum is set by the congregation in its by-laws.)
- c. The Clerk reads the call for the meeting and certifies that public notice of the call has been given in accordance with the congregation's and presbytery's rule for minimum public notice for its meetings.
- d. The Moderator introduces the Pastor Nominating Committee to present its report.

3. Report of the Pastoral Nominating Committee

- a. Members of the PNC present their story of the search process and discovering God's call to the candidate. They should explain why they selected the candidate and present the terms of call. The terms of call must be on the Presbytery of Donegal Terms of Call form and printed for the congregation. A written introduction of the candidate is often provided – many times this introduction has been distributed when the call to the meeting is sent to the congregation.
- b. If this is a Designated Pastorate, a presbytery representative will explain what it means to elect a pastor for a designated term.
- c. The candidate is invited to take five to ten minutes to share her or his vision for ministry with the congregation, plans for the first year of ministry, and some personal history.
- d. The congregation has the opportunity to ask the candidate questions about the vision for ministry and plans.

- e. The candidate and any family members are excused. Someone should be appointed to escort them to a comfortable place to wait, out of hearing distance. If the representative is a member of the congregation, that person may cast her or his ballot before departure.
- f. The congregation then has the opportunity to ask any questions or make comments about the nomination and the terms of call. A representative from the Session and/or Finance Committee should be present to answer questions about the financial implications. Copies of the budget and the bylaws should be available for reference.
- g. If an amendment to the terms of call is passed that would result in a reduction or elimination of any element of the terms of call, the meeting shall be recessed in order for the moderator and the PNC to consult with the candidate. The candidate will either accept the new terms of call or the matter is referred back to the PNC and presbytery representatives and the meeting shall be adjourned for further deliberation.

4. Election of the Pastor

- a. When the congregation is ready to proceed, the Moderator shall put the question “Shall the congregation of the {name of congregation} request that the presbytery install (and ordain if necessary {name of candidate} as {title of pastoral position} for this congregation?”
- b. The Moderator explains the voting process.
 - All members on the active roll of that particular church are eligible to vote. Anyone not on the active roll is not eligible to vote.
 - The vote to call the pastor includes acceptance of the terms of call.
 - The vote is taken by written ballot, with 3 choices: yes, no, or abstain.
 - The Moderator appoints tellers and designates a lead teller.
- c. The ballots are distributed, collected, counted, and recorded on 2 copies of the Vote Total Form.
- d. The lead teller gives to the Moderator the Vote Total Form. The Moderator announces the vote total. If the vote was not unanimous, a motion to make it unanimous is not in order.
- e. A PNC representative takes the other Vote Total Form to the candidate, and shares the vote results with the candidate.
- f. As a norm, COM recommends that the vote total be 85% or more in favor of calling the pastor. In some cases, the recommended total might be 75%, or a “super-majority of the congregation. The percentage will have been agreed upon by COM and the session prior to the meeting of the congregation.
- g. If the total of votes in favor of extending the call meets or exceeds the adopted percentage, the candidate returns to the meeting, and the announcement is made that the congregation has voted to call the pastor.
- h. If the vote is less than adopted percentage in favor of extending the call, the meeting is recessed. The candidate, the PNC, the moderator and the presbytery representative confer as to next steps. If there is no presbytery representative, the meeting is adjourned. If there is a presbytery

representative, the meeting may resume for more conversation. In most cases, the meeting will then adjourn for the session, the Connecting our Ministry Commission, the PNC and the candidate to decide on next steps.

- i. If the pastor has been elected, the Moderator calls for a motion to dismiss the PNC and commend the members for their faithfulness. If there are plans for the PNC to continue as a support group for the pastor, that may be announced.

5. Announcements are made relative to the pastor-elect, such as expected date of arrival, date of installation, etc.

6. A motion for adjournment is made, and the meeting is closed with prayer by the Moderator.