

**Presbytery of the  
Twin Cities Area**



**COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**  
**PNC TRAINING FOR COM LIAISONS**

**June, 2009**

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## **A/PNC Orientation and Organization Outline for COM Liaison**

### **Introductions of the PNC and COM**

It may be helpful to prepare an organizational agenda for your first meeting.  
(See Appendix A)

Some initial questions to ask include:

Who are you and what roles do you play in the church?

Do you represent a particular constituency?

What gifts and skills do you each bring? (recognize in yourselves and one another)

PNC is time consuming. Consider a leave of absence from other responsibilities while you serve in this capacity.

Many resources for this process are available from the presbytery website: [www.ptcaweb.org](http://www.ptcaweb.org). link to Committee on Ministry. There is a PNC Resource Page link on this page.

There are also resources available on the PCUSA web site: [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org).

### **Overview of the search process: basic time flow**

#### **Mission study: 2-3 months**

Is a mission study in process now? Often the session will provide leadership for a church wide mission study. If the process has not begun, the PNC will want to work with the church to be sure that it is completed prior to beginning to write the CIF. If you have not done a mission study, you might want to consider using the SDQ as a way to discover what the congregation's needs and readiness for particular skill sets pastors will bring.

If the church has completed a Mission Study, the PNC will want to use parts of the study to aid in writing the CIF, especially in regard to prioritizing the qualities required and desired in a pastor.

#### **Writing the Church Information Form (CIF) : 3-4 weeks**

\*COM liaison will provide assistance/training in writing the CIF

The CIF must be approved by Session (including position description and terms of call) and then sent to the Committee on Ministry for approval. COM liaison keeps track of progress and makes sure the CIF gets to the COM a week ahead of the meeting.

Once the CIF is approved by the COM, the chair of the PNC will be sent information and instructions submitting it online with the Church Leadership Connection.

### **Receiving and sorting Personal Information Forms (PIF): 6-8 weeks**

- \*COM liaison will provide assistance/training in how to read/rank PIFs  
Communicating with applicants
- \*COM liaison will provide assistance/training in writing supplemental questions, telephone interviews, etc.  
Sending initial emails to those candidates who are identified as a match on the CLC Website (See sample letter – Appendix C)  
Sending e-mails/letters to those who are not being considered further  
Supplemental questions  
Telephone interviews  
Tapes/videotapes of sermons (either all audio or all video)  
Teleconferences On-site visits at their site

### **Checking references**

Reference checks are usually made when a candidate for the position has been invited to send a sermon tape and respond to supplemental questions, and/or is scheduled for a telephone interview. \*The COM liaison should emphasize the importance of thorough reference checks

There is a document called Initial Phone Reference Guide that provides a template and sample questions for use during the call. (See Appendix D)

The PNC can decide to do secondary reference checks two layers down on final candidates, but must have a signed form from the candidate. (This form is available on the PNC page of the PTCA website). This process is commonly referred to as reference checks four across and three down.

\*COM liaison makes the reference check to the COM chair in the presbytery of membership. Executive Presbyter makes reference checks to the EP in the presbytery of membership.

### **Background Checks**

A formal background check must be initiated on all candidates for open positions when they are invited to preach in a neutral pulpit. Since this will usually mean an added expense, the congregation will be asked to pay for ½ the cost (\$60) of each “check” that is made.

\*COM liaison will notify the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery, who will initiate the background check.

### **Face to face interviewing (weekend candidating): 4-6 weeks**

\*COM liaison will provide assistance/training in planning the weekend, will arrange the COM interview (including sending PTCA questions to candidates) and neutral pulpit Tasks of the PNC include:

- arranging transportation and hotel reservations for the candidate (and spouse, if applicable) including expenses
- providing a tour of the area
- optional meeting with a real estate agent (not a member of the congregation)
- arranging time with other pastoral staff
- dinner and interview (in a member's home if possible; if not, in a restaurant with a private meeting room or one put of the neighborhood); COM liaison usually attends this portion of the weekend
- attending worship at the neutral pulpit location, possibly brunch following worship
- candidate's spouse attends PNC events, but not meeting with pastor or COM; may stay for the PNC interview, or may decide to return to the hotel

There is a sample weekend candidating schedule included (See Appendix E)

### **Extending an offer/negotiating terms of call**

\*COM liaison is available to help

PNC extends the call. If accepted, terms of call are negotiated and agreed upon

There is a blank Terms of Call document located on the PTCA website

\*COM liaison makes sure that terms of call are sent to the next COM meeting for approval and requests time on the docket for the PNC to present their candidate. Candidate may or may not be present

Upon COM approval, PNC lets the session know that they have a candidate and asks the session to call a congregational meeting

PNC sends a brochure introducing the candidate, which includes notice of the congregational meeting

PNC makes arrangements for candidating weekend, including transportation and hotel reservations for candidate (and spouse, if applicable); planning a reception for the candidate and congregation following worship

### **Electing a pastor/associate pastor**

\*COM liaison attends the congregational meeting and makes sure that all call forms are completed and signed.

Four (4) copies of the Pastoral Call Form (see Appendix G) must be signed by the moderator, the candidate and at least two (2) representatives of the PNC.

Vote must be taken by written ballot and entered on the Report of Congregational Meeting to Call a Pastor form. One copy of the form must be signed by the Clerk of Session. (Appendix H).

The COM liaison then sends all signed forms to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery.

\*At this point in the process, the COM liaison should give the PNC the Final Steps document (see Appendix F) to be used as a review and checklist.

### **Presbytery Approval**

The candidate you have called must be presented to and approved by the Presbytery at a regular stated meeting. Presbytery meets once every *other* month. The candidate should appear in person at the Presbytery meeting and may be asked to speak or answer questions from the floor. He/she will be voted on and (hopefully) approved. This approval must take place *before* the candidate begins work in the calling church.

### **Installation**

PNC's last task is helping the new pastor plan the installation service. Instructions are sent to the pastor from the presbytery office

## **Committee organization**

- Stress the need for confidentiality throughout the process

- Explain AAEEEO requirement

AAEEEO requirement: Committees on Ministry “shall provide for the implementation of equal opportunity for ministers and candidates without regard to race, ethnic origin,

sex,

age, marital status, or disability. In the case of each call, it shall report to the presbytery the steps in this implementation taken by the calling group.” (*Book of Order* G-11.0502g)

- Election of PNC officers:

Chair (or Co-chairs)

Secretary (Recording – internal communications)

Secretary (Corresponding - external communications)

Internet contact

- Establish meeting day and time for future meetings
- Ask them to download "On Calling a Pastor" from the PTCA website by the next meeting

## APPENDIX A

PNC Organizational Meeting  
June 25, 2008

Purpose of the meeting today:

To orient you to an overview of the search process  
To do some basic committee organization

Goals for This Meeting:

- Introductions
- Review Guidelines for PNC Meetings (see Appendix B)
- Overview of the Process and Timeline (see documents on the PTCA website)
- Download ***On Calling a Pastor*** from PTCA website  
[www.ptcaweb.org](http://www.ptcaweb.org)
- Elect PNC Officers
  - Chair (or Co\_Chairs)
  - Secretary (Recording – Internal)
  - Secretary (Communications – External)
  - Internet contact
- Establish meeting day and time for future

## **APPENDIX B**

### **GUIDELINES FOR PNC MEETINGS**

Please consider these guidelines as you begin your group times together.

1. Your commitment to this group is an important part of insuring its success. Please try to be present and on time for your PNC group discussions.
2. What is said in your groups stays with the group. Please respect the confidentiality of the group.
3. Please respect everyone's right to voice their opinion without judgment. Be respectful of different perspectives and personalities.
4. Your participation in discussions is encouraged and your thoughts and ideas are welcomed. Please know, however, that you also have the option at any time to pass if you prefer.
5. Each person's input is important, and valued equally. If your group feels it appropriate to insure each person gets equal time, you may select a "keeper of the time" to keep things fair for all.
6. Please not that this is a discussion group, not a therapy group. Your help in sticking with the topic at hand is encouraged and appreciated.

## APPENDIX C

Dear Pastor \_\_\_\_\_,

The Church Leadership Connection (CLC) website has listed your Personal Information Form (PIF) as one closely matching many of the characteristics listed in the Church Information Form (CIF) submitted by the Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) of the Presbyterian Church of the Apostles.

We are pleased to have received the referral.

You are encouraged to look at the Church Information Form posted on the CLC website. The PNC went to considerable effort to clearly present both the social and theological characteristics of our congregation and our pastoral needs.

Because there are many candidates and the review process takes considerable time and energy, and because it was the computer and not you who submitted your PIF to us, we would appreciate your looking at our CIF, our web site, and web sites for Burnsville to determine whether or not you wish to be considered for this position.

If this church and its pastoral needs interest you, please respond to this email within the next two weeks. Candidates who are put forward by the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) website but do not directly express an informed interest in the Presbyterian Church of the Apostles will not be considered.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,  
PCA PNC

# APPENDIX D

## Initial Phone Reference Guide

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**Applicant Name**

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<hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reference Name</b></p>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Telephone #</b></p>
<hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reference Title</b></p>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Date</b></p>

Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ calling for the Pastor Nominating Committee of Presbyterian Church of the Apostles in Burnsville, MN. We are currently considering \_\_\_\_\_ for a Solo Pastor position and he/she has given your name as a reference.

Is this a convenient time to talk?  
If yes – Are you familiar with Church of the Apostles?  
If yes – Do you have any questions about our church?

If no - Presbyterian Church of the Apostles is .....

### **Questions**

May I ask you a few questions about the candidate?

1. In what capacity are you familiar with \_\_\_\_\_?
2. Tell me a little about that relationship.
3. What would you say are this person's major strengths?
4. What would you say are this person's major weaknesses, or limitations?
5. Do you feel this person would be qualified in the role of Solo Pastor? Why or why not?
6. Do you have any further comments concerning \_\_\_\_\_ as related to our position?
7. May I call you again if there is further information our committee needs?

Thank you for your time. We appreciate the information you have given us.

**Please complete your notes immediately after the conversation.**

## APPENDIX E

### Candidate Interview Weekend Sample Schedule

#### Saturday morning

COM Interviews w/candidate – 2 hrs.  
Meet w/Pastor or Associate Pastor (at the church or nearby location)

#### Saturday afternoon

Tour of church - only if no one else is around  
Tour of area

#### Saturday evening

Dinner (preferably at someone's home)  
Interviews with entire PNC – 2 hrs.

#### Sunday morning

Preach at neutral pulpit  
Brunch or informal gathering after

The PNC has unanimously decided they would like to extend a call to "Candidate".

The next steps are these:

1. PNC meets to decide on terms of call to offer. Fill out the Terms of Call worksheet line by line with specific offer. (It is not necessary to split salary and housing allowance at this point, only the total of the two.)
2. Call "Candidate" and send him/her the specific offer via e-mail with a note to the effect "We are eager for you to accept this call. If there is anything in the specifics of the call that needs to be changed to make it attractive to you, please call us."
3. "Candidate" decides if he/she feels called to accept.
4. "Candidate" and PNC agree on final terms and proposed start date. Also "Candidate" should decide the split between housing and salary at this time.
5. Notify your COM liaison with all the specifics ASAP so he/she can schedule you for a COM meeting. (Third Mondays; COM will give you an exact time – around 7pm). COM will also need the EEO statistics at this time.
6. PNC meets with COM. Takes about a half hour of question and answer. Each person normally says what they liked about the candidate, and the chair talks about the process.
7. COM approves before you leave.
8. PNC requests their session to call a congregational meeting on a Sunday.
9. "Interim Pastor" is notified of probable end date. (At least 30 days).
10. PNC prepares a newsletter or brochure extolling the virtues of the candidate and introducing him and his family.
11. The PNC might arrange some kind of social event on Saturday before the congregational meeting so people can get to know the "Candidate".
12. On meeting day, the "Candidate" preaches, then leaves the room with his family. At the meeting, the PNC gives a report and moves to proceed to an election. "Interim Pastor" is moderator. The election is taken by WRITTEN ballot and the results are announced. "Candidate" is invited back into the meeting, is told the vote, and indicates he/she will accept.
13. "Candidate"s Presbytery COM acts to dismiss him/her to PTCA
14. COM approves on behalf of the Presbytery. It is recommended that the "Candidate" come to the next Presbytery meeting to be presented.
15. "Candidate" starts work.
16. PNC helps plan the installation service a couple of months after the start date.
17. The PNC is officially dissolved at the Installation Service, but members are especially attentive to support for the new pastor.

**APPENDIX G**

**Pastoral Call Form**

Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_ Presbyterian Church (USA)

The \_\_\_\_\_ Presbyterian Church of

\_\_\_\_\_ (City, State),

*Being well satisfied with your qualifications for ministry and confident that we have been led to you by the Holy Spirit as one whose service will be profitable to the spiritual interests of our church and fruitful for the Kingdom of our Lord, earnestly and solemnly calls you,*

\_\_\_\_\_ to

*undertake the office of \_\_\_\_\_ (Pastor, Associate Pastor) of this congregation, beginning \_\_\_\_\_ promising you in the discharge of your duty all proper support, encouragement and allegiance in the Lord.*

*That you may be free to devote full time (part-time) to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament among us, we promise and obligate ourselves to provide you the following annually:*

Cash Salary	\$ _____
Supplement for Social Security Tax	\$ _____
Foregone interest on below-market loan	\$ _____
TOTAL income reported to IRS	\$ _____

Housing (manse and/or amt. of housing allowance) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Utilities Allowance \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Full medical, pension, disability, and death coverage under the Board of Pensions \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other benefits:

Deferred Compensation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Medical/Dental reimbursement allowance \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Paid vacation leave of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks annually

Paid continuing education leave of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks annually

Cumulative up to \_\_\_\_\_ weeks

Moving expenses \$ \_\_\_\_\_

It is understood that the following expenses of ministry will be reimbursed through an

accountable plan:

Travel expense at \$\_\_\_\_\_per mile  
(IRS allowable rate is recommended)

\$\_\_\_\_\_

Continuing education reimbursement allowance

\$\_\_\_\_\_

*We promise and obligate ourselves to review with you annually the adequacy of this compensation.*

*In testimony whereof we have subscribed our names this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ (Year)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Having moderated the congregational meeting which extended this call for ministerial services, I do certify that the call has been made in all respect according to the rules laid down in the Form of Government, and that the persons who signed the foregoing call were authorized to do so by vote of the congregation.*

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

*Moderator of the Congregational Meeting*

## Certification of Call

### By Presbytery of Call

By the Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_

This call has been reviewed by the **Committee on Ministry**. The committee recommends that the presbytery approve this call.

Date of action \_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
COM Moderator

This call was approved by the Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_  
(through action taken by its Committee as authorized by G-11.0502h)

Date of action \_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
Stated Clerk

### By Presbytery of Care or Present Call

This call has been reviewed by the Committee on (Ministry or Preparation for Ministry). The committee recommends that the presbytery find it expedient to release \_\_\_\_\_ to accept this call.

Date of action \_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
Stated Clerk

### By Candidate

This is to certify that I have received and accepted the call.

Date of acceptance \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**APPENDIX H**

**Report on Congregational Meeting  
to  
Elect a Pastor  
Or  
Associate Pastor**

To: Committee on Ministry, PTCA

From: \_\_\_\_\_ Clerk of Session,  
\_\_\_\_\_ Church

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

At a duly called meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ Church, the  
congregation voted

by written ballot (vote \_\_\_\_\_ yes; \_\_\_\_\_ no) to call

\_\_\_\_\_

as Pastor/Associate Pastor (strike one).

Two representatives of the congregation were selected to sign the completed  
call forms along with the moderator and the candidate. These forms have been  
delivered or sent to the COM Liaison

\_\_\_\_\_ or Presbytery office.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_