GUIDELINES AND CHECKLIST
FOR TRANSITIONS IN PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

Pastoral calls are three-way agreements between the pastor, the congregation, and the Presbytery through the Committee on Ministry.

_____1. A departing pastor should notify the chair of the COM and the Executive Presbyter before making an announcement to the session. After notification, the COM Chair notifies the Chair of the Transitions Task Force, who will assign a liaison. If the dissolution involves an associate pastor, the senior pastor should be notified prior to notifying the session and the congregation.

_____2. The Transitions liaison will meet with the session to:

a. Schedule a congregational meeting to dissolve the pastoral relationship;
b. Schedule exit interviews with the departing pastor and the session, and provide each with copies of the Former Pastor Policy;
c. Determine the congregation's immediate need for leadership, whether interim or other. Provide copies of the Temporary Pastoral Relationship Policy and the pulpit supply list;
d. Inform the session regarding payment of vacancy dues to the Board of Pensions;
e. Request that COM appoint a session moderator;
f. Give approval for the election of the Pastor Nominating Committee ("PNC").

_____3. A congregational meeting is held to dissolve the pastoral relationship. The moderator for this meeting shall be the Executive Presbyter, the stated clerk, the Transitions liaison, or any member of COM. The Transitions liaison shall be present. The COM approves the dissolution and dismisses the pastor to new work or approves a request for change in status (honorably retired, member-at-large, etc.), with all necessary information reported to the next stated meeting of Presbytery.

_____4. If the decision is made to use an Interim, the session approves the job description, which includes the compensation range. A copy is provided to the Transitions liaison, who forwards the copy to the Chair of COM and the Stated Clerk, in care of the Presbytery office.

_____5. The Interim Search Committee presents the name of the candidate and the contract to the Transitions liaison and to the session for approval. If the candidate is not a member of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, the following must occur:

a. A presbytery-to-presbytery check, a background check, and an examination with the Examinations Task Force.
b. Approval of the interim contract by the session and COM.
c. Recommendations to the COM, including the request to make the interim the moderator of the session, from Examinations, Transitions, and / or the stated clerk.
d. The session is notified of the COM's actions by the liaison.

_____6. The session calls a congregational meeting to elect a Pastor Nominating Committee ("PNC"), with the approval of the COM Transitions liaison. The Transitions liaison shall be present. Names, addresses, and contact information of the Pastor Nominating Committee are given to the Transitions liaison and recorded in the COM minutes.

_____7. The first meeting of the Pastor Nominating Committee shall include training on:

a. The partnership between the PNC, the Presbytery, and the Transitions liaison, including the need to report to the liaison on a regular basis;
b. The need for a congregational mission study, and if the session needs to approve such;
c. The election of the PNC chair and secretary;

d. Confidentiality and the independence of the PNC from the session, the interim, and the congregation;

e. The Ministry Information Form ("MIF"), interviews, record-keeping, guidelines for pastoral compensation, and the PC(USA) policy on equal employment. A packet of information will be provided to the PNC.

_____8. The PNC chair contacts the stated clerk for log in IDs and passwords for the PNC chair and the clerk of session. The MIF is prepared and submitted to the PC(USA) Church Leadership Connection ("CLC"). When the MIF is approved by the PNC, it is forwarded to the session for approval. The MIF is attested electronically by the PNC chair and the clerk of session. After approval, the MIF is forwarded to the Transitions liaison for approval by the Transitions Task Force. After approval by the Transitions Task Force, the stated clerk is notified and the MIF is approved electronically for matching by the CLC.

_____9. Personal Information Forms ("PIFs") are received, catalogued and screened by the PNC.

____10. When the PNC has determined the candidate(s) they wish to interview in person, they must submit the names of these candidate(s) to the Transitions liaison. The liaison contacts the Executive Presbyter for a presbytery-to-presbytery check. A copy of the PIF is required for this check. Candidates must have already been thoroughly screened, including checking references and secondary references. Recommendations for clearance will be answered in one of the following ways:

a. Proceed with the candidate(s).

b. Do not proceed with the candidate(s).

____11. If the position is for an associate pastor, the pastor / head of staff of the church shall be consulted during the process and involved in the final decision.

____12. When the PNC indicates to the candidate a desire to extend a call, and the candidate indicates a willingness to accept, the terms of call are negotiated, and a background check must be completed. The PNC will provide the stated clerk with a copy of the PIF and email address so that the background check forms and information can be provided to the candidate. The stated clerk will notify the PNC chair, the Transitions liaison, and the Examinations Task Force chair when the background check is complete. The Presbytery covers the cost of the background check.

____13. The PNC provides the terms of call to the stated clerk, and an examination is scheduled with the Examinations Task Force. The COM acts to approve / disapprove the terms of call and the recommendations of the Examinations Task Force.

____14. Upon COM approval of the candidate and terms of call, the PNC requests that the session call a congregational meeting to approve the call to the candidate. The Transitions liaison shall attend the congregational meeting. The congregational meeting is held to:

a. approve the call (voting is by ballot); and

b. persons (PNC members) are designated to sign the call.

All four original signed copies of the call form are sent to the Stated Clerk before the presbytery meeting. The candidate shall provide the Stated Clerk with the names of persons to serve on the Commission to ordain and / or install two weeks in advance of the presbytery meeting (if not provided at the COM meeting).

____15. The ordination / installation service is held and the PNC is dismissed.

Revised by the Committee on Ministry June 12, 2018