

Working with a Pastor Nominating Committee -- COM Liaison

Congratulations! The Committee on Ministry has asked you to serve as the “official liaison” to a congregation’s Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC). Please take this responsibility very seriously to ensure that the committee is well-equipped for their role of calling a new pastor who is a strong fit for their current context.

What does this role require?

Your attendance at the first meeting for the PNC along with our Executive Presbyter. At this meeting, you will hear in detail about the denominational resources available to help the PNC as well as the established process outlined in various resources. You will listen carefully and be particularly mindful of the ways in which you are to serve as a covenant partner between the presbytery and the congregation during this time of transition. **Please remind the PNC of this covenantal connection!**

When the PNC completes its Ministry Information Form (MIF), **make sure it is clear and well written**, giving an honest assessment of the church, its history, unique qualities, and needs. **Encourage** them to be as open as possible when it comes to experience level and geography. **Remind** them that they must function as an “Equal Opportunity “ Employer. Finally, **urge** the committee (to be as generous as possible with the salary package).

After the MIF’s salary package has been approved by the Session and a final review of the MIF has occurred, **connect** the PNC with the COM Moderator so that they may secure their PIN and ID (for both the PNC Moderator and the Clerk of Session and begin the online matching process. **Remind** the PNC to contact our Executive Presbytery so an initial matching may be completed, and the review of candidates may begin!

Once the initial matching process has been complete and the Personal Information Forms (PIFs) begin landing in the inbox for the PNC, provide **wise guidelines** as they review. (For example: “red flags” *may* include a non-PCUSA seminary, frequent job hopping, gaps in employment history, and the indications of extreme theological views).

Assist the committee in developing questions for reference checks as well as questions for the face-to-face interview process. Ample resources can be found through our denomination’s website at www.pcusa.org regarding this process. **Coach** them during the interview process, reminding them that they are sharing the good news of their mission and ministry while also learning more about the potential candidate. **Encourage integrity and authenticity in conversations so that difficult moments in the life of the church are not avoided or minimized but reflected upon in ways which add theological depth and spiritual insight.**

Whenever possible, attend the final face-to-face interview (*as an observer only*): Give the “Welcome Packet” for our presbytery to the candidate and encourage him/her to review it and be in touch with our Executive Presbyter with questions. Hit the highpoints with the candidate (which means you need to be familiar with this document too!). After the interview, **provide** the committee with your frank – and careful – assessment of the candidate.

When the final candidate has been selected, assist the PNC And the presbytery office in ensuring that ALL documents are prepared and signed for the COM examination. The candidate should come to the meeting with all forms in the “Welcome Packet” completed and signed. The PNC should come with the Terms of Call (TOC) fully outlined on the provided form within the “Welcome Packet”. Prior to the COM examination, the candidate should provide our Executive Presbyter with a “Statement of Faith” and a “Biographical Statement” at least 10 days prior to the meeting date.

After the successful completion of the COM examination, you may work with the candidate to secure a commission to ordain and/or install. This work to secure a commission would happen AFTER the congregation has voted to call the individual and (s)he has begun work on site.

As a final wrap-up: **encourage the candidate to have 3, 6, and 12 month support conferences with the PNC.** Check in with the candidate personally as well. Share your observations with COM for the sake of mutual prayer and support as well as pro-active trouble-shooting.

Guide the PNC and Session in the development of a context-specific job description of the called pastor, which includes clear expectations (rather than unspoken ones!).

***Again, on behalf of our shared mission and ministry,
thank you for your part in assisting our congregation
so they may call effective pastoral leaders for the 21st century!***