

THE CHICAGO PRESBYTERY  
COMMISSION ON MINISTRY  
TRANSITION PROCESS FOR PASTORS  
AND ASSOCIATE PASTORS



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# WHEN A PASTOR LEAVES

## CHECKLIST

### Entering Transition

- Departing Pastor provides advanced notice to Executive Presbyter/Regional Liaison regarding new call and/or retirement.
- Pastor announces departure to Session with Regional Liaison representative present.

Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_


- Session and Departing Pastor prepare Covenant of Expectations for everyone involved.
- Departing Pastor drafts and sends letter to congregation notifying them of departure.



- COM Team conducts an Exit Interview with Session and Departing Pastor.

Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

### Saying Goodbye

- Congregation plans farewell for Departing Pastor.
-   Congregational meeting is called and moderated by someone other than the Departing Pastor. The Covenant of Expectations is read out loud during the meeting and signed by the pastor and Clerk of Session.

Date of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_ Moderator of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

- Congregation dissolves pastoral relationship. Presbytery of Chicago concurs via COM. Dissolution of Pastoral Relationship Report is forwarded to POC Office for church file.

### Documents to submit to POC Office ([ministry@chicagopresbytery.org](mailto:ministry@chicagopresbytery.org)) for church file

- Covenant of Expectations
- Departing Pastor's Exit Interview Report
- Session Exit Interview Report
- Dissolution of Pastoral Relationship Report
- Covenant with a Temporary/Interim Pastor

Find these documents at:

<http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/commission-on-ministry/>

# BEGINNING THE TRANSITION PROCESS


## CHECKLIST

### Overview of Process

- COM Liaison provides links to the Pulpit Supply list, “On Calling a Pastor: A Manual for Churches Seeking Pastors” from the Presbyterian Church (USA), CLC, and Covenant with a Temporary Pastor form. <http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/commission-on-ministry/>
  
- COM appoints a Moderator for Session.  
Session Moderator: \_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Liaison: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Session meets with Regional Liaison and receives an orientation to the search process. The Liaison helps with the Pulpit Supply List if needed.  
Date completed: \_\_\_\_\_

### Appoint Transitional Leadership

- Session works with COM Team to discern appropriate Pastoral Leadership during the transition. (Some options include, but are not limited to, pulpit supply, interim pastors, or temporary supply.)  
Pastoral Leadership selected: \_\_\_\_\_

-   Once discerned, Regional Liaison assists Session in developing a contract with transitional leadership, using the Temporary Covenant form found on the web site.  
<http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/commission-on-ministry/>
  
- Covenant with transitional leadership is approved by Session and COM (and reported to the presbytery at the next Presbytery Assembly meeting).  
Date of Session Approval: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of COM Approval: \_\_\_\_\_

### Documents to submit to POC office (ministry@chicagopresbytery.org) for church file:

- PIFs of any candidates for transitional Pastoral Leadership
- Covenant with a Temporary/Interim Pastor <http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/commission-on-ministry/>

# PNC FORMATION & MIF DEVELOPMENT

## CHECKLIST

### Form PNC

- COM Liaison meets with Nominating Committee to review make-up of PNC and transition process.
- Congregation elects a PNC, if they haven't already done so.
- Report members of PNC to POC Staff, with contact information.
- COM team trains PNC in transition process.

Date of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

### Developing and Distributing the MIF

- PNC prepares and approves MIF and the PNC Moderator signs.
- The Session approves MIF and the Clerk of Session signs.
- The COM liaison contacts the EP, who then sends two codes to the COM liaison to pass back, one for the PNC moderator and one for the Clerk of Session.
- The church uses the code to post the MJIF to the CLC
- The COM Moderator will get a notice that she/he/they need to electronically sign off on the MIF
- As soon as this final electronic signature happens, the MIF is live.

Date completed: \_\_\_\_\_

### Documents to submit to POC Office ([ministry@chicagopresbytery.org](mailto:ministry@chicagopresbytery.org)) for church file

- List of PNC Members and Contact Information
- Final MIF

# REVIEWING PASTOR CANDIDATES

## CHECKLIST

### Candidate Review

- PNC Reviews PIFs matched through the CLC system, self-referrals, and via other sources such as letters to seminary presidents and EPs.
- PNC Gathers more information about potential candidates via email, reference checks, phone calls, and Skype/Zoom interviews.
- PNC selects top candidates for on-site visit.

Candidate	Selected:
Candidate	Selected:
Candidate	Selected:
*****	
Candidate	Selected:
Candidate	Selected:

- Date Top Candidate PIFs are submitted to the POC Office: \_\_\_\_\_



### Reference Checks

- Top candidates from the PNC are given to the Executive Presbyter by COM Liaison for EP reference checks. **NO** candidate may have an on-site interview until this step is completed.

Documents to submit to POC Office ([ministry@chicagopresbytery.org](mailto:ministry@chicagopresbytery.org)) for church file

- PIFS of top candidates for EP checks

# IN PERSON INTERVIEWING

## CHECKLIST

### Interviews

- PNC conducts on-site (or Skype/Zoom) interviews with top candidates

Candidate 1:		Interview Date:	
Candidate 2:		Interview Date:	
Candidate 3:		Interview Date:	
Candidate 4:		Interview Date:	
Candidate 5:		Interview Date:	

### Neutral Pulpits

- Generally, a candidate visits for a weekend, arriving Saturday for a Fit Interview and preaching on Sunday at a Neutral Pulpit (off-site at “sibling congregations). The locations of neutral pulpits are coordinated through COM Regional Liaisons.
- During a neutral pulpit weekend, a team of presbytery peers will interview the candidate to assess, fit (culture, call, theology) with the congregation and with the presbytery. The Fit Interview Teams are coordinated through the POC Commission on Ministry and Liaisons.
- More than one Fit Interview/Neutral Pulpit with candidates may be scheduled in a weekend.

Candidate 1 Fit Team:	Interview Date:
Candidate 2 Fit Team:	Interview Date:
Candidate 3 Fit Team:	Interview Date:

Candidate 1:	Neutral Pulpit Date:	Place:
Candidate 2:	Neutral Pulpit Date:	Place:
Candidate 3:	Neutral Pulpit Date:	Place:

### Documents to submit to POC Office (ministry@chicagopresbytery.org) for church file:

- Names of Top Candidates for which Neutral Pulpits are being scheduled
- Fit Team Interview Reports from Neutral Pulpit Weekend
- PNC Reports from Neutral Pulpit Weekend


# EXTENDING A CALL


## CHECKLIST

### Discerning the Final Candidate

- PNC strives for a unanimous decision, reached through consensus.
- Inform Transitional Liaison of final choice

Date information is forwarded to Liaison: \_\_\_\_\_

 NOTE: POC staff will run a background check at this time. The Candidate's contact information must be forwarded to the POC Office ([ministry@chicagopresbytery.org](mailto:ministry@chicagopresbytery.org)) in order to forward to and receive from the Candidate the background authorization form.

  Call may *only* proceed after background check run by POC staff is cleared.

### Terms of Call

- COM Liaison reviews Instructions for Extending a Call.
- Terms of Call are drafted using the Terms of Call form and Compensation Guidelines for the current year, downloaded from the POC website (<http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/commission-on-ministry/>). This will serve as the document used to negotiate terms with candidate.
- Terms of Call are reviewed with the Regional Liaison. Especially important are the correct amounts for the Board of Pensions Plan. Help calculating the amounts can be found at <http://www.pensions.org/calc/dues>

Date Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

- Terms of call parameters are approved by Session.

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

### Extending the Call



- PNC extends the call and negotiates terms of call with candidate.

Date call extended: \_\_\_\_\_

- Candidate accepts the call along with the Terms of Call.

Date accepted: \_\_\_\_\_



-   It is strongly recommended that the Terms of Call are reviewed again by the COM Region Liaisons, especially if any of the terms have changed after negotiation of the Terms of Call. It will make the process more successful for approval of the Terms of Call by the Commission on Ministry.
-   POC Staff will forward to the pastor the Minister Information Packet, the Life Together Boundary Policy. These need to be returned to the POC Office by the Candidate.

**Documents to submit to POC Office ([ministry@chicagopresbytery.org](mailto:ministry@chicagopresbytery.org)) for church file:**

- POC Affirmative Action / Equal Employment Opportunity in Ministry AA/EEO Acknowledgment Form
- Pastoral Call Letter
- Minister Information Packet, that includes Statement of Faith, copy of Certificate of Ordination, place of ordination and contact information.
- Life Together Signature Page from back of policy

# WELCOMING THE NEW PASTOR

## CHECKLIST

### Call Accepted!

- PNC creates the Report to the Congregation to go with presenting the candidate to the congregation.
- Congregational meeting is called for presenting Candidate to the congregation.  
Candidating service date: \_\_\_\_\_ Moderator of Meeting \_\_\_\_\_  
COM Liaison \_\_\_\_\_

The Clerk of Session records the congregational vote on the form.

The Clerk of Session secures all needed signatures in the Terms of Call.

The Congregation dismisses the PNC at the end of the Congregational Meeting.

The COM Liaison forwards the Terms of Call to Commission on Ministry for official approval.

Presbytery accepts the new pastor on its rolls at its next stated meeting.

**NOTE: *If this is the candidate's first call, he/she will need to complete their ordination examination prior to accepting the call. The Stated Clerk will work with you in navigating this portion of the call.***

Effective Date new pastor begins ministry at church: \_\_\_\_\_

### Ordination / Installation

- The new pastor organizes his/her ordination/installation service, using the form found on the web site. COM Moderator, COM Liaison, Stated Clerk are good sources for help with the service.
- Pastor submits the form along with the service date to the POC Office ([minister@chicagopresbytery.org](mailto:minister@chicagopresbytery.org)) to forward to COM for approval.



NOTE: Form must be submitted to COM 1 week *before* the COM meeting *before* the Ordination / Installation.

### Beyond the Call and Ordination / Installation

- New Pastor and Session develop first year plan together.
- End of first year review with Session, Pastor, and Regional Liaison.

**Documents to submit to POC Office ([ministry@chicagopresbytery.org](mailto:ministry@chicagopresbytery.org)) for church file:**

- PNC Report to the Congregation
- Candidate Biography
- Ordination /Installation Commission form
- End of First Year Review Results

# APPENDIX

## Who Does What During the Search Process

### **The Session**

With the help of Transition Liaisons, puts appropriate congregational and pastoral leadership in place  
Conducts a mission study process for the church  
Consults with presbytery in beginning the pastoral search  
Provides the PNC a budget for expenses, and approves the compensation package for the call.  
Reviews and approves the Ministry Information Form (MIF)  
Supports the PNC with prayer and respects the confidentiality of the process.  
Approves negotiated terms of call  
Calls the congregational meeting to hear the PNC's report and elect the new pastor.

### **The Interim Pastor (if one is employed)**

Carries on the ministry of the church and prepares it to receive a new called pastor  
May assist with a mission study  
Supports and prays for the PNC, but is not directly involve with its work  
Cannot ordinarily be called as the next pastor

### **The Senior Pastor (in the case of an Associate Pastor search)**

Participates in the search process as appropriate  
Honors the independence of the PNC  
Is kept abreast of the progress of the PNC by the PNC Chairperson  
Interviews the final candidates

### **The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)**

Participates in the Mission Study with the Session, if they are formed at that time  
Completes the Ministry Information Form (MIF)  
Reads and evaluates Personal Information Forms (PIFs) from potential pastors  
Interviews and does reference checks on candidates of interest  
Selects candidate to present to the congregation  
Provides support to the new pastor during the transition period into their new call

### **The Congregation**

Dissolves pastoral relationship with departing pastor  
Elects the PNC  
Prays for the PNC and respects its confidentiality  
Votes to call the pastor  
Dismisses the PNC after affirmative vote to call the new pastor

**COM**

Interviews pastor candidates during neutral pulpit weekends to assess candidate's theological and cultural fit with the congregation and Presbytery of Chicago

Trains PNC on search process

Guides PNC through the transition process

Conducts exit interview with Departing Pastor

Orients session to the search process

Arranges for Neutral Pulpit preaching of top candidates

Assembles Clearance Interview Teams during Neutral Pulpit weekend

Approves the dissolution of departing pastors call

Reviews and approves the Ministry Information Form (MIF)

Approves the call on behalf of the Presbytery of Chicago

Approves the installation plans on behalf of the Presbytery of Chicago

Appoints a mentor for the new pastor during the first year

Conducts an end-of-first year review with pastor and Session

Recommends a moderator of Session

Conducts exit interview with departing pastor

Provides the names of potential pulpit supply or interim pastors

Appoints a Transitional Liaison to work closely with the Congregation throughout the entire transition process

Works with Session to establish transitional leadership for the duration of the search process

**POC Staff**

Conduct reference checks on candidates (presbytery-to-presbytery) Gathers Assessments data on candidates

Completes background checks on candidates

## **Glossary**

### **CLC: Church Leadership Connection**

The Internet-based computer system provided by the General Assembly Call Referral Services, Presbyterian Church, (USA). Through this system, Pastor Nominating Committees submit their Ministry Information Forms and pastors submit their Personal Information Forms.

### **Equal Employment Opportunity / Affirmative Action Policy**

A plan designed by Presbytery of Chicago to assist PNCs in giving serious consideration to racial/ethnic persons, persons with disabilities, and women as their next pastor.

### **MIF: Ministry Information Form**

The form containing data which describes the mission and ministry of a particular congregation, together with a description of skills, experience, and interests needed to meet the expectations held for the next-called pastor. It is uploaded to the CLC website by the Pastor Nominating Committee so that pastor candidates can apply for the position.

### **POC: Presbytery of Chicago**

The regional body of which your congregation is part. POC provides support and oversight for Congregations in North-East Illinois, and is one of eight presbyteries in Illinois and Indiana that make up the Synod of Lincoln Trails. The presbytery office is located in Chicago, Illinois.

### **PIF: Personal Information Form**

The form containing data on a particular minister (or candidate for ministry). It provides both resume/CV data (as in prior work experience and educational qualifications) as well as narrative data in the form of statements of faith or other biographical information. The PIFs are matched to the MIF via the CLC website system, and PNCs automatically receive PIFs electronically once their MIF is matched.

### **PNC: Pastor Nominating Committee**

The committee elected by the congregation. It reports to the congregation (NOT to Session). It is also responsible for presenting the congregation with one candidate for the position to be filled.

### **COM: Commission on Ministry**

The commission within the Presbytery of Chicago responsible for oversight of the pastoral search process. The commission makes decisions on behalf of the presbytery and informs the presbytery of those decisions.

## Master List of Documents to be Submitted to the POC Office

### When A Pastor Leaves

- Covenant of Expectations <http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/commission-on-ministry/>
- Departing Pastor's Exit Interview Report
- Session Exit Interview Report
- Dissolution of Pastoral Relationship Report

### Beginning the Transition Process

- Interim Task Study
- Transitional Leadership Contract <http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/commission-on-ministry/>

### PNC Formation & MIF Development

- Final MIF

### Reviewing Pastor Candidates

- PIFs of Top Candidates

### In Person Interviewing

- Fit Interview Team reports from Neutral Pulpit weekends

### Extending a Call

- AA/EEO Acknowledgment Form\*
- Pastoral Call Letter\*

### Welcoming Your New Pastor

- Terms of Call <http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/commission-on-ministry/>
- PNC Report to the Congregation
- Candidate Biography
- Ordination / Installation Administrative Commission report
- End of First Year Review results