

# Pittsburgh Commission on Ministry Handbook

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Pittsburgh Presbytery  
901 Allegheny Ave.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15233  
412-323-1400  
[www.pghpresbytery.org](http://www.pghpresbytery.org)

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## COM Forms

For forms that are in PDF format you will need [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#), which can be downloaded for free. They are listed alphabetically. Contact [Cathy Nelson](#) with questions or for assistance.

- [Associate Pastor Nominating Committee Guidelines](#)
- [At-Large Ministers Report](#)
- [Background Checks](#)
- [Church Assessment Tool](#)
- [Clearance Interview Guidelines](#)
- [Commission on Ministry Organization & Authority](#)
- **Commissioned Pastor (CP) Documents** (formerly known as Commissioned Ruling Elder/CRE):
  - [Commissioned Pastor Process](#)
  - [CP Annual Report](#)
  - [CP Contract Worksheet](#)
  - [CP Commissioning Liturgy](#)
- [Congregational Meeting to Call a Pastor](#)
- [Congregational Meeting to Dissolve a Pastoral Relationship](#)
- [Continuing Education Guidelines](#)
- [Covenant Pastor Agreement Form](#)
- [Equal Employment Opportunity \(EEO\) Intent to Comply](#)
- [Equal Employment Opportunity \(EEO\) Final Report 2020](#)
- [Ethical Guidelines for Teaching Elders](#)
- [Exit Interview](#)
- [Former Pastor Policy](#)
- **Ordination & Installation Service Resources**
  - [Ordination & Installation Service Policies & Guidelines](#)
  - [Planning the Commission for your Ordination Form](#) (required)
  - [Service of ORDINATION/INSTALLATION for Pastors & Associate Pastors Called to Installed Positions](#)
  - [Service of ORDINATION for Candidates Called to Temporary Pastoral Positions or Other Validated Ministries](#)
  - [Service of ORDINATION & INSTALLATION for Candidates Called to Installed Pastoral Positions](#)
  - [Book of Occasional Services](#)
- [Interim Pastor Contract](#)
- [Litany for the Closure of a Ministry](#)

- [https://www.pghpresbytery.org/ministry\\_teams/committees\\_commissions/com/com-forms/Medical Leave Guidelines](https://www.pghpresbytery.org/ministry_teams/committees_commissions/com/com-forms/Medical Leave Guidelines)
- [Mileage Reimbursement Rate 2021 = 56 cents/mile](#)
- [Minimum Terms of Call 2021](#)
- [Ministry Information Form \(MIF\)](#)
- [MissionInsite Demographic Tool](#)
- [Moderator Compensation Policy](#)
- [Non-Installed Ministry Posting Form](#)
- [On Calling A Pastor](#)
- [Parental & Family Leave Policy](#)
- [Parish Associate Policy](#)
- [Part-Time Position Guidelines](#)
- [Pastoral Call Checklist 2021](#)
- [Pastoral Call Form 2021](#)
- [Pastoral Call Form Guidelines](#)
- [Personal Information Form \(PIF\)](#)
- [PNC Registration Form](#)
- [Pulpit Supply Application](#)
- [Pulpit Supply List of Available Pastors](#)
- [Sabbatical & Continuing Education Resources](#)
- [Sabbatical Leave Guidelines for Pastors](#)
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    - [“W” Flow Chart Installed](#)
  - [Pastors & Associate Pastors \(Temporary\)](#)
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  - [Pastors & Associate Pastors \(Newly Created Installed Positions\)](#)
    - [“W” Flow Chart New](#)
  - [Pastors \(Designated Term\)](#)
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- [Specialized Ministry Guidelines](#)
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  - [Temporary Pastor Contract](#)
  - [Temporary Pastor Renewal Form C](#)
  - [Temporary Pastor Annual Review Form A for Pastors](#)
  - [Temporary Pastor Annual Review Form B for Clerks](#)
  - [Temporary Pastor Service of Commissioning](#)
- [Terms of Call Report](#)
- [Understanding Effective Salary](#)
- [Validated Ministry Annual Report](#)
- [Validation of a Specialized Ministry](#)

# 1. Introduction

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## ***Strategies and Values for carrying out our Mission***

Pittsburgh Presbytery

### **Core Values and Mission Strategy for Pittsburgh Presbytery**

*Pittsburgh Presbytery is a **covenant community** formed by the triune God, called to **share together** in the ongoing life and ministry of Jesus Christ, proclaiming and demonstrating the Gospel **publicly in word and deed** in the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*-Mission statement adopted by Pittsburgh Presbytery 2012*

### ***Our Mission and Values***

Our core value: The mission of Jesus Christ is too important for individual persons or congregations to do it in isolation. For it to be truly the work of Jesus, we need to do it *together*. Working in teams was the only mode of ministry in the New Testament – leaders working together, congregations working together.

Our course correction: Prior to adoption of this mission focus, our congregations and pastors worked often independently of each other, even when they did work in connection with our central administration. We now invest our staff and other resources fully into motivating and equipping our congregations and their leaders to work *together* for the sake of the Gospel.

The boldface words (emphases added) indicate the core of our mission statement – congregations in **covenant** working **together** in doing the ministry of Jesus **publicly**. This mandate has become increasingly urgent as a way of demonstrating the truth of the Gospel's reconciling power across social, economic, racial-ethnic, generational, political, and theological divides – especially in the face of the deepening divisions and hostility rampant in the surrounding society.

All members of presbytery – pastors, elders, congregations, commissions and committees, ministry teams, and central office staff – work intentionally to strengthen our witness and work *together* in proclaiming and demonstrating the Good News of the Gospel, namely, that in Jesus Christ we are reconciled to God and to one another. In a world rife with hostility and division, nothing is more needed than this Good News!

## ***Our Mission Strategy***

Pittsburgh Presbytery's staff and core committees/commissions seek to lead the presbytery in fulfilling its mission of congregations and their leaders working together in proclaiming the Gospel. They do this by following a G – A – M – E plan:

- *Gathering church leaders regularly to be strengthened for participation in Christ's mission, personal devotion to Christ's call, and richer fellowship in Christ*
- *Assisting congregations through transitions and challenges in their ministry*
- *Mobilizing and motivating presbytery to fulfill Christ's great commission*
- *Encouraging and equipping for ministry those whom Christ calls into leadership*

Through these means, Pittsburgh Presbytery's staff and elected committees seek to fulfill a biblical blueprint for church leadership: "...to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." (Ephesians 4:12)



## **COMMISSION ON MINISTRY**

(this page is copied from the [Pittsburgh Presbytery Manual](#))

### **Membership**

The Commission on Ministry shall have thirty (32) members, of whom sixteen (16) shall be ministers and sixteen (16) shall be elders. The quorum of the Commission on Ministry shall be a majority of its membership.

### **Powers and Accountability**

The Commission on Ministry shall be directly accountable to, and shall report directly to, Presbytery. The Commission on Ministry shall hold stated meetings and may, with due notice, hold special meetings as called by the Chair or by two (2) members of the Commission.

### **Duties**

The commission shall serve the Presbytery in the following ways. It shall

- visit regularly and consult with each minister of the Presbytery. It shall report to the Presbytery annually the type of work in which each minister of the Presbytery is engaged.
- make recommendations to Presbytery regarding calls for the services of its ministers
- visit with each session of the Presbytery, discussing with them the mission and ministry of the particular church and encouraging the full participation of each session and congregation in the life and work of Presbytery and of the larger church
- counsel with churches regarding calls for permanent pastoral relations.
- counsel with sessions regarding temporary pastoral services when a church is without a pastor, and it shall provide lists of ministers and elders who have been trained by the Presbytery to supply vacant pulpits
- provide for the implementation of equal opportunity employment for ministers and candidates without regard to race, ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, or disability.
- serve as an instrument of Presbytery for promoting the peace and harmony of the churches, especially in regard to matters arising out of the relations between pastors and churches. Its purpose shall be to mediate differences and reconcile persons, to the end that the difficulties may be corrected by the session of the church if possible, that the welfare of the particular church may be strengthened, that the unity of the body of Christ may be made manifest.

### **Authority to Act**

The Commission on Ministry is hereby granted authority to find in order calls issued by churches, to approve and present calls for services of ministers, to approve the examination of ministers transferring from other presbyteries, to dissolve the pastoral relationship in cases where the congregation and the pastor concur, to grant permission to labor within or outside the bounds of Presbytery, and to dismiss ministers to other presbyteries during those times when Presbytery is not in session and there are more than forty-five (45) days intervening between stated meetings of Presbytery, provided that the Commission on Ministry shall make a full report of its actions to Presbytery at its next stated meeting

## **Organization of the Commission on Ministry**

The Commission on Ministry (COM) serves Pittsburgh Presbytery by visiting regularly and consulting with each minister of the Presbytery, ensuring they are successful in their calls, and reporting to the presbytery annually the type of work in which each minister is engaged. It counsels with churches and their sessions to discuss their mission and ministry in their community, the presbytery, and to the larger church, and helps guide them in the process of finding new pastors to lead them if there is ever an opening. The commission also serves as an instrument of the presbytery for promoting the peace and harmony of the churches, especially in regard to matters arising out of the relations between pastors and churches.

### **Congregational Vitality**

The Congregational Vitality and Support Team is a group of passionate servant leaders who are called to serve congregations of the presbytery with energy, imagination, intelligence, and love. Recognizing the changing nature of religious affiliation and participation in our communities, and trusting in the unchanging faithfulness of God who creates and sustains the Body of Christ through the powerful leading of the Holy Spirit, the Congregational Vitality and Support Team is responsible for providing innovative and appropriate tools, training, and other resources for congregational advocates, in partnership with the Branch Ministers, to assist congregations in responding nimbly to God's call to vital mission and ministry.

### **Pastoral Vitality Team**

The Pastoral Vitality and Support Team seeks to be a friend in ministry for teaching elders in the presbytery by praying for them, seeking relationship with them, and tending to their financial, physical, intellectual, and spiritual well-being. This team ensures teaching elders receive just compensation for their service to God's people, by setting minimum salaries and reviewing terms of call on an annual basis. The team serves as a liaison with the Board of Pensions, who provides programs to sustain the physical and mental well-being of teaching elders. Additionally, the team serves as a resource for a wide range of continuing education options, pastor groups, retreats, and other opportunities for teaching elders to continually renew mind, soul and spirit. This team, working in partnership with congregational advocates and Branch Ministers, seeks to continually find ways to be a friend to pastors, especially new pastors, those who labor in solo pastorates, or pastors in remote areas of the presbytery, to encourage them in their ministry.

### **Transitional Liaison Team**

The Transitional Liaison Team is a group of trained ruling and teaching elders who walk with PNCs and APNCs of churches seeking an *installed* pastor, beginning with the resignation of the current pastor, consultation on hiring of interim/transitional pastor, and throughout the call process until the new pastor is installed. Team members are appointed by the COM Moderator(s) in consultation with the ministry staff of the Presbytery. The Congregational Vitality and Support Team provides similar support and encouragement to churches experiencing temporary pastoral transitions.

### **Conflict Management Team**

This team is trained and available to facilitate congregations and their pastors through times of significant conflict. The team works to promote congregational health and vitality, not by

avoiding conflict, but rather by learning and modeling positive behaviors in times of conflict.

### **Specialized Ministries Support Team**

The Specialized Ministry Support Team works to validate and support the ministries of teaching elders who are working in a wide range of areas within the Presbytery, other than as pastors of congregations. This work is conducted through personal interviews, discussion and prayer. In addition, this team also seeks creative ways to review the work of at-large members within the Presbytery. Because it makes decisions on behalf of COM, only current COM members may be on this team.

## **Expectations of COM Members**

1. Understand and support the mission and strategies of Pittsburgh Presbytery.
2. Attend all COM meetings. There are six meetings each year. The meetings are scheduled from 4:00-7:00 PM. Although meetings sometimes conclude early, it is important for commission members to stay for the whole meeting. If a member is unable to attend, he/she must contact the presbytery office to request to be excused. After three consecutive unexcused absences, a member is subject to dismissal from COM.
3. Participate in the work of at least one subcommittee. The subcommittees are: Congregational Vitality, Pastoral Vitality, Specialized Ministries, Transitional Liaison, and Conflict Management.
4. Serve as congregational advocate for four or five congregations within their Branch.
5. Attend Liaison Training.
6. Learn and practice behavior-based interviewing (instruction included in Liaison Training).
7. Participate in COM clearances. Each COM member should plan to attend one clearance per month

## 2. COM and Congregations

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# Congregational Advocate

## COM Congregational Advocate Job Description

In response to the *Book of Order's* mandate that each presbytery "coordinate, guide, encourage, support, and resource the work of its congregations for the most effective witness to the broader community," (*Book of Order* G-3.0303), Pittsburgh Presbytery's Commission on Ministry assigns its members to serve each congregation as a "Congregational Advocate" – an ongoing liaison between four to six congregations and COM.

Before contacting church representatives, advocates should familiarize themselves with the PCUSA's Five Year Trends for the congregation, which provide vital information on membership, attendance, church school education, finances, and other matters: <http://www.pcusa.org/search/congregations/> Also, the denominational minister directory tells how long the pastor has been there, as well as the pastor's prior service: <https://ogaapps.pcusa.org/directories/#/minister>. Each church's website, contact information, and worship times are on our presbytery website: <https://www.pghpresbytery.org/branches/congregations/> Another national site lists church staff and the full statistical report for the prior year for each congregation: <https://ogaapps.pcusa.org/directories/#/church>

Advocates should ask to be on the mailing lists, email lists, social media sites, and websites of their churches. The General Minister informs each pastor and clerk of session which member of COM has agreed to serve as their Advocate, and provides them the COM member's contact information. The Session of each church is asked to elect one active ruling elder as the primary contact person for COM.

Within the first year, each Advocate should ask the church contact person to respond to certain questions, including:

1. What led you to join this congregation, and what keeps you here?
2. What excites you most about your church right now?
3. What concerns you most about your church right now?
4. How is your church providing ministry to your community?
5. How does your church nurture your spiritual life and the spiritual life of the congregation?

Within the first 18 months, the Advocate should attempt to meet with the pastor in person.

Basic questions could include:

1. What do you think are the biggest opportunities and challenges facing your congregation?
2. In what ways is the Session supporting your ministry?
3. How is your congregation providing ministry to your community?
4. What major changes or initiatives would you like to see your congregation undertake?
5. How can COM best help your congregation?

Over the first three years, the Advocate should try to schedule at least one meeting with the Session of each church. A basic question, such as "What inspires you most about your church?" can lead to a rich and rewarding discussion.

It is helpful for advocates to attend worship at their churches occasionally, but given conflicting demands for pastors and many elders, this is just a suggestion.

Congregational Advocates support their congregation in prayer. They make themselves available to meet on request with the pastor, session, or congregation members. They notify the branch minister as soon as they learn of an impending pastoral vacancy or other significant change in the life of the congregation.

## Transitional Liaison

### COM Transitional Liaisons to Congregations – Job Description

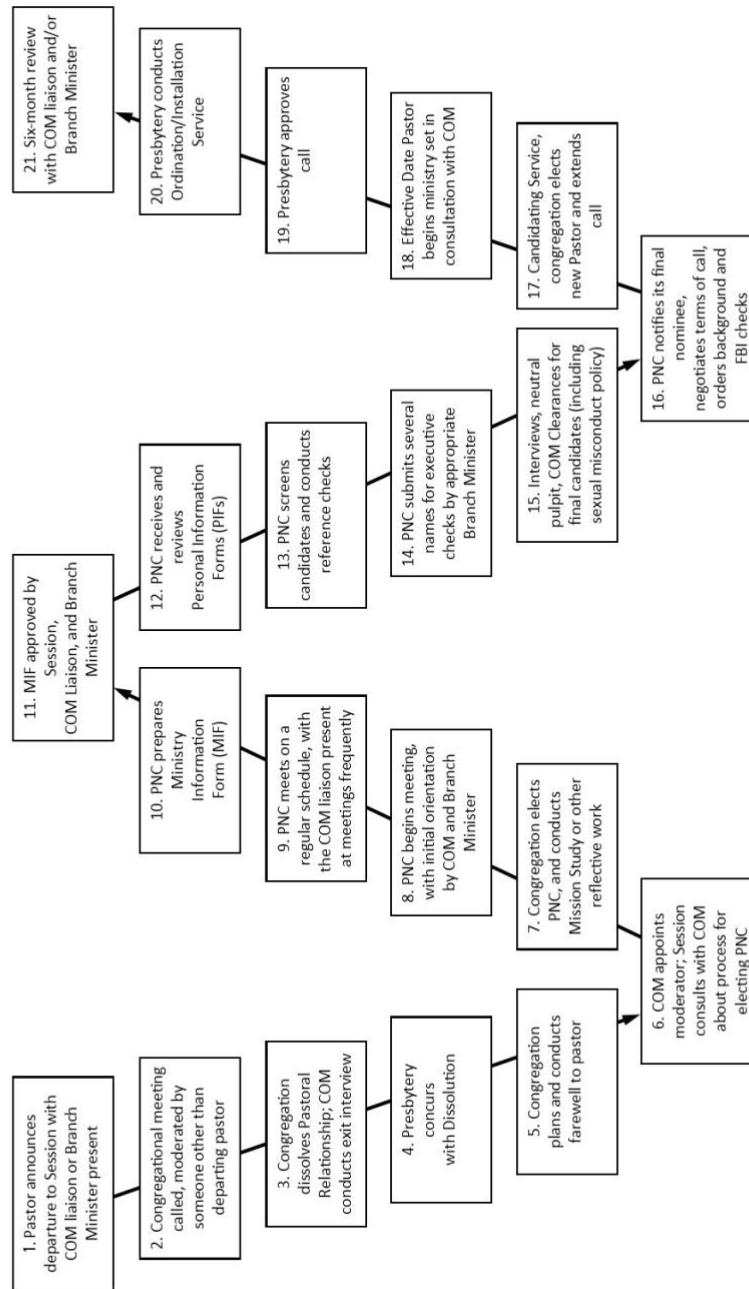
The COM assigns Transitional Liaisons to each congregation going through a search for a pastor. The Branch Minister and Congregational Advocate consult to select a Transitional Liaison as soon as they become aware of a pastoral vacancy arising in a congregation. Former COM members with gifts for this work, as well as current COM members, may be recruited to serve in this capacity. The Transitional Liaison:

- moderates congregational meeting to dissolve the pastoral relationship, or arranges for another teaching elder or COM member to do so, in consultation with Branch Minister
  - assures, in consultation with the Branch Minister, that a Session Moderator is nominated to be in place as soon as the pastor leaves
    - communicates the dissolution and selection of Moderator to COM for approval
  - together with Branch Minister, counsels with Session about whether to seek an installed, temporary, or interim pastor, and educates them on the process involved in each case
  - conducts exit interviews with departing pastor, together with Branch Minister, assuring that both the departing pastor and the Session understand the presbytery's policy on former ministers' interactions with the congregation
  - discusses with the Session the scope and conduct of any mission study, and together with Branch Minister consults with Session periodically on the progress of that study
  - advises the Session on how to form the appropriate PNC
  - assures that the PNC elects a chair and secretary, and relays those persons, with contact information, to Cathy Nelson at the presbytery office
  - sees to it that a job description or MIF is properly prepared, approved by Branch Minister, adopted by Session, and submitted to Cathy Nelson at the presbytery office, so she may assist the PNC with submitting the MIF to the Church Leadership Connection for circulation through denominational and presbytery networks
  - meets regularly with the PNC, and advises it on various critical issues:
    - undergirding its work with prayer and study
    - compliance with presbytery's EEO requirements
    - how to read PIFs and identify a short list of candidates
    - protocols for telephone and in-person interviews, including the pastoral competency model
    - assuring confidentiality with applicants
    - referring short-list candidates to presbytery staff for EP checks
    - arranging COM clearances for finalists with Cathy Nelson, and participating in such clearances
    - arranging for neutral pulpits where PNCs may hear candidates preach
    - assuring that the PNC communicate its selection to their chosen candidate only *after* the preceding steps have taken place
    - making sure, together with Branch Minister, that terms of call are in good order
    - counseling with candidate and congregation on selecting a commission and planning a service for ordination or installation
  - conducts six-month review with new pastors, together with Branch Minister
- forms and guidelines related to each step of this process are available at [https://www.pghpresbytery.org/ministry\\_teams/committees\\_commissions/com/com-forms/](https://www.pghpresbytery.org/ministry_teams/committees_commissions/com/com-forms/)

### 3. Pastoral Search Process

## Pittsburgh Presbytery

### Search Process for Pastors & Associate Pastors in Installed Positions

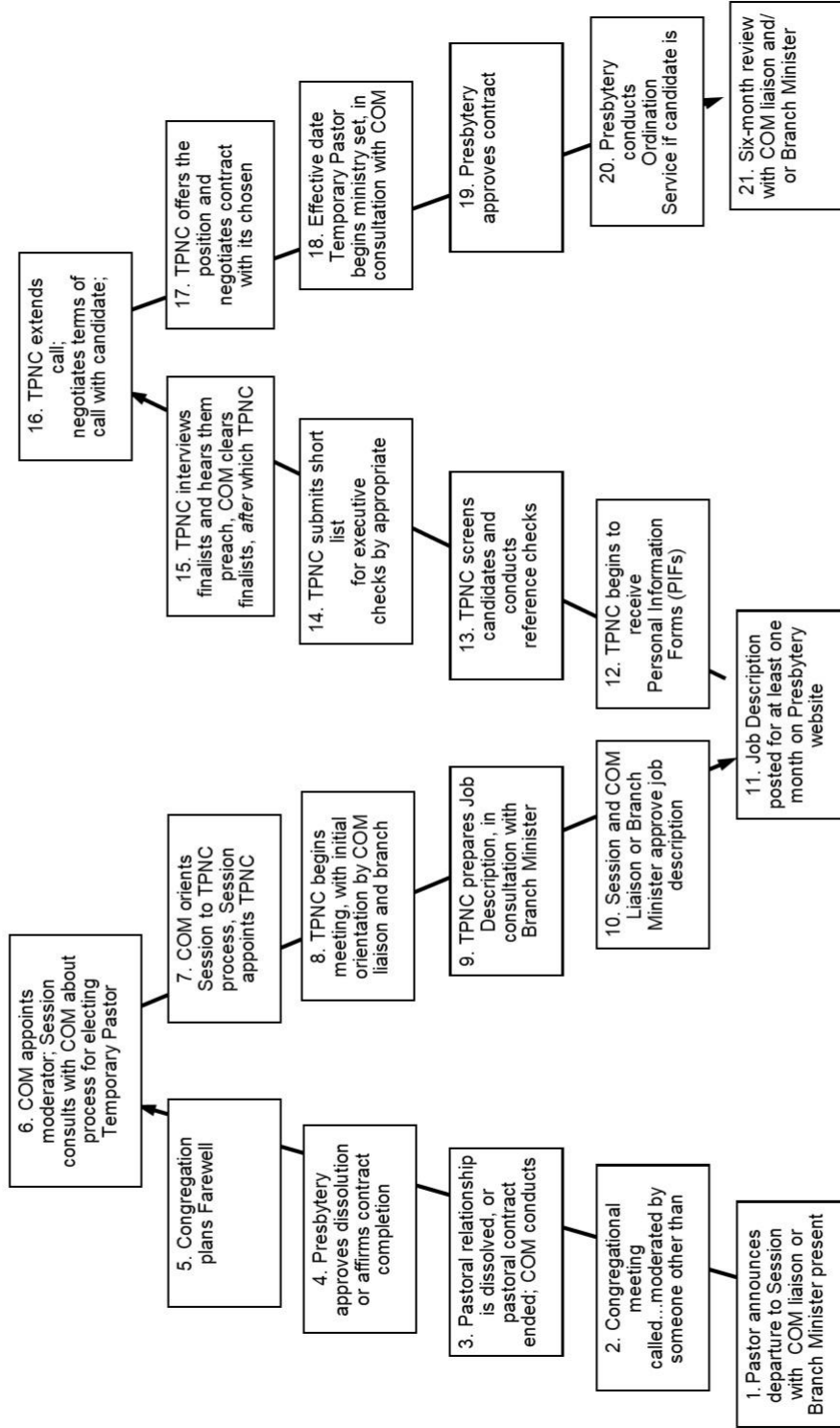


- Check each box as tasks are completed.
- This diagram might be used on a bulletin board to keep your congregation informed on the Search Process.
- Some steps may not be applicable in certain situations. Please consult your COM liaison.



## Pittsburgh Presbytery

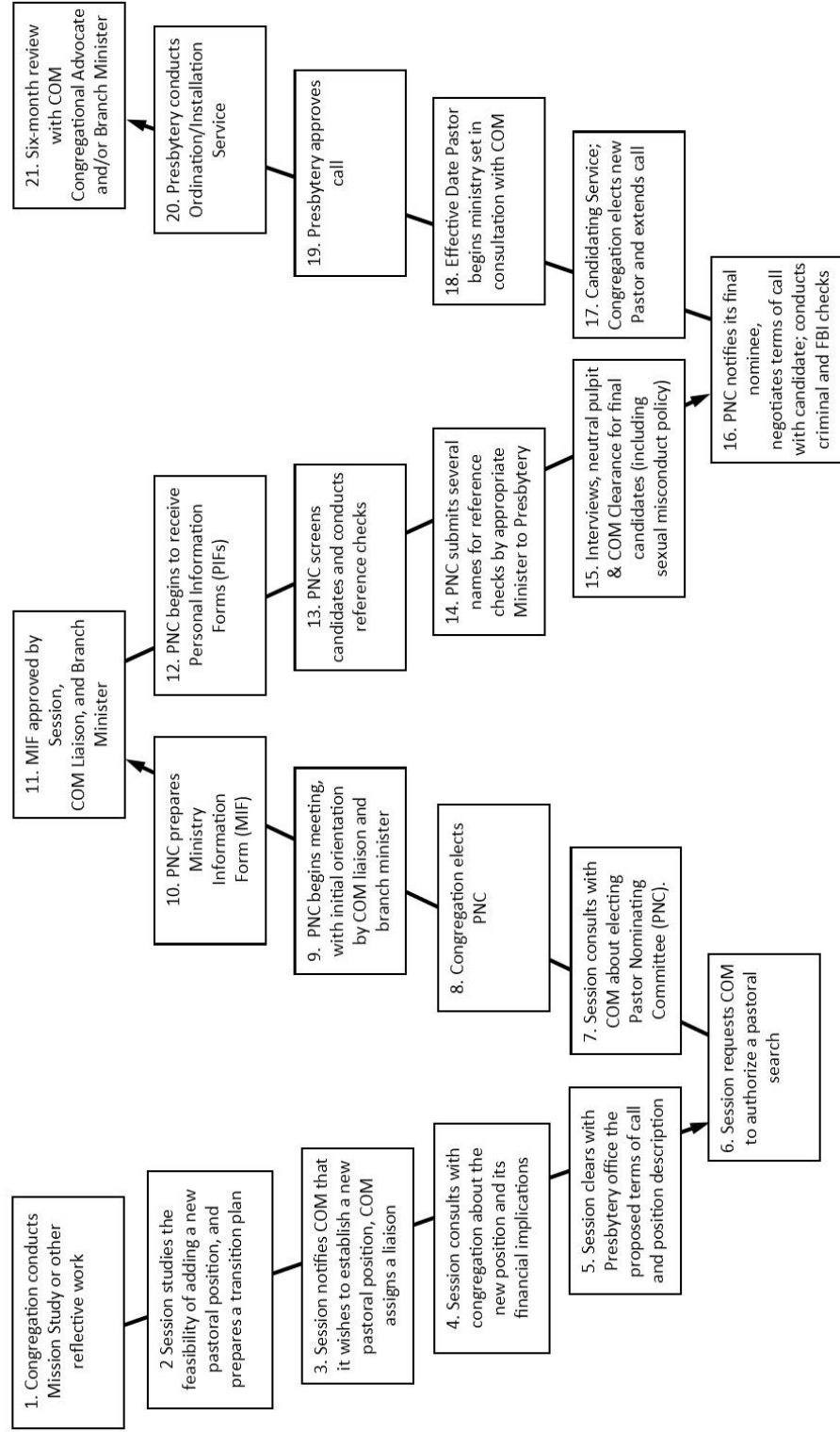
### Search Process for Pastors & Associate Pastors in Temporary Positions



- Check each box as tasks are completed.
- This diagram might be used on a bulletin board to keep your congregation informed on the Search Process.
- Some steps may not be applicable in certain situations. Please consult your COM liaison.

## Pittsburgh Presbytery

### Search Process for Pastors & Associate Pastors in Newly Created Positions



- Check each box as tasks are completed.
- This diagram might be used on a bulletin board to keep your congregation informed on the Search Process.
- Some steps may not be applicable in certain situations. Please consult your COM liaison.

## **Search Process for Pastor -- Designated Term**

A pastor may be called to a position for a designated term, usually 2 to 4 years. The church and the pastor must both have agreed to be considered for a designated relationship. The pastoral nominating committee shall nominate to the congregation for its consideration and vote, only from among those teaching elders designated to it by the presbytery's COM. The pastor is installed by the presbytery and is Moderator of the session.

- COM appoints Moderator of session after former pastor leaves
- Session confers with COM on the process for selecting the next pastor, considering whether the next pastor should be installed with indefinite term, installed with designated term, or called to temporary service.
- If COM and session agree to calling a pastor to a designated term, a PNC is elected for that purpose
- COM presents 3-5 candidates to PNC (Executive checks completed)
- PNC interviews candidates using targeted selection interview process and hears sermons
- PNC requests clearance interview for finalists, (background checks completed)
- PNC extends call; negotiates terms of call with candidate, and sets effective date for beginning ministry
- Candidating service; congregation elects pastor for a designated term
- Presbytery approves call
- Presbytery conducts ordination/installation service
- After end of designated term, congregation may elect pastor for an unlimited term. The session may act as the PNC for the sole purpose of nominating the pastor to serve an unlimited term.

## Associate Pastor Nominating Committee Guidelines

Associate Pastors serve the congregation by way of direct accountability to the session, and their call is independent from that of the Pastor. According to the *Book of Order*, “The relationship of an associate pastor to a congregation is not dependent upon that of a pastor.” (G-2.0504a) Thus, an Associate Pastor’s call process is conducted by an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) elected by the congregation for that purpose. The role of the Pastor (Head of Staff) in that call process is limited to appropriate counsel to the APNC, as specified below.

The position of Associate Pastor is different from the former role of an Assistant Pastor (which the PCUSA removed as a pastoral category in the 1980s). An Assistant Pastor served the Head of Staff directly as a ministry assistant. The Associate Pastor may be supervised by the Pastor, but is accountable to the whole congregation in the same way as the Pastor. While the Pastor does not direct the work of the APNC, it is important for the APNC to consult with the Pastor as it seeks to discern whom it will nominate to the congregation as Associate Pastor. To maintain that balance appropriately, COM advises the APNC as follows.

When an Associate Pastor search is being conducted, the APNC shall conduct its process in a way that assures that:

- the nominee has the endorsement of the Pastor;
- the APNC maintains full ownership of the search process, without undue influence from the Pastor; and
- Confidentiality of applicants is fully protected.

Toward this end, COM advises that the Pastor:

- participate in the initial APNC meeting with COM representative and/or presbytery branch minister;
- have access to all PIFs throughout the APNC process;
- be given opportunity to speak to the APNC about particular candidates in an advisory capacity at any stage of the process;
- be given opportunity to suggest removal from consideration any potential finalist candidate before candidates are told they have been selected as finalists;
- separately interview finalists one-on-one and advise the APNC as to any particular concerns; and
- endorse the nomination before the nominee is presented to COM and to the congregation.

The COM further advises that the Pastor should not:

- participate in most APNC meetings, but should be available as invited;
- be present when the APNC interviews candidates;
- serve as chair or as a voting member at any meeting of the APNC; and
- circulate or discuss any PIFs of candidates beyond the APNC.

## Policy Regarding Former Pastors

The Commission on Ministry has found that healthy relationships between new pastors (Installed and Temporary) and their congregations develop best when former pastors are attentive to maintaining appropriate boundaries with the congregation. The *Book of Order* states, "After the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, former pastors and associate pastors shall not provide their pastoral services to members of their former congregations without the invitation of the moderator of session" (G-2.0905). When former pastors receive requests for pastoral services by former parishioners, they should refer all such requests to the current pastor.

Former pastors should offer neither solicited nor unsolicited pastoral counsel to their former congregants. If they become concerned about developments in their former congregation, they should communicate such concerns only to the presbytery ministerial staff, and not to the church's session or members.

Healthy relationships between congregations and former pastors may include the following forms of contact:

- Pastoral
  - Occasional consultation to maintain institutional memory and goodwill
  - Collegiality between former and successor pastors
- Congregational. **At the invitation of the new pastor.**
  - Occasional attendance at services and special events, such as dedications and anniversaries
  - Sharing bereavement, by attending funeral services
  - Occasional assistance in ministry
- Social
  - Maintenance of personal friendship with a few members, provided there is a
  - clear understanding that the relationship is social and not pastoral

By signing here, the departing pastor and the clerk of session (or other appropriate congregational representative) pledge that they will abide by this policy in their future relationships.

Departing Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Clerk of Session \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

COM representative \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Strategy for communicating this Policy:

1. At the COM exit interview, the COM liaison and/or presbytery staff minister shall discuss this policy with the departing pastor.
2. At the session meeting when the pastor announces his/her departure, the COM liaison or presbytery staff minister will provide copies of this policy to the session and explain its importance. The pastor and session will be asked to affirm their willingness to abide by it.
3. **In the pastoral letter to the congregation announcing the pastor's departure, the pastor shall affirm his/her commitment to abide by this policy. The COM has prepared a sample letter for this purpose, which is available on request.**

## Criminal Background Checks

In order to comply with recommended safe church practices, the Commission on Ministry approved the following policy at its meeting on May 26, 2009:

*Pittsburgh Presbytery requires a Criminal Record Check and a Child Abuse History Clearance issued by each state in which the individual has resided during the previous 10 years from every teaching elder (or commissioned ruling elder) beginning a new position in Pittsburgh Presbytery.*

This policy will be carried out through the following practices:

1. A teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder will produce a **Criminal Records Check** and a **Child Abuse History Clearance** from his/her current state of residence and from each state where he/she has resided in the ten-year period preceding a call or appointment in Pittsburgh Presbytery. The clearances will have been completed within one calendar year prior to the beginning of the call or appointment.
2. The COM can order the required background checks upon receipt of a signed *Permission to Obtain Background Check*. The church that requests the background check will be billed for the cost of the service (usually \$9). If the teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder is being cleared for a position outside of a congregation, the bill will be sent to the teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder. In some situations, such as when the teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder has resided in more than one state or if a more extensive search is required, the cost may be higher. In such cases the entity responsible for payment will be notified of the cost before the search is ordered.
3. If either the Criminal Records Check or the Child Abuse History Clearance cannot be produced or yields questionable information, a waiver can be provided only by the appropriate pastor to presbytery and the COM chair. This waiver and the reasons for the waiver being granted will be placed in the teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder's permanent file.
4. Copies of each of the required background checks will be provided to COM before a call or appointment will be recommended to presbytery. The copies will be held in the teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder's file at the presbytery office.

See website: <http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov/resources/clearances/index.htm>

## Child Protection Clearance Information & Forms

### INFORMATION

[https://www.pghpresbytery.org/about\\_us/stated\\_clerk/forms-resources/](https://www.pghpresbytery.org/about_us/stated_clerk/forms-resources/)

### FORMS

#### CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD

<http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov/resources/clearances/pspcrimck/index.htm>

#### CHILD ABUSE HISTORY CLEARANCE

<http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov/resources/clearances/pachildhistory/index.htm>

#### FEDERAL CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD

<http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov/resources/clearances/fbifinger/index.htm>

## Guidelines for Commission on Ministry Clearance Interview

A clearance interview is generally conducted near the end of a PNC's search process. It is often scheduled to coincide with a candidate's visit to Pittsburgh Presbytery for an on-site interview or to preach in a neutral pulpit. If possible, it is best for the COM to conduct a clearance interview with any of the "finalists" being considered by the PNC. The COM liaison should serve as a member of the clearance interview team, and the Associate Minister to Presbytery for the appropriate branch should be present. Based on the clearance interview, the interview team will recommend to the COM how to proceed with the call process.

### Purpose of the interview:

1. To examine the candidate on his or her Christian faith and views in theology, Sacraments and the government of the church, if the call includes the candidate being ordained as a teaching elder, or if the candidate is seeking to serve as a commissioned ruling elder.
2. To determine whether the candidate will be a good match for the congregation and a good member of Pittsburgh Presbytery in terms of theological style, professional skills, ability to handle conflict, and leadership style.
3. To answer the candidate's questions about the congregation and presbytery.
4. To explore any unusual circumstances in the call.
5. To review the final stages of the call process and obtain necessary information:
  - Congregational meeting
  - Installation
  - Terms of call
  - Call papers
  - Effective date of call

### Possible Behavioral Interview Questions

1. Tell about a time when you created an opportunity out of an obstacle. What were the results?
2. Describe a situation that put your personal relationship with God to the test. What did you do? What were the results?
3. Tell about a time when it was necessary for you to adjust your behavior or your approach in order to be successful in ministry. What was the situation? What did you do?
4. Describe your service to the presbytery or the wider church in your most recent call? How was the presbytery supportive of you?
5. How have you helped a congregation define a vision for a successful missional strategy?
6. Tell about a time when you were able to lead someone to become a true disciple of Christ?
7. Tell about a time when you provided spiritual and emotional support to someone in need. What was the situation? What did you do?
8. Discuss a time when you encouraged your congregation to make a major change that was vital to spiritual growth and discipleship. How did you handle the situation? What were the results?
9. Tell about a time when you were able to gain the commitment of others toward a common goal.
10. How have you successfully engaged conflict to bring about growth and productive change?
11. Tell about a time when it was hard to stay focused on God's mission because of competing demands on your time and attention. How did you stay focused?
12. How do you understand the biblical theology of stewardship and how have you applied it in your own practices?

## **Process**

1. Members of the clearance team should receive copies of the candidate's PIF and copies of the 10-year congregational statistics reported to GA prior to the meeting.
2. Before meeting with the candidate, team members may share their impressions of the PIF and statistical report and receive information concerning the call from the COM liaison and the Presbytery's General Minister or an Associate Minister. The Presbytery Minister should clarify any unusual circumstances concerning the call, such as the transfer of ordination from another denomination, part time, temporary, or validated ministry status, conflict in the congregation, etc.
3. Invite the candidate into the room, introduce participants and pray.
4. Members of the interview team should ask behavioral questions of the candidate and ask the candidate whether he/she continues to affirm the ordination promises without exception.
5. The candidate may ask questions of the team concerning the congregation or presbytery.
6. Ask the candidate to step out of the room while the interview team discusses its recommendation concerning COM action.
7. Invite the candidate back into the room.
  - a. If the team does not plan to recommend the call, explain the reasons to the candidate.
  - b. If the team will recommend the call, inform the candidate of the decision.
    - Explain the process for the call to move forward
    - Ask the candidate to read the presbytery's Policy on Sexual Misconduct and sign a receipt form and complete the required clearances on child abuse and FBI finger printing.
    - Inform the candidate of the COM's New Clergy Orientation and Ethical Training attendance requirements
    - If the candidate is called to a position outside of a congregation, determine whether he/she is interested in being included on the pulpit supply list
8. Ask the candidate to close the meeting in prayer.

03/31/2016



## Guidelines for Terms of Call Forms

The Call Form is to be **filled out and signed** at the congregational meeting at which the call is approved, and returned to [Cathy Nelson](#) at Pittsburgh Presbytery, 901 Allegheny Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15233.

The **title** of the office is **Pastor, Co-pastor, or Associate Pastor**, not “minister of youth” or “senior pastor,” or “assistant pastor.” The agreed upon starting date is the **effective date** of the call.

For **minimum effective salary** (salary, housing, social security offset, and deferred compensation) refer to the [Minimum Terms of Call For 2021](#).

**SECA Offset** of 7.65% is the amount required as part of the Minimum Terms of Call.

**Automobile allowance, expense allowance, and book allowance** ought to be reimbursed by voucher to avoid making the amounts taxable. Reimbursement rate and maximum amount of reimbursement should be indicated.

On the line for **medical expenses**, write “2% Medical Deductible” instead of indicating an actual dollar amount.

**Moving costs** are generally indicated as “full.”

**Study Leave Allowance** should be the amount agreed upon for one year, minimum required annually is \$2,000, although the allowance may be accumulated for up to three years.

**Other** is for anything not included above; such as deferred compensation, if provided, may be included here.

There is no need to write the dollar amount of dues for the Benefits Plan. The **dues** are calculated on the effective salary, which **includes salary, housing, and deferred compensation**. If a manse is provided, it should be valued at an amount equivalent to 30% of the total of salary, deferred compensation, and social security offset for calculation of Benefits Plan dues.

The **Benefits Plan dues rate** for 2021 for Pastors enrolled in “Pastor’s Participation” (required for installed pastors) is 27% [Medical 27%, Pension 8.5 %, Death & Disability 1 %, Temporary Disability 0.5%].

The **minimum vacation** time is four weeks (including 4 Sundays). At least two weeks **study leave** must be allowed, which is cumulative to six weeks in negotiation with the Session.

The date of the **congregational meeting** should be entered on the line which begins “in testimony whereof we have subscribed our names....”

**Three or four signatures** of people authorized at the meeting to sign on behalf of the congregation should be included in the space below. They may include the Chair of the PNC, Clerk of Session, and President of the corporation.

The **name of the pastor/candidate and the name of the church** should be entered in the last paragraph, and the moderator of the congregational meeting should sign the Call form on the front.

The **pastor/candidate** signs Section C, **Acceptance of the Call** on the back.

This is sent to the Presbytery (Attention: Cathy Nelson/COM) for the signature of the Chair of the Commission on Ministry and then given to the Stated Clerk who will sign after the Presbytery meeting and return copies to the church and candidate or send to the candidate's presbytery.

# Calling a Pastor

## The Congregational Meeting to Call a Pastor

### Preparing for the Congregational Meeting

1. After the PNC has made its choice, the COM liaison will meet with the PNC to give an overview of the upcoming steps for a smooth transition and positive experience for the incoming pastor and congregation.
2. Review the terms of call with the PNC (and with the appropriate Assoc. Minister) BEFORE they are sent to the potential candidate. Refer to the guidelines for terms of call, [http://www.pghpresbytery.org/forms/pdfs/com/guidelines-terms\\_of\\_call.pdf](http://www.pghpresbytery.org/forms/pdfs/com/guidelines-terms_of_call.pdf)
3. The PNC meets with the session, notifying the interim pastor and clerk of session.
4. At the session meeting the PNC gives their report and requests the session call a congregational meeting to act on the recommendation of the PNC. (**NOTE:** This date is best worked out with the interim pastor and candidate ahead of time.)
5. The COM liaison (or the appropriate Assoc. Minister) should review with the PNC the following issues and questions.
  - How will the candidate be presented? Publicized to the congregation? e.g. Call to the meeting, a brochure, letter? Will a “meet and greet” be held for the candidate (and family)? This process must be discussed with the candidate in order to avoid lapses in confidentiality while providing the congregation with adequate information.
  - Who will moderate the congregational meeting? Interim, Assoc. Minister, COM liaison?
  - Who will take minutes? Usually the clerk
  - Who will speak at the congregational meeting?
    1. Who will present the call?
    2. Who will review the process? EEO
    3. Who (from the PNC) will present the candidate’s qualifications, pastoral experience, and why the PNC believes this pastor is the one of God’s choosing to lead the congregation at this time?
    4. Who will present the terms of call?
    5. Who will make the motion?
    6. Who will go out of the room with the candidate and his/her family?
6. What will the congregation do while the ballots are being counted?
7. Who will count the ballots? Appoint 3 tellers
8. Have the PNC chair prepare copies of the call papers to be signed.

### Agenda for Congregational Meeting

This meeting should be moderated either by the interim pastor (or pastor if the call is for an associate pastor) or COM Liaison. The Clerk of Session serves as secretary for the meeting (or, if not present, a secretary *pro tem* may be appointed).

1. Open with prayer.

2. The reading of the call of the meeting:  
“A special meeting of the \_\_\_\_\_ Presbyterian Church has been duly called and announced by the session, to be held on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) for the purpose of hearing and acting upon the final report of the Pastor Nominating Committee and to elect \_\_\_\_\_ as pastor.”
  - a. Appoint 3 tellers (not PNC members)
  - b. Appoint Minute Reader
3. The Pastor Nominating Committee presents its final report, including:
  - Review of the process followed by the PNC;
  - The EEO final report;
  - Terms of call, including effective start date;
  - Introduction and presentation of the candidate.
4. The candidate may be asked to introduce him/herself further. Following this, the candidate and family are excused. A member of the PNC should be designated to keep the candidate company while the congregation votes.
5. A motion is made that the congregation elect the Reverend \_\_\_\_\_ to serve as (pastor, associate pastor, or co-pastor) effective \_\_\_\_\_ (date) for a term of \_\_\_\_\_ years (if pastor is serving for a designated term) and that the congregation ask the Presbytery to concur with the call.
6. Discussion.
7. Vote by written ballot.
  - a. Vote is shared with candidate in private, and candidate is asked if he or she accepts the call.\*
  - b. The congregation is informed of the candidate’s and the PNC’s decision – either the Call is accepted and you move on to item 8, or the Call is refused/denied or the decision is delayed and you move to . . . (see note \*)
8. Invite the pastor-elect and family back into the meeting to congratulate them on the call.
9. Motion is made and the congregation votes to dissolve the PNC, with thanks for their service
10. The clerk (or PNC chair) ensures that the signed Call Forms are delivered to the presbytery within 48 hours of the meeting.
11. The minutes of the special meeting are approved before adjournment **or** submitted to the session.
12. Adjournment with Benediction.
13. Celebration!

\* **Note:** In some situations the negative (against) portion of the vote of the congregation may be significant. If more than 5%, at the discretion of the PNC and in full consultation with the candidate, a delay in the decision is recommended until PNC, candidate, and branch minister can discuss why this negative portion is high. If the negative vote exceeds 10%, a

delay is mandatory until that conversation can be held.

## **Guidelines for the Service of Installation**

### **Ordination & Installation Service Policy & Guidelines**

[https://www.pghpresbytery.org/ministry\\_teams/committees\\_commissions/com/com-forms/ordination-installation-service-policy-guidelines/](https://www.pghpresbytery.org/ministry_teams/committees_commissions/com/com-forms/ordination-installation-service-policy-guidelines/)

### **Planning the Commission for Your Ordination Service**

[https://www.jotform.com/pghpresby/CPM\\_planning\\_ordination\\_commission](https://www.jotform.com/pghpresby/CPM_planning_ordination_commission)

### **Service of Ordination/Installation for Called Pastors & Associates**

[https://www.pghpresbytery.org/ministry\\_teams/committees\\_commissions/com/com-forms/service-of-installation-for-called-pastors-associates/](https://www.pghpresbytery.org/ministry_teams/committees_commissions/com/com-forms/service-of-installation-for-called-pastors-associates/)

### **Service of Ordination for Candidates Called to Temporary Pastoral Positions or Validated Ministries**

[https://www.pghpresbytery.org/ministry\\_teams/committees\\_commissions/com/com-forms/service-of-ordination-for-candidates-called-to-temporary-pastoral-positions-validated-ministries/](https://www.pghpresbytery.org/ministry_teams/committees_commissions/com/com-forms/service-of-ordination-for-candidates-called-to-temporary-pastoral-positions-validated-ministries/)

### **Service of Ordination & Installation For Candidates Called to Installed Pastoral Positions Who are being Ordained and Installed in the place of their Call**

[https://www.pghpresbytery.org/ministry\\_teams/committees\\_commissions/com/com-forms/service-of-ordination-installation-for-candidates-called-to-installed-pastoral-positions/](https://www.pghpresbytery.org/ministry_teams/committees_commissions/com/com-forms/service-of-ordination-installation-for-candidates-called-to-installed-pastoral-positions/)

### **BOOK OF OCCASIONAL SERVICES**

<https://www.pghpresbytery.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Book-of-Occasional-Services.pdf>

## 4. Commissioned Pastors (CP)

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## COMMISSIONED PASTORS

Service as a “Commissioned Pastor” (CP) is a calling acknowledged by the Book of Order to ministry within the PC(USA). God calls men and women to this ministry. Using their God given gifts and talents, along with appropriate training, CPs are one of the varieties of ministry Pittsburgh Presbytery may employ in assisting churches to be faithful in Word, Sacrament, and service. Pittsburgh Presbytery will seek to identify those whom God has called and place them in any number of ministry positions. Each placement and position shall be considered and validated by seeking answers to questions such as:

- Is there a clear sense that the CP is called by God?
- If so, what is the appropriate position?
- Will the CP in that ministry position further the mission and ministry of that congregation?

### On COM Website:

- CP Annual Review
- CP Contract Worksheet

## 5. On-Going Care of Ministers of Word and Sacrament

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## **Guidelines for Continuing Education for Ministers Serving Congregations**

Pittsburgh Presbytery requires at least two weeks of Continuing Education in pastoral calls, with an amount of at least \$2,000 for such, governed by these guidelines.

1. The process in the local church should begin with Session's Personnel Committee, which should be an advocate for the pastor's use of the time and money provided for Continuing Education. If your church does not have such a committee, Presbytery's Commission on Ministry can help you establish one.
2. At the time of the pastor's Annual Review, an assessment should be made of the pastor's continuing education over the previous year, and funds used. (Unexpended Continuing Education funds may be carried over up to three years at the request of the teaching elder and consent of the Session.) At this time also, the committee should have conversation with the pastor about his/her plans for Continuing Education in the next year.
3. Matters to consider: The strengths of the pastor—How can a particular Continuing Education experience build on these? The need for the pastor's growth and expertise in particular areas—What's "out there" for the teaching elder to build on? What are the needs of the congregation for growth and development? What Continuing Education opportunities are available in this region? (Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, presbytery events, university offerings, etc.) What "big ticket" opportunities would the pastor thrive on? (Study abroad, an overseas short-term pastoral exchange, a Presbyterian Heritage tour, a unique mission trip, a visit to the General Assembly, etc.) This is why the building up of funds over three years is provided.
4. Plans should be made between the pastor elder and the personnel committee and the recommended action taken to the session for approval. This should be a time of celebration about the professionalism of the pastor, and the affirmation of such by the church officers.
5. The congregation should be aware of the pastor's plans, affirming him/her in such. The Presbytery office should be contacted for a list of available supply preachers, and for the recommended stipend. Please also discuss stipend expectations with the supply preacher.
6. Upon completion of the Continuing Education program/event and the pastor's return, the pastor should provide a written report of the values of the event along with an itemized list of expenditures to the Personnel Committee and the Session. The report should be part of the pastor's permanent file. The pastor should also take this opportunity to teach and preach to the congregation about his/her experience. This is another opportunity for the church to celebrate the professionalism and growth of the pastor.
7. The pastor's use of Continuing Education time and money is a trust matter between the teaching elder and the Session. Continuing Education funds can be used for continuing education only. The pastor should not be reticent about using this portion of the pastoral call; nor should the Personnel Committee and Session be reticent about recommending particular needs for growth of the pastor. Christ's call to reach out is dependent upon the growth of every disciple.
8. Church officers and lay leaders need to grow as well. There are many fine opportunities—local and inexpensive—where ruling elders and deacons and lay leaders can sharpen their skills. We highly recommend that they be encouraged to attend such events, be evaluated in their effectiveness, and be affirmed in their high commitment!

## **SABBATICAL LEAVE GUIDELINES – PASTORS SERVING CONGREGATIONS**

Sabbatical leave for ministers is a planned time of intensive enhancement for ministry and mission. Sabbatical leave follows precedents in the academic community and among a growing number of private sector groups. This “extended time” is qualitatively different from “vacation” or “days off.” It is an opportunity for the individual to strategically disengage from regular and normal tasks so that ministry and mission may be viewed from a new perspective because of a planned time of focus. Sabbatical leave is an extension of the biblical concept of a Sabbath day and a Sabbath year for renewal. It is both an act of faith that God will sustain us through a period of reflection and changed activity and an occasion for recovery and renewal of vital energies.

### **Recommendation**

Pittsburgh Presbytery recommends to the sessions of its churches that pastors be granted a compensated sabbatical of at least three months after seven years of service to an individual church.

### **Rationale**

A sabbatical will enable the minister to be renewed through the vital pursuit of continuing education, extended time spent in spiritual formation, and fresh mentoring by respected teachers. A sabbatical enables a minister to return to the responsibilities of the parish with new energy, spiritual vision and effectiveness.

### **Commission on Ministry Responsibilities**

Encourage churches to offer sabbatical leave for pastors.

Review the sabbatical timetable and usage plan as submitted by the pastor.

Serve as mediator in any concerns of session or pastor relative to the sabbatical.

Determine who will moderate the session in the pastor’s absence.

### **Pastor Responsibilities**

- Bring the sabbatical proposal before the session – at least in outline form - a minimum of six months before the intended commencement of the sabbatical.
- Secure the approval of the session for the sabbatical proposal and work out the necessary coverage of pastoral and p coverage of pastoral and pulpit responsibilities.
- Assure the session of continued service to the church for at least one full year from the conclusion of the sabbatical.
- Bring up to date all pending responsibilities as determined in consultation with the session before departing on a sabbatical.
- Submit to Commission on Ministry in writing the sabbatical timetable and outline of plans.
- Upon return, present an overview of the sabbatical experience to the session, congregation, and Commission on Ministry.

### **Session Responsibilities**

- Receive for approval the pastor’s proposal for a sabbatical, at least six months in advance of the intended commencement of the sabbatical.
- Continue terms of call commitments to the pastor during sabbatical leave.
- Contract for pastoral services during the pastor’s sabbatical.
- Communicate to the congregation the importance and values to the church of a sabbatical.
- Request a written overview of the sabbatical from the pastor upon return.
- If agreed upon by session and the pastor, the sabbatical might be combined with study leave for extended study.

## Sabbatical and Continuing Education Resources

Each of the Presbyterian seminaries has continuing education opportunities. Our local Presbyterian seminary is Pittsburgh Theological Seminary at [www.pts.edu](http://www.pts.edu). Links to all our seminaries and their continuing education programs are published at <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/theology-formation-and-evangelism/theologicaleducation/presbyterian-theological-seminaries-glance/>

1. Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program at <https://www.cts.edu/clergy-renewal/applying/national-program/>
  - A competitive grants program open to Christian congregations that have an ordained pastor
  - Approximately 100 grants are awarded annually
  - Sabbaticals may be taken in one 3-4 month chunk, or in smaller increments
2. Board of Pensions, PCUSA. Sabbatical grants for pastors of smaller churches, at [www.pensions.org](http://www.pensions.org).
3. Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI at [www.calvinseminary.edu](http://www.calvinseminary.edu)
  - Seminars in Christian Scholarship and Calvin Institute of Christian Worship
  - Some partial stipends are offered
4. The Company of Pastors
  - Denominational Program to become part of a covenant community of colleagues practicing spiritual, intellectual and vocational disciplines. Annual subscription. Look for “Daily Prayer” on Google Play or in the App Store.
5. Denominational conferences
  - Conference listings are available at <http://www.pcusa.org/events/list/conference/>
6. Presbyterian Church (USA) national and regional conference centers:
  - Ghost Ranch at [www.ghostranch.org](http://www.ghostranch.org) - Abiquiu, New Mexico
  - Stony Point Center at [www.stonypointcenter.org](http://www.stonypointcenter.org) – Stony Point, NY
  - Montreat Conference Center at [www.montreat.org](http://www.montreat.org) – Montreat, NC
  - Crestfield Camp and Conference Center offers free retreat accommodations, pending availability, to ministers of congregations in Pittsburgh Presbytery, and hosts many renewal programs through the year – [www.crestfieldcc.org](http://www.crestfieldcc.org)
7. Other resources to consider:
  - “What Difference does a Pastoral Sabbatical Make?” by Sheldon Sorge, available from him on request
  - Programs offered by the Leadership Institute at Duke Divinity School: [www.leadership.divinity.duke.edu](http://www.leadership.divinity.duke.edu)

Suggested texts on sabbatical programs found at [www.rowman.com](http://www.rowman.com) (formerly Alban)

- *Clergy Renewal: The Alban Guide to Sabbatical Planning* by A. Richard Bullock and Richard J. Bruesehoff.
- *Journeying toward Renewal* by Melissa Bane Sevier

Updated January 2021

## Parental and Family Leave Guidelines

The celebration, nurture, and encouragement of the family take place in many ways and on many levels in the life of a church. During times of joy and times of sadness the congregation has the opportunity and the responsibility of extending care for the pastor and the pastor's family.

The following guidelines are recommended by Pittsburgh Presbytery to aid in conversations between sessions and pastors. An agreement may be negotiated at the time of call or as need arises.

### 1. Parental Leave

When Christian parents give birth to or adopt a child, the celebration is shared by the whole family of faith. Timing, duration, and compensation of parental leave shall be mutually agreed upon between pastor and session. Congregations are encouraged to provide, as a minimum, either:

- full salary and benefits for six weeks or
- 60% salary with full benefits for three months

Other salary arrangements may be negotiated to extend the leave beyond the initial period. Upon completion of the leave, the pastor will be entitled to return to his/her position. The position will not be filled during the leave except on a temporary basis.

### 2. Family Leave

Family leave is appropriate in life-altering circumstances wherein the pastor is called upon by reason of major life trauma or serious illness to be the primary caregiver for the pastor's spouse, child, parent, sibling, or other family member for whom the pastor bears primary responsibility. Timing, duration, and compensation of family leave shall be mutually agreed upon between pastor and session, but congregations are encouraged at a minimum to provide full salary and benefits for up to four weeks. Other salary arrangements may be negotiated to extend the leave beyond the initial period. Upon completion of the leave, the pastor will be entitled to return to his/her position. The position will not be filled during the leave except on a temporary basis.

### General

1. Churches are encouraged to be supportive in every way when such a situation arises. Family leave is in addition to vacation and other periods of extended time away already set forth in the pastor's call.
2. The Commission on Ministry should be informed when a Parental or Family Leave option is exercised by a pastor.
3. The expectation is that the pastor will return to service.
4. A session ought not to feel over-burdened by monetary considerations in negotiating leave. If a church desires to be supportive and generous, the Presbytery shall seek to assist the congregation when necessary to provide pulpit supply and pastoral services.

## **Medical Leave Guidelines**

### **Sick Leave**

Ministers will receive 10 working days of sick leave each calendar year, cumulative up to 120 days, to be used in case of illness. Sick leave entitlement during the first year of service will be prorated according to length of service. At the time of termination of call (either voluntary or involuntary) a Minister shall have no claim for pay in lieu of unused sick leave.

### **Medically Certified Disability Leave (short term or long term)**

Ministers who are, according to certification by a licensed physician, temporarily disabled and who are not covered by a disability plan, shall receive full salary and benefits for a period of such disability not to exceed 90 days, at which time if disability continues, application may be made for disability benefits from the Board of Pensions for members of the Pension Plan. This policy shall apply to all medically certified disabilities, including pregnancy-related disability.

### **Leaves of Absence with Pay**

- Regular training period in the U.S. Armed Forces (up to two weeks annually).
- Jury duty (up to two weeks annually).
- Marriage of the minister (up to three days).
- Personal and family emergencies or other personal business that cannot be cared for outside working hours (up to three days annually).
- Death in the immediate family (husband, wife, parent, parent-in-law, child, brother, sister, grandparent) (up to four days for each situation).

## **Moderator Compensation Policy**

The policy adopted by Pittsburgh Presbytery regarding moderators of churches without installed pastors is that the session should pay \$60 for each meeting moderated.

In addition, the Commission on Ministry recommends that the congregation reimburse the moderator the cost of travel at current IRS rate.

## **Terms of Call Report**

Terms of Call Reports are requested in the spring of the year and the form will be on the COM website in an interactive format.

All churches are required to fill out this form for all of their pastors.

<https://www.jotform.com/COMPgh/terms-of-call-report>

## 6. Temporary Pastoral Relationships



## **Policy on Moderators**

### Congregational Meetings

The pastor shall be the moderator of all meetings of the congregation. In congregations where there are co-pastors, they shall, when present, alternately preside at meetings. When the church is without a pastor, the moderator appointed by the presbytery will preside at all congregational meetings. If it is impractical for the moderator to preside, he or she shall invite, with the concurrence of the session, another teaching elder of the presbytery to preside. An elder who is, or has been, a member of that presbytery's committee on ministry, the stated clerk, General Minister or Associate Minister may be asked to preside; such elder may not moderate the meeting of a congregation of which that ruling elder is a member. When this is not expedient, and when both the moderator and the session concur, a member of the session may be invited to preside.

A presbytery may appoint a commissioned pastor as moderator to the church to which she or he is commissioned.

### Session Meetings

The pastor of the church shall be the moderator of the session and the session shall not meet without the pastor except as here provided. In congregations where there are co-pastors, they shall, when present, alternately preside. When a church is without a pastor, the presbytery will appoint a teaching elder of the same presbytery as moderator. If it is impractical for the moderator to preside, he or she shall invite, with the concurrence of the session, another minister of the presbytery to preside. An elder who is, or has been, a member of that presbytery's committee on ministry, the stated clerk, General Minister or Associate Minister may be asked to preside; such elder may not moderate the meeting of a congregation of which that elder is a member. When this is not expedient, and when both the moderator and the session concur, a member of the session may be invited to preside.

Presbytery may appoint a commissioned pastor as moderator of the session to the church to which she or he is commissioned.

In all judicial cases, the moderator of the session shall be a minister of the presbytery to which the church belongs.

## **Temporary, Covenant, and Interim Pastors**

### **Contracts**

All of the following forms are found on the COM webpage:

- Covenant Pastor Agreement
- Temporary Pastor Contract
- Interim Pastor Contract
- Form C - Renewal of Temporary Pastoral Relationship Form
- A (for Pastor) - Annual Review of Temporary Pastors Form
- B (for Clerk) - Annual Review of Temporary Pastors
- Service of Commissioning for a Temporary Pastor

## **Parish Associate Policy**

A parish associate is a minister who serves in a validated ministry other than the local parish, or is a member-at-large, or is retired, but who wishes to maintain a relationship with a particular church or churches in keeping with ordination to the ministry of teaching elder. Such persons, already qualified as continuing members of presbytery, may serve as parish associates. The relation shall be established, upon nomination by the pastor, between the parish associate, the session, and the presbytery. The parish associate shall be responsible to the pastor, as head of staff, on an “as needed, as available” basis with or without remuneration.

A parish associate may not be called to be the next installed pastor or associate pastor of a church served as parish associate.

The agreement between the session, the parish associate, and the presbytery shall terminate when the call to the installed pastor is dissolved. The presbytery may dissolve the relationship with the parish associate upon the recommendation of the commission on ministry.

## 7. Specialized Ministries

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## Validation of a Specialized Ministry – COM Process

1. Candidate provides the COM with a position description and contract as well as a PIF or resume.
2. COM arranges a clearance interview with the candidate, ordinarily handled at a regular meeting of the Specialized/HR Subcommittee of COM – interview takes approximately 90 minutes
3. If approved by the subcommittee, the candidate provides the following items:
  - Digital photo of candidate
  - Brief bio
  - Criminal and child abuse background checks (or signed permission to obtain background checks if presbytery is to order the checks. In that case, the candidate will be billed for the process – usually \$9 unless additional checking is required)
  - Date position is to begin
  - If candidate is to be ordained to the position, the date, time and place of the ordination and the names of the teaching elders and ruling elders to serve on the ordination commission
4. Specialized/HR Subcommittee makes the recommendation to COM to validate the ministry
5. COM makes the recommendation to the presbytery
6. Presbytery votes to approve

Notes on specialized ministries: (This is not intended to be a check list of requirements, but a review of the considerations often made by the Specialized/HR Subcommittee in considering validation of specialized ministries.)

- Specialized ministries include but are not limited to: chaplaincy, seminary staff and faculty, governing body staff, pastoral counseling, campus ministry, mission, social work, or consultancy.
- The ministry should be consistent with the mission of Pittsburgh Presbytery and the Great Ends of the Church
- The minister will be accountable to Pittsburgh Presbytery through the COM
- The minister will be accountable to a board or organization that has oversight for the ministry
- The salary should be fair for the work required (or there should be a clearly-defined intention of tent-making), and the budget of the organization indicates that it can provide the salary offered
- There is some reason why the position requires ordination
- The candidate can clearly articulate a personal faith story
- There has been some evidence of fruit-bearing in the candidate's ministry
- Candidate affirms ordination vows

## COM Guidelines for Specialized Ministries

A ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church may be classified as a validated ministry of the Pittsburgh Presbytery when it meets the following criteria:

- a. It is consistent with the mission of the Pittsburgh Presbytery in that it promotes some combination of the following:
  - i. Success in bringing others to Christ
  - ii. Vibrant worship
  - iii. Active participation in the mission of Christ's church
- b. It is theologically faithful to God's Word.
- c. It has, within the scope of its ministry, the promotion of at least one of the Great Ends of the Church (**F-1.0304**)
  - i. Proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind;
  - ii. The shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;
  - iii. The maintenance of divine worship;
  - iv. The preservation of the truth;
  - v. The promotion of social righteousness;
  - vi. The exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.
- c. It is accountable to the Pittsburgh Presbytery in that the person engaged in this ministry agrees that their Specialized Ministry shall be subject to annual review and renewal by the Commission on Ministry of the Pittsburgh Presbytery, and ratified by the Presbytery at large at an appropriately-scheduled Presbytery meeting.
- d. It is accountable to an organization, board, etc. that provides oversight and supervision on an ongoing and regular basis.
- e. The person engaged in this Specialized Ministry agrees to participate in the deliberation and work of the Pittsburgh Presbytery.
- f. The person engaged in this Specialized Ministry continues to affirm the ordination vows.
- g. The ministry makes active and effective use of the biblical and theological training that is required for ordination.
- h. The person involved in validated ministry shall participate in the worship of a local congregation.

## **VALIDATED MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT**

Found on COM website.

## 8. Responding to Difficulties

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## Conflict Resolution – The Pittsburgh Presbytery Process

This sheet is designed to provide guidelines for COM members working with churches in conflict. The process will vary with each situation.

Tools: Prayer, Scripture (esp. Matthew 18, John 17, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 3), *Book of Order* (esp. Historic Principles: F-3.01, and Ordination Questions: W-4.0404), “Seeking to be Faithful Together”

### Underlying Principles:

- Jesus Christ is Head of the church and the source of its unity
- Conflict is a natural part of living in community – all churches experience conflict
- Conflict is not a bad thing or something to be avoided
- Conflict may yield a *Kairos* moment that helps a congregation define who it is and what it is called to be and do
- We strive to maintain unity of the Spirit during times of conflict
- We treat each other respectfully, listening to each other and staying in relationship
- We discern God’s vision for our congregation through prayer
- It is best to resolve the conflict at the most immediate level
- Our goal is to empower the pastor and session to be the primary agents in engaging the conflict

### Phase 1 Awareness

The Presbytery staff or COM becomes aware of difficulties in a church. First awareness may occur through communication from the pastor, session member, church staff member, or church members. The difficulties may become obvious from a Congregational Advocate’s engagement with the congregation, or a Transitional Liaison’s engagement with a PNC.

### Phase 2 Referral to CRT

The referral may be made by presbytery staff, pastor, session, or COM. Ordinarily, a CRT is mobilized only by the request of pastor or session. The conflict situation is summarized at a meeting of the CRT. Two members of the CRT are assigned to work with a presbytery staff member to address the situation and develop a strategy.

### Phase 3 Listening

Ordinarily, the first listening session involves the pastor of the church in conflict. Then the CRT team may meet with the session. If appropriate, the CRT and session may meet with other people such as church staff, individuals with specific concerns, members of the congregation or community. Listen deeply to the feelings as well as the content. Listening sessions with individuals as well as groups may be warranted. It is best if the moderator or session invites the CRT to work beside them in resolving the situation.

Questions used in the listening sessions may include:

- What is the situation that has caused you to call for help from the CRT?
- What specific issues or situations have contributed to the difficulties?
- What history do we need to know in order to understand where we are today?
- What is the mission or purpose of this congregation?
- What do you love about your church? Where are you deeply invested?
- What concerns do you have about your church?

- What do you want your pastor or session to know?
- Which individuals or groups in the church should we hear from?
- What do you want to accomplish?
- Where do you see Christ in this situation?

Ask the group to develop ground rules for the listening sessions, such as:

- Pray together
- Use “I statements” rather than “you” or “we” statements
- Treat each other respectfully
- Confess where we are wrong
- Focus on facts, rather than attributing motives
- Indicate where we agree with those of other viewpoints
- Share personal experiences
- Do not engage in name-calling or labeling
- State what you heard the other say, before offering your response
- Be transparent - share our concerns directly and openly, but kindly
- Seek to stay in community with each other

#### Phase 4 Summarizing

The CRT presents a written report to the session that summarizes and categorizes the issues gleaned from the listening sessions. The report is presented at a session meeting. The following questions may be asked:

- Are there any important points missing from the report?
- How well does the report capture the essence of what has divided us?
- What changes would you recommend in the report?

If changes are recommended by the session, the CRT should revise the report to include the suggestions of the session and then return to another meeting with the revised report.

#### Phase 5 Recommendations and Implementation

The CRT meets with the session to develop recommended responses to the report. It is best if the session generates recommendations, but CRT members may also suggest options. CRT compiles the list of suggestions and writes a recommended action plan based on the suggestions made by the session (or delegates this assignment to a member of the session). Session receives, amends, and implements an action plan based on the recommendations.

#### Phase 6 Coaching

CRT remains in a coaching relationship with the pastor and session as they work through the action plan.

August 2020

## 9. Resources

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## Resources

### ***Book of Order***

[https://www.pghpresbytery.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Book\\_of\\_Order\\_2019-2021.pdf](https://www.pghpresbytery.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Book_of_Order_2019-2021.pdf)

### ***COM Advisory Handbook***

[https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/ministers/pdfs/comhandbook.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/ministers/pdfs/comhandbook.pdf)

### ***On Calling a Pastor***

[https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/clc/pdfs/the\\_revised\\_on\\_calling\\_a\\_pastor\\_manual\\_march\\_2015.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/clc/pdfs/the_revised_on_calling_a_pastor_manual_march_2015.pdf)

### ***Guidelines for Session Personnel Committees***

[https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/clc/pdfs/session\\_personnel\\_guidelines.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/clc/pdfs/session_personnel_guidelines.pdf)

### ***Benefits Information***

[www.pensions.org](http://www.pensions.org)

### ***Understanding Effective Salary***

<https://www.pensions.org/file/what-we-offer/benefits-guidance/forms-documents/Documents/pln-103.pdf/>

### ***PCUSA Standards of Ethical Conduct***

[https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/oga/publications/ethical-conduct.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/publications/ethical-conduct.pdf)

### ***A Set of Ethical Guidelines for Teaching Elders***

[https://www.pghpresbytery.org/ministry\\_teams/committees\\_commissions/com/com-forms/ethical-guidelines-for-teaching-elders/](https://www.pghpresbytery.org/ministry_teams/committees_commissions/com/com-forms/ethical-guidelines-for-teaching-elders/)

### ***Pittsburgh Presbytery Policy and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct***

<https://www.pghpresbytery.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Sexual-Misconduct-Policies-2004.pdf>

### ***Pastor Competency Model and Targeted Selection® Pastor Interview Guide - All Competencies***

[https://www.pghpresbytery.org/ministry\\_teams/committees\\_commissions/com/com-forms/pastoral-competency/](https://www.pghpresbytery.org/ministry_teams/committees_commissions/com/com-forms/pastoral-competency/)

# Church Leadership Connection

## Ministry Information Form

[Enter a New Ministry Information Form \(MIF\)](#)

	PDF	MS Word
MIF Instructions	<a href="#">Download</a>	
MIF (Korean) 한국어 Instructions	<a href="#">Download</a>	
MIF (Español) Instructions	<a href="#">Download</a>	
MIF	<a href="#">Download</a>	<a href="#">Download</a>
Yoked Congregation Form	<a href="#">Download</a>	<a href="#">Download</a>

### Additional Resources

[Ministry Information Form Tutorial](#)

[Leadership Competencies](#)

[On Calling a Pastor](#)

[Calling to Educational Ministry](#)

## Personal Information Form

[Enter a new Personal Information Form \(PIF\)](#)

	PDF	MS Word
PIF Instructions	<a href="#">Download</a>	
PIF (한국어) Instructions	<a href="#">Download</a>	
PIF (Español) Instructions	<a href="#">Download</a>	
PIF	<a href="#">Download</a>	<a href="#">Download</a>

### Additional Resources

[Personal Information Form Tutorial](#)

[Leadership Competencies](#)

[Calling to Educational Ministry](#)

[PIF Tips for Christian Educators](#)

[Work for the Church](#)

[One Door Mission Service](#)

[Network for International Congregations](#)