

On Calling A Pastor

A Manual for Churches Seeking Pastors

This manual is designed to be a resource to be given to churches seeking a new pastor by their presbytery Committee on Ministry as they work together as partners in the process of discerning God's call to the church and to its new leader. The manual is not to supercede any policies or procedures of the presbytery Committee on Ministry.

"Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.'"
(Genesis 12:1-2)

As you journey from one phase of your congregation's life to another, may you know the power of God's presence each step of the way. When you find that person whom God has prepared to be your new leader, may you be a blessing in your ministry together.

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List of Acronyms Used in this Manual

(PNC) Pastor Nominating Committee	(PIF) Personal Information Form
(CLC) Church Leadership Connection	(CIF) Church Information Form
(COM) Committee on Ministry	(PDS) Presbyterian Distribution Service Call 1-800-524-2612
(LEA) Leadership Effectiveness Analysis	(SDQ) Strategic Directions Questionnaire

Part I. Introduction to Calling a Pastor

Theological Foundations of a Pastoral Call Process

Q. Isn't a "pastoral call process" just church language for a personnel search?

A. No. Call involves a spiritual discernment process.

We believe that God uses committees, papers, procedures, and our polity to call persons to positions of leadership. You will fill out forms, use the latest technology in an internet based matching system, and perhaps meet prospective candidates and ministers via videotape or conference call, and then in person.

All of these are ways to help you meet persons who match your needs. That is just the starting point for a call process. No paper or electronic method can replace the discernment process in which each Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) considers the church's hopes, dreams, needs and wants, as well as persons with all of their gifts, experiences, hopes, dreams, and weaknesses and prays for God's guidance. Many PNCs call persons who are very different from the type of person they envisioned when they began the search. They say, "We felt God's spirit leading us in this direction."

What Is "Call?"

Call is the understanding and acceptance of one's purpose in God's plan. It is the coming together of a ministry need and the gifts of a person or group to meet the need.

PCUSA minister/author Frederick Buechner explains call this way:

"By and large, a good rule for finding out is this: The kind of work God usually calls you to is the kind of work (a) that you need most to do and (b) that the world most needs to have done. If you get a kick out of your work, you've presumably met requirement (a), but if your work is writing TV deodorant commercials, the chances are, you've missed requirement (b). On the other hand, if your work is being a doctor in a leper colony, you have probably met requirement (b), but if most of the time, you are bored and depressed by it, the chances are, you have not only bypassed (a), but you probably aren't helping your patients much either.

Neither the hair shirt nor the soft berth will do. The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC, Harper and Row, 1973

Persons and groups who are called are not always eager to serve. Sometimes they feel inadequate, apprehensive, and reluctant. They frequently go through times of wrestling before responding affirmatively. An experience of peace and confidence about the call comes in the confirmation of other persons and in looking back after some time has passed.

The experience of being called is a powerful and awesome experience. The experience of being a member of a calling committee is also a powerful and awesome experience that often strengthens faith and change lives for the participants.

Who Is Called?

All of the following are called to positions of leadership in God's plan:

Individuals: both those specially set aside by ordination as elders, deacons, or ministers, and also all other baptized disciples of Jesus Christ.

Groups of God's people: tribes, disciples, apostles, committees, and congregations who listen to hear the voice of God in the circumstances of their corporate lives and seek to do the will of God in a particular time and place.

Congregations: during the time of transition between pastors, a congregation must be about a spiritual discernment process to discover its call — what God wants it to be and do in the next phase of its ministry. By doing a mission study that involves Bible study, prayer, and a thoughtful look at facts about your congregation and community, the congregation can discern God's direction.

Once that is clear, a PNC goes about a discernment process to discover the person God is calling to lead this ministry. That discernment includes continuing prayerful consideration of God's leading for the church and for potential pastors as well as a thoughtful and thorough use of all the tools and skills the PNC brings to their important work.

Election to A PNC Is A Sacred Trust

The members of the congregation must give careful and prayerful attention to the election of persons to serve in this important role. Those who are asked to serve should consider this to be a significant commitment of their time, energy, and very best wisdom. They should be persons who understand and accept this as a task of spiritual discernment, not being easily influenced by personal desires or congregational politics, but rather listening for the voice of God. They also should be persons of integrity who respect and can maintain confidentiality.

In the Presbyterian call system, the congregation gives authority to the PNC. Once the PNC is elected, the other members of the congregation and the session have no role in determining who will be the next pastor until the PNC is ready to recommend someone to the congregation for a vote. Any Presbyterian may have names to suggest to the PNC, but the work of the PNC must be protected from pressure and intrusion. Names under consideration are not shared outside of the committee. This is both to protect the persons being considered and to protect the integrity of the discernment process.

The presbytery, through the Committee on Ministry (COM) and the executive or general presbyter, has a responsibility to work with your PNC, to advise you, and to evaluate the person whom you select as your next pastor. They are authorized by our Constitution to be partners in the discernment process.

The PNC will receive names from a variety of sources. All names should be considered and evaluated thoroughly, giving attention to the source of the referral. The services of Church Leadership Connection (CLC) are provided as a support to your church free of charge. All Personal Information Forms (PIF) that come through CLC must have the following statement at the bottom of the form:

- for ministers: (Name of Minister) is a member of (Name of Presbytery) As of this date, no allegations or charges are pending against the member, nor is the member currently under judicial censure limiting the ministry or under supervised rehabilitation. The receiving body should always call the presbytery to ask for further information about any applicant, including their ministry and activities within the presbytery of membership. This PIF is in the CLC database.
- for candidates seeking their first call: In accord with Book of Order G-14.0305, G-140309d, and G-14.0310, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry of (Name of Presbytery) has certified (Name of Candidate) ready to receive a call and has given approval for him/her to submit the Personal Information Form for circulation. This PIF is in the CLC database.

It is imperative that the PNC prepares itself spiritually. Bible study and prayer are important as they seek to discern God's call. Here are a few:

References for Committee Bible Study:

About call:

Genesis 12:1-9.. the call of Abram Numbers 11:10-15 and 24-30... the call of outsiders
Isaiah 6:1-13 ...the call of Isaiah Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2:16-21.God's spirit poured out
Exodus 3:1-12.. the call of Moses Matthew 4:18-22..... the call of the disciples
Acts 9:1-22 the call of Paul

About transition points in the life of God's people:

Genesis 32:22-32 Jacob wrestles with God and with himself at the river
Exodus God's people led out of Egypt to the Promised Land
Matthew 28:16-20 the commissioning of the disciples
Acts 4:23-37 the young church

Other Resource

The Book of Order,
Especially chapters 1-4, 6 and 14

Participants in Your Search

Presbytery's Role in the Pastor Search Process

Some members of your congregation may wonder, "Why does the presbytery have a role in our search for our new pastor?" and "What does the presbytery do for us during our search?" The presbytery will appoint a moderator of session after the pastor is gone.

"A pastor or associate pastor shall be elected by the vote of the congregation and the relationship between them shall be established by the presbytery." (G-14.0501b)

As Presbyterians we believe that pastors and congregations are brought together through a call from God. This call is confirmed as the pastor, the church, and the presbytery say "yes" to the relationship. This three-way partnership is acted out throughout the pastoral vacancy process. Presbytery's Committee on Ministry (COM) will be an active participant with your congregation as you seek a new pastor.

Presbytery Committee on Ministry

The Presbytery Committee on Ministry "shall counsel with churches regarding calls for permanent pastoral relations, visiting and counseling with every committee elected to nominate a pastor or associate pastor. It shall advise with the committee regarding the merits, availability, and suitability of any candidate or minister whose name is contemplated for nomination to the congregation, and shall have the privilege of suggesting names to the committee. No calls to a permanent pastoral relationship shall be in order for consideration by the presbytery unless the church has received and considered the committee's counsel before action is taken to issue a call." (G-11.0502d)

The calling process is a primary responsibility of your presbytery's COM. They assist you and provide you with resources, guidelines, compensation requirements, and other services to make your job easier. The COM is involved at key points and must concur in your final decision before a call is issued. An experienced member of the COM should be assigned to work with each PNC as "liaison" throughout the entire vacancy. They usually meet several times with your session and then with your Pastor Nominating Committee after it is elected. This person will be your advocate and coach throughout the process, assisting you and assuring that the requirements of your particular presbytery are met at every stage of your work. Consult regularly with your COM representative or liaison for advice and guidance.

Some areas where COM will be involved:

- The COM will provide the PNC chairperson with a login ID and password to use with the on-line matching and referral service, Church Leadership Connection.
- COM staff (often the executive or general presbyter) will do reference checks with the presbytery of the minister or candidates being seriously considered.

- The COM assures that the PNC considers candidates without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, or marital status, according to the presbytery's plan for inclusiveness in employment.
- Representatives from the COM may meet with "finalists" who visit your church.
- After your PNC has selected a person for election, the COM will examine the person and make recommendations to the presbytery.
- If approved, Presbytery will receive your pastor as a member and will appoint a commission to install her or him in a special worship service.

Who Does What?

Responsibilities During a Pastoral Vacancy

The Session

The session's responsibility is to set a positive and reassuring tone for the vacancy time, helping the congregation to deal with the departure of its pastor, carrying on its ministry, and looking forward to the next stage of its life together. The session meets regularly with the moderator appointed by the presbytery. It continues to fulfill its responsibilities for the worship life of the congregation, Christian education, pastoral care, congregational fellowship, mission and administrative functions. During the vacancy the session is responsible to secure guest preachers and to provide for pastoral care with the assistance of the COM. The session must be involved at key points in the calling process. The session will plan for and participate in any congregational mission study. It will provide a process for the congregation to elect a Pastor Nominating Committee. It supports the PNC with prayer and funding. The session provides funds for search expenses such as travel, telephone, mail, and other incidentals and determines the amount of money available for financial compensation for your new pastor. The session must carefully review and approve the completed Church Information Form. The clerk of session attests to this approval with his or her signature.

The Moderator of Session

The session moderator appointed by the presbyter or COM, moderates session meetings or arranges for another minister of presbytery to do so. In unusual circumstances the moderator may permit an elder to lead a meeting for particular and non-controversial business. The moderator helps session provide for new member and officer training, budget preparation, and statistical report preparation.

The Interim Pastor

The interim (if one is employed) is the temporary pastor and usually the moderator of session, carrying on the ministry of the church during the search for a called or installed pastor. The interim may assist with a mission study (some have special expertise in this area). An interim pastor supports the PNC but is not directly involved with its work. According to our Book of Order, an interim pastor cannot be called as the next installed pastor in a church serving as interim under any circumstances.

The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)

The PNC completes the Church Information Form (CIF) with the help of the clerk of session and the treasurer and submits it to session and the COM for approval, then to Church Leadership Connection for matching with potential pastors. Once the CIF has been matched and PIFs are received, each PNC member reads and evaluates PIFs for further consideration. A member of the PNC is appointed to do reference checking on candidates of interest and share that information with the rest of the committee. Once it has narrowed the field of prospective pastors, the PNC will interview potential pastors away from the local area and during visits to the church community. The PNC selects a candidate to place in nomination before the congregation, works out details of the terms of call, and makes arrangements with the presbytery for the appropriate examination and approvals.

The Presbytery Committee on Ministry (COM)

The COM gives guidance to session and PNC, appointing one of its members to work closely with the church through the entire process. It recommends to presbytery a moderator of session and provides names of potential pulpit supplies and/or interim pastors. The COM moderator or executive/general presbyter does presbytery-to-presbytery reference checks on prospective pastors before they visit, and a COM representative may meet with finalists. Usually, the congregation votes first, then the COM examines the chosen person for suitability for the church and membership in presbytery. Once the pastor is approved, the COM recommends an administrative commission to install the pastor.

Church Leadership Connection (CLC)

CLC Staff in Louisville, Kentucky (888) 728-7228, x8550 provide materials to assist you in completing the Church Information Form (CIF), in conducting the search, and in completing the call. These materials are available from your presbytery office and on the internet at www.pcusa.org/clc. The Church Leadership Connection (CLC), a computer system through which PNCs can submit CIFs, ministers can submit PIFs and matching can be done, either by your presbytery executive or by CLC staff. Your CIF is placed on "Opportunity Search" on the internet to advertise your position. PIFs are referred from ministers whose experience and skills match needs expressed on your CIF.

Part II. Congregational Transition: From Exit to Installation

Stages of Your Transition

During each stage of the pastor search process, the presbytery, through its COM, works with the congregation to guide and support an effective process. Each COM has its own variations on the steps and provides materials to churches seeking pastors, so consult with your COM liaison or moderator. Specific requirements of presbyteries supersede any suggestions made in this guide. These are the stages involved:

1. Dissolving the Pastoral Relationship
2. Planning The Transition

3. Engaging the Congregation in a Mission Study
4. Assessing Your Finances
5. Electing the Pastor Nominating Committee
6. Getting Organized
7. Writing and Submitting the Church Information Form
8. Collecting and Screening Personal Information Forms
9. Interviewing Potential Pastors
10. Choosing the Nominee
11. Making The Official Decisions
12. Installing the Pastor
13. Following Up With Support After Installation

1. Dissolving the Pastoral Relationship

The pastoral relationship between a pastor, associate pastor, or assistant pastor and a church may be dissolved only by presbytery. (G-14.0601 or G-14.0603)

When a pastor announces his or her acceptance of another call for their service or his or her retirement, the congregation often experiences a variety of emotions: sadness, anger, sometimes betrayal or relief. It is very important that the exit of the pastor is handled well for the benefit of all concerned. Members and pastor need time and opportunity to celebrate their ministry together and to say goodbye. It is important that the exit time be neither so short that good-byes do not get said nor so long that everyone is ready to move on before the actual departure date. A good ending is the foundation for a good new beginning for the next pastor.

The minister will inform the session and the presbytery and shortly thereafter share the news with the congregation. The session calls a congregational meeting to act on the minister's request that the relationship be dissolved. The congregational action becomes a recommendation to presbytery. Many presbyteries grant authority to the COM to dissolve the pastoral relationship and to inform the presbytery in cases in which the congregation and the pastor concur. (G-14.0602 and G-14.0603)

Conducting exit interviews

The COM will probably conduct an “exit interview” with your departing pastor and then separately with your session. This is an opportunity to reflect on the ministry you had together, its strengths and weaknesses, and things to be worked on in the months ahead. It is helpful to express feelings that you may have (positive and negative). What you learn from this occasion may inform your search later on.

2. Planning The Transition

The transition between pastors is a valuable time for congregations. It is an opportunity to reflect on your congregation, its community context, and its ministry in the present and

future. The session, the COM, and the PNC (once it is elected) work together to make the transition time constructive.

Each congregation has unique needs, resources, and challenges during a transition between pastors. Some congregations, such as those recovering from a conflict or unhappy dissolution of a pastoral relationship, or those in need of a new direction for their ministry, will be wise to plan a longer transition time. Congregations are encouraged to use an interim pastor during the transition time. In such situations, energy should be placed on getting a skilled interim who can offer valuable assistance to congregations as they discern God's leading for them in the transition time from one installed pastor to another, and allowing time for healing, spiritual development, and strategizing before moving ahead with the election of a PNC. Congregations may experience different patterns of leadership by taking into consideration clergywomen or racial ethnic persons as interim pastor. Your COM can help you look at your situation and determine the best path.

Finding Transitional (sometimes called Temporary) Leadership

As soon as you learn that your pastor is leaving, your session will be wise to obtain immediate transitional (*temporary*) pastoral leadership for the first four to six Sundays following his or her departure. Consult with your COM for names of suitable persons to lead worship. They may have a list of persons to suggest for pulpit supply. This is a good opportunity to invite your presbytery executive to lead worship on one of the Sundays early in the vacancy.

Depending on the size and needs of your congregation and the transition work you want to accomplish, you may select from the following types of longer-term transitional pastoral leadership.

Stated Supply Pastor: “a minister appointed by the presbytery, after consultation with the session, to perform the functions of a pastor in a church which is not seeking an installed pastor. The relation shall be established only by the presbytery and shall extend for a period not to exceed twelve months at a time. A stated supply shall not be reappointed until the presbytery, through its committee on ministry, has reviewed his or her effectiveness. A stated supply may, with presbytery's approval, serve as moderator of the session”. (G-14.0513a.)

If the church is not sure if it will be calling an installed pastor, a stated supply could be a good short-term choice. *Note:* If a church begins to seek an installed pastor, a stated supply automatically becomes an interim pastor and thus may not be called as pastor.

Interim Pastor or Interim Co-Pastor “... a minister invited by the session of a church without an installed pastor to preach the Word, administer the Sacraments, and fulfill pastoral duties for a specified period not to exceed twelve months at a time, while the church is seeking a pastor. “An Interim Co-Pastor” is a minister invited by the session of

a church without an installed pastor which had a co-pastor model which was in effect for at least three years and where the congregation desires to continue such model of permanent ministerial relationship, to preach the Word, administer the Sacrament and fulfill pastoral duties for a specified period not to exceed twelve months at a time, which the church is seeking a co-pastor. The session may not secure or dissolve a relationship with an interim pastor or interim co-pastor without the concurrence of the presbytery through its committee on ministry. A minister may not be called to be the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor of a church served as interim pastor or interim co-pastor.” (G-14.0513b.)

Interim Associate Pastor “...a minister invited by the session to serve in this position while the church is seeking a new associate pastor or is seeking a pastor to serve as co-pastor in accord with G-14.0501c. The session may not secure or dissolve a relationship with an interim associate pastor without the concurrence of the presbytery through its committee on ministry. An interim associate pastor shall serve for a specified period not to exceed twelve months at a time and may not be called to be the next installed pastor or associate pastor of a church served as interim associate pastor.” (G-14.0513c)

Designated Pastor or Co-Pastor(s) “...a minister of the Word and Sacrament approved by the committee on ministry to be elected for a term of not less than two nor more than four years by the vote of the congregation.” The presbytery will establish the relationship. A designated pastor is chosen by the congregation’s PNC only from among those designated by the COM of the presbytery. A designated pastor is installed by the presbytery for the agreed term and then, if the congregation and pastor both desire, is eligible to be installed as pastor after two or more years have elapsed. (G-14.0501e)

Commissioned Lay Pastor (CLP) “...an elder of the Presbyterian Church (USA) who is granted a local commission by the presbytery and has received extensive special training from the presbytery in order to prepare her or him to serve as a pastoral leader. CLPs lead worship and may be authorized by presbytery to administer the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, perform marriages, administer the Sacrament of Baptism, or moderate session or congregational meetings. They can also conduct memorial services, lead Bible study, visit the sick, etc. if time allows (many have secular employment). Ordained minister moderators are appointed for churches served by CLPs and supervise the ministry of the CLP”. (G-14.0801)

Temporary Supply: “...may be a minister, a candidate, a commissioned lay pastor, or an elder secured by the session to conduct services when there is no pastor or the pastor is unable to perform pastoral duties. The session shall seek the counsel of presbytery through its committee on ministry before securing a temporary supply. A temporary supply may not be called to be a pastor or associate pastor of a church served as temporary supply, unless six months have elapsed since the end of the temporary supply relationship, except by a two-thirds vote of presbytery. A presbytery may choose to shorten or cancel the six-month interval if it is determined to be in the best interest of the congregation.” (G-14.0513d)

Inquirer or Candidate as Temporary Supply: “When a church is without a pastor or when the pastor is unable to perform pastoral duties, the session, after obtaining the approval of the presbytery having jurisdiction over the church through its committee on ministry, may secure the services of an inquirer or candidate to serve as temporary supply. Appropriate guidance and supervision for such an inquirer or candidate serving as temporary supply must be assured by the presbytery having jurisdiction over the church and approved by the inquirer's or candidate's committee on preparation for ministry”. (G-14.0513e)

Your COM will help you to understand the differences in these types of transitional (temporary) pastoral leadership, help you to select the best option for you, and help you to find appropriate persons to consider. The session is authorized to make decisions about temporary pastoral relationships and contract with individuals. See *New Times, New Call: A Manual of Pastoral Options for Small Churches*” Available at PDS (800) 524-2612, PDS#72-312-03-001 or the Marketplace at www.pcusa.org/marketplace

Choosing an Interim Pastor

The most effective interim pastors have had extensive special training for this unique ministry. Some interim pastors serve full-time and others serve part-time depending on the needs of the church. Not all persons who call themselves "Interim Pastor" have the necessary skills and training to do effective transitional work with a congregation. Ask about the training they have received

What Can An Interim Do for You

An interim pastor is your congregation's pastor, carrying on the ministry of the church with you while you search for an installed pastor. An interim pastor:

Helps your congregation deal with all the feelings that accompany the departure of a pastor, such as grief, anger, relief, confusion, and anxiety.

Helps you think about the church and its ministry in the past, present, and future.

Help churches deal with problems before a new minister is called.

Helps you prepare for a new minister.

How to Find An Interim Pastor

Your COM liaison can help you assess your needs for an interim pastor and give you names of interims that may be available to serve you. Be sure to involve your COM in reference checking of potential interims.

Church Leadership Connection staff can also assist you. You can list your interim position on the internet and be matched with available interims by completing a regular

CIF. You can omit the narrative sections for interim positions. For special assistance call (888) 728-7228, x8550 or contact The Association of Presbyterian Interim Ministry Specialists (APIMS) at www.apims.org/ **Note: Some presbyteries require that the COM review all potential interims before names are given to the search committee.**

The session usually appoints a committee to interview potential interims and select one. The congregation does not vote on an interim pastor, the session does. Interims cannot serve for more than one year at a time without getting permission from presbytery's COM to extend the contract. Some interim contracts are shorter than one year.

Resources

Alan Gripe, *The Interim Pastor's Manual: Presbyterian Church (USA)*, Geneva Press, 1997.

Roger S. Nicholson, *Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry*, Alban Institute, 1998.

Loren B. Mead, *A Change of Pastors...And How It Affects Change in the Congregation*, Alban Institute, 2005

3. Engaging the Congregation in a Mission Study

An understanding of the nature of a particular church and its unique mission is essential before the search for a pastor can begin. Some presbyteries require such a mission study prior to the election of a PNC. Others find it more helpful for congregations to do a full mission study two-three years after a new pastor is called. In any case, an analysis of the church's mission is the foundation on which the PNC works. The session has primary responsibility for determining the mission of the church. If a mission study of your church's program and its mission directions has not been done recently, the session, with the guidance of the presbytery COM should determine whether this vacancy time is the appropriate time for you to do a study.

Certain times of year are better to involve your members in a mission study (summer or fall) and there are times of the year that are prime time for pastoral searches (ministers often prefer to move in the summer and after Christmas). Take all of this into consideration when you plan your transition. Don't just "let it happen." Think ahead to make the best use of this time.

Mission studies are especially appropriate:

- when the church is seeking a new pastor.
- when the congregation needs to consider a new strategy for pastoral leadership.
- when the church has grown or declined significantly.
- when the congregation does not reflect community changes.
- when there has been a major change in lay leadership or a conflict.
- when the church is seeking funding for pastoral support.

The best mission studies involve everyone who wishes to be involved and will ask these or similar questions:

- What are we doing as a congregation? What is God calling us to do in the next phase of our ministry?
- What are the needs of our community? What is God calling us to do to meet those needs?
- What specifically will we do to strengthen our congregational and community ministry in the next year?
- What must pastor and lay leaders do to help that to happen (for a congregation seeking a pastor)?
- What kind of skills, experience, and personal characteristics do we need in our pastor?

If a study has recently been completed, consider it carefully to understand the mission of the church and the qualities required in the person to be called. The COM representative, the session, and the PNC should meet to study and interpret the findings and determine if they are adequate for the purpose of calling a pastor.

Resources for Congregational Mission Studies

Nancy T. Ammerman, Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney, *Studying Congregations, A New Handbook*, Abingdon Press, 1998

Congregational Survey & Mission Study
www.pcusa.org/ministers/pdf/congre-survey.pdf

Carl S. Dudley and Nancy T. Ammerman, *Congregations in Transition, A Guide for Analyzing, Assessing and Adapting in Changing Communities*, Jossey-Bass 2002

Strategic Directions Questionnaire (SDQ)

The SDQ process enables search committees to identify leadership needs for a congregation, middle governing body, or other church-related organization. Five or more persons representative of the search committee complete the SDQ questionnaire online. The scores of each person plus a median score on each of the 22 leadership sets is returned to a licensed interpreter. The interpreter then meets with the search committee to help them understand and use the results. The Office of Ministry & Support maintains a list of licensed interpreters and will provide names of nearby interpreters upon request at comoffice@ctr.pcusa.org

4. Assessing Your Finances

A critical step before completing the Church Information Form (CIF) is a financial assessment. What is your congregation's true financial picture?

Consider an appropriate compensation package for a pastor with the skills and experience you are seeking. A conversation with your COM liaison and a look at other church positions listed on-line on "Opportunity Search" may be helpful. Most presbyteries have established minimum compensation guidelines.

The manse, when it is offered, is an important part of the personal compensation package. The PNC, representatives of the session, and/or trustees should inspect the manse. If major repair work is required, make plans to get it underway. If a housing allowance is offered in lieu of a manse, someone may need to acquaint your committee with the housing options available in your community. Set an annual housing allowance figure that will provide adequate or reasonable housing for an average size family in your community through mortgage payments or rental.

Figure the annual cost of medical, death, disability, and pension coverage for your pastor through The Board of Pensions (see the following Board publications: Benefits Administrative Handbook and Understanding Effective Salary, or call (800) 773-7752) or go to www.pensions.org **Note: These percentages change each year so make sure you are working with current figures.**

Add the proposed cash salary and housing to the other costs of ministry-maintenance of a manse, expenses for travel and telephone, etc. Look at that in the context of your entire budget for ministry including mission, program, administration, property, etc. Then take the long-term view. How might your expenses increase if you live out your vision of a growing ministry over the next five years? What is a realistic estimate of changes in the income side of your budget?

The session must determine whether there will be sufficient funds to adequately support the pastor you call. It is tragic when a congregation calls a pastor by stretching its income and depleting its investments only to find that they cannot afford to pay that pastor after the first year or so. Pastors and congregations often become frustrated when the pastor's salary is 80% of the budget, leaving little for anything else.

If you find your church in this situation, talk with your presbytery about options other than a full-time minister for pastoral leadership. An excellent resource is *New Times, New Call: Pastoral Options for Small Churches*. The resource is available at PDS, (800) 524-2612, PDS#72-312-03-001 or the Marketplace at, www.pcusa.org/marketplace.

In some situations, such as a New Church Development, presbyteries will assist you in obtaining funding to supplement the church's own financial resources. This funding must be secured before you complete the CIF. Be sure you are clear as to how much funding can be expected and for what period of time. Potential pastors will want to know.

Don't forget to budget for the pastoral search costs and the cost of moving your new pastor to your community. Once you are clear about the financial picture for your congregation, be sure to thoroughly brief PNC members so that they will be better prepared to talk with prospective pastors.

5. Electing a Pastor Nominating Committee

(G-14.0502) “When a church is without a pastor, or after the effective date of the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, the congregation shall, with the guidance and permission of the Committee on Ministry, G-11.0502d, proceed to elect a pastor in the following manner. The session shall call a congregational meeting to elect a nominating committee, which shall be representative of the whole congregation. The committee's duty shall be to nominate a minister to the congregation for election as pastor. Public notice of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting shall be given at least ten days in advance, which shall include two successive Sundays.”

Consider the following steps when electing a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC):

- Session should meet to set a date and time for congregation to meet and elect a PNC.
- Ten days notice must be given including two successive Sundays.
- Session suggests size of committee and recommends to congregation (final authority for PNC rests with congregation).
- The nominating committee should provide a mechanism for receiving input of names from the congregation.
- The nominating committee proposes a slate of representatives of the whole congregation. Persons should be knowledgeable of the church, the community, and Presbyterian theology and government. Before nomination, persons should be contacted to determine if they would serve if elected.
- A ballot is prepared in advance with space for nominations from the floor. Care must be taken that persons nominated from the floor are present and have agreed to serve, or that they have consented in advance.
- If at all possible, a COM representative should moderate the congregational meeting (or be present to advise) when the PNC is elected.

6. Getting Organized

When the members of the PNC have been elected, it is time to get organized and map out exactly what you will need, what you will do, and the timetable you allocated for. Your COM liaison will help you know what is realistic based on COM experience with other churches.

Plan the first meeting in consultation with your COM liaison. Committees on Ministry often lead the orientation meeting. It will be essential for all of your members to

be present. It may also be helpful to ask the session to be present for the first 30 minutes of the meeting so that all roles can be clarified.

Selecting Officers

The role of the chairperson is:

- To encourage discussion of various viewpoints rather than discourage them.
- To delegate responsibility and see that tasks are carried out.
- To ensure that decisions reached are the consensus of the group.
- To carry on correspondence with the presbytery, with CLC staff, candidates, and ministers.

The role of the secretary is:

- To do correspondence and keep records of the committee.
- To perform other duties as determined by the PNC.

In order to speed your work through the use of Church Leadership Connection, you will want to appoint one member to be the internet “communicator” for your PNC. Ideally this would be your PNC chair, but if she or he is not comfortable with the internet, another member of the committee could take this role. This person should have confidential access to the internet on a regular basis. Access through a church office computer is not recommended **unless complete confidentiality can be assured**. All mailings and e-mailings should go only to PNC members, not through others who are not PNC members, thus the church office address should not be used.

Planning Communication and Resources

- Identify those key points at which the session must be involved in your work.
- Keep confidential all matters discussed by your committee.
- Decide now how you will keep the congregation informed. Many PNCs find it helpful to post a list of the stages of a pastoral vacancy and then mark their progress. Articles in the bulletin and newsletter and reports during worship are good ways to inform the congregation. You must not disclose names or descriptions of individuals considered or places visited for interviews, but you can tell the congregation the stage you are in (such as "receiving and evaluating PIFs") and give general statistical information (such as "We have received resumes from 32 individuals-18 men and 14 women").
- Plan the materials you will use to help you in your task and to help you understand the pastor calling process. Check www.pcusa.org/clc and click on “Resources” for on-line instructions and helpful tips. In addition, CLC has a companion DVD/VHS video entitled *On Calling a Pastor Video* to be used with this resource. The video is available at PDS (800) 524-2612, PDS #72214-04014 or at the Marketplace www.pcusa.org/marketplace cost \$10.00

Scheduling PNC Meetings

Set a date and a time for regular meetings, making certain that all PNC members will be available and that it is convenient for the COM representative to attend or be available by telephone. Calling a pastor requires wisdom and spiritual guidance. Prayer should begin each meeting of the PNC. In addition, congregational prayers not only support the work of the PNC but also encourage unity within the congregation at a time when divisiveness could occur. Keep the congregation informed, prayerful, and optimistic.

7. Writing and Submitting the Church Information Form

Before your Church Information Form (CIF) can be sent to Church Leadership Connection a position description should be developed.

Writing the Position Description

If you have done a mission study, a position description should begin to emerge. You are asked to draw up a proposed description so that the PNC and the ministers whom it considers may have a common understanding of what the PNC sees as expectations and qualifications. As you consider the position description, it is helpful for your committee to identify what skills it believes the person must have. For samples of position descriptions see *Guidelines for a Session Personnel Committee* at www.pcusa.org/clc. Click on “resources” and download a copy for free.

Ensuring equal opportunity for service. Committees on Ministry "shall provide for the implementation of equal opportunity employment for ministers and candidates without regard to race, ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, or disability. In the case of each call, it shall report to the presbytery the steps in this implementation taken by the calling group." (G-11.0502g)

“...Care must be taken by the Pastor Nominating Committee to consider candidates without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, age or disabilities.” (G-140502b)

Develop selection criteria that are not discriminatory based on race/ethnicity, age, gender, marital status, or disability. For example, "being married with young children," "having a wife who plays the organ," or "must be African-American" should be ruled out as criteria. It may be helpful to explore feelings and perceptions in a nonjudgmental way, allowing folks to discuss the unfamiliar, to ask questions, and to express concerns. Search committees often say things like "We have nothing against a woman pastor, but our congregation just isn't ready for that yet." However, those are often the PNCs that bring forth a woman nominee with excitement. Those PNCs who do not allow personal preferences to close doors often find themselves deeply enriched as God surprises them.

When the CIF is being completed, the PNC chair and presbytery representatives will need to be able to sign with integrity.

Has the presbytery's Committee on Ministry thus counseled with the Pastor Nominating Committee regarding Equal Employment Opportunity? Yes_____ No_____

Each Pastor Nominating Committee is expected to undertake its search for a minister in a manner consistent with the good news that in the Church "... *as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*"

Has the Pastor Nominating Committee affirmed to the Presbytery Committee on Ministry its intention to follow the Form of Government in this regard? Yes_____ No_____

Completing and Submitting the CIF

Start by getting a paper copy of the CIF. You can download and print a CIF from the internet at www.pcusa.org/clc by clicking on "printable forms" or you may request a copy from CLC or the presbytery office.

In conversation with your session and with your COM liaison, complete your CIF. Your session will give direction about the position and about the compensation package you can offer a new minister. Your COM has experience with pastor searches and will be able to help you present your church in the best way.

Once your CIF is complete, both your session and the COM must read and approve it. COM approval is indicated electronically by your presbytery COM once you enter your CIF online.

When the PNC's research is completed and the information needed for all parts of the CIF has been gathered, the PNC, the session, and the COM representative should meet again to make certain that they all agree on the information to be submitted. All items should be fully discussed; the CIF is the means by which your PNC will evaluate PIFs. It is also a statement of the expectations under which the minister you call will come to your church and within which he or she will work for the first phase of the new pastorate.

Using Church Leadership Connection - For instructions on how to enter the CIF online go to www.pcusa.org/clc and click on "resources".

Get a PNC log-in ID and password from your COM. Secure all IDs and passwords you receive. For help, contact CLC staff at (888) 728-7228 ext. 8550.

For "references" for your church, you may want to consider listing your COM liaison, your executive or general presbyter, a neighboring pastor, your interim pastor, or others who have worked with you recently.

Think carefully about "skills" that you will require from all candidates you consider. Review CLC skill definitions.

Under "Geographic Choices," unless you have some strong reason to limit your search, you will be wise to select "unlimited" to get the best candidates in your referral list.

For "PNC Chair Details" it is important to always enter an email address. This may be the PNC chair or another member of the committee. Since they will receive PIFs through this email, it should be a personal, secure email (not the church inbox or someone who is not an elected member of your PNC).

Once the CIF has been submitted to CLC online, the computer or CLC staff will notify both the clerk of session and COM chair to indicate their approvals. After the approvals are made, the CIF is released into the matching database. Once that occurs, your PNC and anyone with internet access will be able to view your CIF on "Opportunity Search" at www.pcusa.org/clc. At this point, either your presbytery executive or CLC staff will do an initial match for you and your PNC chair or internet communicator will receive a group of PIFs referred for consideration.

By using "Opportunity Search", prospective pastors will be able to read your CIF and link to your web page if you have one, and may send you their PIF directly. These are called "self-referrals." Some PNCs choose to advertise in Presbyterian publications such as *Presbyterian Outlook* or *Presbyterians Today*, to generate other self-referrals. Remember to keep your COM liaison informed of PIFs you receive as self-referrals since they may not have received copies also.

The CLC-matching database has PIFs for Presbyterian ministers and candidates who have been approved by presbyteries to negotiate a call. Each PIF contains answers to narrative questions, details about skills, preferences, work experience, and financial considerations, as well as a list of references. Use this information in your initial screening.

The process of matching and referral through CLC uses the criteria you have indicated as your requirements on your CIF to select persons for your consideration. The first list of PIFs will automatically be sent to you. Additional lists of PIFs will be sent **only on your specific request**. Ordinarily, names of ministers who are presently members of your own presbytery are not suggested; contact your COM if you are interested in someone within your own presbytery. (This does not apply to candidates under care of a presbytery.) Names of racial/ethnic persons and women are included in these selections wherever possible. Additional names of women and racial/ethnic persons may be requested at any time by calling (888) 728-7228, ext. 5748.

At this point we suggest that a midpoint check be done to determine how the PNC will organize itself to work after the PIFs begin to arrive. There are several steps that must be completed, and your committee needs to take the time now to discuss the order in which it will complete each step. The committee may also want to set some target dates for completing each remaining step.

8. Collecting and Screening Personal Information Forms

The PNC member login ID and password gives PNC members access to the PIFs that have been referred to the CIF, thereby eliminating making paper copies for those members who do have internet access. Your presbytery COM moderator or Executive/General presbyter can assign these PNC members IDs and passwords.

The following are suggested steps in the process for collecting and screening Personal Information Forms (that may vary from presbytery to presbytery):

Step 1: Receive all PIFs and provide copies for all PNC members. Even if the committee has determined criteria for consideration of PIFs, a PNC chair should not discard PIFs that have not been shared with the full committee. If members of your PNC have access to the internet, you may want to consider obtaining a separate login ID and password for them.

Step 2: Read all information in the PIFs and by consensus rank them from (1) those most likely to be interviewed, to (3) those whom PNC members feel should not be considered further. Keep in mind that PIFs referred through computer matching are selected based on the compatibility of the information your committee has submitted in the CIF and the statement of preferences, experience, skills, and financial needs of each person as submitted in their PIF.

Step 3: When your committee receives a second copy of a PIF, take a closer look at this person because these come to you from two different processes, (a) clergy self-referral and (b) computer matching. This means that from both the computer matching point of view and the candidate's point of view, the skills and experience of the candidate match the requirements of your church.

Step 4: After all committee members have had a chance to react to each PIF, schedule meetings to carefully review and evaluate each PIF, starting with those ranked (1) and continuing with those ranked (2) set aside those rated (3).

Step 5: Self-referrals may be sent by pastors in response to information they have taken from Opportunity Search. When a self-referred PIF does not contain the sexual misconduct sign-off section or the statement at the bottom of the PIF indicating their presbytery's Stated Clerk's sign-off (all PIFs coming through CLC will have both), ask the individual for a complete PIF or do not consider them further.

What do you do when a candidate is not able to sign the sexual misconduct statement in the affirmative? If this person interests your committee and meets your other criteria, turn this matter over to your executive presbyter or COM moderator and trust their advice.

Communicating with Prospective Pastors

Those persons referred by computer matching may or may not actually be open to considering your position. Although CLC removes persons from the database as soon as notification comes that a call is pending, some referrals will have already accepted another call. It is important to act quickly on receipt of PIFs to contact persons to discover whether they are available and interested and to communicate your interest in them.

- Persons whose PIF you request from CLC may or may not be aware you have their PIF.
- Those persons who self-refer will expect some response.
- Telephone those you have ranked (1) and (2).
- Identify yourself and indicate that the call is initiated based on the committee's reading of the PIF at an early stage in the process.
- Be ready to describe briefly the church and the position opening; have a copy of the CIF for reference.
- Ask if the person is interested in receiving further information about the position.
- Make notes about the call.
- Make arrangements regarding the next steps if the person is interested.

Contacting References

After the PNC has determined that the applicant is interested in the position, contact the references listed in the PIF.

Prepare the questions in advance and review them with your COM representative.

Contact references when you are able to think clearly and be focused.

Ask the reference if this time is convenient. If not, offer to call at a better time.

Be sure of the identity and role of the reference and note it. Make notes about the date, time, and content of your conversation.

Questions to Ask of References

It is usually helpful to tell the reference a bit about the congregation, community, and position for which the candidate is being considered, then ask the reference to give an assessment of how the prospective pastor might serve in your setting.

It is appropriate and important to ask questions related to the candidate's skills and experience that relate to the position being filled. Such questions might be "Tell me about John Doe's worship leadership" or "How does Jane deal with conflict?"

Many Presbyterians who serve on PNCs are familiar with secular employment practices where it is illegal to ask certain questions about a prospective employee. Because of the separation of church and state, the rules are different for search committees considering church professionals. However, questions should focus on the ability of the person to do effective ministry and not be unnecessarily intrusive. A good final question is "Is there anything else we should know?"

Secondary References - Secondary references are persons who are not listed by the candidate but are suggested by others or contacted because they are thought to have knowledge of the candidate. Secondary references should only be contacted when the candidate has given permission. Under no circumstances should a PNC contact members of a pastor's present congregation without her or his permission to do so.

Executive presbyters, stated clerks, COM moderators, and CPM moderators do not fall in this category. They are automatically used as references because of their roles and no authorization is needed from the candidate to consult with them.

Background Checks - Background checks are assessments of a candidate's character and fitness for employment. They may include checks of employment, credit, criminal, and motor vehicle records. **If this position will involve work with children, your state may require you or your presbytery to do a background check on the person you call. Check your state law.**

Using Reference Material - Make notes of your conversation for use when comparing those being considered. Be sure you get reliable information and ask references to respond only on the basis of firsthand knowledge. Do not share rumors or impressions that cannot be substantiated, and be sure you have specific information to back up negative references. When negative references are received, they should be carefully checked. Remember to consider the evaluator as well as the person being evaluated. Your COM representative may follow up on any negative references.

Do not share reference material with anyone other than your committee and presbytery representatives.

Presbytery-to-Presbytery Reference Checks - Once you have narrowed your search to those persons you want to interview, your presbytery COM or presbytery executive will

do reference checks with their colleagues in the presbytery of which your prospective pastor is a member. This is for your protection and for the benefit of all involved. If the information leads the COM moderator or presbytery staff to have serious doubts about the candidate's ability to do effective ministry in the particular calling church, they will share those concerns, usually giving specific areas of ministry where they see potential difficulty. They may choose not to share the identity of the reference. Do not share the information with the pastor under consideration.

Screening Out Candidates - Employment as a Presbyterian minister is not a right. Courts have established that the ministries of the Church of Jesus Christ belong to the Church and tasks are assigned to particular persons for the service of its members and the world. The Church must make such assignment responsibly. In G-11.0502d our Book of Order states:

"The committee on Ministry shall serve the presbytery in the following ways: ... shall advise with the committee regarding the merits, availability, and suitability of any candidate or minister whose name is contemplated for nomination to the congregation, and shall have the privilege of suggesting names to the committee. No call to a permanent pastoral relationship shall be in order for consideration by the presbytery unless the church has received and considered the committee's counsel before action is taken to issue a call ..."

Discussing Your CIF

Most ministers whom you are considering will be able to print a copy of your CIF from the internet. Set a date when the committee will telephone the minister or will expect communication from him or her. Make notes on what has been decided and record any arrangements made.

Set-up a Telephone Interview - For this, a telephone amplifier, a phone with several extensions, or a conference call might be used so that several people can be involved in the conversation. Some PNCs may even use video conferencing technology for interviewing.

Whatever method you use be sure to:

- Allow plenty of time.
- Allow the minister to ask questions that the CIF might have raised.
- Ask the minister to clarify or expand on information in the PIF.
- Keep careful notes.
- Take time to debrief and evaluate as a committee following the call.

Updating Candidates

Promptly let all prospective pastors know their status in your process. **It is suggested to send a thoughtful letter to those individuals the PNC has not decided to consider further.** A response from the PNC is not expected for all CLC referrals, but all self-referrals should be acknowledged. Once you make contact with any potential candidate, you should keep the individual informed of your progress.

9. Interviewing Potential Pastors

The PIF is designed to introduce pastors and PNCs and help them begin to get acquainted. In order for a PNC to evaluate a person fully, it is necessary to meet the person face to face, engage in conversation, and participate in worship with the minister. At some point during the visit a formal interview is scheduled. Obviously, this will require travel on the part of some or all of the PNC members.

Visiting Churches

When visiting the church of a potential pastor, keep the following in mind:

- Become thoroughly familiar with the person's PIF.
- Contact the person and verify that the person is interested before you make the trip. Ask permission to visit during worship. If the pastor feels it is unwise for you to visit the church he or she is currently serving, ask your COM to help you arrange a "neutral pulpit" in your area. This is an opportunity for the prospective minister to lead worship while you are present without sacrificing the important confidentiality of the search.
- If you visit in his or her present church, confirm the time of worship and that he/she will be preaching that Sunday. Visit discreetly. Especially in smaller congregations, it is difficult to conceal the identity of a PNC. Do not introduce yourselves to church members as members of a pastor nominating committee! Arrange to meet in the afternoon if you want to hold a conversation with the minister at the time of the visit. Do not expect to do so immediately following the service.
- If only a portion of the PNC is visiting, engage only in an informal conversation rather than a formal interview. Take notes on your visit so that on your return you will be able to give a full report to the other members of the committee.
- Because PNCs recognize that much about the call process is experiential "the chemistry between people," "the movement of the Holy Spirit" they often move quickly to meet with potential candidates. This is a good time to remember the Presbyterian balance between "ardor and order" or "heart and head."
- If at this point the committee decides it should not consider a particular person any further, a letter should be sent as soon as possible thanking the individual for offering

themselves for consideration, letting them know that the committee has eliminated them from consideration, and wishing them well as they continue to discern God's call.

Preparing for Interviews

Before you meet with any candidate:

Check with your COM to be sure that presbytery-to-presbytery reference checks have been done and you have their approval to move to the interview stage with this person.

Decide what information you want and need in order to evaluate this person as your future leader. What questions will be asked and who will ask them? What information will the candidate want to know about your church and community? Gather this information before the interview.

Every member of the PNC should read the PIF thoroughly and score the candidate on the basis of criteria your committee has set for its future leader.

Compare the PIF with your CIF: Does this person have the experience and skills you seek?

- Has he or she lived and worked in a setting like yours?
- Does this person have the years of experience you are seeking?
- Does he or she exhibit skills that you need?
- Do the pastoral activities ratings match yours closely?

Review other materials the candidate may send you: video- or audiotapes of sermons, bulletins, newsletters, etc.

Come to consensus as a committee so that you convey clarity and harmony. Be clear about the job you are asking your new leader to do and the type of person you are seeking. Interviews are not the time for the committee to sort out their differences over the body of an unsuspecting candidate! Be clear about your process for decision-making. What are the steps you will go through? What is your approximate timeline?

If the candidate is coming to your community, arrange a tour that gives a good picture of your church and community, but be careful to protect confidentiality. Do not include non-PNC members in the visit or introduce the candidate around town. This is a small world and many stories are told about pastors who became "lame ducks" because congregations back home heard that they were out interviewing.

Interview Questions You Might Ask

The following are questions you might ask during an interview of any potential pastor:

1. Tell us about your faith journey.

2. What are the things you feel best about in your present ministry?
3. What have been the challenges there?
4. What makes you think you may be called to leave there now?
5. What interests you about this position?
6. What do you bring to our ministry?
7. What are your greatest strengths in ministry? ... your greatest weaknesses?
8. One of our goals is to strengthen our _____. How would you do that?
9. Describe a typical week in your ministry.
10. Share your perspective on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
11. One of the issues our session has debated in the past few years is _____. Tell us how you might address that topic?
12. If we selected you as our pastor (or other role), when could you start and what would be your start-up plan?
13. How do you balance your personal/family life with your ministry?
14. What will you need from the members of this church in order to be effective as our pastor?
15. What questions or concerns do you have?

You will also want to develop questions related to the specific candidate. These will come out of things you read in the PIF and things you hear from references.

Conducting the Interview

Decide which PNC member should begin the interview. Your committee may want to start by giving a statement regarding the nature of your church and the position to be filled, followed by questions the committee has framed in advance. Each member should take notes and be prepared to ask questions that arise from the initial conversation. Allow adequate opportunity for the candidate to ask questions. These may sometimes be difficult and penetrating, but they indicate interest on the part of the minister. Face the problems and weaknesses as well as the strengths and opportunities of your situation directly and openly.

Take notes, not only of the information shared but also of impressions gained in the course of the interview.

Thank the minister for meeting with you. Let him or her know that the interview is not a commitment on the part of the PNC or candidate, and indicate a specific date by which you will contact him or her.

Ask the minister to let you know within a given period of time if he or she wishes to be considered further, allowing adequate time for him or her to check information and impressions gained in the interview.

Report the results of the interview to the COM representative.

After the Interview

A full committee review should be held as soon after the interview as possible. The COM representative should be present and follow up on any unresolved concerns.

Remember that your committee has given each candidate a week or two to consider your position. If at this point the committee decides it should not consider a particular person any further, a letter should be sent as soon as possible thanking the individual for offering themselves for consideration, letting them know that the committee has eliminated them from consideration, and wishing them well as they continue to discern God's call.

If your committee cannot come to a consensus, it may be necessary to request more PIFs and continue the process. If a candidate should decline your committee's invitation, the experience is not wasted; it will help the committee to move forward more quickly the next time.

If You Get Stalled

Occasionally PNCs become discouraged when things do not move along as smoothly as they had hoped or when the person they choose decides not to accept their call. If this should happen, it would be well to consider prayerfully the cause of your discouragement and deal with it realistically. The following suggestions might be helpful as you analyze and develop a strategy to deal with the problem.

Reconsider the qualifications required

- Are they realistic?
- What is implied by the amount of experience and specific skills the PNC is seeking?
- Which are truly necessary and which would be nice to have?
- Is the committee operating with hidden qualifications not reflected here? It would be best to bring these out in the open and examine them.
- If necessary, rewrite parts of the CIF and consult with your COM liaison.

Reconsider Minimum and Maximum Salary

- Is the salary range realistic enough to encourage applications?
- Has your committee considered the salary figure at which it will begin negotiations? It is not fair to your church or to ministers to set the minimum salary lower than this figure.
- Is the salary commensurate with the experience and skills being sought?
- Are there other benefits that would make the opening more attractive?

Reconsider Distances

- Perhaps additional money and time for travel to hear ministers would be well spent.
- Will a conference call interview help the PNC screen ministers who live some distance away?
- Many presbyteries will make arrangements to have ministers preach in a neutral pulpit nearby, although this is far less satisfactory than worshiping with the minister in his or her own congregation.

Reconsider Personal Information Forms

- In light of your experience, some of the PIFs discarded earlier may now be worthy of new consideration.
- Others with whom you have talked might be reconsidered, and some minor problems negotiated.

Reconsider Your Church Information Form

- Does the CIF accurately portray your church? Does it show all the potential of your church?
- Does it point up the challenges of ministry in your community? Does it look as if your committee cared enough to do a good job?
- Is it attractive? Your committee may want to produce a packet including photos, bulletins, etc., to be sent to those whom the committee is considering.
- Ask someone else, (e.g. neighboring minister, member of presbytery, or perhaps someone in another profession) to read the CIF and react honestly to it.
- Ask a few other members of the congregation to react honestly to the CIF.

10. Choosing the Nominee

The PNC should strive to make its decision both unanimous and enthusiastic. Experience has shown that where there is a serious division in a committee regarding a candidate, the same division may appear in the congregation. Bear in mind that each member's integrity

and individuality are to be respected and that any reservations he or she has about the candidate selected should be brought to the committee's attention and discussed with candor. If the PNC is not unanimous and enthusiastic regarding the selection, your COM representative should be consulted as to the advisability of presenting the candidate to the congregation.

Extending the Call

When the PNC has reached a final decision and has conferred with its COM representative about its choice, the chairperson or other PNC member should telephone the selected candidate and extend an invitation. Although you will be eager to get an affirmative response from your chosen person, she or he may want some time to respond. If that is the case, ask, "How soon can you let us know?" or suggest a time, such as "We would like to hear from you by two weeks from today. Is that acceptable?" Except for unusual circumstances, two weeks should be sufficient time in which to expect a response.

When the candidate accepts the PNC's invitation, notify your COM and CLC staff. Do not reveal your final decision to the session or congregation until the COM has given its final clearance. This will involve an examination of your new pastor by the COM.

With your chosen new pastor discuss the terms of call, effective date of the call, the tentative schedule for the next steps, approval by the COM and presbytery, congregational meeting to approve the call, dissolution of the candidate's current position, and the installation service. There are additional steps and a longer process if your chosen pastor is a candidate for ministry yet to be ordained. Your COM can help you work out a timeline in coordination with his or her Preparation for Ministry Committee.

Negotiating the Terms of Call

A subcommittee might be named to work out the final terms of call with the candidate. In preparation for that meeting, the entire PNC will want to look again at the financial information of the CIF to set the parameters for the discussion. The PNC is not authorized to negotiate beyond the total amount allocated by the session. If there is a need to do so, session approval must be obtained. Pastors have different needs for the allocation of compensation. If you have questions about compensation, your COM will be able to advise you and your new pastor.

Prior to its meeting with your proposed new pastor, the COM will need to have a copy of the **terms of call**. (See sample.) Later the congregation will also need to approve the terms of call at the time it elects its new pastor. (G-14.0506)

Sample

To be revised as needed in consultation with presbytery committee on ministry. Tax authorities should be consulted regarding any unusual payments for the protection of the church and the taxpayer. The form can be tailored to fit the need of the calling presbytery.

Pastoral Call Form

Presbytery of _____ Presbyterian Church (USA)

The _____ Presbyterian Church of _____ (City, State),
Being well satisfied with your qualifications for ministry and confident that we have been led to you by the Holy Spirit as one whose service will be profitable to the spiritual interests of our church and fruitful for the Kingdom of our Lord, earnestly and solemnly calls you, _____ to undertake the office of _____ (Pastor, Associate Pastor) of this congregation, beginning _____ promising you in the discharge of your duty all proper support, encouragement and allegiance in the Lord.

That you may be free to devote full time (part-time) to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament among us, we promise and obligate ourselves to provide you the following annually:

Cash Salary	\$ _____
Supplement for Social Security Tax	\$ _____
Foregone interest on below-market loan	\$ _____
TOTAL income reported to IRS	\$ _____

Housing (manse and/or amt. of housing allowance)	\$ _____
Utilities Allowance	\$ _____
Full medical, pension, disability, and death coverage under the Board of Pensions	\$ _____
Other benefits:	
Deferred Compensation	\$ _____
Medical/Dental reimbursement allowance	\$ _____

Paid vacation leave of _____ weeks annually
Paid continuing education leave of _____ weeks annually
Cumulative up to _____ weeks

Moving expenses \$ _____

It is understood that the following expenses of ministry will be reimbursed through an accountable plan:

Travel expense at \$ _____ per mile (IRS allowable rate is recommended)	\$ _____
Continuing education reimbursement allowance	\$ _____

We promise and obligate ourselves to review with you annually the adequacy of this compensation.

In testimony whereof we have subscribed our names this _____ day of _____ (Year)

Having moderated the congregational meeting which extended this call for ministerial services, I do certify that the call has been made in all respect according to the rules laid down in the Form of Government, and that the persons who signed the foregoing call were authorized to do so by vote of the congregation.

(Signed) _____
Moderator of the Congregational Meeting

Certification of Call

By Presbytery of Call

By the Presbytery of _____

This call has been reviewed by the **Committee on Ministry**. The committee recommends that the presbytery approve this call.

Date of action _____ (Signed) _____
COM Moderator

This call was approved by the Presbytery of _____
(through action taken by its Committee as authorized by G-11.0502h)

Date of action _____ (Signed) _____
Stated Clerk

By Presbytery of Care or Present Call

This call has been reviewed by the Committee on (Ministry or Preparation for Ministry). The committee recommends that the presbytery find it expedient to release _____ to accept this call.

Date of action _____ (Signed) _____
Stated Clerk

By Candidate

This is to certify that I have received and accepted the call.

Date of acceptance _____
Signature

11. Making The Official Decisions

When The Nominee Accepts or Declines the Call

The person whom you have chosen may be ready to respond immediately, or he or she may need time to talk with family and mentors, to consider all of the aspects of this call, and to listen again to the Lord. If he or she asks for this time, it is important to give it. Under normal circumstances, it is reasonable to expect a response in a week or two.

If your nominee declines the call, it is natural to feel disappointed. However, no church benefits from a pastor who does not feel called and is unhappy.

If the nominee accepts the call, these are the next steps:

Notifying CLC of a "Call Pending" - Send an email, hard copy or fax to inform CLC staff of the new pastor's name, name of congregation and the effective date of the call.

Getting Presbytery COM Approval - As the third partner in the call, the presbytery must "examine each minister or candidate who seeks membership in it on his or her Christian faith and views in theology, the Sacraments, and the government of this church" (Book of Order G-11.0402). The COM often does this. The receiving presbytery must also approve the call. This may also be delegated to the COM.

Concluding Your Interim Pastor's Ministry - Be aware of any contractual agreements that your church has with your interim pastor. This may influence agreements with your new pastor. The congregation needs time to say farewell and to thank your interim pastor. It may be helpful to plan a space (using pulpit supplies) between the conclusion of the interim pastorate and the arrival of a new pastor.

Presenting the Selected Pastor to the Congregation

The PNC asks the session to call a congregational meeting to hear and act on the report of the PNC. This meeting usually takes place after a worship service and must be moderated by the session moderator or other minister appointed by presbytery for this purpose. Depending on the historical tradition and preferences of the congregation, the new pastor under consideration may preach and conduct all or part of the service prior to the congregational vote, or the PNC may report and the congregational vote be taken with results being telephoned to the pastor.

The PNC has the responsibility to share what it has learned about the minister with the congregation. Generally speaking, the more you can do to facilitate these introductions, the more enthusiastic will be the support of the congregation for the PNC's work and the easier will be the minister's transition as he/she begins the work as your pastor.

Prepare a Report to the Congregation - This report might include something of the process the PNC followed, including the number and kinds of PIFs reviewed. A brief biographical sketch of the minister, taken from the PIF with revisions suggested by the minister, will help the congregation to know the new pastor more intimately. The terms of call must be included. It is recommended that this report be mailed to each member of the congregation with the announcement of the call of the congregational meeting. Care should be taken to assure that the identity of the proposed new pastor not be shared with the media or information used in a way that could compromise the pastor with his or her present congregation (which at this point normally will be unaware of the pastor's plans to leave).

During the congregational meeting, the PNC chairperson should prepare a formal recommendation, checking with the moderator and clerk of session to be certain it conforms to provisions of the Book of Order. The chairperson should be ready to present personally or through members of the PNC the reasons for selecting this nominee and something of his or her background, experience, and abilities. On occasion, members of the congregation will raise questions. A PNC that has done its work well will be able to answer these questions with ease. After discussion, a motion should be made that the congregation concur with the report of the PNC. Following the congregational vote in the affirmative, they should then move to dismiss the PNC with thanks.

If there is a significant minority of the congregation opposed to this pastoral candidate, the person under consideration is wise to prayerfully reconsider the call, and the PNC should consult immediately with the COM. In such a case, the PNC should not be dismissed at this time.

Finishing Your Work

Destroy all PIF material including references except for the materials related to the person you have called. Others cannot be reused and should not be passed on to other PNCs. Information and references regarding the incoming pastor should be sealed and kept.

The chairperson should inform the session of any agreements the PNC may have made with the incoming pastor, such as starting date, moving date, special personal or financial arrangements, travel expenses for house-hunting, or planning for redecoration of the manse. Once this information is passed along, the session assumes the responsibility for the ongoing work with the pastor.

In many cases, the session sets up a transition committee to help the new minister in the early phases of start-up. Participants might include a member of the PNC and a member of the session. They should be able to communicate needs or concerns regarding the manse, the church office, other staff of the church, and the church calendar. The transition committee should also include someone who can introduce the minister and family, if any, to community services, schools, and shopping. The transition committee might also assist the new pastor and the presbytery in arranging for the service of installation.

Presenting the Pastor-Elect to Presbytery

The minister-elect will meet with presbytery and be welcomed into its membership. Ministers are members of presbytery and accountable to presbytery for their ministry. It is important for members of the PNC to attend the presbytery meeting as a show of support and an opportunity for celebration of your work. At this meeting, the presbytery will appoint a commission to install the pastor.

12. Installing the Pastor

On the day designated for the installation, the presbytery or commission appointed for this purpose shall convene and shall call the congregation gathered to worship. The service shall focus on Christ and the joy and responsibility of the mission and ministry of the church, and shall include a sermon appropriate to the occasion. The stages of the installation service are as follows:

Statement of Purpose (by moderator or chair of the Commission following the sermon)

Moderator or chair says something about the theology of call, the process of preparation for ministry, the process of call, and our Presbyterian understanding of the work of the Spirit in this; describes installation as an act of presbytery; and acknowledges the commission-representing presbytery.

Presentation of the Candidate (by an elder, perhaps chair of the PNC)

"Speaking for the people of the church, I bring _____ to be installed as pastor, associate pastor, etc."

Constitutional Questions to the Candidate (by moderator or chair of the commission)

(1) Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the church and through him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

(2) Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the church universal, and God's Word to you?

(3) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?

(4) Will you be a Minister of the Word and Sacrament in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and continually guided by our confessions?

(5) Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?

(6) Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?

(7) Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?

(8) Will you seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?

(9) Will you be a faithful minister, proclaiming the good news in Word and Sacrament, teaching faith, and caring for people?

(10) Will you be active in government and discipline, serving in the governing bodies of the church; and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

Constitutional Questions to the Congregation (Elder from the congregation)

(1) Do we, the members of the church, accept _____ as our pastor (associate pastor), chosen by God through the voice of this congregation to guide us in the way of Jesus Christ?

(2) Do we agree to encourage him (her), to respect his (her) decisions, and to follow as he (she) guides us, serving Jesus Christ, who alone is Head of the church?

(3) Do we promise to pay him (her) fairly and provide for his (her) welfare as he (she) works among us; to stand by him (her) in trouble and share his (her) joys? Will we listen to the word he (she) preaches, welcome his (her) pastoral care, and honor his (her) authority as he (she) seeks to honor and obey Jesus Christ our Lord?

Prayer of Installation (member of commission)

Candidate may kneel or stand (no laying on of hands)

Declaration of Installation

The member presiding shall then say: " _____, you are now a Minister of the Word and Sacrament in and for this congregation. Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Amen." Symbols of office may be offered (Bible, chalice, baptismal bowl, stole, etc.)

Welcome by the Commission (members of the commission greet new pastor)

Charge to the Pastor (by member of the commission)

Charge to the Congregation (by a member of the commission)

Brief Statement and Benediction (by new pastor)

After the service, the officers and members of the church should be invited to come forward to greet their pastor and give him or her an appropriate expression of cordial reception and affectionate regard. The installation of a minister as pastor or associate

pastor of more than one church may take place in a joint service, provided each church is present and answers for itself the constitutional questions.

13. Following Up With Support After Installation

It is critical that the church and pastor make an intentional plan for effective entry and support. The relationship that the PNC has built with the pastor must now be extended to the session with whom she or he will lead the church and with the congregation and community. It is best that the PNC be dissolved after the installation service and the session become the primary group relating to the pastor. This relationship is one of mutual support and care as pastor and session build an effective ministry together.

The presbytery also provides support for the pastor. It may offer orientation programs, peer support groups, and continuing education opportunities. Encourage your pastor to take advantage of these programs. The presbytery also provides pastoral care for ministers. When your pastor is ill, has a special anniversary, or family crisis, alert the presbytery executive or COM.

May God richly bless you
and your new pastor
as you enter a new phase
in your congregational life
and ministry!

PNC Report to Session

Your PNC's been faithful. (No question of that.)
Through forty-plus meetings we've faithfully sat.

We've read two hundred PIFs and we've ordered some more.
(And thinking of them makes my eyeballs quite sore.)

We traveled to Maumee and met Face-to-Face
with ten ministers whom you'll not meet in this place.
We touted our church and our schools and our city:
We told them we're great and this area's pretty.

We've made phone calls to references farther than near,
and spent hours listening with more than one ear.
We've heard good stuff and bad stuff and stuff in between.
Then we've gathered and prayed and said, "What does it mean?"

We drove up to Youngstown to hear a man preach
(though some would rather have a trip to the beach).
We listened to five different sermons that day

one when we got there, and four on the way.
Though five different sermons are tough to remember
we figured they'd do us at least through November.

We heard from three candidates we liked a lot.
We asked them to visit and all said "Why not?"
Some drove and some flew,
some with kids, some just two.
We showed them the church, showed the "Y", the Big Bear.
Showed them Jim Mitchell's house cause it's so nice up there.

But none was just right, none was just the right fit
(though we wavered and argued and threatened to quit).

We've raked up some muck in the midst of our toil.
And we've dealt with issues to make your blood boil.
You bet we have wrestled and struggled and fought.
(If you think this is easy, you've thought the wrong thought!)

We've tried to be faithful.
We've tried to be true.
And patience and prayers are what we need from you.

For there is a minister awaiting our call.
It might be tomorrow. It might be next fall.
The one of God's choosing is yet to appear,
but we'll stop all this PIFing when God's will is clear.
(and not one day sooner)

Respectfully submitted,
Susan E. Roesch Co-chair, PNC
First Presbyterian Church, Marietta, OH
(Used by permission)