

Presbytery of Northern New England: Checklist for Interim Pastor and Pastoral Search

CHURCH _____

When a session decides to search for a new installed Pastor/Associate Pastor, ordinarily they invite an Interim Pastor to guide the transition. The Interim Pastor assists the congregation to process and grieve the loss of their former Pastor, to review changes in their community's context over the years of the previous pastor, to review its ministries, to make any adjustments in their organization and administration, and to prepare the congregation for their next pastor. This Checklist provides a path through the process from resignation of former pastor, through selection of an Interim, the interim period (including Mission Study, Search, Selection of Candidate, Congregational Action, Installation) and the beginning of a new chapter in the congregation's ministry.

Email

Phone

Clerk:

PNC Chair:

COM Liaison:

Assigned to:		Date completed
Pastor	Pastor/Associate Pastor informs the Session of their decision to conclude the current call.	
Pastor	Pastor notifies COM, the Resource Presbyter, or the Stated Clerk of Presbytery.	
Session	Session calls a Congregational Meeting to dissolve the pastoral relationship, approved by COM.	
COM Liaison	COM assigns Liaison to work with Church through entire process.	
COM Liaison	If possible, the Liaison and session meet prior to the congregational action to dissolve the pastoral relationship. At this meeting the Liaison discusses "what happens now?" including transitional possibilities (interim, stated supply pastor, CRE). The Liaison assures the session of the resources and guidance available.	
Session	When the session decides to proceed with an Interim pastor, Session appoints a search committee (Personnel Committee or small committee of session) to find an Interim Pastor.	
COM Liaison	Liaison assists in reviewing the work of the current pastor and the preparation of a position description and one year contract (meeting current PNNE Minimum Compensation) for approval by Session and COM. <i>NOTE: Contract/Position Description must be updated annually to reflect the accomplishments, detail tasks remaining, and to comply with PNNE Minimum Compensation; ordinarily an Interim will serve 18 months or two years, or, in certain situations, three years.</i>	
Session Search PNNE Staff COM Liaison CLC	If the Search committee decides to publicize nationally: a CLC connection is established through the Clerk of Session with guidance from COM/Presbytery Staff. The search committee Prepares a Ministry Discernment Profile for an Interim position. Once approved by Session and COM. The Clerk posts the MDP for the position on CLC, and provides access to referrals. If they decide for a regional search, Liaison and PNNE staff offers suggestions and connections.	

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COM Liaison	Liaison advises search committee during the search as they identify potential candidates, using AA/EEO guidelines.	
Search Committee; Session PNNE Staff COM COM liaison	Any candidate under consideration must be interviewed by a COM at least 2 members in a clearance interview to assure the Interim's "fit" as to skills and understanding of context. PNNE Staff shall conduct a Presbytery Reference check on all candidates under serious consideration. A criminal background check on the final candidate is completed by the Stated Clerk of PNNE. The Session may invite the final candidate to lead worship and to preach; the congregation does not vote, since this is a contract signed by Session, Interim Pastor and COM liaison. The contract is presented, approved by both session and COM.	
COM liaison COM	COM interviews all final candidates, examining those from outside the presbytery for membership, and reviews policies regarding boundary and dismantling racism training obligations. COM approves the contract and, as needed, the transfer of the Interim Pastor to PNNE.	
COM PNNE	COM arranges for a regional gathering to welcome the new colleague and presents the new member at the next meeting of Presbytery; a new position for a PNNE Member will be announced at Presbytery.	
COM liaison	Once the Interim pastor is in place, COM liaison meets with Session to review search process, and the tasks of the interim during the transition. The Liaison reports monthly to COM regarding the progress of the transition process.	
Session Interim COM liaison	Interim pastor assists Session/committee to prepare a mission study and answer: Who are we? Who is our neighbor? What is God's purpose and call for us? COM Liaison has resources for a mission study, as well as examples.	
Session COM	Session approves mission study and seeks COM concurrence.	
COM liaison Session	Once the mission study is approved, Session requests permission from COM to call a congregational meeting to elect a Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC).	
COM Nominations Session	COM gives permission for congregation to elect a PNC, nominated by the Church Nominating Committee and inclusive of the various ages, ministries, and mission emphases of the congregation. Congregation elects PNC	
PNC COM liaison	PNC is oriented to their work by the COM liaison, who also assists the PNC in establishing roles and responsibilities for administration of the PNC work.	
Church Clerk of Session	The clerk enters the name of the PNC chair in CLC so that the committee can enter the data on-line. <i>Note:</i> It is helpful for the PNC's to review the training videos on using the CLC matching/referral system.	
PNC COM liaison	Liaison may assist PNC in preparing the Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP) based on information from the mission study and current statistics of congregation and community. The Interim Pastor will not engage in the work of PNC, unless asked about specific issues.	
COM liaison	COM liaison reviews completed MDP; makes recommendations as needed.	
Session, COM	Session and COM approve the MDP.	
COM PNC Chair/s PNNE staff	COM provides assistance to PNC for placing MDP on the PCUSA web site and downloading PDPs. Once the MDP is uploaded by the PNC, Presbytery Staff approves the posting and the matching/self referrals begin to arrive in the PNC chair/s email.	
COM liaison	Liaison orients PNC on AA/EEO, reading Personal Discernment Profile (PDP) and interviewing techniques.	
PNC PNNE Staff COM	PNC receives PDPs, reviews them, interviews candidates virtually, and asks for a Presbytery to Presbytery reference check on all candidates prior to any face to face interviews.	

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PNC	PNC conducts reference checks on final 3 or 4 candidates before site visit. Secondary references (not chosen by the candidate) should be consulted with permission.	
COM liaison	Before or during any candidate's site visit, the Liaison and another COM member conduct a Clearance interview to determine if the candidate is a "fit" with the congregation and as reference for candidates on the congregation. This interview may be In person or via Zoom.	
PNC	PNC selects the final candidate and negotiates terms of call (using PNNE Call Form), which must meet or exceed the Minimum Terms of Call established in the Presbytery Policy on Minimum Compensation for Parish Ministers.	
Session PNNE Staff	Session requests Stated Clerk to conduct a Criminal Background Check on final candidate.	
COM	COM approves the terms of call and interviews and approves membership in PNNE; for members of PNNE, COM interviews and votes to affirm the new ministry.	
Session	Session requests permission from COM to call a Congregational Meeting for a specific date in order to meet the candidate and act on the report of the PNC.	
Session	Session calls a Congregational Meeting to act on the conclusion of the PNC's search.	
Church Session PNC	PNC hosts welcome event on candidating weekend, the Candidate preaches in worship, and the congregational meeting approves the Call and dissolves the PNC upon installation of the new pastor.	
COM/PNNE	COM concurs with the execution of the call and welcomes to the Presbytery officially at the next Assembly. PNNE Members are celebrated in their new ministry. COM arranges a welcome gathering with regional pastors.	
New Pastor Presbytery Moderator	The Pastor begins ministry, sets date for Service of Installation in consultation with the Presbytery Moderator; together they select members for the Commission and invite individuals to preach and to charge congregation. The Moderator announces the Commission to Leadership Commission or at the next meeting of the Presbytery.	
PNC	PNC hosts small group meetings to introduce pastor.	
COM, LC	COM and Presbytery Leadership Commission approve the Administrative Commission and Installation date.	
PNNE	Presbytery installs the Minister of Word and Sacrament as Pastor/Associate Pastor of congregation.	

Glossary of Terms

COM **Commission on Ministry of the Presbytery**, monthly meetings; liaison appointed for all congregations

MDP **Ministry Discernment Profile**, a church's resume form in the PCUSA

PCUSA **Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

PDP **Personal Discernment Profile**, a Pastor's resume form in the PCUSA

PNC **Pastoral Nominating Committee**. Congregation's Committee to search for a pastor