

Chapter 4: Pastoral Search

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PASTORAL SEARCH OVERVIEW

After the Committee on Ministry has given its approval (based in part on the recommendation of the Interim or temporary pastor) to form a PNC, the COM liaison arranges for a meeting with the Session to go over two important documents and provide other information as outlined below. The liaison explains the process to form and elect a PNC as well as the future sequence of steps that will be followed throughout the process.

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY LIAISON MEETING WITH THE SESSION *(prior to nomination of PNC)*

NOTE: There are three ways to share this information:

- a. As part of an earlier meeting with the session
- b. As part of a regular session meeting for which you will need to ask 30 minutes of docket time
- c. Telephone communication with the clerk/Moderator of Session.

Be sure you discuss the following two items with the session:

Review the narrative table “Definition of Roles for Pastor Search/Call Process” and the flow chart “The Presbytery of Denver’s Journey Between pastors (JBP) Process” as found in the Preface of the JBP.

Discuss the optimal size of a Pastor Nominating Committee. In part, this is a function of the size of the congregation. It should be no fewer than five people. Seven to nine persons is a good size. Some committees have been as large as 11 to 13 and worked well. A resignation because of a move or other circumstances should be anticipated. Ask the Session to give guidance to the congregation's Nominating Committee.

Remind the Session that the PNC will be considering candidates without regard to race, age, ethnic origin, gender, physical disability or marital status. Refer to recommendations relative to AA/EEO guidelines found in this Chapter.

Ask for questions or concerns.

Discuss the housing and salary challenges that are to be expected. (moving expenses, creative ideas to solve the financial challenges, such as shared equity)

Explain to the Session, including its moderator, that the PNC will be responsible only to the congregation that elected it - not to the session or to any pastor. An Interim Pastor may be asked for advice but will play no active role in the work of the PNC. Suggested guidelines are available in this packet regarding the Head of Staff involvement in the search for an Associate Pastor.

If time permits, it is recommended that the COM liaison meet with the congregation's Nominating Committee. Following is a suggested outline

COM LIAISON MEETING WITH THE CONGREGATION'S NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Electing a Pastor Nominating Committee

Be sure you discuss the following items with the congregation's Nominating Committee:

Report the size of the Pastor Nominating Committee to be elected (from the session's input).

Review the work that will be expected of the Pastor Nominating Committee and review the table "Definition of Roles For Pastor Search/Call Process" and the flow chart "The Presbytery of Denver's Journey Between Pastors (JBP) Process." The demands on an individual's time are enormous. It is not uncommon for a PNC to meet for several hours a week for many months. This committee work requires the highest level of commitment and sacrifice on the part of the PNC member and his/her family.

Note: Ask the committee to make a list of the gifts/skills/talents that will need to be present in this committee. Not everyone will need to have all of the skills listed, of course.

Discuss who should not be considered for service on this committee. Members who are employed by the church should not be considered. Members who are involved in other leadership in the church should be given the opportunity of being released from those responsibilities for service on this committee.

Develop a list of possible names and indicate which skills each one has.

Assist the committee in prioritizing the list of names, if needed.

Rehearse with the committee members a recruitment visit. Encourage "in-person" visits, not telephone calls. Make sure, in these visits, to indicate the importance of the task, the time commitment involved, and the variety of work that lies ahead. DO NOT indicate who else is being considered. Give the person the opportunity to reflect and pray on this invitation. Conclude the visit with prayer.

When a slate of names is ready, ask the Session to call a special Congregational Meeting. Notify the Session of the slate. Request that a written notice be sent to the congregation and include (if desired) in it a presentation of the proposed Pastor Nominating Committee. It may be useful to give a bit of biographical information about each person, such as length of church membership, areas of service, professional and family information. Note: *The congregation has the option of nominating persons from the floor of the congregational meeting.*

SAMPLE OUTLINE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TO ELECT A PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

If possible, the Liaison should be present at this meeting.

Call to Order - Establishment of a Quorum

Opening Prayer

Moderator or Clerk: Read the stated purpose of the congregational meeting

Report of the Congregation's Nominating Committee

MOTION: To elect (.....) presented to serve as the Pastor Nominating Committee

NOTE: If there are additional nominations from the floor, the congregation will have the choice of expanding the size of the committee or taking a written ballot.

MOTION: To commission the Pastor Nominating Committee in worship on Sunday morning, _____, 201?__, at _____ a.m.

Announcements

MOTION: To adjourn

Closing Prayer

A SAMPLE SERVICE OF COMMISSIONING FOR THE PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The following litany may be used as part of a Sunday morning worship service. (Members of the Pastor Nominating Committee will be asked to come forward.)

Pastor or Clerk:

You have been chosen to serve this church in a special way. Together, you will seek a candidate for pastor (associate pastor) of this congregation. I ask you now to respond to the following questions:

Will you make every effort to be diligent in this task, being present at all training sessions and committee meetings, and sharing in all committee decisions?

Committee Members:

WE WILL.

Will you respect your fellow committee members in this task, working with them in love and forbearance when opinions differ?

WE WILL.

Will you try to maintain openness about the persons you will interview, recognizing that ministers and candidates for the ministry are not limited by their age, sex, ethnic origin, marital or family status?

WE WILL.

Will you maintain the necessary confidentiality of this task, even where family members are concerned?

(Family members of the committee members will be asked to stand.)

You are also assuming a task because you will probably have to give up time with the members of your family and, perhaps, assume some of his/her other obligations. Will you answer these questions:

Will you try to bear with demands on your family members' time and strength?

Family Members:

WE WILL.

Will you respect the need for confidentiality?

WE WILL.

(The congregation will be asked to stand.)

This committee is laboring on behalf of the entire congregation and needs its support and encouragement. Will you answer these questions:

Will you remember these committee members in your thoughts and prayers in the months ahead?

WE WILL.

Will you seek to be patient if the search process seems slow?

WE WILL.

Will you, relying upon the Holy Spirit, resist forming images of what the pastor should look like or be like, trusting the committee's skills and intentions to seek worthy qualities of ministry?

WE WILL.

Will you respect the need for confidentiality in this search process?

WE WILL.

Will you, if you are responsible for the recruitment of workers in the church, try to release these members from other tasks during their tenure on this committee?

WE WILL.

Pastor or Clerk:

Let us pray: Almighty God: How many are the ways we serve you within your Church! We thank you for these persons who have pledged themselves to this task of seeking a leader for this congregation. Enlarge their gifts and help them to seek your will. Together, we now dedicate ourselves to them and to you, that we may fulfill our mission faithfully and be your joyful people. Through Christ we pray. Amen.

ORIENTATION OF THE PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Liaison should be sure to discuss the following items with the Pastor Nominating Committee.

Overview the work of the Committee.

Discuss budget expenses for the committee.

Discuss the role of the Liaison Team and that you should be notified of every meeting.

Discuss the care that must be taken to consider candidates without regard to race, ethnic origin, age, gender, physical disability or marital status. Refer to the AA/EEO guidelines in this Packet

Discuss need for confidentiality.

Discuss need for a regular meeting time.

Discuss need to make this committee's work a priority - attendance at meetings, etc.

Discuss decision-making patterns the committee will use (consensus/unanimous, majority vote).

Discuss the relationships of the committee with session, pastors and congregation.

Select officers for the committee: Moderator, Vice-Moderator, and Secretary.

Discuss strategies for communicating with the congregation throughout the process.

Refer to the Presbytery's website for information the minimum compensation required by the Presbytery.

Discuss housing and salary challenges (moving expenses, creative ideas such as shared equity). Refer to the Presbytery's Compensation Policy and associated worksheets in it as found on the Presbytery's website. <http://denpres.org/com-policies>

Explain the Ministry Information Form (MIF) which replaces the old CIF form. Refer to the PC USA website for this form

<https://www.pcusa.org/resource/ministry-information-form/>

Discuss the Church Leadership Connection and the 2016 "*User Guide for Presbyteries – Church Leadership Connection*" which can be downloaded from this site:

<http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/clc/attestation-and-call-forms/>.

Make sure that copies of the Final Report of the church's 12 Strategic Questions are available. Note that the 12 Strategic Questions is the primary resource document for completing the MIF Form.

Review what happens next: completion of the MIF Form, presenting it to the Session for approval and COM for endorsement.

If the search is for an Associate Pastor, Discuss the Guidelines for Involvement of Head of Staff in the Search Process in this Chapter.

The entire PNC or some members of the PNC may find it helpful to hear a prospective candidate in his/her current church in order to get a feel for the climate of the church and his/her style.

The PNC must ask themselves if, after the interview, the candidate's answers meet the PNCs established criteria?

AS THE NEED ARISES AT LATER MEETINGS OF THE PNC

The liaison may need to discuss strategies for:

- handling PIFs
- reading and taking notes on PIFs
- listening and taking notes on sermon tapes
- using supplemental questions
- conducting telephone interviews
- conducting personal interviews
- conducting reference checks (getting release forms)
- planning the weekend interview visit (provide sample schedule)

- Discuss the need to let ministers know that they are not being considered in a timely manner through careful, considerate, personalized responses.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT GUIDELINES

Every Presbytery Committee on Ministry is to inform each Pastor Nominating Committee of its constitutional obligations and how it might assure fairness in the calling process.

COM Liaisons to Pastor Nominating Committees and Associate Pastor Nominating Committees are responsible for encouraging the thoughtful, prayerful and serious consideration of all qualified candidates from the very inception of the search.

Equal Employment Opportunity

“The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall give full expression to the rich diversity within its membership and shall provide means which will assure a greater inclusiveness leading to wholeness in its emerging life. Persons of all racial ethnic groups, different ages, both sexes, various disabilities, diverse geographical areas, different theological positions consistent with the Reformed tradition, as well as the different marital conditions (married, single, widowed, or divorced) shall be guaranteed full participation and access to representation in the decision making of the church.” (F-1.0403)

“(The Committee on Ministry) shall provide for the implementation of equal opportunity employment for ministers and candidates without regard to race, ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, or disability. In the case of each call, it shall report to the presbytery the steps in this implementation taken by the calling group.” (G-3.0103)

Care must be taken by the Pastor Nominating Committee to consider candidates without regard to race, ethnic origin, sex, or marital status, age or disabilities.

Sample Equal Employment Opportunity in Ministry - Report from PNC on Search Process

TO: Moderator, Committee on Ministry

FROM: _____
(Name of Church) (Address)

(Chairperson – PNC) (Date)



TITLE OF POSITION _____

Date position first advertised _____

Date nominated to congregation _____

DATA

TOTAL

RACIAL/ETHNIC

WOMEN

PIFs Received

Prospects Preached

Interviewed

Offered Position

Please list the names of candidates you either heard preach, interviewed, brought to your community, or offered position, indicating for each one his or her race, ethnic origin, sex, age marital status, and whether any had an identifiable disability:

_____	_____
_____	_____

NAME OF NOMINEE _____

Comments on Nominee's Qualifications:

Comments on Total Employment Process-Recruitment, Screening, Interviews, Employment, etc.

SIGNED: _____ DATE: _____

Chairperson of Pastor
Nominating Committee

Equal Employment Opportunity in Ministry

REPORT FORM ACTION OF PRESBYTERY

Action of Committee on Ministry:

1. Received report of the Pastor Nominating Committee indicating that they fulfilled requirements of Form of Government, Section G-3.0103.
2. Committee on Ministry's Action:

APPROVED _____ DISAPPROVED _____

(Moderator, Committee on Ministry)

(Date)

ACTION OF PRESBYTERY:

1. Received report of Committee on Ministry indication that the Pastor Nominating Committee fulfilled requirements of Form of Government, Section G-3.0103.

YES _____ NO _____

2. Presbytery's Action:

APPROVED _____ DISAPPROVED _____

(Stated Clerk of Presbytery)

(Date)

SAMPLE PASTORAL TERMS OF CALL FORM

Note – Use the current Presbytery “Compensation Policies and Guidelines for Pastors” and associated worksheets found on pages 16 and 17 of this policy to develop the TOC. Refer also to the current Presbytery minimums on the Presbytery website. <http://denpres.org/#com-policies-section>

Presbytery of Denver (PCUSA)

The _____ Presbyterian Church of _____ (City, State), 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, _____ to undertake the office of _____ (Pastor, Associate Pastor) of this congregation, beginning _____ promising you in the discharge of your duty all proper support, encouragement and allegiance in the Lord.

That you may be free to devote full time (part-time) to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament among us, we promise and obligate ourselves to provide you the following annually:

Cash Salary	\$ _____
Supplement for Social Security Tax	\$ _____
Foregone interest on below-market loan	\$ _____
TOTAL income reported to IRS	\$ _____
Housing-(Manse and/or amount of Housing Allowance)	\$ _____
Utilities	\$ _____
Full medical, pension, disability and death benefit coverage under the Board of Pensions	\$ _____
Other benefits (if applicable):	\$ _____
Deferred Compensation (if applicable)	\$ _____
Medical/Dental Reimbursement Allowance	\$ _____

Paid vacation leave of _____ weeks annually

Paid continuing education leave of _____ weeks annually (cumulative up to _____ weeks)

Moving expenses (if applicable)

It is understood that the following expenses of ministry will be reimbursed through an accountable plan:

Travel expense at \$_____ per mile (current IRS allowable rate is recommended)	\$_____
Continuing Education Reimbursement Allowance	\$_____

We promise and obligate ourselves to review with you annually the adequacy of this compensation.

In testimony whereof we have subscribed our names this ____ of _____ 201?__.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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

Certification of Call

By Presbytery of Call

By the Presbytery of Denver

This call has been reviewed by the Committee on Ministry. The Committee recommends that the presbytery approve this call.

Date of Action _____ (Signed) _____ COM Moderator.

This call was approved by the Presbytery of _____ through action taken by its Committee as authorized by G-3.0307.

Date of Action _____ (Signed) _____ Stated Clerk

By Presbytery of Care or Present Call

This call has been reviewed by the Committee on (Ministry or Preparation for Ministry).
The Committee recommends that the presbytery find it expedient to release
_____ to accept this call.

Date of Action _____ (Signed) _____ Committee Moderator

The Presbytery of _____ hereby finds it expedient to release
_____ to accept this call and therefore has placed this call in the
minister's/candidate's hands.

Date of Action _____ (Signed) _____ Stated Clerk

By Candidate

This is to certify that I have received and accepted the call.

Date of Acceptance _____ (Signed) _____

COMPLETING THE MINISTRY INFORMATION FORM

The Ministry Information Form (formerly CIF or Church Information Form) is available for download on the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) website.

<http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/clc/>. As mentioned before, it may be helpful to refer to the 2016 “User Guide for Presbyteries – Church Leadership Connection” which can be downloaded from this site: <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/clc/attestation-and-call-forms/>.

Instructions on how to complete the form are found on this website as well. The COM liaison assists in the preparation, as needed. After completion and approval of the draft by the COM liaison, the MIF is given to Session for approval. Following that approval the final MIF is approved by the Committee on Ministry. The approved form is then entered into the Church Leadership Connection website (referenced above) with assistance (if needed) by the COM liaison and the Presbytery staff.

GUIDELINES: INVOLVEMENT OF HEAD OF STAFF IN SELECTION OF ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Background

The call process is often a time of anxiety and tension. The Head of Staff (HOS) worries about the right person selected for the position. The Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) worries that they will make a mistake. This anxiety along with unclearly defined roles can cause an interruption to the call process as it is intended.

With this in mind, the Committee on Ministry (COM) offers some guidelines that are designed to benefit the HOS and the APNC in their respective roles as they work towards their selection of an appropriate candidate for the Associate Pastor position. Selection of a new staff person needs the input of both the APNC and the HOS.

Suggested Roles for the Head of Staff and APNC

1. The HOS involvement may help to clarify the responsibility of the APNC in its work and to empower the APNC. In the early stages, attending only the key meetings and being available for consultation on the process best do this.
2. Involvement might be most helpful in three areas of the committee's work: At the beginning when the Ministry Information Form is being developed and the work of the APNC is clarified: in the middle to assess where the committee is in the process: and at the end when candidates are brought in for interviews and selection.

3. The HOS may know of candidates that have not applied and invite them to submit their PIFs. However, it would not be appropriate to push the APNC to consider a specific candidate over another.
4. Both the APNC and the HOS have a need for trust to be clearly in place. One of the ways this occurs is for the HOS to extend trust to the APNC to manage the meetings in his/her absence. The APNC could promote trust by keeping the HOS informed about each meeting, regarding the process, decisions, questions, etc. Copies of minutes need to be readily available.
5. In the final stage, the HOS must be allowed as much time as necessary to interview, consult and dialogue with the final candidates as well as have as much access to the APNC as necessary to make his/her preferences known.
6. HOS role could include group, spiritual, and leadership development for the APNC. Education regarding the discernment process of our call system; suggestions for their process and organizing their meetings; identification of his/her needs as HOS during this process; or any other input that would strengthen the process.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ADVERTISING THE POSITION

Be sure you consider the following:

The Church Leadership Connection, discussed above, will be a major advertising source. The Opportunity Lists they prepare will contain a brief summary of your church position. The lists are distributed monthly to all Presbytery offices and to pastors seeking a call.

Consider denominational publications for additional advertising. In particular, consider a special advertisement in "The Presbyterian Outlook" www.pres-outlook.com and Presbyterianstoday@pcusa.org. It requires some lead-time.

Note: Be sure your "position" description is clear. You want individuals to respond to your ad who are a good match with your congregation. Specifics which may be limiting may be more productive in the long term.

The Presbytery website can also publicize openings that might be attractive to local candidates. See this link: <http://denpres.org/job-postings/>

Consider contacting Executive Presbyters and Moderators of COMs in neighboring Presbyteries, by email, letter or phone.

If the position might be filled by a recent seminary graduate, contact seminary placement offices. Those addresses and phone numbers are available through our Presbytery office.

Let your congregation know that you are now receiving PIFs. If members know of pastors who might be interested in applying or who might want to recommend someone, encourage them to do so. Be careful to tell persons who suggest names that the PNC will not discuss how your “suggestion” is doing in the process.

SUGGESTIONS FOR READING PERSONAL INFORMATION FORMS AND LISTENING TO SERMONS

Each PNC should decide on a rating system and the particular elements to be rated in each PIF. The following sample is but one way to do the rating of a candidate. Other methods are certainly acceptable but the same method needs to be used by each member of the PNC to be consistent.

Consider using the following as a Rating Checklist - on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = poor, 10 = outstanding) indicate your impressions as follows:

Name: _____ Rating Notes

Initial impression

Writing style

Interest in pastoral care

Interest in home visitation

Interest hospital visitation

Interest in evangelism

Interest in church education

Interest in youth/seniors

Interest in preaching

Understanding of Sacraments

Interest in stewardship programs

Interest in mission interpretation

Interest in community service

Interest in the larger Church (Presbyterian/Ecumenical)

Overall impressions

PROCESSING PERSONAL INFORMATION FORMS

PNCs set their own procedures for evaluating PIFs. These seven numbered paragraphs (I. through VII.) include some ideas for consideration.

I. A First Cut? - It May Be Useful

A quick "first cut" can save time and effort if the circumstances of a church are such that a few objective criteria (examples given below) can be used to remove a substantial number of PIFs from further consideration. The PNC may choose instead to simply have such criteria in mind during general review of the PIFs.

II. Criteria for Evaluation of PIFs

Prior to both the first (if any) and the main (or only) review of PIFs, the PNC develops a list of criteria that all members will at least have in mind in evaluating the PIFs. This practice leads to more systematic evaluation, focused on the needs of the particular church and common to all evaluators.

For a rapid first cut, such criteria should be purely objective, like the following examples:

- 1) The correspondence between the choices of highest priorities for pastoral activities on the MIF and those on the PIF
- 2) Experience - length and type
- 3) Education - where and how much
- 4) Distance of the pastor's current residence
- 5) Minimum salary that the candidate will consider
- 6) The correspondence between the size of the church and the sizes that are of interest to the candidate.

With experience, a few such criteria can be applied to a PIF in no more than two minutes.

Other criteria are applied in the general review of the PIFs (after any first cut). Many of these are subjective and call for each evaluator to form a judgment, from reading of the whole PIF, of the degree to which the candidate appears to meet each of them.

III. The Possible Use of Supplementary Questions

Supplementary questions may be sent to candidates at any stage of the search process and at more than one stage. These are questions, significant to the particular church or candidate, that the PNC wants all or any of the remaining

candidates to address specifically. A time limit for reply is specified. Supplementary questions are commonly used late in the review process to help the PNC arrive at three or four finalists. They may be used very early in the process by sending them, along with the MIF, to all ministers whose PIFs are to be given any consideration. Such use provides additional information on the candidates and also eliminates those who, after reading the CIF, are no longer interested. (They don't meet the time limit.)

IV. Organization of the PNC for Evaluation PIFs

For a first cut, only one or two people need scan a PIF, provided that the criteria are truly objective. Organization for the main evaluation of PIFs varies considerably among PNCs. Many successful PNCs believe that every PIF should be evaluated individually by every member. Some of these store all PIFs at the church where PNC members can come individually to evaluate them. More commonly, PNCs choose to make a copy of every PIF for every member or to circulate several copies among members so that members make their individual evaluations in their homes. In any case, the PNC meets, as a whole, to discuss the individual evaluations, eliminate some candidates, approve some candidates for later serious consideration and plan further needed contacts with others.

Some PNCs choose instead to divide into groups of about three for evaluating PIFs. The groups meet either during part of the meetings of the whole PNC or at other times of their choosing. After discussion a group arrives at a consensus evaluation of a PIF. Procedures may call for each PIF to be passed through two or more groups. (This group approach may speed the review process a little but in the writer's experience, it does not lead readily to in-depth, whole-PNC discussion, based on all hearing the particular insights of all, regarding rating candidates or the need of posing specific questions to some of them.)

V. Methods of Comparing ("Grading") PIFs

A common grading system for PIFs is a simple "yes" (hold) or "no" (discard) applied to every PIF after it has been read by an individual or a group and, again, after full-PNC discussion. "Maybe" grades can be troublesome and should be changed as soon as possible, while memories are fresh, to "no" or "yes." Quick phone calls to "maybe" candidates with specific questions are very helpful and may prevent elimination of some fine possibilities.) Another common procedure calls for members to grade each PIF, on a scale of one to ten, with regard to each of the several criteria that the PNC has decided are most important. Individual work sheets listing the criteria and providing space for "grades" and/or comments and general "gut" feelings may be helpful. Each member must ultimately be able to say "yes" or "no".

It is important, whatever method is used, that whenever a PNC member reads a PIF, the member write down any questions that he/she would have liked to ask the candidate if the candidate had been present. Otherwise, these questions will have been forgotten when they are needed.

VI. Rules for Decision Making

Some PNCs have strict rules on retaining a PIF for further consideration. Commonly, the requirement is a majority of favorable votes. Other PNCs adopt more flexible procedures. They may, for example, retain any PIF regarding which, after discussion, the moderator senses a lack of consensus for rejection; or they may retain any PIF regarding which any one member has particularly strong feelings.

Other rules that many PNCs have found useful:

- a) If a member hasn't evaluated a PIF before the committee meeting at which it is discussed, he or she can't vote.
- b) If a member will be unavoidably absent from a committee meeting, he or she may submit written evaluations prior to the meeting.

VII. Courtesy and Kindness to Candidates

Naturally, ministers want to know whether their PIFs have been received and whether they remain under active consideration by the PNC. The candidate's impression of the PNC's church will be strongly shaped by the courtesy that they receive. It is thoughtful to acknowledge receipt of PIFs, by letter or phone, within a few days of arrival; we should never let many weeks pass without informing the candidate of the status of his/her PIF, even if the status has not changed. A PNC can learn much about promising candidates, establish a personal relationship, and hold their interest in the church by assigning individual members to make phone calls in which they inform the candidate of the status of his/her PIF, ask questions in the PNC's minds and offer to answer questions about the church.

The PNC should prepare a courteous, gracious form letter to be sent to all pastors who are dropped from consideration and this letter should be sent immediately after the decision is made. (Exception: pastors whose PIFs are sent by Louisville on the basis of computer matching do not know that their PIFs have been sent to the PNC and they should be contacted only if the PNC wishes to consider them further.) In writing such letters we must remember that rejection can hurt and that the pastor whom we are addressing is probably a very fine, sensitive Christian.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

A set of supplemental questions is a way to further screen candidates and discover their interest in the church. A cover letter and a set of five to seven questions may be sent to those under consideration, usually requesting a reply by a certain date (or within a certain time period) and usually limiting the responses to three to four typed pages. The questions can range from general to particular areas of inquiry for your congregation. Some general questions are:

What is the purpose of leadership in the church? How do you fulfill that purpose with your style of leadership?

What topics do you include in officer training? What resources do you use?

How do you help a congregation honor diversity of opinion?

What are the basic theological themes that govern your life and your ministry?

What are your personal and professional goals for the next phase of your ministry?

Some Pastor Nominating Committees use supplemental questions very early in the process. Upon receiving a Personal Information Form, and after the first cut, they automatically send a copy of their Ministry Information Form and the list of questions. They indicate in the cover letter that, if the candidate is interested, he/she should respond. This strategy will separate those who are seriously interested from those who are only casually so. Committees then read the papers of only those who reply. The result is that committees end up reading fewer dossiers, but then must read more information on each person.

Other committees read all information forms initially received and use the supplemental questions as an alternate strategy.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CONDUCTING TELEPHONE AND INTERNET INTERVIEWS

Many pastors are very comfortable using the internet, including Skype, Go to Meeting, Facetime and other online programs that allow multiple people to participate in a call including video. Some pastors use social media and some churches post a pastor's sermons on that church's website. These electronic opportunities allow PNC's to learn more about a candidate before the interview than just using the PIF. Facebook is another online source of information that may be available to a PNC.

Be sure you consider the following:

Develop a list of questions (5-6) that you want to ask this particular candidate. Think through the answers that you are looking for.

Send a brief biography of PNC members before the telephone interview. Pictures of each member may also be helpful.

Arrange for a telephone with a speaker so the entire committee can hear the conversation. If using an internet tool, be sure each member of the PNC is familiar with login and procedures for “chatting” as these may be different from one program to another. A trial online interview with just PNC members is recommended before contacting the first candidate for an online interview.

Pre-arrange a date and time with candidate for the interview.

Introduce yourselves and have someone prepare to give a brief statement of your church and needs. Be clear as to how much time is allotted for this call.

Introduce yourself each time you speak so that the candidate may be clear.

After asking your questions, allow the candidate to ask a few of his/her own.

Before concluding the telephone/online interview, thank the candidate for this time and indicate what the next steps will be.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CONDUCTING REFERENCE CHECKS

Be sure to consider the following:

Send out the Permission Form to all candidates about which you want to make inquiry or get permission requested over the telephone.

Criminal background screening is done by the Stated Clerk. Please email contact the Presbytery Office prior to in person interviews.

Develop a set of questions you want to ask about each person. Some possibilities:

How long have you known this candidate?

What do you perceive as his/her strengths in ministry?

How has the candidate been active in his/her community?

Can the pastor take criticism?

Would you go to this person in a time of crisis?

What one weakness of this person has an impact on his/her ministry?

How easily does this person delegate authority?

How would you describe the person's work style?

Family and home life?

What are some areas you would encourage us to especially make inquiry with this candidate?

In making telephone or online contact: explain your purpose; ask if now is an appropriate time to talk; ask your questions; thank the person for his/her time. Remember: be sensitive to the reference person's time; it may be better to make a second call at a more convenient time.

Contact only preliminary references (two to six people listed on the Personal Information Form).

Remember: confidentiality is important. No one is to know whom you are considering or contacting except the persons involved.

When (and if) you want to explore secondary references, contact the Committee on Ministry Liaison for assistance. Make sure you have a signed release form or verbal consent and honor the candidate's desires about secondary references. You may need to call one or two preliminary references again to establish the names of some secondary ones.

Give the Presbytery ample time to do its reference checking before any candidates are invited to preach in a neutral pulpit.

**RECOMMENDED FORM TO SECURE PERMISSION TO INQUIRE AND REVEAL
INFORMATION**
(only for secondary references)

Please sign the following and forward to the Moderator of the Pastor Nominating Committee as soon as possible.

I understand that the members of the Pastor Nominating Committee of _____ Presbyterian Church of _____, Colorado, a congregation in the Presbytery of Denver, may be contacting secondary references not listed on my Personal Information Form.

A copy of this permit may be furnished to any person or entity covered or named above and such person or entity may consider the copy as being my permission to reveal any information sought to the members of the Committee.

This permit is valid for six months from the date that I signed it.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date Signed: _____

SUGGESTIONS FOR PLANNING A FACE-TO-FACE SITE INTERVIEW

Be sure to consider the following:

When making plans to host a candidate for a visit, contact your Committee on Ministry Liaison Team for assistance.

Interviews involve sharing information and asking for information. Make sure there is time for both to happen.

Some of the information you share with candidates during the visit can be determined ahead of time. For example, you may want to prepare a packet of information on the church that might include the most recent annual reports, current financial information, outreach and evangelism brochures, newsletter, sample bulletins, website links, etc. You may also want to prepare a packet of information on the community. The Chamber of Commerce is a good source of materials.

Some of the information you share in an interview will be at the direction of the candidate. Be sure to allow time for candidates to ask questions of you.

Be organized in your asking for information. Prepare your list of questions ahead of time. Divide the list so that each committee member has an opportunity to participate in asking a question.

Be clear about roles in the interview: Who will make the opening statement? Who will offer the opening prayer? Who will handle housekeeping details (about taping the interview, introductions, etc.)? Who will ask which questions and in what order? Who will invite the candidate to ask his/her questions? Who will offer the closing prayer (consider asking the candidate!)? Who will watch the time so that you stay within the limit?

(Be aware that rigid conformity to this type of "structure" can destroy the informality, spontaneity and relaxed atmosphere that is so important in an in-depth interview.)

Remember: avoid jumping to conclusions based on initial impressions. Make sure you have the information you need to make your decisions.

Consider taping the interview for anyone not present or for later reference. Make sure you have the candidate's agreement to do this.

PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE PLANNING VISITS WITH FINAL CANDIDATES

When making plans to host a candidate for a visit, contact COM Liaison Team as soon as the plans are final. Allow at least two-three weeks for Liaisons to arrange scheduling of the neutral pulpits and COM required interviews.

It is recommended that PNCs hear each candidate preach, therefore you will most likely arrange a weekend visit.

Liaison Team will help arrange preaching in a neutral pulpit.

Include in your preparations for weekend:

- Transportation around town (to and from airport, interviews, etc.)

- Social time for PNC and candidate

- Meals for candidate (and spouse) with a few members of PNC

- Overnight accommodation

- Unscheduled time for the candidate to prepare sermon, reflect with spouse, see the area, etc.

- Time with staff, tour of building

- Tour of the city, community

The PNC should limit the candidate's contacts to the PNC, PNC spouses, COM members and selected staff at the church.

GUIDELINES FOR COM INTERVIEW WITH CANDIDATES

The COM Interview Team will need approximately two to three hours to interview the candidate in a location where there are no distractions, usually the Presbytery Center. The Liaison team will secure the persons for the interview team which will ordinarily consist of the Liaison and two other members of the COM. See "Interviews With Candidates/Clergy Entering the Presbytery" on the Presbytery website at this link: <http://denpres.org/com-policies>

Each member of the interviewing team should be provided a current MIF and the PIF of the candidate at least three days prior to the interview.

The interviewing team will determine whether or not to approve the candidate. They will satisfy themselves that the candidate's views are acceptable to the Presbytery and the candidate is a good "match" for the church. If the team cannot approve the candidate, they will report immediately to the moderator of the PNC and the moderator of COM.