

Policy Regarding Associate Pastors, Interim Pastors, Stated Supply or Temporary Supply Pastors who wish to submit their Personal Information Form (PIF) for the position of pastor / head-of-staff.

When an Associate Pastor, Interim Pastor, Stated Supply or Temporary Supply Pastor (hereafter referred to as the candidate) wishes to submit his or her Personal Information Form for the position of Pastor, the following realities are acknowledged:

- This new possibility door has been opened by our denomination's New Form of Government, leaving local presbyteries to establish guidelines / policies for implementation;
- Other denominations have lived faithfully with this possibility;
- Such candidates, as well as Pastor Nominating Committees (PNC's), have the advantage of knowing the strengths and needs of candidate, the church, and the community.

However, prior to application / inquiry, regardless of which party (candidate or PNC) is initiating the inquiry / application, the candidate and/or the PNC must first consult with the Committee on Ministry (COM). Seeking to be fair in their responsibility to uphold the peace and unity of the church, COM will discern on a case-by-case basis if this is wise for the candidate and / or for the congregation.

Provided the COM grants permission for the candidate or the Pastor Nominating Committee's exploration, both parties, independently, must approach this consideration with open hands, in a spirit of discernment, and with the understanding that if the call comes to pass, God is at work; and if it does not transpire, God is still at work.

The PNC must resist the temptation to take the easy road and call the candidate who is already there. COM requires at least two face-to-face interviews with other viable candidates; and to restate, the PNC must affirm Equal Employment Opportunities.

If the PNC extends a call to the candidate, the call will require a three-fourths vote of Presbytery at a duly called Presbytery meeting. The candidate, PNC, and the congregation must realize that this is a high threshold.

The candidate and PNC must give careful thought to the reality that the congregation will vote on the PNC's recommendation. Thus, prior to the congregational vote, the candidate, PNC and COM should decide what is an acceptable percentage of those voting in favor of this call... i.e., 90%... 95%?

In the case of an Associate Pastor, careful thought must also be given to the following covenantal considerations:

- How will this impact the Associate Pastor's current position?

- Will an Associate be able to return to his or her position and be content? Or will the candidate feel a need to move on if not selected?
- Will the Associate Pastor be able to work with and under the new Head of Staff who is called instead of them?

With these considerations in mind, the PNC and the candidate must be especially diligent in confidentiality during and after the deliberations. It is recommended that the PNC and the candidate sign a confidentiality agreement. If COM hears of politicking within the congregation for or against the candidate, the Committee on Ministry has authority to stop the proceedings.

Again, in the case of an Associate Pastor being the candidate, if elected, the PNC needs to be aware their decision will prompt the need for another PNC to fill the Associate position.

If there are questions or concerns about this policy, please speak to your COM liaison, COM moderator, or the Pastor to the Presbytery.

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