

Presbytery of Eastern Virginia
COMMISSION ON MINISTRY



Pastor Nominating Committee Handbook

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I. INTRODUCTION

The process of calling a Minister of Word and Sacrament (whether a pastor, co-pastor or associate pastor), hereafter in this document abbreviated “pastor”, is an act of spiritual discernment. This is a spiritual task, not an executive search. Your task as the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) is to find the person God is calling to serve your church in the coming years. This will require prayer, careful listening, and reflection. Every member of the PNC in concert with the congregation should pray daily for the work and discernment of the committee to discover the one God is calling.

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.” Therefore, we use nominating committees.

There are lots of instructions and paperwork that accompany this process. You’ll be introduced to a new language with abbreviations and acronyms. The Commission on Ministry (COM) wants to make your work easier and has developed this handbook as a guide through the process. The COM has also assigned a COM liaison to your PNC to assist you in this task. At your first meeting, your COM liaison will meet with you, provide an overview of the process, give a brief overview of this handbook, and answer any questions you may have. S/he will also be available along the way for additional guidance.

II. ACRONYMS

Below is a list of most of the acronyms you'll encounter. If you do not find an abbreviation listed below, contact either your liaison, the Vice Moderator for Transitions, or the Moderator of the COM.

AA/EEO – Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity.

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

COM – Commission on Ministry, the presbytery committee responsible to help churches find pastors and pastors find churches.

MIF – Ministry Information Form, the church resume in CLC standard format that a church fills out which describes the position they are seeking to fill and information necessary to help match potential candidates.

PIF – Personal Information Form, the resume in CLC standard format that pastors and candidates fill out sharing who they are and where they would be interested in serving.

PIN – Personal Identification Number, a unique number for each congregation. You can get that number from your Clerk of Session.

PNC – Pastor Nominating Committee, the search committee elected by the congregation to nominate a pastor for the congregation.

III. CONFIDENTIALITY

It is important that your committee speak openly and honestly with each other, sharing your thoughts, insights, intuition, and observations, about the candidates you will consider. BUT...these must be shared only with those on the PNC and never shared with those outside the PNC. Confidentiality is vitally important.

As a committee of the congregation, you officially report only to the congregation and the COM. But this does not mean you keep the congregation in the dark. You represent them and should periodically give an update on the progress being made in the search. But when you do, never mention names, location, gender, etc.

Why? Because as a PNC you are also protecting the candidates' confidentiality. Often, while a pastor is circulating a PIF his/her congregation doesn't know that he/she is sensing a call to a new congregation. With that in mind, don't leave messages with baby-sitters, children, on voice mail or answering machines, other than your name and phone number. Baby-sitters can be church members, children may not know that the parent is considering a move, and you never know who might overhear the message you leave on a machine.

IV. FINDING THE ONE

The PNC works as a team in coordination with the COM. Work is best done through consensus and never by authoritarian rule. One person or group of persons should not exercise undue sway over others.

There are three distinct stages to calling a pastor: Getting Ready, Searching, and Calling. Your tasks are different in each stage. This handbook is divided into those three stages, explains what is going on in each stage, and offers information and explanations that will be helpful in that stage.

1) GETTING READY

a) Overview - During the Getting Ready stage, the session secures interim pastoral leadership for your congregation. Generally, by the time the PNC has been elected, the Interim Pastor and/or COM has helped the congregation complete a mission study which will aid the PNC in writing a MIF.

b) Organize the PNC - Elect some on the committee to serve a specific function:

- a chair, vice-chair, or co-chair
- a secretary to keep a record of conversations, considerations and actions by the committee and to serve as the official communicator with candidates. (this is a very important position and requires someone who is diligent in initiating, maintaining, and closing communications in a timely manner)
- a technology person to properly upload or download MIF's and PIF's; coordinate zoom or facetime meetings with candidates.

c) Establish a Budget - In coordination with session, establish a budget for the search process. Your budget should include travel for committee members and visiting candidates, mailings, accommodations, and meals for those times when a potential candidate visits your town. Most importantly, session must give you guidelines for compensating your new pastor, including benefits and moving expenses. Presently, with a combination of being able to access multiple sermons online and having access to extensive online information about a candidate's church and conducting interviews electronically, the necessary budget to perform a PNC search is greatly reduced.

d) Write a MIF - You will use the Mission Study as the basis for writing your MIF. What is your mission as a congregation at this point? What kind of leadership do you need to develop that mission? What skills and personal traits are desired in your next pastor? Answering these questions will help you focus on the type of leader you'll be looking for. **Hint:** a blank MIF is on the PEVA Website. Go to "Grants and Other Forms & Docs, PNC Folder, MIF (Blank).

e) Obtain a MIF online. - Download a blank MIF on the CLC website at <http://www.pcusa.org/clc/>. A MIF has two parts. You only need to work on Part II since Part I is automatically filled out by the computer based on last year's annual statistical

report for your church. The CLC Handbook is online and available at the same website. As a part of the MIF, you indicate “required” and “desired” skills you seek in your new pastor. The Skills Definition List can be downloaded from the same site so that you know exactly how particular skills are defined.

f) Prepare a MIF - Your session will give direction about the position and about the compensation package you can offer a new pastor. Your COM liaison will have a copy of the current Presbytery Minimum Compensation Package and can assist in looking at compensation for congregations with a similar size and demographics. Your COM liaison has knowledge about pastor searches and can provide insight into how best to present your church in a positive way.

i) Fill out the MIF form on a computer - write a draft MIF using the Word version is helpful so that you can “cut and paste” onto the form online rather than retyping all the entries.

ii) Comments about specific lines on a MIF

- A Church/Organization ID is your church PIN.
- Experience desired is the minimum years’ experience you want candidates you might consider having. (**HINT**: using a lower number of years of experience generates more PIF matches.)
- Narrative question boxes only hold 1500 characters, and every letter, number, punctuation, or space is a character. Stay within that limit but still say what is most important. (**HINT**: Most word processing programs contain a tool to give you a character count.)
- Church References - consider listing your COM liaison, the General Presbyter, a neighboring pastor, your Interim Pastor, or others who have worked with you recently. Never list church members, current or past.
- Skills - select up to 4 skills that all PIFs must have (required) and 6 additional skills you would like PIFs to have (desired).
- Effective Salary -cash salary plus housing allowance – both minimum and maximum that your session feels it can offer. The presbytery has published minimum effective salary guidelines posted on the PEVA website and available from your COM liaison. **Note** –salary ranges posted on the PEVA website are not visible to candidates.
- Geographic choices - PNCs may select certain regions of the country or “unlimited” for CLC to generate a greater number of “matches” meeting your criteria. The broader the search area the more costly a move may be.
- Confidential Communication - consider creating an email address unique to the PNC rather than using a personal email. The committee may designate one person to monitor the email on a regular basis.

g) MIF Approval - Once your MIF is complete, send a copy to your COM Liaison for review. Consider his/her comments and insights, then print out a copy for your session to review, amend and approve. When approved by Session, send the final copy to your COM Liaison who will forward it to the COM for their review and approval.

h) Enter the MIF Online

i) IDs and Passwords - After the COM has approved your MIF, contact the PEVA Administrator who will issue your PNC a login ID and password.

ii) Log in to the CLC and Enter Your MIF - Go to www.pcusa.org/clc and click "User Login" (do not click "Enter a New MIF"). Enter your login ID and password. To populate your MIF, click on "Fill a New MIF" (if you used Word you can "cut and paste" the data into the online form).

After you have completed Part II, Part I of the MIF is automatically filled in based on the Annual Statistical Report your Clerk of Session submitted in January. Review Part I and edit it if necessary, by clicking on the task list "View/Update MIF (Part I)". When finished, click "Submit MIF".

After your MIF is entered into CLC, ask your Clerk of Session to "sign" your form electronically and advise your COM liaison that your MIF is ready for COM to "sign" electronically.

iii) MIF Identification Number - When your signed form is received, the CLC system will confirm it and generate a MIF ID. Write it down and keep it. You will need it to edit your MIF.

Once your COM Liaison notifies you that COM has approved your MIF, the PNC Chair should log-in to CLC and confirm the MIF is active. Then, "request a match" and the CLC system will find matching PIFs for your MIF and notify you there are PIFs available to view. For more specific help, call the Call System Support Representative at 1-888-728-722 (extension 8550) or email clcstaff@pcusa.org.

Hint: Helpful information on posting a MIF is on the PEVA Website. Go to "Grants and Other Forms & Docs, PNC Folder, MIF posting Instructions.

2) SEARCHING

a) Overview - During the Search stage you will request, receive and process PIFs, solicit suggestions, evaluate candidates, check references, and interview persons who may become your next pastor. **Note:** if the position to be filled is not for a pastor/head of staff, the PNC and pastor should agree ahead of time how s/he will be involved in the search, interview, and selection of the candidate. Some may want to read every PIF, others may only read and participate in interviews/ conversations about those identified for first or second electronic interviews and in-person interviews.

b) Receiving Personal Information Forms (PIFs) - There are several ways in which you will receive the PIFs of potential candidates for your position. By far the largest number will come via the CLC or self-referral.

i) CLC Referrals will come via e-mail indicating that matches have occurred. Log onto the CLC website. When “Task List for PNC Chair” appears on the screen, select “View Referral List” and see the names of those matched to your MIF. The number to the left of a name is the candidate’s PIF ID number. Clicking on the number opens their PIF which may be downloaded and saved to share with members of the PNC. When you want more PIFs for review, double click “Request New CLC Matching” on the “Task List for PNC Chairperson.”

ii) Self-Referral - When a PIF is sent to the PNC through the CLC by request of an individual or outside the CLC system using the e-mail address listed on your MIF.

iii) Advertising - The PNC may also place an ad in a denominationally related publication or website, such as “The Presbyterian Outlook” which has online and print advertisements.

c) Processing PIFs

i) Prioritizing PIFs - Develop a process by which the PNC prioritizes PIF’s. Some adopt the “ABC” system: Group “A” contains PIFs that sound exactly like what you are searching for; “Group “B” has PIFs that sound interesting but aren’t an exact match; Group “C” has PIFs that do not match your MIF and are not a candidate you would consider. **Appendix A** has tips for reading PIFs.

ii) Acknowledge Every PIF Received - Acknowledge each PIF the PNC receives. For PIFs in groups A or B, (but not C), contact that person (probably by e-mail) and inquire whether the person is still available to be considered.

When you receive a Self-Referred PIF it is also important to let that person know when they can expect to hear from you again.

Keep a record of every PIF you receive as a way to track PIFs. There are many ways to do this, but a spreadsheet listing status, dates, and follow-ups is probably

most useful. You should go no longer than one month without letting a candidate know where you are in the process, and whether they are still under consideration.

iii) AA and EEO Requirements - Be mindful not to discriminate against any candidate on the basis of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography or theological conviction. **Appendix B** provides more guidance on this requirement.

iv) Rejection Letters - When your PNC decides to pass on a candidate, send that person a note to that effect, perhaps like this:

Dear _____,

We have reviewed your PIF, and although you seem 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 _____.

d) Narrowing the Field

i) Gathering Additional Information - You may want to ask some applicants to provide additional materials in order to get to know them better. If they are currently serving a church their current congregation has a website with information and/or sermons. After gathering additional information, the PNC may want to re-rank the candidate. **Appendix C** gives tips for listening to sermons.

ii) Electronic Interviews - Consider using electronic media (Zoom, Skype, Facetime, Google Teams...) as a next step before deciding upon candidates and setting up an in-person interview. **Note:** in-person interviews are not allowed until the General Presbyter (or a designee) conducts a presbytery-to-presbytery reference check and grants approval to proceed.

e) Presbytery to Presbytery Reference Checks - Prior to inviting any candidate(s) to interview in-person you **MUST** contact your COM liaison to request a presbytery-to-presbytery clearance check. Provide the candidate's name, a copy of their PIF, and the presbytery in which s/he is a member. The purpose of these checks is to learn whether there is anything known by the other presbytery about a candidate that would prevent or make it inadvisable for him/her to be considered further. In most cases the reference check provides confirmation or surfaces additional questions the PNC might want to ask the candidate or references suggested by the candidate.

f) PNC Reference Checks - Develop standard questions to use in contacting references listed on the PIF. **Appendix D** gives sample questions for making reference checks. If you want to contact anyone other than those listed as references on the PIF, contact the candidate for additional names and/or permission.

g) Electronic and In-person Interviews - Because much of the call process is experiential, PNCs are often tempted to 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”.

i) Prepare for the interview - Develop a gameplan as you prepare to evaluate candidates. What information do you want or need to have as you interview this person? What questions will you ask, and who will ask them? What information might the candidate want to know about your church and community and who will provide this information?

As a committee you’ll want to convey clarity and harmony about the job you are working to fill and the type of person you seek. Be clear about your process for decision-making - what are the steps you will go through? What is your approximate timeline?

Before you meet any candidate, every member of the PNC should read the candidate’s PIF thoroughly, compare it with your MIF, and score the candidate based on criteria your committee has set for its future leader. For example,

- Does this person’s experience and skills match what we are seeking?
- Have they lived and worked in a setting like ours?
- Do they have the years of experience we are seeking?
- Do they exhibit skills that we need?
- Do the pastoral skills ratings match ours closely?

Review what you know from sermons and check out links they may have included in the PIF, social media, etc.

ii) Prepare for an In-person Visit - You may want to invite a candidate (and his/her family) to the area. 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 whose congregations back home heard that they were out interviewing.

iii) During the Interview - Develop standard questions for all candidates to form a basis for comparison. Develop specific questions for individual candidates based on what you read in the PIF and what you hear (or don’t hear) from references.

Appendix E has hints and sample questions for interviewing candidates.

iv) Associate Pastor and Christian Educator Interviews - When the PNC is searching to fill a position other than a pastor, identifying a candidate who will work well with the pastor/head of staff is essential. The PNC and pastor should work out a plan for how the pastor will be involved in the selection process, including an opportunity to meet with finalists being interviewed. S(he) might attend meetings to debrief initial interviews (usually web-based), observe second and/or in-person interviews, and meet with the candidates individually.

h) Listening to Sermons - PNCs can listen to potential candidate's sermons online. Your COM liaison can assist your PNC with more information or help you find a neutral pulpit in our presbytery. Never invite a prospective minister to preach in your church until after a call has been accepted.

If you want to listen to a pastor in their current pulpit, contact them to let them know you wish to attend worship. Ask how obvious visitors would be. When you visit do not have more than two or possibly three people arrive and sit together. It may cause members of the congregation to wonder why you are there. Don't ask members questions about their pastor that a first-time visitor would not normally ask.

i) Miscellaneous Comments

Interviews go both ways. While you are interviewing the candidate, s/he is interviewing you. Allow time in the interview for their questions.

i. **Transparency** - Don't hide the difficult things your congregation may be facing. Discuss the goals of your church and your expectations of the pastor or associate and listen to their expectations.

ii. **Reimbursement** -The PNC is responsible for travel costs the candidate and family will incur during in-person interviews. Agree ahead of time how the candidate will submit vouchers for reimbursement.

iii. **Family Members attending interviews** - Unless you are searching for a co-pastor clergy couple, you are not interviewing the spouse of your candidate (even if s/he sits in on the interview). Allow the spouse to participate in activities the PNC has planned; answer her/his questions if s/he asks questions; treat her/him as you would want to be treated if you were meeting folks for the first time and considering moving to your church. (Note: Searching for or being open to "co-pastors" is not the same as considering a pastor whose spouse is also an ordained minister. Co-pastors serve the same congregation and may each be full-time or may share a full-time position. A clergy couple may seek to serve as co-pastors or each serve in different congregations/ministry settings.)

3) CALLING

a) Overview - If your committee is ready to offer a Call to a candidate, be sure to consult with your COM liaison about next steps. When you initially contact the candidate to offer the call, you are offering it contingent upon the professional background check, negotiating mutually acceptable terms of call, and approval by the Commission on Ministry. If the candidate responds positively to becoming the finalist, then you will need to follow steps identified below.

If your committee has decided **NOT** to offer a call to a candidate, communicate that decision in a kind and timely manner.

In the case of an associate pastor or Christian educator, it is essential that the pastor/head of staff be in full agreement with the person to be nominated.

b) Background Check - When you have selected one or possibly two finalists, ask the Stated Clerk of the presbytery to perform a professional background check. This must be done before s/he is examined by the COM.

c) Prepare the Covenant and Terms of Call - The Covenant details the expectations of both the pastor and the church. Terms of Call specify the pastor's compensation and benefits. Templates and instructions for both are available on the PEVA website, as are current minimum "Compensation Guidelines."

Your COM liaison can assist in preparing these documents and is responsible to make sure that all forms are filled out properly, meet the presbytery's minimum compensation guidelines, and are AA/EEO compliant. When you are ready to make an offer, make sure that you first consult with your COM liaison and take into consideration the range approved by Session and the candidate's experience.

The terms will also need to specify the starting date.

Hint: a blank Pastoral Call form is on the PEVA Website. Go to "Grants and Other Forms & Docs, PNC Folder, Pastoral Call Form.

d) Examination by the COM - The COM will examine your candidate and review the Covenant and Terms of Call. The PNC is responsible for paying her/his expenses for the examination.

Your COM liaison can work with the COM Moderator to schedule the examination. The COM will need all of the following prior to the meeting:

- The candidate's PIF
- Statement of Faith
- Faith Journey
- Pastoral Covenant
- Terms of Call.

All candidates, including members of our presbytery, must be examined by the COM.

If desired, a member of the PNC may accompany the candidate to the examination but will not be present during the examination.

The COM is responsible to determine whether the candidate is theologically sound, if there is a good “fit” between the candidate and the church and approve the Terms of Call and Pastoral Covenant.

Your COM liaison will notify the PNC of the results of the examination. If approved, meet with your session to inform them of your nominee and ask the Session to call a congregational meeting.

Hint: a blank Pastoral Covenant is on the PEVA Website. Go to “Grants and Other Forms & Docs, PNC Folder, Pastoral Covenant.

e) Inform the Session - When you are ready to make a nomination, the PNC should check with the pastor candidate about confidentiality concerns and timeline for sharing a name or other identifiers. The session should be told why the PNC is recommending this person. It is also wise to share the Covenant and Terms of Call, without a name if possible. The PNC should also let Session know of its plans for informing the congregation about the candidate in preparation for the congregational meeting.

f) The Congregational Meeting

i) The Session calls a Congregational Meeting in accordance with the Book of Order and rules established by the church. **Appendix F** contains procedures for a congregational meeting to call a pastor.

ii) The Chair of the PNC ensures that the Call Form is appropriately filled out and returned to the Stated Clerk as soon after the congregational meeting as possible.

V. INSTALLING YOUR NEW PASTOR

It is the responsibility of a presbytery to ordain and install pastors. The presbytery appoints a commission to do this on behalf of the whole presbytery.

If you are issuing a Call to a candidate for ordination, please be in touch with the Stated Clerk about procedures. A candidate for ordinations must be examined on the floor of presbytery at a stated PEVA meeting. The Presbytery will appoint a commission to ordain and install the candidate. However, if the candidate for ordination is from another presbytery, the candidate may choose to be ordained in his/her home church, and then installed at your church by a commission appointed by PEVA.

The Stated Clerk of the Presbytery will provide a form with requirements for forming a commission and planning for the service. The PNC will assist the candidate in identifying people for the ordination and/or installation commission. Questions about the form may be directed to the presbytery office. The completed form should be returned to the Stated Clerk and then the COM will review and approve the plans.

The time of the service and the appropriate dress (i.e.: will clergy wear robes/stoles...) for the members of the commission are decisions worked out between the Pastor-elect and the commission moderator. Before the ordination/installation service, the commission should convene and prepare for the service. Following the worship service, the minutes of the commission must be sent to the presbytery office.

VI. THE FIRST SIX MONTHS

Typically, the PNC remains active through the first six months of the new pastor's term to provide support and advise which might include:

- 1) Assist with relocation.
- 2) Encourage members of your congregation to attend the meeting of presbytery when the pastor is to be examined (in the case of ordination) and received.
- 3) Assist with the Installation service.
- 4) Discuss installation expenses (e.g., out-of-town participants, who pays for what, etc.), and petitioning session for funds, if appropriate or necessary.
- 5) Assist in the initial six-month evaluation of the Covenant by the minister and session.

Appendix A
TIPS ON READING PERSONAL INFORMATION FORMS¹

I. Establishing a Basis of Judgment

- Decide on Criteria
- Consider having each PIF read by at least 2 members of the PNC who rank according to criteria

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 the PIF 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 are the candidates view of the church?
- What do you learn about this candidate as a person?

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 in the PIF make you uneasy? If so, what made you uneasy?
- Did anything in the PIF cause you to pause and reflect, "Mmm ... now, that's interesting.... I'd like to hear more about that"? If so, what?

¹ Angus W. McGregor; Greensboro, NC 9/00

APPENDIX B²

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Pursuant to F-1.0403 in the Book of Order, “God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person.” It is important that PNCs and COMs 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 PNCs and COMs when they are making their decisions and yet cautions them to implement the requirements of F-1.0403.

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

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.

² Angus McGregor; Greensboro, NC 9/00

APPENDIX C³
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?

³ Angus W. McGregor; Greensboro, NC 9/00

- 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?
- If you are visiting the minister's church, note your feelings about the entire service, not just the sermon.

12. Conclusion

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

APPENDIX D GUIDE FOR DOING REFERENCE CHECKS

- Call and talk to the reference only.
- Do not leave messages with any information other than, "I am calling to do a reference check."
- No names of candidates to receptionists or on voicemail even if you believe it is confidential.

SCRIPT: My name is _____. I am calling on behalf of the Pastor Nominating Committee for _____ Presbyterian Church. Your name was given to us as a reference by _____, who is a candidate for the position of _____. Do you have a few minutes to talk? [If not, set a convenient time to call back.]

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

- 1) Can you tell me how long you have known _____ and in what capacity?
- 2) What do you believe are his/her greatest gifts?
- 3) How does he/she go about identifying and employing the skills and experience of members of the congregation (not just elders)?
- 4) What have been some of his/her greatest accomplishments?
- 5) What have been some of the challenges that he/she has experienced? How did he/she meet those challenges?
- 6) How does he/she handle situations involving conflict or disagreement? Can you give an example?
- 7) How would you describe his/her preaching style?
- 8) How has he/she helped the congregation's spiritual development?
- 8) How does the congregation feel about and respond to his/her personality and leadership? Has he/she fostered enthusiasm and participation?
- 9) On a scale of 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent), how would you rate this person's:
[note to interviewer: if the rating is low, ask, "May I ask why you say that?"]
 - Approach to pastoral care?
 - Administrative abilities?
 - Teaching skills?
 - Ability to communicate with all age groups.
 - Ability to work with staff members and lay leaders.
- 10) If you could change or improve one thing about _____ or his/her ministry, what would it be?
- 11) Is there anything else you think we should know about him/her?
- 12) If you were a member on our PNC, would you be enthusiastic about calling him/her?

APPENDIX E⁴

TIPS ON INTERVIEWING A CANDIDATE

A. Before the Interview

Think carefully about the questions you'll ask. Standard questions should be asked of all candidates to form a basis for comparison. Each candidate's PIF and references will help the PNC develop individual questions particular to him or her. Questions that encourage the candidate to give examples and tell stories about how he or she has handled situations in the past are better than questions that can be answered with a "yes" or "no".

Agree on which PNC member will moderate the interview. Consider assigning specific questions to different committee members so that no one person dominates the discussion.

B. Conducting the Interview

Open with prayer.

Introduce yourself and share a bit about yourself in relation to your church (i.e.: I've been a member here for... I serve on the blank committee...)

- Allow time in the interview for the candidate to ask questions which may be difficult and penetrating but also 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 about information shared as well as observations.
- Ask follow-up questions.

C. Sample Standard Questions

1. Tell us about your faith journey.
2. Why did you become a minister?
3. What keeps you in the ministry?
4. What are the things you feel best about in your present ministry?
5. What have been the challenges there?
6. What makes you think you may be called to leave there now?

⁴ Fred Jenkins, Director
Office of Constitutional Services
excerpt from PCUSA Polity Reflection #19
July 1998

7. What interests you about this position?
8. What do you bring to our ministry?
9. What are your greatest strengths in ministry? your greatest weaknesses?
10. One of our goals is to strengthen our _____. How would you do that?
11. Describe a conflict situation you have experienced in your ministry, and how you addressed it.
12. Describe a typical week in your ministry.
13. Tell us about your preaching. How do you prepare? What are your sources for topics?
14. Describe a sermon that you believe made a real difference in your congregation. Has there been one that was not well received?
15. What can you tell us about your work habits?
16. How do you foster dedication and enthusiasm in staff members? In church leaders? In members of the congregation?
17. How do you go about identifying, employing and developing the skills and experience of members of the congregation?
18. How do you integrate music into worship?
19. What have you done to move your present church members closer to God?
20. How involved are you in church activities and programs?
21. What is your approach to financial stewardship?
22. Share your perspective on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
23. One of the issues our session has debated in the past few years is _____. Tell us how you might address that topic.
24. If we selected you as our pastor (or another role), when could you start and what would be your start-up plan?
25. How do you balance your personal/family life with your ministry?
26. What would you need from the members of this church to be effective as our pastor?

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

1. What questions or concerns do you have?

D. Closing the Interview

Invite the candidate to offer a closing prayer.

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 the candidate and indicate a specific date by which you will contact him or her.

Ask the minister to let you know if he/she accepts another position or decides they are no longer interested.

E. What about questions that cannot be asked?

A few words about appropriate questions:

Many Presbyterians who serve on PNCs 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”.

Given this legal environment, COMs and PNCs 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.

APPENDIX F
PROCEDURE FOR A CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
TO CALL A PASTOR OR AN ASSOCIATE PASTOR

I. Prior to the meeting

The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) meets with the session:

1. Share the Covenant that it has developed, and which has been approved by the pastor to be called.
2. If session feels there should be a change, it should recommend the change to the PNC. The change must be approved by the PNC and the person to be called.
3. The PNC shares the terms of call (without the name) with the PNC requests the session to call a congregational meeting in accordance with established church rules "to hear and act on its report."

II. The Congregational Meeting

1. The moderator of the congregational meeting shall be the pastor (if any) or the moderator of the session as appointed by presbytery. If neither can serve, with the concurrence of the session, another pastor of the presbytery may preside.
2. 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
3. The vote on the report of the PNC should be by written, secret ballot. Sufficient paper ballots will be on hand to distribute to members of the congregation at the meeting. Have several session members ready to distribute, collect, and count ballots from the congregation.
4. The vote on the covenant and terms of call does not have to be by secret ballot.
5. Typical Agenda
 1. Call to Order – Moderator
 2. Election of secretary (if necessary)
 3. Determination of a Quorum (church rules)
 4. Presentation of Report of Pastor Nominating Committee – Chair
 - a. Background of search process
 - b. Personal information about the nominee
 - c. Covenant
 - d. Terms of Call.
 5. Constitutional Questions – "Are you ready to proceed to the election of a pastor (associate pastor)?"
 6. Distribute paper ballots to congregation members. The vote on the ballot will be in response to the question, "Shall _____ (congregation name) _____, under the will of God, call _____ (name of nominee) _____ to be our pastor (associate pastor) according to the Terms of Call presented?"

7. Collect ballots and count them (The count should be done by one session member and the Chair of the PNC).
8. Announce the results - the Moderator of the Congregational Meeting shall announce the results of the vote taken (a simple majority is one more than half of those present and voting is sufficient to elect.)
9. Approval of the Covenant and Terms of Call.
10. Vote to dissolve or extend the PNC as an advisory group (typically for six months).
11. Approval of Minutes – Secretary
12. Adjournment – Moderator

III. Following the Congregational Meeting

1. Members of the PNC shall sign the Terms of Call.
2. The moderator shall sign the Call certifying that all persons who signed it were authorized to do so and that the call was in all other aspects prepared as constitutionally required.
3. The Chair of the PNC will forward a copy of the signed Terms of Call and a copy of the signed Covenant to the Stated Clerk of the presbytery as soon as possible after the meeting.
4. The moderator shall contact the nominee by telephone and inform her/him of the results of the congregational vote.

APPENDIX G

PNC TIMELINE

	Step	Reference	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	Congregation elects PNC and conducts Mission Study	
<input type="checkbox"/>	2	PNC meets for orientation on the search process with COM Liaison	
<input type="checkbox"/>	3	PNC meets on a regular basis with COM Liaison present, as needed	
<input type="checkbox"/>	4	PNC writes Ministry Information Form (MIF) if necessary	IV.1.d
<input type="checkbox"/>	5	Draft MIF sent to COM Liaison for review	IV.1.g
<input type="checkbox"/>	6	Draft MIF sent to Session for approval	IV.1.g
<input type="checkbox"/>	7	Draft MIF sent to COM for approval	IV.1.g
<input type="checkbox"/>	8	Request PNC Login ID	IV.1.h.i
<input type="checkbox"/>	9	Upload MIF to CLC	IV.1.h.ii
<input type="checkbox"/>	10	Receive a MIF ID#; write it down	IV.1.h.iii
<input type="checkbox"/>	11	PNC begins to receive Personal Information Forms (PIFs)	IV.2.b
<input type="checkbox"/>	12	PNC screens PIFs	IV.2.c
<input type="checkbox"/>	13	PNC submits finalist name(s) to General Presbyter for Presbytery-to-Presbytery check	IV.2.e
<input type="checkbox"/>	14	PNC interviews desirable candidates and conducts reference checks	IV.2.f
<input type="checkbox"/>	15	On-site interviews, neutral pulpit preaching	IV.2.g
<input type="checkbox"/>	16	PNC extends call; negotiates Terms of Call	IV.3.c
<input type="checkbox"/>	17	COM examines finalist, Covenant, and Terms of Call	IV.3.d
<input type="checkbox"/>	18	PNC informs Session	IV.3.e
<input type="checkbox"/>	19	Congregational meeting to present PNC nominee; Terms of Call; vote to approve	IV.3.f
<input type="checkbox"/>	20	Presbytery conducts Ordination and/or Installation Service	V
<input type="checkbox"/>	21	Six-month review with PNC, COM Liaison	VI
<input type="checkbox"/>	22	Session dismisses PNC	