



## Call Process for Installed Pastors – 2021

### CHECKLIST FOR SEARCH PROCESS FOR INSTALLED PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Session appoints a mission study team**, which completes a mission study and drafts a written mission study report. Session then reviews and approves the mission study report.
- The COM Liaison brings the mission study report to COM for approval.** If approved by COM, COM will grant session permission to call a special meeting of the congregation for the purpose of nominating and electing a Pastor/Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC/APNC).
- PNC/APNC is elected by congregation**
- The PNC meets with the Executive Presbyter and COM Liaison for a PNC orientation.** Copies of the mission study of the congregation are made available at this first meeting of the PNC. The Executive Presbyter and COM Liaison review recommendations for a good search process. PNC elects a chairperson and a secretary and schedules next PNC meeting. The chairperson is the primary contact with COM and all candidates, and the primary communicator back to session and PNC. The secretary keeps minutes, documents, and arranges meetings.
- The PNC develops a plan for every phase of its search and interview process.** This includes:
  - How initial interviews (sorting and screening interviews) will be conducted (usually remotely: Skype, Facetime, etc.)
  - Identifying 5 reference questions to ask of each initial candidate for comparisons
  - Selection of 2-4 candidates for face-to-face interviews
  - Hospitality plans during candidate (spouse) visits
  - Communication plan established, led by PNC chairperson
- The PNC completes the Ministry Information Form (MIF) and a Job Description** using information from the mission study. **The completed MIF and job description are reviewed and approved by COM.** Constructive feedback may be offered during this COM review. Once COM approves the MIF and job description, COM will then authorize the PNC/APNC to place the MIF online in the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) of the PC(USA).
- The chair of the PNC/APNC and the clerk of Session contact the clerk of the COM for User IDs and passwords for the MIF to be placed online through the CLC.**
- The chair of the PNC requests matching for the congregation's MIF to Ministers' Personal Information Forms (PIF).** The chair will download PIFs received electronically and give hard copies to members of the PNC/APNC.

- **The PNC develops a process to screen PIFs, ensuring that every elected member of the PNC has an opportunity to review every PIF.**
  - EEO requirements must be carefully observed.
  - Minister in whom you are interested are informed ASAP.
  - With self-referrals, Ministers are informed whether or not the PNC/APNC is interested in further conversation; if a self-referral PIF does not have a date/time attestation, the candidate should not be (or be very carefully) considered.
  - Keep in close contact with Pastors in whom you are interested.
  - Also keep track of details of the PIFs reviewed, as it will be important to the discussion you have with COM on the final candidate.
  
- **The PNC checks references for Ministers in whom it is interested.** Reference checking is primarily the responsibility of the PNC/APNC. For candidates of high interest, the PNC/APNC may wish to complete second and third level referencing, noting that **this requires the permission of the candidate in writing.**
  
- **The PNC interviews potential candidates.** Interviews may include telephone interviews, Skype or FaceTime, requests for video recordings of sermons or online links to sermons, and visiting churches (the latter only with the permission of the candidate), and finally face-to-face interviews. **CONFIDENTIALITY MUST BE MAINTAINED THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE PROCESS.**
  
- **The PNC may wish to have a few (usually no more than 2) “final” potential candidates preach in a neutral pulpit in a church within the bounds of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, or in a neighboring Presbytery. For assistance in scheduling a neutral pulpit, contact the Executive Presbyter.** Do not show up at their home church without permission; if you do go, only send a few of the PNC so you don’t stand out. If the candidate is laboring within the bounds of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, complete confidentiality must be maintained. **No one, not even members of Session, can know the identity of the candidate until the time he or she is presented to the congregation for election.**
  
- **It is imperative that the PNC send a copy of the mission study to potential candidates prior to any face-to-face interviews with the PNC (and COM).** The mission study provides the potential candidate with important information that the potential candidate will need when being interviewed by the PNC and COM.
  
- **When the PNC is serious enough to have a face-to-face interview with a small pool of potential candidates (2-4), the PNC/APNC chair contacts the Executive Presbyter and lets him/her know that PNC/APNC would like to do a Presbyter-to-Presbyter check.**
  
- **When the PNC is serious enough to have a face-to-face interview with a small pool of potential candidates (2-4), the PNC/APNC chair also contacts the COM Liaison to schedule an examination for membership/fitness with the COM and the candidate (required).** The COM Liaison will request a copy of the potential candidate’s PIF to circulate among members of COM in preparation for the interview. The COM will request that representatives of the PNC/APNC, including its chair, be present for the face-to-face interview with the candidate.

- **The PNC chooses a candidate.** The PNC/APNC informs the COM Liaison. The COM Liaison will provide the PNC with the necessary four copies of the Pastoral Terms of Call Form (including Board of Pensions information) to negotiate the terms of call.
- **It is critical to understand that ONLY the PNC negotiates terms of call with the candidate. The PNC will work with Session and the finance team to understand the boundaries of what may be offered but no one – not staff, the Session, Personnel or finance – speaks with or meets the candidate at any time prior to the congregational meeting.**
- **The COM Liaison informs the Executive Presbyter of the need for a background check for the candidate.** The Executive Presbyter provides the information for permission to do a background check, and it is the responsibility of the chair of the PNC/APNC to ensure the candidate completes this process. The Executive Presbyter will send the candidate instructions for this process.
- **Nota bene: the Presbytery-to-Presbytery background check, COM examination for membership/fitness, and the release form for permission to do a background check (in addition to the actual background check) MUST BE COMPLETED prior to any announcement or final selection of a candidate for the call, or any of the following steps.**
- **The PNC negotiates the terms of call and communicates these to the COM through the Liaison.** The COM must concur with the terms of call (TOC) created by the PNC/APNC. All TOC must meet the current Presbytery minimum standards for TOC, unless agreed upon by COM. **Session does not engage in this negotiation, although you may confer with the treasurer, so know your budget ahead of time. The Executive Presbyter can help with terms of call.**
- **With COM's permission, the PNC/APNC informs Session of its candidate and the terms of call.** The PNC/APNC also requests that Session call a special meeting of the congregation for the purpose of nominating and electing the candidate as Pastor/associate Pastor. On this same Sunday, the candidate will preach in worship prior to the congregational meeting.
- **The PNC/APNC contacts the COM so that it might appoint a moderator for this special meeting of the congregation.** It is strongly encouraged that the PNC/APNC schedules a reception to introduce the candidate and his/her family to the congregation, preferably prior to the congregational meeting.
- **Congregational voting must take place by secret written ballot.** In the case of emergencies that require a virtual congregation meeting, contact the COM for instructions. Once the ballots are tallied by the PNC, the ballots and tallies are filed in the church (personnel files for those called to pastoral service).
- **If the candidate is elected, the PNC/APNC makes sure that the four (4) Pastoral Terms of Call forms are properly signed (along with necessary forms related to the Board of Pensions).** Copies of the Pastoral call forms are delivered to the moderator of the COM and the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Cincinnati. If the COM Liaison is unable to be present, the PNC/APNC chair makes a written report to the COM Liaison that the call has been approved by the congregation.

- **The PNC destroys all confidential information, such as PIFs of all Ministers considered.** Having completed its work, the PNC/APNC is dissolved by the congregation (at the same time of the congregational meeting at which the Pastor is elected), with the thanks of the congregation.
  
- **The Pastor/associate Pastor, session, and the Presbytery schedule a service of installation.** The Pastor/associate Pastor contacts the moderator of the Presbytery to begin the process of scheduling a service of installation, and the members of the Administrative Commission to install are forwarded by the Pastor/associate Pastor to the COM Liaison. On behalf of the Presbytery, the COM approves the Administrative Commission to install the new Pastor/associate Pastor. An outline and requirements for this service of worship can be provided by the COM Liaison or Stated Clerk, or it can be found on the Presbytery website.
  
- **A congregational support system is established for the Pastor/associate Pastor.** This may be a transition team or group appointed by session or the PNC/APNC.
  
- **The Pastor/associate Pastor is introduced and welcomed at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery, after they have begun service in the Presbytery of Cincinnati.**