

The Role of the Session in the Search for a Pastor

The primary responsibility of the Session is to keep the ministry of the church going. To this end the Session hires the Transitional Pastor or provides for other pastoral leadership.

Involvement at key points in the calling process:

1. After the COM approves, the Session calls for a congregational meeting for the election of a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). The Session recommends a size for the committee to the congregation, although final authority for the PNC's size rests with the congregation. Nominations for the PNC are made by the congregation's Nominating Committee, nominating people who are representative of the congregation, knowledgeable of the church, community, and Presbyterian theology and government.
2. The Session plans for and participates in any congregational mission study, addressing the following questions:
 - a. What are we doing as a congregation? What is God calling us to do in the next phase of our ministry?
 - b. What are the needs of our community? What is God calling us to do to meet those needs?
 - c. What specifically will we do to strengthen our congregational and community ministry in the next year?
 - d. What must our next called pastor and Session do to make that happen?
 - e. What kind of skills, experience, and person do we need in our pastor?

The document "Mission Study Guidelines," on the presbytery's COM document list, may be helpful.

3. Support the PNC with prayer and funding (funds for search expenses, such as travel, document reproduction, phone expenses, etc.). Determine the amount of money available for financial compensation for the new pastor.
4. When the PNC completes the Ministry Information Fund (MIF), the Session must carefully review and approve the document. The Clerk of Session attests to this approval by signing it online. The Moderator of the COM will provide the password for this process.
5. Be encouraging of the PNC but **RESPECT CONFIDENTIALITY!** The PNC is a committee of the congregation and is responsible to the congregation, not to the Session. They will be encouraged to keep everyone informed of where they are in the process without giving details of possible candidates.
6. When the PNC is ready to nominate a pastor, the Session will call a congregational meeting.

Revised October 22, 2017