

Pittsburgh Commission on Ministry Handbook

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Pittsburgh Commission on Ministry Handbook

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Commission On Ministry (COM)

**ADMINISTRATIVE
COMMISSION FOR
TRANSFORMATION**

[CLICK HERE FOR THE COM HANDBOOK](#)

**COMMISSION ON
MINISTRY**

[CLICK HERE TO MEET OUR NEW PASTORS!](#)

**COMMISSION ON
PREPARATION FOR
MINISTRY**

You may choose the links below to view specific documents in PDF format. Forms listed that are **underlined** are also available in Word format. Please submit your request to Cathy Nelson by **emailing** her at the presbytery office.

**NEW WORSHIPPING
COMMUNITIES
COMMISSION**

- [Associate Pastor Nominating Committee Guidelines](#)
- [At-Large Ministers Report](#)
- [Background Checks](#)
- [Church Assessment Tool](#)
- [Clearance Interview](#)
- [COM Policy on Health Benefits for Teaching Elders in Pittsburgh Presbytery 2018](#)
- [Commission on Ministry Organization & Authority](#)
- [Commissioned Pastor \(CP\) Documents \(formerly known as Commissioned Ruling Elder or CRE\):](#)
 - [CP Annual Review](#)
 - [CP Contract Worksheet](#)
 - [CP Commissioning Liturgy](#)
- [Congregational Meeting to Call a Pastor](#)
- [Congregational Meeting to Dissolve a Pastoral Relationship](#)
- [Continuing Education Guidelines](#)
- [EEO Intent to Comply](#)
- [EEO Final Report](#)
- [Ethical Guidelines for Teaching Elders](#)
- [Exit Interview](#)

- [Former Pastor Policy](#)
- Ordination & Installation Service Resources:
 - [Ordination & Installation Services Policies & Guidelines](#)
 - [Service of **INSTALLATION** for Pastors & Associate Pastors Called to Installed Positions](#)
 - [Service of **ORDINATION** for Candidates Called to Temporary Pastoral Relationships or Other Validated Ministries](#)
 - [Service of **ORDINATION & INSTALLATION** for Candidates Called to Installed Pastoral Positions](#)
 - [Book of Occasional Services](#)
- [Interim Pastor Contract](#)
- [Litany for the Closure of a Ministry](#)
- [Medical Leave Guidelines](#)
- Mileage Reimbursement Rate 2018 = 54.5 cents/mile
- Minimum Salary Requirements
 - 2018
- Ministry Information Form (MIF)
- MissionInsite Demographic Tool
- [Moderator Compensation Policy](#)
- On Calling A Pastor
- [Parental & Family Leave Policy](#)
- [Parish Associate Policy](#)
- Pastor Profile
- [Pastoral Call Checklist](#)
- [Pastoral Call Form](#)
- [Pastoral Call Guidelines](#)
- Personal Information Form (PIF)
- [Policy on Moderators](#)
- Pulpit Supply Application
- [Pulpit Supply List](#)
- [Sabbatical & Continuing Education Resources](#)
- [Sabbatical Leave Guidelines for Teaching Elders](#)
- Search Process for Pastors & Associate Pastors
- [Search Process for Pastors, Designated Term](#)
- Session Personnel Committee Guidelines
- [Specialized Ministry Guidelines](#)
- Temporary Pastor (TP) Documents:

[TP Contract](#)
[TP Renewal Form C](#)
[TP Annual Review Form A](#) for Pastors
[TP Annual Review Form B](#) for Clerks
[TP Service of Commissioning](#)

- [Terms of Call Report](#)
- [Understanding Effective Salary](#)
- [Validated Ministry Annual Report](#)
- [Validation of a Specialized Ministry](#)

All downloads are in PDF format. For more information about PDF files, see the [Forms Library](#) section of our website.

1. Introduction



Strategies...to carry out our Mission

Pittsburgh Presbytery

Presbytery's Mission

Pittsburgh Presbytery is a covenant community formed by the triune God, called to share together in the ongoing life and ministry of Jesus Christ, proclaiming and demonstrating the Gospel publicly in word and deed in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus told his followers, "You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another." (John 15:16-17)

A Foundational Principle

Our God is a missionary God; we are a missionary people. In response to God's call, through our congregations and staff, and by means of our money and other resources, we will turn out to the communities of Pittsburgh Presbytery in love, bearing fruit through evangelism, training disciples, serving with mission agencies, working for racial, social and economic justice and strengthening ecumenical bonds.

Strategies for Mission

The scriptures call us to hold fast to faith, to make disciples, to extend love to all people, especially the "least of these," and to give of what we have received to "invest our talents."

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least who are members of my family, you did it to me.'" (Matthew 25:37-40)

"The master replied, 'For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.'" (Matthew 25:29)

Strategies:

1. Assist, equip and empower congregations to be the primary agents of mission to the people of their communities and encourage cooperation with mission agencies and other groups working on common mission tasks.
2. Equip congregations to call and make disciples who will come to know the content, vocabulary and skills of following Jesus Christ through intentional relationships and other disciples within the congregation.
3. Seek, respond to and nurture Spirit-driven *kairos* moments leading to renewed commitment to mission in pastors, leaders and congregations.
4. Launch new congregations in communities where growth is anticipated or where existing congregations are not bearing fruit.
5. In its work with congregations, direct the members, staff and money of the presbytery to those which are effectively doing mission.
6. Design the staff, administrative structure and organizational framework of the presbytery to facilitate and implement these strategies.

Scripture references for reflection, prayer and study:

Making Disciples: **John 3:1-17; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:13-15**

Responding to *kairos* and Spirit-led moments: **John 20; Ezekiel 37:1-5**

Being held accountable: **Ephesians 4:11-12; Matthew 25:23-29; Isaiah 49:6**

Creating an effective structure: **Exodus 18:17-18; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:16**

Commission on Ministry (from Pittsburgh Presbytery Manual)

1. Membership

The Commission on Ministry shall have thirty (32) members, of whom sixteen (16) shall be ministers and sixteen (16) shall be elders. The quorum of the Commission on Ministry shall be a majority of its membership.

2. Powers and Accountability

The Commission on Ministry shall be directly accountable to, and shall report directly to, Presbytery.

The Commission on Ministry shall hold stated meetings and may, with due notice, hold special meetings as called by the Chair or by two (2) members of the Commission.

3. Duties

The commission shall serve the Presbytery in the following ways. It shall ...

... visit regularly and consult with each minister of the Presbytery. It shall report to the Presbytery annually the type of work in which each minister of the Presbytery is engaged.

... make recommendations to Presbytery regarding calls for the services of its ministers.

... visit with each session of the Presbytery, discussing with them the mission and ministry of the particular church and encouraging the full participation of each session and congregation in the life and work of Presbytery and of the larger church

...counsel with churches regarding calls for permanent pastoral relations.

...counsel with sessions regarding temporary pastoral services when a church is without a pastor, and it shall provide lists of ministers and elders who have been trained by the Presbytery to supply vacant pulpits

...provide for the implementation of equal opportunity employment for ministers and candidates without regard to race, ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, or disability.

...serve as an instrument of Presbytery for promoting the peace and harmony of the churches, especially in regard to matters arising out of the relations between pastors and churches. Its purpose shall be to mediate differences and reconcile persons, to the end that the difficulties may be corrected by the session of the church if possible, that the welfare of the particular church may be strengthened, that the unity of the body of Christ may be made manifest.

4. Authority to Act

The Commission on Ministry is hereby granted authority to find in order calls issued by churches, to approve and present calls for services of ministers, to approve the examination of ministers transferring from other presbyteries, to dissolve the pastoral relationship in cases where the congregation and the pastor concur, to grant permission to labor within or outside the bounds of Presbytery, and to dismiss ministers to other presbyteries during those times when Presbytery is not in session and there are more than forty-five (45) days intervening between stated meetings of Presbytery, provided that the Commission on Ministry shall make a full report of its actions to Presbytery at its next stated meeting.

Organization of the Commission on Ministry

Much of the work of the Commission on Ministry will be done by its four sub-committees as defined below. Each member of the Commission, with the exception of the Chair, will serve on at least one and no more than two sub-committees. The Chair of the Commission will be an ex-officio member of all sub-committees.

Congregational Vitality

- Provides orientation, pastoral care, and support for teaching elders
- Nurtures the relationships between pastors, congregations, and the presbytery
- Organizes and oversees the congregational visit program of the presbytery
- Reviews compensation annually, recommending changes in terms of call
- Monitors teaching elders' use of continuing education time and funds
- Serves as liaison to the Board of Pensions
- Conducts ethical training for teaching elders
- Oversees the work of PEAL

Pastoral Vitality

- Supports those serving in temporary pastoral relationships by developing and implementing policies and procedures related to the service of interim, covenant pastor, parish associate, and commissioned ruling elder
- Organizes support groups for individuals serving in temporary pastoral situations, as needed or appropriate
- Conducts an annual review of temporary pastoral relationships
- Maintains an up-to-date pulpit supply list

Transitional Liaison

Conflict Management

Seeks to promote the peace and harmony of congregations by mediating differences and intervening in conflicted situations when appropriate, in an effort to reconcile persons and bring unity to the body of Christ.

Specialized/Honorably Retired Ministers

- Provides pastoral care and support for ministers who are retired, their spouses and widows, and for those active in specialized ministries
- Reviews the annual reports of specialized pastors, making recommendation to presbytery for the validation of their ministries

Expectations of COM Members

1. Understand and support the mission and strategies of Pittsburgh Presbytery.
2. Attend all COM meetings. There are six meetings each year. The meetings are scheduled from 4:00-7:00 PM. Although meetings sometimes conclude early, it is important for commission members to stay for the whole meeting.
3. Participate in the work of at least one subcommittee. The subcommittees are: Congregational Vitality, Pastoral Vitality, Specialized/Honorably Retired, Transitional Liaison, and Conflict Management.
4. Serve as liaison to at least one church in transition.
5. Serve as congregational advocate for four or five congregations within their Branch.
6. Attend Liaison Training.
7. Learn and practice behavior-based interviewing (instruction included in Liaison Training).
8. Participate in COM clearances (Each COM member should plan to attend one clearance per month).

2. COM and Congregations

Congregational Advocate

COM Congregational Advocate Job Description

In response to the *Book of Order's* mandate that each presbytery "coordinate, guide, encourage, support, and resource the work of its congregations for the most effective witness to the broader community," (*Book of Order* G-3.0303), Pittsburgh Presbytery's Commission on Ministry assigns its members to serve each congregation as a "Congregational Advocate" – an ongoing liaison between four to six congregations and COM.

Before contacting church representatives, advocates should familiarize themselves with the PCUSA's Five Year Trends for the congregation, which provide vital information on membership, attendance, church school education, finances, and other matters: <http://www.pcusa.org/search/congregations/> Also, the denominational minister directory tells how long the pastor has been there, as well as the pastor's prior service: <https://ogaapps.pcusa.org/directories/#/minister>. Each church's website, contact information, and worship times are on our presbytery website: <http://www.pghpresbytery.org/congregations/congregations.htm#AB>. Another national site lists church staff and the full statistical report for the prior year for each congregation: <https://ogaapps.pcusa.org/directories/#/church>

Advocates should ask to be on the mailing lists, email lists, social media sites, and websites of their churches.

The General Minister informs each pastor and clerk of session which member of COM has agreed to serve as their Advocate, and provides them the COM member's contact information. The Session of each church is asked to elect one active ruling elder as the primary contact person for COM.

Within the first year, each Advocate should ask the church contact person to respond to certain questions, including:

1. What led you to join this congregation, and what keeps you here?
2. What excites you most about your church right now?
3. What concerns you most about your church right now?
4. How is your church providing ministry to your community?
5. How does your church nurture your spiritual life and the spiritual life of the congregation?

Within the first 18 months, the Advocate should attempt to meet with the pastor in person. Basic questions could include:

1. What do you think are the biggest opportunities and challenges facing your congregation?
2. In what ways is the Session supporting your ministry?
3. How is your congregation providing ministry to your community?
4. What major changes or initiatives would you like to see your congregation undertake?
5. How can COM best help your congregation?

Over the first three years, the Advocate should try to schedule at least one meeting with the Session of each church. A basic question, such as "What inspires you most about your church?" can lead to a rich and rewarding discussion.

It is helpful for advocates to attend worship at their churches occasionally, but given conflicting demands for pastors and many elders, this is just a suggestion.

Congregational Advocates support their congregation in prayer. They make themselves available to meet on request with the pastor, session, or congregation members. They notify the branch minister as soon as they learn of an impending pastoral vacancy or other significant change in the life of the congregation.

Congregational Liaison

COM Transitional Liaisons to Congregations – Job Description

The COM assigns Transitional Liaisons to each congregation going through a search for a pastor. The Branch Minister and Congregational Advocate consult to select a Transitional Liaison as soon as they become aware of a pastoral vacancy arising in a congregation. Former COM members with gifts for this work, as well as current COM members, may be recruited to serve in this capacity.

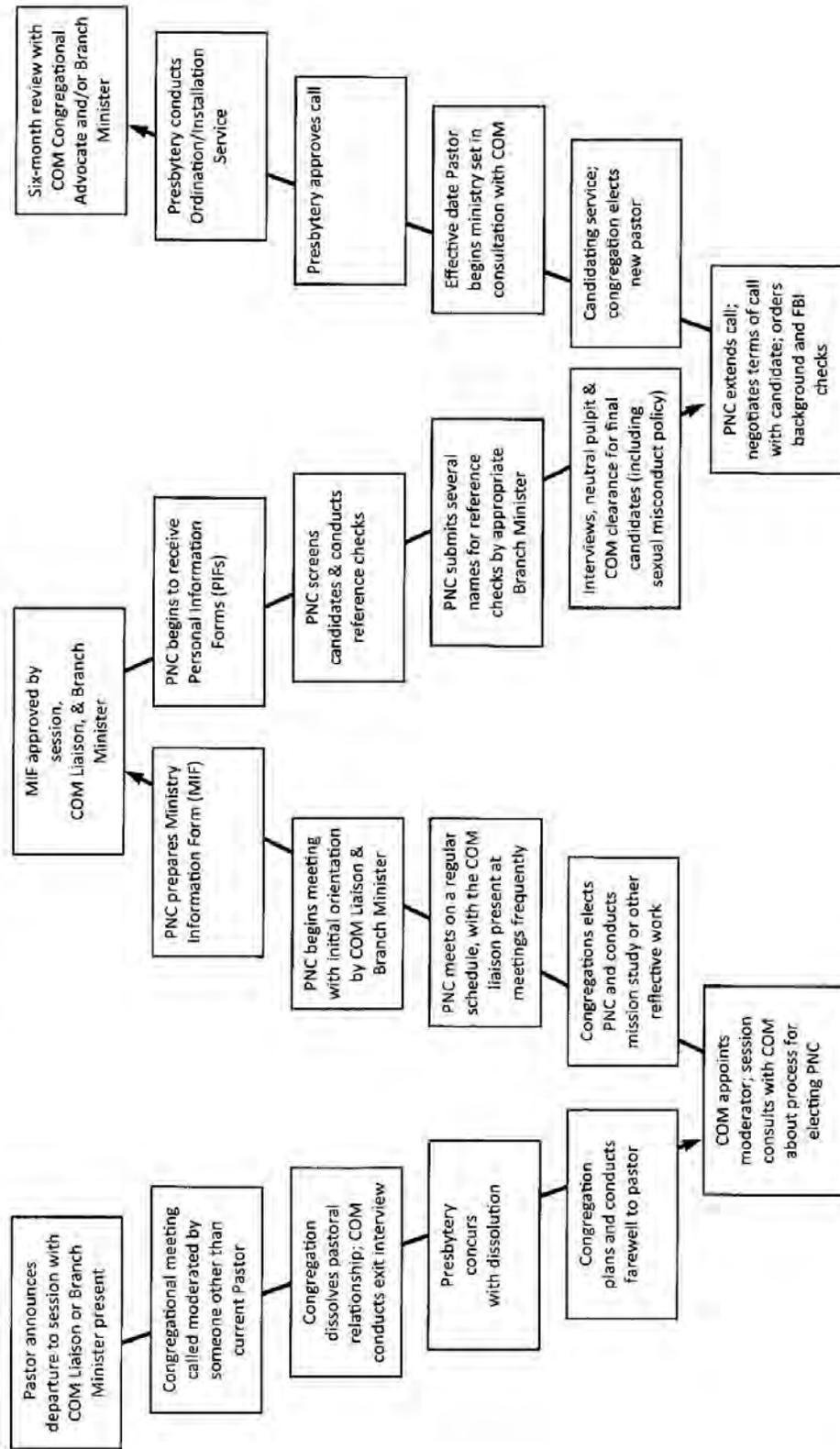
The Transitional Liaison:

- moderates congregational meeting to dissolve the pastoral relationship, or arranges for another teaching elder or COM member to do so, in consultation with Branch Minister
 - assures, in consultation with the Branch Minister, that a Session Moderator is nominated to be in place as soon as the pastor leaves
 - communicates the dissolution and selection of Moderator to COM for approval
 - together with Branch Minister, counsels with Session about whether to seek an installed, temporary, or interim pastor, and educates them on the process involved in each case
 - conducts exit interviews with departing pastor, together with Branch Minister, assuring that both the departing pastor and the Session understand the presbytery's policy on former ministers' interactions with the congregation
 - discusses with the Session the scope and conduct of any mission study, and together with Branch Minister consults with Session periodically on the progress of that study
 - advises the Session on how to form the appropriate PNC
 - assures that the PNC elects a chair and secretary, and relays those persons, with contact information, to Cathy Nelson at the presbytery office
 - sees to it that a job description or MIF is properly prepared, approved by Branch Minister, adopted by Session, and submitted to Cathy Nelson at the presbytery office, so she may assist the PNC with submitting the MIF to the Church Leadership Connection for circulation through denominational and presbytery networks
 - meets regularly with the PNC, and advises it on various critical issues:
 - undergirding its work with prayer and study
 - compliance with presbytery's EEO requirements
 - how to read PIFs and identify a short list of candidates
 - protocols for telephone and in-person interviews, including the pastoral competency model
 - assuring confidentiality with applicants
 - referring short-list candidates to presbytery staff for EP checks
 - arranging COM clearances for finalists with Cathy Nelson, and participating in such clearances
 - arranging for neutral pulpits where PNCs may hear candidates preach
 - assuring that the PNC communicate its selection to their chosen candidate only *after* the preceding steps have taken place
 - making sure, together with Branch Minister, that terms of call are in good order
 - counseling with candidate and congregation on selecting a commission and planning a service for ordination or installation
 - conducts six-month review with new pastors, together with Branch Minister
- forms and guidelines related to each step of this process are available at http://www.pghpresbytery.org/committees_commissions/comm_files/com.htm

3. Pastoral Search Process

Search Processes for Pastors and Associate Pastors

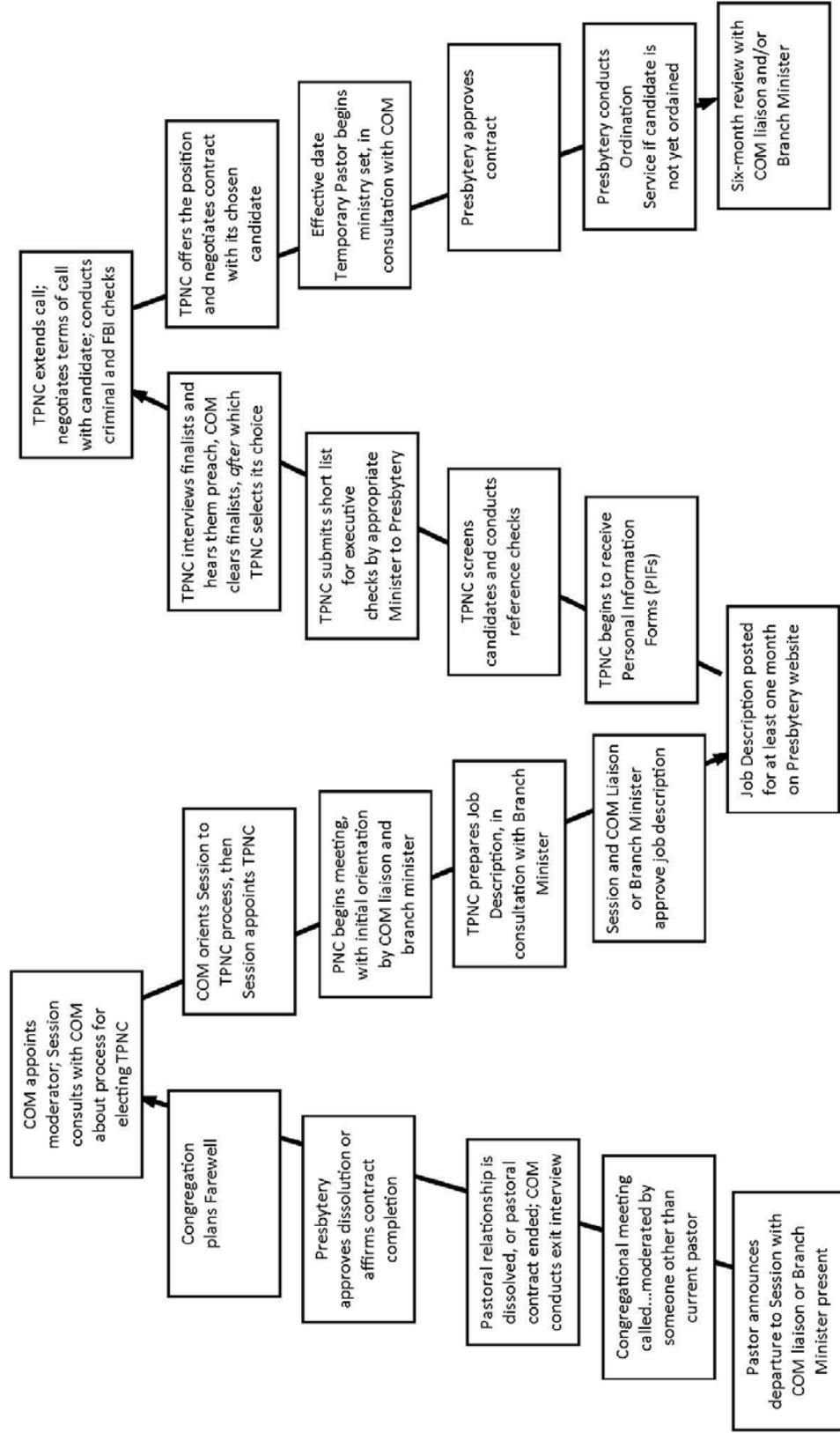
Pittsburgh Presbytery Search Process for Pastors and Associate Pastors in Installed Positions



- Check each box as tasks are completed.
- This diagram may be used on a bulletin board to keep your congregation informed on the Search Process.
- Some steps may not be applicable in certain situations. Please consult with your COM Liaison.

Pittsburgh Presbytery

Search Process for Pastors & Associate Pastors in Temporary Positions



- Check each box as tasks are completed.
- This diagram might be used on a bulletin board to keep your congregation informed on the Search Process.
- Some steps may not be applicable in certain situations. Please consult your COM liaison.

Pittsburgh Presbytery Search Process for Pastor -- Designated Term

A pastor may be called to a position for a designated term of 2-4 years. The congregation and the pastor must both have agreed to be considered for a designated relationship. The congregation's pastoral nominating committee shall nominate to the congregation for its consideration and vote, only from among those teaching elders designated to it by the presbytery's commission on ministry. The pastor is installed by the presbytery and is a member of the session.

- Pastor announces departure to session with Pastor to Presbytery and COM liaison present
- Congregational meeting called by session
- Congregation dissolves pastoral relationship
- Presbytery concurs with dissolution
- COM conducts exit interview
- Congregation plans farewell
- COM appoints moderator
- Congregation votes to call a pastor for a designated term of 2, 3, or 4 years; COM concurs
- Congregation elects PNC
- COM presents 3-5 candidates to PNC (clearance interviews and background checks complete)
- PNC interviews candidates using targeted selection interview process and hears sermons
- PNC extends call; negotiates terms of call with candidate
- Candidating service; congregation elects pastor for a designated term
- Presbytery approves call
- Effective date pastor begins ministry
- Colleague in ministry assigned by COM
- Presbytery conducts ordination/installation service
- After end of second year, congregation may elect pastor for an unlimited term. The session may act as the PNC for the sole purpose of nominating the pastor to serve an unlimited term.

Outlines for the Following on found on the COM website:

- **Congregational Meeting to Dissolve a Pastoral Relationship**
- **Exit Interview**

Associate Pastor Nominating Committee Guidelines

Adopted February 2017

An Associate Pastor serves the congregation by way of direct accountability to the session, and their call is independent from that of the Pastor. According to the *Book of Order*, "The relationship of an associate pastor to a congregation is not dependent upon that of a pastor." (G-2.0504a) Thus, an Associate Pastor's call process is conducted by an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) elected by the congregation for that purpose. The role of the Pastor (Head of Staff) in that call process is limited to appropriate counsel to the APNC, as specified below.

The position of Associate Pastor is different from the former role of an Assistant Pastor (which the PCUSA removed as a pastoral category in the 1980s). An Assistant Pastor served the Head of Staff directly as a ministry assistant. The Associate Pastor may be supervised by the Pastor, but is accountable to the whole congregation in the same way as the Pastor. While the Pastor does not direct the work of the APNC, it is important for the APNC to consult with the Pastor as it seeks to discern whom it will nominate to the congregation as Associate Pastor. To maintain that balance appropriately, COM advises the APNC as follows.

When an Associate Pastor search is being conducted, the APNC shall conduct its process in a way that assures that:

- the nominee has the endorsement of the Pastor;
- the APNC maintains full ownership of the search process, without undue influence from the Pastor; and
- Confidentiality of applicants is fully protected.

Toward this end, COM advises that the Pastor:

- participate in the initial APNC meeting with COM representative and/or presbytery branch minister;
- have access to all PIFs throughout the APNC process;
- be given opportunity to speak to the APNC about particular candidates in an advisory capacity at any stage of the process;
- be given opportunity to suggest removal from consideration any potential finalist candidate before candidates are told they have been selected as finalists;
- separately interview finalists one-on-one and advise the APNC as to any particular concerns; and
- endorse the nomination before the nominee is presented to COM and to the congregation.

The COM further advises that the Pastor should not:

- participate in most APNC meetings, but should be available as invited;
- be present when the APNC interviews candidates;
- serve as chair or as a voting member at any meeting of the APNC; and
- circulate or discuss any PIFs of candidates beyond the APNC.

Pittsburgh Presbytery
Policy Regarding Former Pastors

Approved May 5, 2014, Pittsburgh Presbytery

The Commission on Ministry has found that healthy relationships between new pastors (Installed and Temporary) and their congregations develop best when former pastors are attentive to maintaining appropriate boundaries with the congregation. The *Book of Order* states, "After the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, former pastors and associate pastors shall not provide their pastoral services to members of their former congregations without the invitation of the moderator of session" (G-2.0905). When former pastors receive requests for pastoral services by former parishioners, they should refer all such requests to the current pastor.

Former pastors should offer neither solicited nor unsolicited pastoral counsel to their former congregants. If they become concerned about developments in their former congregation, they should communicate such concerns only to the presbytery ministerial staff, and not to the church's session or members.

Healthy relationships between congregations and former pastors may include the following forms of contact:

- Pastoral
 - Occasional consultation to maintain institutional memory and goodwill
 - Collegiality between former and successor pastors
- Congregational. **At the invitation of the new pastor.**
 - Occasional attendance at services and special events, such as dedications and anniversaries
 - Sharing bereavement, by attending funeral services
 - Occasional assistance in ministry
- Social
 - Maintenance of personal friendship with a few members, provided there is a
 - clear understanding that the relationship is social and not pastoral

By signing here, the departing pastor and the clerk of session (or other appropriate congregational representative) pledge that they will abide by this policy in their future relationships.

Departing Pastor _____ Date _____

Clerk of Session _____ Date _____

COM representative _____ Date _____

Approved May 5, 2014

Strategy for communicating this Policy:

1. At the COM exit interview, the COM liaison and/or presbytery staff minister shall discuss this policy with the departing pastor.
2. At the session meeting when the pastor announces his/her departure, the COM liaison or presbytery staff minister will provide copies of this policy to the session and explain its importance. The pastor and session will be asked to affirm their willingness to abide by it.
3. **In the pastoral letter to the congregation announcing the pastor's departure, the pastor shall affirm his/her commitment to abide by this policy. The COM has prepared a sample letter for this purpose, which is available on request.**

Criminal Background Checks

In order to comply with recommended safe church practices, the Commission on Ministry approved the following policy at its meeting on May 26, 2009:

Pittsburgh Presbytery requires a Criminal Record Check and a Child Abuse History Clearance issued by each state in which the individual has resided during the previous 10 years from every teaching elder (or commissioned ruling elder) beginning a new position in Pittsburgh Presbytery.

This policy will be carried out through the following practices:

1. A teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder will produce a **Criminal Records Check** and a **Child Abuse History Clearance** from his/her current state of residence and from each state where he/she has resided in the ten-year period preceding a call or appointment in Pittsburgh Presbytery. The clearances will have been completed within one calendar year prior to the beginning of the call or appointment.
2. The COM can order the required background checks upon receipt of a signed *Permission to Obtain Background Check*. The church that requests the background check will be billed for the cost of the service (usually \$9). If the teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder is being cleared for a position outside of a congregation, the bill will be sent to the teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder. In some situations, such as when the teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder has resided in more than one state or if a more extensive search is required, the cost may be higher. In such cases the entity responsible for payment will be notified of the cost before the search is ordered.
3. If either the Criminal Records Check or the Child Abuse History Clearance cannot be produced or yields questionable information, a waiver can be provided only by the appropriate pastor to presbytery and the COM chair. This waiver and the reasons for the waiver being granted will be placed in the teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder's permanent file.
4. Copies of each of the required background checks will be provided to COM before a call or appointment will be recommended to presbytery. The copies will be held in the teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder's file at the presbytery office.

See website: http://www.pghpresbytery.org/forms/form_files/child_clearance.htm

Child Protection Clearance Information & Forms

INFORMATION

[2015 Child Abuse Law Changes Summary](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

FORMS

CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD [ONLINE FORM](#) (obtained from the PA State Police/\$10 fee)

CHILD ABUSE HISTORY CLEARANCE (obtained through the PA Department of Human Services/\$10 fee)

FEDERAL CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD (obtained by submission to FBI through Cogent Online Application Processing Services/\$25-\$75 fee)

- Click [here](#) for fingerprinting locations in Pittsburgh
- IMPORTANT NOTE: You must register before going to have your fingerprints taken. To register, go to the Cogent webpage linked above
- Click [here](#) for volunteer fingerprinting waiver

Commission on Ministry Clearance Interview

Guidelines

A clearance interview is generally conducted near the end of a PNC's search process. It is often scheduled to coincide with a candidate's visit to Pittsburgh Presbytery for an on-site interview or to preach in a neutral pulpit. If possible, it is best for the COM to conduct a clearance interview with any of the "finalists" being considered by the PNC. The COM liaison should serve as a member of the clearance interview team, and the General Minister or Associate Minister for the appropriate sized church should be present. Based on the clearance interview, the interview team will recommend to the COM how to proceed with the call process.

Purpose of the interview:

1. To examine the candidate on his or her Christian faith and views in theology, Sacraments and the government of the church.
2. To determine whether the candidate will be a good match for the congregation and a good member of Pittsburgh Presbytery in terms of theological style, professional skills, ability to handle conflict, and leadership style
3. To answer the candidate's questions about the congregation and presbytery
4. To explore any unusual circumstances in the call
5. To review the final stages of the call process and obtain necessary information:
 - o Congregational meeting
 - o Installation
 - o Terms of call
 - o Call papers
 - o Effective date of call

Possible Behavioral Interview Questions

1. Tell about a time when you created an opportunity out of an obstacle. What were the results?
2. Describe a situation that put your personal relationship with God to the test. What did you do? What were the results?
3. Tell about a time when it was necessary for you to adjust your behavior or your approach in order to be successful in ministry. What was the situation? What did you do?
4. Describe your service to the presbytery or the wider church in your most recent call? How was the presbytery supportive of you?
5. How have you helped a congregation define a vision for a successful missional strategy?
6. Tell about a time when you were able to lead someone to become a true disciple of Christ?
7. Tell about a time when you provided spiritual and emotional support to someone in need. What was the situation? What did you do?
8. Discuss a time when you encouraged your congregation to make a major change that was vital to spiritual growth and discipleship. How did you handle the situation? What were the results?
9. Tell about a time when you were able to gain the commitment of others toward a common goal.
10. How have you successfully engaged conflict to bring about growth and productive change?
11. Tell about a time when it was hard to stay focused on God's mission because of competing demands on your time and attention. How did you stay focused?
12. How do you understand the biblical theology of stewardship and how have you applied it in your own practices?

Commission on Ministry Clearance Interview

Process

1. Members of the clearance team should receive copies of the candidate's PIF and copies of the 10-year congregational statistics reported to GA prior to the meeting.
2. Before meeting with the candidate, team members may share their impressions of the PIF and statistical report and receive information concerning the call from the COM liaison and General Minister or Associate Minister. The General Minister should clarify any unusual circumstances concerning the call, such as the transfer of ordination from another denomination, part time, temporary, or validated ministry status, conflict in the congregation, etc.
3. Invite the candidate into the room, introduce participants and pray.
4. Members of the interview team should ask behavioral questions of the candidate and ask the candidate whether he/she continues to affirm the ordination promises without exception.
5. The candidate may ask questions of the team concerning the congregation or presbytery.
6. Ask the candidate to step out of the room while the interview team discusses its recommendation concerning COM action. Recommend a possible colleague in ministry.
7. Invite the candidate back into the room.
 - a. If the team does not plan to recommend the call, explain the reasons to the candidate.
 - b. If the team will recommend the call, inform the candidate of the decision.
 - Explain the process for the call to move forward
 - Ask the candidate to read the presbytery's Policy on Sexual Misconduct and sign a receipt form
 - Inform the candidate of the COM's New Clergy Orientation and Ethical Training attendance requirements
 - Explain the role of the colleague in ministry
 - If the teaching elder is called to a position outside of a congregation, determine whether he/she is interested in being included on the pulpit supply list
8. Ask the candidate to close the meeting in prayer.

Guidelines for Terms of Call Forms

Four copies of the Call Form are to be filled out, signed at the congregational meeting at which the call is approved, and returned to Cathy Nelson at Pittsburgh Presbytery, 901 Allegheny Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15233.

The title of the office is Pastor, Co-pastor, or Associate Pastor, not minister of youth or senior pastor. The agreed upon starting date is the effective date of the call.

The minimum effective salary (salary, housing, and deferred compensation) must total at least \$____. That amount can be divided any way the pastor and church agree as long as the pastor can support the housing allowance amount to the IRS. If a manse is provided, the sum of salary, and deferred compensation must total at least \$____. Free use of the manse and actual cost of utilities are also provided by the congregation.

Automobile allowance, expense allowance, and book allowance ought to be reimbursed by voucher to avoid making the amounts taxable. Reimbursement rate and maximum amount of reimbursement should be indicated.

On the line for medical expenses, write "2% Medical Deductible" instead of indicating an actual dollar amount.

Moving costs are generally indicated as "full."

Study Leave Allowance should be the amount agreed upon for one year, although the allowance may be accumulated for up to three years.

Other is for anything not included above. A social security supplement or deferred compensation, if provided, may be included here.

There is no need to write the dollar amount of dues for the Benefits Plan. The dues are calculated on the effective salary, which includes salary, housing, and deferred compensation. If a manse is provided, it should be valued at an amount equivalent to 30% of the total of salary, deferred compensation, and social security offset for calculation of Benefits Plan dues. The Benefits Plan dues rate for _____ is _____% of effective salary.

The minimum vacation time is four weeks (including 4 Sundays). At least two weeks study leave must be allowed, which is cumulative to six weeks in negotiation with the Session.

The date of the congregational meeting should be entered on the line which begins "in testimony whereof we have subscribed our names...." Three or four signatures of people authorized at the meeting to sign on behalf of the congregation should be included in the space below. They may include the Chair of the PNC, Clerk of Session, and President of the corporation.

The name of the pastor/candidate and the name of the church should be entered in the last paragraph, and the moderator of the congregational meeting should sign the Call form on the front. The pastor/candidate signs Section C, Acceptance of the Call on the back. Four copies are sent to the Presbytery for the signature of the Chair of the Commission on Ministry and then given to the Stated Clerk who will sign after the Presbytery meeting and return two copies to the church or send to the candidate's presbytery.

[Pastoral Call Form](#)

Calling a Pastor

The Congregational Meeting to Call a Pastor

Preparing for the Congregational Meeting

1. After the PNC has made its choice, the COM liaison will meet with the PNC to give an overview of the upcoming steps for a smooth transition and positive experience for the incoming pastor and congregation.
2. Review the terms of call with the PNC (and with the appropriate General Minister or Associate Minister) BEFORE they are sent to the potential candidate. Refer to the guidelines for terms of call, http://www.pghpresbytery.org/forms/pdfs/com/guidelines-terms_of_call.pdf
3. The PNC meets with the session, notifying the interim pastor and clerk of session.
4. At the session meeting the PNC gives their report and requests the session call a congregational meeting to act on the recommendation of the PNC. (**NOTE:** This date is best worked out with the interim pastor and candidate ahead of time.)
5. The COM liaison (General Minister or Associate Minister) should review with the PNC the following issues and questions.
 - How will the candidate be presented? Publicized to the congregation? e.g. Call to the meeting, a brochure, letter? Will a "meet and greet" be held for the candidate (and family)? This process must be discussed with the candidate in order to avoid lapses in confidentiality while providing the congregation with adequate information.
 - Who will moderate the congregational meeting? Interim, General Minister or Associate Minister, COM liaison?
 - Who will take minutes? Usually the clerk
 - Who will speak at the congregational meeting?
 1. Who will present the call?
 2. Who will review the process? EEO
 3. Who (from the PNC) will present the candidate's qualifications, pastoral experience, and why the PNC believes this pastor is the one of God's choosing to lead the congregation at this time?
 4. Who will present the terms of call?
 5. Who will make the motion?
 6. Who will go out of the room with the candidate and his/her family?
6. What will the congregation do while the ballots are being counted?
7. Who will count the ballots? Appoint 3 tellers
8. Have the PNC chair prepare copies of the call papers to be signed.

Agenda for Congregational Meeting

This meeting should be moderated either by the interim pastor (or pastor if the call is for an associate pastor) or COM Liaison. The Clerk of Session serves as secretary for the meeting (or, if not present, a secretary *pro tem* may be appointed).

1. Open with prayer.
2. The reading of the call of the meeting:
"A special meeting of the _____ Presbyterian Church has been duly called and announced by the session, to be held on _____ (date) for the purpose of hearing and acting upon the final report of the Pastor Nominating Committee and to elect _____ as pastor."

- a. Appoint 3 tellers (not PNC members)
- b. Appoint Minute Reader
3. The Pastor Nominating Committee presents its final report, including:
 - Review of the process followed by the PNC;
 - The EEO final report;
 - Terms of call, including effective start date;
 - Introduction and presentation of the candidate.
4. The candidate may be asked to introduce him/herself further. Following this, the candidate and family are excused. A member of the PNC should be designated to keep the candidate company while the congregation votes.
5. A motion is made that the congregation elect the Reverend _____ to serve as (pastor, associate pastor, or co-pastor) effective _____ (date) for a term of _____ years (if pastor is serving for a designated term) and that the congregation ask the Presbytery to concur with the call.
6. Discussion.
7. Vote by written ballot.
 - a. Vote is shared with candidate in private and asked if he or she accepts the call.*
 - b. The congregation is informed of the candidate's and the PNC's decision – either the Call is accepted and you move on to item 8, or the Call is refused/denied or the decision is delayed and you move to . . . (see note *)
8. Invite the pastor-elect and family back into the meeting to congratulate them on the call.
9. The clerk (or PNC chair) ensures that the signed Call Forms are delivered to the presbytery within 48 hours of the meeting.
10. The minutes of the special meeting are approved before adjournment *or* submitted to the session.
11. Adjournment with Benediction.
12. Celebration!

* **Note:** In some situations the negative (against) portion of the vote of the congregation exceeds 1% of those in attendance, and may reach 8% or higher.

In those situations, at the discretion of the PNC and in full consultation with the candidate, a delay in the decision is recommended until PNC, candidate and COM liaison can discuss why this negative portion is high. If the negative vote exceeds 10%, a delay is mandatory until that conversation can be held.

Pittsburgh Presbytery
Guidelines for the Service of Installation

Ordination and Installation Service(s) Resources:

[Ordination & Installation Services Policies & Guidelines](#)

[Service of INSTALLATION for Pastors & Associate Pastors Called to Installed Positions](#)

[Service of ORDINATION for Candidates Called to Temporary Pastoral Relationships or Other Validated Ministries](#)

[Service of ORDINATION & INSTALLATION for Candidates Called to Installed Pastoral Positions](#)

[Book of Occasional Services](#)

2. Commissioned Pastors (CP)

COMMISSIONED PASTORS

Pittsburgh Presbytery

Vision Statement

The CP is a calling acknowledged by the Book of Order to ministry within the PC(USA). God calls men and women to this ministry. Using their God given gifts and talents, along with appropriate training, CPs are one of the varieties of ministry Pittsburgh Presbytery may employ in assisting churches to be faithful in Word, Sacrament and service. As such, Pittsburgh Presbytery will seek to identify those whom God has called and place them in any number of ministry positions. Each placement and position shall be considered and validated by seeking answers to questions such as:

- Is there a clear sense that the CP is called by God?
- If so, what is the appropriate position?
- Will the CP in that ministry position further the mission and ministry of that congregation?

On COM Website:

- CP Annual Review
- CP Contract Worksheet

5. On-Going Care of Ministers of Word and Sacrament

Guidelines for Continuing Education for Ministers Serving Congregations

As Pittsburgh Presbytery requires at least two weeks of Continuing Education in pastoral calls, with an amount of at least \$1,500 for such, the Presbytery provides these guidelines for pastors and Sessions.

1. The process in the local church should begin with Session's Personnel Committee, which should be an advocate for the pastor's use of the time and money provided for Continuing Education. If your church does not have such a committee, Presbytery's Commission on Ministry can help you establish one.
2. At the time of the pastor's Annual Review, an assessment should be made of the pastor's continuing education over the previous year, and funds used. (Unexpended Continuing Education funds may be carried over up to three years at the request of the teaching elder and consent of the Session.) At this time also, the committee should have conversation with the pastor about his/her plans for Continuing Education in the next year.
3. Matters to consider: The strengths of the pastor—How can a particular Continuing Education experience build on these? The need for the pastor's growth and expertise in particular areas—What's "out there" for the teaching elder to build on? What are the needs of the congregation for growth and development? What Continuing Education opportunities are available in this region? (Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, presbytery events, university offerings, etc.) What "big ticket" opportunities would the pastor thrive on? (Study abroad, an overseas short-term pastoral exchange, a Presbyterian Heritage tour, a unique mission trip, a visit to the General Assembly, etc.) This is why the building up of funds over three years is provided.
4. Plans should be made between the pastor elder and the personnel committee and the recommended action taken to the session for approval. This should be a time of celebration about the professionalism of the pastor, and the affirmation of such by the church officers.
5. The congregation should be aware of the pastor's plans, affirming him/her in such. The Presbytery office should be contacted for a list of available supply preachers, and for the recommended stipend. Please also discuss stipend expectations with the supply preacher.
6. Upon completion of the Continuing Education program/event and the pastor's return, the pastor should provide a written report of the values of the event along with an itemized list of expenditures to the Personnel Committee and the Session. The report should be part of the pastor's permanent file. The pastor should also take this opportunity to teach and preach to the congregation about his/her experience. This is another opportunity for the church to celebrate the professionalism and growth of the pastor.
7. The pastor's use of Continuing Education time and money is a trust matter between the teaching elder and the Session. Continuing Education funds can be used for continuing education only. The pastor should not be reticent about using this portion of the pastoral call; nor should the Personnel Committee and Session be reticent about recommending particular needs for growth of the pastor. Christ's call to reach out is dependent upon the growth of every disciple.
8. Church officers and lay leaders need to grow as well. There are many fine opportunities—local and inexpensive—where ruling elders and deacons and lay leaders can sharpen their skills. We highly recommend that they be encouraged to attend such events, be evaluated in their effectiveness, and be affirmed in their high commitment!

SABBATICAL LEAVE GUIDELINES FOR MINISTERS SERVING CONGREGATIONS IN PITTSBURGH PRESBYTERY

Sabbatical leave for ministers is a planned time of intensive enhancement for ministry and mission. Sabbatical leave follows precedents in the academic community and among a growing number of private sector groups. This "extended time" is qualitatively different from "vacation" or "days off." It is an opportunity for the individual to strategically disengage from regular and normal tasks so that ministry and mission may be viewed from a new perspective because of a planned time of focus. Sabbatical leave is an extension of the biblical concept of a Sabbath day and a Sabbath year for renewal. It is both an act of faith that God will sustain us through a period of reflection and changed activity and an occasion for recovery and renewal of vital energies.

Recommendation

Pittsburgh Presbytery recommends to the sessions of its churches that pastors be granted a compensated sabbatical of at least three months after seven years of service to an individual church.

Rationale

A sabbatical will enable the minister to be renewed through the vital pursuit of continuing education, extended time spent in spiritual formation, and fresh mentoring by respected teachers. A sabbatical enables a minister to return to the responsibilities of the parish with new energy, spiritual vision and effectiveness.

Commission on Ministry Responsibilities

1. Encourage churches to offer sabbatical leave for pastors.
2. Review the sabbatical timetable and usage plan as submitted by the pastor.
3. Serve as mediator in any concerns of session or pastor relative to the sabbatical.
4. Determine who will moderate the session in the pastor's absence.

Pastor Responsibilities

1. Bring the sabbatical proposal before the session – at least in outline form - a minimum of six months before the intended commencement of the sabbatical.
2. Secure the approval of the session for the sabbatical proposal and work out the necessary coverage of pastoral and pulpit responsibilities.
3. Assure the session of continued service to the church for at least one full year from the conclusion of the sabbatical.
4. Bring up to date all pending responsibilities as determined in consultation with the session before departing on a sabbatical.
5. Submit to Commission on Ministry in writing the sabbatical timetable and outline of plans.
6. Upon return, present an overview of the sabbatical experience to the session, congregation, and Commission on Ministry.

Session Responsibilities

1. Receive for approval the pastor's proposal for a sabbatical, at least six months in advance of the intended commencement of the sabbatical.
2. Continue terms of call commitments to the pastor during sabbatical leave.
3. Contract for pastoral services during the pastor's sabbatical.
4. Communicate to the congregation the importance and values to the church of a sabbatical.
5. Request a written overview of the sabbatical from the pastor upon return.

If agreed upon by session and the pastor, the sabbatical might be combined with study leave for extended study.

Sabbatical and Continuing Education Resources

Each of The Presbyterian Seminaries has particular programs and continuing education opportunities. Our Local Presbyterian Seminary is Pittsburgh Theological Seminary at www.pts.edu.

1. Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program at www.clergyrenewal.org
 - A competitive grants program open to Christian congregations that have a pastor
 - Approximately 100 grants are awarded annually
2. Board of Pensions, PCUSA. Sabbatical grants for pastors of smaller churches. See www.pensions.org
3. Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI at www.calvinseminary.edu
 - Seminars in Christian Scholarship and Calvin Institute of Christian Worship
 - Some partial stipends are offered
4. Sabbatical Grant for Pastoral Leaders, the Louisville Institute at www.louisville-institute.org
 - Grants from 6-12 weeks for full time teaching elders and church staff members
5. Union Theological Seminary and PSCE, Richmond, VA at www.union-psce.edu and CMLD@union-psce.edu
 - Inquire on Leadership Development
 - The Connelly Gamble Tower Scholar Program is a one week program for teaching elders, educators, and other church leaders engaged in pioneering work in ministry who wish to advance their efforts
 - No charge for meals or lodging
 - Stipend for travel costs is offered
6. The Company of Pastors, 100 Witherspoon St., Louisville, KY 40202-1396
 - Denominational Program to become part of a covenant community of colleagues practicing spiritual, intellectual and vocational disciplines
 - Annual subscription.
7. Annual Clergy Sabbath Retreat
 - First held over Memorial Day Week 2005
 - Check www.pcusa.org for details
8. Presbyterian Church (USA) national and regional conference centers:
 - Ghost Ranch at www.ghostranch.org
Abiquiu and Santa Fe, New Mexico; Casa del Sol (Home of the Sun) a spirituality center at Ghost Ranch, Abiquiu .
 - Stony Point, New York at www.stonypointcenter.org
 - Montreat, North Carolina at www.montreat.org
 - Further information available at www.pcusa.org/ideas in *Ideas for Church Leaders*, Volume Five, Issue Four, Summer 2006. Page 11.

Other resources to consider:

What Makes a High-Quality Proposal? at www.clergyrenewal.org

Suggested texts on sabbatical programs found at www.alban.org:

Clergy Renewal: the Alban Guide to Sabbatical Planning by A. Richard Bullock and Richard J. Bruesehoff.

Journeying toward Renewal by Melissa Bane Sevier

From the On-going Care Team of Committee on Ministry. October 2007

Pittsburgh Presbytery Parental and Family Leave Guidelines

The celebration, nurture, and encouragement of the family take place in many ways and on many levels in the life of a church. During times of joy and times of sadness the congregation has the opportunity and the responsibility of extending care for the pastor and the pastor's family.

The following guidelines are recommended by Pittsburgh Presbytery to aid in conversations between sessions and pastors. An agreement may be negotiated at the time of call or as need arises.

1. Parental Leave

When Christian parents give birth to or adopt a child, the celebration is shared by the whole family of faith. Timing, duration, and compensation of parental leave shall be mutually agreed upon between pastor and session. Congregations are encouraged to provide, as a minimum, either:

- full salary and benefits for six weeks or
- 60% salary with full benefits for three months

Other salary arrangements may be negotiated to extend the leave beyond the initial period. Upon completion of the leave, the pastor will be entitled to return to his/her position. The position will not be filled during the leave except on a temporary basis.

2. Family Leave

Family leave is appropriate in life-altering circumstances wherein the pastor is called upon by reason of major life trauma or serious illness to be the primary caregiver for the pastor's spouse, child, parent, sibling, or other family member for whom the pastor bears primary responsibility. Timing, duration, and compensation of family leave shall be mutually agreed upon between pastor and session, but congregations are encouraged at a minimum to provide full salary and benefits for up to four weeks. Other salary arrangements may be negotiated to extend the leave beyond the initial period. Upon completion of the leave, the pastor will be entitled to return to his/her position. The position will not be filled during the leave except on a temporary basis.

General

1. Churches are encouraged to be supportive in every way when such a situation arises. Family leave is in addition to vacation and other periods of extended time away already set forth in the pastor's call.
2. The Commission on Ministry should be informed when a Parental or Family Leave option is exercised by a pastor.
3. The expectation is that the pastor will return to service.
4. A session ought not to feel over-burdened by monetary considerations in negotiating leave. If a church desires to be supportive and generous, the Presbytery shall seek to assist the congregation when necessary to provide pulpit supply and pastoral services.

Medical Leave Guidelines

Sick Leave

Ministers will receive 10 working days of sick leave each calendar year, cumulative up to 120 days, to be used in case of illness. Sick leave entitlement during the first year of service will be prorated according to length of service. At the time of termination of call (either voluntary or involuntary) a Minister shall have no claim for pay in lieu of unused sick leave.

Medically Certified Disability Leave (short term or long term)

Ministers who are, according to certification by a licensed physician, temporarily disabled and who are not covered by a disability plan, shall receive full salary and benefits for a period of such disability not to exceed 90 days, at which time if disability continues, application may be made for disability benefits from the Board of Pensions for members of the Pension Plan. This policy shall apply to all medically certified disabilities, including pregnancy-related disability.

Leaves of Absence with Pay

- Regular training period in the U.S. Armed Forces (up to two weeks annually).
- Jury duty (up to two weeks annually).
- Marriage of the minister (up to three days).
- Personal and family emergencies or other personal business that cannot be cared for outside working hours (up to three days annually).
- Death in the immediate family (husband, wife, parent, parent-in-law, child, brother, sister, grandparent) (up to four days for each situation).

Pittsburgh Presbytery Moderator Compensation Policy

The policy adopted by Pittsburgh Presbytery regarding moderators of churches without installed pastors is that the session should pay \$60 for each meeting moderated.

In addition, the Commission on Ministry recommends that the congregation reimburse the moderator the cost of travel at current IRS rate.

See COM website Mileage Reimbursement Rate for [current year].

Terms of Call Report

Terms of Call Reports are requested in the spring of the year and the form will be on the COM website in an interactive format.

All churches are required to fill out this form for all of their pastors.

http://www.pghpresbytery.org/forms/form_files/com_terms_of_call.htm

6. Temporary Pastoral Relationships

Pittsburgh Presbytery Policy on Moderators

Congregational Meetings

The pastor shall be the moderator of all meetings of the congregation. In congregations where there are co-pastors, they shall, when present, alternately preside at meetings. When the church is without a pastor, the moderator appointed by the presbytery will preside at all congregational meetings. If it is impractical for the moderator to preside, he or she shall invite, with the concurrence of the session, another teaching elder of the presbytery to preside. An elder who is, or has been, a member of that presbytery's committee on ministry, the stated clerk, General Minister or Associate Minister may be asked to preside; such elder may not moderate the meeting of a congregation of which that ruling elder is a member. When this is not expedient, and when both the moderator and the session concur, a member of the session may be invited to preside.

A presbytery may appoint a commissioned pastor as moderator to the church to which she or he is commissioned.

Session Meetings

The pastor of the church shall be the moderator of the session and the session shall not meet without the pastor except as here provided. In congregations where there are co-pastors, they shall, when present, alternately preside. When a church is without a pastor, the presbytery will appoint a teaching elder of the same presbytery as moderator. If it is impractical for the moderator to preside, he or she shall invite, with the concurrence of the session, another minister of the presbytery to preside. An elder who is, or has been, a member of that presbytery's committee on ministry, the stated clerk, General Minister or Associate Minister may be asked to preside; such elder may not moderate the meeting of a congregation of which that elder is a member. When this is not expedient, and when both the moderator and the session concur, a member of the session may be invited to preside.

A presbytery may appoint a commissioned pastor as moderator of the session to the church to which she or he is commissioned.

In all judicial cases, the moderator of the session shall be a minister of the presbytery to which the church belongs.

Pittsburgh Presbytery Temporary and Interim Pastor Contracts

All of the following forms are found on the COM webpage:

Temporary Pastor Contract

Interim Pastor Contract

Form C - Renewal of Temporary Pastoral Relationship

Form A (for Pastor) - Annual Review of Temporary Pastors

Form B (for Clerk) - Annual Review of Temporary Pastors

Service of Commissioning for a Temporary Pastor

Parish Associate Policy

A parish associate is a minister who serves in a validated ministry other than the local parish, or is a member-at-large, or is retired, but who wishes to maintain a relationship with a particular church or churches in keeping with ordination to the ministry of teaching elder. Such persons, already qualified as continuing members of presbytery, may serve as parish associates. The relation shall be established, upon nomination by the pastor, between the parish associate, the session, and the presbytery. The parish associate shall be responsible to the pastor, as head of staff, on an "as needed, as available" basis with or without remuneration.

A parish associate may not be called to be the next installed pastor or associate pastor of a church served as parish associate.

The agreement between the session, the parish associate, and the presbytery shall terminate when the call to the installed pastor is dissolved. The presbytery may dissolve the relationship with the parish associate upon the recommendation of the commission on ministry.

7. Specialized Ministries

Validation of a Specialized Ministry – COM Process

1. Candidate provides the COM with a position description and contract as well as a PIF or resume.
2. COM arranges a clearance interview with the candidate, ordinarily handled at a regular meeting of the Specialized/HR Subcommittee of COM – interview takes approximately 90 minutes
3. If approved by the subcommittee, the candidate provides the following items:
 - Digital photo of candidate
 - Brief bio
 - Criminal and child abuse background checks (or signed permission to obtain background checks if presbytery is to order the checks. In that case, the candidate will be billed for the process – usually \$9 unless additional checking is required)
 - Date position is to begin
 - If candidate is to be ordained to the position, the date, time and place of the ordination and the names of the teaching elders and ruling elders to serve on the ordination commission
4. Specialized/HR Subcommittee makes the recommendation to COM to validate the ministry
5. COM makes the recommendation to the presbytery
6. Presbytery votes to approve

Notes on specialized ministries: (This is not intended to be a check list of requirements, but a review of the considerations often made by the Specialized/HR Subcommittee in considering validation of specialized ministries.)

- Specialized ministries include but are not limited to: chaplaincy, seminary staff and faculty, governing body staff, pastoral counseling, campus ministry, mission, social work, or consultancy.
- The ministry should be consistent with the mission of Pittsburgh Presbytery and the Great Ends of the Church
- The minister will be accountable to Pittsburgh Presbytery through the COM
- The minister will be accountable to a board or organization that has oversight for the ministry
- The salary should be fair for the work required (or there should be a clearly-defined intention of tent-making), and the budget of the organization indicates that it can provide the salary offered
- There is some reason why the position requires ordination
- The candidate can clearly articulate a personal faith story
- There has been some evidence of fruit-bearing in the candidate's ministry
- Candidate affirms ordination vows

COM Guidelines for Specialized Ministries

A ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church may be classified as a validated ministry of the Pittsburgh Presbytery when it meets the following criteria:

- a. It is consistent with the mission of the Pittsburgh Presbytery in that it promotes some combination of the following:
 - i. Success in bringing others to Christ
 - ii. Vibrant worship
 - iii. Active participation in the mission of Christ's church
- b. It is theologically faithful to God's Word.
- c. It has, within the scope of its ministry, the promotion of at least one of the Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304)
 - i. Proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind;
 - ii. The shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;
 - iii. The maintenance of divine worship;
 - iv. The preservation of the truth;
 - v. The promotion of social righteousness;
 - vi. The exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.
- c. It is accountable to the Pittsburgh Presbytery in that the person engaged in this ministry agrees that their Specialized Ministry shall be subject to annual review and renewal by the Commission on Ministry of the Pittsburgh Presbytery, and ratified by the Presbytery at large at an appropriately-scheduled Presbytery meeting.
- d. It is accountable to an organization, board, etc. that provides oversight and supervision on an ongoing and regular basis.
- e. The person engaged in this Specialized Ministry agrees to participate in the deliberation and work of the Pittsburgh Presbytery.
- f. The person engaged in this Specialized Ministry continues to affirm the ordination vows.
- g. The ministry makes active and effective use of the biblical and theological training that is required for ordination.
- h. The person involved in validated ministry shall participate in the worship of a local congregation.

VALIDATED MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT

Found on COM website.

8. Responding to Difficulties

This sheet is designed to provide guidelines for COM members working with churches in conflict. The process will vary with each situation.

Tools: Prayer, Scripture (esp. Matthew 18, John 17, and 1 Cor. 13), Book of Order (esp. Historic Principles: F-3.00, and Ordination Questions: W-4.4003)

Underlying Principles:

- Jesus Christ is Head of the church and the source of its unity
- Conflict is a natural part of living in community – all churches experience conflict
- Conflict is not a bad thing or something to be avoided
- Conflict may yield a *Kairos* moment that helps a congregation define who it is and what it is called to be and do
- We strive to maintain unity of the Spirit during times of conflict
- We treat each other respectfully, listening to each other and staying in relationship
- We discern God's vision for our congregation through prayer
- It is best to resolve the conflict at the most immediate level
- Our goal is to empower the pastor and session to be the primary agents in engaging the conflict
- Premature resolution of an issue may prevent underlying issues to be addressed

Phase 1 Awareness

The Presbytery staff or COM becomes aware of difficulties in a church. First awareness may occur through communication from the pastor, session member, church staff member, or church members. The difficulties may become obvious during a visit to a congregation or session. The COM and presbytery staff must decide when to take cognizance of the information. Intervention by COM may not be the most appropriate response.

Phase 2 Referral to CRT

The referral may be made by presbytery staff, pastor, session, or COM. The conflict situation is summarized at a meeting of the CRT. One or two members of the CRT is assigned to work with a presbytery staff member to address the situation. A strategy for intervention is developed at a CRT meeting.

Phase 3 Listening

Generally, the first listening session involves the pastor of the church in conflict. Then the CRT team may meet with the session. If appropriate, the CRT and session may meet with other people such as church staff, individuals with specific concerns, members of the congregation or community. Listen deeply to the feelings as well as the content. Listening sessions with individuals as well as groups may be warranted. It is best if the moderator or session invites the CRT to work beside them in resolving the situation.

Questions used in the listening sessions may include:

- What is the situation that has caused you to call for help from the CRT?
- What specific issues or situations have contributed to the difficulties?
- What history do we need to know in order to understand where we are today?
- What concerns do you have about your church?
- What do you love about your church? Where are you deeply invested?
- What do you want your pastor or session to know?

- Which individuals or groups in the church should we hear from?
- How are you feeling?
- What do you want to accomplish?
- Where do you see Christ in this situation?
- What is the mission or purpose of this congregation?
- What is the crossroads where you currently find yourself in the life of this church?

Ask the group to develop ground rules for the listening sessions. The ground rules may include the following:

- Use "I statements"
- Treat each other respectfully
- Pray together
- Indicate where we agree with those of other viewpoints
- Share personal experiences
- Do not engage in name-calling or labeling
- Share our concerns directly with people with whom we have differences
- Seek to stay in community with each other
- Confess where we are wrong

Phase 4 Summarizing

The CRT presents a written report to the session that summarizes and categorizes the issues gleaned from the listening sessions. The report is presented at a session meeting. The following questions may be asked:

- Were there any important points missing from the report?
- How well do you think the categories captured the essence of the concerns?
- What changes would you recommend in the report?

If changes are recommended by the session, the CRT should revise the report to include the suggestions of the session and then return to another meeting with the revised report.

Phase 5 Recommendations

The CRT meets with the session to generate some recommendations based on the report. It is best if the session generates recommendations, but CRT members may also suggest options. CRT takes the list of suggestions back and writes a recommended action plan based on the suggestions made by the session (or delegates this assignment to a member of the session). Session receives, amends, and implements an action plan based on the recommendations.

Phase 6 Coaching

CRT remains in a coaching relationship with the pastor and session as they work through the action plan.

9. Resources

Resources

Book of Order

COM Advisory Handbook

On Calling a Pastor

Guidelines for Session Personnel Committees

Benefits Administration Handbook

Understanding Effective Salary

PCUSA Standards of Ethical Conduct

Pastor Competency Model

A Set of Ethical Guidelines for Teaching Elders

Pittsburgh Presbytery Policy and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct

Targeted Selection Pastor Competencies and Interview Questions