

Chapter I

When a Church Goes Through a Change in Pastoral Leadership

The Committee on Ministry assists churches in a great variety of ways during a time of transition. Direct contact may be made with our committee at any time through the official moderator who is normally a member of COM appointed by the Presbytery. Sessions may also contact the chairperson of the COM or the Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery at any time.

During the period when the church is without an installed pastor, the Session must assume additional, full leadership responsibility for the life of the church with the support and assistance of COM. This need not be a period to “mark time”. Rather, it can be a time for honest evaluation of your church and a time of spiritual renewal.

Sequence of Events When a Church has a Vacant Pulpit

1. COM interviews departing Pastor
2. COM appoints a moderator for the Church's session
3. COM meets with Session, discusses process and options in detail
4. Next Steps - Mission Study and Pastor Nominating Committee

Each of these steps are described in detail below:

1. The COM will conduct an exit interview with the departing pastor. Here is a list of sample questions.

- *What opportunities in your new call are particularly attractive to you that are not available in your current position?*
- *Why are you leaving this position at this time?*
- *What are the strengths of this congregation?*
- *What are the congregation's weaknesses?*
- *How would you describe the session?*
- *What is the actual and potential leadership situation?*
- *Where do you see the church going in the next five to ten years?*
- *What is the current financial position of the church?*
- *Do you anticipate any special needs or concerns for the church in the next five years?*
- *How do you think the community views the church? Why?*
- *Do you feel the church would benefit from having an transitional pastor? If not, what is your suggestion for pastoral leadership?*
- *What characteristics do you feel are needed in the transitional leadership to best serve this congregation?*

- *Have you felt supported in your ministry by the congregation and by the presbytery?*
- *Are there any other comments which you feel would help us?*

2. The COM will appoint a moderator

The Committee on Ministry will appoint a moderator for your session and Congregation. This role may be assumed at some point by an transitional or stated supply pastor but the COM-appointed moderator will serve as long as needed. This person will be the moderator of all session and congregational meetings (though he/she may ask any other minister of the Presbytery to moderate specific meetings. The moderator appointed by the Committee on Ministry will receive a copy of the minutes of all meetings of the session and congregation.

3. The COM will meet with the session

As soon as practical after a Pastor has announced his or her resignation, representatives of the Committee on Ministry or other appropriate presbytery representatives will meet with the Session without the departing pastor being present. This meeting will be moderated by the COM or Presbytery representative. There are several items that will be covered by the COM.

- Review of the Presbytery's Boundaries Covenant (See *Section V of this manual*) and how it applies to the former pastor, session, and congregation. The need for a covenant with the former Pastor and special arrangements for correspondence with the congregation will be discussed and negotiated if required. It is advisable for family members to be familiar with this document. While they are not required to sign it, they are expected to respect its intent.
- Discuss with the Session the process for obtaining pastoral services while the church is without a pastor. Note that persons preaching in a church must be approved by the Committee on Ministry BOO Reference***
Ordinarily a committee of the Session, or a person named for that purpose by the Session, will select and request Pastors to fill the pulpit, working in consultation with the COM. The Presbytery has a list of potential pastors and qualified laypersons to fill the pulpit. **Note that during the period in which a church does not have an installed pastor, no one that is or is likely to become a candidate for pastor of that church should be asked to preach.**
- Counsel the Session on any Associate Pastors. If a church has an associate pastor on its staff, it is appropriate for the Session to re-align his/her duties and compensation during the period the church is without a pastor. The status as associate pastor does not change, but he/she may

be asked to perform some of the former pastor's functions or be relieved of some previous duties to assume additional pastoral duties. The official relationship of an associate pastor to a church is not dependent upon that of a pastor. There is no expectation that the Associate Pastor offer his or her resignation when the Pastor resigns or a new Pastor is installed. An Associate Pastor is not ordinarily eligible to become the next pastor of the church. An Associate Pastor is not eligible to continue in the role of Transitional Pastor.

- Counsel with Session on any Parish Associates. A Parish Associate is normally a position for a retired pastor or a pastor who has another employment source. The agreement between the session and the parish associate may continue with the permission of COM. Unlike the position of Associate Pastor which is with the congregation, the position of Parish Associate is with the pastor and may be terminated at the discretion of the person serving as the transitional or installed pastor. During the time before an transitional or installed pastor is called, the Parish Associate reports to the Session.
- Explain the process to be followed by the church as it seeks a new Pastor. This will include consideration of various temporary pastoral relationships and also the process for calling an Installed Pastor/Associate Pastor.
- Temporary pastoral relationships include Transitional Pastors and Stated Supply Pastors. The Presbytery also offers a Designated Pastors/Associate Pastors relationship that will also be discussed. Note that 'titles' and 'terms of service' for temporary relationships are determined by the Presbytery. A person serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is invited for a specified period not to exceed twelve months in length, which is renewable with the approval of the presbytery. (G-2.0504b) Details of each of these relationships and the process used to implement them are provided below:

Transitional Pastors

The Session may decide that it desires the services on a Transitional Pastor. A transitional pastor is a minister invited by the Session of a church without an installed pastor to preach the Word, administer the Sacraments, and fulfill pastoral duties for a specified period not to exceed twelve months at a time, while the church is seeking a Pastor. The Session may not secure or dissolve a relationship with a Transitional Pastor without seeking the concurrence of Presbytery through its COM.

A position description shall be written for this position and approved by the Committee on Ministry, which shall also approve a written contract between the church and the Transitional Pastor (see attached forms). With the

permission of the COM, the Transitional pastor, if a member of this Presbytery, may moderate session and congregational meetings to insure continuity.

A minister in a temporary pastoral relationship, including a transitional pastor, may not normally be called to be the next installed Pastor or Associate Pastor of a church in which he or she served as a Transitional pastor. However: if a church, during the term of a Transitional Pastor, is experiencing an exceptionally fruitful season of ministry as measured by, for instance, a significant increase in adult baptisms, worship attendance, membership, stewardship, mission support, Sunday School attendance, the starting of new mission initiatives, then the PNC may request a meeting with the COM to grant an exception to this policy in order to consider the Transitional Pastor as the next called pastor in accordance with BOO (2011-2013) G-2.0504c. "A Presbytery may determine that its mission strategy permits a teaching elder employed in a temporary pastoral relationship (including Transitional Pastors) to be eligible to serve as the next installed Pastor, co-Pastor, or Associate Pastor. Presbyteries that permit this eligibility shall establish such relationships only by a three-fourths vote of the members of Presbytery present and voting." (G-2.0504c)

See section VI of this manual for more information on Transitional Pastors.

Stated Supply Pastors

A 'Stated Supply' is a minister appointed by the Presbytery, after consultation with the Session, to perform the functions of a Pastor in a church. A stated supply relationship is established when for some reason the church is not currently seeking a Pastor. A Stated Supply serves as a Pastor, and is approved for no longer than one year at a time.

Designated Pastor/Associate Pastor

A Designated Pastor/Associate Pastor is a category of installed Pastors allowed in the Book of Order and defined by our Presbytery. They are used when a church desires to shorten the normal Pastoral search process which can take from 1-2 years.

There are several particulars about the process that are specific to this type of Call:

- A. Committee on Ministry must approve whether it is appropriate to consider a designated pastoral relationship for the specific church.
- B. A congregation must vote to participate in this type pastoral relationship through a called Congregational Meeting. Prior to this vote, the Committee

on Ministry (COM) will present information about the Designated Pastor process, first to the Session and then to a congregational meeting.

C. A 'Designated Pastor Nominating Committee' (DPNC) is elected by the congregation.

D. The search process for the Designated Pastor/Associate Pastor is normally considerably shorter than the normal search process. Ordinarily a PNC would evaluate many PIFs before deciding on a highly qualified short list for COM's approval. In this case, the Committee on Ministry provides the DPNC a limited list of Personal information Forms (PIFs) for candidates which the Committee on Ministry feels would be highly qualified pastors for that church. Recommendations for this limited list may come from the Presbytery staff, COM members, DPNC/DAPNC members, congregation members, presbytery at large, and through pastoral networks. The pastors on the list must agree to be considered for a Designated Pastor/Associate Pastor position.

E. The DPNC considers ONLY those applicants designated by the COM. If the DPNC does not accept any of the candidates on the short list provided by COM, they can request additional names, or they can recommend to Session and the congregation that the church proceed to a full search.

F. The DPNC will review, interview, hear sermons, etc. in the same manner as a regular PNC. The DPNC will make an offer to the candidate of their choice from among the names they received from COM.

G. The chosen candidate is presented to the congregation. The congregation votes on whether to elect the candidate Designated Pastor/Associate Pastor for a term of not less than two years nor more than four years.

H. The Designated Pastor/Associate Pastor is installed by Presbytery and becomes moderator of the Session.

I. After two years of service, it is possible for the Designated Pastor/Associate Pastor to be called as the Installed Pastor/Associate Pastor. For this to occur, the Session, acting as a Pastor Nominating Committee and with the concurrence of Committee on Ministry and the Designated Pastor/Associate Pastor, must recommend to the congregation that the Designated Pastor/Associate Pastor be called as the Installed Pastor/Associate Pastor. At a called Congregational Meeting, the congregation will vote on this recommendation.

J. The Session must recommend that the Designated Pastor/Associate Pastor be called as the Installed Pastor/Associate Pastor on or before the

fourth anniversary of the establishment of the Designated Pastor/Associate Pastor relationship. If this recommendation is not made with the concurrence of the concurrence of Committee on Ministry and the Designated Pastor/Associate Pastor by this time, the position of Designated Pastor/Associate Pastor will automatically come to an end.

K. If the call is terminated before the end of four years, then the usual dissolution procedures for an Installed Pastor/Associate Pastor shall be followed. Otherwise, the relationship ends at the end of four years with no further termination provisions.

Designated Pastor/Associate Pastor Process Considerations

Pros

- Maintains ministry momentum during the transition
- Provides an objective set of eyes to evaluate the church and its needs.
- Provides opportunity for highly qualified candidates on the shortlist.
- Shortens the search process with fewer PIFs to review
- Risk is limited by the limited time span of the pastoral relationship

Cons

- Shorter transition time may not be sufficient for congregational healing.
- Shorter transition time may limit the self-evaluation of the church and its needs.
- Shorter transition may lead to confusion between the COM and the DPNC regarding priorities in candidates.
- Shortlist may not provide an adequate candidate because of limited search time and limited availability of highly qualified candidates

4. The COM will explain the next steps for seeking an Installed Pastor include completing a Mission Study and establishing the Pastor Nominating Committee:

The Mission Study

A specially assigned Mission Study Task Force (MSTF) appointed by the Session conducts a Mission Study with support from the COM Transitions Sub-Committee. It is the policy of the Presbytery, whenever a church is without an installed pastor that the Session shall engage in a congregational Mission Study with the assistance and guidance of the Presbytery. The Congregational Mission Study process is designed to help the Pastor Nominating Committee and the Session understand their church and the community it serves and help them determine the qualifications, gifts, and experience they desire in the pastor they will call. The material from the study process helps the Pastor Nominating Committee prepare the Ministry Information Form (MIF). The MIF is used by the General Assembly Agency in "matching" ministers who might be interested in a call with the particular church-and pastors reviewing churches in which they might be interested. When completed, the Mission Study is reviewed and approved by the session and COM, and signed by the clerk of session. If revisions are required, it will be sent back to the Task Force.

Note the following:

Members of the same family cannot serve together on the Mission Study Task Force

Any or all of the members of the MSTF may become members of the PNC by the election of the congregation.

A liaison from the COM will be assigned to the MSTF to guide them in their process.

The MSTF can use a 'Vision Day' as a convenient and effective means to accelerate a Mission Study. It may also use another method such as focus groups or online survey if approved by COM.

The Vision Day

A Congregational Vision Day enables a church to gather in one day most of the information and materials they need to get started on finding their new pastor. It is based on a congregational survey given to the church before Vision Day (write, distribute, tally).

At the end of this day the local church will be able to start producing their Mission Study, which when approved by Session and the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry, will allow them to form their PNC.

The PNC will then be able to begin producing their Ministry Information Form (MIF), which when approved by their Session and the Presbytery's Committee

on Ministry will allow them to start receiving Personal Information Forms (PIF) from candidates wanting to apply for their position.

A church may also choose to host a Congregational Vision Day at any significant point in their congregation's life, even if they are not looking for a new pastor. It is a wonderful tool to review, reflect, and re-engage the congregation as a whole in their local mission. The COM would be glad to assist in this if invited.

The Congregational Vision Day is facilitated by members of the Transitions Sub-Committee from the Committee on Ministry. All members should fill out the surveys on worship and pastoral preference in advance. COM encourages the participation of as many members as possible in the Vision Day for the most representative results. For more information or to start your own vision day, contact COM.

When the Mission study is completed and approved by the Session and COM, the PNC may be elected and will prepare a Church Information Form according to the outline on the following pages.

MISSION STUDY DESIGN GUIDE
(For Congregational Study)
(Revised 3/1/2018)

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I. WHAT IS A MISSION STUDY?

A Mission Study.....

1. Is a document put together by the congregation and approved by the Session
2. Is for the purpose of understanding the church's mission, vision, values, theological issues, neighborhood and focus for the next 5 plus years
3. Must be presented to and approved by the Committee on Ministry (COM) before the Ministry Information Form (MIF) can be produced.
4. Is normally completed and approved before the PNC is formed. Sometimes the Mission Study Task Force members are, in whole or in part, the same as the PNC members, but this must come with the approval of the session and the congregation.

NOTE: If a church has completed a Mission Study within the past 5 years. the church may be able to update the previous Mission Study, with the approval; of the Committee on Ministry.

II. OBJECTIVES OF A MISSION STUDY

1. To discover and express the mission and ministry of the congregation and to build consensus and support for that ministry and mission among the leaders and members of the congregation.
2. To explore new areas of ministry within the congregational life.
3. To further the ministry and mission of the Presbyterian Church in this area.
4. To discover and state what needs to be preserved, strengthened and changed based on the future needs of the church.
5. To evaluate staffing needs and the specific skills and abilities required of staff.

III. THE MISSION STUDY PROCESS

1. Selection of the Mission Study Committee.
2. First meeting scheduled with Presbytery staff for orientation.
3. The Mission Study is conducted and completed.
4. The Mission Study presented to Session for review.
5. The Mission Study presented to the Committee on Ministry (COM) for approval.
 - a. Sent to and received by the COM at least one week prior to their meeting. (Held on the 1st Thursday of every month, except August & December which are normally taken as vacation by the COM.
 - b. Two or more members of the Mission Study Design Committee must attend this meeting so that questions and input can be discussed.
6. Only after the Mission Study is approved by COM can the Church Information Form (CIF) be written and submitted to the COM.

IV.. MEETINGS OF THE MISSION STUDY PROCESS

FIRST MEETING

1. Gather information on names, chairs, secretaries, etc.
2. Negotiate meeting schedule.
3. Share each member's story of involvement with church.
4. Distribute Mission Study Design Guide.

5. Review the "Objectives of a Mission Study," and the "Church and Its Mission" statements to reflect upon how the study fits into the life and mission of the particular congregation and of the whole church.
6. Outline the Mission Study process.
7. Share the "Suggested Outline for Mission Study."
8. Assign tasks for the next meeting.

SECOND MEETING

1. Any questions since last meeting.
2. Discuss and design process for gathering and giving information from/to congregation. The Congregational Visioning Day (described elsewhere) is a great tool for this.
3. Review Membership report (2 people).
4. Review Properties report (1 person).
5. Review Worship and Attendance report (1 person).
6. Review Educational Programs report (1 person).
7. Other Programs report (1 person).
8. Mission Causes (1 person).
9. Boards (1 person).

THIRD MEETING

1. Any questions since last meeting.
2. Review remainder of reports from last meeting.
3. Assign general "editor(s)" with good writing/editing skills and, if possible, access to computer for putting together reports.
4. Assignment: Develop a list of those activities, programs, services and causes that you wish to see **PRESERVED**: preserved with few or no changes; **STRENGTHENED**: continued with significant changes; or, **CHANGED**: eliminated or begun.

FOURTH MEETING

1. Any questions since last meeting.
2. Review Preserve/Strengthen/Change.
3. Begin discussion of strengths and weaknesses.
4. Assign small group to write Preserve/Strengthen/Change.
5. Assignment: What do you believe should be the five-year goals for your church? (i.e. what should be its mission and ministry?)

FIFTH MEETING

1. Any questions since last meeting.
2. Review Goals/Mission/Ministry (both the committee members' opinions and those of the congregation).
3. Assign editors the task of writing any summary statements and other narrative material for the Mission Study. Use other people in the congregation to read over the documents and give objective feedback.

SIXTH MEETING

Arrange to put into final form for Session review.

The following questions and comments will serve as a guideline for the development of the report. Pick and choose what questions or suggested format will provide the clearest description of the membership of _____ Church.

1. Prepare a membership graph for the last 5-10 years. Indicate the current number of males and females.
2. What occupations are represented among your members? What educational levels?
3. Where do the members live in relationship to the church? You may wish to gather this information by zip codes or by the creation of a map with mileage radius markers and membership located.
4. Describe your congregation at worship. Include information about visitors as well as members; racial make-up, ages, gender and anything else that you think is significant.

<h2>V. MISSION STUDY COMPONENTS / REPORTS</h2>
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WORSHIP AND ATTENDANCE REPORT

1. Describe the Sunday morning service of worship at your church.
 - a. Be sure to include any special or unique parts of the service.
 - b. Describe any changes which have occurred in the service over the past five years.
2. Describe any special or seasonal services of worship as well as any mid-week services.
3. Give the average, high and low attendance at worship during the previous year.
 - a. Mention any seasonal fluctuations of which you are aware.

THE CHURCH COMMUNITY

1. Describe the area served by the church. Specify the radius or distances used.
 - a. Where is the church located?
 - b. What kind of community surrounds the church?
 - c. Do commercial or industrial areas exist nearby?
 - d. What lifestyles, housing patterns, employment and economic concerns are in evidence?
 - e. How does the membership of the church compare with the neighborhood?
2. What are the major issues that face your community now and in the years ahead?
 - a. How has your church responded to past needs of the community and how is it likely to respond in the future?

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS REPORT

1. Describe the educational programs in which your church is involved and the facilities which are used by each program. Be sure to include adult education, leadership development (church officer training, teacher training) and any weekday programs.
2. Make a list of all church school classes by age/grade and give the number enrolled and the curriculum used.

REPORT ON OTHER PROGRAMS

1. Describe programs which are not considered part of the educational program. Be sure to include all organizations and activities which are a part of the ministry or mission of the church.
2. Tell the approximate number of people involved in each program and the frequency of occurrence. Also note if there is staff participation or leadership expected.

REPORT ON THE PROPERTIES

1. Describe your church's buildings and location. Be sure to include the general uses of each building.
2. If the church owns a manse (or manses) include a brief description including the location.

REPORT ON THE MISSIONS

1. List all the mission causes in which your church is involved. Indicate whether each is denominational, non-denominational, and local.
2. Include amounts of money given and what percentage of the total budget that amount is. Also indicate if the support of a cause is other than financial.

REPORT OF THE BOARDS OF THE CHURCH

1. Describe the functioning of the boards of your church and the committee structure of those boards.
2. List the time commitment that is expected of staff in working with the boards and their committees.

OTHER RESOURCES

Go to www.pcusa.org to collect 10 year annual statistics on your congregation.

Demographic Information on your ministry area is available through Mission Insight. This is a free service provided by the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii. Contact Casey Maddren at the Presbytery Office to set up an account for this valuable service.

<h2>V. MISSION STUDY ORDER</h2>
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The order of the Mission Study may differ slightly from the order required by the Church Information Form. The order here provides for a smooth flow for the Mission Study.

1. **COVER** - Name of the Church, Date, "Mission Study," Picture/Design
2. **INSIDE TITLE PAGE** - Committee members, resource people
3. **PURPOSE STATEMENT**

4. **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES** or Preserve, Strengthen, Change List
5. **BRIEF HISTORY OF CHURCH**
6. **DESCRIPTION OF PARISH AREA** (Demographics, etc.)
7. **COMMUNITY INFORMATION** (Concerns and Problems)
8. **MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**
9. **WORSHIP AND ATTENDANCE**
10. **EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER PROGRAMS, ORGANIZATIONS, and ACTIVITIES** (Include committee structure and each committee's responsibilities.)
11. **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY**
12. **FINANCIAL SECTION** (Budget and Mission Support)
13. **STAFF POSITION DESCRIPTION**
14. **APPENDIX** (Sample bulletins, charts, other information)