

# **A Guidebook for Searching for a Pastor in the Presbytery of Scioto Valley**



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## Introduction: Called to Serve

<sup>7</sup> But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. <sup>8</sup> Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high, he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people."...

<sup>11</sup> The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ." (Ephesians 4:7, 11-13)

However, it is we are called to serve, whatever we do, in word or deed, we do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit, giving thanks to God.

This guide, written by the Presbytery's Commission for Congregational Life, is intended to steer the search process a congregation undertakes when it is time to find a new pastor.

This is not a one-size-fits-all kind of process. Churches have different needs based on the mission and ministry of the church, and so the process may look different from one congregation to another. The chart on the first page of this document provides a general overview of the 4 phases of searching for a new pastor. Using this as a template, your liaison from the Commission for Congregational Life will help determine the specifics for your search.

**Learning the Acronyms.** To navigate your way through this document, you need to know how to speak the lingo. Use this list as a handy reference chart! Please also refer to the Pastoral Transitions Lingo page at the end of this document.

- BOP Board of Pensions
- CCL Commission for Congregational Life
- CCP Commission for Church Professionals
- CLC Church Leadership Connection
- EP Executive Presbyter
- MIF Mission Information Form
- PIF Pastor Information Form
- PNC Pastor Nominating Committee

## Pastor Search Process Chart

PHASE 1 Saying Goodbye	PHASE 2 What's Next?	PHASE 3 The Search Begins!	PHASE 4 A Warm Welcome
The pastor announces their decision to leave the church to session and to congregation.	Session and a rep from CCL discern what's next for the congregation in terms of pastoral leadership. CCL will provide ongoing training for Session and Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC).	Upon receiving CCL approval, a PNC is elected by the congregation and creates a Ministry Information Form (MIF) to be approved by Session and CCL; once approved, the MIF is posted in the "Church Leadership Connection" for matching.	After hearing a candidating sermon, the congregation votes on whether to elect and call the new pastor at a special congregational meeting that same day.
Session calls a congregational meeting to approve the dissolution of the pastor's call.	Should it be discerned that a <i>transitional pastor</i> is appropriate, a search team is appointed.	The PNC prayerfully begins to screen potential candidates through phone, virtual, and in-person interviews and references.	The pastor and leaders of the congregation set an effective date for the new call to begin. Arrangements are made for moving the new pastor into town.
Session plans a time to express appreciation for and to say goodbye to the pastor.	Should it be discerned that <i>another kind of pastoral leader</i> is appropriate, Session works with CCL rep to choose a suitable process.	Once PNC has named two finalists, those names are submitted for an executive check and CCP/CCL clearance interview. Upon approval from executive check and CCP/CCL interview, PNC will conduct its second interview, neutral pulpit(s), and negotiate terms of call.	The new pastor will work with the Presbytery moderator to schedule the Installation (and/or Ordination) service.
Presbytery concurs with the session and pastor's decision to end the call.	Either the Session or PNC is responsible for completing a Mission Study, reflecting on the gifts of the congregation and the needs of the community.	PNC sends terms of call to CCP for approval, background check is conducted by presbytery, and PNC invites candidate for candidating Sunday.	A welcome reception/party is planned by the congregation to introduce the new pastor to the faith community.

# Pastor Search Process Narrative

## Phase 1: Saying Goodbye

Saying goodbye begins when a pastor decides to leave their current call. This is the beginning of the grieving process for both the pastor (and pastor's family) and the congregation. Normally a pastor will have an end date in mind and will announce the departure 4-6 weeks prior.

This announcement generally is made to the session at a meeting. It is helpful to have a Commission on Congregational Life (CCL) representative, usually the congregation's CCL liaison or the EP present at this meeting to answer any questions the session may have. The pastor then shares the news with the congregation in a letter and announces it from the pulpit the following Sunday.

At this time, the session has several important responsibilities:

1. Setting the congregational meeting to approve officially the dissolution of the call. This is normally the last Sunday the pastor preaches. (If the pastor has unused vacation days, they may choose to add those on after the final Sunday.) At this meeting the appropriate form should be completed and returned to the Presbytery Office.
2. The session should also begin to plan, through the appropriate group or committee, to provide for a time for the congregation to expression appreciation for and say goodbye to the pastor. This often occurs on the pastor's last Sunday, following worship. Individuals may present the pastor with cards and the congregation as a whole may present a parting gift if that is their desire. This is also the appropriate time for the pastor to hand over all the keys and any other property to the church.
3. The dissolution of the call between the pastor and the congregation is official once it is approved by the Presbytery. The church's treasurer should support the appropriate forms to the Board of Pensions.
4. CCL in conjunction with the church Session will identify a person to moderate future session meetings. The appropriate committee or person within the church should begin to arrange for 2-3 months of pulpit supply and pastoral care in case of an emergency.

## Phase 2: What's Next?

In this phase of the search process, the session begins to direct their gaze from the present to the future of the church.

The CCL liaison will help the session discern the next steps of the search process. For some congregations, that is forming a transitional search team to find a transitional pastor to maintain ministry throughout the search process for their next pastor.

A transitional (or interim) pastor is helpful in situations where the congregation is particularly grieving the pastor's loss, if the pastor dies while serving the congregation, if the previous pastoral relationship was conflicted, or if the pastor had a long tenure in the congregation. Congregations in these situations particularly benefit from an experienced hand at the wheel as one who understands the dynamics of a congregation in transition.

In other cases, a transitional pastor may not be needed. If a congregation is relatively healthy, the leadership is willing, and the parting with the pastor was gracious and loving, the CCL liaison will walk the session through the leadership options they may choose during the search process. Session should note this choice will require them to make decisions about maintaining worship, pastoral care and any other missions and ministry of the congregation. A chart defining different types of pastoral leadership is at the close of this document.

### **Finding a Transitional Minister**

1. Session appoints a transitional search team to work with the CCL liaison and EP by creating a position description and financial package.
2. The search team will conduct all interviews, present a final candidate to CCL for background and reference checks, and will present the candidate to session for approval.
3. A dedicated transitional pastor's job is to provide continuity within the church.
4. They may share with the CCL liaison in the initial training of the elected PNC. The rest of the Pastoral search process is led by the PNC with support from the CCL liaison.

### **Discerning What's Next**

1. Separately or as a group with the CCL liaison, the session is highly encouraged to watch the introductory videos on the search process produced by the Presbyterian Church.

<http://oga.pcusa.org/section/midcouncil-ministries/clc/revised-calling-pastor/>

2. A vital step in this process is to create a Mission Study. Mission studies come in all shapes and sizes, but they all have the same goal: to help a church look out the window at the community in which God has planted them and to look in the mirror to see the ways God has gifted them to serve. The better a congregation's understanding of who God is making them to be and how God is calling them to serve, the better match they will make with their next pastor. A brief overview of the Mission Study materials from PCUSA can be found on page 10.

3. The mission study may be the responsibility of a special task force (comprised of a few session members and members of the congregation) or of the PNC, whichever is best for the congregation.
4. Any mission study should include the formulation of a mission statement (which should sound similar to other church's mission statements since we all share the same mission) and a vision statement (which speaks to how the church plans to specifically live out its mission). It may also be helpful to meditate on a Scriptural metaphor that describes the congregation's story.
5. The CCL will review the mission study and make suggestions before it is submitted to the session for approval. (The session may also make suggestions.)

### **Selecting the Pastoral Nominating Committee**

Pastoral calls are a collective effort involving the individual church, the Presbytery and the national PCUSA matching service called the Church Leadership Connection (CLC). When a session determines they are ready to begin the search process the Liaison will seek permission from the Presbytery on behalf of session for the Nominating Committee to be given the task of forming a Pastoral Nominating Committee.

The church's Nominating Committee is given the task of finding 5-9 active members to serve as the PNC. At least 1 or 2 members should be currently serving on session. Other major groups or demographics in the church should also be represented if possible.

Once the Nominating Committee has a slate of names for the PNC, they should notify session who will then call a congregational meeting to approve the names. At that meeting, it is appropriate to open up the floor for nomination before the final vote. This meeting will be moderated by the moderator of session, the CCL liaison, or his/her designee.

## **Phase 3: The Search Begins**

### **The Work of the PNC**

Once the congregation elects the PNC, they will meet with the CCL liaison for additional training and consultation as often as needed. The PNC and CCL liaison should exchange contact information for future reference.

**The first step** is to select a PNC Chair early on. This person is responsible for the organization and running of the PNC meetings. It's also wise to select someone to take minutes for the meetings. In addition, once the PNC is ready to receive emails and matches, someone will need to set up an email address and monitor the inbox. This can be the same person who takes the minutes or someone else.

**The second step** is to watch the remaining modules of “On Calling a Pastor” (<http://oga.pcusa.org/section/midcouncil-ministries/clc/revised-calling-pastor/>).

**The third step** is for the PNC to meet with the session to determine the budget for the work of the PNC. It's recommended to set aside \$10,000 to cover costs (for travel expenses for candidate interviews, neutral pulpit weekend, and candidating weekend as well as moving costs, particularly if they are coming from a distance). The session must provide the PNC with a maximum amount of effective salary the church can afford as the PNC must have this figure in order to complete the MIF.

**The fourth step** is for the PNC to use the Mission Study (in consultation with the finance committee of the congregation) to complete the MIF and submit it to the CCL rep and the session for review and approval. Once the MIF has been approved by both parties, it's ready to be uploaded to the Church Leadership Connection. <https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/clc/> .

The PNC chair should contact the CCL chair and EP to receive a username and password. One person, usually the PNC chair or assigned PNC member will be tasked with uploading the MIF. That person will be the only one who can edit content on the church MIF. Other members of the PNC can be assigned log in privileges to read Pastor Information Forms of potential applicants. The Clerk must validate that the session has approved the MIF. This requires a separate PIN obtained from Presbytery and finally approved by CCL liaison or chairperson.

In addition to the matching service provided by CLC, the session may choose to advertise the position however they desire. Often churches set up a separate page on their website with information that would be particularly interesting to potential candidates.

**Fifth step:** at this point, confidentiality is crucial in the PNC process. Candidates and their qualifications should not be discussed outside of PNC meetings. Most pastors who are searching for a new call are currently serving congregations; protecting that relationship is imperative. It is important to give updates to the session on the PROCESS and how it's going, but no details of who is being interviewed should be given.

This is an anxious time for the congregation who don't see all the work going on behind the closed-door meetings of the PNC. Updating the congregation once a month during worship or including a blurb in the newsletter about the PROCESS is a way of letting them know work is happening even if they aren't privy to the inner workings.

Once the PNC is ready to begin receiving Pastoral Information Forms (PIFs) from potential candidates, the committee will need to develop a process for ranking the forms. Usually, bulk batches of PIF's will be distributed at one time. A simple initial filtering process includes individuals categorizing PIFs as YES, NO, and MAYBE and comparing their groupings with the rest of the PNC members.

The PNC should select the top 3-5 candidates at a time to interview by phone or Skype. References can be checked now or wait until after the first interview. PNCs can also request additional materials from pastors, such as audio or video sermon recordings.

If no satisfactory candidates are found in a particular batch of PIFs, another match can be requested. This should result in additional PIFs.

**Sixth step:** When the PNC has completed a thorough search of a significant number of PIFs and identified (2-3) Pastors of interest, these names and PIF's should be shared with the CCL liaison. General results of a brief conference with the EP and the candidate's EP will be shared with the PNC before it continues its work. If there are no red flags, the PNC should move on in the selection interviews. When the PNC finds a candidate who seems to be an excellent match, contact the CCL liaison who will work with the EP and CCP for a joint interview to allow the candidate an opportunity to better understand the Presbytery and answer any questions they may have prior to final negotiations with the PNC. An in-depth background check will be completed. Once they pass that check, the PNC should begin to talk about setting up a neutral pulpit weekend with the candidate(s).

**Seventh step:** A neutral pulpit is a chance for the PNC to hear the candidate preach in someone else's church preferably in some other town. Generally, the day before is an excellent time for a face-to-face meeting with the candidate. When setting up a neutral pulpit, be clear about whether a pastor's spouse is invited or not.

**Eighth step:** Once the PNC picks a final candidate and is ready to extend a call:

1. Should begin initial terms of call conversations with the candidate. Check with the PSV website for the most current minimum compensation guidelines and the Terms of Call document.
2. Make sure the candidate has interviewed with CCP and request that a full background check be completed.
3. Schedule a candidating weekend (where the candidate comes to the church to preach during worship) and notify session of the need to call a congregational meeting that day for the purpose of voting on the candidate.
4. The candidate will lead worship and preaching during the service, followed by a congregational meeting. At the meeting the PNC will present him/her and the terms of call for discussion and vote which shall be counted by written ballot.
5. In the event there is a high number of negative votes (anything less than 80-85% is cause for concern), the PNC, the CCL liaison, and the candidate should discuss whether it's advisable to accept the call.
6. If approved, the pastor is recommended for presbytery membership at its next stated meeting though the pastor may begin in the position before that day.
7. At the end of the meeting, the PNC is officially dismissed with great thanks at the conclusion of the meeting.
8. It is strongly encouraged that the members of the PNC or another designated team within the congregation specifically continue to provide support and encouragement to the new pastor as they get oriented and acclimated in a new position and place.

9. If it hasn't already happened, someone from the PNC needs to contact any remaining candidates and let them know they have selected someone else, thank them for their interest, and contact the CLC to remove the MIF from the system.
10. The candidate should begin to plan a start date with the new congregation and, if appropriate, announcing to his/her departure to the current position

**For an Associate Pastor** the APNC may have places of collaboration with the Lead Pastor, but the APNC is accountable to the congregation, not the pastor.

- The pastor may offer insight into the MIF, however, ultimately the APNC is responsible for the final document and following the procedures noted above.
- The pastor does not moderate or participate in the APNC meetings. They may serve as a source of information if the CCL liaison is not available.
- Pastors can read and review PIF's indicating to the PNC chair any of particular interest. It is the responsibility of the PNC chair to determine whether to share those with the PNC as a whole.
- When the committee has narrowed the search it will be appropriate for the Lead Pastor to be invited to have a conversation with the candidate to allow the candidate to ask questions and determine whether they may be a good team.
- All decisions about whether to extend the call are the responsibility of the APNC.

#### **Phase 4: A Warm Welcome**

1. At the next stated meeting of presbytery, CCP presents the candidate and their recommendation, with the pastor's statement of faith, biographical information and terms of call.
2. If the pastor is coming from another church or position where they presently serve, the pastor gives notice of the conclusion of service there. If from another presbytery, then that presbytery also must act to dissolve that call before transferring the pastor to this presbytery.
3. The pastor arrives at the new call and is welcomed. Often a luncheon or special celebration is held after worship on the pastor's first Sunday. Another option is to create a public event to introduce the pastor to the wider community.
4. Thoughtful acts of hospitality in the first weeks of a new pastoral call go a long way to ensure the pastor starts to get to know the congregation members.
5. An Administrative Committee of the Presbytery is approved by the CCP for the purpose of installing the pastor at a date approved by the pastor and the moderator of Presbytery who presides at the ordination/installation service.
6. The Pastoral Call Process is concluded upon the installation of the pastor.

# About Mission Studies

## Why a Mission Study?

A good mission study of a congregation will allow the reader to understand the unique ministry of the congregation. The mission study will include, as much as possible, the past, present and potential for the future ministry of the church under study.

When complete, the mission study will become the basis for an elected Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) to accurately shape the Mission Information Form (MIF) that will serve as the church's face and voice to prospective candidates.

Mission studies can be done at any time. They may be initiated by a church session in anticipation of a change in leadership or to expand understanding of the church and community to enhance outreach ministry. Mission studies take time!

## How do we do a Mission Study?

The Presbyterian Church USA has resources for those who may be interested in doing a Mission Study.

The following link to the PCUSA Mission Study video includes basic content as well as a description of the ways Presbyteries time mission studies at the beginning of new pastorates. The Presbytery of Scioto Valley expects congregations to have completed a mission study prior to submitting a MIF for approval.

[https://oga.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/oga/multimedia/on\\_calling\\_a\\_pastor/mission\\_studies.mp4](https://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/multimedia/on_calling_a_pastor/mission_studies.mp4)

Included in this video are some key questions that may help a session or PNC better understand the need for a strong Mission Study.

- How long since last search pastoral search?
- Have there been significant changes in the size or financial capabilities since the last search?
- Are there significant changes in the community the congregation serves? Immigrants, population shifts, etc.
- \*What is the energy level of the congregation to conduct an in-depth study?
- Is there a trained Interim Pastor in place? (Was a study done to hire this person or is this person trained to help the congregation with a study?)
- Has there been significant conflict in the congregation?
- Did the last pastorate end precipitously?

There are professional services that can be hired by a session to design and implement a Mission Study for the church. Holy Cow is one example of a service that has been used recently by churches within the Presbytery of Scioto Valley.

For do-it-yourself congregations, PCUSA offers this resource: Research Strategies for Congregations: A packet of information gathering tools designed to help you learn

more about your worshipers and your local community.

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/research-strategies-june20101.pdf>

## Accessing demographic information

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/research-services/demographic-report/>

<https://maps.nazarene.org/DemographicsPresbyterian/>

## Looking ahead to the MIF

The Ministry Information Form (MIF) The Ministry Information Form provides a narrative picture of the mission and ministry of the congregation and its sense of call. Prospective pastors will use the description you provide on your form to help them discern whether God is calling them to serve your church. Mission Study is designed to help PNC's complete a MIF

Information to include on the (MIF) Your Ministry Narrative Includes:  Your unique ministry context  Demographics  Congregational history  Theology  Cultural context  Values  Leadership needs  Vision for ministry  Expectations  Hopes and dreams

## Ministry Information Form Narrative Questions

1. What is the congregation's or organization's vision for ministry? Additionally, describe how this vision is lived out. 2. How do you feel called to reach out to address the emerging needs of your community or constituency? 3. How will this position help you to reach your vision and mission goals? 4. Provide a description of the characteristics needed by the person who is open to being called to this congregation and/or organization. 5. For what specific tasks, assignments, and program areas will this person have responsibility?

For more information see: PCUSA: On Calling a Pastor Church Leadership Connection

[https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/clc/pdfs/introduction\\_to\\_clc\\_powerpoint\\_-\\_teach\\_the\\_teacher\\_resource.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/clc/pdfs/introduction_to_clc_powerpoint_-_teach_the_teacher_resource.pdf)

Resources for writing and submitting the MIF can be found at <http://www.pcusa.org/clc> under Calling Organizations. Instructions for completing the MIF Users Guides for the PNC chair and clerk of session Downloadable forms in PDF and Microsoft Word formats

# About Transitional Pastors

Transitional pastors, also known as interim pastors, receive special training and have experience in helping congregations prepare for their next called and installed pastor. Some transitional pastors have special skills and experience that can help a congregation recover from a time of conflict, clergy misconduct, or other trauma in the congregation.

Transitional pastors, along with the church's session, provide for the continuation of the church's programs and ministries during the time of preparation and search for the next pastor. This usually includes:

Worship leadership and preaching

- Pastoral care
- Moderating the session
- Administrative work including supervision of staff
- Support of programs and committees of the congregation.
- Maintaining connections in the community
- Active participation in the life of the presbytery

The duties of a *transitional associate pastor* are defined by the church and outlined in the covenant for a transitional associate pastor. A transitional pastor also works with the congregation to prepare for the next chapter of the church's ministry under the leadership of a new pastor. This work includes:

- Exploring the church's heritage both in times of challenge and in times of accomplishment
- Discerning the mission of the church – how and where is God calling us in this time and place
- Strengthening the leadership of the church for ministry and mission
- Building connections to the community and to the presbytery
- Preparing for new pastoral leadership with renewed energy and commitment

In other words, the transitional pastor helps a congregation discover their identity apart from their last pastor and prepares them to embrace their ministry and mission with a new pastor.

Transitional pastors are not called and installed pastors, and their terms of call are not voted on by the congregation. They are contracted by the session and a covenant for their ministry is negotiated by the pastor and the session, and then approved by the Commission for Church Professionals. The term of the contract is usually for one year but can be terminated by either party with appropriate notice. It can also be renewed as needed.

A transitional pastor is not eligible to be called as the next installed pastor except in rare instances and only by following the presbytery's policy for calling a transitional pastor. The transitional pastor may assist the session or a special committee with completing the mission study and the Mission Information Form. The transitional pastor may not be involved in any of the discernment of the Pastor Nominating Committee. An assigned liaison from the Commission for Congregational Life is responsible for training the PNC and providing assistance to the committee as needed.

You should expect a good transitional pastor to begin their time with you with intensity and energy, and to leave with intentionality, being fully present with the congregation from the beginning and really leaving when it is time for them to say good-bye.

*\*Sections adapted from the PC(USA), Office of the General Assembly website*

## Pastoral Transitions Terminology

TITLE	DEFINITION	CALL/CONTRACT	SALARY INFO	ADDITIONAL INFO
<b>Permanent Positions</b>				
Pastor G-2.05	Full or part time with ongoing indefinite term	Called by congregation and installed	Minimum guidelines apply	Traditional Online PSV call documents
Associate Pastor or Co-Pastor G-2.05	Additional pastor to meet strategy and missional needs. Ongoing term F or PT	Called by congregation and installed	Minimum guidelines apply	Duties are determined by session and approved by Presbytery. Ordinarily not eligible to become next pastor*. Online PSV documents available
<b>Temporary positions</b>				
Pastor for designated term G-2.05	Serving congregation F or PT for a specific amount of time	Call by congregation and installed	Minimum guidelines apply	Online PSV documents available
Interim Pastor/Transitional Associate transitional	Goals are to work with congregation on five developmental tasks of interim ministry F or PT	Covenant contractual with Session, temporary, 1 year renewable	Guidelines follow what was paid for previous pastor	Contract document online; Transitional pastor not to be involved with PNC; usually not eligible to become pastor*
Stated Supply	Temporary pastoral relationship. F or PT May be renewed each year	Covenant contractual with Session.	Minimum guidelines apply	Contract document online. Areas of ministry/responsibility are outlined by session in contract
Contracted Pastoral Service	To provide Pastoral services for church	Session contracts for services listed in contract	Number of hours listed to be paid at min. \$25/hr to include travel time	Online PSV documents available

Gap pastors	To provide temporary coverage for a period between an interim and called pastor or called pastor and interim	Session contracts		
Pulpit supply	Brief coverage for vacations, etc.			List available from presbytery

\*There are exceptions

Temporary positions, other than pastor for designated term, are not installed positions. Titles and terms shall be determined by presbytery. Full/Part time positions: FT is 40-48 hours (10-12 four-hour modules); 12 hours (3 modules) must be reserved for preaching and worship leadership, even if PT position; PT pay must be based on % of minimum compensation determined by presbyter.