

## Calling an installed Pastor

### Section III – Searching for a Pastor: The Work of the Pastor Nominating Committee/Associate Pastor Nominating Committee

NOTE: Wherever the term Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) is used, similar steps would be used by an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC).

1. Once an interim pastor is in place, the church can expect him/her to provide leadership activities done by all ministers:
  - a. Worship leadership and preaching
  - b. Pastoral care
  - c. Work with the session to provide for the life and ministry of the congregation
  - d. Administrative work including supervision of other staff persons
  - e. Staff support for programs and committees of the congregation
  - f. In addition, the interim pastor will work on the Five Developmental Tasks of an interim
    - i. Coming to terms with history
    - ii. Discovering a new identity
    - iii. Strengthening patterns of lay leadership
    - iv. Strengthening denominational ties
    - v. Preparing for new leadership
2. Once a transitional plan is in place, the congregation should undertake a time of mission study.
  - a. This study could be done by a separate committee of the congregation prior to the formation of the PNC (see below) or sometimes by the PNC.
  - b. The mission study will inform the church's Ministry Information Form (MIF).
3. A Mission study is performed either by a separate committee of the congregation (preferred approach) prior to the formation of the PNC or sometimes by the PNC.
  - a. Who are We?
    - Questionnaire
    - Demographics
    - Needs
    - What kind of pastor
    - Vision
4. A congregational meeting is called to elect a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)

- a. Nominating committee will seek PNC members who represent the diversity within the whole congregation.
  - b. PNC members should be knowledgeable about the congregation, the community, Presbyterian theology and polity.
  - c. PNC members should accept this as a task of spiritual discernment.
  - d. PNC members should expect to commit a significant amount of time, energy and wisdom to a search that usually involves weekly meetings for sometimes up to 12 months or longer.
  - e. Your COM liaison will moderate the first meeting of the PNC and help orient members to their tasks and to discuss the Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity policy of the Presbyterian Church (USA).
5. The PNC is a committee of the congregation.
  - a. Their work is confidential.
  - b. They do not report to the Session or discuss their work with the Session.
  - c. However, Session needs to provide the PNC with a budget that considers travel requirements for interviewing candidates, moving costs, salary, benefits, and so forth.
6. The PNC normally meets regularly (weekly) for the duration of the process, which may take a year or longer.
  - a. We recommend that meetings not last more than two hours.
  - b. Persons nominated to serve must be willing to make this extensive and intensive time commitment.
  - c. Work between meetings often involves time in reading and preparation.
7. The PNC selects its own officers.
  - a. 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, Church Leadership Connection (CLC), candidates and prospective pastors.
    - ensure that Presbytery's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy is followed.
  - b. The role of the Secretary might be to:
    - be responsible for correspondence to and from the committee.
    - keep records for the committee.
    - perform other duties as determined by the PNC.
    - (sometimes a PNC will have a separate clerk to take minutes, leaving the secretary for correspondence and other tasks.)

- c. 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.
  - d. The role of a Chaplain might be to:
    - organize opening and closing devotions/prayers
    - help the committee be attentive to God's Spirit
8. Usually the first meeting is moderated by a liaison from the Committee on Ministry.
- a. The Committee on Ministry liaison should review the process and steps involved in calling an installed pastor.
  - b. The liaison should present and discuss the Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/gamc/pdf/ceeo\\_p1985.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/gamc/pdf/ceeo_p1985.pdf) and the Presbytery [www.psne.org/EEO policy 1991.pdf](http://www.psne.org/EEO_policy_1991.pdf) to provide equal employment opportunity for all qualified persons; to prohibit discrimination in employment based upon racial ethnic group, sex, age, disability or marital condition; and to correct any existent patterns of discrimination.
  - c. The liaison will be available to the PNC throughout the process to help with questions and will stay in regular communication with the PNC.
9. A Mission study is performed either by a separate committee of the congregation (preferred option) prior to the formation of the PNC or sometimes by the PNC.
- a. Who are We?
    - Questionnaire
    - Demographics
    - Needs
    - What kind of pastor
    - Vision
10. The PNC completes another MIF, if one as been done for the interim pastor vacancy, based on information discerned through the Mission Study.
- a. The MIF is available on line at: <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/clc/>
  - b. The MIF is approved by Session.
  - c. The MIF is then approved by COM.
  - d. After these approvals, the MIF can be posted on the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) for matching with ministerial candidates.

- i. The Presbytery Office will provide a password to upload the form on-line, where it will be published by the CLC in the national "Opportunity List".

11. Pastoral Information Forms (PIFs) are received and prioritized. Dossiers may be received from three sources:
  - a. Self-referrals
  - b. Suggestions from individuals
  - c. Church Leadership Connection

This work takes quite a bit of time and cannot be accomplished in 1-2 months.

12. PNC reviews PIFS. Thoughtful development of the process for the consideration of candidates will help ensure that all members of the PNC are heard and can improve the functions of the committee. (The section "The Work of the Pastor Nominating Committee" in the manual *On Calling a Pastor*, referenced below, may be helpful.)
  - a. Read dossiers
  - b. Check references
  - c. Interview candidates
  - d. Listen to candidates preach
  - e. Confer with the COM as to the suitability of the persons under final consideration

13. Final candidates identified by PNC
  - a. In-person interview with the PNC
  - b. Background checks by the Stated Clerk and reference checks by the Executive Presbyter should be performed before the final candidate is asked to preach in a neutral pulpit.
  - c. Final candidate invited to lead worship at a neutral pulpit within the local area where Members of the PNC may attend.
  - d. Session approves terms of call.
  - e. COM interviews final candidate and approves terms of call. While the interview may be more of a formality if the COM has been kept informed by thorough communication throughout the process, it is an essential part of the "three-way agreement" between the parties.
  - f. COM notifies the PNC of approval of the candidate.
  - g. Session is informed that the PNC has a candidate.
  - h. PNC asks Session to call a congregational meeting for the purpose of presenting a candidate to the congregation.
  - i. Finalist is invited to "candidate" at the church and is presented to the congregation at the meeting following worship
    - i. Only one candidate is presented.
    - ii. A formal announcement should be made.

- iii. The candidate's bio should be shared with the congregation.
  - iv. Terms of call should be provided for the attendees, including compensated time off for the required Early Ministry Institute for first-call pastors.
- 14. Throughout the process confidentiality is of great importance. What can be shared with Session and the congregation:
  - a. Where the PNC is in the process.
  - b. The kinds of responses that are being received.
  - c. Requests for prayer.
  - d. *The following should NOT be shared:*
    - i. *Who is voting what on the PNC*
    - ii. *The names of any candidates.*
    - iii. *Speculation as to how long it is going to take the finish the process.*
- 15. Upon election of the pastor, the congregation should vote at that meeting to dissolve the PNC.
- 16. The members of the PNC often serve informally as a welcoming group to assist the new pastor with the transition into the life of the church and the community.
- 17. At a Presbytery meeting, the Presbytery as a whole will need to interview and approve the candidate before installation.
  - a. Presbytery votes to approve the call, including statement of faith and terms of call
  - b. COM may approve the candidate to work within the bounds of the Presbytery until the pastor is received into the presbytery.
  - c. Stated Clerk receives the call papers signed by the candidate and COM and sends call on to the dismissing Presbytery for signature.
  - d. The Stated Clerk of the Presbytery coordinates with the Pastor-elect's former presbytery for the formal dismissal and transfer of the Pastor-elect to the current presbytery.
- 18. Following the pastor's reception into the presbytery, the session should work with the Stated Clerk and the Moderator of Presbytery to request an Administrative Commission to Install the called pastor, set a date for installation. The pastor is installed by the Presbytery.
  - a. The Installation Committee is appointed by the Presbytery.
  - b. The pastor is installed in conjunction with the Session and congregation.
- 19. Once the new pastor is voted in by the congregation, plans should be made for the departure of the interim pastor and celebrating his/her ministry.

Helpful Resources/Links:

**PCUSA Church Leadership Connection:**

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/clc/>

**On Calling a Pastor:** A manual to help participants in the pastoral call process understand their responsibilities and tasks from the time a pastor has announced his or her departure until a new pastor is called and installed

Pcusa.org – download resources – manuals and policies – On Calling a Pastor (P. 17)

**Equal Employment Opportunity Policy of the PCUSA**

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/ceeop1985.pdf>

**Equal Employment Opportunity Policy of Presbytery**

[www.psne.org/EEO\\_policy\\_1991.pdf](http://www.psne.org/EEO_policy_1991.pdf)

**AAEEO Report from Search Committees**

<http://pcusa.org/resource/equal-employment-opportunity-ministry-report-searc/???> Not found

**Advisory Handbook for Ministry Committees/Commissions**

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/committee-ministry-advisory-handbook-pdf/>

**PSNE's Policies for Pastoral Compensation**

<http://www.psne.org/minicomp.pdf>

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