

The Congregational Meeting to Call a Pastor

Preparing for the Congregational Meeting

1. After the PNC has made its choice, the COM liaison will meet with the PNC to overview the upcoming steps for a smooth transition and positive experience for the incoming pastor and congregation.
2. Please review the Terms of Call with the PNC BEFORE they are sent to the potential candidate. Refer to the guidelines for Terms of Call, which can be found on the COM Forms Page.
3. The PNC meets with the Session, notifying them, the Interim Pastor, and the Clerk of Session.
4. At the session meeting, the PNC gives their report and requests the session Call a congregational meeting to act on the recommendation of the PNC. (NOTE: This date is best worked out with the Interim Pastor and potential candidate ahead of time.)
5. How will the potential candidate be presented? Publicized to the congregation? Call to the meeting, a brochure, letter? Will a "meet and greet" be held for the pastor (and family)?
This process must be discussed with the candidate to avoid lapses in confidentiality while providing the congregation with adequate information.
6. The COM liaison should review with the PNC the following issues and questions
 - Who will moderate the congregational meeting? Interim or COM liaison?
 - Who will take minutes? usually the clerk
 - Who will speak at the congregational meeting?
 - Who will present the Call?
 - Who (from the PNC) will present the candidate's qualifications, pastoral experience, and why the PNC believes this pastor is the one of God's choosing to lead the congregation at this time?
 - Who will present the Terms of Call?
 - Who will make the motion?
 - Who will go out of the room with the potential pastor and his/her family?
 - How the vote will be taken (paper ballots, hands, or voiced)
 - If paper ballots - what will the congregation do while the ballots are being counted?
 - Who will count the ballots? Appoint three counters (not PNC members)
 - Have the PNC chair prepare copies of the call papers to be signed. (samples can be found on the COM page under [Calling a Pastor](#))

Congregational Call For a Pastor:

Special Congregational Meeting

_____ CHURCH

Address

A special meeting of the _____ Presbyterian Church has been duly called and announced by the session, to be held on _____ (date) for the purpose of hearing and acting upon the final report of the Pastor Nominating Committee and to elect _____ as Pastor and approve the Terms of Call. No other business will be transacted.

Agenda for Congregational Meeting

This meeting should be moderated either by the Interim Pastor or COM Liaison.

The Clerk of Session serves as secretary for the meeting (or, if not present, a secretary pro term may be appointed).

Open with prayer.

The reading of the Call of the meeting:

A special meeting of the _____ Presbyterian Church has been duly called and announced by the session, to be held on _____ (date) for the purpose of hearing and acting upon the final report of the Pastor Nominating Committee and to elect _____ as Pastor and approve the Terms of Call.

Appoint three counters (not PNC members)

Appoint Minute Reader (usually submitted to the Session)

The Pastor Nominating Committee presents its final report, including:

Review of the process followed by the PNC;

Introduction and presentation of the candidate.

The candidate may be asked to introduce him/herself further.

Following this, the candidate and family are excused. A member of the PNC should be designated to keep the candidate company while the congregation votes.

Review the Terms of Call, including effective start date; (can be handouts or electrically)

A motion is made that the congregation elect the Reverend _____ to serve as (pastor, associate pastor, co-pastor, or designated pastor) effective _____ (date) and the Terms of Call as presented and that the congregation ask the Presbytery to concur with the call.

Discussion

Vote

The vote is shared with the candidate in private and asked if he or she accepts the Call.*

The congregation is informed of the candidate's and the PNC's decision – either the Call is accepted, and the Call is signed, or the Call is refused/denied, or the decision is delayed, and you move to . . . (see note *)

Invite the pastor-elect and family back into the meeting to congratulate them on the Call.

The clerk (or PNC chair) ensures that the signed Call Forms are delivered to the presbytery within 48 hours of the meeting.

Adjournment with Benediction.

Celebration!

* Note: In some situations, the negative (against) portion of the congregation's vote exceeds 1% of those in attendance and may reach 8% or higher.

In those situations, at the discretion of the PNC and in full consultation with the candidate, a delay in the decision is recommended until PNC, candidate, and COM liaison can discuss why this negative portion is high. If the negative vote exceeds 10%, a delay is mandatory until that conversation can be held.