

CALLING A PASTOR OR ASSOCIATE PASTOR*
National Capital Presbytery – Committee on Ministry Congregational Transitions Commission
 Created 12/19/23

When a Pastor or Associate Pastor leaves a church, COM advises the Session on securing leadership for the search period.

This document describes the steps to be taken when the Session has determined that it is time to begin the search for a called/installed pastor to fill the vacancy created when the previous pastor left, or when COM approves a new called/installed position. This process assumes that a COM liaison has been or will soon be appointed. The importance of this matrix is to understand of when the presbytery and session needs to be involved in decisions. This matrix is to be used alongside the “PNC Guide to Calling a Pastor.”

STEP	Responsible Party
1.0 GP is notified that the church is ready to begin the search process.	Pastor & COS
1.1 Session sends written request to CTC and COM Administrator, requesting COM permission to call a congregational meeting to elect a PNC.	COS
1.2 Session receives a copy of this matrix and “PNC Guide to Calling a Pastor.”	COM Administrator
1.3 CTC grants permission to elect a PNC and informs the Session of that action.	CTC & COM Administrator
1.4 CTC assigns a liaison to meet with Session to share the “PNC Guide to Calling a Pastor” with the PNC.	CTC
2.0 PNC is elected.	
2.1 Session establishes a process for constituting the PNC (usually the church officer Nominating Committee) and develops a slate of candidates that is broadly representative of the congregation.	Session
2.2 Session announces the PNC slate to the congregation and calls a congregational meeting for their election.	Session
2.3 A duly called congregational meeting is held to elect the PNC. The COM liaison attends to provide an overview of the search process and the Presbytery’s EEO/AA process for the congregation. The Moderator signs EEO/AA Form 1 to verify the presentation of the policy to the congregation.	Moderator & COM liaison
PART I: GETTING STARTED	
3.0 PNC begins its work. (The steps below are a high-level summary of the PNC’s work. Detailed guidance on the search process is provided in NCP’s “PNC Guide to Calling a Pastor.”)	
3.1 Session ensures that all PNC members have the resources needed to begin their work, including the documentation sent previously and a budget for PNC expenses.	Session
3.2 COM liaison arranges for a Theology of Call presentation to be made to a joint meeting of Session and the PNC. The Presbytery’s EEO/AA policy is also presented and discussed. The Clerk of Session signs EEO/AA Form 1 to verify the presentation of the policy to the Session and the PNC.	COM Liaison, Theology of the Call presenter, COS

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3.3 COM liaison calls the first meeting of the PNC and acts as moderator of the meetings until the PNC elects its leadership. The liaison, possibly assisted by the Temporary Pastor/Pastor, leads team building and orientation activities.	COM Liaison
3.4 PNC begins regular reporting on its progress to the Session and congregation, being mindful to protect confidential information.	PNC
PART II & III: PREPARING TO WRITE THE MINISTRY DISCERNMENT PROFILE (MDP) & WRITING THE MDP	
4.0 PNC drafts the MDP in consultation with the Session.	
4.1 PNC gathers data for the MDP, consulting with Session for membership statistics and input on the position description, the church's mission and direction, and the salary range (effective salary) for the position. The PNC will draw on the most recent mission study and/or strategic plan and may also conduct congregational surveys to obtain input.	PNC, Session
4.2 PNC completes the MDP and presents it to Session and the Liaison for approval.	PNC
4.3 Session and liaison approve the MDP.	Session, COM Liaison
4.4 PNC sends a hard copy of the MDP, signed by the Clerk, the Liaison, and the PNC Chair to the COM Administrator, along with EEO/AA Form 1.	PNC Chair
4.5 PNC Chair contacts COM Administrator to set up PNC to submit the MDP electronically to Church Leadership Connection. Refer to CLC online instructions on how to post the MDP. As a part of this process, CTC confirms that the minimum salary meets Presbytery's compensation guidelines.	PNC Chair, CTC
4.6 PNC Chair writes a brief position description, including a brief description of the church, the total compensation, and the PNC contact information. This is sent to the CTC Co-Chair who approves it.	PNC Chair, CTC Co-Chair
4.7 CTC Co-Chair asks the Director of Communication to add a position notice (with a link to the MDP) to the Presbytery website. The Director of Communication sends e-mail to the PNC Chair and liaison when the posting is completed, with a link.	CTC Co-Chair, Director of Communication
PART IV: SELECTING AND INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES	
5.0 PNC identifies and interviews promising candidates.	

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5.1 PNC receives and evaluates PDPs received through CLC computer matching and self-referral. PNC may also choose to advertise the position in church publications and at seminaries and by networking with other Presbytery execs.	PNC
5.2 PNC reviews recorded sermons; may conduct preliminary telephone interviews or arrange anonymous visits to hear candidates and conducts reference checks.	PNC
5.3 Using EEO/AA Form 2, the PNC requests General Presbyter reference checks for candidates they wish to interview face-to-face. Requests are sent to the COM Administrator, along with a copy of the candidate's PIF. For non-ordained candidates, the General Presbyter secures confirmation that the candidate is certified ready to receive a call.	PNC Chair & GP
5.4 PNC receives confirmation that the General Presbyter's reference checks are satisfactory and that non-ordained candidates are certified ready to receive a call. Only then does the PNC proceed to face-to-face interviews and narrow to final candidates.	COM Administrator
5.5 PNC interviews final candidates in person and may hear them preach at neutral pulpits. If the position to be filled is Associate Pastor, the Pastor, as Head of Staff, participates in the interviews. Candidates for Pastor may meet with other installed pastors as part of the interview process.	PNC
5.6 It is very important that the PNC resolves all "fit" issues with the candidate(s), such as strengths and weaknesses, job description, terms of call, matching vs. non-matching skills, theology. The PNC is the only body that assures the theological "fit" between the congregation and the final candidate.	PNC
5.7 As the process begins to end, the PNC keeps the temporary pastor informed so that they can begin the search for the next position.	PNC Chair & COM Liaison
PART V: WE HAVE A FINAL CANDIDATE	
6.0 PNC selects a final candidate.	
6.1 PNC chooses a final candidate and negotiates the Terms of Call. PNC submits proposed Terms of Call to COM Administrator and CTC Co-Chairs for preliminary review.	PNC Chair & COM Liaison
6.2 Proposed Terms of Call get preliminary OK, and the PNC is informed.	COM Administrator & CTC Co-Chair
6.3 PNC Chair informs the liaison, CTC Co-Chair, and the COM Administrator that the final candidate has accepted the offer and requests that an examination be scheduled. The name of the candidate must be kept confidential within the PNC until the candidate has successfully passed the examination, has been approved by CTC, and has	PNC Chair

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given the PNC the go-ahead to share the candidate's identity with the congregation. If the candidate is a minister member of NCP and has been examined within the past 10 years, no new examination is required.	
7.0 The Candidate is examined by Presbytery and approved for membership pending the action of the congregational meeting.	
7.1 The candidate receives an electronic memo regarding possible exam dates and instructions on submitting a Statement of Faith, a brief biographical statement, and responses to five examination interview essay questions. The following documents are also attached with instructions regarding their submission: (1) the Examination Process, (2) the Clergy Sexual Misconduct Policy, (3) the Code of Ethics for Clergy and Other Church Professionals, (4) the Administrative Leave Policy, (5) the signature form for agreeing to Administrative Leave Policy, Code of Ethics, and Sexual Misconduct Policy, (6) the Release for Criminal Background Check.	COM Administrator
7.2 The candidate returns the required documents. COM Administrator requests potential exam dates and communicates with the Examination Team Chair who in turn finds a mutually agreed upon date between the exam team and candidate. Administrator distributes the Statement of Faith, biographical statement, responses to exam questions, and the candidate's PDP or resume to the Examination Team.	Candidate, COM Administrator, COM Exam Team Chair
7.3 GP or Stated Clerk orders and reviews a criminal background check on the candidate.	GP or Stated Clerk
7.4 The examination is conducted. Examination team chair notifies the COM Administrator and CTC Co-Chairs of the team's recommendation.	COM
7.5 If the examination has been sustained, the Terms of Call, PDF, and Statement of Faith are shared with the CTC Co-Chairs. A final review of the negotiated terms of call is conducted. (If the examination is not sustained, the call is referred to COM for further discernment.)	COM Administrator
7.6 The Terms of Call, PIF, and Statement of Faith are sent to CTC members. At its next meeting, the CTC concurs with the examination team's recommendation; grants permission for the session to call a congregational meeting to hear the report of the PNC; approves the candidate for membership in the NCP and approves the terms of call. These actions are pending the results of the congregational meeting, and, if appropriate, pending ordination. If expedited approval is needed, the above actions may be taken by electronic vote.	CTC Co-Chair
7.7 PNC Chair, Clerk of Session, COM liaison, and the candidate are informed of the CTC's actions.	COM Administrator
8.0 The call is approved by the congregation.	
8.1 Congregational meeting to call the pastor is duly announced. Find the agenda and sample ballots for the congregation meeting in Appendix G & H of the "PNC Guide."	Session

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8.2 Candidate may meet with church officers/members prior to the congregational meeting.	Candidate, Session, PNC, Congregation
8.3 Candidate may preach during worship prior to the congregational meeting.	Candidate
8.4 PNC presents a report to the congregation, introducing the candidate. Congregation votes on the candidate and the terms of call in a single vote. The Temporary Pastor and COM liaison remind the congregation of the Former Pastor Policy and indicates that this policy applies also to Temporary Pastors.	Congregation, Temporary Pastor, & COM Liaison
8.5 Moderator attests to the congregation's actions, and Clerk completes formal call forms and returns them to the COM Administrator. Moderator, Clerk of Session	COS
8.6 CTC Co-Chair asks NCP Director of Communications to remove job posting from NCP website and asks the COM Administrator to contact CLC to take down the MDP.	CTC Co-Chair & Director of Communications, COM Administrator
8.7 To maintain confidentiality, PNC seals all materials related to the chosen candidate, including reference check and interview notes, and stores them in a secure place. PNC destroys all other PDFs, references, interview notes, and reference check notes.	PNC
9.0 Pastor begins work as Called Pastor or Associate Pastor.	
9.1 If applicable, pastor is placed on the agenda of the next Presbytery meeting for welcome and introduction.	COM Administrator
9.2 If candidate has not yet been ordained, candidate may begin work but may not perform pastoral functions (administer the sacraments, conduct funerals, moderate Session or congregational meetings) until candidate has been ordained.	Candidate
9.3 If the candidate has not yet been ordained, and if the candidate is to be the solo pastor, the Stated Clerk will appoint a Moderator to perform pastoral functions until the ordination service.	Stated Clerk
9.4 The Stated Clerk sends to the Pastor information about planning the ordination/installation plans. Plans are made for the service of ordination/installation. Installation services may not be scheduled on Sunday mornings so that other members of the Presbytery can attend. Services must include the presbytery moderator or their designee.	Stated Clerk
9.5 Stated Clerk of Presbytery approves all final installation/ordination plans. Stated Clerk can elect to send exceptional plans to CTC for approval.	Stated Clerk
9.6 Installation/ordination service is conducted.	NCP Moderator or Vice Moderator

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* Copy the COM Administrator & CTC Co-Chairs on all the email correspondence.

Authority: Book of Order: G-2.0503 (Categories of Membership), G-2.0504 (Pastoral Relationships), G-2.08 (Call and Installation), G-3.0303 (Relations with Sessions), G-3.0307 (The Presbytery: Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor to Teaching Elders and Congregations)

NCP Policies: PNC Guide to Calling a Pastor; Pastoral Categories Policy; EEO/AA Policy and Supplement (NCP); Background Check Policy; Terms of Call Packet and Policy for PNCs; Compensation and Personnel Policies for Pastors; Code of Ethics for Clergy and Other Church Professionals; Policy on Examination Process

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