



Presbytery of Middle Tennessee
Committee on Ministry
2021 Resources for Transitions
in Pastoral Leadership
-COM Liaison-

Transitions Resources - Liaison

Guidelines and Checklist for Transitions in Pastoral Leadership
Guidelines Regarding Dissolution and Severance Agreements
Sample Script for Moderating a Congregational Meeting - Dissolution of Pastoral Relationship
Exit Interviews
Policy Concerning Former Pastors
Policy on Temporary Pastoral Relationships and Sample Contracts
Policy on Designated Pastors
Electing a Pastor Nominating Committee
Congregational Survey and Mission Study
Policy on Background Checks
Guidelines for PNC Interviews
Ministerial Compensation (including Sabbatical Policy)
Sample Script for Moderating a Congregational Meeting – Approval of Pastoral Relationship
Guidelines for Ordination / Installation

Transitions Resources – Session

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Transitions Resources - Pastor Nominating Committee

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**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 Co-Executive Presbyters 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 Co-Executive Presbyters, 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 Co-Executive Presbyters 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 or voice vote or show of hands); 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.

**GUIDELINES REGARDING DISSOLUTION
AND SEVERANCE AGREEMENTS
FOR INSTALLED PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Preamble

In recognition that there is a need for an orderly transition that is compassionate and equitable for the teaching elder and to the church when pastoral relationships end, the following guidelines are to be utilized. Regardless of the nature of the dissolution, the chair of the Committee on Ministry and/or the Co-Executive Presbyters should be contacted as soon as possible to offer advice, guidance and assistance.

TYPES OF DISSOLUTIONS OF PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

1. **Ordinary Resignations.** An ordinary separation is when a teaching elder accepts another call to ministry, decides to leave the ministry, or retires. Such resignations require a written notice to the session, an affirmative vote of the Committee on Ministry, and an affirmative vote of the congregation. *The teaching elder will be paid the cash equivalent of his/her unused earned vacation (but not study leave) at the date of dissolution.*

2. **Resignations not Ordinary.** Such resignations can become necessary when conflicts arise within the congregation that are focused on the teaching elder even though the teaching elder has served the congregation honorably and in good faith. If the teaching elder has had insufficient time to seek a new call and will be unemployed when the pastoral relationship ends, the following guidelines for severance shall be considered:

Less than two years:	one month compensation plus moving expenses
Between two and four years:	two to three months compensation
Between five and eight years:	four to six months compensation
Above eight years:	seven to 10 months compensation

The teaching elder will also be compensated for any unused vacation time. A formal Severance Agreement will be entered into following the guidelines below.

3. **Resignation and Transfer to Another Denomination.** When a teaching elder who is pastoring a church considers leaving the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for another denomination, it is expected that he/she will be in conversation with the Co-Executive Presbyters and the chair of Committee on Ministry as he/she is going through the discernment process. This can be a time of great confusion for the church and warrants handling with grace and dignity. When a final decision is reached, the teaching elder should notify the Co-Executive Presbyters and the chair of COM *prior to notification to the session and church* so that a representative of the presbytery can be present. The pastor's resignation is effective when the session is notified of his/her decision. The teaching elder will be entitled to compensation for any unused vacation time, but not study leave, and is not entitled to any severance. The COM will help the session obtain pulpit supply by providing names of qualified individuals and will appoint a temporary moderator for the session until more permanent arrangements, i.e. an interim, etc., can be made. If the teaching elder is occupying a manse, arrangements should be made to move as soon as possible; but no later than a month after the resignation.

4. **Death or Disability of a Teaching Elder.** It is recognized that the Board of Pensions has benefits which will become effective at the death or disability of a teaching elder. Should the teaching elder be utilizing a manse at the time of death or disability, that benefit should be continued by the church for a minimum of three months.

5. **Elimination of a Pastoral Position.** The elimination of an installed pastoral position can come about by virtue of a budget retrenchment, or as a result of other circumstances involving no fault of the teaching elder. This type of separation is at the discretion of the session and the congregation with the approval of the Presbytery through the Committee on Ministry. The session must notify in writing the Committee on Ministry after first consulting with the teaching elder. Recognizing that the teaching elder may have had insufficient time to seek a new call, it is appropriate for a congregation to enter into a Severance Agreement with the teaching elder for a period of six months.
6. **Separation for Cause** can come about for
 - a. unsatisfactory performance,
 - b. abuse or misconduct,
 - c. insubordination to proper church authority,
 - d. neglect in the care and use of church property or funds, or
 - e. conduct inconsistent with Presbytery standards.

Such cause must be clearly documented and thoroughly substantiated beyond a reasonable doubt. Under such circumstances, a teaching elder will be paid for any unused vacation but will not receive a Severance Agreement and compensation.

SEVERANCE AGREEMENTS

Guided by these guidelines of the Presbytery, and in conformity with same, the teaching elder and session will negotiate a dissolution and severance agreement for the installed pastoral relationship. Before becoming final, the agreement must be reduced to writing, approved by the teaching elder and session, approved by the Committee on Ministry, approved by the congregation (members of which must be furnished copies of the dissolution agreement no later than the date of first call for the congregational meeting at which the dissolution of call and the written agreement is to be considered), and the dissolution and written severance agreement must be approved by Presbytery through the Committee on Ministry.

The dissolution of pastoral relationship agreement shall contain:

- a. The reason for the dissolution.
- b. All financial agreements including but not limited to: salary continuation, benefits continuation, loan repayment or shared equity arrangement (where applicable), compensation for unused earned annual leave provision, use of office, equipment, etc., and terms and time limits on physical presence.
- c. The agreement shall specify that if a teaching elder finds full-time employment prior to the end of the term of the agreement that the church's financial obligations end as of the date said full-time employment begins. Part-time employment will result in appropriate pro-rated adjustments in financial payments.

In cases where an agreement for the dissolution of the installed pastoral relationship agreement is not reached, an Administrative Commission may be elected and empowered to establish the terms of separation.

The Presbytery will not assume financial liability for such agreements. However, financial arrangements may be conducted through the Presbytery Office after the teaching elder's departure from the church. The church will make the agreed payments to the Presbytery at least seven days prior to the respective due dates for said payments to the former teaching elder, and the Presbytery will make the respective payment to the former teaching elder after receipt of payments from the church. This is intended to prevent unnecessary contact between the former teaching elder and the church.

SAMPLE SCRIPT FOR MODERATING A CONGREGATIONAL MEETING DISSOLUTION OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

I call this meeting to order. Let us pray. *[offer prayer]*

I am _____, teaching elder / ruling elder [of _____,] and a member of the Committee on Ministry. The Committee on Ministry has appointed me to moderate this meeting. The Clerk of Session will serve as the secretary of the meeting. Visitors are welcome to stay and observe.

Mr. / Madam Clerk, do we have a quorum present? *(usually 1/10 of membership)*

Wait for Clerk's answer and then say, "I declare we have a quorum."

Notice for this meeting has been given, so we will proceed.

I remind you that the only business that can be transacted at this meeting is that which was listed in the call for this meeting, and any related matters.

Mr. / Madam Clerk, will you please read the session's / Presbytery's recommendation.
[clerk reads recommendation]

You have heard the recommendation – are there any questions?
[wait; respond to any questions]

Are you ready to vote?

All those in favor of the recommendation, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the recommendation, please say "no."

The recommendation is approved / not approved.

There being no further business, I will entertain a motion to adjourn.
[wait for motion; ask for second]

All in favor of adjourning, please rise for a closing prayer. *[offer prayer]*

If there is any concern about contention at this meeting, speak with the Co-Executive Presbyters or Stated Clerk about procedures.

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EXIT INTERVIEWS

Exit interviews are to be conducted with interim, pastor, associate pastor, and session. Information from exit interviews will be reported to the Committee on Ministry and kept on file in the Presbytery office.

Questions for Pastor / Associate Pastor

1. What did you enjoy about your work?
2. What do you feel was the greatest contribution you made to this congregation? Any major regrets?
3. Was the Pastor Nominating Committee clear with you as to their role expectations and the priorities they place on the roles?
4. How would you compare your expectations when you accepted the call with your actual experience? Were there any surprises or disappointments?
5. What appeals to you about where you are going?
6. What issues / concerns do you hope the session will address here before the next pastor / associate comes?
7. If you were following you, what do you hope someone would tell you before you accepted a call to this church?
8. What special skills or strengths should the next pastor / associate have?
9. In what ways could the presbytery have been more helpful to you and the church?
10. Other concerns / joys not covered by the previous questions?

Questions for the Session

1. What contributions did the pastor / associate make to the life of the congregation?
2. What were the highlights of his/her ministry?
3. What concerns or problems in the congregation you feel need to be addressed before the next pastor / associate comes?
4. What special gifts or skills should the next pastor / associate bring to this congregation?
5. In what way could the presbytery have been more helpful to you and the church?
6. Are there any messages you would like to send to the pastor / associate that are not covered by the previous questions?

INTERIM EXIT INTERVIEW

NAME: _____

CHURCH: _____

BEGINNING DATE: _____ EXIT DATE: _____

FORWARDING ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

Exit interview may be conducted with interim and session, together, as judged appropriate by the COM Transitions Liaison. Questions 1-10 together, questions 11-14, interim only.

1. What is it about this interim that has given satisfaction?
2. What is it about this interim that has been dissatisfying or disappointing?
3. Discuss how the congregation has come to terms with its history. What issues from the past have been resolved? What events from the past are not yet resolved?
4. Describe what is new in this congregation's identity. What has the congregation discovered about itself during the interim in terms of identity?
5. What power shifts have occurred? (e.g., who is in and who is out, in terms of decision-making, influence, etc.)
6. In what ways has this congregation reviewed / renewed / changed its denominational affiliation? Is it closer to presbytery / synod / General Assembly?
7. In what ways has the congregation prepared to receive new leadership? How is it prepared to accept a person with a different approach, style, perspectives, from the former installed pastor / associate?
8. What issues or problems have not been addressed? To what extent do these continue to affect the congregation? How might presbytery intervene? Which problems should the next installed pastor / associate address first?
9. How has presbytery been helpful during this interim? Not helpful?
10. Are there any projects in progress that will need to be given attention by the next installed pastor / associate?

To Be Completed Only by Interim Pastor

11. What regrets do you have about your ministry with this congregation?
12. If you were following you, what do you wish someone would tell you about this congregation before you accept a call to this congregation? After you accept a call . . .? Are there any "land mines" of which the next installed pastor / associate should be informed?
13. What actions have you taken to achieve effective closure in your termination with this congregation? Is there any unfinished business related to closure? Have you fulfilled all your contractual / covenantal obligations with this congregation, and they with you?
14. If going to a new position: Briefly describe your new position, including departure plans and new start date. If interim has not secured new service: What will you be doing while waiting for a new call for your services?

PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE POLICY CONCERNING FORMER PASTORS

DEFINITION

A former pastor is one who no longer serves as pastor, associate pastor, or in any temporary pastoral relationship in a congregation due to call to other service, retirement, or involuntary termination. Whenever the term "pastor" is used in this policy, it is understood to mean pastor, associate pastor, or person serving in a temporary pastoral relationship.

RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY

When the pastoral relationship between a pastor and a congregation is dissolved, the nature and character of the relationship changes. Both the pastor and the congregation must disengage from the nature and character of the pastoral relationship, in order to engage and establish new relationships. This policy, and the attached paper on how to relate to a former pastor, address issues in this transition.

When a pastor leaves a congregation due to retirement, call to other service, or involuntary termination, there are certain ethical standards that should be followed so the ties between the former pastor and the congregation are severed and new relationships are established between the new pastor and the congregation. When those standards are followed it provides a smooth transition and happy relationship among all parties. Direction for the former pastor comes from the words of John 3:30, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

REQUIREMENTS FOR FORMER PASTORS

When a pastor resigns, retires, or leaves for other reasons, due care should be exercised not to influence, by direction or indirection, by spoken or written word, the selection of any successor or the policies of that successor. After leaving a church, the former pastor shall exercise all care so as to have no further influence upon the congregation either by conversation, correspondence or other action.

During the closure phase of a ministry, the retiring / resigning / leaving pastor should publicly announce that he / she will no longer be available for pastoral services to the members of that church following the stated date of termination. Thereafter, the pastor shall fulfill that announced intention by declining all requests from members of that church to conduct baptisms, weddings, funerals, and other pastoral duties for them and shall encourage the strengthening of ties between the congregation and their present pastor. In special situations a former pastor may be called upon for services upon the invitation of the present pastor and the approval of the session. The former pastor would not ordinarily conduct services but rather would assist the present pastor at his / her direction.

The former pastor will ordinarily seek a church home in another parish. If he / she remains in the community, that person bears a heavy obligation of self-restraint regarding the business and spiritual well-being of the congregation. The current pastor must invite the former associate pastor back to the church previously served.

The former pastor shall vacate both the manse and the office by the date of dissolution or by a mutually agreed upon date. At the time of vacating, all keys must be returned to the session or proper church committee. Further, definite plans should be made by the former pastor for the disposition of pastoral counseling notes, personal records, etc. It is strongly recommended that the former pastor change her/his phone number(s).

Former pastors who are elected pastor emeritus are reminded that this is an honorary title only and carries no job responsibilities or privileges unless they are expressly stated by the session and approved by the presbytery.

Former pastors are still under the obligation of the presbytery's policies.

Subject to the needs and desires of the former pastor and his / her family, the presbytery has a responsibility to meet the spiritual and physical needs of this family and to utilize their talents and gifts to the glory of God.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CHURCH MEMBERS

When the pastoral relationship between a pastor and a congregation is dissolved by reason of retirement, a call to other service, or any other cause, the pastor's relationship with members of the congregation is altered in ways that must be respected by all persons involved. The relationship that formerly existed between the pastor and members of the congregation is no longer appropriate. Although the pastor continues as a sister / brother in Christ, this pastor is no longer "the pastor."

Efforts on a congregation member's part to continue the past relationship, such as asking the former pastor to perform some usual or customary pastoral services, creates an ethically awkward situation. While the former pastor may wish to honor the request (and certainly would not want to hurt feelings), ministerial etiquette and ethics make it inappropriate to render such services unless invited to do so by the present pastor and the session.

It is inappropriate to ask a former pastor to provide pastoral services for any reason (e.g., weddings, hospital calls, funerals).

It is inappropriate to discuss the congregation, the new pastor, the session, or any other aspect of congregational life with the former pastor. Especially do NOT solicit the former pastor's advice or counsel about any of these matters. However, in her / his best interest and for the health of the church, the former pastor must distance herself / himself from the congregation. Raising issues related to the congregation puts the former pastor in violation of this policy. It is inappropriate to take comments, concerns, or criticisms of the current pastor to a former pastor. This puts the former pastor in violation of this policy.

It is appropriate to pray regularly for both current and former pastors and the congregation.

I / We have read and agreed to abide by these policies.

Pastor/Associate Pastor/Interim Pastor

Date

Clerk of Session

Date

THE PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE POLICY ON TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

INTRODUCTION

This policy is to be used by sessions and the presbytery to assist congregations to have effective pastoral services in the absence of an installed pastor. The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee ordinarily recommends an interim pastor, either full or part time, during the period between regularly installed pastors. This policy has three purposes:

1. To help sessions of congregations without pastors understand their options for securing pastoral leadership during transitional periods.
2. To present a basis and guidelines for establishing an interim pastorate.
3. To outline presbytery's active partnership with these congregations.

I. OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO CONGREGATIONS WITHOUT INSTALLED PASTORS

When a congregation is between pastors, the session should obtain the services of a teaching elder in a temporary pastoral relationship. No formal call is issued, and no formal installation takes place. The session has the following options:

- A. Temporary Supply / Stated Supply (*G-2.0504b, c*): A temporary supply may be a teaching elder, candidate, commissioned ruling elder, or ruling elder. Arrangements are made by the session for services as needed, not to exceed twelve (12) months at a time. The session shall seek the counsel of the presbytery through its COM before securing a temporary supply. A temporary supply may not be called as pastor or associate pastor of a church served as temporary supply, except by three-fourths vote of presbytery.
- B. Interim Pastor: The interim pastor is invited by the session for a specified period of time, not to exceed twelve (12) months at a time, while the church is seeking a pastor. Presbytery approval through the COM is required. The interim pastor is not ordinarily eligible to be called as the next regularly installed pastor, co-pastor, associate pastor (*G-2.0504b*).

The policy concerning former pastors applies to pastors in temporary pastoral relationships.

II. DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD

When a presbytery and session determine that an interim pastor, interim co-pastor, or interim associate pastor is necessary and helpful, the session shall consult the Committee on Ministry and seek an interim pastor as soon as a date certain for departure has been announced by a pastor or associate pastor planning to leave. This is accomplished by seeking the counsel of presbytery through the Committee on Ministry. The COM shall then:

- A. Initiate meetings with the session to establish directions and methods of acquiring temporary pastoral relationship or interim.
- B. Support the session in any needs that may arise whether physical, moral, or spiritual.
- C. Conduct all exit interviews with former pastor and the session.
- D. The interim, through the COM liaison, shall report on continuing progress of the interim relationship. The COM liaison shall conduct exit interviews with the interim and the session upon termination of the interim contract.

The current pastor cannot be involved in the interim search process.

III. PRACTICALITIES OF ESTABLISHING AN INTERIM PASTORATE

A. Resources

When a congregation is without a pastor, and in need of the services of an interim pastor, the clerk of session shall contact either the Co-Executive Presbyters, the chair of COM, or the COM liaison for recommendations of potential interims.

B. Contracts

All contracts with interim pastors must be in written form. The contracts must be explicit and detailed in order to avoid any misunderstanding. The contract must be approved by the Committee on Ministry. A sample contract will be provided by the COM. Ordinarily, the interim pastor should already be trained in Interim Ministry or shall take Phase I training during the first year of the interim, then Phase II training during the second year, then Advanced Training. The presbytery expects the interim minister to work toward certification.

Revised by the Committee on Ministry 10 January 2017

**THE PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE
SUGGESTED INTERIM CONTRACT**

The following contract between the session of _____ Presbyterian Church (“Church”) and Interim _____ (“Interim”) is for the purpose of providing interim pastoral services to the Church.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

The Interim is employed by the session of the Church with the concurrence of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee through its Committee on Ministry to serve as interim for the period _____ to _____ (*not to exceed 12 months at a time*).

Check all that apply:

- The Interim is a member of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee.
- The Interim is requesting permission to labor inside the bounds of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee to perform this ministry.
- The Interim is requesting permission to transfer his / her membership to the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee.
- The Interim will serve as head of staff.
- The Interim will serve as moderator of the session.
- The Interim will encourage the Pastor Nominating Committee to provide the session with regular reports but will refer all questions related to the pastoral search process to the Committee on Ministry liaison.

TASKS OF INTERIM MINISTRY:

The Interim will be responsible for providing pastoral duties as indicated below: (*Designation of seven areas of responsibility is generally considered a full time commitment. The assistance of the COM liaison or the Co-Executive Presbyters may be helpful in assessing whether the duties desired by the Church would call for a full-time or part-time interim. This consultation should take place prior to contact with any potential candidates for the interim position.*)

List areas of responsibility in priority order:

PREACHING AND LEADING WORSHIP - Public presentation of the Gospel through: preparing sermons and leading worship; administering sacraments; officiating at weddings and funerals as requested; planning for special worship related to season to the Christian Year.

VISITATION - Developing bonds of caring with members through: routine calling on homes of the congregation; visiting hospital patients or members in nursing homes, etc.; pastoral care of persons and families in crisis and experiencing significant life events (birth, marriage, death, vocational changes, etc.).

ADMINISTRATION - Building a more effective church organization by: helping to plan and develop the church's program of activities in order to be prepared for the coming of the next installed pastor; training leaders toward responsible leadership; resourcing church committees along with leaders; supervising whatever office operation the church may have.

TEACHING - Fulfilling calling as a teacher by: teaching the following class(s) - _____ (*specify responsibility*); holding confirmation classes; conducting officer and / or teacher training.

PERSONAL GROWTH - Seeking continued professional and spiritual growth: in faith through devotional use of the Bible and other reading and regular prayer and spiritual discipline; in personal maturity and pastoral skills through participation in continuing education.

___ SERVICE TO THE GREATER CHURCH – Service to the Presbytery, the Synod, and / or the General Assembly.

INTERIM MINISTRY TASKS:

The Interim will lead the congregation through the five developmental tasks:

1. Coming to terms with the history;
2. Discovering a new identity;
3. Shifts in power;
4. Re-thinking denominational linkages; and
5. Becoming committed to new leadership and a new future.

It is understood that _____ has agreed not to be a candidate for the pastoral office and in every way will seek to prepare the way for the coming of the next installed pastor.

It is understood that this agreement may be terminated by either party upon 30 days / 60 days (*circle one*) written notice.

TERMS:

The Compensation shall meet the presbytery minimum if the position is full time. The COM liaison or Co-Executive Presbyters can assist with interpretation upon request.)

Cash Salary	_____
Housing	_____
Furnishings / Utilities	_____
Social Security self-employment	_____
Pension/Major Medical	_____

(If interim is an active member, pension and medical insurance dues are applicable as for installed pastor. The church may assist interim with cost of Medicare supplement or other insurance.)

Automobile Expenses	_____
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(Presbytery recommends reimbursement up to the current IRS rate per mile for business mileage. Session and interim should address whether reimbursement covers the mileage to and from the church field.)

Moving Costs (<i>if applicable</i>)	_____
Four Weeks Vacation	(<i>prorated annually</i>)
Two Weeks Study Leave	(<i>prorated annually</i>)
Professional Expenses	_____

_____ Interim	_____ Date
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_____ Clerk of Session	_____ Date
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_____ Chair, Committee on Ministry	_____ Date
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THE PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE
SUGGESTED TEMPORARY PASTORAL SUPPLY CONTRACT

The following contract between the session of _____ Presbyterian Church (“Church”) and _____ (“Pastor”) is for the purpose of providing temporary pastoral services to the Church.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

The Pastor is employed by the session of the Church with the concurrence of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee through its Committee on Ministry to serve for the period _____ to _____ (*not to exceed 12 months at a time*).

Check all that apply:

- The Pastor is a member of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee.
- The Pastor is requesting permission to labor inside the bounds of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee to perform this ministry.
- The Pastor is requesting permission to transfer his / her membership to the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee.
- The Pastor will serve as head of staff.
- The Pastor will serve as moderator of the session.

PASTORAL TASKS:

The Pastor will be responsible for providing pastoral duties as indicated below: (*Designation of seven areas of responsibility is generally considered a full time commitment. The assistance of the COM liaison or the Co-Executive Presbyters may be helpful in assessing whether the duties desired by the Church would call for a full-time or part-time pastor. This consultation should take place prior to contact with any potential candidates for the position.*)

List areas of responsibility in priority order:

- PREACHING AND LEADING WORSHIP** - Public presentation of the Gospel through: preparing sermons and leading worship; administering sacraments; officiating at weddings and funerals as requested; planning for special worship related to season to the Christian Year.
- VISITATION** - Developing bonds of caring with members through: routine calling on homes of the congregation; visiting hospital patients or members in nursing homes, etc.; pastoral care of persons and families in crisis and experiencing significant life events (birth, marriage, death, vocational changes, etc.).
- ADMINISTRATION** - Building a more effective church organization by: helping to plan and develop the church's program of activities in order to be prepared for the coming of the next installed pastor; training leaders toward responsible leadership; resourcing church committees along with leaders; supervising whatever office operation the church may have.
- TEACHING** - Fulfilling calling as a teacher by: teaching the following class(s) - _____ (*specify responsibility*); holding confirmation classes; conducting officer and / or teacher training.
- PERSONAL GROWTH** - Seeking continued professional and spiritual growth: in faith through devotional use of the Bible and other reading and regular prayer and spiritual discipline; in personal maturity and pastoral skills through participation in continuing education.
- SERVICE TO THE GREATER CHURCH** – Service to the Presbytery, the Synod, General Assembly.

[It is understood that _____ has agreed not to be a candidate for the pastoral office.]

It is understood that this contract may be terminated by either party upon 30 days / 60 days (*circle one*) written notice.

TERMS:

The compensation shall meet the presbytery minimum if the position is full time. The COM liaison or Co-Executive Presbyters can assist with interpretation upon request.)

Cash Salary	_____
Housing	_____
Furnishings / Utilities	_____
Social Security self-employment	_____
Pension/Major Medical	_____

(If the Pastor is an active member, pension and medical insurance dues are applicable as for installed pastor. The church may assist the Pastor with cost of Medicare supplement or other insurance.)

Automobile Expenses _____

(Presbytery recommends reimbursement up to the current IRS rate per mile for business mileage.)

Moving Costs (<i>if applicable</i>)	
Four Weeks Vacation	<i>(prorated annually)</i>
Two Weeks Study Leave	<i>(prorated annually)</i>
Professional Expenses	_____

Pastor

Date

Clerk of Session

Date

Chair, Committee on Ministry

Date

**COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY
PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE
POLICY ON DESIGNATED PASTORS**

A designated pastor relationship may be utilized in a church transformation situation, upon recommendation of an Administrative Commission, or in situations where there has been church conflict, or if determined necessary by the Committee on Ministry. The designated pastoral relationship is a pastoral relationship for a designated term; the designated pastor's term of call shall not be less than two years or more than four years. The term is renewable, upon request by the pastor and session / Administrative Commission, with approval by the Committee on Ministry.

The Designated Pastor relationship shall be established and carried out in the following manner:

1. After conferring with the session / Administrative Commission and congregation, the Committee on Ministry ("COM") may decide that a designated pastor relationship is appropriate. The COM shall approve the terms of call for the particular designated pastor relationship.
2. Upon approval of the COM, the congregation shall vote on whether to call a designated pastor to be used. This search process may include a designated pastor nominating committee ("DPNC"), the session acting as the DPNC (upon authority of the COM or the Administrative Commission), or a search committee composed of the COM chair, the COM liaison, and the Co-Executive Presbyters. The COM chair, the COM liaison, and the Co-Executive Presbyters will be responsible for the initial screenings of all applicants to determine qualifications and will recommend approved names to the DPNC / session. The COM liaison may assist in the preparation of the Ministry Information Form ("MIF"), if it is determined that such a form is necessary.
3. The COM shall review with the session / Administrative Commission the effectiveness of the designated pastor at least six months before the end of the designated pastor's term. Upon completion of the review, the COM, in consultation with the session / Administrative Commission, and the designated pastor, shall make one of the following recommendations:
 - a. extend the designated pastor call;
 - b. call the designated pastor to installed pastoral relationship (after a minimum term of two years); or
 - c. begin a new call process.

Revised by the Committee on Ministry 10 January 2017

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ELECTING A PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE **(Suggested Model)**

1. The session meets to set a date and time for the congregational meeting to elect a Pastor Nominating Committee (“PNC”). Advance public notice of the meeting must be given (usually two successive Sundays). The session recommends the size of the PNC to the congregation (usually five – nine persons). Final authority for the PNC rests with the congregation.
2. Nominations for the PNC are best made by the church-wide nominating committee (the committee that nominates the congregation’s elders, deacons, and trustees).
3. The Nominating Committee should provide a mechanism for receiving input of names from the congregation.
4. The Nominating Committee’s slate should be representative of the entire congregation. Persons should be contacted in advance to determine if they will serve if elected.
5. Ballots may be prepared in advance, with space for nominations from the floor. Care must be taken that persons nominated from the floor have consented to serve.
6. If possible, the COM’s Transitions liaison should moderate the congregational meeting (or be present to advise) when the PNC is elected.
7. The PNC and the Transitions liaison meet briefly following the congregational meeting to elect a convener and to set a date and time for their first meeting.
8. The Transitions liaison is present at the first meeting to train the PNC. The liaison also meets with the session so that information is shared and roles are clarified.

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[suggested for use with new pastor]

CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY AND MISSION STUDY

PHASE I – INFORMATION GATHERING

Step 1. *Use one of the questionnaires at the end of this document in one of the four following formats:*

- Cottage meetings
- Congregational Gathering and Small Group Discussions
- Questionnaire completed during Morning Worship
- Questionnaire mailed to all active members

Step 2. *Collate data received and prepare a report to the congregation*

PHASE II – INFORMATION SHARING

Step 1. *Church-wide fellowship gathering to:*

Review the report and discuss the results.

- ❖ Celebrating our history and mission.

Small group work to:

1. Identify areas for future emphasis.
2. Preliminary wording for a Mission Statement

Plenary sharing of small group work.

Step 2. *Small group emphasis areas assignments*

Small group work to:

1. Describe the conditions, which would be present if this mission emphasis were successfully addressed.
2. Identify conditions/issues, which presently serve as barriers to successfully addressing this future mission area.
3. Suggest plans and actions, which might be helpful in overcoming the barriers.

Step 3. *Information from the small groups is collated and published in a report to the congregation.*

PHASE III – SESSION RETREAT TO:

- Review the information and suggested actions.
- Prepare a Mission Statement for the Church.
- Set goals and objectives for implementation.

PHASE IV – CONGREGATIONAL GATHERING TO HEAR AND DISCUSS RESULTS OF THE SESSION RETREAT AND CONGREGATIONAL ADOPTION OF ITS ACTIONS.

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR USE IN CONGREGATIONAL MISSION STUDIES

Questionnaire #1

We will be considering areas of mission for _____ Presbyterian Church covering a broad range of the programs and missions. Our first task will be to identify the area of mission and program we think should receive top priority.

Please indicate your assessment of the church's life and work by circling the number most closely approximating your opinion under the phrases below.

1. In terms of fellowship, I see my church as:

Warm & Personal 1 2 3 4 5 Cold & Distant

2. In terms of worship, I see my church as:

Alive & Compelling 1 2 3 4 5 Dead & Boring

3. In terms of its program of education, I see my church as:

Effective & Innovative 1 2 3 4 5 Ineffective & Dull

4. In terms of its evangelism, I see my church as:

Aggressive & Clear 1 2 3 4 5 Timid & Uncertain

5. In terms of stewardship, I see my church as:

Generous & Self-sacrificing 1 2 3 4 5 Tight & Protective

6. In terms of its service to others in the community, I see my church as:

Active & Concerned 1 2 3 4 5 Inactive & Ingrown

7. In terms of its emphasis on youth needs, I see my church as:

Interested 1 2 3 4 5 Unconcerned

8. In terms of its unity, I see my church as:

Cooperative & Trusting 1 2 3 4 5 Fractured & Fighting

9. In terms of its commitment to Christ, I see my church as:

Very dedicated 1 2 3 4 5 Lukewarm

10. In terms of knowledge of the Bible and the Reformed faith, I see my church as:

Knowledgeable 1 2 3 4 5 Confused

11. In terms of communication with/among itself, I see my Church as:

Open & Clear 1 2 3 4 5 Closed & Garbled

12. In terms of having clear goals, I see my Church as:

Well Focused & Moving 1 2 3 4 5 Confused & Scattered

QUESTIONNAIRE #2

Name _____ How long a member _____ yrs.

Date of this meeting _____ Time _____

Gender: _____ Marital status: _____

Age:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. <input type="checkbox"/> Under 12 | d. <input type="checkbox"/> 25 - 35 |
| b. <input type="checkbox"/> 12 - 20 | e. <input type="checkbox"/> 35 - 50 |
| c. <input type="checkbox"/> 20 - 25 | f. <input type="checkbox"/> 50 - |

On the average, about how many times did you attend worship in this congregation during the last year?

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. <input type="checkbox"/> None | d. <input type="checkbox"/> About once a month |
| b. <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 6 times | e. <input type="checkbox"/> About 2 or 3 times a month |
| c. <input type="checkbox"/> About once or twice every 2 months | f. <input type="checkbox"/> 4 or more times a month |

On the average, about how many times did you attend Sunday School in this congregation during the last year?

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. <input type="checkbox"/> None | d. <input type="checkbox"/> About once a month |
| b. <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 6 times | e. <input type="checkbox"/> About 2 or 3 times a month |
| c. <input type="checkbox"/> About once or twice every 2 months | f. <input type="checkbox"/> 4 or more times a month |

How much time do you spend during an average month in this congregation's affairs (including worship, study groups, meetings, committee work, travel preparation, etc.)?

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. <input type="checkbox"/> Less than one hour | d. <input type="checkbox"/> 11 - 15 hours |
| b. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 - 5 hours | e. <input type="checkbox"/> 16 - 20 hours |
| c. <input type="checkbox"/> 6 - 10 hours | f. <input type="checkbox"/> over 20 hours |

In the last two years, has your participation in this congregation

increased? decreased?

Why?

remained about the same?

Offices currently held: (Session, Diaconate, PW coordinator, Teacher, etc.)

In which groups and organizations within the church do you actively participate?
(Choir, Youth Group, Bible Studies, etc.)

Why do you participate in this congregation? (Not why you joined, but why you continue to participate)

What are the strengths of this congregation?

What are the weaknesses of this congregation?

If you could make one change in this congregation, what would it be?

What have there been conflicts about in the congregation?

How were the conflicts resolved?

What have we learned about how this congregation resolves conflicts/disagreements?

**COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY
PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE
POLICY ON BACKGROUND CHECKS**

“The Church’s ministry is a gift from Jesus Christ to the whole Church. Christ alone rules, calls, teaches, and uses the Church as he wills, exercising his authority by the ministry of women and men for the establishment and extension of God’s new creation. Christ’s ministry is the foundation and standard for all ministry, the pattern of the one who came “not to be served but to serve” (Matt. 20:28). The basic form of ministry is the ministry of the whole people of God, from whose midst some are called to ordered ministries, to fulfill particular functions. Members and those in ordered ministries serve together under the mandate of Christ.” G-2.0101

“The Church’s ordered ministries described in the New Testament and maintained by this church are deacons and presbyters (ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders). Ordered ministries are gifts to the church to order its life so that the ministry of the whole people of God may flourish. The existence of these ordered ministries in no way diminishes the importance of the commitment of all members to the total ministry of the church.

The government of this church is representative, and the right of God’s people to elect presbyters and deacons is inalienable. Therefore, no person can be placed in any ordered ministry in a congregation or council of the church except by election of that body.

Ordination to the ministry of deacon, ruling elder, or minister of Word and Sacrament (also called teaching elder) is unique to that order of ministry.” G-2.0102

The Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee seeks to fulfill its responsibility to the churches, sessions, and teaching elders by ensuring quality pastoral leadership that is Presbyterian and Reformed. Background checks are required as an additional assessment of a candidate’s character and fitness, so that the presbytery through its COM, the congregation through the pastor nominating committee, and the candidate through prayer and discernment, are all guided towards the movement of God’s will for the Church.

The Committee on Ministry strongly encourages its churches to develop and utilize similar policies for its employees and volunteers.

A. Purpose and Scope

The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee adopts this policy so that Pastor Nominating Committees, the Committee on Ministry, and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry may make informed decisions about those persons seeking membership or employment in the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee. This policy reflects the presbytery’s commitment to exercise appropriate diligence and oversight to its churches and ministers. Its purpose is to:

1. Implement policies intended to prevent abuse of children and other abuses of authority;
2. Discover and verify background information provided by all candidates and teaching elders seeking membership or employment in the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee; and
3. Accomplish these purposes without limiting or compromising the existing authority of the Committee on Ministry to recommend termination of a call or employment based on reasons wholly unrelated to the findings (or lack thereof) of a background check pursuant to this policy.

Effective the date this policy is adopted, the Presbytery will conduct background checks as part of the clearance process for all teaching elders seeking to become members of the Presbytery; ruling elders seeking to be commissioned; candidates; and applicants for Presbytery staff positions.

Background checks will also be required for teaching elders transferring within the bounds of the presbytery. Exceptions to background checks for teaching elder members of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee may be made on a case-by-case basis by the Committee on Ministry.

B. Required Background Checks

The following background checks will be required:

1. Presbytery-to-Presbytery reference checks (usually handled by the Co-Executive Presbyters)
2. Criminal Record History, to include both Federal and state sexual offenders registries
3. Education
4. Employment History
5. Motor Vehicle Record

Records and histories will be for the past seven to 10 years; pre-employment screening will include specific questions related to previous complaints of sexual misconduct contained in Personal Information Forms or revealed through the background checks.

C. Persons Authorized to Order Background Checks and Review Reports

The Co-Executive Presbyters will ordinarily perform the presbytery-to-presbytery check; either the COM chair or the Stated Clerk will order the remaining background checks (2 - 5). Normally, the Stated Clerk will receive, review, and retain (with parameters defined) the background checks, providing a summary when necessary.

D. Process and Cost of Background Checks

The Committee on Ministry shall select and engage a firm to conduct these checks that is experienced and recognized as a timely and reliable source.

The Presbytery will conduct background checks as part of the clearance process. The Presbytery will pay for background checks.

E. Procedure

1. Prospective members and employees of Presbytery shall be informed during the interviewing and selection process that a background check will be conducted and asked to sign a consent and release form to authorize it.
2. Copies of the consent and release form will go to the Stated Clerk. A background check will be initiated upon receipt of the form.
3. Background check reports will be sent to the Stated Clerk, who will consider the results of the presbytery-to-presbytery reference check and the background check report, as well as the PIF / resume to determine if any of the following are present:
 - a. Pending criminal or civil proceeding of any kind;
 - b. Conviction of any criminal offense;
 - c. A deferred adjudication on any offense;
 - d. A judgment against the candidate in a civil case;
 - e. A pending ecclesiastical disciplinary proceeding;
 - f. A judgment or act of censure entered in an ecclesiastical disciplinary proceeding;
 - g. An alternative form of resolution agreement approved by a permanent judicial commission in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or equivalent body of another church resolving an ecclesiastical disciplinary proceeding;
 - h. Any inconsistency between the background check report and the educational, employment, and criminal background information provided by the candidate;

- i. Allegations of sexual misconduct that did not result in criminal charges will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The COM chair, in consultation with the Co-Executive Presbyters and the Stated Clerk, shall investigate the allegations and make a determination on whether to proceed with the candidacy.

Where appropriate the Co-Executive Presbyters and the COM Chair will counsel both the prospective candidate and the Pastor Nominating Committee.

4. The Committee on Ministry will take into account the failure of a candidate to volunteer critically important information regarding criminal or misdemeanor history. A formal interview process shall be established with the Co-Executive Presbyters and the COM chair, who will decide on the next steps and document those findings.

5. Should an otherwise qualified candidate be unwilling to sign a release, the candidacy shall not proceed.

6. A teaching elder, candidate, or potential employee who believes that information in the report is inaccurate, misleading, false, or incomplete, shall have the right to dispute it with the investigative firm and the Committee on Ministry.

7. These reports will be kept in a secured file in the Stated Clerk's office.

8. If the background check report discloses no relevant information or inconsistencies, the Stated Clerk will notify the COM Transitions Team liaison and the chair of the church's PNC of that fact in writing. The Stated Clerk shall retain evidence of the completion of the background check process; the background check report will be archived in a secure file.

9. If the background check report discloses relevant information or inconsistencies:

- a. *Notice to Candidate* - If a background check report or presbytery-to-presbytery reference check discloses the existence of any information or inconsistencies, the Stated Clerk shall promptly contact the candidate and inform him/her of such information or inconsistencies. The Stated Clerk shall also provide him/her a copy of the background check report.

- b. *Response by Candidate* - Within ten (10) days of the notification in 9a, the candidate shall deliver to the Stated Clerk a letter confirming or denying the information contained in the report, along with any evidence relevant to support the candidate's position.

- c. *Continuation of Candidacy* - Upon receipt of the candidate's letter and supporting evidence, the Stated Clerk, the Co-Executive Presbyters, the COM chair, and/or the PNC (as provided herein) shall determine whether the person's candidacy will continue using the following criteria:

- (1) *Conviction or Other Final Disposition in Case Involving Any Criminal Offense or Sexual Misconduct*

- (a) If the background check confirms that the candidate's personal history contains a conviction or deferred adjudication for any criminal offense or any other criminal charge involving sexual misconduct, the candidacy shall be terminated and the candidate notified in writing and, if applicable, the chair of the PNC shall be notified in writing.

- (b) If the background check confirms the candidate's personal history contains (i) a judgment against or settlement involving the candidate in a civil case involving sexual misconduct; or (ii) a judgment, act of censure, or alternative form of resolution agreement resolving an ecclesiastical disciplinary proceeding involving sexual misconduct, the candidacy shall be terminated and the candidate, and if applicable, the chair of the PNC, shall be notified in writing.

(2) *Pending Criminal Charges, Civil Complaint Involving Any Offense, Sexual Misconduct, or Ecclesiastical Proceeding*

If the background check confirms the existence of any pending criminal, civil or ecclesiastical proceeding against the candidate involving any criminal offense or sexual misconduct, the Stated Clerk shall advise the COM Chair, the candidate, and the chair of the PNC (if applicable) in writing that the candidacy will be suspended. The candidate may submit written information to the PNC and the Stated Clerk regarding the charges. The PNC shall advise the COM Chair and the candidate as to whether it wishes to await final disposition of the charges or to discontinue its consideration of the candidate.

(3) *Cases Involving Matters Other than a Criminal Offense or Sexual Misconduct*

If the background check confirms that the candidate's personal history contains matter(s) other than a criminal offense or sexual misconduct, the Stated Clerk shall prepare a summary of the relevant information in the background check and the information provided by the candidate and deliver such summary to the candidate and, as applicable, the COM chair and the PNC chair. Upon request of the members of the PNC chair, the Stated Clerk shall provide copies of specific documents to the members of the PNC for review during a PNC meeting attended by the Stated Clerk. At the conclusion of such meeting, the Stated Clerk shall collect all copies of such documents from the PNC members and shall destroy them.

The Stated Clerk, the Co-Executive Presbyters, the COM Chair, and the PNC chair (in the case of a candidate seeking installation in a parish) shall determine whether the person's candidacy will continue, based on its consideration of all relevant factors, including, but not limited to, the following:

- (a) The nature and seriousness of the matter;
- (b) The relationship of the matter to the purpose of the church;
- (c) The extent to which call or employment might offer the opportunity to engage in similar activity;
- (d) The age of the candidate at the time of her/his commission of the crime or engagement in the activity that is the subject matter of the proceeding;
- (e) The time elapsed since the candidate's last engagement in the activity that is the subject of the engagement; and
- (f) Other evidence of the candidate's fitness including letters of recommendation from law enforcement, prosecution, probation, or other persons of good community standing and reputation who may have been in contact with the candidate.

(4) *Inconsistencies in Employment or Education Information*

If the background check confirms that the candidate's personal history is inconsistent with the educational or employment information provided by the candidate, the Stated Clerk shall advise the COM chair, the candidate and, if applicable, the chair of the PNC, of that fact in writing and shall deliver to them copies of the background check, all documents provided by the candidate, and other relevant information. The Stated Clerk, the Co-Executive Presbyters, the

COM Chair, and the PNC chair (in the case of a candidate seeking installation in a parish) shall determine whether the person's candidacy will continue, based on its consideration of all information received, including but not limited to the following factors:

- (a) The nature and seriousness of the inconsistency;
- (b) The relationship of the inconsistency to the purpose of the church; and
- (c) Other evidence of the person's fitness or veracity including letters of recommendation from persons of good community standing and reputation.

F. Timing of Background Check

1. *Candidate seeking installation in a church:* At the request of a PNC, the Co-Executive Presbytery makes presbytery-to-presbytery reference checks on the candidate the PNC wants to interview. The PNC selects its top candidate. The selected candidate is informed that a background check will need to be performed before proceeding any further. The PNC sends the candidate's name, email address, and a copy of the candidate's Personal Information Form to the Stated Clerk, who then sends to the candidate a form requesting permission to perform the background check. Once the background check is clear, the Stated Clerk will let the PNC know if it can proceed, and will inform the COM chair and the Examinations Task Force chair that there is a candidate to examine. This process also applies to Teaching Elders transferring within the bounds of the Presbytery and to Ruling Elders being commissioned.

2. *Candidate seeking membership not in connection with installation in a church:* Background checks will be performed at the time the person submits his/her name for membership. A presbytery-to-presbytery reference check will be done first. If cleared, the candidate, or sponsoring entity / employer shall provide the Stated Clerk a fully-executed authorization and release form, and a copy of the candidate's Personal Information Form. The candidate or sponsoring entity / employer will be billed for the actual cost of the background check upon its completion.

If the background check is clear, the candidate will be examined by the COM Examinations Task Force. The Examinations Task Force will make a recommendation to the COM regarding the candidate's membership in the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee.

"To those called to exercise special functions in the church—deacons, ruling elders, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament—God gives suitable gifts for their various duties. In addition to possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, those who undertake particular ministries should be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world. They must have the approval of God's people and the concurring judgment of a council of the church." G-2.0104a.

The Committee on Ministry is guided by the Book of Order in its work, and seeks to ensure the best leadership for the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee.

Adopted by the COM: June 8, 2010

Adopted by the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee: October 21, 2010

Amended by the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee: February 2, 2013

Amended by the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee: May 17, 2014

Revised January 2017

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GUIDELINES FOR PNC INTERVIEWS

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important step in the call process is interviewing persons. Remember, you are not just hiring someone to do a job. You are involved in a call process that includes the church, the person called by God, and the Presbytery through the Committee on Ministry. Each interview needs to be approached in a spirit of prayer and expectation. It is essential to be open to God's surprises.

It is important to remember that a candidate cannot be visited or brought onto the field without a presbytery to presbytery reference check by the Co-Executive Presbyters.

II. PURPOSE OF INTERVIEWING

- A. To get to know the person and begin to build a relationship with that person.
- B. To enable the person being interviewed to get to know you, the church, and the community.
- C. To share your faith, hopes, and dreams openly with one another.
- D. To share expectations openly and honestly with one another.
- E. To compare the church's needs with the interests, experience, and skills of the person being interviewed.
- F. To impart a positive view of your church and community and the excitement you feel about the future ministry of your church.

III. GENERAL GUIDELINES

A. Context for Interviews

There are two types of interviews: (1) initial interviews, which may be by telephone or electronic means; and (2) face-to-face interviews with the top candidate(s), after a presbytery-to-presbytery check is done.

PNC Preparations for the Initial Interview

The tone of the interview is as important as what is said. Be as much at ease to be as comfortable as possible.

- 1. Know the responsibilities of each person on the PNC during the interview. One person should take the lead, another provide information about the church and community, while others may want to observe and take notes.
- 2. Make sure that you have discussed all the areas you want to cover and all the questions you want to ask in advance. Have a list of the most important questions so you won't forget them.
- 3. Review the data on the PIF again before the interview. Don't ask questions that are already covered on the PIF unless clarification is necessary.

Areas to Cover in the Initial Interview

- 1. Begin with each person introducing himself/herself. Take some time with this. Give your name, background, how long you have been in the church, etc.
- 2. Possible Questions to Ask
 - a. Initially ask some ice-breaking questions; ask the person to share his/her personal faith experience, basic beliefs, and experience in the church.
 - b. Explore the person's theological positions related to scriptural interpretation and/or social issues facing the church.
 - c. Ask what attracted the person to your church?

- d. Ask what is the person's approach to pastoral work? Have him/her describe an average week.
 - e. Ask about his/her view of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its relationship to presbytery.
3. Additional Information for Multiple-Church Fields - Distance and driving time between churches; Hour of services; Joint programs; Relationship between the churches; How pastor will divide time.

PNC Preparations for the Face-to-Face Interview(s)

The face-to-face interview(s) may take place either in your community or at a convenient neutral site. You may want to make plans for a meal together. If necessary, it is appropriate to arrange a separate time to meet the spouse and respond to questions and concerns.

B. Responsibilities to the Person Being Interviewed

It is the PNC's responsibility to make all of the arrangements for the interview. The PNC is responsible for expenses incurred including travel, meals, and lodging. If the person being interviewed comes to your community, be careful not to schedule things too tightly. Allow the person some free time. Make sure there is opportunity to visit the church and the community. Make provisions to include the spouse in the arrangements.

Confidentiality is essential. Be careful to communicate clearly with the person being interviewed. Before the interview, make sure the person is aware of all the arrangements and expectations.

C. Follow-Up from Interviews

1. Spend some time de-briefing immediately after the interview. List your impressions, including positive and negative reactions. Also, discuss how you feel you did as a committee in the interview.
2. Set a meeting time later when you can come back together and discuss the interview more fully after you have had time for prayer and reflection.
3. Follow-up with a letter or email thanking the person for his/her interest and time.

MINISTERIAL COMPENSATION

The compensation paid and/or furnished to a teaching elder should appear reasonable, just, and fair to the leaders of a congregation, to a majority of the members of a congregation, and to the teaching elder. Remuneration for services rendered by the teaching elder should be in line with the income levels of the area in which that service takes place. The teaching elder is a trained professional with responsibilities for which the Church has required preparation and training.

Each congregation in the Presbytery, through its Session and its teaching elder(s), should annually discuss compensation.

SECTION 1 MINIMUM EFFECTIVE SALARY

The Presbytery sets the Minimum Effective Salary requirements at 80% of the Churchwide Median Salary as established annually by the Board of Pensions. These figures will be reported annually to be effective for the following calendar year. **“Effective Salary” is defined as the combination of cash salary and housing.**

For 2021, the Churchwide Median Salary is \$61,200; **therefore the Minimum Effective Salary is \$48,960.** Exceptions may be allowed with approval of the Committee on Ministry.

Other requirements include:

- a. Full dues to the Benefits Plan of the Board of Pensions (37% of Effective Salary as defined by the Board of Pensions). The cost of family coverage shall be covered for full time installed teaching elders.
- b. Salary supplement equal to no less than 50% of the Social Security Self-Employment Tax.
- c. Four weeks or one month paid vacation inclusive of Sundays.
- d. Professional Expense Reimbursement Plan - Presbytery has approved a minimum of \$2500 for reimbursement of automobile expenses, books, continuing education and other professional expenses when substantiated to the Church Treasurer or other person designated by the session.
- e. Annual Study Leave of two weeks.
- f. Annual review of the terms of call and covenant with an evaluation of the mutual achievement of mission goals by teaching elder and session.
- g. A comprehensive evaluation of teaching elder every five years to grant a three month sabbatical from church duties after six years of continuous full time service.

SECTION 2 TAX INFORMATION

Each person's tax situation will be different, and advice should be sought from professional financial / legal counsel. Please note that it is the *responsibility of the teaching elder* to substantiate the amount and use of funds spent for housing if audited by the Internal Revenue Service.

IRS Publication 517 [<http://www.irs.gov/publications/p517/index.html>] provides information on reporting income, Social Security, expense reimbursement, housing allowances, etc.

SECTION 3 SABBATICAL POLICY

All full-time (35 hours per week or more) teaching elders and commissioned ruling elders in permanent installed positions are to be granted a compensated sabbatical of at least three months after completion of six years of continuous full-time service to a particular church, and such sabbatical is part of the terms of call / contract. The Committee on Ministry strongly endorses this policy for all full-time professional staff of any church. With the agreement of the session, a sabbatical will be combined with vacation and study leave. If the teaching elder / commissioned ruling elder leaves within 12 months of completion of the sabbatical, he / she is not eligible for severance. In churches with multiple staff,

congregations may limit sabbatical leave to one staff person per year. Pastoral Nominating Committees in the presbytery are required to incorporate sabbatical leave provisions into pastoral terms of call in order for such terms to be approved by COM. The requirements of this policy go into effect upon approval by presbytery and will only apply to all new terms of call after date of approval.

Responsibilities of the Teaching Elder / Commissioned Ruling Elder

- * A minimum of six months prior to the proposed commencement of the sabbatical, bring a sabbatical proposal to the session. The proposal may include a description of the proposal, and may include the goals to be achieved, the expected results, and a personal statement as to how sabbatical leave will be beneficial to the teaching elder / CRE and to the church.
- * Make any necessary arrangements for coverage of pulpit, pastoral, and other responsibilities during sabbatical leave. In cooperation with the session, assure that pending responsibilities are brought up to date prior to departure on sabbatical leave.
- * Upon return, present an overview of the sabbatical experience with the session and the COM. Sharing of the experience with the entire congregation is strongly encouraged.

Session Responsibilities

- * Review the sabbatical proposal with the teaching elder / CRE and negotiate any necessary clarifications or changes.
- * Communicate to the congregation the importance and value to the church of the sabbatical leave.
- * Continue terms of call / financial commitments to the teaching elder / CRE during sabbatical leave.
- * Receive from the teaching elder / CRE the written overview of the sabbatical experience upon his/her return.
- * Set aside funds annually to accumulate toward the sabbatical year. For example, if a congregation determines that the cost of providing a sabbatical for its teaching elder / CRE will be \$3,000 - \$5,000, the congregation would write \$500 - \$834 into its annual budget to accrue to the Sabbatical year.

COM Responsibilities

- * Serve as mediator in any concerns of the session or the teaching elder / CRE with respect to the sabbatical, making sure the agreement is being met.
- * Appoint a moderator for the session for the duration of the sabbatical.
- * Provide human and financial resources as needed.

SECTION 4

MINISTERIAL COMPENSATION FOR PULPIT SUPPLY

The Committee on Ministry recommends pulpit supply at \$150 per Sunday, with mileage (at the current IRS rate) negotiated in advance.

Congregations may vary from this guideline only in extraordinary circumstances (i.e. multiple worship services, congregation size, etc.) and with prior negotiation with the teaching elder.

SECTION 5

CALCULATING COMPENSATION AND BOARD OF PENSIONS DUES

The Board of Pensions website provides information on the Board's dues for medical, death and disability, pensions, and optional benefits. The Board also provides a calculator for effective salary as well as a calculator for dues. These calculators can be found at <http://www.pensions.org/what-we-offer/employer-guidance/calculators>.

Call Form (Initial)

The _____ Presbyterian Church of (Location) _____, Tennessee, belonging to The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, being well satisfied with your qualifications 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 pastor (associate pastor) of this congregation, promising you in the discharge of your duty all proper support, encouragement, and allegiance in the Lord.

That you may be free to devote yourself full time (part time) to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament among us, we promise and obligate ourselves to pay you the following (those agreed upon are to be filled in):

- Annual salary \$ _____ (in regular monthly or semi-monthly payments)
- Use of the manse \$ _____
- Housing allowance \$ _____
- Utilities allowance \$ _____
- Other medical insurance \$ _____
- Professional expenses \$ _____ (includes: automobile, continuing education, books, and personal business expenses)
- Social Security Tax \$ _____
- Other (specify) \$ _____
- Moving costs \$ _____

Vacation of (time period) _____ Continuing Education (time period) _____

and we will pay regularly in advance to the board responsible for benefits a sum equal to that requisite percent of your salary which may be fixed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for participation in the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including both pension and medical coverage, or any successor plan approved by the General Assembly, during the time of your being and continuing in the pastoral relationship set forth in this call to this church. We further promise and obligate ourselves to review with you annually the adequacy of this compensation, and to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of ministry every five years to grant a three month sabbatical from church duties after six years of continuous full time service. In testimony where of we have subscribed our names this _____ day of _____, A.D. _____.

(Signatures)

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 rules laid down in the Form of Government, and that the persons who signed the foregoing call were authorized to do so by vote of the congregation.

(Signed) _____

Moderator of the Congregational Meeting

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**SAMPLE SCRIPT FOR
MODERATING A CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

Approval of Pastoral Leadership

I call this meeting to order; let us pray. *[offer prayer]*

I am _____, teaching elder / ruling elder and a member of the Committee on Ministry. The Committee on Ministry has appointed me to moderate this meeting. The Clerk of Session will serve as the secretary of the meeting. Visitors are welcome to stay and observe. Mr. / Madam Clerk, do we have a quorum present? *(usually 1/10 of membership)* After the clerk's answer, declare: "We have a quorum."

[Speak briefly about the procedure – the Pastor Nominating Committee reviewed Personal Information Forms, selected a candidate, and this congregational meeting has been called to hear the report of the committee and to vote on the committee's recommendation. Voting will be by ballot, and ruling elders _____ and _____, members of the session, will serve as tellers for the ballots.]

Let us now hear the report of the Pastor Nominating Committee.

Report

Are you ready to proceed to the election of a pastor / associate pastor? *[wait]*

I declare the name of _____ to be in nomination. *(recommendation of the PNC needs no motion or second)*

Are you ready to vote? Would the active members please raise your hand so you can receive a ballot. When you have finished voting, please raise your hand and your ballot will be collected.

[tellers count the ballots]

The result of the balloting is as follows: _____ for the recommendation, _____ against the recommendation. Congratulations, you have elected a pastor / associate pastor.

The terms of call are now before you *(recommendation of the PNC)*. All in favor of the terms presented, please say "aye". All opposed, "no". The terms are approved.

Is there a motion to elect the members of the PNC who are present to sign the call on behalf of the congregation? *[wait]* Is there a second? *[wait]* Are there any objections? So ordered.

Is there a motion to dismiss the Pastor Nominating Committee? *[wait]* Is there a second? *[wait]* Are there any objections? So ordered. And I know you join me in thanking the PNC for their hard work!

Is there a motion to adjourn? *[wait]* Is there a second? *[wait]*

All in favor of adjourning please rise, and we will close with prayer / sing the Doxology.

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**COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY
PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE
INFORMATION FOR ORDINATION AND/OR INSTALLATION SERVICE**
This form MUST be in the hands of the Stated Clerk
before you can be received by Presbytery!

Name of Minister/Candidate: _____

Current Presbytery of Membership: _____

Church/Work to which Called: _____ **Effective Date:** _____

Address to which correspondence should be mailed: _____

Terms of Call: Attach Form (four originals)

SERVICE OF ORDINATION AND/OR INSTALLATION

Place: _____

Date: _____ **Time:** _____ a.m. _____ p.m.

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMISSION: [indicate Teaching or Ruling Elder and name of Church;
NOTE: at least FIVE commission members shall be from the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee]

Chair of the Commission will preside, propound constitutional questions, declaration of Ordination / Installation:

Name: _____ Church: _____

Ruling Elder to propound congregational questions [for installation]:

Name: _____ Church: _____

To Preach the sermon:

Name: _____ Church: _____

Laying on Hands [for ordination] **and Prayer** [for ordination and installation]:

Name: _____ Church: _____

To Charge the Congregation [for installation]:

Name: _____ Church: _____

To Charge the Teaching Elder:

Name: _____ Church: _____

Other Members of the Commission:

Name: _____ Church: _____

Name: _____ Church: _____

Name: _____ Church: _____

Name: _____ Church: _____

[If members of the commission are from another presbytery, please list the name of the presbytery.]

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1. A Commission shall consist of at least five Ruling Elders and Teaching Elder members from the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee in numbers as nearly equal as possible (two of one and three of the other) [*G-3.0109b*] with no more than one ruling elder from any church. The Commission may include a member of the Committee on Ministry.
2. Please note that a Ruling Elder must ask the congregation the constitutional questions [*W-4.0404*].
3. Please note that Installations require the same questions as Ordination [*W-4.0404*].
4. It is your responsibility to ask the Teaching and Ruling Elders of the Commission if they will be willing and able to serve on the date set. This must be done prior to the meeting of Presbytery.
5. **YOU** will be responsible for advising each member of the Commission:
 - A. that he or she has been appointed by Presbytery to serve on the Commission;
 - B. of the part which has been assigned; and
 - C. of the place and hour at which the Commission will convene (usually at least one half hour before the service begins).
6. If you need any help or suggestions of Teaching and Ruling Elders who might be available, the COM liaison, Co-Executive Presbyters, or Stated Clerk will be glad to assist. The Presbytery office will provide mailing labels for invitations if you so request.
7. You must provide a camera ready statement of faith and autobiographical statement. This will be copied and distributed at the Presbytery meeting, so it is important that it is legible and concise.
8. **THIS FORM MUST BE IN THE HANDS OF THE STATED CLERK BEFORE YOU CAN BE RECEIVED BY THE PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE!**

THE PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE
3900 West End Avenue
Nashville, TN 37205
www.pbymidtn.org
615-332-3330