

GUIDELINES FOR A NEW PNC

1. Those elected to serve on a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) should consider this to be a significant commitment of their time, energy and wisdom.
2. You should understand that this is a task of spiritual discernment. This is not a time to be easily influenced by personal desires or congregational politics. This is a time to listen for God's leading.
3. Those elected to a PNC should be persons of integrity who respect and maintain confidentiality. The PNC is responsible to the congregation, not to the Session.
4. In the Presbyterian call system, the congregation gives authority to the PNC. Once the PNC is elected, the other members of the congregation and the Session have no role in determining who will be the next pastor until the PNC is ready to recommend a pastoral candidate to the congregation for a vote.
5. Congregation members may suggest names of pastors for the PNC to consider, but the PNC must be protected from undue pressure and intrusion. Names under consideration must not be shared outside the committee. This protects both the persons under consideration and the integrity of the process.
6. The Presbytery, through the Committee on Ministry (COM) will appoint liaisons to help guide the PNC through this search process. The General Presbyter will also work with the PNC to help vet possible candidates. The Presbytery will be a partner with the PNC in this search process.
7. The PNC will need to elect a moderator (and/ or co-moderator) as well as a clerk/secretary.
8. The PNC will also need to set some ground rules concerning how decisions will be made—i.e. unanimous or majority, etc. What to do if there is disagreement? etc.
9. The Session is responsible for conducting a mission study with the congregation. The PNC's first task, if this has not been undertaken by the Session, is to use this mission study and determine the needs of the church, possibly by working with the congregation or other groups within the church. What kind of pastor do we need? What kind of skills, experience and person do we need in our next pastor? Which pastor's gifts are a good "fit" for our congregation's needs?
10. The PNC will complete the Ministry Information Form (MIF). Have others, including the Presbytery/COM liaisons, read this over for clarity and suggestions.
11. Once the MIF is approved by the liaisons, the Session must also approve the MIF. Once approved, the PNC will receive log-in numbers in order to post this MIF online at the PC(USA) website—the Church Leadership Connection (CLC). Go to

pcusa.org and search for **CLC** to get directions on how to complete the MIF. Make sure you write the MIF completely prior to inserting it into the form on-line as there are time and space limitations when typing it into the website.

12. The PNC will receive names from the General Presbyter (based on initial matches and preferences). These candidates' MIF's will have been initially vetted and are available for consideration by the PNC. If these initial names are not satisfactory, the General Presbyter will provide more names until the PNC has selected a short list to consider further.
13. The PNC may also receive self-referrals from candidates as well as referrals from CLC. All names to be considered must be vetted by the General Presbyter.
14. The PNC may listen to sermons online, make initial phone calls to determine interest, etc. The PNC may travel to other churches or arrange for neutral pulpits to hear candidates preach.
15. Once the PNC has narrowed its interest to 2-3 candidates, the General Presbyter and COM moderator will make final background calls. If the way be clear and there are no "red flags," the PNC may also make its own reference calls. COM clearance is necessary before the candidate will be brought on site for face-to-face interviews.
16. Once the PNC had made a decision on a candidate, that candidate (and family) may be brought to the community for further interviews.
17. Once the PNC settles on one pastoral candidate and there is agreement on terms of call, the candidate will be examined for "fit" and for membership in the Presbytery by an Examination Subcommittee of the COM.
18. If the way be clear, the PNC will request that the Session call a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing the new pastor.
19. A word or caution: Try to avoid "love at first sight." This happens, of course, and it makes for great stories and movies. But there are disasters that happen as well. There may be pressure to find a new pastor, so you will need to be patient and wise. Try to avoid the mistakes that come with "short cuts" and "rushing to judgment." Remember John Wooden's advice: "Be quick, but don't hurry!"

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