



The Presbytery of
DONEGAL

Steps in Calling a Transitional Pastor

Pastoral Model for Transitional Ministry

1. The session decides on the transitional pastoral model:
 - a. Interim
 - b. Transitional – Eligible to apply for the long-term position
 - c. Transitional – Not eligible to apply for the long-term position
 - d. Covenant – long-term pastorate on a yearly contract. May include part-time service of a pastor who is receiving retirement benefits, following BoP regulations.
 - e. Designated Pastor – Installed pastor for a designated term for two to four years. Can then be installed with an unlimited term, or the pastoral relationship can end.
 - f. Moderator/Pulpit Supply
 - g. Student Pastor
 - h. Pastor from another denomination, with a moderator appointed by the COM
 - i. Begin search for next installed pastor while current pastor prepares for retirement or departure
 - i. This decision is made only in consultation with COM. It requires a lead-time of at least one year, and only when there is reasonable confidence that no major transitional work needs to be accomplished. Major transitional work would include the need to develop a new staffing model, the need to end the employment of one or more significant employees, major financial issues, conflict or general malaise. If any of these conditions need to be addressed, the best course is to plan for a transitional pastor, so the installed pastor can begin with focus on vision and forward-movement.
 - ii. The search for an installed pastor to begin after the departure of the current pastor may include an overlap period of up to three months. COM recommends a much shorter overlap period of a few weeks. The job titles would be Outgoing Pastor/Head of Staff and Incoming Pastor/Head of Staff. COM reserves the term Co-Pastor for genuine co-pastorates and does not use this term to indicate a succession plan.
 - iii. A back-up plan for short-term transitional coverage must be established, in case the search for the Installed Pastor is not concluded before the departure of the current pastor.
 - iv. The procedures in the documents called Steps to Launch the Search for the Installed Pastor and the Handbook on Pastoral Searches must be followed. The remainder of this document on procedures for calling a Transitional Pastor would not pertain.
2. The session communicates with the congregation regarding next steps. COM is will and ready to help with this.
3. Ending with the current pastor: plan for ending celebration, congregational meeting to dissolve the call, terminate with the Board of Pensions, determine whether there will be Vacancy Dues

Pastoral Model for the Next Longer-Term Pastor

COM will work with the session to determine options and timing for the next Longer-Term Pastor

1. Installed Pastor or Co-Pastor – must be in the Board of Pensions
2. Covenant – long-term pastorate on a yearly contract, may be in full Board of Pensions, in the “menu option” with other allowances, or receive allowances for retirement, medical, and death and disability.
3. Designated Pastor or Co-Pastor – Installed pastor for a designated term for two to four years. Can then be installed with an unlimited term, or the pastoral relationship can end.
4. Moderator/Pulpit Supply
5. Student Pastor
6. Pastor from a Formula of Agreement Denomination – can be installed and serve as moderator
7. Pastor from another denomination – may serve as pastor upon approval of COM with a COM-appointed moderator.
8. Share pastoral leadership with another congregation/s

Selection of a Candidate for Transitional Pastor

1. Circulate advertisement of the position in the Presbytery of Donegal and neighboring presbyteries.
2. The Transitional Pastor Search Team reviews applications and interviews applicants.
3. EP Reference Check completed, if the potential pastor is not a member of the Presbytery of Donegal.
4. Transitional Pastor Search Team takes any further needed steps to decide: listen to sermons, further interviews, supplemental essay questions, checking references listed in PIF or Resume.
5. The Transitional Search Team offers the position to the selected candidate, based upon agreement on position description, time expectations and compensation negotiations.

Position Description and Time Expectations

1. The Transitional Pastor Search Committee confirms the position description with the candidate and confirms whether this will be a full or part-time position.
2. If it is a full-time position, it is strongly recommended that the search committee develop the Time Expectations Worksheet with the candidate, or that the church personnel committee do so immediately after the position begins. The Time Expectations Worksheet is on the presbytery website or may be obtained from the presbytery office.
3. If the position is less than fulltime, the Transitional Pastor Search Team:
 - a. Decides with the candidate what percentage of full-time the position will involve. Full time equals 45 hours per week, $\frac{3}{4}$ time equals 33.75 hours per week, and half time equals 22.5 hours per week. Other prorated positions may be developed. COM does not recommend a call of less than half time, since this amount of time is essentially pulpit supply.

- b. The Transitional Pastor Search Committee develops or reviews the Time Expectations Worksheet with the candidate. The session will give approval of this worksheet when approving the candidate.

Negotiating Compensation: Salary

1. The position must meet or exceed presbytery minimum salary. This figure is available on the presbytery website or from the presbytery office.
2. If the congregation owns a manse, the session will have determined whether they prefer or require that the transitional pastor move into the manse as part of compensation. In many cases, transitional pastorates are shorter term, and the transitional pastor commutes from their residence. In other cases, the transitional time is a time for the congregation to spruce up their manse between pastors. When the transitional pastor will not be living in a manse, then the compensation will include an amount for housing allowance.
3. The exact amount of the housing allowance as a portion of the salary amount is set by the pastor and adopted by the session. The housing amount is then recorded in the session minutes for IRS purposes.

Negotiating Compensation: Retirement, Medical and Death/Disability Benefits – Board of Pensions Considerations

1. Determine Board of Pensions Benefits for the Transitional Pastor

a. Pastor Participation Plan

If the Transitional Pastor is a member of the Pastor's Participation Plan, then the pastor will be enrolled in the plan as part of compensation. For 2019, the dues basis is 37% of Effective Salary. The presbytery office will send a self-calculating Terms of Call Spreadsheet to determine the exact amounts.

b. Board of Pensions Menu Options or Other Benefits Arrangements

If the Transitional Pastor would prefer to select menu options from the Board of Pensions for Pension and Death/Disability Participation:

- i. For 2019 Pension dues are 11% and Death/Disability is 1%, as long as the pastor is also enrolled in the pension program.
- ii. If the pastor would prefer to maintain medical coverage through a spouse, then at least 10% of Effective Salary must be allocated for a medical reimbursement plan. This amount is to be determined in consultation with the pastor. The reimbursements must be through an adopted Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) or added to the pastor's compensation to be allocated as a Flexible Savings Account (FSA).
- iii. If the Transitional Pastor would rather that contributions be made to a qualified 403(b) for retirement savings, then an amount equivalent to at least 11% of salary must be allocated for this purpose as an employer contribution. The Presbytery of

Donegal recommends the PC(USA) Retirement Savings Program (RSP) managed by Fidelity. A pastor does not need to be a member of the Board of Pensions (BoP) Pension plan to enroll in the RSP.

- iv. If death and disability are provided through the BoP pension plan without also being a member of the pension plan, then dues are 2.5 percent of effective salary. If death and disability coverage are not provided, then COM will work with the Transitional Pastor and Search Team to make sure there is adequate life insurance provisions in case of death in time of service.
- v. In same cases, it may be to the benefit of the transitional or covenant pastor not in the BoP Pastor Participation Plan to have a different division of percentages between retirement savings/pension, medical reimbursement allowance, and death and disability coverage. The percentages may be reallocated in consultation with the Search Team and COM.

c. Post- Retirement Service

If the Transitional Pastor is accepting the call after having retired from a previous position, and is receiving BoP Pension, then the following conditions apply:

- i. If the Transitional Pastor will be working less than 20 hours per week, then the retired pastor may receive a salary, and may continue to receive the BoP Pension. The congregation pays the 12% Vacancy Dues if the previous pastor was installed.
- ii. If the Transitional Pastor will be working 20 hours per week or more, the pastor may receive a salary and may continue to receive BoP Pension Benefits. The congregation will then pay 12% post-retirement service dues.
- iii. All post-retirement service must be approved by the BoP, with verification by the presbytery. There is a specific process for this, and failure to do so could jeopardize the payment of pension benefits. No pension credits accrue for post-retirement service.
- iv. In unusual circumstances, the retiree could suspend reception of retirement benefits, and re-enroll in BoP benefits plans. In this case, the pension payment would be suspended, and pension credits would continue to accrue within BoP age limits.
- v. Any post-retirement service planning should be coordinated carefully with COM and BoP to make sure the BoP rules are followed.

d. Optional Benefits

While not required, other benefits are often included in pastoral compensation. A general recommendation from COM is that the congregation be willing to match benefits coverage previously received by the Installed Pastor, if requested. Optional benefits might include: a fixed or percentage amount for medical deductibles and other expenses, dental benefits, additional retirement savings contributions, or supplemental death/disability coverage.

Negotiating Compensation: Reimbursable Professional Expenses

1. **Mandatory: Travel Allowance**

The Presbytery of Donegal requires a travel allowance sufficient to cover miles driven and any other travel costs incurred (like parking and tolls) in the fulfillment of pastoral duties. Mileage logs must be kept along with a record of other expenses and submitted for reimbursement.

2. **Mandatory: Continuing Education**

The Presbytery of Donegal requires that at least \$750 be allocated for Continuing Ed. Please note that this is not enough for any event that requires travel, and pastors will typically negotiate for more Con Ed funds.

3. **Mandatory: Communications/Technology Allowance**

If the congregation is going to expect that the Transitional Pastor be in touch over email, phone, or social media while not in the office, then the terms of call must include a technology allowance of at least \$50 per month to contribute to the expense of cellphone and internet service.

4. **Recommended: Book and Other Media Allowance**

To cover books, magazines, periodicals, and recorded or streaming media which are related to the professional practice of ministry.

5. **Recommended: Professional Expenses Allowance**

The Professional Expenses Allowance is for the pastor's vocation-related and "out of pocket" miscellaneous ministerial expenses, professional lunches, etc.

Other Contract Provisions: Paid Time Off and Termination of Contract

1. **Vacation/Study Leave Time**

The Presbytery of Donegal requires that a minimum of one month of vacation (30 days) and two weeks of study leave (14 days) be included in the call. For Transitional pastors who will be in place for less than one year, this time off may be pro-rated. I.e. after the Transitional Pastor serves for 3 months, s/he would be eligible for one week of vacation and 3.5 days of study leave. The same amount of time off is earned by those in positions that are at least three-quarter time, at the same rate of part-time pay. For positions that are less than three-quarter time, the amount of paid time off earned will be negotiated on a case by case basis. Any other leave requests, whether paid or unpaid, should be negotiated while working on the contract.

2. **Termination Provisions**

The contract needs to include terms for terminating the position (generally notice of sixty days from the session. The pastor will be asked to give notice at least two weeks in advance.)

3. **Terms of Call Spreadsheet**

When the candidate is selected, the chair of the Transition Search Committee and the candidate will be sent a link to a Terms of Call Spreadsheet, using Excel Online. The spreadsheet will be tailored to the benefits choices that have been made and will be the form the Transitional Search Team uses to

generate the Terms of Call Form for COM and for the Session. A Terms of Call Signature sheet will be required to be signed by the Clerk of Session, the Transitional Pastor, and the Stated Clerk or Executive Presbyter.

Accepting the Call as Transitional Pastor: COM, Background Clearances and Session Approval

1. **COM FIT between person and position conversation**

Once the terms of call have been negotiated, the final candidate meets with the Connecting Our Ministry Commission (COM) for a Fit Between Person and Position Conversation. The description of this process may be found on the presbytery website or by contacting the presbytery office.

2. **COM Approval of Terms of Call**

COM will meet by conference call to approve the Terms of Call as submitted in the Terms of Call Spreadsheet.

3. **Meeting with Presbytery Examination Commission as Necessary**

If the Transitional Pastor is already a member of the Presbytery of Donegal, then it is not necessary to meet with the Examination Commission. If this will be a short-term position, then permission to labor outside the bounds of the home presbytery is obtained from the home presbytery. For a short-term position of two years or less, it is not necessary to become a member of the Presbytery of Donegal. If the teaching elder wishes to do so, or if the transitional position is expected to last for a longer time, then a meeting with the Examination Commission would be scheduled. The pastor would continue to labor outside the bounds of their presbytery until received in membership of Donegal Presbytery. If the person is a minister in another denomination, then reference checks and appropriate permissions would be obtained from their denominational equivalent of the presbytery.

4. **Required PA Clearances**

All clearances required by the Commonwealth of PA must be obtained and filed with the presbytery office and with the Clerk of Session at the church before any work can begin.

Approval of the Session for the Transition Pastor

1. **Approval of the Candidate for the Position**

The Session is presented with information about the chosen candidate, and votes to endorse the selection of the Transitional Pastor Search Committee.

2. **Approval of the Contract, or Authorization to the Search Team to Finish Negotiating Terms**

Ideally, the session will approve the Terms of Call prior to finalizing the extension of the call as Transitional Pastor. If the timing of session meetings does not permit, then the session may authorize a “bottom line” amount that may not be exceeded and empower the Transitional Pastor Search Team to finish the compensation details for ratification at the next session meeting.

Plans to Introduce the Transitional Pastor to the Session and Presbytery

The Transitional Pastor Search Team and the session should plan on multiple ways to introduce the transitional pastor to the congregation. These include letters and social media postings, once it's official. Care should be given to planning the first day in the pulpit, including introductions and a reception or coffee hour.

The Presbytery will send an email welcoming the new Transitional Pastor to their ministry and introduce them at the next presbytery gathering.