**PNC Training**

**Maumee Valley Presbytery**

**Essential Resources**

1. *On Calling a Pastor*, request a copy from COM liaison or downloadable at:
   1. <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/calling-pastor/>
      1. *Acronymns* – page 5
      2. *Overview of Call Process* – page 14
      3. *Session’s Role* – page 16
      4. *PNC’s Role* – page 17
      5. *Searching for a Pastor* – pages 25-40
      6. *Calling a New Pastor* – pages 41-44
2. Training videos for PNCs
   1. <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/clc/revised-calling-pastor/#videos>
3. COM Handbook, Chapter IV, especially 4.1 and 4.7, request a copy from COM liaison:
   1. *10 Steps to seeking a pastor – 4.1*
   2. *Confidentiality in the PNC – 4.7*

**Beginning of the Process: notes for the PNC**

1. Key Acronyms: PNC = Pastor Nominating Committee; PIF = Personal Information Form; MIF = Church Information Form; CLC (or clc) = Church Leadership Connection (the General Assembly office that resources pastoral searches, including the online PIF/MIF matching), COM = Commission on Ministry (in our MVP system this is our Leadership Commission, or LC); MVP = Maumee Valley Presbytery; BOP = Board of Pensions; CPM = Committee on Preparation for Ministry (for seminary candidates); EP – Executive Presbyter (for reference checks); SC = Stated Clerk (for attestation and terms of call).
2. Set a regular meeting day and time; plan to meet weekly.
3. Create a budget, if Session has not already crafted one.
4. The church office is not a good place to receive email or snail mail – confidentiality is difficult.
5. Don’t write your MIF by committee. Choose a strong writer to craft a winsome message and allow the rest of the PNC to serve as editors. The MIF is the primary marketing tool to capture pastors’ attention. Writing in a committee compromises clarity of voice!
   1. The 1,500 character count for the narrative questions is a hard cap so be concise (while you’re being creative).
   2. Choose the “ten competencies” from across the categories. It is acceptable and wise to get both congregational opinion and Session opinion about which of the competencies are most important. However, it is necessary for the PNC to decide which ten ultimately show up on the MIF.
6. Make sure your MIF and Mission Study read like the same congregation! The MIF must be approved by both the Session and the COM before it can be posted to the clc website. If COM requests an edit to your MIF, it usually means there is something in it the COM has learned through their cumulative experience will be a stumbling block in the process. Please do not take a request for edits personally 😉
7. Require a statement of faith. Most statements of faith will appear similar, which is expected in that every candidate is summarizing the same Book of Confessions. However, some statements of faith will stand out either in how well or poorly someone articulates the faith. Take note of such candidates to give a closer look if their statement stands out and to avoid if their statement is so poorly written that you notice.
8. Do NOT enter a deadline for your MIF! The clc will disappear your MIF from the system ten days after the deadline.
9. Consider carefully opening the position to first-call candidates. Every church wants someone young, gifted, with years and years of experience. The reality is that some candidates are young and gifted with little to no experience, but still young and gifted. Other candidates are second career seminarians with marvelous professional credentials that will make them strong pastors from day one.
   1. The Board of Pensions has both debt and medical dues relief programs for smaller churches and some first-call candidates (see *On Calling a Pastor*, page 33).
10. Once your MIF is approved by Session and COM, Brad will provide instructions, logins, and passwords to the PNC chair and the Clerk of Session. In order to ensure accountability for the process,
    1. The PNC chair posts the MIF to the clc website.
    2. The Clerk of Session approves the MIF on the clc website.
    3. The COM (in our case the Leadership Commission/Ann Wasson, Chair) approves the MIF for the clc website.
11. The PNC Chair “triggers a match” request in the clc system.
12. The PNC will get PIFs from the clc; however, self-referrals, congregational referrals, and network referrals are strongly recommended.
    1. If a PIF does not have attestation, contact either Dean McGormley (SC) or Matt Meinke (GP) before moving forward with that candidate. The lack of attestation may be a simple procedural glitch or a sign of undisclosed misconduct.

**Middle of the Process: notes for the PNC**

1. All PNC members should read and rank all PIFs (1-3 or 1-5 scales are most commonly used), AND it is important to discuss the PIFs rather than rely solely on the numerical rating. The process of discussion will help shape and form the PNC’s cohesive vision for what is desired in a pastor. Further, the process of discussion sometimes reveals either (a) someone’s hidden assumptions, prejudice, or bias, or (b) previously unknown differences in perspective among PNC members. All these issues are best discussed early rather than late.
2. It is advisable to request additional materials of “second round” candidates (i.e. those who pass the PIF round of the process). Common requests are sermons (YouTube/DVD/MP3s audio) and supplemental questions of congregation/mission/ministry specific issues, though some questions can be saved for the interview process.
3. A good list of interview questions (or at least a good start) can be found in *On Calling a Pastor*, page 38, though it should be noted these questions are light on asking about specific, concrete, results and outcomes of a candidates’ ministry. Members of the PNC with interviewing experience may want to hone these questions so they are more focused and less prone to allow gifted wordsmiths to wiggle away from a difficult question.
4. The process moves from (1) PIF review (50 to 100 candidates) to (2) Skype/Zoom videoconference interview (5 to 10 candidates) to (3) Face-to-Face meeting (2 to 3 candidates) to (4) “candidating before the congregation” (1 candidate). **BEFORE STEP 3**, the PNC must inform the General Presbyter of the candidates’ names and presbyteries so he can conduct the EP reference check. **BEFORE STEP 4**, the candidate must have the presbytery conduct a background check.
5. When visiting a candidate in her or his own church, don’t be a dope! Confidentiality **must** be maintained in all circumstances. Don’t sit together. Don’t engage with congregants. If you do, say you are a tourist / businessperson on assignment / broke down on the highway…anything but that you are with a PNC. While we are on the subject of confidentiality:
   1. Don’t contact the candidate’s church in any way.
   2. Don’t talk to your friends **OR** family about a candidate.
   3. Don’t ask for secondary references unless the candidate gives specific permission.

**Final Stages: notes for the PNC**

1. Neutral Pulpits are scheduled through the COM liaison in coordination with a neighboring church, the candidate’s schedule, and the PNC’s schedule. The candidating weekend is ordinarily the time when COM will interview the candidate for membership in the presbytery. The COM cluster should meet with the candidate prior to his/her meeting with the PNC. The COM interview will be scheduled by the COM liaison.
2. *Terms of Call*: coordinate with Session, COM and candidate
   1. Negotiate the terms of call with the pastor but DO NOT go beyond the Session approved number. It is acceptable for the PNC to return to the Session to request more money, if needed.
   2. The presbytery’s *minimum* terms of call are listed on the MVP website at <https://maumeevp.org/resources/documents-forms> (in 2021, $48,640 for effective salary (cash salary + housing).
   3. The terms of call sheet must be signed by the candidate and the clerk of Session and then returned to Dean McGormley, the Stated Clerk of the presbytery.
3. *Extending the Call*: coordinate with Session, COM, candidate and congregation
   1. Upon receiving an invitation to become the congregation’s pastor, it is customary for candidates to give a response to the PNC within one week.
   2. The Session must call a congregational meeting (for “installed” pastors) and have a congregational vote at a duly authorized meeting. For “temporary” pastors, a Session vote is all that is necessary.
   3. It is customary when “presenting” the candidate,
      1. To have the candidate preach.
      2. For the PNC chair to review and summarize why this candidate was the committee’s choice.
      3. Allow the congregation to ask questions of the candidate.
      4. To vote by written ballot. Note: the old Book of Order required a candidate receiving less than 80% positive vote to be told the specific percentage before whether to accept the call. This requirement is no longer in the Book of Order but remains a good standard.
4. *When the Candidate Accepts the Call*: coordinate with Clerk of Session, Stated Clerk and COM
   1. Send the signed call letter to the Stated Clerk.
   2. Notify the clc the church is no longer looking for a pastor.
   3. Notify remaining prospective candidates.
   4. Dispose of all PNC materials related to candidates that were not called. Keep materials related to the candidate who became the new pastor.
   5. Complete the EEO form (Equal Employment Opportunity) listed at <https://maumeevp.org/resources/documents-forms>
   6. Share with Session any agreements made with the new pastor (e.g. start date, time away for prior commitments, etc.) ALL such agreements should be made in writing.
   7. Help the new pastor plan her or his ordination and/or installation service. Instructions for ordination / installation services can be requested from the COM liaison.