

**Presbytery of Eastern Virginia**

**COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**



**March 2006**

**Handbook**

**For**

**Pastor Nominating Committees**

**This handbook was prepared using a similar handbook developed by Salem Presbytery as a model. Their contribution is hereby gratefully acknowledged**

## **So You've Been Elected to the Pastor Nominating Committee**

The process of calling a Pastor, Co-Pastor or Associate Pastor is first and foremost an act of spiritual discernment. There are lots of instructions and paperwork that go into this process, but do not be deceived; this is a spiritual task not an executive search. Your task is to find the person that God is calling to fill the vacancy at your church. That will require of you and of the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) prayer, careful listening, and reflection. Indeed, every member of the committee should make it part of their daily devotional life to pray for the work of the committee and for the discernment to discover the one God is calling.

As was mentioned above, there are lots of instructions and paperwork that go with this process. You will be introduced to a whole new language with some puzzling abbreviations. Your Committee on Ministry seeks to make this task a bit easier by providing this handbook and a person, your COM Liaison, to assist you in this task. This handbook is a work in progress. If there are places where it doesn't make sense or is difficult to understand, please contact your COM Liaison to let them know.

### **Alphabet Soup**

In the process of searching for a Pastor (Senior Pastor, Head of Staff, Co-Pastor or Associate Pastor), you will encounter all sorts of abbreviations. Below is a list of most of them. If you do not find an abbreviation listed below, contact either your Liaison, or the Chair of the Vacancy Subcommittee, or the Moderator of the Committee on Ministry.

**AAEEO** – Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity.

**COM** – Committee on Ministry, the Presbytery committee charged with the responsibility of helping churches find ministers and ministers find churches.

**CIF** – Church Information Form, the form which a church fills out during the search process which describes the position they are seeking to fill and the information necessary to help match potential candidates.

**CLC** – Church Leadership Connection, the official name given to the General Assembly Internet process of handling leadership matching (churches and ministers).

**CRS** – Call Referral Services, the name for the office that manages CLC and provides help to COM's and Churches, and Ministers in the matching process.

**PIF** – Personal Information Form, the form which ministers and candidates fill out to share who they are and in what sorts of ministerial positions they would be willing to serve.

**PIN** – Personal Identification Number, each church has an assigned identification number. You can generally get that number from your Clerk of Session.

**PNC** – Pastor Nominating Committee, sometimes called Pulpit Nominating Committee, the search committee elected by the congregation to nominate a Pastor (Senior Pastor, Head of Staff, Co-Pastor or Associate Pastor), for the congregation.

There are three distinct stages to calling a Pastor: The Pre-Search Process, The Search Process, and The Call Process. Your tasks are different in each stage. This handbook will be divided into those three stages. We shall attempt to explain what is going on in each stage and offer information and explanations that will be helpful in that stage.

## **THE PRE-SEARCH PROCESS**

During this stage of the search, the Session secures Interim Pastoral Leadership for your congregation. If your Session has secured a trained Interim Pastor, s/he will be assisting you in the preparation of your Church Information Form. Generally, by the time the PNC has been elected, the Interim Pastor has helped complete the Mission Study, and the church is on the process of developing a Vision/Mission Statement about the future direction of the church. This will be a helpful part of your CIF writing.

### **Organizing the Team**

The work of the PNC will be greatly facilitated by electing leaders. Typically a Chair and Vice-Chair, or Co-Chairs are elected. This allows for the work of the committee to continue even if the designated convener/leader is not able to attend.

The committee should have a clerk to keep a record of conversations, considerations and actions by the committee. This might not be appreciated early on, but as time goes by and memories start getting fuzzy, it is good to have a clear record of why you have proceeded in a given way.

In addition, the committee might want to elect a corresponding secretary or clerk. The responsibility here will be to serve as the official communicator with the candidates. This will be a very busy position during the middle part of the process, and requires someone who will be diligent in initiating, maintaining, and closing communications in a timely manner with candidates.

## **Find someone who is computer literate.**

It is of the greatest importance that someone on your committee be computer-literate, able to use a word processor, know how to “cut-and-paste,” know how to send and receive email. This process depends on using a computer, and using the Internet. If you don’t have someone on your committee, you may want to find a “computerist” to serve with your PNC.

## **Finding your vision for the search**

As you begin your thinking about preparing your CIF, you will need to think seriously about the vision of the congregation for ministry. What is your mission as a congregation at this point? What kind of leadership do we need in service of that mission? What kinds of skills and personal qualities are desired? Answering these questions will help you determine the type of leader for whom you are going to be searching.

An excellent resource in this task is the work of your Interim Pastor (that is, if you have one). Prior to allowing the election of a PNC, the Session will have undertaken a mission study and the development of a new vision for your congregation. The results of this study and visioning process will help define the vision for your CIF.

## **Obtaining a CIF**

In order to begin writing your CIF, you’ll need to get a copy of the blank form. To do that you need to download it from the General Assembly Internet web site at <http://www.pcusa.org/clc/>. You can download a CIF in either PDF or MS Word format. MS Word format is recommended as most computers can work with Word documents. You only need CIF (Part II), because Part I will automatically be filled out by the computer based on last year’s annual statistical report. The CLC Handbook is online and available at the same web site. As a part of the CIF, you will have to indicate the “required” and “desired” skills you desire in the new pastor. The Skills Definition List needs to be downloaded from the same site so that you know exactly how the particular skills are defined.

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 Clerk of Session and your Liaison have a copy of the current Presbytery Minimum Compensation Package). Your COM has experience with pastor searches and will be able to help you present your church in the best way.

## **Fill out the CIF form on a computer**

This is so that when you come to put it “online” (see below), you will be able to “cut and paste” it onto the form online, rather than having to retype all of the entries. This is possible using the Word version, but typically not possible using the PDF version of the form.

## **Comments about separate lines on your CIF**

When the form asks for Church/Organization ID, type in your church PIN number (your Clerk of Session will have the number).

“Experience desired” is the minimum amount of experience you want to see in the PIF’s you receive from matching. (**HINT:** In order to receive the broadest number of matches, use a lower number of years of experience.)

On the narrative questions, the boxes will only hold 1500 characters so count the letters, numbers, punctuation, and spaces to be sure you stay within that limit and still say what is most important. (**HINT:** Most word processing programs contain a tool to give you this information.)

For references for your church, you may want to consider listing your COM liaison, your General Presbyter, a neighboring pastor, your Interim Pastor, or others who have worked with you recently. **DO NOT list current church members.**

When you come to skill choices, you will want to have discussed this thoroughly before filling out the form. Include your Liaison in that discussion; s/he can assist you. You may select up to 4 skills that you want in all the PIF’s you receive (required) and 6 more skills you would like to have (desired). Your pastor candidates will select 10 skills on their PIF’s.

Compensation and housing - enter only cash salary in the boxes – both minimum and maximum that your Session feels it can offer. If you only have a total budget amount, you will need to figure how much of that you can offer for cash salary. (Our presbytery ordinarily denotes that a minimum of 40% of cash salary is for housing.) One way to do that is to consider how much it costs for a family of four to live in a house that you would want your pastor to live in. Subtract that and other allowances plus the cost of medical and pension coverage (your treasurer or COM liaison can help estimate that).

Geographic choices - unless you have some strong reason to limit your search, you will be wise to select “unlimited” to get the most “good” candidates in your referral list. (That is Louisville’s advice.) BUT, consider also whether you can afford to fly a candidate from Oregon here, or whether you can afford to fly your

committee to Oregon to hear a person. Also consider how much the moving expenses will be. The new pastor will expect the church to cover those also.

PNC Chair Details - It is very important to enter an email address for your PNC if at all possible. This may be the PNC Chair, or another member of the committee. Since you will be receiving some PIF's 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). You may want to create a new email address specifically for the Search Committee. You can do that at places like Juno or Yahoo (and they are generally free). If all else fails, see if your COM Liaison has email and use theirs.

### **CIF Approval**

Once your CIF is complete, print it out so that your Session can read and approve it. After the Session has approved the CIF, email it to your COM liaison so that the Vacancies Subcommittee of COM and the COM can approve it. Once that has happened, you are ready to put your CIF "online." After it is "online," the Clerk of Session and the Vacancies Subcommittee Moderator or COM Moderator will "sign" your form electronically.

### **CIF Identification Numbers**

The church's PIN in this example is 23456

Search Committee Chairperson's login ID looks something like this: P0023456 (P, zero, zero, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6). The Clerk of Session of that church will also be given a login ID number. It will look like COS23456 (C, O, S, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6). Both login ID's will be assigned an initial password. The password is case sensitive and it will look something like this: 1stpres.

When you submit the CIF, it will give them a CIF ID which will look like this - 23456.AA0 (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, period, A, A, zero).

### **To enter the CIF "online:"**

Get your PNC login ID and password from the COM (The Vacancies Moderator can generate them on the Internet especially for your church). The login ID will look something like: P0023456. The password will look like: 1stpres (up to 8 letters or numbers).

Go to <http://www.pcusa.org/clc/> and then click "User Login" (Do not go to "Enter a New CIF"). Enter your login ID in the 1st box and your password in the 2nd one.

The computer already knows about your church from your login ID. After you have completed Part II, it automatically fills in Part I. of the CIF based on the Annual Statistical Report your Clerk of Session submitted in January. You can review Part I and edit it if necessary (after you fill in Part II) by clicking on the task list “View/Update CIF (Part I)”.

To begin filling in your CIF, click on “Fill a New CIF”. If you used Word when doing your CIF, “cut and paste” the data from your CIF that you filled out on your computer into the online form. When you have completed the task, click “Submit CIF”.

When your form is received, the computer will confirm it and generate a CIF ID. It is made up of your church PIN and some other digits that will identify that particular CIF. It will look like: 23456.AA0. Write it down and keep it. You will need it to edit your CIF.

For more specific help, call the Call Referral Church Representative at 1-888-728-7228 – (ext. 5730).

## **THE SEARCH PROCESS**

### Shhhhh!!!.... A Word About Confidentiality

Presbyterians don't have bishops. And we don't appoint pastors to serve congregations. Instead, we work from the classically Reformed understanding that “the studied wisdom of the few is more profound than the ignorance of the many, or the prejudice of the one.” This is why we use nominating committees. Toward this end, it is vitally important that you as a committee be able to speak openly and honestly to each other about any candidates who come before you for consideration. You must be able to share your thoughts, insights and intuitions. BUT...these must be shared only in committee. Confidentiality is an absolute must.

The work of leading a congregation as a pastor is difficult work. When a congregation finds that its pastor is in conversation with a PNC, it will often times assume that this pastorate's days are numbered and the pastor is now a lame duck. Should the conversation not end in extending a call, what might have been a good ministerial relationship is damaged, often beyond repair. Therefore, to honor the health of sister churches, it is essential that both names AND places of candidates not be shared beyond the PNC – not even with spouses.

HOWEVER, this does not mean you tell the congregation nothing. You represent them, and must periodically inform them of the progress being made in

the search. Do not mention names, location, gender, etc., but let them know the process is moving along and where you are in the process.

### **Is Anybody Out There?**

Once your CIF has been approved and put online, and signed off by the Clerk of Session from your congregation, and the COM representative, you move into the next stage, the Search Process. During this stage, you will receive and process PIF's, you will solicit suggestions, evaluate potential candidates, check references, and interview persons who may become you next pastor.

### **Receiving PIF'S**

There are several ways in which you will receive the Personal Information Forms of potential candidates for your position. By far the largest number will come via the Internet; both from CLC and also self-referral. The CLC referrals will come via an email note to the PNC Chairperson. S/he will get an email indicating that matches have occurred. The Chairperson will log onto the CLC website ([www.pcusa.org/clc](http://www.pcusa.org/clc)) as done earlier, and when the "Task List for PNC Chairperson" appears on the screen, the chairperson will select "View Referral List." There you will find the names of all those whom the computer has matched to your CIF. The number to the left of their name is the PIF ID number. By double clicking on the number, you will see their PIF. You may download any or all of these PIF's. You can print them out and copy them so that all persons on the PNC have a copy, you can also download the PIF's and email to your other PNC members. When you need more PIF's to review, you may send a request by double clicking "Request New CLC Matching" on the "Task List For PNC Chairperson."

Another way you will receive PIF's via email is by self-referral. Ministers and Candidates for Ordination will send their PIF's to the email address of the PNC Chairperson as it is listed on your CIF. You will need to handle these as you did the ones that were referred by CLC.

The fewest number of CIF's will come in hardcopy format. These will either be self-referrals that you receive via the USPS or from your Liaison who may offer some referrals from Presbytery's file of ministers looking to relocate.

Another way of soliciting PIF's is by placing an ad in our denomination's magazine "Presbyterians Today," and/or a denominationally related publication, such as "Presbyterian Outlook" or on a related web site.

## **Sources of PIF's**

Again, by far the largest source of PIF's will be CLC matches. However, as suggested above there are other sources: self-referral, Presbytery referral, and suggestions from the congregation and friends of the congregation. You will want to seek the suggestions of members and friends of your congregation. New members from out of town may suggest their former pastor; folks who know your congregation will want to offer suggestions of persons to consider. In these cases, you will not have a PIF; you will need to get one. Presbytery is not able to access these for you; you will have to contact the person and ask if they are interested in being considered, and if so, would they please send a PIF? When sending letters of this type, it is a good idea to include a copy of the church CIF as well.

## **Processing the PIF's**

The first thing that you will want to do with the PIF's that come from computer matching is contact each one (probably by email) and indicate that the computer matched you with the person and then find out whether the person is still available to be considered. Sometimes minister and churches are slow in informing the CLC of a new position, and therefore some persons will be matched when they are no longer available.

In the case of self-referred PIF's, it is important to acknowledge that you have received the self-referral. In addition, it is important that you indicate where you are in the process, and when the person might expect to hear from you again.

Indeed it is very important to keep people up-to-date in your process. For instance, "We have just gotten organized and are now receiving PIF's. It will probably be at least four weeks until you hear from us again."

When you have received a requested PIF from a particular minister, it is also important to let that person know when they can expect to hear from you again.

Keep a running log of these correspondence details and honor the dates you have given for communication. It is appropriate to go no longer than one month without letting a candidate know where you are in process; and whether they are still under consideration. Remember, you are being evaluated not only by what you say, but in your courtesy toward your possible new pastor.

## Sorting PIF's

Once you start the process of reading PIF's, you will want to sort them into different groups. You might well want to try the "ABC" system. Group "A" contains those PIF's that sound exactly like what you are searching for. "Group "B" PIF's sound quite interesting but don't seem to match exactly. Group "C" is composed of those PIF's that are not a match you would consider.

Some tips for reading PIF's are found in **Appendix A**. One way to go about the sorting is to have two members of the PNC read each PIF and on a sticky note put their suggested pile assignment on the PIF (if you all have email copies, they could email the chairperson the name and pile). If there is not agreement on a PIF, have a third person read it. By this process, you can get folks into all three piles. Of course, you may want all members of the PNC to read each PIF, and discuss each PIF's pile assignment at a PNC meeting.

How ever you sort the PIF's, you will want to release the Group "C" from the search. Therefore, **if you have had some sort of contact with the candidate**, you will send them a note that is something like this:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

We have reviewed your PIF, and although you seem to us to be well qualified for ministry, it does not appear to us that your gifts match well with our direction for ministry. We wish you God's blessings in your work.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_.

Only if the person self-referred, should you also thank them for their interest in your position. Moreover, as stated above, make sure that you have had some prior contact with the person (informing them that they were on your list of potential candidates). No one likes to receive a rejection letter for a position for which they did not know they were under consideration.

## Further evaluation of PIF's

After you have communicated with Group "C" you will also want to communicate with Groups "A" and "B." You will need to say that the process of reading and evaluating PIF is taking longer than you expected. You wanted them to know that they are still under consideration.

Through reading and group evaluation, you will want to select your top 3 - 5 candidates. Let your COM Liaison know who those persons are and of what

Presbytery they are members or candidates for ordination in. The COM Liaison will request Presbytery staff do a background check to see whether there are any “red flags” which might cause problems. Once the list is cleared, you will begin the interviewing portion of this stage. **ABSOLUTELY NO PERSON -TO- PERSON CONTACT IS ALLOWED UNTIL THE “EXEC CHECK” IS COMPLETED, AND APPROVAL IS GRANTED!**

### **Interviewing Pastoral Candidates**

As you begin this process, you may wish to ask the persons to send you copies of bulletins, newsletters, tapes/CD’s of sermons, etc. so that you might get to know them better. After you have received this information and after you have re-read the PIF, you may want to re-rank the candidates, and proceed to interviewing them.

A word about telephone interviews: regarding telephone interviews, this is better than communicating by mail (email or otherwise) but not much! **However, this is the only contact allowed until an “exec check” has been performed on the candidate, and approval to proceed is granted.** You will want to communicate face to face as well before reaching a final decision.

Because PNC’s 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”.

### **Preparation for the Interviewing**

Before you meet with any candidate:

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.**

Do this person’s experience and skills match what you are seeking?

Have they lived and worked in a setting like yours?

Do they have the years of experience you are seeking?

Do they exhibit skills that you need?

Do the pastoral activities ratings match yours closely?

Review other materials the candidate may send you: Video or audio tapes of sermons, bulletins, newsletters, etc.

### **Do thorough reference checking.**

Call each of the references listed and ask both general questions and questions that the PNC has developed about this particular person. A list of sample questions for references is included in **Appendix B** of this handbook. **DO NOT CONTACT ANYONE OTHER THAN THOSE LISTED AS REFERENCES ON THE PIF.** You may put the candidate in a tight spot in the current pastorate if you decide God is not leading you to him/her.

**IF YOU ARE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING A CANDIDATE** Get permission to do a background check on the candidate. This is in addition to the “exec-check” presbytery staff performs. Check with your COM liaison for sources of this information.

### **Prepare for the interview.**

What information do you want and need in order to evaluate this person as your future leader? What questions will be asked and who will ask them? It is a good idea to develop a list of standard questions in order to evaluate the candidates equally. What information will the candidate want to know about your church and community? Gather this information before the interview.

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 time line?

If the candidate is coming to a neutral pulpit in your community, arrange a tour that gives a good picture of your church and community, but be careful to protect confidentiality. Some tips for listening to sermons are included in **Appendix C** of this handbook. 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.

### **During the Interview**

Some hints for interviewing candidates are included in **Appendix D** of this handbook.

### Some Questions You Might Ask:

- Tell us about your faith journey.
- What are the things you feel best about in your present ministry?
- What have been the challenges there?
- What interests you about this position?
- What do you bring to our ministry?
- What are your greatest strengths in ministry? ...your greatest weaknesses?
- One of our goals is to strengthen our \_\_\_\_\_. How would you envision doing that?
- Describe a typical week in your ministry.
- Share your perspective on the Presbyterian Church (USA).
- One of the issues our Session has debated in the past few years is \_\_\_\_\_. Tell us how you might address that topic.
- If we selected you as our pastor (or other role), when could you start and what would be your startup plan?
- How do you balance your personal/family life with your ministry?
- What will you need from us, the members of this church, in order to be effective as our pastor?
- 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. Also ask is there anything else you need to know that will impact this person's performance of ministry?

### **What about questions that cannot be asked?**

A few words about appropriate questions

Neither civil nor church law mandate prohibited questions. Many Presbyterians who serve on PNC's are familiar with secular employment practices where it is illegal to ask certain questions of a prospective employee. Because the ministries of the Church belong to the Church, the rules are different for search committees interviewing church professionals. Search committees and presbyteries have the right and responsibility to ask questions that will help them determine "fitness for office".

Pursuant to G-11.0502 g., Committees on Ministry "shall provide for the implementation of equal opportunity 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." It is important that PNC's and COM's examine their decision-making processes to ensure they are not making decisions based upon these categories. This allows for the very broad discretion vested in PNC's and COM's when they are making their decisions and, yet, cautions them to implement the

requirements of G-11.0502g and requires them to report on the steps taken in the case of each call.

From Fred Jenkins, Director - Office of Constitutional Services, excerpt from PCUSA Polity Reflection #19, July 1998

“6. Q. What may those who examine church officers do?”

A. Each examining body, a CPM, COM, PNC, Nominating Committee, Session, or Presbytery decides its own procedures, as it does now. They may ask what is necessary to satisfy themselves of the fitness, or lack of fitness, of the person for the church office under consideration. The committee may not discriminate solely on the basis of sexual orientation. Each examining body decides when it is satisfied, but may be subject to administrative review or judicial review. For example, see the judicial decision in Bedford-Central Church v. Presbytery of New York City, Minutes 1987 page 119 in which the decision of the candidates committee received administrative review on the floor of presbytery and the presbytery’s decision subsequently received judicial review.

Applicants, especially candidates, need to understand that religious institutions are permitted to discriminate on the basis of religious belief and may enforce standards of character that apply to a person’s private life to a degree that is not legally permitted in secular occupations and professions.”

Given this legal environment, COM’s and PNC’s should, above all, exercise Christianity, common sense, and Presbyterian decency and order as they seek to discern the call to a leader for God’s people.

### **General words and Observations**

Remember that the interview is a two way street: the minister is also interviewing you. The minister will have questions to ask, so please leave time in the interview for this.

When you go to listen to a minister in his/her pulpit, either let him/her know that you are coming, and arrange (if you wish) a time to meet with the person after the service, or if you choose to appear unannounced, contact the minister by the middle of that week and identify yourself as having visited, and tell him/her when they can expect to hear from you further.

Unless you are searching for a clergy couple, you are not normally interviewing the spouse of your candidate. While that statement is true, after you have had your first visit/interview with the candidate, you should consider including the spouse in your interviews. This is especially true when you invite the candidate to visit your church.

Remember: just because you have the minister's PIF, even if it was self-referred, it is almost certain, that his/her congregation does NOT know that he/she is considering moving. Please, do nothing to break that confidentiality.

Do not leave messages with baby-sitters, children, or answering machines, except your name and phone number. Baby-sitters can be church members. Children may not know that the parent is considering moving. You do not know who may overhear your message on an answering machine. And never leave a message on an answering machine at the minister's office.

Be sparse in your use of neutral pulpits. If the minister is talking to you, they probably are talking to others. They have only a limited number of Sundays when they can be away from their home pulpit [generally 6 per year]. They are using their vacation to preach in a neutral pulpit.

### **Offering the Call**

Before a call may be issued, indeed before your congregational meeting may be called to issue the call to your candidate, s/he must be approved first by the Examinations Subcommittee of the Committee on Ministry, the Vacancies Subcommittee must approve the Terms of Call and The Covenant, and they must also be approved by the full Committee on Ministry. These committees ordinarily meet the first Tuesday of each month; check with your COM liaison for specifics.

So, when you have reached a decision on your first choice, it is appropriate to offer the position to the candidate. If s/he says that they will accept the call, the PNC informs the Liaison and Presbytery's Office of the top candidate's willingness to accept the call if approved by the groups listed in the paragraph above. **Appendix E** has instructions for completion of the Pastoral Call form (**Form 1**). You will also develop a "Covenant" document. This will detail the expectations of both the pastor and the church. The Covenant will become part of the Call Documents. **Appendix F** contains guidelines for writing a covenant document (**Form 2**).

The PNC Liaison makes sure that the call form is filled out properly and meet presbytery's minimum compensation, and that the AAEEO Report form is filled out and submitted to the COM before moving onto the Call Process.

### **THE CALL PROCESS**

The Call Process involves the time from the moment your top choice says, "Yes!" until the end of the Installation Service. Once your candidate says yes, there are several constitutional hoops to jump through.

## **Meeting with Examinations Subcommittee and COM**

The deadline for getting a candidate's name before the COM is ordinarily 10 days before the meeting, and the deadline is the same for the Examinations Subcommittee. Even if the Minister is a member of our presbytery, they still need to appear before the Examinations Subcommittee. If you are ready to act before the deadline, we will, if possible, set a time and date for your candidate to meet with representatives of the appropriate committee(s). A time will also be set for the PNC to join the candidate in meeting with the COM. This will be an opportunity for the COM to meet with you as well as your candidate.

It is the Examinations Subcommittee's responsibility to determine whether or not the candidate is theologically sound and appropriate for membership in the Presbytery. It is the Vacancies Subcommittee's responsibility to determine the suitability of the match between the candidate and the church, and to approve the Terms of Call and The Covenant. If these subcommittees approve your selection and the call, they will recommend approval to the full COM. If the full COM concurs with the subcommittee recommendations, your COM liaison will contact you, and grant permission to the PNC to request its Session to call a congregational meeting to issue the call. **Appendix G** contains procedures for a congregational meeting to call a pastor.

In addition, the Committee on Ministry has the authority to allow a person to move onto the field and begin work on the effective date of the call. That means that we do not have to rush to get something done just to fit the schedule of a Presbytery meeting.

## **The Congregational Meeting**

The Session calls the Congregational Meeting in accord with The Book of Order G-7.0303 b. That means there must be ten 10 days notice and two (2) intervening Sundays. The meeting must be moderated by an Ordained Minister of the Presbyterian Church (USA) (G-14.0503).

After hearing the Terms of Call and the Covenant, the Congregation votes BY SECRET BALLOT (G-14.0503 b) whether or not to extend the call. Following an affirmative vote (see The Book of Order G-14.0503 b. and G-14.0505), the Moderator certifies the vote on the Call Form and signs it. The Search committee (usually) is elected by the congregation (by voice vote) to sign the call and prosecute (present) it before the next Presbytery meeting. **Appendix H** covers the procedures for presenting and prosecuting the call at a Presbytery meeting. The Chairperson (or a designate) will appear at the Presbytery meeting, and at the appropriate time read a script and present the call. The Congregation, effective upon the Installation of the Pastor (or Associate Pastor or Co-Pastor)

may dissolve the Search Committee. [NOTE: The members of the Search Committee may continue as an advisory group to the new pastor (or Associate Pastor or Co-Pastor) for a period of time as stated in the Covenant]. The Chair of the Pastor Nominating Committee is responsible for ensuring the Call Form is appropriately filled out and returned to the Stated Clerk at Presbytery's Office, as soon after the congregational meeting as possible.

### **The Ordination and/or Installation Commission**

While it is the responsibility of Presbytery to ordain and/or install all of the pastors who are members, it is impractical for all of Presbytery to gather to do this. So Presbytery appoints an Administrative Commission to do this task on behalf of the whole of Presbytery. It is the practice of the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia to allow the minister to be ordained and/or installed to nominate her/his Commission.

A form is provided for this purpose to the minister and to the PNC Chairperson. The form has a date on it. PLEASE see to it that your candidate has this filled out and returned to the office on time. The form comes with directions about the requirements of the Commission. Since The Book of Order requires that the elders on a Commission may not be from the same congregation, you can help your candidate by suggesting elders from other congregations who might serve on the Commission. If there are any questions, call the Presbytery Office.

After your candidate is received at a Presbytery Meeting, the Administrative Commission mentioned above is appointed by the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia to ordain and/or install your new pastor. The time of meeting and the appropriate dress for the minister members of the Commission are decisions worked out between the minister-elect and the Moderator of the Commission (that is the person Presbytery appoints "to preside and propound.") On the appointed day, at the time suggested by the Commission moderator, the Commission convenes and prepares for the service and conducts the Ordination and/or Installation Service. Following the service the minutes of the Commission are sent to the presbytery office.

**Form 1 (Sample Pastoral Call)**

**PASTORAL CALL**  
(For Pastor or Associate Pastor)

The \_\_\_\_\_ Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) of \_\_\_\_\_ Virginia, belonging to the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia (PIN 150/190) being well satisfied with your qualification 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 \_\_\_\_\_ of this congregation, effective \_\_\_\_\_, promising you in the discharge of your duty all proper support, encouragement and allegiance in the Lord.

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

1. a. Cash Salary of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ annually, of which \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is designated for housing, utilities, furnishings and appurtenances.
  - b. Free use of a manse.
  - c. Utilities for manse provided (except personal long distance phone calls).
2. A salary supplement equal to \_\_\_\_\_% of Social Security Self-employment tax.
3. Paid vacation of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks/month.
4. Reimbursement of Professional Expenses for Automobile Expenses, Books, Continuing Education and other Professional Expenses of up to \$ \_\_\_\_\_ when substantiated to the Church Treasurer or person designated by the Session.
5. Annual Study leave with pay of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks (with accumulation of up to three years).
6. Consideration of Sabbatical Leave in accordance with established Presbytery policy.
7. Moving Expenses to the field.
8. Regular payment in advance to the board responsible for benefits a sum equal to that requisite percent of your salary which may be fixed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for participation in the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including both pension and medical coverage, or any successor plan approved by the General Assembly, during the time of your being and continuing in the pastoral relationship set forth in this call to this church.
9. We further promise and obligate ourselves to annually review these Terms of Call and the Covenant with an evaluation of the mutual achievement of mission goals by minister and session as to their adequacy with serious consideration given to the current adjusted median family income.
10. In addition, we promise to provide:

In testimony whereof, we have subscribed our names this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*  
The Pastor Nominating Committee has provided for consideration of candidates without regard to race, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, age or disabilities. (Book of Order G-14.0502b.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No

Having moderated the congregational meeting, which extended this call for ministerial services, I do certify that the call has been made in all respects according to rules of the *Book of Order*, and that the persons who signed the call were authorized to do so.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_, Moderator of the Meeting  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Being convinced of the leading of God's Spirit, I am ready to undertake the responsibilities stated in this call.

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

\*\*\*\*\*

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY OF CALLING PRESBYTERY

The Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia, having determined that it is for the good of the church, approves this call to:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, Stated Clerk      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

APPROVAL OF MINISTER'S/CANDIDATE'S PRESBYTERY

The Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_ has approved this call and has granted permission to \_\_\_\_\_ to transfer to the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia.

\_\_\_\_\_, Stated Clerk      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

APPROVAL OF CALLING PRESBYTERY

The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia, having determined that it is for the good of the whole church, has found in order this call to

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, Stated Clerk      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Form 2 (Sample COVENANT)

### THE COVENANT The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia

The \_\_\_\_\_ Presbyterian Church of \_\_\_\_\_, Virginia of the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) accompanies its call as Pastor/Associate Pastor to:

\_\_\_\_\_

with the following covenant of our support and encouragement as we seek together to serve the Lord and His world. The specific goals, expectations, and responsibilities for the work of the Pastor/Associate Pastor and of the congregation are as follows:

**WORSHIP** is most important to the life of the church.

The Pastor/Associate Pastor, the Session, and the Worship Committee, shall seek to develop a rich worship life for the congregations. He/She shall be expected to deliver no less than \_\_\_\_\_ sermons per year and to assist in all other worship services such as weddings, funerals, and special services.

The officers and congregation shall support the worship life of the church through faithful attendance and constructive commentary on the sermons and the elements of worship.

The **CHILDREN AND YOUTH** are an integral part of the church.

The Pastor/Associate Pastor shall develop new and expand existing programs into a vibrant and meaningful ministry for children and youth. He/She will assist in the enlistment and development of trained lay leadership. He/She will encourage children and youth participation throughout the organizational structure of the church.

The officers and congregation shall assist and volunteer to serve as teachers and leaders of these age groups, and will encourage the participation of their daughters and sons in the life of the church.

**CHRISTIAN NURTURE** through the Church School and homes of the congregation is vital to the life of the congregation.

The Pastor/Associate Pastor, assisted by the Christian Nurture Committee and the Church School Superintendent, will work to strengthen and educational program of the church by training, supporting, and seeking to motivate teachers, by encouraging faithful attendance and involvement of children, parents, and other adults of all ages, and by teaching classes in which she has particular expertise.

The officers and congregation shall assist and volunteer to serve in all of the nurturing programs developed by the Pastor/Associate Pastor and the Session.

**PASTORAL CARE** of the congregation is important in the church's expression of God's love to others.

The Pastor/Associate Pastor, in conjunction with the church officers, shall develop a program of visiting in the homes of the congregation and shall visit and provide counsel

and support for the bereaved, sick, shut-ins, elderly and those with special problems and needs.

The Pastor/Associate Pastor, church officers, and congregation shall welcome the Pastor/Associate Pastor into their homes, will make known to the church office the names of those needing special concern, and will assist in whatever way they can.

**REACHING OUT TO THE UNCHURCHED** is the mission of the church.

The Pastor/Associate Pastor shall work to reach those without a church home, to follow-up those who visit our church, and to reclaim the inactive of our church family.

The officers and congregation will call to the attention of their pastors the names of visitors and perspective members and will assist in developing, a warm and friendly atmosphere at all church functions.

The **PROFESSIONAL STAFF** of the church provides leadership for the people of God.

The Pastor/Associate Pastor shall work with the Choir Director/Organist, the Administrative Assistant, the Pre-Kindergarten Director, and the Sexton in developing a harmonious working relationship by participating in regular staff meetings, by maintaining regular office hours, and through open channels of communication.

The officers and congregation will assist in this endeavor by providing adequate office space and equipment, by providing secretarial assistance, and by recognizing the need for one day away from the church office each week.

**RESPONSIBILITIES BEYOND THE LIFE OF THE LOCAL CONGREGATION** are expected of the Pastor/Associate Pastor.

The Pastor/Associate Pastor shall be expected to participate in the work of the governing bodies of the denomination and in civic endeavors of the community as he/she desires.

The officers and congregation recognize the importance of a minister's involvement in duties to the church universal and to the community as a whole and will make available time for their pursuit.

The officers and congregation accords the Pastor/Associate Pastor their love and support as he/she lives and works among us. We shall support financially and spiritually the work and worship of our church and actively participate in its mission.

The Pastor/Associate Pastor, the Session, and the Pastor Nominating Committee will evaluate both the Covenant and the performance of the Pastor/Associate Pastor at the end of six months. Subsequently, each year the Pastor/Associate Pastor, the congregation, and the Session shall participate in an annual review and evaluation of the missions and goals of the church, formulate a plan for the coming year, and revise the covenant as necessary.

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Pastor/Associate Pastor

---

Chair PNC/Clerk of Session

## **Appendix A: TIPS ON READING PERSONAL INFORMATION FORMS**

### **I. Establishing a Basis of Judgment**

- Decide on Criteria
- Each PIF read by at least 2 members who rank according to criteria: if both think it a “bomb” – discard

### **II. Some Items to Consider in Arriving at Criteria:**

#### **A. Items of Objectivity**

- Experience
- Compatibility with congregation’s ranking Pastoral Activities
- Writing style: how is it written and what is communicated by the style of writing?
- Interplay between theology and life? Does it appear that the person has internalized the faith more than just recounting what has been read?
- What is the person’s view of the church?
- What do you learn about this person as a person from the PIF?

#### **B. Items of Subjectivity**

- Would you like a two-hour conversation with this person on the basis of what is said in the PIF? What would you like to talk about?
- How do the comments on leadership style and skills for ministry fit with the congregation’s experience and expectations?
- Did anything make you uneasy as you read? If so, what?
- Did anything cause you to pause and reflect, “Mmm ... now, that’s interesting.... I’d like to hear more about that”? If so, what?

from: Angus W. McGregor; Greensboro, NC 9/00

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## Appendix B. Questions for References

(This has been provided to aid PNC's as they interview the References listed on a particular PIF)

Candidate \_\_\_\_\_

Introduce yourself, state the purpose of the call and thanks for willingness to help us.

Statement of intent: We are looking for that person whose natural gifts, training and prior experience is a "fit" with what we believe our church needs, given the opportunities God has placed before us.

How would you describe this person's work habits?

Could you tell me what you know about his/her past and present ministry and highlight your sense of his/her greatest strengths.

Since none of us are perfect at everything, are there some areas where s/he has noticeable weaknesses?

How have you seen this person demonstrate his/her administrative skills?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate this person's preaching ability?

\_\_\_\_\_

How often have you heard him/her preach?

How would you describe his/her style?

(On the following four questions, if the rating is low, ask "May I ask why you say that?")

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate this person's teaching ability?

\_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate this person's spiritual development skills? \_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate this person's administrative leadership? \_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate this person's pastoral care abilities?

\_\_\_\_\_

How well does this person work with other staff members, and lay leaders?

Besides being professionally competent, we are looking for someone who fits well in our community. What can you tell me about his/her non-work activities, e.g. hobbies, community involvement, family, etc.?

To put you on the spot, if you were in my shoes, would you be enthusiastic about calling him/her?

## **Appendix C: TIPS FOR LISTENING TO SERMONS**

### **1. Spirit/Attitude**

- Does the preacher's attitude direct your attention to the preacher or to what is being communicated?

### **2. Use of the Bible**

- How clear is it that the Bible is the authority for what s/he says?
- What about the balance and transitions between biblical and other material?

### **3. Witness to Faith**

- Does the preacher evidence a genuine personal faith, including struggle, or is it more of an intellectual, rhetorical exercise?

### **4. Relationship to "Everyday Life"**

- What evidence is in the sermon that the preacher is alive in today's world?

### **5. Reformed Tradition/Theology**

- What do you hear that points to our Reformed tradition?

### **6. Voice**

- Does his/her voice help or hinder him/her, i.e., quality?, projection?, audibility?

### **7. Organization**

- Did the preacher keep you focused on the direction the sermon was heading?

### **8. Balance: Intellectual Integrity – Emotional Appeal**

- What is the preacher's judgment of the congregation's ability to think?
- Where were you "touched," "stirred" as you listened to this sermon?

### **9. Use of Illustrations**

- How were illustrations used? Too many, not enough, degree to which you saw the connection to biblical/theological matters?

### **10. Images**

- What could you see as you listened to this sermon?

### **11. Delivery**

- Eye Contact: Were you comfortable with the amount of eye contact maintained with the congregation?
- Mannerisms: Were the gestures and body language appropriate to the point being made in the sermon?
- Written Text: Was the preacher sufficiently free from the written text so as to relate to the congregation?

### **12. Conclusion**

- After listening to the sermon, so what????

from: Angus W. McGregor; Greensboro, NC 9/00

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## **Appendix D: TIPS ON INTERVIEWING A CANDIDATE**

### **Areas of Inquiry About the Candidate**

(What do you want to know?)

#### **1. Merit**

- sense of call/why in ministry
- education, especially continuing education
- what books/continued education experiences in the last 12 months

#### **2. Suitability**

(Does candidate's personal/ministerial style match that of the congregation?)

Some possible questions:

- Tell us who you are without talking about your work.
- What do you do when you don't have anything to do?
- Tell us about your family of origin.
- Verbally introduce us to your immediate family.
- What do you do when you get angry? When others get angry at you?
- If ministry is second career... What do you bring from your first career into the ministry?
- What about the ministry "gets your juices flowing"?
- Tell us about your preaching. How do you prepare? What are your sources for topics? How or do you follow or use the Lectionary?
- Say something about your work habits.
- How do you work with staff?
- Comment on highlights from her/his PIF; ask for elaboration/clarification.

#### **3. Availability**

- His/her criteria for the next place to live.
- Readiness to move?

from: Angus McGregor; Greensboro, NC 9/00

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## **APPENDIX E: INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION OF THE PASTORAL CALL FORM**

**General.** You will receive two copies of the Pastoral Call Form for your use in completing the official call in its final form. One copy is to be completed and returned for presbytery use and the other is for your files.

The Pastoral Call Form

**First Section:** – Fill in the official name of the church and the name of the city or post office serving the church and the state, the full name of the minister, the office (pastor, associate pastor), and the effective date when the minister will begin serving the church.

### **Second Section (Terms of Call):**

#### 1. Salary

##### a. If no Manse or Utilities are to be furnished

(1) Fill in line 1a with the Cash Salary (which includes all allowances for housing and utilities, etc.) NOTE: Be sure to check that it meets minimum requirements.

Following the words “annually, of which \$” enter the amount of the Salary designated for housing, utilities, furnishings, and appurtenances.

This amount should be an actual dollar figure but normally at least 40% of the Cash Salary.

(2) Cross out item 1b.

##### b. If a Manse is furnished but no Utilities are provided

(1) Fill in line 1a with the Cash Salary (which is to include all allowances for utilities, etc.). NOTE: Be sure to check that it meets minimum requirements. Following the words “annually, of which \$” enter the amount of the Salary designated for utilities, furnishings, and appurtenances. This amount should be an actual dollar figure but equal to at least 25% of the Cash Salary. Cross out the word “housing” in line 1a.

(2) Leave line 1b as it is and cross out line 1c.

##### c. If a Manse and its Utilities are furnished

(1) Fill in line 1a with the Cash Salary. NOTE: Be sure to check that it meets minimum requirements. Following the words “annually, of which \$” enter the amount of the Salary designated for furnishings and appurtenances. This amount should be an actual dollar figure but equal to at least 15% of the Cash Salary. Cross out the words “housing, utilities” in line 1a.

(2) Leave lines 1b and 1c as they are printed.

2. The Salary Supplement needs to have the % of SECA (Self Employment Compensation Act) Tax to be paid by the church filled in – either 50% or 100%.

NOTE: Do not enter the dollar amount.

3. Paid Vacation – enter the amount of time in weeks or on a monthly basis. Cross out the word not used.

4. Reimbursement of Professional Expenses – enter the dollar amount on an annual basis. This will include any Continuing Education dollars contemplated by the Session. The CE portion of the expenses may accumulate for up to three years.

5. Annual Study Leave – The recommend minimum is two weeks per year accumulating up to three years (six weeks).

6. Should be left in unless minister lives in the area in which he or she will serve.

7. Leave in.

8. Leave in.

9. Add any other terms or provisions. If there are no other terms or provisions leave blank or cross out.

**Third Section:** Fill in the date of the congregational meeting and have all persons who are chosen by the congregation at the meeting sign the call.

Bottom of front page – The pastor nominating committee will have indicated that they have complied with G-14.0502b of the *Book of Order*.

**REVERSE SIDE:**

**Fourth Section:** Following the congregational meeting, the Moderator of the meeting is to sign and date.

**Fifth Section** – Minister being called will sign when available.

**THIS COMPLETES YOUR WORK ON THE CALL FORM.**

**The Covenant** – The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia’s Committee on Ministry expects that a Covenant will accompany your Pastoral Call. Please refer to the “Guidelines for Writing Covenants” for developing the Covenant and having it approved by the minister, the session, and the congregation at the same time as the call is extended. The final Covenant as approved by all parties should be submitted to Presbytery with the official call.

**Follow-up**

1. Prior to the congregational meeting, be sure you have followed all steps in the paper, “Procedure for a Congregational Meeting to Call a Pastor or an Associate Pastor.”

2. Follow III, Following Congregational Meeting, of the above procedure and send the Call, Covenant, and names and addresses of those elected by the congregation to prosecute the call before Presbytery to: **Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Eastern Virginia, 801 Loudoun Avenue, Portsmouth, Virginia 23707-3216.**

## **APPENDIX F: GUIDELINES FOR WRITING COVENANTS**

### **A. Elements that go into writing Covenants**

1. The mission statement/goals of the congregation, particularly as developed on the Church Information Form (CIF).
2. The position description as developed in the CIF.
3. The expectations of the minister as outlined in the Personal Information Form (PIF).
4. Summary of conversations held during the “serious negotiations” period of what is expected to be done.

### **B. Types and Duration of Covenants**

- 1) Beginning Covenant – This covenant may be used to describe goals and working relationships for the first six months to a year.
  - a) An important element in this type of Covenant is to state when it will be evaluated (six months, nine months, one year) and who will be the parties to the evaluation. It is suggested that these parties should include the pastor, session, and pastor nominating committee (PNC).
  - b) Under the goals/expectations statement should be listed some specific things that can be done, or at least adequately begun, prior to the evaluation.
  - c) The reason for developing a beginning covenant is to have an agreement that is a part of the start-up and allow for extensive revisions after a period when pastor and congregation are better able to write a long-term covenant.
- 2) Long-Term Covenant – This may be developed at the time the call is issued or after the initial evaluation of the Beginning Covenant.
  - a) This Covenant should be seen as developing the direction of the pastor and congregation for two to three years.
  - b) It should state when and who will be involved in the evaluation. Each year an evaluation should be made as a part of the Annual Review of the Terms of Call and Covenant and revisions made as appropriate. Every three years, an extensive review and evaluation of the Covenant should be made with the opportunity for major revisions or re-writing.

### **C. Style and Format**

- 1) Brevity and conciseness is very import. The Covenant should be able to be completed on one to two pages single-spaced.
- 2) For each Covenant Statement, there should be a goal or direction statement stating where the church should be in the future as a result of the activities to

be undertaken and following that, some specific activities on part of congregation and session to achieve these.

#### **D. Process**

- 1) Develop; revise as necessary, the elements mentioned in A above as far as the congregation is concerned.
- 2) When you are at the point of serious visitation looking toward the probability that a call might be issued, ask the minister to bring to your meeting with him/her expectations, hopes, and concerns to be considered in a covenant.
- 3) Keep careful notes during the interview on those areas of program and mission that are agreed upon by the PNC and minister during the negotiation period.
- 4) Using above material, the PNC drafts a proposed Covenant and sends it to the minister.
- 5) The minister reviews, edits, rewrites, etc., and returns it to the PNC. If major changes are called for, a conference call between minister and PNC representatives should be held to iron these out.
- 6) At appropriate time, submit the Covenant to the session for approval. If major disagreements occur, rework as in D.5 above.
- 7) Present Covenant to the congregation at the time the call is to be extended.
- 8) Attach approved Covenant to call and send to the Presbytery.

## **APPENDIX G: PROCEDURE FOR A CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TO CALL A PASTOR OR AN ASSOCIATE PASTOR**

### **I. Prior to the meeting**

- A.** The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) meets with the session:
1. Shares the Covenant that it has developed and which has been approved by the person to be called.
  2. The session goes over Covenant and approves it. If session feels there should be a change, it should recommend the change to the PNC. The change must be approved by the PNC as well as by the person to be called.
  3. The PNC shares the terms of call with the session to be sure they agree that it is fair and manageable.
  4. The PNC requests the session to call a congregational meeting in accordance with G-14.0502 “to hear and act on its report.”
- B.** The session will act to:
1. Call a congregational meeting.
  2. Be sure that public notice of the time, place and purpose of the meeting is given at least 10 days in advance and includes two successive Sundays (G-14.0502.)

### **II. The Congregational Meeting (G-14.0503)**

- A.** The moderator of the congregational meeting shall be
1. The pastor (if any).
  2. The moderator of the session as appointed by Presbytery.
  3. If neither can serve, then they shall invite, with the concurrence of the session, another minister of the Presbytery to preside. (G-7.0306)
- B.** As with any other congregational meeting, the Clerk of Session shall serve as secretary of the congregational meeting. If unable to serve, a temporary secretary shall be elected by the congregation
- C.** The vote must be by written ballot. Sufficient paper ballots will be on hand to distribute to members of the congregation at the meeting. It is wise to have several session members ready to distribute and collect ballots from the congregation.

#### **D. Typical Agenda**

- 1) Call to Order – Moderator
- 2) Election of secretary (if necessary)
- 3) Determination of a Quorum (See G-7.0305)
- 4) Presentation of Report of Nominating Committee – Chair
  - a. Background of research
  - b. Personal information about person to be nominated
  - c. Terms of Call
  - d. Covenant
- 5) Constitutional Questions – “Are you ready to proceed to the election of a pastor (associate pastor)?”
- 6) Distribution of paper ballots to congregation members.
- 7) The vote on the ballot will be in response to the question, “Shall the congregation, under the will of God, call \_\_\_\_\_(name of nominee)\_\_\_\_\_to be its pastor (associate pastor) according to the Terms of Call presented?”
- 8) Collection of ballots and counting them (The count should be done by one session member and the Chair of the Pastor (Associate Pastor) Nominating Committee.
- 9) Announcement of Vote – Moderator
  - a. It takes a majority of those present and voting to elect.
  - b. If there is a substantial minority opposed to the nominee, G-14.0505 must be followed.
- 10) Approval of the Covenant (Presbytery Minutes Oct.'91, page 108)
- 11) Election of representatives of the congregation to sign, present and prosecute the Call on behalf of the congregation (G14.0506).
- 12) Approval of Minutes – Secretary
- 13) Adjournment – Moderator

#### **III. Following Congregational Meeting**

- A.** Persons elected by the congregation shall sign all copies of the call.
- B.** Moderator shall sign the call certifying that all persons who signed it were authorized to do so and the number for and against the Call.
- C.** The Chair of the Pastor Nominating Committee will forward to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery as soon as possible after the meeting:
  1. A copy of the Terms of Call
  2. A copy of the Covenant
  3. The names and addresses of those elected to present and prosecute the Call before Presbytery.
- D.** The moderator shall contact the nominee by telephone and inform her/him of results of congregational vote.

**APPENDIX H: PRESENTING AND PROSECUTING A CONGREGATION’S CALL TO A MINISTER OR CANDIDATE BEFORE THE PRESBYTERY**

The *Book of Order* G14.0506 states “Persons shall be elected by the vote of the congregation...to present and prosecute the call before presbytery.”

**EXPECTATIONS OF THESE PERSONS IN PRESBYTERY OF EASTERN VIRGINIA**

1. To be present at the Stated Meeting of Presbytery when the call is to be approved and presented to the minister or candidate.
2. At the time of the presentation, to come forward when introduced by the Stated Clerk, to be greeted by the moderator and, at the appropriate time, to reaffirm the congregation’s desire for the call.
3. After the presentation, at least one person to come to the Clerk’s desk and receive the congregation’s copy of the call after the minister has signed it. This copy is then to be given to the Clerk of Session for inclusion in the record of the congregational meeting that issued the call.

(NOTE: Although it practically never happens, if a problem develops in a committee or on the floor of Presbytery relating to the approval of the call and/or reception of the minister/candidate, these persons would represent the interest of the congregation in pursuing the call.)

**PROCEDURE:**

- A. Elect person at the congregational meeting when the call is issued.
- B. Give them a copy of the upper part of this paper.
- C. Send to the Presbytery office the bottom part of this paper with names and addresses of persons elected, as soon as possible after the congregational meeting.
- D. Shortly before the Presbytery meeting, Presbytery’s office will send the persons elected a sheet entitled ORDER FOR RECEPTION OF MINISTERS which will indicate what will happen in the Presbytery meeting.

**PERSONS ELECTED TO PROSECUTE CALL BEFORE PRESBYTERY**

Name of the Congregation \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Minister/Candidate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name, Address, City, Zip

- 1.
- 2.
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- 6.

Please return as soon as possible after congregational meeting to:  
PRESBYTERY OF EASTERN VIRGINIA  
801 LOUDOUN AVENUE  
PORTSMOUTH VA 23707-3216