

Presbytery of Philadelphia



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Commission on Ministry (COM)

## **Pastoral Search Process Outline**

This **Pastoral Search Process Outline** is intended to provide members of the Commission on Ministry (COM), Session, and Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) with a companion resource to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) “On Calling a Pastor—A Manual for Churches Seeking a Pastor”. See [www.pcusa.org/resources](http://www.pcusa.org/resources) for more information.

STAGE I

1. Announce Pastor Status Change
2. Dissolve Relationship
3. Sign Covenant of Closure
4. Conduct Pastor and Session Exit Interviews

STAGE I: DISSOLUTION OF A PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP

**ANNOUNCE:** Installed pastor notifies the Commission Ministry (COM) and the Executive Presbyter (EP) of a new call or other change in status and discusses process and timelines.

**DISSOLVE:** The COM liaison (and/or the EP) meets with the session when there is to be a dissolution of a pastoral relationship. See *Book of Order G-2.0903, 2.0904* when request is not by the pastor. At session meeting:

- Pastor requests dissolution
- Session approves a motion to call a congregational meeting
- COM liaison moderates the remainder of the meeting

**SIGN:** Copies of the Covenant of Closure regarding retired ministers and ministers leaving for another position are presented, discussed and signed by pastor and clerk of session. Copies are given to all present. COM liaison:

- Talks about the next steps and available resources
- Gives a broad overview of the vacancy process

The next day: a letter is sent from the pastor to the congregation notifying them of the pending dissolution

The congregational meeting is held to concur with the request to dissolve the pastoral relationship and the Covenant of Closure is shared.

Notice of the action of the congregation is sent by the clerk of session to the EP and the Chair of the COM, and the motion to approve the dissolution is placed on the docket of COM. COM acts on behalf of the presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relationship and **the** Regional Team appoints a moderator of the session.

**CONDUCT:** COM liaison arranges exit interviews with the pastor and the session.

Soon after the departure of the pastor, the COM liaison or other representative of COM is invited to hold a Town Meeting to inform the congregation about the process that lies ahead and to answer questions.

Resources Continued

Stage V

- Evaluating Pastoral Qualities
- Interview Evaluation
- Applicant Flow Log
- Interview Prep
- Hiring Questions Check List
- Competency Model
- Interview Guide
- Sample Reference Questions
- Privacy Guidelines

Stage VI

- Pastoral Terms of Call
- Understanding Effective Salary
- PNC Feedback
- Policy and Guidelines for Ordinations and/or Installations
- Sexual Misconduct Policy and Level I Quiz
- Code of Ethics Policy
- CPC Provisional Manual of Operations

Resources	
Documents, forms and resource links are available on CCL Documents web page at <a href="http://www.presbyphl.org">www.presbyphl.org</a>	
Stage I	COM Church Liaison By Region Dissolution of a Pastor Relationship Policy Sample Dissolution Agreement Covenant of Closure with an Outgoing Pastor Exit Interview for Pastor Exit Interview for Interim Pastor Exit Interview for Sessions
Stage II	Categories & Requirements Selection and Expectations of an Interim Pastor Contract – Temporary Supply Contract – Interim Ministry
Stage III	Ingredients of a Mission Study Outline for Congregational Gathering for a Mission Study
Stage IV	AA/EEO Form Instructions for Entering a MIF Ministry Information Form (blank) MIF Tips for Interim Positions MIF Approval Form On Calling a Pastor Minimum Salary Compensation Recommendation Board of Pension Clergy Effective Salary ( <a href="http://www.pensions.org">www.pensions.org</a> )

STAGE II	
1. Select Supply or Interim Pastor	2. Write, Approve and Advertise Job Description
3. Receive PIFs	4. Negotiate and Approve Contracts

STAGE II: SELECTION OF TRANSITIONAL LEADERSHIP
<b>SELECT:</b> Following the COM action to dissolve the pastoral relationship, the session appoints an Interim Pastor Search Committee or secures a temporary supply pastor. The session is responsible for filling the pulpit until an interim or supply pastor arrives.
<b>PREPARE:</b> Committee or session writes a position description that outlines the ministry setting, includes an outline of tasks to be performed, and the salary range being offered. Then sends the information to the COM liaison for the COM regional team’s review.  Upon COM approval, the position description is submitted to <a href="mailto:enews@presbyphl.org">enews@presbyphl.org</a> to be posted on the presbytery’s website
<b>RECEIVE:</b> PIFs may be received from the EP, COM liaison and/or self-referrals. The committee may also request PIFs from potential candidates directly.  If considering non-Presbytery of Philadelphia PIFs, the Exec must conduct a presbytery reference prior to offer.
<b>NEGOTIATE:</b> Following the protocol of the Presbytery:  <b>For Interim Pastor:</b> The search committee interviews candidates and makes a recommendation to session. Note: <i>An interim pastor is hired following approval by session and the CCL and contract is may be renewed annually.</i>  <b>For Temporary Supply Search:</b> The session interviews and selects the candidate.  <i>A temporary supply pastor is appointed by the Presbytery for a one-year period following approval by session and COM and contract may be renewed annually.</i>
The COM liaison meets with the session and the interim pastor to review “Selection & Expectations of an Interim Pastor” the Mission Study and Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) process.

# STAGE III

1. Develop Mission Study Process
2. Write, Submit and Approve

## STAGE III: MISSION STUDY

**DEVELOP:** The Mission Study is used by the PNC as a guide for preparing the Ministry Information Form (MIF) and as a “road map” in the selection process.

Mission Study resources can be obtained from the Presbytery Office

Whether the process is over a few days or several months, the following are essential for a thorough study and evaluation by a congregation of its mission and purpose and development of its mission statement:

### Ingredients of a Mission Study

- Bible Study
- Congregational Analysis
- Mission Planning

The following can be done in one gathering or more. Divide the gathering into discussion groups of 7-9 persons, each group represented as wide as possible by a session member, a deacon, a youth, various congregational committees, potential PNC, Mission Study Task Group, etc. In other words, mix them up. Mission Study Task Group member records notes to be shared with team:

### Outline of Congregational Gathering( s) for a Mission Study

- Time-line Exercise
- Discussion Questions
- Bible Study/Mission Statement
- Envisioning/Future Forecasting

**APPROVE:** The Mission Study is reviewed and approved by the session and the Regional Team of COM, and clearance is given to form a PNC.

Note: The session decides how the completed study will be shared with the congregation.

# STAGE VI continued

**ELECT:** PNC begins to make plans for welcoming a new pastor. Upon CPMM approval, the PNC request session to set a date for the worship service and call a congregational meeting to elect the finalist.

A member of Presbytery or COM should moderate this meeting at the request of the Interim Pastor and the Interim Pastor should not be present. This will begin to facilitate the appropriate disengagement of the interim pastor from the congregation’s life.

**APPROVE:** Terms of Call are signed and returned to Presbytery Office for approval by the COM at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

**CONDUCT:** The COM liaison provides the finalist with installation service guidelines and AC Request for COM approval. These plans should be submitted to the Regional Moderator at least one month prior to the planned date. The date of the installation should be set in consultation with the Presbytery Moderator.

The Session gives official notice to the Interim Pastor of the effective date of the end of their contract, and makes plans for the congregation to say good-bye to him/her. The PNC prepares to welcome the new pastor and to facilitate integration into the life of the congregation.

**ORDAIN/INSTALL:** The Ordination and/or Installation service is held with a reception for the new pastor.  
**CELEBRATE!**

## STAGE VI

1. Present Finalist to Commission on Preparation for Ministry and Membership (CPMM)
2. Elect Finalist
3. Approve Terms of Call
4. Conduct Ordination Examination *(if applicable)*
5. Ordain and/or Install

### STAGE VI: CALL & MEMBERSHIP

**PRESENT:** To prepare the finalist for membership exam with the Commission on Preparation for Ministry and Membership (CPMM), the Presbytery Office will supply the finalist with membership and statement of faith guidelines as well as other required forms for completion.

**If the candidate is not ordained**, the COM liaison notifies the Presbytery Exec and the Chair of the COM, who then confer with the candidate’s Presbytery of Care to confirm that he/she is certified ready to receive a call. The process to be ordained is guided by CPMM. *(See the CPMM page on [www.presbyphl.org](http://www.presbyphl.org))*

The COM liaison conducts an exit interview with the interim pastor and the session.

COM liaison reviews the final steps with the PNC and assures that all paperwork is completed.

Paperwork to be sent to the Presbytery Office before the finalist can meet with CPMM:

- CLC PIF
- Statement of Faith
- Biographical Statement
- Sexual Misconduct Training
- Certificate of Adherence for Presbytery Sexual Misconduct and Code of Ethics Policies
- Presbytery Pastor Contact Information Form

Other needed materials:

- Draft Terms of Call (for proofreading)

- COM Request for Ordination/Installation Administrative Commission

CPMM normally meets every second Thursday of the month. CPMM must have a Statement of Faith and Biographical Statement to be considered for the docket. PNC and finalist schedules an interview with CPMM for the membership exam and approval to present their candidate to the congregation.

## STAGE IV

1. Review PNC Process
2. Elect and Train PNC
2. 3. Create, Approve and Submit MIF

### STAGE IV: PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE (PNC)

#### MINISTRY INFORMATION FORM (MIF)

**REVIEW:** Liaison receives information through the Presbytery Office and directly from church programs, etc. in order to prepare for his/her role in support of the search process.

COM liaison meets with session to review:

- Process for electing a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)
- Allocating funds to cover the expenses of the PNC
- Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Policy (AAEEO)
- An overview of the PNC search process
- The role of the interim pastor, session, PNC, and COM in the search process
- The need for strict confidentiality in the process

**ELECT:** Session contacts the church nominating committee and instructs them to prepare a slate of nominees (recommended 7 – 9) which is representative of the congregation as a whole. These persons shall be presented to the congregation as nominees for the PNC.

*Contact Presbytery Office for the “Nominating Church Officers” booklet.*

When the church nominating committee has determined its slate and the Mission Study is completed and approved by COM, session calls a congregational meeting to elect the PNC. At the congregational meeting:

- The slate is offered to the congregation
- Additional nominations, if any, are received from the floor

The congregation votes on a PNC (with no alternates).

The CCL liaison **or other representative of COM** is ordinarily present at the meeting to explain the search process to the congregation and answer questions.

Session plans for funds to cover the expenses of the PNC. Upon election of the PNC, a final budget will be established in consultation with the PNC. The PNC meets briefly to coordinate with the COM liaison a date and time for their first meeting when all members can be present. Clerk of session sends PNC Roster to COM liaison.

## STAGE IV continued

**TRAIN:** The COM liaison convenes and moderates the first meeting of the PNC. At the first meeting:

Review the entire search process of

- Communicating with the congregation
- Preparation for receiving, evaluating and tracking PIFs
- EP reference checks
- Productive interviewing
- Evaluating worship and sermons
- Effective reference checks by PNCs
- Neutral pulpits

The liaison may want to visit the PNC at various stages of the search to review the process further

Declare intention to comply with the AA/EEO policy

Elects officers (including a Chair, Vice-chair, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, and others as needed). [Sometimes a PNC may delay this to see if leadership naturally arises from the members of the PNC.]

Define the role of the interim pastor, session, and presbytery in the search process.

- **For an Associate PNC:** COM liaison will find a mutually agreeable plan for the roles of pastor and APNC in search process

Each member receive PNC resources:

- Ministry Information Form (MIF) from
- “On Calling a Pastor” from [www.pcusa.org/resource](http://www.pcusa.org/resource)

Finalize search process budget prepared by session. It is recommended that the PNC establish a separate bank account to ensure confidentiality when reimbursing travel expenses of candidates.

**CREATE:** The PNC prepares the first draft of the MIF using information from the Mission Study, supplemented with other presbytery resources. The position description and effective salary sections are prepared in conjunction with the session, using current resources.

Session reviews and approves the completed MIF, proposing revisions where necessary to accurately describe the congregation, the community, and the pastoral position for which applicants are sought. The MIF is then submitted to the COM liaison along with a MIF approval form for COM regional team to review. For docket consideration, the MIF should be emailed to the COM liaison no later than the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of the month.

Once the MIF is approved by the regional team, the **COM Chair** contacts the Church Leadership Connection at 800.728.7228, ext. 5738 in order to receive the codes to enter the MIF online at [www.clc.pcusa.org](http://www.clc.pcusa.org) and relays the codes to the PNC chairperson.

## STAGE V

1. Determine PIF Evaluation and Interview Process
2. Receive PIFs
3. Obtain EP References
4. Select Nominee

### STAGE V: EVALUATION, INTERVIEW & SELECTION

**DETERMINE:** If a non-Presbytery of Philadelphia PIF does not contain either the sexual misconduct sign-off section or the Stated Clerk’s signature from his/her presbytery, ask the candidate for a complete PIF or do not consider him/her further. If you would still like to consider this candidate, turn this matter over to the COM Moderator and trust their advice.

PNC develops procedure, criteria and forms for evaluation PIFs

PNC develops basic interview questions

PNC conducts the search as follows:

- Evaluates PIFs
- Makes initial phone contact with those persons in whom they are interested
- Maintains a log of phone and email contacts
- Receives and review sermons (tape, podcast, etc.)
- Conducts at least one telephone/in person/Skype interview of candidates of interest
- Ranks candidates in order of preference after initial interviews
- Checks references of top candidates
- Informs candidates frequently of where they are in the search process
- Requests an EP reference check on those being seriously considered
- Arranges neutral pulpits for final candidates and brings him/her in for interview and tour of facilities and surrounding area
- Chairperson request and finalist grants permission to the Presbytery to complete the required background checks
- Chairperson completes the AA/EEO report form and submits to COM liaison
- Arranges with the Presbytery Office to present the finalist to the CPMM for their final clearance

**SELECT:** Negotiates Terms of Call with the finalist (in consultation with session and COM).

PNC Chair informs the Interim Pastor that a call is anticipated, so he/she can begin to make plans for transition.