

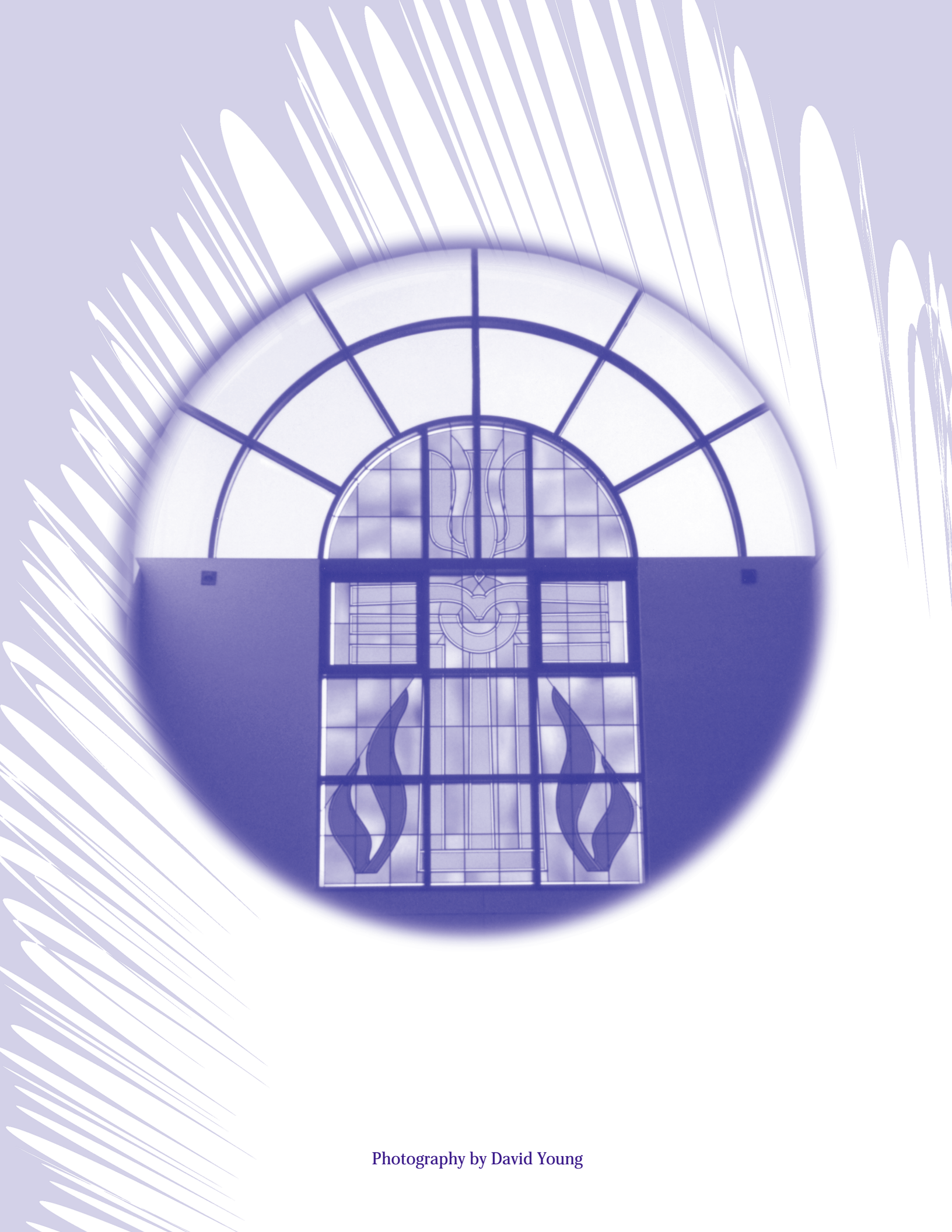


On Seeking a Call



A Manual for
Church Professionals
Considering New
Ministries

Churchwide
PERSONNEL SERVICES



Photography by David Young



This manual is designed to be a resource to be used by church professionals as they discern God's call to new service in the Presbyterian Church (USA). The manual is not to supersede any policies or procedures of presbytery Committees on Ministry.

"Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.'" (Genesis 12: 1-2)

As you journey from one phase of your life to another, may you know the power of God's presence each step of the way. When you find the people whom God has prepared you to serve, may you be a blessing in your ministry together.



Table of Contents

Part I.	Introduction to Seeking a Call	4
	Theological Foundations For A Call Process	4
Part II.	Your Transition: From Beginning to Unpacking	6
	Stages of Your Transition — Pastoral Call	6
	Preparing Yourself to Consider a Call	7
	People Involved in Your Search	8
	Assessing Your Gifts	9
Part III.	Using Church Leadership Connection	11
	Roles in the CLC Process	11
	Personal Information Form (PIF)	12
	Submitting the Form On-line:	14
	Changing or Updating a PIF	15
	Check Referral Status of PIFs	15
	Opportunity Search	16
	Self-Referrals	17
	Sending Your Self-Referrals	17
Part IV.	A Word To Those In Special Ministry Circumstances	18
	A Word to Candidates for Ministry	18
	A Word to Interim Pastors	19
	A Word to Christian Educators	20
Part V.	Discerning Your Call With the Search Committee	21
	Key People Working With Churches Seeking Leaders	21
	Be Open To God's Call	22
	Screening and Reference Checks by the PNC	22
	Interviewing	24
	The Call is Extended	26
Part VI.	The Official Decisions	28
	Examination for Membership in the Presbytery	28
	Congregational Meeting to Elect	29
	Signing The Formal Call Papers	29
Part VII.	Finishing the Process	30
	Notifying CRS of a "Call Pending"	30
	Dissolving the Pastoral Relationship	30
	Worship Recognition of the Beginning of a Ministry	31
	Orientation and Support in Your New Ministry	33



A List of Acronyms Used in this Manual

(PNC)	Pastor Nominating Committee
(CRS)	Call Referral Service
(COM)	Committee on Ministry
(CPM)	Committee on Preparation for Ministry
(SDQ)	Strategic Directions Questionnaire
(PIF)	Personal Information Form
(CIF)	Church Information Form
(CLC)	Church Leadership Connection
(LEA)	Leadership Effectiveness Analysis





Part I. Introduction to Seeking a Call

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR A CALL PROCESS

Isn't a "call process" just church language for a personnel search?

No. Call involves a spiritual discernment process.

We believe that God uses committees, papers, procedures, and our polity to call persons to positions of leadership. You will fill out forms, use the latest technology in an Internet-based matching system, and perhaps prospective churches will meet you via videotape or conference call, and then in person.

All of these are ways to help you be introduced to church situations that match your gifts and interests. That is just the starting point for a call process. No paper or electronic method can replace the discernment process in which each minister, candidate, or educator considers a wide variety of ministry opportunities and prays for God's guidance. As you begin the call process, you come with all of your gifts, experiences, hopes, dreams, skills, and weaknesses. If you allow yourself to be open to the leading of God's Spirit, you may be in for some wonderful surprises. Many who have gone before you in a call process have discovered that God called them to places and situations very different from that which they envisioned when they began the search. Their lives have been transformed and they have delighted in the fulfillment of God's purpose (which always seems much clearer from the end of the process than it does along the way). Welcome to the journey!

What Is "Call"?

Call is the understanding and acceptance of one's purpose in God's plan. It is the coming together of a ministry need and the gifts of a person or group to meet the need.

PCUSA minister/author Frederick Buechner explains call this way :

"By and large, a good rule for finding out is this: The kind of work God usually calls you to is the kind of work (a) that you need most to do and (b) that the world most needs to have done. If you get a kick out of your work, you've presumably met requirement (a), but if your work is writing TV deodorant commercials, the chances are, you've missed requirement (b). On the other hand, if your work is being a doctor in a leper colony, you have probably met requirement (b), but if most of the time, you are bored and depressed by it, the chances are, you have not only bypassed (a), but you probably aren't helping your patients much either.

Neither the hair shirt nor the soft berth will do. The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC, Harper and Row, 1973.



Who Is Called?

Individuals: All those who are baptized are called to discipleship and service of Jesus Christ. Some are specially set apart by ordination as elders, deacons, or ministers. Others are specially called to the ministry of Christian education in the church.

Groups of God's people: Tribes, disciples, apostles, committees, and congregations listen for the call of God in the circumstances of their lives together, and they seek to do the will of God in a particular time and place.

Congregations: During the time of transition between pastors, a congregation must be about a spiritual discernment process to discover its call — what God wants it to be and do in the next phase of its ministry. By doing a mission study that involves Bible study, prayer, and a thoughtful look at facts about a congregation and community, the congregation can discern God's direction. Once that is clear, a pastor nominating committee (PNC) for pastors and a Search Committee for Christian educators goes about a spiritual discernment process to discover the person God is calling to lead this ministry.

As Presbyterians we believe that pastors and congregations are brought together through a call from God. It is a relationship established not primarily for the benefit of one or both of the parties but for the purpose of service in the ministry of Jesus Christ. God has endowed both the leader and the people with particular gifts and experiences that, when brought together, provide the resources for effective ministry. This relationship is confirmed as the pastor, the church, and the presbytery all say "yes" to the call. This three-way partnership is acted out throughout the pastoral vacancy process. For educators this relationship is confirmed as the Session, the educator, and possibly the Presbytery all say "yes" to the call.

Like Moses, persons and groups who are called are not always eager to serve. Often they feel inadequate, apprehensive, and reluctant. They often go through times of wrestling before responding affirmatively. An experience of peace and confidence about the call comes in the confirmation of other persons and in looking back after some time has passed. The experience of being called is a powerful and awesome experience. It is a spiritual adventure!





Part II. Your Transition From Beginning to Unpacking

STAGES OF YOUR TRANSITION — PASTORAL CALL

1. Discerning a Call to Leave Where You Are
2. Preparing Yourself to Consider a New Call
3. Assessing Your Leadership Gifts
4. Consulting With Mentors, Peers, and Other Wise Counsel
5. For Candidates — Obtaining Approval from Your CPM to Seek a Call
6. Writing and Submitting the Personal Information Form (PIF)
7. Screening Church Information Forms (CIFs)
8. Interviewing
9. Considering a Call
10. The Official Decisions are Made by the Call Partners -
 - You Accept the Call and Negotiate the Terms of Call
 - Examination by the Calling Presbytery
 - The Congregation Votes
 - Presbytery Approves and Appoints an Installation Commission
11. For Candidates — The Presbytery of Care Ordinarily Ordains
12. The Presbytery Installs the Pastor
13. Follow-up Support by the Presbytery



PREPARING YOURSELF TO CONSIDER A CALL

It is important to ask yourself, "Is God calling me away from this ministry?" Consider the gifts you bring to your present ministry, the goals you and the church have set together, the ministry you have together, and the commitments you have made. Have you accomplished the things you believe God called you there to do? Is it God's time for you to open yourself to new possibilities?

If so, how will you prepare for the journey from one ministry to another? Before getting out the moving boxes or completing a Personal Information Form, it is important to prepare yourself spiritually. Bible study and prayer are important as you seek to discern God's call to you.

References for Bible Study

About call:

Genesis 12:1-9 . . . the call of Abram	Numbers 11:10-15 and 24-30 . . . the call of outsiders
Isaiah 6:1-13 . . . the call of Isaiah	Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2:16-21 . . . God's spirit poured out
Exodus 3:1-12 . . . the call of Moses	Matthew 4:18-22 the call of the disciples
Acts 9:1-22 the call of Paul	

About transition in the life of God's people:

Genesis 32:22-32 Jacob wrestles with God and with himself at the river
Exodus God's people led out of Egypt to the Promised Land
Matthew 28:16-20 the commissioning of the disciples

Other resources:

Stotts, Jack L., *A Theology of Vocation*, PDS # 232-91-016 (free)
Witherspoon, Eugene and Marvin Simmers, ed. *Called to Serve*, PDS #095525
The Book of Order, especially Chapters 1-4, 6 and 14

Mentors, Peers, Presbytery Staff, and Other Wise Counsel

It may be helpful to talk with a mentor, your Executive Presbyter, a neighboring pastor or educator, the Placement Director at your theological institution, or an old school friend as you make the decision to seek a new call and all along the journey to your new place of ministry. These friends can help you assess your strengths and be honest about your weaknesses and growing points. They can ask probing questions that help you in your discernment process. A call process is not an individual thing. It is a journey within the community of faith in which many persons help to shape the call.



As Frederick Buechner suggests, ask yourself whether your work is the kind of work (a) that you need most to do and (b) that the world most needs to have done. If you really enjoy your work, you've probably met the first requirement, but if your work seems to have no real purpose, you may have missed the second.. On the other hand, if your work seems to be work that the world really needs but you're bored and depressed by it, chances are you've missed requirement (a) and probably aren't fulfilling (b) very well either. Remember: "Neither the hair shirt nor the soft berth will do. The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet" (Frederick Buechner "Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC").

For Reflection and Self-Assessment:

Name some places where the world is in deep hunger, places that you care about..

Name experiences that have touched a deep gladness in you, that have resulted in deep joy and satisfaction.

Are there ways to join the world's deep hunger and your deep gladness?

PEOPLE INVOLVED IN YOUR SEARCH

The following people will be involved in your pastoral search:

Your Presbytery Stated Clerk will be asked to attest that you are "a member in good standing of the Presbytery of _____ against whom no charges are pending or have been sustained" (for ministers) or "a member of a church of the Presbytery of _____" (for lay professionals).

Presbytery Committee on Preparation for Ministry Moderator will be asked to confirm that the CPM has given you permission to circulate your PIF (for candidates).

Presbytery Committee on Ministry will be asked to approve the dissolution of your present pastoral relationship and the transfer of your membership to your new presbytery. They will be guiding your church through the search for new leadership (for ministers).

The Executive or General Presbyter has a great deal of experience and many personal connections that may benefit you if you seek his or her wise counsel early in your search process. You can expect that your EP/GP will be contacted for reference checks, so as a courtesy, you should bring him or her into your confidence early in your search process.

The staff of Call Referral Services of Churchwide Personnel Services are those persons in the Presbyterian Center in Louisville who work to assist churches and church professionals in making connection for further conversation. CRS staff will be happy to answer your questions as you get started in the process and guide you along the way. Once you submit your PIF, you will have a special "Church Leadership Connection Consultant" assigned to you to coach you through the process, but any of the CRS staff will be glad to help. Contact them at 1-888-728-7228 ext. 8550 or by e-mail through www.cpsstaff@pcusa.org.



ASSESSING YOUR GIFTS

"Stir up the gift of God that is within you."
II Timothy 1:6

The following two sources can help you assess your gifts while you are in the call process.

Leadership Effectiveness Analysis

The Leadership Effectiveness Analysis (LEA) helps church leaders to assess the gifts God has given and improve the ability to serve and lead. The LEA helps us to look more deeply into ourselves, to celebrate God's gifts and to be "transformed by the renewing of our minds, so that we may discern what is the will of God" for our lives (Romans 12:2).

The LEA can help you describe your leadership style by identifying up to 10 of the 22 leadership characteristics in which you score mid-high or high. Search committees that take the Strategic Directions Questionnaire (SDQ) will be able to define their leadership needs and use the feedback for discussion during the interview process.

After completing the LEA, church professionals meet with a trained interpreter who helps them to interpret the LEA feedback and do developmental planning for future continuing education. The LEA is primarily a developmental tool for individuals. The SDQ points out gaps between group leadership needs and individual strengths so is especially powerful for developmental planning.

Note: You will be asked to sign a form to permit release of scores to the interpreter who will work with you. Your scores will not be released to search committees, but can provide a common understanding and language for discussing leadership behavior.

COST: \$35 for each LEA
questionnaire scored

\$100.00 for five observer
SDQs scored

Instruments may be requested from:
Ares Scott
Churchwide Personnel Services
100 Witherspoon Street, Mezz.
Louisville, KY 40202-1396
1-888-728-7228 ext. 5847
e-mail: ascott@ctr.pcusa.org





MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ACCREDITED CAREER COUNSELING CENTERS

Presbyterian-supported Career Development Centers provide vocational and pastoral counseling for church professionals. You may benefit from an assessment with them as you consider a ministry change.

Arlington, Texas
Southwest Career Development Center
624 Six Flags, #210
Arlington, TX 76011
817-649-8134

Atlanta, Georgia
Career Development Center of the Southeast
531 Kirk Road
Decatur, GA 30030-3798
404-371-0336

Boston, Massachusetts
Center for Career Development and Ministry
70 Chase St.
Newton Centre, MA 02159-2233
617-969-7750

Charlotte, North Carolina
Career and Personal Counseling Service
4108 Park Rd., #200
Charlotte, NC 28209-2259
704-523-7751

Chicago, Illinois
Midwest Career Development Service
P.O. Box 7249, 1840 Westchester Blvd.
Westchester, IL 60154-7249
708-343-6268

Columbus, Ohio
Midwest Career Development Service
1520 Old Henderson Road, 102-B
Columbus, OH 43220
614-442-8822

Kansas City, Kansas
Midwest Career Development Service
P.O.Box 2816, 754 North 31st St.
Kansas City, KS 66110
913-621-6348

Lancaster, Pennsylvania
Mid-Atlantic Career Center, Inc.
1401 Columbia Avenue
Lancaster, PA 17603
717-397-7451

Oakland, California
The Center for Ministry
8393 Capwell Drive, #220
Oakland, CA 94621
510-635-4246

Princeton, New Jersey
Northeast Career Center
407 Nassau St.,
Princeton, NJ 08540
609-924-9408

St. Paul, Minnesota
North Central Career Development Center
516 Mission House Lane, NW
New Brighton, MN 55112
651-636-5120

St. Petersburg, Florida
Career and Personal Counseling Center
Eckerd College,
St. Petersburg, FL 33733
813-864-8356



Part III. Using Church Leadership Connection

Responding to requests from presbyteries, pastor nominating committees, search committees, and church professionals, the Office of Call Referral Services (CRS) has developed a computer matching system that is accessible over the World Wide Web. The new system, called "Church Leadership Connection," provides easy access, user-friendly forms, instant posting opportunities, and instant retrieval of matching data.

A pastor, church educator, church administrator, executive presbyter, synod executive, or other church professional can complete a Personnel Information Form (PIF) and submit it to CRS. The same PIF is used for all types of positions and all ecclesiastical statuses and replaces the three previously used forms. The same is true for a pastor nominating committee or search committee submitting a Church Information Form (CIF). The CIF and PIF are shorter and easier to use than previous versions.

After required approvals and attestations are obtained, CRS reviews and places the CIF or PIF in the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) matching database. Presbyteries, synods, theological institutions, or CRS can then match people to positions.

A system of Log-in IDs and passwords guarantee security and confidentiality. The only people who have access to the full database are CRS staff. Others have access only to the tasks the security level of their Log-in ID permits.

ROLES IN THE CLC PROCESS

Call Referral Services (CRS) provides tools and leadership for using CLC. Each completed CIF and PIF are submitted to CRS, then placed in the matching database. CRS provides matching services for congregations located in presbyteries that do not do their own matching and for Search Committees.

Committee on Ministry (COM) assigns a log-in identification number (ID) and password to the Pastor Nominating Committee Chair and to the Clerk of Session and also approves the CIF.

Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) chair or the assigned representative can log onto the system to fill in and submit the CIF and to review the referred PIFs after a match.

Clerk of Session reviews and electronically signs off on the completed CIF.

Committee on Preparation for Ministry electronically signs off on the PIFs of candidates to give permission to circulate a PIF.

Executive Presbyter or Synod Executive logs onto the system and uses the Matching function to provide a list of PIFs to refer for a specific CIF.

Church professionals access the system to use the Opportunity Search, to fill in and submit a PIF, and to review their list of referrals.

Stated Clerk of presbytery electronically attests to an individual's standing in presbytery.

Theological Institution Placement Officers use Reverse Matching and Opportunity Search to assist seminarians in their search for positions.



PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM (PIF)

This section of the handbook describes the steps taken by church professionals searching for a position. It shows how to fill out the Personal Information Form (PIF), how to obtain a log-in ID and password, and how to update your PIF in Church Leadership Connection. Your PIF is the means by which the matching database selects positions for your consideration and is the basis for your evaluation of Church Information Forms (CIFs) that you find using the Opportunity Search or that are sent to you.

The following is an overview of the steps you will take:

- Printing the Form from the World Wide Web to Use as a Draft Worksheet
- Submitting the Form On-line (and Helpful Hints to Get Started)
- Submitting Multiple PIFs
- Obtaining a Log-in ID and Password
- Changing or Updating a PIF
- Checking Referral Status of PIFs
- Viewing or Printing Your Existing PIFs
- Attesting the PIF

Note: Church educators and interim pastors, see special instructions on pages 19 and 20.

Printing the Form

Access and print a blank copy of the PIF from the Church Leadership Connection web page. Use the printed form as a draft worksheet before you go on-line to submit the form. Do not try to write the PIF on-line; time-out features can cause loss of data.

1. To access the CLC web page, enter address <http://www.clc.pcusa.org>
2. Click on Hardcopy Forms
3. Click on the format you want to use to print the form (Plain HTML, MS Word, MS Word 5.0 WordPerfect 5.X or PDF). Print a PIF (Part I).
4. To print the forms, click your browser's File menu and select the Print option. You may also save the form to your hard drive by clicking on File, then Save As. Indicate the directory and file name.
5. Repeat steps 3-4, clicking on and printing or saving Part II.



6. If you will be submitting a paper or disk copy of the PIF, click on Attestation/Approval Forms and print the appropriate form (Minister of Word and Sacrament, Lay Professionals, or Candidate for Ministry).

7. Exit from the web page. You can use your browser's Back [↶] button if you want to go back to a previous page, or use the Exit [X] button.

The PIF is also available in hard copy (please use a typewriter to fill it in) or diskette (Plain HTML, MS Word 97, MS Word 5.0, or WordPerfect 5.X Versions). If you choose to send a diskette or hard copy, send the completed form to Call Referral Service, at 100 Witherspoon Street, Mezzanine, Louisville, KY, 40202, and our staff will enter the data into the CLC system. The appropriate Attestation/Approval Form should accompany the PIF.

Helpful Hints:

1. Before you begin, read the Questions on the CLC Main Menu or click on PIF for New Users and read the F.A.Q. questions.
2. Most browsers have a "time out" feature that disconnects you from the Internet after a period of inactivity (this period may be as short as 20 minutes). The CLC system has a "time out" feature set for 2 hours of inactivity. Before you begin entering the data on-line, you may want to extend your browser time-out limit. To minimize the time required to complete the narrative sections of the PIF, you may want to type the narrative portions in a word-processing program or Windows Notepad, then cut and paste the narrative sections into the on-line form.
3. You can complete Part I at anytime and Part II within ten days.
4. *You are allowed 1500 characters to answer each one of four Narrative Questions. This includes punctuation and spaces.*
5. As you type information into the fields, press the Tab [⇒] to go to the next field or use the mouse.
6. To select multiple items press and hold the CTRL key while clicking with the mouse.



SUBMITTING THE FORM ON-LINE:

Using your draft worksheet as a guide

- Access the CLC web page at <http://www.clc.pcusa.org>.
- Click on PIF for New User; review the introductory information, then click on, “Start Filling My Personal Information Form”.
- Fill in Part I of the PIF and click the next button. You will then receive an acceptance message with your professional ID number and password. Write down or print out the ID# and password; you will use these to regain access to your PIF. Then proceed to Part II.
- Complete Part II and if there are no corrections, click on the submit button.
- When a PIF is completed (Part I and Part II), the PIF will automatically be placed in a holding area to await attestation by your Presbytery Stated Clerk. When the person is a Candidate under care, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) Moderator will consult with the Stated Clerk prior to approving the PIF.

To avoid losing data, as you fill out the PIF on-line, never click the back key button while inside the form. This will delete the information you have already entered. Click the back key button only when the computer prompts you to go back to make a correction. To back up to a previous screen, use the scroll bar to the right of your screen.

Multiple PIFs

You may have up to three (3) active PIFs in the matching database. This allows you to tailor your narrative responses to best highlight your experience and skills for various types of positions, such as pastoral, administrative, educational, interim, etc. For these positions, you will need to fill out only an additional Part II of the form, which will automatically link to your Part I.

Obtaining a Log-in ID and Password

After you submit your PIF (Part I), the CLC system assigns you a professional log-in ID and initial password. The log-in ID is a 9 digit number, (such as 100000000). If CRS staff enter the PIF for you, contact your CLC Consultant for your ID and password (1-888-728-7228 ext. 8550). The password will be a complicated group of numbers and letters that are case sensitive. You can change your password, but please make sure it's eight characters or fewer. If you forget your password or cannot for any reason open your file, you may call the CRS staff to re-initialize a new password for you.

Attesting of the PIF

When a PIF has been submitted to the CLC system, the appropriate person will be notified that a PIF needs to be attested:

- Stated Clerk of Presbytery for Ministers of Word and Sacrament
- Committee on Preparation for Ministry Moderator for Candidates for Ministry
- Stated Clerks of Presbytery where church membership resides

CRS will not place the PIF in the matching database without the attestation.



CHANGING OR UPDATING A PIF

You will be *required* to update the PIF once a year. CRS will notify you by e-mail or letter when it is time to update the form. On your PIF Task List under Fill/Update PIF (Part 2), you will note that under the heading of Comment the system will notify you of the date that your PIF will expire, and in the Action column it will prompt you to update your PIF. If you do not do so by the expiration date, the PIF will be removed from the system.

The following instructions are for the church professional to update a PIF.

Access the CLC web page at <http://www.clc.pcusa.org>

1. Click User Log-in.
2. Fill in your professional log-in ID and password and click Submit.
3. You are shown a list of Tasks.
4. Click on Update My General Information (Part 1). Be sure to keep your address and phone numbers current at all times. To update Part 2 click on, Fill/Update PIF (Part 2). Under the Action column click on update. Use your Tab key or mouse pointer to go from field to field. Click Update Form. A message is shown that your PIF is updated. If your PIF is not complete, another message is shown. Use the browser's Back [←] button to return to the previous screen; complete; and click Submit again.
5. The options under Fill/Update PIF (Part 2) allow you to do the following:
 - View an existing PIF
 - Print an existing PIF
 - Update a PIF
 - Fill out an Additional PIF (Part 2)

CHECK REFERRAL STATUS OF PIFs

From the Task List for Church Professionals, click on the option Check Referral Status. This allows you to see where your PIF has been referred. Click on any of the church's PIN numbers to see the church's CIF. If you are particularly interested in a position to which your PIF has been matched, consider writing the PNC to confirm your interest.

View or Print Your Existing PIFs

You can view or print any version of your PIF by going to Fill/Update PIF (Part 2) and click on the PIF ID number.



OPPORTUNITY SEARCH

Anyone can use the Opportunity Search. A log-in ID and password are not needed. You can tailor the search to your own personal needs by filling out the criteria screen, or you may search for a particular church or organization.

The following are instructions for using the Opportunity Search:

1. Access the CPS web page at <http://www.clc.pcusa.org>.
2. Click Opportunity Search.

To look for a CIF from a specific church:

1. Click on Search opportunities in a particular church/organization.
2. Fill in the church's 5-digit OGA pin number, or the church name, city, and state. Completing only the church name will bring up all churches in the system with that name; completing only the city and state will bring up all the churches in that city and state.
3. Click on the CIF ID number to review the complete CIF.

To obtain a list of positions matching your criteria:

1. Choose whether to conduct an unlimited search (default) or a restricted search for each of the criteria shown. For example, to select only certain states from which to conduct the search, click on the Only the states selected circle, then click on the state names that you want to include in your search area. To select more than one state, hold down the control key and click on additional states. For Minimum cash salary, type in the minimum cash salary, not including housing or benefits you would consider. View the complete CIF to find the amount for housing allowance. You may also specify the skills you want the position to contain. Keep in mind that each position lists a maximum of ten skills, so you will want to avoid selecting "match all. . ." if you select more than ten skills. You may select as many skills as you want when you select "match any. . . ."
2. Click on Search General List to bring up all positions that match the criteria you have selected. Click on Search Diversified List to bring up interim positions, educator positions, governing body positions, and all other non-congregational positions. Click on Search Racial Ethnic List to bring up positions in congregations or organizations that have identified themselves as multiracial or multiethnic.
3. To view a list of the matching CIFs click on Show Header Info Only: You are shown the list of CIFs for positions that meet your criteria. You can view the complete CIF by clicking on the CIF ID number. To view more detail of the CIFs, click on Show Summary Info: You are shown a summary of the CIF data and the name and address of the person or persons to whom you can send a copy of your PIF for self-referral. To view the full CIF, click on View CIF Details. This also allows you to view a bar graph or a table of ten-year trends in this congregation.



4. Determine how many records to display per page. If you have a slower PC with limited memory, we advise you leave the number of records per page at ten. For faster PCs, you can increase the number to as many as 50.
5. Click Begin Search.
6. You are shown the matching CIFs, either by Header Info, or Summary (see Step 3 on previous page).

SELF-REFERRALS

Suggestions follow to assist those who wish to send their PIF to a church/organization. Your first step is to select from the Opportunity Search the position(s) in which you are most interested. Then carefully review your PIF and ask yourself the following questions:

- Are you within the geographic choices specified? If not, would you be willing to pay part of the moving expenses?
- Have you checked that you would consider the community type listed?
- Do you have the experience required? The characteristics and qualifications needed?
- Have you checked that you would consider the congregation size shown?
- Is the salary acceptable?
- Do the skills you have listed on your PIF match at least the four required skills selected by the church/organization?

SENDING YOUR SELF-REFERRALS

You may see a CIF on “Opportunity Search” or see an ad in a Presbyterian publication and want to apply. It is perfectly acceptable and encouraged to do “self-referral.” If you decide a position is a good match for you, send your PIF with a one-page cover letter to the person(s) designated in the “Self-Referral Contact Information” field for the church/organization. Because some presbyteries prefer that the Executive Presbyter and COM review all PIFs before they are given to a PNC, it is wise to check Church Leadership Connection for referral information before mailing or e-mailing your PIF directly to a PNC. Even when you send to a PNC, it is always courtesy to send a copy of your PIF to the EP of the presbytery. Indicate in the letter your interest, highlight your qualifications, and state why you believe you are a good candidate. If you are particularly interested in serving in a specific presbytery, it will serve you well to send your PIF and speak personally with the EP. If you have special skills or interests or have a spouse with special career needs, an EP can be especially helpful.

Note: A church/organization cannot access your PIF unless a computer match occurs for the particular position(s) in which you are interested. Sending only a cover letter with your name and ID# is not sufficient; send your PIF. You can also send your PIF electronically by doing a Save AS (you may have to change the extension from an ASP file to a HTML file) and then e-mail it to the person indicated on the opportunity search.



Part IV. A Word to Those In Special Ministry Circumstances

A WORD TO CANDIDATES FOR MINISTRY

When you have completed all of the requirements for ordination and been approved by your Committee on Preparation for Ministry to circulate your Personal Information Form, you may begin your search. Prior to this you should not be in conversation with any church. While you may be approached, you must make it clear that you must wait and give them a date when you expect to be cleared to search. While this seems harsh, this Book of Order policy allows you to focus on the task of completing your preparation process and allows all candidates to have an equal opportunity.

You will proceed in the search process as described previously in this manual except that the Moderator of your Committee on Preparation for Ministry (rather than the presbytery Stated Clerk) will be asked to attest that you have permission to seek a call.

Process

The Book of Order (G-14.0314) now states that:

It is the responsibility of the presbytery of call to conduct the examination for ordination.

Ordinarily it is the presbytery of care that ordains a candidate.

However, the candidate may request his/her presbytery of care to permit the ordination service to take place within the presbytery of call, and that presbytery may grant such permission when requested by the presbytery of care.

A. If you are seeking a call in your presbytery, what are the steps to be followed?

- Complete a successful final assessment.
- CPM gives permission to circulate the PIF.
- CPM initiates conversation with the COM moderator.
- CPM reviews with you the process leading to a call.
- CPM prepares you for examination by presbytery.
- The presbytery examines for ordination. This examination includes the preaching of a sermon. The COM has been authority to conduct this examination in many presbyteries.
- With guidance from the presbytery, select names for the ordination and installation commission to presbytery.

If you are a Candidate seeking your first call, it is critical that there be coordination between your presbytery of care and the presbytery of the church you will serve.

B. If you are receiving a call in a presbytery other than your "home presbytery", what else might you expect?

- The presbytery of call may have different requirements that you will be expected to meet.
- Time schedules for committee and presbytery meetings may not mesh together smoothly and the process may take longer than you would like. Be patient and cooperative.
- Both the COM and CPM of the calling presbytery may be interviewing you. The CPM might examine you for ordination and the COM for membership in the presbytery and suitability for a particular call. Be sure to contact the COM and CPM chair in the new presbytery to coordinate the requirements you will need to meet.



A WORD TO INTERIM PASTORS

Individuals interested in serving as interim pastors or filling interim governing body positions complete the Personal Information Form in accordance with the instructions given above. You may indicate your interest in interim ministry on your PIF by including these position types in your selection.

We recommend that Interim Pastors submit their PIF six months before they expect to be available for a new Interim position. In completing your PIF, be sure to include in "Work History" detail about the congregations or governing bodies you have served as interim. In the "Training/Certification" section, indicate your PC (USA) or Interim Ministry Network Training along with the location and score of your training. CRS staff will confirm your Certification as an Interim Ministry Specialist, and indicate such on your PIF.

It may be to your advantage to complete a separate Part II of the PIF, to be used exclusively for matching with interim positions. (see "Multiple PIFs" on page 14) The narrative sections, particularly the sections discussing leadership style and accomplishments in your present call, can be written to emphasize those characteristics and skills especially pertinent to serving as an interim.

Likewise, in the section on church characteristics desired, you will want to indicate the specific type of interim position in which you are interested: e.g., interim head of staff, interim solo pastor, or interim presbytery executive, etc. Do not include these designations in the position type listing at the beginning of Part II — only check interim ministry. You may also want to include your preferences for short-term or long-term positions.

Remember, *"The session may not secure or dissolve a relationship with an interim pastor or interim co-pastor without the concurrence of the presbytery through its committee on ministry (Book of Order G-14.0503c)."* So establish and maintain communication with the COM Moderator early in your negotiations with the session.

Review frequently the "Diversified" listing on the Opportunities Search. Interim positions are posted and filled more quickly than regular installed positions.



A WORD TO CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS

Christian Educators complete the Personal Information Form following the same basic instructions given above. However, Christian Educators should note the following differences:

Presbytery of Membership: Select "N/A"

Church Membership: Fill in your Church 5-digit OGA Pin or use the "look up" feature to find the Pin.

Experience Level: If you are looking for your first professional position as a Christian Educator, select "0 to 2 years". Otherwise, select the appropriate level for the number of years of your professional church educator experience.

Training/Certification: Indicate if you are a Certified Christian Educator or Certified Associate Educator. If you are in the process of certification, indicate your training in the "Continuing Education" section.

Geographical Search Area: Many educators are restricted to a relatively small geographical search area. The more mobile you are, the more likely you are to find a call quickly offering a good position at a good salary.

Upon submission of your Personal Information Form, the Stated Clerk of the presbytery in which your church membership resides will be asked to attest that you are an active member in good standing. To decrease the time required to obtain this attestation, you may want to print a copy of the attestation form (from "Hardcopy Forms" on the CLC Main Menu page) and have the Stated Clerk complete the form. This can be mailed or faxed to our office or attached to your paper version of the PIF.

Review often the "Diversified Listings" of the Opportunity Search. There are an increasing number of openings for church educators, and more congregations are opening associate pastor positions, formerly available only to ordained pastors, to lay Christian educators.





Part V. Discerning Your Call With the Search Committees

KEY PEOPLE WORKING WITH CHURCHES SEEKING LEADERS

“A pastor or associate pastor shall be elected by the vote of the congregation and the relationship between them shall be established by the presbytery.”
Book of Order G-14.0501b.

The following are the key people who will work with churches seeking new leaders.

Presbytery

The presbytery has the responsibility of determining who its members will be and who will lead its congregations. No minister can be employed without presbytery concurrence. The presbytery is responsible for the life and mission of its congregations, and has concern for those who serve the church as leaders.

Presbytery Committee on Ministry - COM Liaison

The calling process is a primary responsibility of a presbytery COM. They assist Pastor Nominating Committees, providing resources, guidelines, compensation requirements, and other services to make the process easier. The COM is involved at key points and must concur in the final decision before a call is issued. An experienced member of the COM is usually assigned to work with each PNC as "liaison" throughout the entire vacancy.

Presbytery Executive

The Executive or General Presbyter often staffs the COM and is a resource and support to churches. It is wise to contact the EP/GP when you are in serious conversation with a church so that you can begin to get acquainted and get his or her perspective on the ministry of the church. You can expect that the EP/GP will be contacting the EP/GP of your presbytery for a reference check.

Interim Pastor

Interim Pastors have particular developmental tasks that they are called to accomplish during the pastoral transition period. They have particular skills in congregational analysis so may provide you with helpful insights about the congregation you are considering. They are not to be involved in the search process, but may have assisted with a congregational self-study prior to the completion of a CIF. Their role is to prepare the way for your ministry, so view them as an ally.

Call Referral Services

Call Referral Services of Churchwide Personnel Services are working with the churches and presbyteries as well as with you.



BE OPEN TO GOD'S CALL

There are presently more churches seeking leaders than persons available. Especially needed are pastors for small churches, Christian Educators, Interim Pastors, and Youth Workers.

In the present circumstances where there are more churches seeking leaders than church professionals available for new calls, it is likely that you will receive many contacts from congregations. It is important to be truly open to the working of the Holy Spirit in this process. You may prefer one type of church situation, only to be surprised by God and find a very satisfying ministry in another. Many leaders report such powerful surprises, saying, "I never would have imagined myself serving here, but I felt deeply called and have never regretted accepting." On the other hand, it is important to do some careful and prayerful sorting of opportunities so that you can give serious consideration to a few situations rather than being in conversation with many churches hoping to find "the best deal." That is not fair to the churches you reject along the way. Consider the costs in time, energy, and dollars when a PNC pays for transportation for an interview.

Communicating with Prospective Ministries

Once a PNC has received your PIF, they will consider it and may contact you. Once you have reviewed their CIF, communicate with the PNC and let them know of your interest in continuing the conversation. If you are not interested, be honest and thank them. At whatever point in the process you determine that this position is not the call for you, communicate that to the search committee as soon as possible. It is neither constructive nor kind to string a church along when you are not seriously considering them. Likewise, it is essential that you **INFORM CRS IMMEDIATELY WHEN YOU HAVE ACCEPTED A CALL** (even before all of the final steps are complete) so that your PIF can be removed from circulation. It is very discouraging to a PNC to get excited about a PIF and contact the candidate only to discover that the person is no longer available.

SCREENING AND REFERENCE CHECKS BY THE PNC

On what grounds do COMS or PNCs have the right to screen out candidates?

Employment as a Presbyterian minister is not a right. Civil courts have established that the ministries of the Church of Jesus Christ belong to the Church and tasks are assigned to particular persons for the service of its members and the world. The Church must make such assignment responsibly.

Our *Book of Order* states: "The committee [on Ministry] shall serve the presbytery in the following ways:

(G-11.0502d) It 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. 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. . . ."



What questions should a Pastor Nominating Committee ask of a reference?

It is appropriate and important for PNCs to ask questions related to your skills and experience that relate to the position being filled. Such questions might be: “Tell me about Jane Doe’s worship leadership” or “How does Jane deal with conflict?”. References should respond only on the basis of first-hand knowledge. It is usually helpful if the reference knows a bit about the congregation, community, and position for which you are being considered.

Are there other questions that a COM member or Executive Presbyterian may ask?

A COM member or Executive Presbyterian may also ask any of the following questions:

- “Why is Jane Doe leaving her present position?”
- “Are there any things about Jane that negatively affect her ability to do ministry?”
- “Would you welcome Jane to serve in a similar position in your presbytery?”

Are there questions that cannot be asked in a reference check?

No. By law Church search committees may ask questions which are prohibited in secular employment. (see page 24)

What are secondary references?

These are persons who are not listed on your PIF, but are suggested by others or contacted because they are thought to have knowledge. Executive Presbyters, Stated Clerks, COM Moderators, and CPM Moderators are automatically used as references because of their roles, and no authorization is needed from you for a PNC to consult with them.



What are background checks?

Background checks are assessments of a person’s character and fitness for employment. They may include checks of employment, credit, criminal, and motor vehicle records. If this position will involve work with children, the state may require a background check.



INTERVIEWING

Because PNCs recognize that much about the call process is experiential ("the chemistry between people"; "the movement of the Holy Spirit"), they often move quickly to meet with potential candidates. This is a good time to remember the Presbyterian balance between "ardor and order" or "heart and head."

Preparation for Interviewing

Before you meet with any search committee:

Compare your PIF with the CIF. Do your experience and skills match what they are seeking?

Have you lived and worked in a setting like the church context?

Review other materials. Review any materials the church may send you, such as bulletins, newsletters, annual reports, budgets, Chamber of Commerce brochures etc.

Do thorough reference checking. Call each of the references listed on the CIF and even if he or she is not listed, contact the Executive or General Presbyterian or the COM Moderator or both.

Consider what additional information you want and need in order to evaluate this opportunity as the call for you. Ask about the search committee's process for decision-making. What is their approximate time line?

The Interview Itself

Visiting Churches. If the interview will take place in the church community, ask for a tour that gives a good picture of your church and community, but be careful to protect confidentiality. Do not include non-PNC members in the visit or allow yourself to be introduced around town. This is a small world, and many stories are told about pastors who became "lame ducks" because congregations back home heard that they were out interviewing.

Some Questions You Might Be Asked:

Tell us about your faith journey.

What are the things you feel best about in your present ministry?

What have been the challenges there?

What makes you think you may be called to leave there now?

What interests you about this position?

What do you bring to our ministry?

What are your greatest strengths in ministry? . . . your greatest weaknesses? One of our goals is to strengthen our _____. How would you envision doing that?

Describe a typical week in your ministry.

Share your perspective on the Presbyterian Church (USA).

One of the issues our session has debated in the past few years is _____.

Tell us how you might address that topic.

If we selected you as our pastor (or other role), when could you start and what would be your start-up plan?

How do you balance your personal/family life with your ministry?

What will you need from us, the members of this church, in order to be effective as our pastor?

What questions or concerns do you have?



What about questions that cannot be asked in an interview?

Neither civil nor church law mandate prohibited questions. Many Presbyterians who serve on PNCs are familiar with secular employment practices where it is illegal to ask certain questions of a prospective employee. Because the ministries of the Church belong to the Church, the rules are different for search committees interviewing church professionals. Search committees and presbyteries have the right and responsibility to ask questions that will help them determine "fitness for office."

Pursuant to *Book of Order* G-11.0502g, Committees on Ministry "shall provided 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." It is important that PNCs and COMs examine their decision-making processes to ensure they are not making decisions based upon these categories. This allows for the very broad discretion vested in PNCs and COMs when they are making their decisions yet cautions them to implement the requirements of G-11.0502g and requires them to report on the steps taken in the case of each call.

*From Fred Jenkins, Former Director — Office of Constitutional Services
excerpt from PCUSA Polity Reflection #19, July 1998*

6. Q. What may those who examine church officers do?
- A. Each examining body, a CPM, COM, PNC, Nominating Committee, Session, or Presbytery decides its own procedures, as it does now. They may ask what is necessary to satisfy themselves of the fitness, or lack of fitness of the person for the church office under consideration. The committee may not discriminate solely on the basis of sexual orientation. Each examining body decides when it is satisfied, but may be subject to administrative review or judicial review. For example, see the judicial decision in Bedford-Central Church v. Presbytery of New York City, Minutes 1987 page 119 in which the decision of the candidates committee received administrative review on the floor of presbytery and the presbytery's decision subsequently received judicial review.

Applicants, especially candidates, need to understand that religious institutions are permitted to discriminate on the basis of religious belief and may enforce standards of character that apply to a person's private life to a degree that is not legally permitted in secular occupations and professions.



THE CALL IS EXTENDED

Negotiating the Terms of Call

The terms of the call must be negotiated for presentation to the presbytery and the congregation (see sample call form below).

The following are a list of resources that you might find helpful:

A Study of the Theology of Compensation, Office of the General Assembly, PCUSA, 1983, 1986.

From the Board of Pensions (call 1-800-773-7752 to order):

Understanding Effective Salary

Benefits Administrative Handbook

Tax Guide for Ministers and Churches, Richard R. Hammar

Federal Reporting Requirements for Churches, Richard R. Hammar

Board of Pensions website: www.pcusa.pensions.org

Response line tax assistance for clergy: 1-800-455-5129

The *Minimum Compensation Guidelines* of the Presbytery to which you are being called.

Proposed Compensation Guidelines for Certified Christian Educators, Office of Certification PCUSA (1-888-728-7228 ext. 5757).

Other things to consider:

How does the cost of living in your present location compare with your new location. Go to <http://www.bankrate.com/brm/movecalc.asp> to find out.

Is the manse adequate? Do you really need a housing allowance instead?

There are ways to get more benefit for both the church and the church professional by careful arrangement of compensation items. Consult the resources above and your tax consultant.

Does the church have a good accounting system set up for accountable reimbursable ministry expenses? (This is an important tax consideration for you.)

Will your call be subsidized in any way by funding sources other than the local congregation? If so, how long will this funding be available and what are the expectations?

What moving expenses will be paid?

Are there any significant costs related to registering your vehicle in the new state?



SAMPLE PASTORAL CALL FORM

To be revised as needed in consultation with Presbytery Committee on Ministry. Tax authorities should be consulted regarding any unusual payments for the protection of the church and the taxpayer.

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 benefit 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 _____ 20 _____.

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



Part VI. The Official Decisions

After the Pastor Nominating Committee has made its decision and you have agreed to accept a call, each of the partners to the call must approve it. Each of the following must be included in the final official process:

- ✓ Examination by the Committee on Ministry and/or the presbytery
- ✓ Vote by the congregation
- ✓ Signing of the formal call papers (*Book of Order* G. 14.0506). Appointment of a presbytery commission to ordain and/or install the pastor. If you are a candidate accepting your first call, your presbytery of care will ordinarily ordain you. (G.24.0314) You will need to consider at least 5 persons with a balance of ministers and elders with no more than one elder from any one church. If you invite other elders or ministers who are not members of the calling presbytery, they may be invited to sit with the commission. (See *Book of Occasional Services*, Office of Theology and Worship, Geneva Press, 1999 for ordination services.)
- ✓ Dissolution of any existing call relationship through a duly called congregational meeting followed by presbytery action to concur in the dissolution of the relationship and transfer your membership to the presbytery of call.

EXAMINATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE PRESBYTERY

Many Committees on Ministry will ask the candidate to meet with them for formal examination prior to the congregational meeting. Depending on the procedures established by the calling presbytery, the pastor receiving a call may be examined by the presbytery as a whole or by a committee authorized to do this and report to the presbytery. All ministers receiving new calls are to be examined on "Christian faith and views in theology, the Sacraments, and the government of this church" (*Book of Order* G-11.0402). You may be asked to bring with you or send ahead to the examining group the following:

Personal Information Form

A Statement of Faith — usually one page.

A Faith Journey Biography — usually one page.

Proposed Terms of Call

- ✓ Vote by the congregation.
- ✓ Signing of the formal call papers (G. 14.0506).
- ✓ Appointment of a presbytery commission to ordain and/or install the pastor. You will need to consider at least 5 persons with a balance of ministers and elders with no more than one elder from any one church. Some presbyteries require that commissions also be racially and gender balanced. If you invite elders or ministers who are not members of the calling presbytery, they may be invited to sit with the commission. (See guidance on page 32 following.)



Dissolution of any existing call relationship through a duly called congregational meeting. You ask the session to call for a congregational meeting to concur with your request that the pastoral relationship be dissolved on a specific date. If the congregation concurs, a record of the congregational action is submitted to your presbytery for dissolution and transfer of your membership to the presbytery of call. Most presbyteries have delegated this authority to the committee on ministry.

For lay educators, the official decisions may depend on what a particular presbytery requires. In general, the Search Committee for the educator position may want to think about the following:

- Interview by the Educator Search Committee
- Vote by the Session
- Call extended by the session and call accepted by the educator
- Committee formed to develop a service of commissioning to be held during a worship service. Encourage representation from the presbytery.



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TO ELECT

For the election of a pastor, the session must call a congregational meeting for the PNC to report. Some churches have the custom of hearing a potential minister preach a "candidating sermon" immediately prior to the congregational meeting. Other churches would find such a practice unusual and will act upon the report of the PNC without meeting the person under consideration. Some churches will arrange a "get acquainted supper" the night before the congregational meeting. It is best to follow the guidance of the calling presbytery at this point.

The vote must be taken by ballot. A majority of the voters present and voting shall be required to elect. If a substantial minority of the votes are negative, the moderator must recommend that the call not proceed. If the majority chooses to proceed, the moderator must forward the call to presbytery certifying the number of those who do not concur in the call and any other facts of importance. The moderator shall also inform the person being called of the nature and circumstances of the decision.

SIGNING THE FORMAL CALL PAPERS

The congregation elects persons to sign the call and to present and prosecute the call before the presbytery (usually members of the PNC). The moderator of the meeting shall certify to the presbytery that those signing the call were properly elected and that the call was in all other respects prepared as constitutionally required (*Book of Order* G-14.0506d).

The call shall specify all and only those allowances and amounts which are undertaken as part of the call (G-14.0506c).

When two or more churches established by presbytery as a larger parish unite in calling a pastor, the call must specify the support promised by each church (G-14.0504).



Part VII. Finishing the Process

NOTIFYING CRS OF A “CALL PENDING”

Call 1-888-728-7228 ext. 8550 or send e-mail, mail, or fax to inform CRS of the effective date of the call. This is necessary to end the Church Leadership Connection process for you and the church, and it will prevent other churches from getting your PIF and being disappointed to learn you have accepted a call.

DISSOLVING THE PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP

Although most of your attention will be focused on the call to the new place, it is important that you also pay attention to how you say your "good-byes." Good closure is essential for the spiritual and emotional well-being of both the church leader and the congregation.

G-14.0601 The pastoral relationship between a pastor, associate pastor, or assistant pastor and a church may be dissolved only by presbytery. (See G-6.0202c)

When a pastor announces her or his acceptance of a call to another congregation, the present congregation often experiences a variety of emotions — sadness, anger, sometimes betrayal or relief. It is very important that the pastor's exit is handled well — for the benefit of all concerned. Members and pastor need time and opportunity to celebrate their ministry together and to say goodbye. It is important that the exit time be neither so short that good-byes do not get said nor so long that everyone is ready to move on before the actual departure date.

The minister will inform the session and the presbytery and then shortly thereafter share the news with the congregation. The session calls a congregational meeting to act on the minister's request that the relationship be dissolved. The congregational action becomes a recommendation to presbytery. Many presbyteries grant authority to the COM to dissolve the pastoral relationship and to inform the presbytery in cases in which the congregation and the pastor concur.

A Word About Your Relationship With A Former Congregation

The COM will probably conduct an "exit interview" with you and then separately with your session. This is an opportunity to reflect on the ministry you had together, its strengths and weaknesses, and things to be worked on in the months ahead.

The *Book of Order* (G-14.0606) requires that you receive an invitation from the moderator of session prior to officiating "at services for members of a particular church, or at services within its properties." It is important for the future of the congregation and for the memory of your ministry in a former congregation that you disengage as completely as possible. Friendships can be maintained but providing pastoral services or discussing the life of the congregation with its members should cease.



WORSHIP RECOGNITION OF THE BEGINNING OF A MINISTRY

Ordination and installation services are presbytery services, led by a presbytery-appointed commission. While you have hopes for the style of the service and want special friends to participate, you must follow the policies of the presbytery. It is wise to include people who have special relationships with the church, such as the COM liaison who worked with the church through the search process. Either the moderator of the presbytery or other presbytery leader will chair the commission and have a particular role in the service. Many presbyteries ask that an offering be taken for a particular presbytery cause.

An Outline for the Service of Worship

On the day designated for the installation, the presbytery or commission appointed for this purpose shall convene and shall call the congregation gathered to worship. The service shall focus on Christ and the joy and responsibility of the mission and ministry of the church, and shall include a sermon appropriate to the occasion. The stages of the installation service are as follows:

Statement of Purpose (by moderator or chair of the Commission, following the sermon)

Moderator or chair says something about the theology of call, the process of preparation for ministry, the process of call, and our Presbyterian understanding of the work of the Spirit in this process; describes installation as an act of presbytery; and acknowledges the commission representing presbytery.

Presentation of the Candidate (by an elder, perhaps chair of the PNC)

"Speaking for the people of the church, I bring _____ to be installed as Pastor, Associate Pastor, etc."

Constitutional Questions to the Candidate (by moderator or chair of the commission)

- (1) Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
- (2) Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the church universal, and God's Word to you?
- (3) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?
- (4) Will you be a Minister of the Word and Sacrament in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and continually guided by our confessions?
- (5) Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?



- (6) Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?
- (7) Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?
- (8) Will you seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?
- (9) Will you be a faithful minister, proclaiming the good news in Word and Sacrament, teaching faith, and caring for people? Will you be active in government and discipline, serving in the governing bodies of the church; and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

Constitutional Questions to the Congregation (Elder from the congregation)

- (1) Do we, the members of the church, accept _____ as our pastor (associate pastor), chosen by God through the voice of this congregation to guide us in the way of Jesus Christ?
- (2) Do we agree to encourage him (her), to respect his (her) decisions, and to follow as he (she) guides us, serving Jesus Christ, who alone is Head of the church?
- (3) Do we promise to pay him (her) fairly and provide for his (her) welfare as he (she) works among us; to stand by him (her) in trouble and share his (her) joys? Will we listen to the word he (she) preaches, welcome his (her) pastoral care, and honor his (her) authority as he (she) seeks to honor and obey Jesus Christ our Lord?

Prayer of Installation (Member of commission)

Candidate may kneel or stand (no laying on of hands for installation).

Declaration of Installation

The member presiding shall then say: "_____, you are now a Minister of the Word and Sacrament in and for this congregation. Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Amen." Symbols of office may be offered (Bible, chalice, baptismal bowl, stole, etc.).

Welcome by the Commission (members of the commission greet new pastor)

Charge to the Pastor (by member of the commission)

Charge to the Congregation (by a member of the commission)

Brief Statement and Benediction (by new pastor)

After the service, the officers and members of the church should be invited to come forward to greet their pastor and give him or her an appropriate expression of cordial reception and affectionate regard. The installation of a minister as pastor or associate pastor of more than one church may take place in a joint service, provided each church is present and answers for itself the constitutional questions.

Source: See *Book of Occasional Services*, Office of Theology and Worship, Geneva Press, 1999 for other appropriate services.



ORIENTATION AND SUPPORT IN YOUR NEW MINISTRY

It is critical that the church and pastor make an intentional plan for effective entry and support. The relationship that you have built with the PNC must now be extended to the session and others with whom you will work. It is best that the PNC be dissolved after the installation service and the session become the primary group relating to the pastor. This relationship is one of mutual support and care as pastor and session build an effective ministry together.

The presbytery also provides support for the pastor. It may offer orientation programs, “New Pastor Seminars,” peer support groups, and continuing education opportunities. Take advantage of these programs. The presbytery also provides pastoral care for ministers.

Sources:

The Pastor as Newcomer, Alban Institute, Bethesda, MD.

Here I Am, Lord, Now What?; Transition and Survival in the First Parish, Fox, Susan E. and Hess, Kurtis C.; TAS^{TE} of Ministry, Pby of WV 1-304-744-7634.

May God richly bless you as you enter a new phase in your ministry!



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