

# Guidelines for Calling and Installing a Pastor

## *A Fact Sheet for Pastor Nominating Committees in the Presbytery Wabash Valley*

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### A. Help is near

Who	Role	Email	Phone
	Transitional Care Coordinator (TCC)		
Rev. Catherine Moran	Moderator Commission on Ministry	<a href="mailto:com@ourpresbytery.org">com@ourpresbytery.org</a>	
Vicki Dreibelbis	Administrative Assistant	<a href="mailto:vicki@ourpresbytery.org">vicki@ourpresbytery.org</a>	(800) 235-5376 (574) 223-5678

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### B. Basic Steps

#### *Getting Started*

1. Pray.



To call a pastor is to discern the will of God for a congregation. Thus a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) should include prayer every time they meet. *On Calling a Pastor* offers a long list of appropriate scripture readings PNC members might read together or as part of their personal devotions.

2. Elect a PNC.



The Presbytery through the Commission on Ministry (COM) will provide guidance and permission to form a PNC after considering the congregation's readiness including income and expense statements for the most recent two years and a current asset statement.



The Session or church nominating committee recommends the size of the PNC and a slate, but the congregation may nominate alternate or additional members. The PNC normally includes at least one ruling elder on the Session and representatives of the various groups/boards/committees/..., and reflects the age, racial, and gender distribution of congregation members.

3. The Transitional Care Coordinator meets with and trains PNC and elect leadership.



The PNC chair may wish to establish a separate email address to receive Pastor Information Forms (PIFs) and for correspondence with prospective pastors.



If not provided previously by the Session, the PNC should propose a budget for their work at a minimum to include travel expenses by prospective candidates and optionally travel by the PNC to hear a pastor preach in his/her current church.

4. PNC develops Ministry Information Form (MIF) using data collected in Congregational Reflection Process.



Congregational Reflection might include assessment of finances and a survey of leadership competencies desired in a future pastor.

5. Session reviews the MIF for approval asking:
  - a. Does the MIF accurately present the congregation and community to prospective candidates?
  - b. Does the MIF accurately describe the pastor or associate pastor skills that the congregation is seeking?
  - c. Does the MIF reflect the findings of the Congregational Reflection?
  - d. Can the congregation afford to pay the salary range offered?
6. COM reviews MIF and when approved, forwards it to the Presbytery office who posts it online via the Church Leadership Connection (CLC).



The COM may have helpful comments from their experience with other congregations and pastors. These comments may lead to additional updates by the PNC and Session. Once approved, the PNC may post the MIF for the congregation to view and distribute.



If the congregation is open to calling a First Ordained Call pastor, the COM will notify the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM).

### *Narrowing the Field*

7. Using CLC, the Presbytery office “matches” MIF to current PIFs and PNC Chair receives PIF’s for review.




The PNC should treat all PIFs, interview notes, and reference check notes confidential. Release of prospective candidates names could cause conflict within the congregation regarding why particular candidates were or were not selected or could adversely affect a prospective candidate’s current employment.

8. PNC receives matches as well as self referrals for consideration.




Congregation members may know of potential candidates and should encourage those prospects to send their PIF directly to the PNC. The PNC should not comment to other members, including their family members, about any PIFs received or the status of any particular prospect as these pastors may not have disclosed the possibility of moving with their current congregation. If an associate pastor, transitional pastor, or other temporary pastor is seeking to become the next installed pastor (see BOO G-2.0504 c), the PNC and candidate should be especially careful not to disclose their possible candidacy, in case the PNC finds a candidate who might be better fit.

9. PNC reviews PIF’s, contacts candidates, asks supplemental questions. Supplemental questions might include a request for audio/video tapes of a recent sermon or worship service. *On Calling a Pastor* suggests several supplemental questions.
10. PNC selects candidates for phone interviews. *On Calling a Pastor* suggests several interview questions.


 Candidates not selected for phone interviews or for an on-site interview may be politely told that the PNC has discerned to proceed in a different direction.

11. Notify COM (through your TCC) if considering a non-PC(USA) candidate.

12. PNC checks primary and secondary references.


 While talking with persons listed on a candidate's PIF (a primary reference), the PNC might ask for other people who know the candidate well (a secondary reference). Secondary references may be contacted if the candidate has signed a permission form. PNC should not contact anyone a candidate has stipulated not to call as these persons may have a conflict of interest or might react badly if they knew the candidate was seeking a call. See section E. Sample Reference Release Form.

13. PNC selects candidates for face to face interviews and notifies the Presbytery office and COM chair to request additional reference checks, including Presbytery to Presbytery checks.

 For First Ordained Call Candidates, see section C. below for additional steps.

14. PNC arranges for candidate to come for a visit which should include an interview with the COM and may include a neutral pulpit event.

a. Candidate signs release form to perform criminal and credit background checks. For

 additional guidance for an on-site visit, see section D. below .

### *The Last Steps*

15. After all face to face interviews have been completed, PNC votes to select a candidate and extend a call.


16. PNC contacts the candidate to a) extend a call, or b) notify them of decision not to extend a call. Terms of call should be given to the candidate along with a covenant.

17. The candidate notifies PNC of decision to accept/reject call and negotiates the terms.

18. PNC notifies the Presbytery office if they wish to suspend receiving PIFs by inactivating their MIF. If problems arise, the MIF can be reactivated.

19. PNC sends the Covenant and Terms of Call to the COM for approval.

20. Session calls Congregational Meeting (after a candidating date has been agreed upon with the candidate and the Session).

 The PNC may tell the Session why they have discerned this person to be ideal for their next pastor, but items circulated beyond the PNC and Session should not include the candidate's name or other identifying information. Disclosing too much information may adversely impact the candidate's current employment should the congregation or candidate discern against ministry together.

21. Candidate preaches for congregation and the congregation meets to accept the call and to approve the terms.

22. The Terms of Call form is completed.

23. PNC notifies other candidates that they have not been selected.



PIFs, interview notes, and reference check notes regarding the selected candidate should be kept in the church's personnel file. Information about candidates who were not selected (PIFs and notes) should be destroyed to prevent inadvertent disclosure of identifying information.

24. For First Ordained Call Candidates only, ordinarily our presbytery will hear the candidate preach a sermon and examine the candidate for ordination during a Presbytery Assembly. Alternately, the Presbytery of Care will examine and possibly ordain the candidate before the service for installation.
25. Presbytery appoints and Installation Commission to install the newly called pastor. Following installation, the Presbytery office notifies CLC of the call and the MIF is removed from the system. For First Ordained Call Candidates, this service will ordinarily include the ordination.

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## C. First Ordained Call Candidates

There is a slightly revised call process if the PNC chooses to call a First Ordained Call Candidate which includes participation on the part of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry as well as an examination on the floor of the Presbytery Assembly. If this is the case special consideration needs to be taken in light of the schedule of Presbytery meetings.

### *Face to Face Interviews with First Call Candidates*

1. When a PNC seriously considers a first call candidate, they will notify COM who will request that the CPM chair conduct a presbytery to presbytery check on the candidate as to their readiness to receive a call and in regards to any concerns related to the candidate.
2. CPM informs the COM which in turn informs the PNC that they may schedule a face to face visit with the candidate and COM.
3. The candidate will provide their statement of faith in advance and will meet with the CPM to be examined for preparedness and with the COM for suitability to serve in our presbytery.

When candidate has been under care in Wabash Valley Presbytery, the action of the CPM to clear that candidate to circulate a PIF will function as step 3. Step 3. then will be an examination with the candidate by COM for suitability to server in our presbytery.

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## D. Guidance for a Candidate Visit

1. PNC sets up visit, with COM assisting to arrange for a neutral pulpit (if PNC so desires).
2. Visiting candidate sends a one page, statement of faith to COM and PNC prior to visit.

### *The Visit*

3. Visiting candidate meets with COM.

- a. One or two PNC members should accompany candidate to this meeting. The congregation's TCC may also participate in this meeting.
  - b. Candidate will be asked questions regarding his/her Statement of Faith as a part of the interview with COM. For previously ordained candidates, the COM acts as a commission of presbytery to examine potential candidates for presbytery membership.
  - c. After meeting with the candidate COM will meet with the PNC representatives to discern the fit of this candidate to their congregation.
4. PNC meets with and interviews the candidate.
- a. The PNC may take the visiting candidate to dinner, give a tour of the community, and conduct other business related the interview.
  - b. **Do not introduce** visiting candidates to non-PNC members, to family members of the PNC, or to church staff. These additional people can interfere with the deliberations of the PNC or a candidate's current congregation.
  - c. *On Calling a Pastor* suggests several interview topics questions.
  - d. The PNC might want to consider giving the candidate time on his/her own to explore the community and finalize a sermon.
5. The candidate preaches at the neutral pulpit church.
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## E. Sample Reference Release Form

To Whom It May Concern:

I understand that the Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) of \_\_\_\_\_ Church of \_\_\_\_\_ Indiana may contact secondary references not listed on my Personal Information Form (or resume).

This PNC has my permission to:

Contact any and all references as you see fit and think necessary. \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)

Contact only the secondary references listed on the back (names & addresses).

\_\_\_\_\_ (initial)

Contact and all references except those listed on the back (names & addresses).

\_\_\_\_\_ (initial)

I appreciate that any limitations I place on secondary references will not prejudice the PNC.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please return by \_\_\_\_\_ in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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## F. Updates and Revisions

To assist other congregations who may face similar circumstances in the future, please forward all concerns, comments, and/or suggestions about this document to [COM@ourpresbytery.org](mailto:COM@ourpresbytery.org).

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## G. Recommended Resources

*The Book of Order: Part II of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).*

<http://store.pcusa.org/OGA13010?sc=8&category=4517>

*On Calling a Pastor: A Manual for Churches Seeking Pastors.* Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Office of Vocation, Church Leadership Connection, 2011.

[http://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/clc/pdfs/callingpastor.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/clc/pdfs/callingpastor.pdf)

*Understanding Effective Salary.* PLN-103. ©2012 The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) <http://www.pensions.org/AvailableResources/>

[BookletsandPublications/Documents/pln-103.pdf](http://www.pensions.org/AvailableResources/BookletsandPublications/Documents/pln-103.pdf)

“Ministry Information Form.” <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/ministry-information-form/>

“Instructions for Entering a MIF.” <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/instructions-entering-mif/>

“MIF Leadership Competencies.” <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/leadership-competencies/>

“Presbytery of Wabash Valley Pastoral Call and Covenant.”

<http://www.ourpresbytery.org/docs/COM/Call%20FormIA.pdf>

“Presbytery of Wabash Valley Terms of Call: Annual Salary/Terms of Call.”

<http://www.ourpresbytery.org/docs/COM/2016/2016.Terms.of.Call.Report.Final.xlsx>

2014 Dues Schedule. The Board of Pensions. [http://www.pensions.org/](http://www.pensions.org/AvailableResources/BookletsandPublications/Documents/DuesSchedule_2014.pdf)

[AvailableResources/BookletsandPublications/Documents/DuesSchedule\\_2014.pdf](http://www.pensions.org/AvailableResources/BookletsandPublications/Documents/DuesSchedule_2014.pdf)

Board of Pensions Dues Calculator. [http://www.pensions.org/AvailableResources/](http://www.pensions.org/AvailableResources/CalculatorsandModelingTools/Pages/Dues-Calculator.aspx)

[CalculatorsandModelingTools/Pages/Dues-Calculator.aspx](http://www.pensions.org/AvailableResources/CalculatorsandModelingTools/Pages/Dues-Calculator.aspx)

“How Presbyterian Churches Can Help Make the Pastor’s Salary S-T-R-E-T-C-H Further (without costing the church more).” Clint McCoy, Executive Presbyter, Presbytery of Northern New York, PC(USA)

<http://oga.pcusa.org/media/uploads/oga/pdf/midcouncil-resources/pastorsalarystretchpbyunny.pdf>

The Presbytery Calendar for meeting dates, times and locations.

<http://www.ourpresbytery.org/calendar.htm>