

Chapter II

FORMING, TRAINING AND DOING THE WORK OF A PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE (PNC)

"When a congregation has a vacancy in a pastoral position, or after the presbytery approves the effective date of the dissolution of an existing pastoral relationship, the congregation shall, with the guidance and permission of the presbytery, proceed to fill the vacancy in the following manner...The session shall call a congregational meeting to elect a pastor nominating committee that shall be representative of the whole congregation. The committee's duty shall be to nominate a pastor for election by the congregation." (G-2.0801 and G-2.0802).

The Responsibilities of the Session

The Session recommends the size of the PNC to the congregation. Our suggestion is that it be between seven and nine members. A minimum number would be 5 members. All members of the PNC shall be members of the congregation; and the PNC shall be representative of the congregation (age, sex, profession, ethnicity, etc.). As such, the number should be sufficient to provide this representation, yet small enough to work together without need for an executive committee.

The Session may determine the wisdom of allowing active, sitting elders to serve on the PNC. On the one hand, having an active member of the Session serve on the PNC can provide for smooth communication between the PNC and the Session. On the other hand, serving on a PNC is, in itself, a very demanding job. It often requires weekly meetings for over a year. Of course in smaller congregations with limited personnel resources, having at least one elder on the PNC may not be a choice. It is also very helpful to have a member for the PNC who is very familiar with the results of the congregational mission study.

Only one person from a family can serve on the PNC. (e.g. spouses cannot serve together.)

The Session needs to assign the PNC a budget. The details on this are in the next section.

Because the PNC is a committee of the congregation rather than a committee of Session, the Session makes its recommendations regarding size and format of the Pastor Nominating Committee at a meeting of the congregation which must approve the size and format prior to proceeding to the election of the committee. This will be done at a congregational meeting where the congregation will vote on two things: 1) the recommendations from the Session as to the size of the PNC and 2) the method to be used in nominating the PNC. Beyond these two things, neither the Session as a whole nor individual elders have any power to direct the work of the committee nor the right to

reports on the work of the PNC beyond those given to the congregation as a whole. The only exceptions are those items of scheduling and budgeting noted below. If there are members of the Session on the PNC, they are expected to maintain the high degree of confidentiality with Session and individual elders discussed in "Clarify How to Work as a PNC" below.

Methods for Nominating a PNC

The goal is to have a PNC that is representative of the whole congregation: that means diversity of age, gender, race, theology, etc. Nominees **MUST** realize this is a major commitment of time for 1 – 2 years for PNC's and APNC's, and 6 months - 1 year for DPNC's.

There are four (4) methods that may be used to nominate a PNC. The method chosen by the congregation is up to the congregation, but based on our experience each method fits best a specific set of circumstances. The 4 methods are:

Method 1

The Session asks the congregation to empower the Session to act as the nominating committee to nominate a representative PNC.

Note that as in all these methods, the congregation needs to grant the Session the authority to act in this capacity.

This method is best in the following circumstances: Smaller churches in which session adequately represents the full diversity of the congregation. The potential downside is that the congregation may see the Session as overly controlling.

Method 2

The Session asks the congregation to empower the existing congregational nominating committee to act to nominate the PNC. This should be done only if the nominating committee is truly representative of the congregation and has demonstrated effectiveness.

This method is best in the following circumstances: Churches with a standing congregational nominating committee which is truly representative and has been effective. There are no potential downsides.

Method 3

The Session recommends to the congregation the names of organizations which are to each name a nominee (i.e. session, deacons, youth, women's ministry, men's ministry, music ministry, missions etc.) The persons nominated by these groups are not charged

to specifically represent those groups. It is simply one method of gaining representation from the whole congregation.

This method is best in the following circumstances: Larger churches with multiple, compartmentalized program elements. The potential downsides are that PNCs elected in this way tend to favor the status quo and that PNC members can see themselves as representatives of a group rather than seekers of the best candidate for the whole congregation.

Method 4

The congregation itself nominates the slate of nominees from the floor at a meeting of the congregation. All persons nominated must have agreed in advance to have their names put forward and expressed their willingness to serve if elected.

This method is best in the following circumstances: Rare situations in which a small congregation has a need to act quickly, a standing congregational nominating does not exist or is ineffective, and the session would be unlikely to identify a slate of candidates that would be accepted by the congregation. The downside is that it tends to produce a confused process and unrepresentative PNC. COM considers this last method as the most open to problems and the least likely to achieve representation of the whole congregation.

Electing the Pastor Nominating Committee

The Session will call a congregational meeting to vote on the nominees. Notice of the meeting and its objective must be given on two successive Sundays and at least ten days in advance of the meeting. The meeting announcement should explain floor nominations will be allowed, however, any floor-nominated candidate must have been consulted prior to the meeting and agreed to be nominated.

If methods 1-3 above are followed, the names of those persons being placed in nomination must be publicized in advance. It is helpful to publish a flyer with the nominees' names, photos, and a brief personal and ministry bio. It is also helpful to have each nominee share with the congregation why he or she feels called to accept this responsibility if elected.

Opportunity must be given for additional nominations from the floor. Individuals planning to nominate someone from the floor should consult with that person in advance as to their willingness to serve if elected. Note that since the size of the committee has already been set, the election of one or more persons from the floor means that one or more of the persons on the slate of nominees will not be elected. It is not appropriate simply to expand the size of the PNC to accommodate all who wish to serve. It is not permissible for a floor-nominated candidate to run against a specific person on the slate of nominees. If there are more nominees than positions of the committee all nominees must be voted on. This would be by written ballot with each voting member of the

congregation having has many votes as there are positions to be filled. Each nominee may be voted for only once on each ballot. The top vote getters will be elected up to the authorized size of the committee.

A member of the COM will be assigned by COM to work as a liaison with your PNC. That liaison should be present at the congregational meeting (clear the date with him or her in advance) and plan to meet briefly with the newly elected members of the PNC following the congregational meeting to set a place, date and time for the first official meeting of the PNC.

The Initial Meeting of the PNC

The appointed liaison from the Committee on Ministry shall conduct this first meeting of the PNC. The chairperson (to be elected at the first meeting) will conduct all subsequent meetings,

The purposes of the first meeting are:

- 1) to organize the committee for its work
- 2) to clarify the role of the COM and the liaison
- 3) to cover how a PNC should do its work
- 4) to familiarize the PNC with the basic scope and flow of its work
- 5) to break the ice on the process of discernment.

Organize the PNC

The PNC should elect a chairperson, a vice chairperson, and a secretary (often both a recording and a corresponding secretary are needed), and a treasurer, if necessary. The benefit of having two secretaries is that one would be specifically tasked with letting all candidates know where they are in the process. Set a date for the next meeting, at which the PNC will begin writing the Church Information Form from the information in the Congregational Study.

Clarify the Role of the COM

The decision to call a pastor is a three-way agreement that includes the minister, the congregation and the Presbytery. All three must be in agreement. The congregation is looking for a pastor. The Presbytery Committee on Ministry (COM) is looking for (among other things) a member of the presbytery. The Pastor is looking for the church in which God is calling him/her to serve.

Polity Stuff about COM (G-2.0803)

"According to the process of the presbytery and prior to making its report to the congregation, the pastor nominating committee shall receive and consider the presbytery's counsel on the merits, suitability, and availability of those considered for the call

The COM shall counsel with churches regarding calls for permanent pastoral relations, visiting and counseling with every committee elected to nominate a pastor or associate pastor. It shall advise with the committee regarding the merits, availability, and suitability of any candidate or minister whose name is contemplated for nomination to the Congregation, and shall have the privilege of suggesting names to the committee. (G-2.0803). No call to a permanent pastoral relationship shall be in order for consideration by the presbytery unless the Church has received and considered the committee's counsel before action is taken to issue a call. A call to a permanent pastoral relationship shall not be issued until it has been approved by the presbytery." When seeking to call a designated pastor, the PNC shall nominate for the congregation's consideration and vote, only from among those ministers designated to it by COM.

The presbytery has authorized the COM to find in order calls which are issued by churches (SFPSR 7.52H). Once the requirements have been met and the COM has found the call to be in order, the pastor is invited to appear before Presbytery for examination on the floor.

Clarify the Role of the Liaison

The COM has appointed a liaison to your committee. Direct contact may be made with the COM at any time through him/her. It is customary for the COM liaison to attend most PNC meetings. While the COM as a whole must approve the candidate, the liaison has voice but no vote on the PNC. Other helpful resources are the Chair of COM and the Presbytery staff.

The liaison appointed by COM will counsel the PNC in at least three stages in the process: 1) at the beginning of its work (the first meeting); 2) prior to reading dossiers, and 3) prior to interviewing prospective pastors.

The COM and its liaison will not do the work of the PNC and will not control the work of the PNC except as mandated by the Book of Order. But COM can offer service, counsel and experience which can make the PNC's work more efficient and rewarding. The representative assigned by COM to the PNC is there to offer assistance, counsel and support, for the purpose of making the considerable work of the PNC as easy as possible. Communication with the COM will normally be made through the liaison, but whenever needed, the PNC may contact the chair of COM directly.

It is the policy of the COM that liaisons to PNC's enjoy good working relationships with the PNC. Within two weeks of this first meeting with the PNC, chaired by the representative of COM, the chairperson of the Transition Sub-Committee of COM shall contact the PNC chairperson to determine the acceptability of the COM liaison. Thereafter, similar inquiries shall be made by the Transition Sub-Committee chairperson on a quarterly basis, for the purpose of monitoring the status of the relationship.

In the event that a PNC feels that a change in representatives is needed, the PNC chairperson shall contact the chairperson of the Transition Sub-Committee, and request that a replacement be made. If the differences cannot be resolved, the Transition chairperson shall appoint a new liaison.

In the event that the PNC chairperson indicates that the relationship is not a good one, the Transition Sub-Committee chairperson shall discuss the situation with the COM liaison and the PNC Chairperson to determine if a change in COM liaison is appropriate. In the event there is disagreement regarding the continuation of the relationship, the PNC chairperson's view shall prevail.

Clarify How to Work as a PNC

Be a Participating Committee PNC's usually meet once a week and it is important that a majority of the members be present at all meetings. There will also be some homework involved (e.g., writing sections of the MIF and reading PIFs). During the final stages, there may be additional time required for interviews and hospitality, usually on the weekends, and possibly trips out of town. Should a member be unable to continue on a regular basis, the PNC chairperson should contact the COM representative immediately. The congregation does not fill the vacated position since it is difficult to bring a new person up to speed and integrate them into the life of the committee.

Be a Praying Committee Seeking a new pastor requires more than human wisdom. Your committee will want to spend time in prayer at each meeting beyond just formal opening and closing prayers. Some committees select one person to prepare devotions for each meeting; others let each member take a time in rotation. Never assume it will just happen. Also, invite the congregation to be in prayer with and for you.

Be a Confidential Committee The meetings of the PNC are closed to everyone except the COM liaison and guests who are invited to the meetings by the PNC.

When an associate pastor is being called, the election and the duty of the nominating committee are the same as when a pastor is being called. The procedures are the same with the following exceptions: a. When seeking an associate pastor, the nominating committee shall confer with the pastor or any continuing co-pastors. b. The role of the pastor in relating to the PNC and its work will be one that is mutually acceptable. The PNC will give the pastor or co-pastor the PIFs of those candidates still under consideration after preliminary references have been checked and sermon tapes reviewed. The PNC will arrange for the pastor or co-pastor to interview all final candidates.

All matters discussed in this committee should be absolutely confidential. We cannot stress the importance of this enough. Do not reveal details of your deliberations or the names of ministers under consideration or any of your comments or decisions about them either within or outside your church (this includes the Session, other pastors / staff, etc.). The congregation has chosen you to do a sacred work on its behalf, and the

acceptance of your final report will largely be determined by the manner in which you maintain silence outside this committee. This should be made clear especially to the members of your family.

Many pastors do not want their staff, Session or congregation to know they are seeking another call. This knowledge can be very disruptive in the life of a church. You will avoid hurting some minister and/or some other congregation by keeping your discussions strictly confidential.

Connectionalism is one of the hallmarks of the Presbyterian Church. Frequently there are much fewer than six degrees of separation between those who know one another. The down side of this connectedness is that others, not bound by confidentiality, may easily connect the dots in an idle comment that allows a candidate to be identified. During WW II there was a slogan that "loose lips sink ships." They've been known to sink a pastor nominating process too.

Establish a budget It is helpful to establish a budget for the work of your committee from the beginning, or to have an understanding with the Session (and trustees, if they are a separate body), so that necessary monies are available to do your work. Committee expenses are of two kinds: a) Committee travel, telephone calls, correspondence, etc.; and b) expenses for bringing a minister from a distance, when your committee wants to hear that minister in a neutral pulpit and interview the minister. Normally, these expenses will run \$10,000 to \$15,000, "backloaded" (meaning a majority of costs occur near the end of the process). This does not include the cost of relocation which will depend on where pastor is relocated from and possessions to be moved; it may be as little as \$2,000 to \$3,000 or as high as \$15,000.

To maintain complete CONFIDENTIALITY, the Pastor Nominating Committee may establish a separate bank account, making a full and final financial report when they have completed their assignment.

Pulpit Guests After the PNC begins operation, no active candidate should preach in your church. This will apply until you ask the session to invite your nominee to preach in the pulpit of your church for the congregation's consideration.

Familiarize the PNC with the basic scope and flow of its work

The flow charts will also be helpful in this orientation. They have page indicators to show where each topic is covered.

Each of these topics is fleshed out in the later sections of Sections II and III of this Manual. These titles are the titles of those sections.

The Work of the PNC is to:

Identify the characteristics of the church and prior pastor(s) -- starting with the closing

exercise at this meeting

Identify the desired characteristics of the future pastor -- -- starting with the closing exercise at this meeting

Create a Church Information Form (MIF) telling prospective pastors who you are.

Request COM approval of MIF

Report progress to Congregation on a regular basis

Set up process for reviewing Personal Information Forms (PIFs) from pastors.
Receive and review PIFs.

Identify pastors to follow up on.

Narrow list to 3-6 most interesting, viable candidates

Request COM approval of short-list candidates and do background clearance through the EP

Report progress to congregation

Plan interview process

Prepare to host candidates

Interview candidates.

Evaluate interviews and determine if PNC is ready to issue a Call

Extend invitation for Call.

Negotiate Terms of Call if invitation is accepted.

Request COM approval to present candidate for presbytery membership

Present candidate to congregation for approval.

Present candidate to the Presbytery for vote

Break the Ice on the Process of Discernment.

PURPOSE This exercise, done at the first regular meeting of the Pastor Nominating Committee and COM liaison, functions as a get acquainted/getting to know you experience between the COM liaison and PNC. It gives the PNC the opportunity to tell

the COM liaison who they understand the church is and who they understand the previous pastor to be. While it helps the liaison get to know the church and prior pastor through "insiders" eyes, more importantly it helps the PNC verbalize who and what the church is, both strengths and growth areas, and how that compares and contrasts with their future desires and expectations. Because churches often take on aspects of their pastor's personality, it is helpful to describe the prior pastor, both strengths and growth areas, especially if the pastorate has been long-term or conflicted.

BENEFITS The PNC becomes more conscious of what the PNC wants to keep and what they might like to change. It helps identify differences of opinion or perspectives that could lead to conflict among committee members. It helps identify personality characters that the PNC might be looking for. It helps as a reference point to return to occasionally when the process gets confused over conflicting information and priorities, especially when developing the CF and pastor profile.

BREAK THE ICE PROCESS

Part 1 The COM liaison asks the PNC members to describe in Words Or phrases who and what the church is. Emphasizing strengths and work areas are both OK. Responses are written on a marker board or paper for all to see. If a word or phrase isn't clear to the liaison, a request for more information is requested, i.e., "when you say what do you mean? or what does that look like in the congregation? Can you give me an example of that?"

Part 2 The COM liaison continues the process by asking the PNC members to describe in words or phrases their former pastor. Emphasizing strengths and work areas are both OK. Again the responses are written on a marker board for all to see and clarification is requested as in Part 1.

Part 3 The COM liaison identifies or makes observations about words or phrases that begin to express patterns of being or functioning in the congregation. The PNC members are invited to respond to these generalizations. This process invites "coloring in the picture" of who the church is.

Make sure someone transcribes this information so it can be referred to later if necessary. This information is, of course, CONFIDENTIAL.

The Work of the Pastor Nominating Committee

Create a Ministry Information Form (MIF) telling prospective pastors **who you are**.

Your first task will be to complete the Ministry Information Form (4F). This form should be completed using information in the congregational study of your church. This document may be obtained online at <http://www.pcusa.org/closforms.htm> in Word or Acrobat PDF format or a hard copy may be secured from the Presbytery Office. Download Parts I and II and also the "Skills List" which will be useful in filling out the MIF. Become familiar with the Church Leadership Connections (CLC) information on the website as many frequently asked questions are answered there.

Personal Information Forms (PIF) will not be sent to your committee until the MIF is approved by the Presbytery's COM.

In filling out the MIF, pay particular attention to the Skills choices as they are the primary "matching characteristics used in the choice of suitable candidates by the CLC system.

Request approval of MIF: Upon completion of the MIF, it should be approved by the Session and then forwarded to the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry for approval.

At this point, the preliminary salary figures will also be reviewed and approved by the COM and the Session. With regard to the Compensation and Housing part of the MIF, note that the maximum salary, including any housing allowance, needs to be worked out with the Session as to feasibility with regard to the church's budget.

Compensation figures that must be considered include: Cash Salary, Vacation, Housing/Utilities, Study Leave, Board of Pensions, Optional expense reimbursements to be considered such as Social Security Offset, Business Expenses, Flexible Spending Accounts, Mileage and Books. Relocation expenses should be considered and expenses to be covered by the church clearly identified.

Note: The housing issue needs to be fully researched as to potential costs that may require arrangements such as shared equity or other capital contributions toward down payment. These may be needed if the candidate does not have sufficient equity or resources to find adequate housing. ***(Separate guidelines will be provided for this issue which will appear as Appendix A of this section).***

Once the MIF has been approved by the COM, the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery assigns a login ID and password to the PNC/APNC/DPNC and Clerk of Session. This information is necessary to do the next step as well as later inquiries. The PNC enters the MIF on-line, the CLC system generates an email message to the Clerk of Session and COM requesting approval of the MIF. The Clerk of Session and COM login to CLC and approve the MIF. The MIF will then appear on the Opportunities Search of the CLC.

Report progress to Congregation on a regular basis: It is important to keep the congregation and Session informed of the pastor search process which at times can be lengthy. It is equally important to be circumspect about the information provided since the pastor search process is a confidential process. It is appropriate to give general but not specific information. At no time are the candidates' names ever mentioned, and it is wise not to mention church names or locations of potential candidates.

The PNC should be alert to the congregation's understanding of the PNC status. It may be necessary for the PNC to explain the importance of the transition period which can may seem excessively long and drawn out to those who have not been through it before. It may be necessary to remind the congregation several times that transition periods of a year or more are typical for healthy Presbyterian churches and do not in any way suggest that the PNC is encountering problems.

Of special importance is the spiritual aspect of the process. Reporting on answered prayer and evidence of God's hand in the search process can be very encouraging to the congregation.

Progress reports are typically made during worship services, in church newsletters, at congregational meetings, and in church-wide mailings.

Here is a sample:

SAMPLE PROGRESS REPORT FROM A PNC

For our report for (month) , we'd like to tell you about the process we are making toward calling a new pastor since we've last communicated with you.

After completing the Church Information Form, which is now online at the PC(USA) website, we have begun to receive Pastor Information Forms from candidates who would like to be considered as our pastor. The PIF describes a pastor's training, skills and job experience. We are reviewing these carefully to see how they match with the characteristics and skills we consider to be required and highly desired.

This has been an interesting learning experience for the PNC. To begin with, the first few PIFs looked really good, but the more we read the easier it gets to discern those that don't meet our requirements and those that appear more highly qualified. As we pray for God's mind in calling our new pastor, we're learning to see how God is guiding us through the process of the discerning reading of PIFs.

Depending on the number of PIFs we receive, this reading process may last a couple of months. We look forward to sharing with you in the near future about the next steps of the process.

Please continue to pray for the PNC as they serve you in this important process.

*Chair of the Committee
on behalf of
Names of the PNC members*

The COM liaison must meet with the PNC for further training before the PIF Review Process begins.

The general steps of the PIF Review Process include:

- 1. Receiving PIF's**
- 2. Initial Screening of PIF's**
- 3. Narrow the Search**

Receiving PIF's:

A PIF is prepared by a minister in standard format, giving basic biographical information together with statements of her/his theological views and particular strengths in various aspects of church leadership and life.

PIFs are kept on file by the Call Referral Services Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 100 Witherspoon Street Louisville, KY 40202-1396 502/569-5713 This office maintains PIFs for all ministers of the church who have completed one and for some other ministers interested in serving within the Presbyterian Church (USA).

The Call Referral Service is a service provided by the denomination; it does not endorse or recommend ministers to you. The responsibility for selection belongs to your committee and congregation in conjunction with the Committee on Ministry and the Presbytery, which must approve your selection.

The PNC will receive many PIFs through the CLC (see the acronym list at the beginning on this manual.) The PNC receives additional names of candidates from various sources: members of the church, friends, nearby pastors, and the matching by the Executive Presbyter. Any candidate desiring to be considered may send their PIF to your committee. Such "self-referral" PIFs may constitute the largest number your committee will receive. Individual pastors may also send you their PIFs directly without going through the CLC. This is perfectly acceptable.

If it is desired, at any time, additional matches can be made by changes in the skill mix on your PIF by requesting the Executive Presbyter (EP) to do so. The CLC system casts a broad net when providing referrals to PNCs. The PNC may receive PIFs that do

not meet the required/desired criteria listed in the MIF. While this may be frustrating at first, it allows each PNC to do the finer sifting for highly qualified candidates.

You may request the EP to send you the PIF of any minister you wish, including those of ministers suggested to your Committee. If the EP is able to secure the requested PIF from Call Referral Services, it will be forwarded to the PNC.

Recommendations from the Congregation: Make clear to the Congregation that your Committee welcomes the submission of names of possible candidates. You will want to request that they be presented to you in writing, with some indication of the person's qualifications as pastor for your church. Be sure to acknowledge all suggestions indicating that the suggested name will be considered. However, it is important for your members to realize that you cannot give them information as to your actions with regard to the names suggested. The only decision reported to the congregation will be the final candidate of your committee.

Initial Screening of PIFs:

The PNC develops a list of criteria for evaluating PIFs. This will be based on information from the congregational study, MIF, and conversations by the PNC regarding such considerations as theological orientation, skills, experience, gifts, leadership style, community interests, etc.

The list of candidates will be prioritized by evaluating PIFs, listening to sermon tapes, telephone interviews, reference checking, visiting personal web sites, etc. Based on this list the most promising candidates will be added to the "short list."

Some committees develop a list of "supplemental questions" which they send to candidates who are still being considered after the initial screening. These are usually specific to the congregation and are intended to provide additional information useful for determining final candidates to be interviewed. These questions may be theological, pastoral or organizational -- whatever you feel you want to know in more depth.

ADD POSSIBLE SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS IF AVAILABLE

A difficult choice faces every PNC. There is the natural desire to cast the net wide and to leave it out for a long time to achieve the greatest number of candidates in order to find "the one." At the same time, your top prospects are often other PNC's top prospects. There is a good possibility that a overly slow process will result in several of your top possibilities no longer being available by the time you are ready to narrow down your selection process. We don't have a solution for this. We just want you to be aware.

Do reference checks: Follow up on the references provided by the candidates you wish to pursue. Here are some possible questions:

- How long have you known (the candidate)?
- What has been your relationship?
- After describing the position and specific responsibilities, ask how you believe the candidate meets your needs.
- What are the candidate's strengths/gifts as well as weaknesses?
- How the candidate relates to others – individually & in groups?
- If the candidate has formally been in a supervisory role, how has the candidate related to those he/she has supervised?
- If the candidate has formally been a Head of Staff, how has the candidate related and expressed leadership of a Session?
- In their experience would they describe the candidate as an introvert or extrovert?
- How do you characterize the candidate's theology and why? Examples?
- How is the candidate's relationship to the PCUSA is expressed?
- Would you want the candidate to be your pastor?
- Given the position and specific responsibilities you are considering the candidate for, what do you think will be the candidate's biggest challenges and successes?
- If there is anything else the committee should know?
- Any other suggestions of people the committee should speak with?

Narrow the Search:

After the initial screening, normally, you will narrow your selection to about three to six candidates. This is called the short list. When you have reached this point, you will contact these candidates to ascertain their current degree of interest in the position. If a particular candidate is interested, she/he will probably want to see a copy of your Church Information Form.

It is customary to correspond with all ministers whose PIFs you receive from the Call Referral Service. However, once you have entered into any correspondence (in person, by letter, by email, or by telephone), you are obliged to notify that person of her/his status from time to time, indicating whether she/he is still under consideration. When you eliminate a particular minister from consideration, it is not necessary to supply justification for your decision but it is common courtesy to inform them of your decision. As a matter of courtesy, be careful not to leave any minister "dangling" once you have initiated contact.

The Committee on Ministry must review candidates as part of the final interview process by your pastor nominating committee. This is done by the COM reading the candidate's PIFs and by an interview with members of the Interview Sub-Committee of COM as part of the candidating weekend. Before any candidate may be invited for an interview, the names of the final candidates must also be submitted to the Presbytery Executive through the COM liaison for Presbytery clearance checks. This would include a formal police background check such as the California Department of Justice's Live Scan

fingerprinting services. **Remember, the final decision is a three-way agreement among the minister, the church, and the presbytery.**

The COM liaison must meet with the PNC for further training before planning and conducting interviews.

Plan interview process and do Interviews Decide ahead of time the questions which will be asked of all candidates and by which members of your committee. It is often helpful for your PNC to first conduct a mock interview with the pastor of a neighboring church or another pastor who is not and could not become a candidate. This allows your committee to receive feedback and work out any awkward kinks in its interview process. Remember that you are also being interviewed. How you handle yourselves as a group and the questions you ask communicate about your church.

Once candidates receive clearance by COM, they are invited to preach in a neutral pulpit. A neutral pulpit is a pulpit of another congregation in the area which, ideally, is close in size to your congregation, where you may hear the pastor preach. Often a portion of the committee has already heard the candidate preach in his or her home setting and the PNC may well have heard several sermons on line. It is very important that confidentiality be maintained throughout the process. The host congregation should not be told why the pastor is preaching or who you are. Arrangements for hearing final candidates preach in a neutral pulpit in this presbytery are made with the assistance of the COM liaison.

Prepare to host candidates On the weekend of the neutral pulpit for each "finalist", you will conduct a thorough interview with them, usually involving a full weekend. It is appropriate to send a packet of information about your community prior to this visit (Chamber of Commerce is helpful). Under no circumstances may any member of the Congregation have any contact with the candidate. No members of the staff or members of Session who are not serving on the PNC should have contact with any candidate except the final nominee. This contact restriction ordinarily extends to realtors and educators who are members of the church. You will show them your community and church facilities, giving them maximum and almost continuous exposure to the members of your committee for the time they are among you. This is a time of extending significant hospitality to the candidates. How thoughtfully they are treated is often very influential in the pastor's discernment process. Thoughtful hospitality does not mean lavish hospitality.

You are responsible for all transportation costs, housing (preferably a good hotel where they can have "private space"), meals, and other costs to the candidate.

Where needed, TIMELY REIMBURSEMENT is essential. If married, it is important to invite the spouse to the process as they are part of any decision made. Spouses are invited to attend the formal interview times. If they decline, provide activities for them during the formal interview times. (ASK what they would like to do or see what would

help them understand their potential new community.) Arrange for childcare if that is appropriate.

APPENDIX A Housing Issues NOT APPROVED/TO BE REVIEWED

The housing issue must be addressed early in the pastor nominating process. An appropriate time to address this issue is when the PNC/APNC is preparing the Church Information Form (MIF)

The need for attention to this detail is caused by the increased costs of housing in the presbytery. It has been found that inability to provide adequate housing due to costs has limited PNC/APNC/DPNC's choices of final candidates. This problem is acute when the potential candidate lives in an area of the country where housing costs are much lower and therefore have been less of a portion of the total compensation package, i.e., housing allowance.

The salary and housing total must meet Presbytery guidelines for minimums and comparable figures within the Presbytery. Presbytery minimums can be obtained from the Presbytery's website. The Presbytery Salary Survey can be requested from the Presbytery office; comparative figures can be seen for current pastors by church size and position.

- 1. Determining the housing portion of the compensation will require research and assumptions. What are the current prices of an adequate home, for example, a 4-bedroom single family home in the immediate area of the church or nearby?*
- 2. What if the potential candidate does not have significant equity to apply toward the purchase of a home? It should be assumed that the pastor has very little available for a down payment to give an estimate on the high side as far as housing startup costs.*
- 3. Given the price determined in step 1 and assuming a 30-year fixed loan is involved, some scenarios must be examined. **For example**, say a price of \$800,000 was determined and that from step 2, little or no equity would be available from the candidate, then assume a down payment figure which then would determine the balance that needs to be financed by a mortgage loan. The monthly (yearly) payment required to service the loan would be an estimate of the housing allowance required. The down payment amount will need to be provided by the congregation, assuming no equity transfer. This amount is the most important figure that must be examined for feasibility by the calling congregation. Are there resources available for capital in the church's funds? Could a capital campaign raise these funds?*

Should a "shared equity" plan be considered where the congregation buys or contributes to the funds necessary for the down payment, the shares would become a percentage of the total and the title and ownership of the home would be shared with the Church being listed on title along with the pastor. There is an example of a shared equity agreement available on the Presbytery's website,

Other presbyteries have experience with “limited liability company” arrangements (LLC). Contact Karen Vietmeier, Presbytery of Los Ranchos for a general description of this arrangement which must be drafted by a lawyer. (Contact: kvietmeier@losranchos.org; 714-517-8099 x 123) This analysis should be carefully reviewed when Session approves the MIF because of the impact on church finances.

When a candidate has been found and terms of call are being developed, the above analysis needs to be done with the actual numbers available. The housing allowance is an important number, of course, making up the salary and housing total.

One option to consider when a candidate has been found and terms of call, salary and housing are being negotiated is to consider the first period on site, say six months to a year, living in a rental. This gives time for the called pastor to become familiar with the area, search for a desirable home and time for the congregation to develop the shared equity resources or financial resources to assist with the purchase of the pastor’s home. It is also understandable that the pastor and his or her family are not interested in moving twice within a short period of time even if there are other pragmatic reasons to do so.

As an example:

*\$700,000 cost of home and closing costs for buyer
 -50,000 pastor’s down payment
 -90,000 church contribution to down payment*

\$560,000 to be financed

Assume a 6% loan rate:

A. What would the monthly payments be?

B. What level of annual income is needed to qualify for this loan?

Because of the complex legal and financial issues possible in a shared equity relationship between congregation and pastor it is extremely important to secure reliable financial and legal advice. It is important to understand the options available and their legal implications. There are IRS rules that speak to the forms of shared equity relationship that need to be well understood so that the congregation and pastor do not inadvertently find themselves in non-compliance.

All terms of the call, including the housing agreement (shared equity, etc.) must be signed at the time of accepting the call.

When the final terms of call, especially the housing agreement, are finalized, it needs to be communicated to the entire PNC and Session. The terms of call and

housing agreement shall be recorded in the Session minutes. The terms of call must be approved by COM and recorded in the COM minutes. If there are any current or pending housing agreements, they must be in writing prior to the pastor beginning his or her first day of work even if the details are not finalized.