

An Outline for Calling a New Pastor
Including Forms Checklist
*Procedure for Committee on Ministry, Sessions, and Pastor Nominating Committees
of the Presbytery of Cincinnati*
Adapted from On Calling a Pastor, www.pcusa.org/clc “resources”.

Unless specified otherwise “COM” refers to the COM cluster liaison to the church involved, that person generally brings the information to the COM Cluster Chair, then to the COM Moderator and the General Presbyter as appropriate. “COM representative(s)” could include any of the above.

Most of the reference documents can be found on the website of the Presbytery of Cincinnati. Those downloadable from www.presbyteryofcincinnati.org/COMFileCabinet.htm are marked *

1. Dissolving the pastoral relationship

- Pastor notifies COM of his/her intention to accept another call, resign or retire and discusses necessary steps and time line in relocation or retirement process.
- Pastor informs church session with COM representative(s) present to answer questions and provides support. A severance package (if appropriate – * *Compensation Guidelines* – section I-E) is negotiated at this meeting.
- COM representative(s) may be present in worship on the Sunday when the pastor’s departure is announced to the congregation.
- COM consults with Clerk of Session when the pastor's intention to leave is known to the congregation, regarding the process for dissolution of the pastoral relationship
- COM meets with the departing pastor for an exit interview including review of ethical issues. See * *Ministerial Ethics*.
- Session calls a congregational meeting (with appropriate notice) to concur with the pastor's request to dissolve pastoral relationship with the congregation. COM representative(s) may be present in worship on that Sunday. Clerk of Session informs COM liaison of the congregation's action.
- COM acts to dissolve the pastoral relationship.

2. Planning the transition

COM liaison consults with session for the purpose of:

- A pastoral visit to the session early in the transition time including review of ethical issues from the congregation’s perspective. See * *Ministerial Ethics*.
- An exit interview with the session to share perspectives and feelings about the church’s ministry during the departed pastor’s tenure, and to assess church’s present situation. (see appendix for resources).
- Sharing information and answering questions about the transition process.
- Notifying session of COM’s assigned moderator for the session.
- Discussion of types of pastoral leadership, called and temporary, including immediate pulpit supply and pastoral care.
- Sharing information about temporary pastoral leadership or the appropriate use of an Interim Pastor. See * *Interim Ministry Guidelines and Five Development Tasks and Contract*.
- Planning for the work of a transition team and/or an interim pastor Search Committee. COM appoints liaison for Search Committee.

- Discussing a congregational mission study.

3. Engaging the congregation in a mission study

Congregation participates in a mission study.

Some presbyteries require a full mission study at the beginning of the search process. Others require a briefer mission study at the beginning of the search process and a full mission study to be completed sometime in the first three years of the new pastor's tenure.

Presbytery of Cincinnati recommends at least a minimal mission study using the resources listed at the end of this document.

4. Assessing the congregation's finances

- Session considers the congregation's financial situation to determine whether there will be sufficient funds to support the pastor the church might call.
- The cost of housing in the community will be an important consideration for any potential pastor. It may be helpful for a session to consider shared equity in the pastor's purchase of a home.
- Pastoral search expenses as well as moving expenses for the new pastor must also be considered.

5. Electing the pastor nominating committee (PNC)

- After the departure of the pastor, after deciding that the congregation is ready and able to proceed to seek a new called pastor, and after receiving COM authorization, the session recommends number of people to serve on the PNC, and asks the congregational nominating committee to nominate members of the congregation to serve on the PNC.
- The PNC must be representative of the whole congregation and should include an elder currently serving on session.
- COM appoints a PNC liaison to assist the PNC in their work.
- When nominees have been secured, the session calls a congregational meeting to elect a PNC. Public notice of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting must be given with appropriate notice.
- At the time of the congregational meeting to elect a PNC, nominations from the floor of the meeting are in order, provided that members so nominated have given their consent in advance.

6. Orienting and organizing the pastor nominating committee

The PNC liaison meets with session, moderator and PNC for the purpose of:

- Reviewing the theology of call.
- Reviewing the search process in general.

At this point session members not serving on the PNC leave and the PNC liaison meets with PNC for the purpose of orienting the PNC to their work.

- Organization of the PNC
 - Election of chairperson, (assistant chair), recording secretary, corresponding secretary and Internet Contact with CLC.
 - Planning Communication and Resources.
 - Scheduling PNC meetings.
- Review of search process in detail.
- PNC plans to ensure equal opportunity for service.

The PNC liaison is responsible to assist the Pastor Nominating Committee to understand its role in implementing the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s commitment to equal opportunity

employment. See **EEO/AA policy and reporting form*. All potential pastors should be considered based on the gifts they bring to ministry and not on cultural factors such as sex, race, ethnic background, age, disability, or marital status. The church of Jesus Christ is enriched when we welcome diversity in our leadership.

7. Writing and submitting the Church Information Form (CIF)

- PNC plans how it will develop the following and makes assignments:
 - Goals and Mission Statement (grows out of Mission study and requires consultation with Session).
 - Selecting and contacting references who know the congregation well.
 - Narrative section (composed by PNC).
 - Position description, qualifications, and pastoral skills.
(developed in consultation with session and personnel committee)
 - Compensation package for new pastor.
(developed in consultation with session)
- PNC shares draft of CIF with PNC liaison for suggestions.
- PNC completes CIF and presents to session for approval.
- When session has approved, appropriate COM cluster reviews and approves the CIF.
- PNC submits CIF online through the Call Referral System through COM clerk or mails it to
Church Leadership Connection
100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville, KY 40202-1396.

8. Collecting and screening Personal Information Forms (PIF)

PNC liaison consults with PNC for the purpose of:

- Learning how to evaluate potential pastors from PIFs.
- Planning for communications with prospective pastors.
- Considering the use of supplemental questions.
- Learning how to do effective reference checking.
- Learning how to do productive interviewing.
- Planning for communication with potential pastors, keeping those in whom the PNC is interested informed of the committee's anticipated timeline and process, and informing those no longer under consideration of the committee's decision.
- PNC develops procedures and criteria for evaluating PIFs.
- PNC may develop supplemental questions to be sent to potential pastors in whom they have a serious interest.
- PNC receives PIFs from matching process by Church Leadership Connection, recommendations of others, and self-referrals.
- PNC screens PIFs to determine those it wants to consider further.
- PNC communicates with potential pastors by telephone, email, or mail to determine which are interested in consideration.
- PNC reviews sermons of potential pastors via electronic media or listening in person.
- PNC may send supplemental questions to potential pastors and sets a firm date by which all must be received.
- PNC screens the responses to determine which potential pastors they wish to interview.

9. Interviewing potential pastors

- Initial interview process.
 - conduct telephone interviews.
 - check references.
 - hear potential pastors preach in a neutral pulpit or the churches they presently serve (Always check to see if she/he is preaching and whether you can visit with pastor after worship).
- After initial interviews, rank the potential pastors in order of preference.
- Require those who remain on the “short list” to complete a Background Check Form. See * *Background Check policy and procedures*. At this time a Presbytery reference check is made.
- Arrange for one or more potential pastors to visit with PNC in your community. If the person is already ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament, they are interviewed and examined by the COM cluster involved. See * *Entrance Interview*. If the person is not yet ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament they will be interviewed by COM and meet with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) to prepare for their examination by the Presbytery.

10. Choosing the nominee

- PNC makes final choice of pastor including finalizing terms of call, and consults with PNC liaison and with COM cluster.
- All calls must follow the Compensation Guidelines and the current Minimum Terms of Call. See * *Compensation Guidelines, Minimum Terms of Call and Call Papers*.
- PNC determines nominee's willingness to accept call.

11. Making official decisions

- The nominee accepts or declines the call.
- PNC asks session to call congregational meeting (with appropriate notice per - G-14.0532). See * *Congregational Meeting for Calling Pastors, and Presenting & Receiving Calls*
- The nominee will preach a sermon during the worship service before the congregational meeting. At the meeting the PNC will present its nominee and the terms of call. The vote for calling the pastor shall be by written ballot. A majority of the voters who are present and voting is required to elect.
- COM acts to establish the pastoral relationship.
- The PNC works with the session to assist the new pastor and the congregation in the transition to new leadership.
- The PNC may participate in presenting the new pastor to the presbytery.

12. Installing the new pastor

- The presbytery installs the new pastor during a worship service in the congregation. See * *Ordination Guidelines and Installation Guidelines*
- Installing Commissions are appointed by the moderator of the presbytery.
- Often the congregation hosts a welcoming reception following the service of installation.

13. Follow up with support after installation

- Both the congregation and the presbytery have the responsibility to build relationships of trust and care with the new pastor and her or his family.

- Presbytery of Cincinnati has a First Call Pastors support group. Other support opportunities such as mentors are also available.

Tools to assist the search

- The Office of Vocation (1-888-728-7228 ext 8550) offers two helpful resources for use by PNCs and COMs as they assist congregations during the search for new leadership.
 - *On Calling A Pastor* (PDS# OGA-07-090) contains specific directions and information for a PNC during the process. It also contains step-by-step instructions and information about the new computer system and how to use it effectively. Obtain a copy for each member of the PNC you are assisting. It is available for purchase or download at www.pcusa.org/clc
 - *On Calling a Pastor* Video. This ten-minute video is a companion piece to “On Calling a Pastor.” Order from Presbyterian Distribution Services.(1-800-524-2612)
- Research Services can provide statistics about the church in transition and its community. Membership trends and other information, based on the Stated Clerk’s annual report are available on the PCUSA web site at <http://www.pcusa.org/research/index.htm>.
- Resources for Interim Pastors and their work include but are not limited to:
 - The Interim Pastor’s Manual – Revised Edition*
by Alan G. Gripe Published by Geneva Press.
 - Temporary Shepherds A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry*
by Roger S. Nicholson, Editor Published by Alban Institute
Effective interim ministry depends on strong partnership between the interim minister and congregation. Lay leaders of congregations preparing for such a transition will value the expert guidance provided by over a dozen experienced interim pastors. What is interim ministry all about? What needs to happen during the interim? What should leaders and members expect from the interim pastor and themselves during this transition? What other resources are available for congregations?
- Resources for Mission Studies include but are not limited to:
 - Who is Our Church? Imagining Congregational Identity*
by Janet R. Cawley Published by Alban Institute
This book presents a creative and unique group exercise in congregational identity. With numerous composite stories about congregations that have worked with this accessible technique, Cawley demonstrates how to use a congregation’s knowledge of itself to construct a metaphor of the congregation as a person and then draw on that metaphor to generate options for future mission.
 - Discerning Your Congregation’s Future A Strategic and Spiritual Approach*
By Roy M. Oswald and Robert E. Friedrich, Jr. Published by Alban Institute
Drawing on extensive consulting experience with congregations, the authors provide a step-by-step guide to congregational planning that grounds strategic planning techniques in a process of spiritual discernment. Through this process members will own the vision and be eager to participate in congregational calling, life, and ministry. You’ll learn the theory behind the techniques, and receive help for addressing specific situations.

Context w/Revision from Percept

Contains a congregational survey, 3 reflection series meetings and a final retreat.

Studying Congregations: A New Handbook

By Nancy T. Ammerman, et al.

Published by Abingdon

Help for those who want to look at the life of congregations. Outlines areas of investigation and gives suggestions.

Rural Congregational Studies: A Guide for Good Shepherds.

By L. Shannon, Jung and Mary A Agria

Published by Abingdon

How to study rural congregations.

- Resources for the Search Process include but are not limited to:

Pastoral Search -- The Alban Guide to Managing the Pastoral Search Process

By John Vonhof

Published by Alban Institute

Pastoral search teams for congregations in all denominations will find a wealth of information and ideas in this guide to the complex task of finding a new pastor. Every step is detailed: forming the search team, keeping the congregation informed, conducting a congregation self-study, communicating with candidates, developing selection criteria, conducting interviews, managing the call process, and arranging for a smooth transition. Sample letters, forms, and other tools are provided for use in major aspects of the search process.

Searching for a Pastor the Presbyterian Way

By Dean Foose

Published by Geneva Press

Good description of the Presbyterian process.

CALLING A PASTOR FORMS CHECKLIST

* downloadable from www.presbyteryofcincinnati.org/COMFileCabinet.htm

1. Dissolving the pastoral relationship

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Resource</u>
Procedure	<i>Book of Order</i>
Exit interview with minister	*Ministerial Ethics
Separation package (if applicable)	*Compensation Guidelines, section I-E

2. Planning the transition

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Resource</u>
Exit interview with session	*Ministerial Ethics
Searching for an interim	*Interim – Ministry Guidelines
	*Interim – Five Developmental Tasks
	*Interim – Contract

3. Engaging the congregation in a mission study

4. Assessing the congregation's finances

5. Electing the pastor nominating committee (PNC)

6. Orienting and organizing the PNC

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Resource</u>
Equal Employment Opportunity	*EEO/AA Policy
	*EEO/AA Report Form

7. Writing and submitting the Church Information Form (CIF)

<u>Resource</u>
*Church Information Form (CIF)

8. Collecting and screening Personal Information Forms (PIF)

9. Interviewing potential pastors

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Resource</u>
Final choice background check	*Background Check Policy
	*Background Check Procedures
	*Background Check Authorization Form
Entrance interview by cluster	*Entrance Interview

10. Choosing the nominee

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Resource</u>
Negotiating terms of call	*Compensation Guidelines
	*Minimum Terms of Call
	*Designated/Permanent Positions – Call Papers

11. Making official decisions

Topic

Congregational Meeting
Presenting the call

Resource

*Congregational Meeting for Calling Pastors
*Presenting & Receiving Calls

12. Installing the new pastor

Topic

Ordination (if applicable)
Installation

Resource

*Ordination Guidelines
*Installation Guidelines

13. Follow-up with support after installation