



**THE PRESBYTERY OF MINNESOTA VALLEYS
COMMISSION ON LEADERSHIP**

MANUAL AND RESOURCE GUIDE

***SECTION 6*
THE PASTORAL SEARCH**

**GUIDANCE FOR PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEES,
SESSIONS, AND THE COMMISSION ON LEADERSHIP**

**COMMISSION ON LEADERSHIP MANUAL
SECTION 6: THE PASTORAL SEARCH**

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**POLICIES REGARDING THE PASTORAL SEARCH AND
PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEES
The Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys**

1. No election of a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) will be held until representatives of the Commission on Leadership (COL) have met with the session to give instructions regarding the process of calling a pastor and the commission has given its approval.
 - a. In cases where a congregation will be served by an Interim or Transitional Pastor, there will be tasks that it is expected that the transitional leader will undertake and complete with the congregation before approval is granted.
 - i. When the Interim/Transitional Pastor feels that the congregation and its leadership have progressed to a point where it is felt that a PNC should begin work, they will request a meeting with the COL to seek approval for the forming of a PNC.
 - b. In cases where a congregation will not be served by an Interim or Transitional Pastor, there will be tasks that it is expected that the session will undertake and complete with the congregation before approval is granted.
2. The Ministry Information Form (MIF) must be approved by the congregation's session prior to being presented to COL.
3. The Commission on Leadership must approve the Ministry Information Form before it can be circulated. The commission may delegate this authority to the commissions Co-Chairs, or to a task group of the commission.

SPECIAL NOTE (See Section 2, page 217 for more information)

Any Minister of the Word and Sacrament who is serving a first call following graduation from seminary and comes with any educational indebtedness, shall be required to show evidence of having attended a financial planning workshop such as a "Fiscal Fitness" workshop sponsored by the Board of Pensions or another financial planning workshop. If the Minister of the Word and Sacrament has not attended such a workshop, he/she shall be required to do so within twelve months of startup. The cost of the registration fee, accommodation and travel shall be considered legitimate reimbursable expense from study leave allowance

A PASTORAL SEARCH PROCESS CHECKLIST

This checklist should be used alongside the process chart found on pages 406-413 in Section 4 (Pastoral Transitions) of this Manual, which outlines the complete transition process.

✦ COMMISSION ON LEADERSHIP LIAISON MEETING WITH THE SESSION

(This meeting may occur in conjunction with the meeting where the pastoral leader announces his/her intentions to leave, or at a meeting of the session subsequent to that meeting. This meeting definitely occurs prior to the Nomination of the Pastor Nominating Committee)

Be sure you discuss the following items with the session:

- Prayer – remind everyone that the search process must be surrounded by the prayers of the congregation, the session, and the presbytery. Pastoral calls are not solely the work of the PNC.
- If a mission study or other appropriate assessment has not been completed, remind the session that this will need to be completed before proceeding with the selection of a Pastor Nominating Committee.
- Remind the session that the congregation needs COL's approval before forming a PNC.
- Review the checklist and flow chart with the session
- Discuss the optimal size of a Pastor Nominating Committee. In part, this is a function of the size of the congregation. It should be no fewer than five people. Seven to nine persons is a good size. Some committees have been as large as 11 to 13 and worked well. A resignation because of a move or other circumstances should be anticipated. Ask the Session to give guidance to the congregation's Nominating Committee.
- Remind the Session that the PNC will be considering candidates without regard to race, age, ethnic origin, gender, physical disability or marital status. Distribute recommendations relative to AA/EEO guidelines.
- Ask for questions or concerns.
- Discuss the housing and salary challenges that are to be expected. (moving expenses, creative ideas to solve the financial challenges, such as shared equity)
- Explain to the session, including its moderator, that the PNC will be responsible only to the congregation that elected it - not to the session or to any pastor. An Interim Pastor may be asked for advice but will play no active role in the work of the PNC.
- Review what happens next: a meeting with the congregation's Nominating Committee.

✦ **COMMISSION ON LEADERSHIP LIAISON MEETING WITH THE CONGREGATION'S NOMINATING COMMITTEE:**
(This occurs following COL's action authorizing the congregation to elect a Pastor Nominating Committee, and prior to that committee being nominated.)

Be sure you discuss the following items with the congregation's Nominating Committee:

- Report the size of the Pastor Nominating Committee to be elected (from the session's input).
- Review the work that will be expected of the Pastor Nominating Committee (review the Checklist and the Overview Chart). The demands on an individual's time are enormous. It is not uncommon for a PNC to meet for several hours a week for many months. This committee work requires the highest level of commitment and sacrifice on the part of the PNC member and his/her family. Note: Ask the committee to make a list of the gifts/skills /talents that will need to be present in this committee. Not everyone will need to have all the skills listed, of course.
- Discuss who should not be considered for service on this committee. Members who are employed by the church should not be considered. Members who are involved in other leadership in the church should be given the opportunity of being released from those responsibilities for service on this committee.
- Encourage the committee to develop a list of possible names and indicate which skills each one has.
- Encourage the committee to prioritize the list of names before making contacts.
- Encourage committee members, as they recruit, to make "in-person" visits, not telephone calls. Make sure, in these visits, to indicate the importance of the task, the time commitment involved, and the variety of work that lies ahead. DO NOT indicate who else is being considered. Give the person the opportunity to reflect and pray on this invitation. Conclude the visit with prayer.
- When the committee has a slate of names ready, they ask the Session to call a special Congregational Meeting. Notify the Session of the slate. Request that a written notice be sent to the congregation and include (if desired) in it a presentation of the proposed Pastor Nominating Committee. (Also, give a bit of biographical information about each person, such as length of church membership, areas of service, professional and family information.)

✦ **OUTLINE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TO ELECT A PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE SAMPLE**
If possible, the Liaison may wish to be present at this meeting.

- Call to Order - Establishment of a Quorum
- Opening Prayer
- Moderator or Clerk: Read the stated purpose of the congregational meeting
- Report of the Congregation's Nominating Committee
- MOTION: To elect (.....) presented to serve as the Pastor Nominating Committee NOTE: If there are additional nominations from the floor, the congregation will have the choice of expanding the size of the committee or taking a written ballot.

- MOTION: To commission the Pastor Nominating Committee in worship on Sunday morning, _____, 20____, at _____ a.m.
- Announcements
- MOTION: To adjourn
- Closing Prayer

✦ **Sample: A SERVICE OF COMMISSIONING FOR THE PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE**
The following litany may be used as part of a Sunday morning worship service.

(Members of the Pastor Nominating Committee will be asked to come forward.)

Pastor or Clerk: You have been chosen to serve this church in a special way. Together, you will seek a candidate for pastor of this congregation. I ask you now to respond to the following questions:

Will you make every effort to be diligent in this task, being present at all training sessions and committee meetings, and sharing in all committee decisions?

PNC Members: WE WILL.

Pastor or Clerk: Will you respect your fellow committee members in this task, working with them in love and forbearance when opinions differ?

PNC: WE WILL.

Pastor or Clerk: Will you try to maintain an openness about the persons you will interview, recognizing that ministers and candidates for the ministry are not limited by their age, sex, ethnic origin, marital or family status?

PNC: WE WILL.

Pastor or Clerk: Will you maintain the necessary confidentiality of this task, even where family members are concerned?

PNC: WE WILL.

(Family members of the committee members will be asked to stand.)

Pastor or Clerk: You are also assuming a task because you will probably have to give up time with the members of your family and, perhaps, assume some of his/her other obligations. Will you answer these questions:

Will you try to bear with demands on your family members' time and strength?

Family Members: WE WILL.

Pastor or Clerk: Will you respect the need for confidentiality?

Family Members: WE WILL.

(The congregation will be asked to stand.)

Pastor or Clerk: This committee is laboring on behalf of the entire congregation and needs its support and encouragement. Will you answer these questions:

Will you remember these committee members in your thoughts and prayers in the months ahead?

Congregation: WE WILL.

Pastor or Clerk: Will you seek to be patient if the search process seems slow?

Congregation: WE WILL.

Pastor or Clerk: Will you, relying upon the Holy Spirit, resist forming images of what the pastor should look like or be like, trusting the committee's skills and intentions to seek worthy qualities of ministry?

Congregation: WE WILL.

Pastor or Clerk: Will you respect the need for confidentiality in this search process?

Congregation: WE WILL.

Pastor or Clerk: Will you, if you are responsible for the recruitment of workers in the church, try to release these members from other tasks during their tenure on this committee?

Congregation: WE WILL.

Pastor or Clerk: Let us pray: Almighty God: How many are the ways we serve you within your Church! We thank you for these persons who have pledged themselves to this task of seeking a leader for this congregation. Enlarge their gifts and help them to seek your will. Together, we now dedicate ourselves to them and to you, that we may fulfill our mission faithfully and be your joyful people. Through Christ we pray. Amen.

✦ **ORIENTATION OF THE PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The Liaison should be sure to discuss the following items with the Pastor Nominating Committee.

- Overview the work of the Committee.
- Discuss budget expenses for the committee.
- Discuss the role of the Liaison and that you should be notified of every meeting.
- Discuss the care that must be taken to consider candidates without regard to race, ethnic origin, age, gender, physical disability or marital status. Distribute AA/EEO guidelines.
- Discuss need for confidentiality.
- Discuss need for a regular meeting time.
- Discuss need to make this committee's work a priority - attendance at meetings, etc.

- Discuss decision-making patterns the committee will use (consensus/unanimous, majority vote). Stress that when it comes time to vote on extending a call to a candidate to become pastor, that the votes of the committee must be unanimous.
- Discuss the relationships of the committee with session, pastors and congregation.
- Select officers for the committee: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Clerk.
- Discuss strategies for communicating with the congregation throughout the process.
- Provide a copy of the minimum compensation and benefits for pastoral leaders that are required by the Presbytery. (Section 3, pages 311-313)
- Discuss housing and salary challenges (moving expenses, creative ideas such as shared equity)
- Explain the Ministry Information Form (MIF) and provide a copy of a blank MIF for the moderator.
- Discuss the On-line Church Leadership Connection
- If the Session has completed the “Critical Questions” assessment, a mission study, or other assessment of the congregation, make sure that copies of the Final Report are available.
 - This information will be the primary resource document for completing the Ministry Information Form.
- Review what happens next: completion of the MIF, presenting it to the Session for approval and COL for endorsement.

⚡ **AS THE NEED ARISES AT LATER MEETINGS OF THE PNC**

- Discuss strategies for:
 - handling Personal Information Forms (PIFs) reading and taking notes on PIFs
 - listening and taking notes on sermon tapes
 - using supplemental questions
 - conducting telephone interviews
 - conducting personal interviews
 - conducting reference checks (getting release forms)
 - requesting “executive level checks” on prospective candidates before they are invited to come for an interview
 - planning the weekend interview visit (provide sample schedule)
- Discuss the need to let ministers know that they are not being considered in a timely manner through careful, considerate, personalized responses.
- COL conducts separate “entrance interviews” with all prospective candidates. (a two-hour time is needed). The COL interview team must be provided with a MIF from the Church and PIF of the candidate for review, prior to the interview. NOTE: If the person under consideration is not ordained, the COL must also be informed of this fact.

- Examining Team or Liaisons contact PNC immediately of any concerns that may prevent the church from calling a particular candidate.
- PNC unanimously selects a candidate, negotiates terms, and notifies the COL that it is ready to present a candidate.
- PNC must work according to the Presbytery AA/EEO guidelines.
- If the search is for an Associate, the Liaisons should meet with the Head of Staff to outline the process and share with him/her a copy of the "Guidelines for Involvement of Head of Staff in Selection of Associate Pastor".

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEES

The following suggestions are offered by the Commission on Leadership to the Pastor Nominating Committees of this presbytery. It is our hope they might be adapted and prove useful as PNC's do the important work of seeking pastoral leadership for their congregation.

Helpful Reminders regarding the Ministry Information Form:

1. The MIF is the PNC's calling card.
 - a. It is designed to introduce the congregation and position to those who are seeking new ministry opportunities.
 - b. It is essential that the MIF be well-written. Learnings from congregational mission studies, surveys, and other resources will provide the significant information for the writing of this document.
 - c. The MIF must make a good first impression!
 - d. Important Steps:
 - i. Before being circulated, the MIF will need to be approved by both the session and the Commission on Leadership.
 - ii. Commission approval may be done by the Co-chairpersons or individuals designed by the commission's leadership.
 - iii. The PNC will enter the MIF into the Church Leadership Connection's on-line system. Passwords can be secured from one of the COL Co-chairs.
 - iv. The Church Leadership Connection is not the only way that the Personal Information Forms (PIFs) of prospective candidates can be secured. PNCs are encouraged to consider communicating with the Presbytery Leaders in other presbyteries, the Presbyterian Seminaries, and through church-wide publications, including this presbytery's Valley Bridge.

Reviewing Personal Information Forms (PIF)

As the PNC reviews the PIFs it receives, it will prove very helpful to the process if the committee establishes a process for evaluating the individuals whose PIFs have been received.

This is one suggestion:

PIF rating considerations - Rate the individual from 1 (poor or unacceptable) to 5 (excellent, desirable) on some, or all, of the following criteria (or establish criteria of your own)

- Evidence of general professional growth
- Cultural and educational background
- Apparent administrative ability
- Community service
- Job performance (pastorates past and present)
- Theological viewpoint (degree to which it is expressed with originality and clarity; and reasonably reflects my/our expectations)
- Evidence of pastoral interest, warmth, and concern
- Preaching

- Interest and involvement in Christian education
- Imagination and resourcefulness
- Problem-solving ability
- Conflict-management ability
- Leadership style
- How the individual matches with the congregation's needs

Here is another suggestion:

From your Ministry Information Form (MIF), make a list of mandatory qualifications and desirable qualifications as a committee. Use this list to rate each candidate, as above.

Reference Checks

1. Remember to get permission to contact the references listed on the PIF.
2. Do not check references which come from other sources besides the candidate without obtaining the candidate's permission.
3. If possible, have at least two people participate in the reference-check calls.
4. Develop a list of questions which you will ask all references. Some suggestions:
 - *How do you know the candidate?*
 - *What are the candidate's pastoral strengths?*
 - *What are possible areas of growth for this candidate?*
 - *What questions would you suggest we ask the candidate?*
 - *If the candidate is not pastor to the reference, you might wish to ask the reference – "Would you want this person as your pastor?"*

Interviewing Prospective Candidates

1. Ask everyone the same questions.
2. Determine in advance who will ask each question.
3. Ask open-ended questions
4. Allow time for the prospective candidate to ask questions, and take note of the questions that they ask.
5. Use the interview time efficiently.
6. Avoid:
 - a. Idle chatter
 - b. Questions with "yes"/"no" answers.
 - c. Questions which can only be answered with inside information.
 - d. Questions which require a dissertation.
 - e. Questions about plans for marriage/family/spouse's work.

Possible Questions

1. Tell us about your faith journey.
2. What has been most satisfying in your ministry thus far?
3. What has been most frustrating?
4. How do you train/equip/empower members of the congregation to share in ministry?
5. How do you work with staff?
6. How do you help members grow spiritually?

7. How do you prepare sermons?
8. Why are you seeking a new call now?
9. Describe a conflict situation which you had responsibility for managing.
10. How do you care for yourself? How do you play? How do you nurture your own spiritual life?
11. In what area of ministry are you most intentional about growing?

“ON CALLING A PASTOR”: Helpful References

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has created a guide entitled *On Calling a Pastor* for use by congregations engaged in the pastoral search process.

https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/clc/pdfs/the_revised_on_calling_a_pastor_manual_march_2015.pdf

The following sections from **Part Five – Searching for a Pastor** may prove to be helpful to a search committee:

- Using the Church Leadership Connection – p. 27
- Writing the Ministry Information Form – pp. 28-33
- Evaluating PIFs (Personal Information Forms – pp. 36-38
- Interview Questions – p. 38
- Reference Checks – pp. 38-39

“CRITICAL QUESTIONS”
STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR CHURCHES SEEKING A PASTOR
*(Adapted from resources of the Presbytery of Denver for use by congregations
in the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys)*

This is a time in the life of the church for this congregation to consider the way the church functions in the way of activities to support the congregation in fellowship, worship, service, etc. Before this congregation moves forward in its search for new pastoral leadership, it is imperative that the congregation, led by its Session, step back and look at itself. The following process replaces the laborious and time-consuming mission study process that many presbyteries, including ours, previously required of all churches seeking a pastor. This process is designed to help congregations prepare for a successful search.

The questions presented here are the kind of questions that will be asked by potential candidates. These questions can be answered by the session or the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) or a combination of both. Developing answers will help the church and PNC as you enter the interviewing process. We leave it up to each session and PNC to gather the resources needed to answer the questions. You may need the input of the congregation or other resources available in your community. We ask you to answer at least 10 of these questions. The answers should be presented to the session for their input and approval.

The Commission on Leadership will look at the answers to determine if you as a congregation are ready to move forward in the search process. This process is intended to create an opportunity for creative, extensive dialogue within your congregation, Session and PNC. If your Session and/or PNC is not able to fully answer these questions, the Commission on Leadership may determine that a complete and more detailed Mission Study would better satisfy the needs of your congregation.

Completion and approval of this exercise is required of a congregation before a PNC may be formed.

These “Critical Questions” look at these activities, and assesses how these are appropriate for the congregation and a statement of goals for future growth. The answers to the Questions provide a vehicle for your congregation to review its strengths, weaknesses and to prioritize what it feels is the actual purpose of your church, and what type of Pastor you will need for your future.

This exercise has several functions:

1. They allow a church (congregation and/or leadership) to think about direction and emphasis in effort and resources for the future.
2. It is the basis for part of the Ministry Information Form (MIF) that will be submitted to the Church Leadership Connection as part of the pastor search process.
3. It allows a pastor nominating committee to evaluate a candidate in terms of his/her strengths and interests in the areas of the work to be accomplished at the church.
4. Sent to a candidate, it allows the applicant to evaluate the fit of the church and its goals with their personal gifts and interests.
5. It serves as a tool for the session and pastoral staff to assess the accomplishments, and discuss programs and staffing to be changed/deleted due to circumstances.

The Critical Questions:

Offer as many specific examples as you are able.

1. What does your church have to offer that the world can't live without?
2. What sets your church apart from other Presbyterian churches?
3. What sets it apart from churches of other denominations in your neighborhood?
4. What demographic information about your community will shape the next five years of ministry?
5. Why do people join your church? Why do they stay? Why don't they join? (If you don't know, what's your best guess?)
6. Who is your target audience? Who is your ideal new member? What are you currently doing as a congregation to reach out to that target audience?
7. What issues of faith are engaging the congregation? What is exciting people theologically?
8. What do you see as the role of the pastor? Describe your previous called pastor – what were his/her strengths and weaknesses? How did he/she divide his time among such things as worship, teaching, pastoral care, administration, and church growth?
9. Who are you as a church? What are the demographics of age, sex, race, education, etc.? How would you describe the culture of the church?
10. What is the current relationship among staff, session and congregation? Would you like those relationships to change with the new pastor? If so, how?
11. What do you see as areas of growth and challenge in the next few years?
12. What programs/areas of your church life are calling cards for your church? Which programs/areas need to be ended?
13. What has been your most energetic dispute? Has the dispute found resolution? If so, how was it accomplished? If not, how will it be resolved before the new pastor arrives?
14. What one question do feel is missing from this document? Ask it; and then answer it!

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR SERVICE:
Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Affirmative Action (AA):
Including All of God's Gifted People in Ministry**

F-1.0403 Unity in Diversity

"As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:27-29).

The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church's membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person. The Presbyterian Church (USA) shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution.

- The PC (USA) is committed to equal opportunity for service. This commitment is not based on secular law but on the higher standards of our constitution.
- In completing a ministry information form (MIF) to search for a pastor, the pastor nominating committee (PNC) of a congregation will be asked to affirm their commitment to undertake the search for a pastor in manner consistent with the standards of our constitution.
- The presbytery, which shall determine the process for calling a pastor within the presbytery, may wish to consider how this commitment to equal opportunity for service will be carried out in the pastoral search process.

Early in the vacancy period, the Commission on Leadership liaison should present and discuss the policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the presbytery to provide equal employment opportunity for all qualified persons; to prohibit discrimination in employment based upon racial ethnic group, sex, age, disability or marital condition; and to correct any existent patterns of discrimination.

The COL liaison should recommend that the composition for the Pastor Nominating Committee should reflect the composition of the congregation -- including age, sex, marital status, race, socioeconomic status, and theological diversity.

The COL liaison will be available to assist the Pastor Nominating Committee in developing criteria for the selection of the pastor which are not discriminatory: based on racial ethnicity, age, sex, marital condition or disability. It may be helpful to explore feelings and perceptions about this in a non-judgmental way -- allowing folks to discuss the unfamiliarity, to ask questions, and to express concerns. Search committees often say things like, "We have nothing against a woman pastor, but our congregation just isn't ready for that yet." Those are often the PNCs that bring forth a woman nominee with excitement, if they are handled in a supportive way by presbytery representatives.

When the Ministry Information Form is being completed, the PNC Chair and presbytery liaison will need to be able to sign with integrity:

Has the presbytery's Commission on Leadership thus counseled with the Pastor Nominating Committee regarding Equal Employment Opportunity? Yes _____ No _____

Each Pastor Nominating Committee is expected to undertake its search for a minister in a manner consistent with the good news that in the Church "...as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Has the Pastor Nominating Committee affirmed to the presbytery Commission on Leadership its intention to follow the Form of Government in this regard? Yes _____ No _____

Assist the Pastor Nominating Committee in screening personal information forms to determine that applications from persons in the protected categories have been received and seriously considered. It is important to stress that every PNC member should see every PIF received, not allow the Chairperson to do initial sorting. It is helpful to hold the PNC accountable by asking, "How many women, racial ethnic candidates have you considered?"

Be sure the Pastor Nominating Committee knows that they may ask specifically for Personal Information Forms of persons from the protected categories, if they have not previously received them. Urge the Pastor Nominating Committee to interview qualified persons from the protected categories.

When the call is finalized, it is requested that the COL shall report to the presbytery the steps in implementation taken by the calling group. To that end, the PNC shall complete and submit to the COL, an "Equal Employment Opportunity in Ministry Report on Pastoral Search Process" form (page 617).

**EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY IN MINISTRY
Report on Pastoral Search Process**

To be completed and submitted to the Stated Clerk at the completion of the Pastoral Search

To: Presbytery of _____

From: _____
Name of Church, City, State

Title of Position Filled: _____

Name of Person Called: _____

Check all that apply:

Racial/Ethnic: _____

Woman: _____

Other: _____ Specify: _____

	Total Number	Racial-Ethnic	Women
PIFs Received			
Phone Interviews			
Heard Preach			
Face-to-Face Interviews			
Offered the Position			

Signed _____
PNC Chairperson

Date

Signed _____
COL Liaison

Date

GUIDANCE FOR THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Before you meet with any candidate:

- Every member of the PNC should read the PIF thoroughly and score the candidate based on criteria your committee has set for its future leader.
- Compare the PIF with your MIF:
 - Does this person's experience and skills match what you are seeking?
 - Have they lived and worked in a setting like yours?
 - Do they have the years of experience you are seeking?
 - Do they exhibit skills that you need?
 - Do the pastoral activities ratings match yours closely?
- Review other materials the candidate may send you—video or audio tapes of sermons, bulletin, newsletters, etc.
- Do **thorough** reference checking.
 - Call each of the references listed and ask both general questions and questions that your PNC has developed about this person.
 - Before inviting a prospective candidate to come for a face-to-face visit, ask your COL liaison ask the Presbytery Leader to do the presbytery-to-presbytery reference check. This will tell you about any serious problems before you invest time, money, and yourselves in a candidate. It will also help you gather information and know what questions you need specially to ask this candidate.
- Prepare for the interview.
 - What information do you want and need to evaluate this person as your future leader?
 - What questions will be asked and who will ask them?
 - What information will the candidate want to know about your church and community?
 - Gather this information before the interview.
 - Come to consensus as a committee so that you convey clarity and harmony.
 - Be clear about the job you are asking your new leader to do and the type of person you are seeking.
 - Interviews are not the time for the committee to sort out their differences over the body of an unsuspecting candidate! Be clear about your process for decision-making—what are the steps you will go through? What is your approximate time line?
 - The COL liaison might offer to be the subject of a mock interview for the committee so they can practice, get feedback, and get the “first interview” over with.
 - The PNC should be careful to establish a hospitable and comfortable atmosphere during the interview - think about appearances, seating, time, comfort, etc.

- What about questions that cannot be asked?

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”.

From Fred Jenkins, 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 based on 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 based on 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.

Given this legal environment, COMs and PNCs should, above all, exercise Christianity, common sense, and Presbyterian decency and order as they seek to discern the call to a leader for God’s people.

Please remember: there are some questions that may be considered inappropriate: Are you married? What does your spouse do? Will your children be attending our public schools? These may be sneaky ways of trying to get at information which is irrelevant - or prejudicial. While the secular law may not pay attention, our own ethical code should demand that all questions address “bona fide” criteria for employment.

- Why is committee consensus important?

A divided committee will likely be indicative of a divided congregational vote. It is best to work out the issues in committee rather than on the floor of a congregational meeting while the expectant candidate is waiting in the hall.

REFERENCE CHECKS
Guidance for The Commission on Leadership and
Pastor Nominating Committees

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

Employment as a Presbyterian minister is not a right. 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.

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

It is appropriate and important to ask questions related to the candidate's skills and experience that relate to the position being filled. Such questions might be: "Tell me about John Doe's worship leadership" or "How does John deal with conflict?" It is important to ask references to respond only based on first-hand knowledge. It is usually helpful to tell the reference a bit about the congregation, community, and position for which the candidate is being considered.

Are there other questions that a COL member or Presbytery Leader should ask?

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

Are there questions that are prohibited?

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 considering church professionals.

What do you do when a PIF does not contain the sexual misconduct signoff section or Stated Clerk's signature? Ask the candidate for a complete PIF or do not consider them further.

What do you do when a candidate is not able to sign the sexual misconduct statement (see below) in the affirmative?

[I certify by the signature below that no civil, criminal, ecclesiastical complaint has ever been sustained* or is pending* against me for sexual misconduct; and that I have never resigned or been terminated from a position for reasons related to sexual misconduct.

_____ I am unable to make the above certification. I offer, instead, the following description of the complaint, termination, or the outcome of the situation with explanatory comments.]

- **For PNCs** - Turn this matter over to your Presbytery Leader or COL Co-Chair and trust their advice.
- **For Presbytery Leaders and COL Co-Chairs** - Talk to the Executive Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, and/or the COM Chair in the presbyteries where the person has served. If the person has undergone counseling related to this issue, ask for a release and obtain a copy of a

report from the counselor. Weigh all this information carefully and prayerfully before responding to the PNC.

What are secondary references?

These are persons who are not listed by the candidate, but are suggested by others or contacted because they are thought to have knowledge of the candidate. Presbytery Leaders, Stated Clerks, COM Moderators, and CPM Moderators do NOT fall in this category. They are automatically used as references because of their roles and no authorization is needed from the candidate to consult with them.

Under what circumstances is it appropriate for PNC members to contact secondary references?

Secondary references should only be contacted when the candidate has given permission. Under no circumstances should a PNC contact members of a pastor's present congregation without her or his permission to do so.

When is the best time for reference checking to be done in a search process?

It is wise **for a PNC** to do reference checks as soon as they know that the candidate is available and interested in being considered.

It is wise **for a presbytery** (COL, COM, EP, Stated Clerk) to do "presbytery-to-presbytery 'executive level'" reference checks before the candidate comes to the community for an interview. If difficulties are found, it is easier for everyone if that is known early in the process. Because of the time involved, it is beneficial if the PNC has narrowed its search to 3-5 finalists before presbytery is asked to check references.

When a presbytery check reveals negative information, what should COL or staff share with a PNC about a negative reference?

If the information leads the COL Co-Chairperson or staff to have serious doubts about the candidate's ability to do effective ministry in the particular calling church, they should share those concerns as a consultant, giving specific areas of ministry where they see potential difficulty. If reliable information is of such a serious nature that the candidate should not be considered further, the PNC should be told that and the COL must determine whether they are willing to consider the candidate further.

What are background checks?

Background checks are assessments of a candidate's character and fitness for employment. They may include checks of employment, credit, criminal, and motor vehicle records. They also include fulfilling the requirements of Minnesota Statute 604.20.

What precautions should individual COL members or staff persons take to minimize risk for references they give or information they fail to give?

- Give references when you can think clearly and be focused. It is OK to ask the caller for an appointment to give the reference when you are at your best.
- Be sure of the identity and role of the caller and note it.
- Also, make notes about the date, time, and content of your conversation.
- Find out a bit about the ministry context to which the candidate is seeking a call and evaluate what you know in light of that prospective context
- Be sure you have reliable information. Do not share rumors or impressions that cannot be substantiated.
- Be sure you have specific information to back up negative reference.

- If there are serious concerns about a person, say so! You are responsible if you fail to share important information. Even if the receiving presbytery fails to do reference checks, the sending presbytery gives an affirmative reference by the action of transferring.

MODEL LETTER TO SECURE APPROVAL OF A SECONDARY REFERENCE

(On Church/Mid-Council Letterhead)

Dear (Candidate):

Your name is being considered by our committee for the position of _____.

In accordance with the policy of our presbytery (synod), we are asking if we may contact other persons than those you have named in your Personal Information Form as suitable references. Ordinarily such additional references will include the Executive Presbyter, Associate Executives, and the chairperson or other designated member of the Committee on Ministry of your presbytery of membership. We have selected these specific persons as we believe they are able to have accurate knowledge about your professional career in relation to the presbytery.

We may also contact secondary references who are suggested in conversations with your primary references.

Please respond to us as soon as possible by completing the enclosed form.

Very truly yours,

Secretary/Chairperson

MODEL PHONE CALL TO SECURE APPROVAL OF A SECONDARY REFERENCE

Committee Member: Mr. /Ms. Jones, this is _____, a member of the Pastor Nominating Committee of _____ Presbyterian Church in _____, Minnesota.

Response:

Committee Member: We are interested in considering you as a candidate for our position.

Response:

Committee Member: At the present time we are beginning to contact your primary references. However, we are also considering talking to other persons than the three or four you have on your PIF. The purpose of this phone call is to get permission to contact those secondary references. Such additional references will possibly include your Executive Presbyter, Associate Executives, and the chairperson or other designated member of your Committee on Ministry. There may be others beyond those with whom we would like to talk.

Response:

Committee Member: If there are names you would like to give me now on the phone, which would be helpful to us.

Response:

Committee Member: If there are persons or groups that you do not want us to contact at this time, would you please let me know.

Response:

Committee Member: I am going to send you a copy of a permission form I would like you to sign so we can have it as part of our file. We want to be clear that we have your permission in doing this.

Response:

Committee Member: Thank you very much for your help in our search process.

**MODEL FORM FOR CANDIDATE TO GIVE
APPROVAL FOR CHECKING SECONDARY REFERENCES**

Date _____

I understand that the Search Committee of _____ may be contacting secondary references not listed on my dossier (Personal Information Form).

You have my permission to:

1. Contact any and all references as you see fit and think necessary.
_____ (please initial)

2. Contact only the following secondary references (list names and addresses on back).
_____ (please initial)

3. Contact any and all references except the following (list names or groups on the back).
_____ (please initial)

Signed _____

Please return this form to:

Secretary/Chairperson
Search Committee
_____ Presbyterian Church
_____, Minnesota

BACKGROUND CHECK GUIDELINES

The Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys

The policy of the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys is to conduct criminal background checks, including fulfilling the requirements of Minnesota Statute 604.20, on all Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and all Commissioned Pastors, to affirm the individual's character and fitness for employment in a congregation of this presbytery, and as a condition of membership in the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys. The background checks will be handled at the direction of the Commission on Leadership, through the presbytery office.

The local churches are responsible for background checks on all paid employees and volunteers subject to screening.

The Stated Clerk, the Presbytery Leader, and the Moderator(s) of the Commission on Leadership shall be solely authorized to view the background reports.

Information gained from the background checks will be held in the strictest of confidence. The background check report shall be the sole property of the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys.

No background check may be commenced without the written consent of the Minister of the Word and Sacrament or Commissioned Pastor (also known as Commissioned Ruling Elder). The consent form will be found on the following pages in this manual.

Adverse information regarding sexual misconduct, abuse, or child sexual abuse will be discussed with the individual and appropriate action taken. Other adverse findings will be treated as pastoral issues.

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION CONSENT
The Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys

I, _____, hereby authorize the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys and/or its agents to make an independent investigation of my background for criminal activity. This investigation may include criminal and police records, including those maintained by both public and private organizations and all public records, and include meeting the provisions of Minnesota Statute 604.20

I understand that this investigation is pursuant to policies adopted by the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys and found in the presbytery's Manual of Operations. I further understand that this policy is a condition for continuing membership in the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys.

I understand that adverse information regarding sexual misconduct, abuse, or child sexual abuse may result in disciplinary action against me.

I authorize the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys to conduct a criminal background investigation of my history over the past ten years. I release the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys and/or its agents and any person or entity which provides information pursuant to this authorization, from any and all liabilities, claims, or lawsuits regarding the information obtained from any and all of the above referenced sources.

The following is my true and complete legal name, and all information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Full Name (Printed)

Maiden Name or Other Names Used

Present Street Address

How Long?

City/State/Zip

Previous Street Address

How Long?

City/State/Zip

Date of Birth

Social Security

Driver's License

State

Expiration Date

Signed

Date

THE ENTRANCE INTERVIEW

Becoming A Member of The Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys:

Entrance Interview Philosophy:

This interview enables the Commission on to garner a sense of who our prospective pastors are and how they might conduct themselves once they are on the field. Although the Book of Order allows for the possibility, there is not a sense here that we are seeking to prohibit someone from entering the presbytery, only that we might be better prepared to anticipate and interact with individuals who serve in ministry in Minnesota Valleys Presbytery.

Ideally, this interview will be conducted by a minimum of two persons, one of whom shall be a current member of the Commission on Leadership.

A potential new member of the presbytery, whether a candidate for ministry or an ordained Minister of the Word and Sacrament, should provide the Commission on Leadership with a copy of their PIF prior to the interview. If it is not a part of the PIF, the prospective pastor should provide a copy of their Statement of Faith.

We recommend that during the interview the prospective pastor not be given a copy of the questions because one of the things which you are assessing is this person's ability to think on their feet to converse with spontaneity. Committee members should each have a copy and use the sheet to make notes.

What we might be assessing in this interview are things like:

- Is this a lone ranger?
- Do we have someone here who will likely be an advocate for the presbytery or someone who will engender estrangement from the presbytery?
- Does this appear to be someone who knows it all and is authoritarian in attitude?
- Are we seeing someone who might serve the larger church in some specific area?
- Did anything come up in the interview which the Presbytery Nominating Committee ought to be made aware?
- Is this person's theology and practice, Presbyterian?

Once the interview is completed, the prospective pastor should be excused; and the committee members should collaborate their impressions. One of the entrance interview members should collect notes and make a formal report which would be put in the committee's file. The report will be mailed to the Moderator of the Commission on Leadership.

Entrance Interview Guidelines:

(Adopted by the Committee on Ministry, February 2, 2009)

1. Begin with prayer, introductions. Ask a few questions about the Candidate's Statement of Faith, including their sharing something of their spiritual journey, and possibly something which is key or central to their theology.
2. Questions for the interview will vary depending on circumstances, but may include the following or similar questions:
 - a. Please talk to us about your sense of call to ordained ministry.
 - b. What draws you to this new congregation?
 - c. What in your experience prepares you to serve this congregation well?
 - d. What energizes you as you think about becoming the pastor of this congregation?
 - e. What concerns you?
 - f. What leads you to seek a new call at this point? (If the candidate is a Minister of the Word and Sacrament serving as a pastor)
 - g. How do you anticipate serving in this presbytery?
3. Ask how they plan to approach their self-care: days off, what they see as appropriate work hours a week, how they approach their continuing education, their concept of Sabbath, etc.
4. "Can you answer all the ordination and installation questions with confidence and a clear conscience?" An alternative question: "Do you hold any scruples, or any points of departure, from the beliefs or requirements outlined in the church constitution for ordained officers?"
5. Talk about the culture and character of the presbytery (any packets of information to give?).
6. Invite the person being interviewed to ask any questions that they might have.

THE PASTORAL CALL
 (For Pastor, Co-Pastor, Associate Pastor, Designated Pastor)
The Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys, Presbyterian Church (USA)

The _____ Presbyterian Church of _____
 belonging to the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys, being well satisfied with your qualification 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,

 (Name)

to undertake the office of _____ in 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 Word and Sacrament among us,
 we promise and obligate ourselves to pay you in regular monthly payments the following effective
 salary and following vouchered expenses (fill in those which are agreed to):

Effective salary		Reimbursable expenses (by voucher)	
Cash Salary	\$ _____	Automobile expense (IRS rate)	\$ _____
Fair rental value of manse	\$ _____	Business/professional expenses	\$ _____
Housing Allowance	\$ _____	SECA Supplement (up to 50%)	\$ _____
Utilities Allowance	\$ _____	Continuing Education	\$ _____
Deferred Compensation	\$ _____	Other allowances	\$ _____
Other allowances	\$ _____		
Total	\$ _____	Moving Costs (up to)	\$ _____

Benefits

Full medical, pension, disability, and death benefit coverage under the Board of Pensions

Paid Vacation of _____ weeks annually, including Sundays (4 Weeks Minimum)

Paid Continuing Education of _____ weeks annually (2 Weeks Minimum), cumulative for three years
 maximum.

Paid maternity/paternity leave of 6 Weeks.

We further promise and obligate ourselves to review with you annually the adequacy of this
 compensation.

In the seventh year of service, the congregation will provide for a three-month Clergy Renewal Leave,
 continuing the salary and benefits for that period, and providing for pulpit supply in the pastor's
 absence.

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 presbytery policy and the Form of Government, and that the persons who signed the foregoing call were authorized to do so by vote of the congregation.

Vote of the congregation at the meeting was _____ in favor of the candidate and _____ opposed.
(Signed) _____, moderator of the meeting

Certification of Call

A. Action by Presbytery of Call

1. The Presbytery of _____ has reviewed and approved this call.

Date of action _____ (Signed) _____
Stated Clerk or Authorized Signer

B. Action by the Minister's/Candidate's Presbytery

1. The Presbytery of _____ finds it expedient (not expedient) to release _____ to accept this call.

Date of action _____ (Signed) _____
Stated Clerk or Authorized Signer

C. Acceptance of the Call

This is to certify that I have received and accepted the call.

Date of action _____ (Signed) _____
Minister

Complete and sign three original copies. When all parties have signed, an original copy goes to 1) the minister, 2) the calling church, and 3) the presbytery of call

DOCKET FOR CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TO ELECT A PASTOR

The moderator of the session, or another minister of Minnesota Valleys Presbytery appointed by the moderator, shall preside. The Clerk of Session or a session designated substitute shall act as secretary. Tellers as well as ballot blanks shall be arranged prior to the meeting.

1. Call to order.
2. Open with prayer.
3. Declare the meeting to be in order, if it has been properly called and a quorum is present.
4. State the purpose of the meeting:
"To decide whether a Call should be extended to _____ to become the (pastor, co-pastor, associate pastor, etc.) of the _____ Church of _____."
5. Introduce the moderator of the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) who in turn will recognize the members of the committee and give a resume of the candidate.
6. Personal statements by the candidate (if present) and his/her spouse would be appropriate at this time.
7. If there are any outstanding references or recommendations, it would be appropriate for them to be read or mentioned at this time, if confidentiality permits.
8. The Terms of Call shall be read.
9. A summary of the agreed upon job description shall be given.
10. Information concerning the candidate's availability should be given (when they could arrive on the field of service, when their responsibilities would begin, etc.).
11. Plans for ordination and/or installation, if in place, should be mentioned or discussed. The moderator should make it clear that installation is a presbytery event. (See Ordination-Installation Service Information Sheet.) This issue should have been discussed with the session, but the COL liaison may need to be certain the moderator has this information.
12. Excuse the candidate (if present) and his/her spouse/family from the meeting.
13. State the motion:
 - a. "Is there a motion that the congregation of the _____ Church of _____ call _____ to be their pastor according to the Terms of Call and summary job description as stated at this meeting?"
 - b. "Does someone second this motion?"
 - c. "Is there any discussion or questions?"

- d. When the above discussion/questions are concluded, vote by written ballots which have been distributed to those members entitled to vote.
- e. Instruct the tellers to collect and count the ballots. When finished, the count is reported to the congregation.
 - Number of votes in concurrence _____
 - Number of votes in non-concurrence _____

14. Invite the candidate to hear the report (if present).

15. Ask the candidate to state his/her acceptance (if present and ready).

16. State motion to authorize two or more persons (often the PNC) to sign the Call:

“Is there a motion to authorize _____, _____, _____, _____ to sign the Call?” The signed Call forms are to be sent to the Stated Clerk of Minnesota Valleys Presbytery.

17. State motion to take action to discharge PNC:

“Is there a motion to discharge with appreciation the Pastor Nominating Committee following the installation of the new pastor?”

18. Closing prayer.

19. Pronounce Benediction.

ORDINATION/INSTALLATION SERVICE INFORMATION SHEET The Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys

It is the responsibility of the Commission on Leadership Liaison to coordinate the Ordination/Installation Service in close consultation with the Pastor-Elect. They shall also be responsible for contacting persons to serve on the Commission and to seek approval of this Commission from the Commission on Leadership.

The Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys takes seriously the need to begin new pastoral ministries with services of worship that are appropriate, dignified, and in full compliance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The service needs to be planned far enough in advance for adequate publicity as well as at a time and day that will enable full participation by members of the Presbytery.

In planning for this service, be aware of the following guidelines:

1. The membership of the Administrative Commission for the Ordination/Installation of Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be in accordance with G-3.0109b. The form for "APPOINTMENT OF A COMMISSION FOR ORDINATION/INSTALLATION OF A MINISTER OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT" shall be completed and submitted to a Co-chair of Commission on Leadership for action by the commission. Copies of this form shall be given to the Moderator and Stated Clerk of The Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys. One copy of the form shall be retained by the church/Pastor-Elect for use in preparing the worship bulletin and possible news articles.
2. The Pastor-Elect, along with the calling church's Clerk of Session and in consultation with COL Liaison shall have the responsibility for the preparation of the order of the service of worship and shall assure that hymns, anthems, and the order of worship itself reflects a reformed understanding of worship. (See sample Order of Worship, page 639) The intended order of worship shall be in the hands of the Commission on Leadership Liaison no later than two weeks prior to the service.
3. The Pastor-Elect shall have the responsibility of notifying in a timely manner all members of the Administrative Commission as to the date and time of the service as well as their particular duties as part of the service.
4. The sermon should not exceed fifteen (15) minutes.
5. The charges to the congregation and to the pastor should not exceed five (5) minutes each.
6. It is appropriate that the congregation be given an opportunity to confess their faith by using an appropriate creed, or a portion of a creed, from the *Book of Confessions*.
7. An elder from the calling church, who will be a member of the Administrative Commission, shall ask the constitutional questions required of the congregation (W-4.4006).
8. An offering will be received. A notice in the bulletin shall explain that the money received will be used by the Presbytery's Commission on Leadership for support of the presbytery's seminary students. This offering shall be counted by representative of the hosting church, immediately following the service. It shall be transmitted to the presbytery office by the church.

9. The charges to the pastor and to the congregation shall be given by members of the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys except in ecumenically federated or yoked parishes.
10. The Commission shall meet no later than one-half hour before the service and be organized as a Commission by the person designated by Presbytery as Convener (ordinarily the presbytery Moderator). Prayer will be offered and the work of the Commission reviewed and proper actions, i.e.: seating Presbytery-invited members, and the request that presbytery dissolve the Commission upon the completion of its work. The request to presbytery for dissolution of the Commission shall be relayed to the Commission on Leadership by the Convener. Thought should also be given to the seating arrangements of the Commission. The convener of the meeting shall ensure that minutes of this meeting are recorded and sent to the Stated Clerk.
11. The Commission should be ever mindful that it is serving as the presbytery and is subject to the requirements of the *Book of Order* and that it is accountable to presbytery.
12. The local congregation shall assume the expenses of the members of the Commission except for the Moderator and the Presbytery Leader.
13. The Ordination/Installation Service shall be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting of the church's session and the newly-installed pastor's name, ordination date and installation date should be recorded in the church register.
14. News articles and a worship bulletin from the Ordination/Installation Service should be sent to the presbytery office for placement in the church's file. They may also be sent to the presbytery's newsletter editor.

**APPOINTMENT OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FOR
THE ORDINATION AND/OR INSTALLATION OF
A MINISTER OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT
The Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys
*Updated August 2016***

This form or the information on this form needs to be sent to the chair of Commission on Leadership and receive approval from that body.

Candidate/Minister's Full Name _____

Date of Ordination/Installation Service _____ Time _____

Place of Ordination/Installation Service _____

Minister (Minister of the Word and Sacrament) Members of the Commission are (two or three):

Name	Church Served	Position
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Ruling Elder Members of the Commission are (must be from different congregations):

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Are all the recommended Commission members living within the bounds of the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys? ____ Yes ____ No If no, give names and addresses of those who do not live in this presbytery.

Other Information:

Name of person providing the Ordination/Installation information

Telephone

Address/City/State/Zip Code/Email Address

Send to: Commission on Leadership Chair-person; see www.minnesotavalleys.org for contact information.

**PRESBYTERY OF MINNESOTA VALLEYS
SAMPLE ORDER FOR AN INSTALLATION SERVICE**

Prelude

Welcome by Convener (ordinarily Moderator of Presbytery) (Name)

Call to Worship (Name)

Hymn

Confession of Sin (Name)

Assurance of Pardon (Name)

The Gloria Patri

Scripture Readings (Name)
Scripture
Scripture

Sermon (Name)

Offering

Offertory Music

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication (Name)

Hymn

Affirmation of Faith: The Apostles Creed

Service of Installation (Convener)

The Charge to the Pastor (Name)

The Charge to the Congregation (Name)

Hymn

Benediction Newly Installed Pastor

Postlude

MINUTES/ACTIONS OF COMMISSIONS APPOINTED BY PRESBYTERY

G-3.0109b "...A commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings, and shall submit to its council to be incorporated in its minutes and to be regarded as the actions of the council that created it."

Since commissions act on behalf of the presbytery and their minutes are presbytery minutes, it is recommended when feasible, that the form on the following page be used for recordkeeping purposes.

Following the commission's final or only meeting, the completed form(s) shall be submitted to the Presbytery Stated Clerk to be reported to the presbytery and included in the minutes of the meeting to which it was reported.

Process:

1. The Stated Clerk will send form to the moderator/convener when such person is approved by the Commission on Leadership, acting on behalf of the presbytery.
2. The Moderator/Convener will be responsible for the completion of the form and submitting it to the Stated Clerk for inclusion in presbytery minutes. Submitting it to the Stated Clerk may be done following the moderator/convener reporting the actions to Commission on Leadership or the presbytery.

Commission minutes will be included as an addendum in the appropriate minutes of presbytery

**REPORT OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FOR
THE ORDINATION AND/OR INSTALLATION OF
A MINISTER OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT
The Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys**

Date the Commission was appointed by Minnesota Valleys Presbytery _____

Moderator/Convener of the Commission _____

Date of the Commission meeting _____

Place of Commission meeting _____

Purpose of the Commission _____

Members of the Commission who were present:

Actions that were taken by the Commission:

NOTE: Be certain to include the action of RECOMMENDING TO PRESBYTERY the dismissal of the Commission.

Signed _____

PROCESS FOR RECEIVING A CALL FOR CANDIDATE UNDER CARE OF MINNESOTA VALLEYS PRESBYTERY

If a PNC seeks to call as Pastor, a Candidate Under the Care of this presbytery, the process outlined in the PNC Checklist is to be followed along with these additional steps:

1. Prior to submitting a PIF to a PNC for consideration, a candidate will have undergone a final assessment by COL and have received permission to circulate their PIF.
2. When the PNC is seriously considering a candidate under care of Minnesota Valleys Presbytery, COL Liaison will inform the COL Co-chairs of the possibility of such a call.
3. If the congregation issues a call to the candidate under care, COL, in consultation with the candidate, arrange for the candidate to attend a Presbytery meeting and be examined for ordination.
 - a. When at all possible, this shall be done at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Presbytery, so the COL liaison should help the PNC and candidate plan schedules accordingly regarding examination by the Presbytery, ordination services, and start date at the congregation.
4. The COL is responsible for informing the Stated Clerk of the date for the candidate to be examined by Presbytery
5. The COL will assist the candidate with preparation for examination by Presbytery.
6. The COL will present the candidate for examination by Presbytery.
7. If the examination is successful, the COL presents motions to Presbytery seeking approval of the call, date of ordination and installation and membership for the administrative commissions for ordination and installation.
8. The COL liaison assists the candidate in planning the ordination and installation services. Ordination may be held in the candidate's home church with the installation service in the calling church.
9. The Stated Clerk files the appropriate papers and notifies the candidate's church of membership of the ordination and the necessity of removing the newly ordained pastor from their membership rolls.

**PROCESS FOR RECEIVING A CALL
FOR CANDIDATES UNDER CARE OF ANOTHER PRESBYTERY**

1. If a Pastor Nominating Committee is interested in pursuing a Candidate from a presbytery other than Minnesota Valleys, they will follow the same search and call process as with a pastor that is already ordained.
2. The COL liaison requests that the COL Co-Chair ascertain with the CPM Chair of the candidate's presbytery that the candidate has received a successful final assessment and has permission to circulate their Pastor Information Form (PIF).
3. If information is received that all is not in order, the COL Co-Chair shall notify the COL liaison who will in turn advise the congregation.
4. If the information received is in order, the COL liaison will advise the PNC that they may continue conversations with the individual.
5. If the candidate is invited to visit for a face-to-face interview and possible neutral pulpit, the COL shall arrange to conduct an "entrance interview" in conjunction with that visit.
6. If it is determined that the candidate is to be offered the position and asked to "candidate" with a congregation, before the "candidating" visit is planned, the COL liaison shall contact the presbytery office with the name and address of the candidate and request that the process for the background checks be started.
7. The presbytery office shall notify the Presbytery Leader, Stated Clerk, and COL liaison when the report of the background checks has been received. When that information is received, the COL liaison will inform the PNC that they may proceed appropriately.
8. "Candidating": the candidate conducts worship with the congregation. Worship is followed by a duly called congregational meeting to act on whether to extend a Call. If the congregation votes to extend a Call, action must also be taken to approve Terms of Call and elect those to sign the Call papers (four copies).
9. If Minnesota Valleys is to conduct the ordination examination, the COL presents the Candidate to the Presbytery for examination).
10. Upon successful examination, COL seeks action to approve the Call, notify the Candidate's presbytery of care and request that they be ordained. The Presbytery of candidate's care may request that Minnesota Valleys conduct the ordination.
11. Upon successful examination, the COL (or presbytery) approves, in consultation with the Moderator of Presbytery, the date of installation (and/or ordination) as well as the members of the commission(s).
12. The Candidate is ordained.

13. The COL liaison assists the candidate in planning the installation service.
14. The COL appoints a mentor, advising the mentor and new pastor of such appointment.
15. The Presbytery's Stated Clerk files the appropriate papers with General Assembly and Synod as well as entering the name of the newly ordained/installed pastor on the rolls of presbytery.

A PROCESS FOR CALLING A DESIGNATED PASTOR or A DESIGNATED ASSOCIATE PASTOR

In addition to Ministers of the Word and Sacrament being installed for an indefinite period of time, the *Book of Order* in G-2.0504a also states that Ministers of the Word and Sacrament may be installed “for a designated term determined by the presbytery in consultation with the congregation and specified in the call.” In order to call a designated pastor or a designated associate pastor, the congregation shall meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Congregational stability would be significantly endangered by a full vacancy process;
- The congregation lacks sufficient leadership to sustain its mission while at the same time conducting a search process;
- The congregation’s ministry is not sufficiently developed to attract applicants;
- A designated pastorate would help the congregation implement or develop its plans for ministry, particularly a redevelopment strategy.

When one or more of these criteria has been met, this process shall be followed:

1. The session, in consultation with the Commission on Leadership (COL), reviews the above criteria and determines if the congregation desires to call a designated pastor or a designated associate pastor.
2. If the COL determines that one or more of the above criteria has been met, it gives the congregation permission to elect a Designated Pastor Nominating Committee (DPNC) or a Designated Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (DAPNC).
3. The DPNC/DAPNC, assisted by the COL, may need to complete a mission study, or similar exercise, and prepare a position description and a Ministry Information Form (MIF) based on the results of that study. The MIF will be posted on the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) with all PIFs sent to the Presbytery Leader. The term will be for two years with the possibility of either being elected for another two-year term or called by the congregation as pastor/associate pastor.
4. The COL liaison informs the session that a criminal background check will be required for their final candidate before the congregation votes.
5. The COL, assisted by the Presbytery Leader, will review PIFs (Personal Information Forms) of potential candidates and send at least 5 PIFs to the DPNC or DAPNC chair and the COL liaison. The Executive Presbyter will complete the necessary executive-level reference checks with the appropriate person in the potential candidate’s presbytery so that it does not have to be done later in the process.
6. While maintaining contact with the COL liaison, the DPNC/DAPNC will conduct phone, Skype, and face-to-face interviews with those persons whose PIFs they have been given.
7. They will select the final candidate, agree on the terms of call, and request that the appropriate background checks be completed.

8. If the final candidate is not a current member of the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys, the COL liaison will make arrangements to meet with two members of the Commission on Leadership for an “entrance interview”.
9. Once the DPNC/DAPNC receives clearance on the background check and “entrance interview” from their COL representative, the session will call a congregational meeting when the candidate will be presented to the congregation for election as designated pastor or designated associate pastor and the terms of call approved.
10. The Presbytery, upon recommendation of the COL, will approve the call extended by the congregation and install the candidate as designated pastor/designated associate pastor. The call form can be found in this manual (page 631).
11. The work of the designated pastor/designated associate pastor shall be reviewed every six (6) months with the session and COL at which time the designated pastor/designated associate pastor shall present a written report.
12. During the last six (6) months of the first two-year term, the session and congregation, assisted by the COL and in consultation with the designated pastor/designated associate pastor, will:
 - a. Approve another two-year term. If the session desires the designated pastor/designated associate pastor to serve a second two-year term and the designated pastor/designated associate pastor is willing to fulfill a second term, the session shall call a congregational meeting to elect him/her as designated pastor/designated associate pastor to a second two-year term. If there is at least a $\frac{3}{4}$ favorable vote, the COL may recommend that Presbytery approve a second term.
 - b. Elect the designated pastor as pastor or designated associate pastor as associate pastor. If there has been an open search process conducted by the COL and after at least two years of the designated pastor/designated associate pastor relationship, upon concurrence of the COL, the designated pastor/designated associate pastor and the session acting in place of the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) for the single purpose of calling the designated pastor/designated associate pastor, a congregational meeting shall be held to call the designated pastor as pastor or designated associate pastor as associate pastor. The action of the congregation is reported to the Presbytery through the COL. If the action is affirmative, the Presbytery, after voting to approve the new pastoral relationship, shall install the designated pastor as pastor.
 - c. Elect a pastor or associate pastor nominating committee. If the session and designated pastor/designated associate pastor decide to end the pastoral relationship, the session, with the concurrence of the COM shall call a congregational meeting to elect a pastor or associate pastor nominating committee to conduct the full pastoral search.
13. A designated pastor/designated associate pastor may serve a total of four (4) years before either a) being called and installed as pastor or associate pastor or b) ending the pastoral relationship. During the last six (6) months of the second two-year term, the session and congregation, assisted by the COM and in consultation with the designated pastor/designated associate pastor, will do one of the following:
 - a. Elect the designated pastor as pastor or designated associate pastor as associate pastor. If there has been an open search process conducted by the COL and after at least two years of the designated pastor/designated associate pastor relationship, upon concurrence of the

COL, the designated pastor/designated associate pastor and the session acting in place of the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) for the single purpose of calling the designated pastor/designated associate pastor, a congregational meeting shall be held to call the designated pastor as pastor or the designated associate pastor as associate pastor. The action of the congregation is reported to the Presbytery through the COL. If the action is affirmative, the Presbytery, after voting to approve the new pastoral relationship, shall install the designated pastor as pastor or the designated associate pastor as associate pastor.

- b. Elect a pastor or associate pastor nominating committee. If the Session and designated pastor/designated associate pastor decide to end the pastoral relationship, the Session, with the concurrence of the COL shall call a congregational meeting to elect a pastor or associate pastor nominating committee to conduct the full pastoral search.

In Summary:

A Designated Pastor or Designated Associate Pastor:

- is selected from among a few candidates forwarded by presbytery's Commission on Leadership (COL);
- is generally able to move into a new position fairly quickly;
- is an installed position;
- is a term-limited position;
- requires a vote of the congregation to establish position and then to approve specific call;
- requires approval by COL to establish position and then to approve specific call;
- requires an installation;
- requires review and reconsideration as the designated term concludes – whether to convert to a called-installed “permanent” position, or to part company.