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Commission on Ministry Presbytery of Baltimore

Churches and Pastors in Transition: Table of Contents Glossary Flowchart

(The General Presbyter or Presbytery staff member or COM Liaison gives one copy to the Clerk of Session at their initial meeting with the Session following the departing pastor's announcement.)

PREFACE

Dear Clerk and Session Members,

During this time of transition, excitement, and anxiety, there are several things that you can do to support your church:

- ***Trust God who is faithful in everything in every time, and take time to discern the movement of God's Spirit.***
- ***Trust the Presbyterian call process that has been effective for 300 years. Familiarize yourself with the Book of Order. It's amazing how much actually works!***
- ***Celebrate our connectional denomination. You are not alone in this time of transition.***
- ***Take even more seriously than usual the need for the Session to be the spiritual leaders of the church.***
- ***Be exceedingly intentional about communicating with the congregation. Full and frequent communication is better than incomplete information or sporadic sharing.***

Enclosed you will find the outline for each of the documents on the phases of the transitional process with accompanying appendices, a glossary of terms, and a flow chart of the process.

- **Phase 1 - Dissolution Of The Pastoral Relationship**
- **Phase 2 - The Session's Leadership During Transition**
- **Phase 3 - The PNC: Getting Organized and the Ministry Discernment Profile**
- **Phase 4 - The PNC Searches For And Calls A New Pastor**
- **Phase 5 - The New Pastor Joins The Congregation**
- **Special Situations: COM Liaison Reference Materials**

The Commission on Ministry and the General Presbyter are eager to support you in this time of transition. We are your partners in ministry. Please do not hesitate to call us.

NOTE: The Session is responsible for the actions in Phases 1 and 2.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **AA/EOE or EEO.** Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer or Equal Employment Opportunity. The church and each governing body has a policy re AA/EOE which must be followed during any search process. (Presbytery Manual 7.9.3.7)
- **Assistant Pastor.** The position of Assistant Pastor is no longer approved (since December 31, 1985) unless the person serving in that capacity was called to it prior to that date and has continued in it since then. Assistants were called by the session, not the congregation.
- **Associate Pastor.** A member of the pastoral staff of a congregation elected by the congregation and called with the approval of presbytery (upon recommendation of COM). This is one of the permanent pastoral offices. (G-2.0504)
- **Book of Order.** The part of the constitution that defines the rules that govern our corporate lives as members and governing bodies of the denomination. The Book of Order contains the Form of Government, the Directory for Worship, and the Rules of Discipline.
- **Call Theologically.** The sense that God has chosen one to engage in ministry as a layperson or clergy. Also referred to as “Avocation.” Also the term applied to the covenant between a congregation and pastor wherein the pastor responds to the “call” of the congregation in response to a larger vocation to ministry. This term also applies to the specifics of the contract or covenant established between the pastor and congregation including compensation, etc. G-2.08.
- **Call Referral Services.** Churchwide Personnel Services staff members who work with presbyteries, congregations, and church leaders in the call process using Church Leadership Connection.
- **Candidate.** (1) The status in the preparation for ministry process following Inquirer. Movement to candidacy requires approval of the session and presbytery of care, preceded by examination on the floor of presbytery with respect to one’s Christian faith, form of service, and motives for seeking the ministry. (2) Also used to refer to the persons being considered during the search to fill a particular position. G-2.0403
- **Candidating.** Term frequently applied to the final step preceding nomination for election to the pastorate in a congregation. Ordinarily refers to the day on which the candidate for the position preaches to the congregation and is presented to the congregational meeting.
- **Career Development Center.** Refers to the centers that provide career-counseling services for church professionals. There are centers across the

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country (Kansas City, Chicago, Columbus Ft. Worth; Charlotte; Princeton, JN; Lancaster, PA; Atlanta, St. Petersburg, Boston, Oakland, CA)

- **Church Leadership Connection.** The Internet-based referral system provided by Churchwide Personnel Services to assist presbyteries, congregations, and church leaders in the call process. Access CLC at www.clc.pcusa.org or through the PCUSA web site.
- **Ministry Discernment Profile.** The “dossier” or resume prepared by a congregation that is seeking a new pastor.
- **Clerk of Session.** The elder elected to serve as secretary and keeper of records and rolls for a session. G-3.0104.
- **Clearance Exam.** The process a presbytery uses to determine whether a minister will be accepted for membership in that presbytery. These are often conducted by the COM but may (also) be conducted on the floor of presbyter. G-2.0503, G-2.08
- **COM.** Commission on Ministry (G-3.0307, Presbytery Manual 7.9)
- **Commission on Ministry (COM).** The Presbytery commission that is to serve as pastor and counselor to the ministers and Certified Christian Educators of the Presbytery, to facilitate the relations between congregations, ministers, and Certified Christian Educators, and the presbytery, and to settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery when possible and expedient. (G-3.0307, Presbytery Manual 7.9)
- **Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM).** The Presbytery commission that works with sessions, Inquirers, Candidates, and seminaries to guide persons preparing for ordained ministry. G-2.06, Presbytery Manual 7.8
- **Constitution of the PCUSA.** Four documents that guide the Presbyterian Church (USA). They are the Form of Government, Directory for Worship, Rules of Discipline, and the Book of Confessions. They are published in two books, one the Book of Order, and the other the Book of Confessions.
- **Co-Pastor.** Pastors who are called and installed with equal responsibility for pastoral ministry in a particular church. G-2.08.
- **[In] Correspondence.** The status of formal relationship with and recognition of another denomination and the PCUSA. We are “in correspondence” with another denomination if we have had historical relations with it outside the U.S., are members of the ecumenical bodies in which the PCUSA holds membership, and if we are in full communion with them by ecumenical agreements approved by the General Assembly. The ordination of minister members of a denomination in

correspondence with the PCUSA may be recognized by the PCUSA. G-5.02.

- **CPM.** Committee on Preparation for Ministry G-2.06, Presbytery Manual 7.8
- **CPM of Call.** The CPM of the presbytery to which a candidate is being called to a first ministry position.
- **CPM of Care.** The CPM of the presbytery under whose care a particular candidate or inquirer is enrolled.
- **Designated Pastor.** A minister approved by the Commission on Ministry to be elected for a term of not less than two nor more than four years by the vote of the congregation. The only designated pastoral relationships are pastor and co-pastor. The PNC will choose a designated pastor from a list of persons approved and commended to them by the presbytery. G-2.0504a
- **Directory of Worship.** The part of the Book of Order, which provides the guidelines for worship within the Reformed tradition and the liturgical and sacramental requirements for appropriate worship.
- **Discernment.** “A way of making Christian choices, of following the Spirit of God in the decisions we make.” In the New Testament, the word for discernment is diakrisis, - “differentiating” or “distinguishing.” In discernment, individuals and groups allow the experiences of a dynamic relationship with the Living God to give share to their decisions, seeking to judge between choices that are obedient to God” will and those that are contrary to God” desires. It is especially suited to decisions regarding the call of God to a particular person or group. Discernment is an ongoing process rather than an isolated event and is grounded in a life of prayer. It makes use of rational processes, intuition, imagination, and emotion, and always includes the testing of a discerned decision.
- **Dissolution.** The process of concluding a relationship. A pastor’s relationship to a congregation is dissolved when he or she leaves the position. A church is dissolved when it is closed. The active relationship of an elder or deacon is dissolved when they resign or cease to be serving on the board. G-2.09, G-2.04
- **Elder.** The ordained office of the church with responsibility for the spiritual oversight and governance of a congregation. G-2.03.
- **Emerita or Emeritus.** An honorary status that may be awarded to someone honorably retired from a particular position by election of the congregation and upon approval of the presbytery. This status may include an honorarium but assumes no pastoral authority or duty.
- **EP** Executive Presbyter.

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- **Executive Presbyter (EP).** The chief administrative staff person for a presbytery.
- **General Presbyter (GP).** The chief administrative staff person for a presbytery whose job may include that of the Stated Clerk.
- **GP.** General Presbyter.
- **Head of Staff.** The pastor of a congregation who is the supervisor of other pastoral staff.
- **Inquirer.** A person enrolled in the Inquiry Phase of preparation for ministry. (See Inquiry below)
- **Inquiry.** The initial phase of preparation the purpose of which is to provide an opportunity for the church and for those who believe themselves called to Ministry of Word and Sacrament to explore that call together to determine together one's suitability for that ministry. G-2.06 and following.
- **Installation.** The act of the governing body that completes the call of a person to service in the church. The congregation installs elders and deacons. The presbytery installs ministers of Word and Sacrament. A call is not complete and the person is not considered "hired" for legal purposes until the installation. G-2.0805
- **Interim.** Applies to the time between the dissolution of the pastoral relationship of one pastor and the installation of the next.
- **Interim Pastor.** A minister invited by the session of a church without an installed pastor to fulfill pastoral duties for a specified period, not to exceed 12 months at a time, while the church is seeking a pastor. There are pastors who have been trained and certified as Interim Pastors but any pastor serving in that capacity is an interim. An interim pastor may not be the next called pastor of the church served as an interim. G-2.0504b
- **Laboring Outside/Inside the Bounds.** Permission that is granted by authority of the presbytery for a Minister of Word and Sacrament to minister (work). In particular, if a pastor wants to perform as pastoral duty outside the bounds of their presbytery of membership and within the bounds of another, permission must be sought from both presbyteries prior to the exercise of that duty. A pastor cannot preach, celebrate the sacraments, etc. within the bounds of another presbytery without permission. G-3.0306, Presbytery Manual 7.9
- **LEA Leadership Effectiveness Analysis.** An optional component of the call process, which provides an assessment of one's leadership behaviors in the ministry setting. Companion instrument to the Strategic Directions Questionnaire (SDQ).

- **Liaison.** One who connects one group or person with another. COM assigns a member as liaison to a PNC. CPM may assign a member as liaison to the session of an inquirer or candidate under care or to a particular inquirer or candidate.
- **Mentor.** One who teaches or serves as a role model and confidant. A COM may assign a mentor to a newly ordained clergy person to help them transition from seminary to the parish.
- **Minister of Word and Sacrament.** One of the official titles of the ordained office for clergy in the PCUSA. The preferred title is Teaching Elder. Initials are occasionally used in informal communication, such as MOWS G-2.0103
- **MDP** Ministry Discernment Profile. Formerly called MIF or Ministry Information Form.
- **Mini-Assessment.** A shorter form of mission study designed to help the church determine the type of leadership it needs. A full Mission Study would be done after the new pastor arrives.
- **Mission Study.** Carried out during the interim period to evaluate a congregation's present and to assess its future mission goals.
- **Neutral Pulpit.** The church a pastor being considered by a PNC preaches in prior to candidating as one of the final steps in the selection process.
- **OGA.** Office of the General Assembly
- **Ordination.** The act by which the church sets apart persons to be presbyters (ministers of Word and Sacrament or elders) or deacons and is accompanied with prayer and the laying on of hands. Ordination to the office of teaching elder or minister of Word and Sacrament is an act of the presbytery on behalf of the whole church. G-2.0403
- **Ords.** See Ordination Exams
- **Ordination Exams.** Standardized examinations required of all candidates in the areas of Bible Content, Biblical Exegesis, Polity, Theology and Worship. G-2.0607
- **Parish Associate.** A minister who serves in some validated ministry other than the local parish, or is a member at large, or is retired, who wishes to define and maintain a relationship with a particular church. (Presbytery Manual 1.5)
- **Pastor.** One of the permanent offices of ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

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The pastor is the moderator of session, the supervisor of the staff, the worship leader, the celebrant of the sacraments, and the theologian-in-residence for a congregation. G-2.0504, G-2.08 See also the Directory for Worship

- **Pastor Nominating Committee.** The term applied to the search committee for a pastor (or associate pastor). G-2.0802
- **Personal Discernment Profile.** The dossier or resume of a pastor or other church professional.
- **PDF.** Personal Discernment Profile. Formerly known as PIF, Personal Information Form
- **PNC.** Pastor Nominating Committee
- **Polity.** Term applied to the government of the church.
- **Pulpit Supply.** The person who preaches for a church without an installed pastor. A list of qualified persons is to be maintained by the presbytery and provided to vacant churches to ensure the quality of proclamation.
- **Session.** The governing body which governs the life of the congregation. G-3.02
- **Solo Pastor.** A minister serving a pastorate without associates.
- **Spiritual Formation.** The activity of the Holy Spirit that molds lives into the likeness of Jesus Christ. This likeness is one of deep intimacy with God and genuine compassion for all of creation. Persons cooperate with this work of the Spirit through certain practices that make them more open and responsive to the Spirit's touch.
- **Stated Clerk.** One of the two required officers of a governing body, the clerk is responsible for maintaining the minutes, records, and rolls of the governing body. The Stated Clerk may also be the clerk of the Permanent Judicial Commission. G-3.0104
- **Stated Supply.** A temporary pastoral relationship of a minister of Word and Sacrament provided to a church, which is not seeking an installed pastor and appointed by the presbytery. The relationship is established by the presbytery and shall extend for a period not to exceed 12 months at a time. The Presbytery of Baltimore calls this temporary pastoral relationship "Temporary Supply".
- **Student Pastor.** A candidate who is serving in a temporary supply position, as an intern, or during field education.
- **Terms of Call.** The specifics of the pastoral relationship extended by the

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congregation and approved by the presbytery, which includes the nature of the ministry to be carried out and the terms of compensation. A presbytery must approve any changes in the terms of call and may determine minimum levels of compensation. G-2.0804

- **Transfer.** The process of transferring the membership of a minister of the Word and Sacrament or the care of a candidate or inquirer from one presbytery to another. G-2.0608
- **Validated Ministry.** Each presbytery is required to have written criteria to determine which ministries outside of parish ministry will be considered “valid” for its minister of Word and Sacrament members. Those whose ministry meets those requirements will be qualified to be “continuing members” of the presbytery, G-2.0503a, G-3.0306
- **Waiver.** When a presbytery, on recommendation of the CPM, decides not to require a candidate to complete one or more of the ordinary requirements for ordination. G-2.0610

Bibliography

BASIC REFERENCES FOR SESSION AND PNC

These references may be ordered via the PCUSA website or downloaded from that website. <http://www.pcusa.org>.

- **On Calling A Pastor** (<https://oga.pcusa.org/section/clc/clc/revised-calling-pastor/>)
A manual to help participants in the pastoral call process understand their responsibilities and tasks from the time a pastor has announced his or her departure until a new pastor is called and installed. This manual can assist session members, interim pastors, pastor nominating committee members, and presbytery Commission on Ministry members.
- **Book Of Order** This can be downloaded (https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/boo_2023-2023_publishedversion_cover_and_boo_complete.pdf or <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/book-of-order-2023-2025-text-only/>), or ordered <https://www.pcusastore.com/Products/9798988550105/book-of-order-20232025.aspx> from these web links. Or search the PCUSA website, if these links don't work.
- **Searching For A Pastor The Presbyterian Way: A Roadmap For Pastor Nominating Committees** by Dean E. Foose (Paperback - Nov 2000), \$13.49 from Amazon.com or Cokesbury.
- **Mission Yearbook Of Prayer**
<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionyearbook/> Listen to the podcast or subscribe to the email version.
- **Presbyterian Planning Calendar**
<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/planning-calendar/>
For 2024, this 19-month calendar that begins with June 2024 contains many aids for pastors and other church leaders. The 2024 calendar costs \$16.95 each; \$14.50 each for 10 to 49; plus shipping for all orders.

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Baltimore Presbytery Search Process for Pastors and Associate Pastors

