

OVERVIEW OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CALL PROCESS FOR AN INSTALLED PASTOR RELATIONSHIP

Why do Presbyterians take so long to get a new pastor?

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1. TWO TYPES OF PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH CONGREGATIONS
 - a. Installed Pastoral Relationships
 - b. Temporary Pastoral Relationships
2. CALLING A NEW INSTALLED SENIOR PASTOR
 - a. Presbyterian process for installed pastoral positions follows Presbyterian Reformed Theology
 - i. Presbyterians do not appoint pastors to serve congregations – no bishops
 - ii. Ordained PC(USA) pastors are free to seek and leave installed positions at their discretion
 - iii. Presbyterians discern God’s will in groups, not by individuals – Reformed understanding of discernment
 - iv. Pastors are “called and installed” by agreement of the pastor, the presbytery and the congregation -- it is a spiritual task, not an executive search
 - v. God calls people to service in the church (see Jeremiah 1:1-9) and the church needs to discern the one that God is calling
 - b. Four groups are involved
 - i. PC(USA) – CLC
 - ii. Presbytery – COM

- iii. Congregation – Session and PNC with COM liaison support
 - iv. Candidates
 - c. Ordained PC(USA) pastors can serve in any presbytery
 - i. Ordained pastors under Formulas of Agreement (United Church of Christ, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Reformed Church in America, Korean Presbyterian Church in America) can serve as pastor of any Presbyterian congregation
 - ii. Ordained pastors from other Christian denominations (United Methodist Church, The Episcopal Church) may serve under certain additional requirements
- 3. PNC AND SECRECY
 - a. PNC members are elected by the congregation – they are a congregational committee and not a committee of the Session
 - b. Candidates’ confidentiality is paramount – Pastor’s careers and reputation are at stake and damage could be great to them and their families
 - c. PNC can report general status to the congregation but cannot break rules of confidentiality
 - d. PNC becomes more secretive the closer they get to a final candidate
 - e. PNC discerns final candidate through prayer, careful listening and reflection – this takes TIME
 - f. Final candidate must be approved by COM
 - g. New Terms of Call (salary and benefits) are negotiated by PNC under financial guidelines provided by Session
- 4. CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TO CALL A NEW PASTOR
 - a. Congregation votes to call a new pastor

b. Candidate decides whether this is God's call

5. CALLING AN ASSOCIATE PASTOR

a. Book of Order says that an Associate Pastor "is ordinarily not eligible to be the next installed pastor of that congregation"

b. An Associate Pastor may be called to be the next installed pastor if the PNC conducts a full and complete search of other candidates and the COM/Presbytery determines that its mission strategy permits the Associate Pastor to be eligible to serve and such decision is confirmed by a three-fourths affirmative vote of Presbytery

6. DIFFERENT PROCESS FOR TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

a. Contracts versus Terms of Call

b. Session process versus PNC process

c. Must be approved by Presbytery

d. Such relationships include interim, transitional or bridge pastors, pulpit supply or stated supply pastors, parish associates or other uninstalled pastor relationships including Ruling Elders who are commissioned to pastoral service by this Presbytery (called Commissioned Pastors (CPs), Commissioned Lay Pastors (CLPs) and Commissioned Ruling Elders (CREs))