

## **Procedure: Pastor Search Process**

### **Initial Steps**

1. When a pastor or associate decides to accept a call to another congregation, or otherwise to leave a parish, the pastor is required to check with the Committee on Ministry (COM) concerning the appropriate process and procedures, so that a smooth transition occurs for both the congregation and the pastor.
2. The Session calls a congregational meeting for the purpose of dissolving the pastoral relationship. The COM Representative (Moderator or designated Liaison) is contacted before this and all subsequent congregational meetings, so that recommended procedures can be outlined and followed.
3. The COM provides the Session with:
  - a. Name of the COM Liaison.
  - b. The COM Liaison supplies a resource packet from the Presbytery office with the various forms and guidelines needed by the Session and Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) throughout the process.
  - c. A list of acceptable supply ministers and/or names of people from whom Session may select an interim pastor.
  - d. Necessary information concerning procedures and remuneration of those who supply the pulpit.
  - e. Consider the possibility of advertising the position in magazines, etc.
4. The COM Liaison consults with the Session about the selection of a Moderator, who will have primary responsibility for working with the Session during the interim period. (This step is not necessary when an associate pastor leaves, since he/she is not the Moderator of the Session.) Occasionally the Presbytery, through the COM, will appoint a stated supply pastor for a period of time.
5. The Intentional Interim Ministry policy will be followed at this time (see Book of Order).
6. The COM Liaison and Executive Presbyter meet with the Session, explain personnel search options, and recommend procedures for establishing a Pastor Nominating Committee. Qualifications for committee membership are carefully explained and Presbytery report form #1-A for Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity (AA/EEO) is completed and filed with the Presbytery office.
7. The Session calls a Congregational meeting for the purpose of electing a PNC which is representative of the congregation in regard to age, gender, and interests. PNC's normally have between 7-11 members. This committee is elected to prepare the Church Information Form (CIF) and conduct the search for a new, permanent pastor or associate pastor. The COM Liaison is present at the congregational meeting to outline the Presbytery's AA/EEO Policy 4.3102 presents the corresponding Form 4.3507 completed and filed with the Presbytery office.
8. In all of these steps, the appointed COM Liaison strives to be present and helpful, overseeing the search process on behalf of Presbytery and keeping the AA/EEO guidelines before the congregation and PNC.

### **Steps for the Pastor Nominating Committee**

1. Elect a Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Secretary, and, if desired, a Corresponding Secretary. Complete and submit to the Presbytery Presbytery's AA/EEO Policy Form 4.3507
2. Select a regular meeting time, preferably weekly.
3. Confer with the COM Liaison regarding the steps to be taken in the search process, from preparing the CIF to the actual calling of a pastor or associate. He/she will meet frequently

with the PNC to assist them in the search process.

4. Study the kit of materials supplied by the Presbytery office through the COM Liaison. These should be reviewed in depth by the committee members, together with the COM Liaison, who will meet frequently with the PNC to assist in the search process.
5. Complete the CIF accurately. Determine from the Session the salary and benefits which are to be offered. Current factual information about congregation membership, indebtedness, etc. is required, as is a copy of the congregation's mission statement. Help will be provided by COM Liaison. When the CIF is completed, it must be approved by the Session.
6. Copies of the CIF are sent to the COM Moderator, COM Liaison, and Executive Presbyter, after it has been approved by the Session. After any changes have been made and the form meets the requirements of the COM it is entered online, using the passcode given by the COM Moderator. After entry, matches of PIF's on file may be made electronically.
7. Determine how you want to evaluate basic data sheets of the official dossier which is called a Personal Information Form (PIF), before they begin arriving. Decide how you will contact candidates, and how many dossiers you want to consider before selecting finalists. Develop a method for evaluating dossiers and conducting interviews. Settle budgetary matters as they relate to Committee expenses, such as telephone calls, entertaining candidates, and the travel expenses of candidates.
8. Inform all candidates when you have received their PIFs, asking for supplemental information as desired, and keep them informed of the process, including notifying them when they are no longer being considered for the position. PNC's should evaluate only PIF's that have been filed with the at Louisville. When PIF's are self-referred or are forwarded from other locales, the copy on file with CPS is the one that should be used for evaluation.
9. Begin reading and evaluating basic data sheets. Request additional batches of computer-matched candidates from Church Leadership Connection (CLC) as desired or required. Remember to request basic data sheets from candidates included in AA/EEO categories.
10. After initial screening, selected candidates should be contacted by telephone or letter in order to determine their interest in the position and availability for further consideration. In no way should this contact take the form of an interview. It is simply to verify interest and availability.
11. The PNC mails out a secondary reference authorization form to each candidate for whom it desires to check references beyond those listed on the PIF. Secondary reference checks made to individuals who are not specifically listed by the candidate cannot be made unless the signed authorization form has been received by the COM. Exercise care in contacting secondary references. Remember, that candidates always have the right to refuse that certain people be contacted.
12. Preliminary clearance is needed and must be received via the COM Liaison before the PNC may hear and interview any candidate in-person. To clear the names of all those being seriously considered by the PNC, the COM Liaison will give names and basic data sheets, or complete PIFs of prospective candidates, to the COM Moderator and/or Executive Presbyter, who investigates and gives or denies clearance. The COM Moderator reports to the liaison, who in turn reports to the PNC.
13. When the PNC wishes to consider no further PIFs, notify the Church Leadership Connection that you no longer wish to receive PIFs. Otherwise matches and self-referrals will continue.
14. Neutral pulpit arrangements are made by the PNC. Plan well in advance and ask the COM Liaison and/or Executive Presbyter for assistance in recommending churches where you can arrange to hear candidates you bring to the area. If you are considering someone presently serving a congregation in your region, it is best if you hear him/her there. Most PNCs and candidates find it preferable to schedule this visit for a regular service of worship, but, when necessary, candidates may deliver a sermon just for the committee. The COM Liaison or an

alternate from the COM must be present whenever a PNC hears a candidate preach in-person, and also must be present for any and all interviews with candidates.

15. Final clearance is done by the COM Moderator and Executive Presbyter who contact their counterparts in the candidate's Presbytery. These officials may be more candid when speaking with their counterparts than with someone from the PNC. **AT LEAST TWO WEEKS ARE TO BE ALLOWED FOR THIS CHECKING.** Make certain that at least one of these semi final candidates is from a minority category as defined by the AA/EEO policy.
16. If a finalist has not been ordained, then make preparations for an ordination examination, which may need to be coordinated with the candidate's presbytery. The Stated Clerk may be helpful here.
17. After the further reference checking has been completed, if necessary, the PNC, in conjunction with the COM Liaison, arranges a meeting for deliberation and comparison of the top candidates. **AT THE INTERVIEWS WITH EACH OF THE SEMI FINALISTS, PRELIMINARY NEGOTIATIONS OF TERMS OF CALL SHALL BE HELD.**
18. The Session shall be informed that a candidate has been selected, and asked to call a congregational meeting for the purpose of acting on the PNC's recommendation to extend a "call" to the candidate.
19. Initiate a criminal background check with the candidate.
20. Inform all candidates as soon as they are no longer being seriously considered.
21. Prepare your congregation to hear the candidate you have agreed upon and the COM has approved. A special mailing from the PNC to the congregation often is helpful and may contain biographical material, excerpts from the candidate's PIF, photographs of the candidate, quotations from members of the PNC, etc. Provide ample informal social opportunities for the candidate and congregation before the candidate leads worship and preaches. The meeting of the congregation for the purpose of acting on the recommendation of the PNC follows worship.
22. Notify the Presbytery office once a minister has been officially invited to candidate, so that copies of the call form and AA/EEO form will be on-hand when the congregation meets to act on the call.
22. An announced meeting of the congregation follows the service of worship where the candidate has preached the sermon and led worship. The candidate is presented by the Moderator of the PNC. Voting is done by ballot, with the candidate and his/her family absent from the room. The COM Liaison and officiating Moderator are to monitor the election and the balance of affirmative and negative votes.
23. Process the call by securing all necessary signatures and submitting the call and AA/EEO report form to the COM. The COM will present the candidate and the "call" at the next meeting of the Presbytery. Determine who from the PNC will introduce your candidate to the Presbytery and briefly describe your search.
24. Presbytery acts on the "call" on the recommendation of the COM, approves arrangements for a service of installation as soon as such arrangements have been completed by your new Pastor and your Session, and elects an Administrative Commission to carry out the installation.
25. The Moderator of the PNC notifies the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) that the position has been filled.