

DESIGNATED PASTOR: BACKGROUND INFORMATION and CHECK LIST

STAGE III: ELECTION AND ORIENTATION OF DPNC AND WRITING MINISTRY INFORMATION FORM (MIF)

DESIGNATED PASTOR RELATIONSHIP

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has available a unique pastoral relationship that enables a congregation and a pastor to enter into a temporary called relationship, but with the opportunity to transition to a more permanent relationship at a later date. Congregations may want to consider this option when their transition experience has already been a lengthy one and/or they do not require the specific skills of an interim pastor. This Designated Pastoral relationship, full or part-time, is a call to a Minister of the Word and Sacrament/Teaching Elder for a term of not less than two and not more than four years. The congregation, minister, and Presbytery Committee on Ministry (COM) must all approve of this decision. The congregation gives its approval in the context of a congregational meeting at which a Designated Pastor Nominating Committee (DPNC) is elected.

When a congregation elects a DPNC rather than a PNC, COM will provide additional assistance in the search process by screening Personal Information Forms (PIF) from candidates and doing executive reference checks before passing along to the DPNC. Typically, this expedites the search process.

At the end of the designated period of the call, the position must be reviewed by the Session in order to determine whether to *renew the call, if it has not yet been 4 years; allow the call to expire; or recommend that the congregation call the Designated Pastor as Pastor*. A time of discernment to include the Designated Pastor, the Session, and the COM liaison should be a part of this process. See GUIDELINES FOR DESIGNATED PASTOR TO INSTALLED PASTOR for further details.

PROCESS CHECK LIST

1. Session submits a Rationale for Calling a Designated Pastor to COM for approval. This can be done prior to, or simultaneous with, a congregation's seeking approval of its Congregational Self-Study. This rationale can also be used in interpretive communication with the congregation.
2. Session sets a budget and a committee size and either nominates or has the Nominating Committee nominate candidates for a Designated Pastor Nominating Committee (DPNC). At an appropriately called meeting, the congregation elects the DPNC. The Stated Clerk sends a *Report on Election of Designated Pastor Nominating Committee* to the COM liaison.
3. If a Congregational Self-Study has not been done, it can be done by the DPNC as a part of completing the Ministry Information Form (MIF).

4. COM liaison convenes the first meeting of the DPNC.
 - a. Reviews search process.
 - b. Reviews denominational and Presbytery EEO/AA Guidelines found in this section and Report Form: Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action.
 - c. Suggests two available resources: The Revised On Calling a Pastor: A Manual for Churches Seeking a Pastor and Searching for a Pastor the Presbyterian Way by Dean E. Foose, which is available from the PC(U.S.A.) web site.
 - d. Provides blank MIF for each member.
 - e. Has DPNC elect officers (typically Chair, Vice-Chair, Recording and Corresponding Secretaries)
 - f. Stresses importance of confidentiality.

5. DPNC, in consultation with the Session, prepares the MIF, using guidance from On Calling a Pastor.

6. The DPNC completes and the Session approves the MIF. It is then submitted for COM approval. Upon COM approval, the MIF is ready for submission to the PCUSA Church Leadership Connection (CLC) database where it will be matched with clergy seeking pastorates who have completed their own Personal Information Forms (PIF).
 - a. COM's CLC liaison acquires the necessary user names and passwords from the CLC Office in Louisville and provides them to the DPNC which then enters the MIF into the system. Before it "goes live," the congregation's Stated Clerk and the COM CLC liaison must digitally approve it.

7. The COM liaison organizes a sub-committee charged with the task of sorting and reviewing PIFs in light of the congregation's needs. This sub-committee usually consists of COM's CLC Liaison, the COM liaison to the searching church, and up to two other COM members. The Presbytery Leader will conduct executive checks on those PIFs selected as appropriate and, if still appropriate, they will be given to the DPNC.
 - a. Self-referred PIFs sent directly to the DPNC must be referred to the Presbytery Leader who performs the necessary clearance check and, if appropriate, refers them to the COM sub-committee for consideration.
 - b. If the DPNC does not find a candidate in the COM-referred PIFs, they may need to consider changing the position to Pastor and conducting a full search without the screening process provided by COM.

8. DPNC receives and reviews Personal Information Forms (PIFs).
 - a. Develops a process for reading and review prior to reading a PIF. Sample Scoring Sheet #1 and Sample Scoring Sheet #2, provide suggestions.
 - b. Develops a system for acknowledging and responding to the PIFs you receive.

9. DPNC chooses persons to interview.
 - a. Any PIF that is eliminated from consideration gets a brief "we are no longer considering your PIF" note.
 - b. An initial phone call is made to determine a candidate's continued availability and willingness to have a Skype-like interview with the DPNC.

- 1) Conducts interview in a confidential setting.
 - 2) Has a plan which will include previously agreed-upon questions. All members of the DPNC should participate.
 - 3) Conducting an Interview provides more details to assist with interview preparation.
10. DPNC conducts Reference Checks on candidates it wishes to further explore.
- a. Reference Questions-Phone offers some suggestions for telephone reference calls. If you plan to ask references for secondary references, make sure the prospective pastor knows you are doing this and who those secondary references are. Permission must be received in writing from the prospective pastor. Another source for information on reference checks is found in the The Revised "On Calling a Pastor".
11. DPNC chooses person(s) to bring in for on-site visit, neutral pulpit, and COM clearance interview. NOTE: *If an individual scheduled to be interviewed has not yet been ordained, the COM liaison requests the COM chair make the necessary contacts with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, of the Presbytery of care, before the interview process takes place.*
- a. Schedules an acceptable weekend with the candidate and informs the COM liaison who will arrange for a neutral pulpit and schedule a COM clearance interview during the visit.
12. The next steps in the process are described in **STAGE V: INTERVIEWS & CANDIDATE CLEARANCE**. *Begin Stage V with Step 3.* Upon completion of Stage V, move on to **STAGE VI: THE CALL**.
- a. Note that the *Pastoral Call Form* (see Stage V) must include the length of the designated term and a commitment on the part of both the congregation and the Designated Pastor to review the call at the end of that period in order to determine its future status.
13. During the entire process of searching for a pastor, the PNC/DPNC should keep the Session and congregation informed of its progress, but keep the names of all applicants confidential.