

PASTORAL TRANSITIONS

MANUAL

**COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY
PRESBYTERY OF LONG ISLAND
1998**

(Revised December 22, 1998)

**Presbytery of Long Island
Presbyterian Church (USA)
42 Hauppauge Road
Commack, NY 11725**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS: PASTORAL TRANSITIONS MANUAL
COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY
PRESBYTERY OF LONG ISLAND**

- C.01.00 INTRODUCTION**

- C.02.00 PASTORAL TRANSITIONS: PHASE I**
 - C.02.01 LEARNING OF A PENDING DISSOLUTION**
 - C.02.02 FORMALIZING THE DISSOLUTION**
 - C.02.03 TRANSITION ORIENTATION AND DETERMINING IMMEDIATE PASTORAL NEEDS**
 - C.02.04 FAREWELL**

- C.03.00 PASTORAL TRANSITIONS: PHASE II**
 - C.03.01 DETERMINING LONG TERM PASTORAL NEEDS**
 - C.03.02 MISSION SELF-STUDY OF THE CONGREGATION**
 - C.03.03 INTERIM MINISTRY**
 - C.03.04 SELECTION/ELECTION OF PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

- C.04.00 PASTORAL TRANSITIONS: PHASE III**
 - C.04.01 ORIENTATION/ORGANIZATION OF THE PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE**
 - C.04.02 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY IN THE PRESBYTERY AND THE CONGREGATION (G-11.0502 g)**
 - C.04.03 THE CHURCH/STAFF INFORMATION FORM**
 - C.04.04 INTERIM MINISTRY CONTINUES**
 - C.04.05 SEARCH PROCESS**
 - C.04.06 VISITING, INTERVIEWING, AND SELECTING**
 - C.04.07 ON CALLING AN ASSOCIATE PASTOR**

- C.05.00 PASTORAL TRANSITIONS: PHASE IV**
 - C.05.01 THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY, THE CANDIDATE, AND THE PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE**
 - C.05.02 THE SESSION**
 - C.05.03 THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TO CALL**
 - C.05.04 APPROVAL OF CALL AND TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP**
 - C.05.05 THE SERVICE OF ORDINATION/INSTALLATION**
 - C.05.06 THE INTERIM MINISTRY CONCLUDES**
 - C.05.07 THE NEW MINISTRY BEGINS**

**PASTORAL TRANSITIONS
COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY
PRESBYTERY OF LONG ISLAND**

INTRODUCTION

C.01.00 **PURPOSE:** This manual outlines the process during pastoral transitions. It offers guidelines for working through this critical and complex time in the life of a congregation. Guidance is offered to the Committee on Ministry liaisons who will work with the Session and the Pastor Nominating Committee, and to congregation leaders who oversee and implement the process. A copy of this manual will be provided to

- a. each COM liaison
- b. interim search committee chair
- c. interim pastor
- d. pastor nominating committee chair
- e. clerk of session

CHALLENGE: Each church transition has its own unique dimensions and may require different responses. Ordinary transitions offer an opportunity to take stock of where a congregation is and to envision where God wants the congregation to go in the future. It is a time of affirmation and commitment. When the transition comes following disappointment or conflict, a time for healing, learning, and adjustment is necessary before moving on. Whatever the case, this is one of the most important moments in the life and ministry of a congregation.

DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS: The most common reaction during a time of pastoral transition is often said this way: “there is a only one thing for us to do. Get a new pastor, the sooner the better.” In fact, there is more to it than this. Congregational studies have identified five specific developmental tasks during the transition period:

- a. coming to terms with history,
- b. discovering a new identity,
- c. coping with power shifts among members,
- d. strengthening partnership with Presbytery and other congregations,
- e. building a commitment to a new future and a new pastor.

Trained interim pastors know many ways to help a congregation handle these tasks. When these tasks are effectively completed, the start-up of a new pastor is enhanced. When the developmental tasks are not completed, the effectiveness of the new ministry is delayed.

**PASTORAL TRANSITIONS
PHASE I**

C.02.01 **LEARNING OF A PENDING DISSOLUTION:** Under usual circumstances a pastor will announce his or her dissolution request (which is a request that the Presbytery dissolve the pastoral relationship) as somewhat of a surprise to the congregation. The process of announcing the dissolution request brings a new set of attitudes and expectations within the congregation. Several precise steps and timing requirements make this process go smoothly.

C.02.02 **FORMALIZING THE DISSOLUTION:**

C.02.021 1. Inform the Committee on Ministry Liaison, Chairperson and Executive Presbyter: This can be done by the pastor upon accepting an invitation to candidate for a new call. Informing these persons helps to clarify the process and create the next steps in the process.

C.02.022 2. Call A Meeting of the Session: The purpose of this meeting is really one announcement. The Session does not act on the dissolution request but calls a congregational meeting to act on the pastor's request. A termination date is announced at this meeting. Terms of the present call continue to the termination date. No "severance pay" is included in usual dissolution arrangements. The Session elects a representative to attest to Sessions actions to the Presbytery.

The Committee on Ministry should be informed in advance of this meeting so the COM liaison can attend to demonstrate the Presbytery's support of the congregation and to assist the Session with immediate plans for temporary pastoral service. It may be necessary to call a special Session meeting with the COM liaison as soon as conveniently possible after the pastor has announced departure intentions.

Setting a termination date calls for sensitivity. Too early a date may arouse unwarranted emotions in an appearance of haste, and too late a date prevents a congregation from beginning necessary plans for interim leadership and pastoral search. It is recommended that ordinarily termination be not less than three nor more than six weeks following congregational action on dissolution.

C.02.023 3. The Congregational Meeting: The Committee on Ministry can assist in determining whether it is advisable for the resigning pastor to moderate the meeting or if another moderator should be selected. The resigning pastor may request another moderator. At this meeting the congregation votes to request that Presbytery dissolve the pastoral relationship, acts on arrangements for termination provisions, if any; and elects a representative from the congregation to verify before the Committee on Ministry the action that has been taken. The COM liaison assures the congregation

of Presbytery assistance during the transition and outlines, briefly, the challenge and steps ahead. The congregation begins plans for any farewell activities to be held before the pastor leaves or determines the proper group or organization to make these arrangements.

C.02.024 4. Committee on Ministry Meeting: Two important actions take place at this meeting. The Committee on Ministry approves dissolution of the pastoral relationship with the verification of Session and congregation actions by representatives present, and the Committee on Ministry approves a person to be named Moderator of the Session by the Presbytery. The Committee on Ministry will report its action to the next meeting of Presbytery and may prepare suitable plans to celebrate the pastor's ministry.

C.02.025 In the event that a pastor and congregation do not concur in the dissolution, the Committee on Ministry shall seek to mediate the disagreement. If this is not possible, the matter may be presented to the next Presbytery meeting for appropriate action.

C.02.026 The Committee on Ministry will become involved with the congregation during the transition immediately upon announcement of the intention to terminate by the departing pastor. The COM liaison with the congregation begins his or her most active relationship with the congregation at this point. All concerns which arise concerning future ministry of a congregation or plans for pastoral selection should be directed to the COM liaison. The liaison will have access to both the COM chair and the Executive Presbyter for assistance. It is inappropriate for a departing pastor to be consulted about or to attempt to influence the nature of ministry or pastoral selection process following announcement of intent to relocate or retire.

C.02.027 Any travel or extraneous expense of the COM liaison are paid by the COM through the ordinary Presbytery voucher process. It is recommended that the person named Moderator of the Session upon the departure of the pastor be paid a stipend of \$50 by the church for each Session and/or congregational meeting moderated. Any additional expenses for travel or meeting costs are negotiated between the Moderator and the Session.

C.02.03 **TRANSITION ORIENTATION AND DETERMINING IMMEDIATE PASTORAL NEEDS**

C.02.031 Exit Interview: Exit interviews are conducted for Pastor, Associate, Co-Pastor, and Designated Pastors. The interview may take place during a Committee on Ministry meeting, or it may be conducted by a COM team at a place and time mutually agreeable prior to the departure of the minister. Details of the departure need to be handled at a different time.

Interviews should be in an informal and comfortable atmosphere and be pastoral in nature. The exit interview should include expressions of affirmation and thanksgiving for the ministry of the departing minister. It is appropriate to offer

prayer at the conclusion of the interview. One person should lead the exit interview although all may participate in asking the questions. One person takes detailed notes, compiles them, and makes sure the notes are put in the church file and given to the liaison. Exit interview questions are found in B.07.01 of the Committee on Ministry Red Book.

C.02.032 Pension Vacancy Dues: One matter often overlooked during the transition period is the participation of the congregation in the Presbyterian Pension Plan. COM liaisons should alert Sessions of this continuing requirement. Vacancy dues are the dues a local church pays while any of its ministerial called positions are unoccupied. Vacancy dues are calculated at 12% of the total effective annual salary of the last minister who occupied the position that has become vacant. A church begins paying vacancy dues the day after the last day it paid salary and dues for the member who left the position. Vacancy dues end at the end of the first twelve months that the position is vacant. If a church hires and enrolls a new minister in the Pension Plan before the position has been vacant for twelve months, vacancy dues will end the day before the first day salary and dues are paid for the new minister. Vacancy dues are important in the Pension Plan. These funds directly benefit retired ministers, missionaries, church workers, and their spouses by financing the Supplement to Medicare benefits offered to retirees. Questions about vacancy dues may be referred to the chair of the COM Compensation and Benefits Sub-Committee or to the Regional Representative of the Board of Pensions.

C.02.033 Session Orientation: As soon as possible following the congregational meeting to dissolve the pastoral relationship, the COM liaison shall meet with the Session. If the incumbent pastor remains in service, she or he should not attend the meeting and should appoint a Moderator pro tem to preside. The purpose of this initial meeting is (1) to get to know one another, (2) to outline what the transition period will entail, (3) to discuss how to break the ties with the incumbent pastor, (4) to establish an initial timeline with target dates to accomplish certain tasks, and (5) to draw up a list of assignments needing immediate attention.

C.02.034 Determining Immediate Pastoral Services: Either at this initial meeting or one following, the Session shall discuss how to provide worship and pastoral leadership for the congregation during the transition period. The Book of Order assigns to the Session that responsibility (G-10.0102 c, m)

There are two options available to the Session at this time. As defined by the Book of Order (G-14.0513), these are temporary supply and interim pastor. Usually the distinction between these is understood as (1) while a church has a pastor who is temporarily unable to serve, and (2) while a church is without a pastor but is actively seeking a new pastor.

The COM liaison will work with the Session to determine the most advantageous approach for the congregation. In ordinary circumstances it may be assumed that the Session will use the temporary supply alternative initially to provide for the congregation's immediate worship needs. The Presbytery has a number of minister

members and candidates for the ministry who may be available to assist in worship ministry on a Sunday by Sunday basis.

It is likely that the Session will reach the conclusion that a more extended relationship providing pastoral continuity is desirable. The Committee on Ministry believes that, ordinarily, such continuity is desirable and will work with the Session to secure and provide such interim continuing leadership as quickly as possible. A Session may, with the concurrence of the COM through the liaison, proceed with the process to secure an interim pastor prior to the departure of the installed pastor. In this case, the primary staff person for the process is the COM liaison. The departing pastor may be interviewed by the Interim Search Committee but shall not be involved in the selection process. As soon as the Session decides that it desires more continuity of service the Committee on Ministry has a clearly defined approach to effect such a relationship. Any such arrangements are three-way: between the Session, the Presbytery, and the minister involved.

Interim Pastoral Service: Provisions for implementing an interim relationship are defined in the Committee on Ministry handbook (B.05.00 - 05.17)

C.02.04 **FAREWELL**

C.02.041 Ordinarily, a congregation will direct the Session, a special committee or an organization to provide a suitable farewell celebration for the departing pastor where expressions of appreciation may be made. Notice of such events should be given throughout Presbytery so that others might join in the festivities.

C.02.042 Upon the departure of the pastor, the Moderator appointed by the Presbytery takes office and persons with transition assignments begin their work. The Interim Pastor process outlines steps for the Committee on Ministry liaison.

C.02.043 Manse Visit: As soon as feasible following the departure of the pastor, representatives of the Session (and Trustees, if that is appropriate) and the COM liaison shall visit the manse (if there is one) and determine what maintenance and improvements may be required during the transition. The transition period is a critical time to consider and accomplish such tasks in order to prepare for the next pastor. D.02.05 a in the COM Red Book outlines the policy.

**PASTORAL TRANSITIONS
PHASE II**

C.03.01 DETERMINING LONG TERM PASTORAL NEEDS

C.03.011 The usual assumption of a congregation, upon the dissolution of a pastoral relationship, is that a new pastor will be sought to serve in the same way as before. While this is ordinarily the case, there are other options and, prior to electing a Pastor Nominating Committee, the Session must lead the congregation in determining the form and nature of its pastoral leadership. The Committee will need to concur in the decision made.

C.03.012 The primary long-term options are these:

1. A regularly called and installed pastor. If there are no extenuating circumstances in the church, this is the option that will likely be chosen and the steps of pastoral selection are as defined in the following sections of this manual. Sometimes a congregation will determine to have additional or shared staff. This may include a called and installed co-pastor or associate pastor.

2. A designated pastor. This option may be chosen when a congregation faces a period of redevelopment that will require significant change, or when there is a period of difficulty and conflict in a congregation. If there is any uncertainty about the church's ability to make a long-term commitment, if the church desires the Committee on Ministry to be more active in the selection process, or for other reasons, a designated pastor option offers an alternative. A designated pastor is called by the congregation and installed as pastor for a limited term. The term can be renewed and the call can be made permanent at a later date. A Pastor Nominating Committee will be elected but it will be assisted more actively in its search process by the Committee on Ministry. B.05.07 in the COM Red Book outlines the Designated Pastor Plan. (See G-14.0501 g)

3. A stated supply pastor. When a church decides that it cannot proceed to call a pastor, this option may be exercised. Reasons may include size, financial ability, particular development challenges, specific problems in the church, or other matters. A stated supply pastor is appointed by the Presbytery through the action of the Committee on Ministry, upon consultation with the Session, for a period of one year. She/he may be reappointed. This does not involve a Pastor Nominating Committee or a call from the congregation. The Committee on Ministry may nominate as few as a single person for a stated supply position to a Session. B.05.06 in the COM Red Book provides the Stated Supply Pastor Policy. (See G-14.0513 a)

C.03.013 The Committee on Ministry has responsibility to make a recommendation concerning the form and nature of a pastoral leadership in a congregation, especially when there are known reasons which might make a regularly called and installed relationship

inadvisable.

C.03.014 The form and nature of pastoral leadership to be secured may be evident to the Session without lengthy deliberation. Sometimes, a mission self-study will be needed to guide the decision. This is often the case when adding staff and considering the addition of an associate pastor. When this is the case, the Session shall inform the Mission Study Committee that it will need information from the study to make this decision.

C.03.02 **MISSION SELF-STUDY OF THE CONGREGATION**

C.03.021 Ideally, a congregation will conduct an in-depth mission self-study every five to seven years, and intentionally update the study every two years. The mission circumstances and conditions challenging our congregations change significantly on an on-going basis. Churches which assess the situation God has called them to serve may have a clearer identity of who they are, what their direction is, and the mission to which God calls them in Jesus Christ.

C.03.022 The time of pastoral transition offers a unique opportunity to conduct a new mission self-study if a recent (less than three years old) one is not available, to refine an existing mission self-study, or to review and update an existing mission self-study. This process is an effective way to meet the developmental tasks requiring attention during the transition period, and to provides information for the process of calling a pastor. Because this is the case, the Committee on Ministry requires that each congregation complete a new mission self-study, or refine or update a recent study before proceeding with the election of a Pastor Nominating Committee.

C.03.023 The Committee on Ministry offers advice, training and consultant service in conducting mission self-studies and the refining and updating of existing studies. Sessions are urged to contact their COM liaison about these resources before proceeding. Those guiding the mission study process will provide information as to the nature of the process, timelines, costs, the make-up of the committee, etc. The COM Red Book provides guidance for the process.

C.03.024 In consultation with the COM liaison, the Session appoints the committee to conduct the new mission self-study, or to refine or to update a recent one. The committee should be representative of the congregation and have the capabilities required for the task. The mission self-study committee shall keep the Session and the COM liaison informed of their progress. The Committee on Ministry will provide consultants to guide the process. When the mission self-study committee formulates its findings and recommendations, these are presented to Session for discussion and revision. The COM liaison should be present. Final conclusions may be postponed until the new pastor is called. When this is the case, a process to accomplish this needs to be formulated. The mission self-study and Session revisions are reported to the Committee on Ministry for comment, revision and concurrence. The Session approves the final report. Plans to share the findings with the congregation should be carefully implemented.

C.03.03 **INTERIM MINISTRY**

C.03.031 When a church determines to secure interim pastor service (as indicated above), the Committee on Ministry shall provide initial orientation for the interim pastor as she or he begins their ministry. The COM liaison, chair, and Executive Presbyter may participate in the orientation. During the interim pastor's tenure, the interim is asked to participate in a case study group with other interim pastors in the Presbytery, conducted under the guidance of the Executive Presbyter.

C.03.032 The Committee on Ministry will conduct three month and six month reviews with the interim pastor. The purpose of these reviews is: (1) to assess how the pastoral transition is proceeding, (2) to review the interim's goals for ministry, proposing revisions as necessary, and (3) to offering support for the interim pastor. The reviews may be conducted at a time and place of mutual agreement, and shall include the COM liaison who will convene the review.

C.03.04 **SELECTION/ELECTION OF PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

C.03.041 After the mission self-study has been completed, refined or updated, and the Session has determined, in consultation with the Committee on Ministry, what leadership and direction it wishes to give to the search for a pastor, the Committee on Ministry may give its permission for the congregation to proceed to elect a Pastor Nominating Committee.

C.03.042 Electing a Pastor Nominating Committee: "When a church is without a pastor, or after the effective date of the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, the congregation shall, with the guidance and permission of the committee on ministry, G-11.0502 d, proceed to elect a pastor in the following manner. The session shall call a congregational meeting to elect a nominating committee, which shall be representative of the whole congregation. This committee's duty shall be to nominate a minister to the congregation for election as pastor. Public notice of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting shall be given at least ten days in advance, which shall include two successive Sundays. The nominating committee shall confer with the committee on ministry as provided in G-11.0502 d and when seeking an associate pastor or co-pastor, with the pastor or any continuing co-pastors. Care must be taken to consider candidates without regard to race, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, age, or disabilities." (G-14.0502) The same procedure shall be followed for an associate pastor.

C.03.043 The Session, in addition to calling the meeting of the congregation to elect this committee, has the responsibility of recommending the size of the committee and the process by which persons are nominated for election to it.

1. Size: Determining the size of the committee is a matter of importance and practicality. The Pastor Nominating Committee should be representative of the entire congregation. Where a congregation has wide diversity, it is important to have representation of each sub-group. This consideration could imply a large highly

disciplined committee. However, practical considerations require that, in its work, the committee meet regularly and often over a period of time; it will need to reach agreement on many issues; it will need to make many personal contacts; and it will need to travel occasionally to visit with prospective candidates. These processes become more difficult as the number of members of the committee increases. Considerable expense may also be involved in the work of the committee and the Session must budget funds for these expenses as the committee either needs to travel or to pay the costs of persons coming to them for interview. The key is the people involved. One rubric that has been used is that the committee should be large enough to represent the congregation but small enough to be able to travel in two cars.

2. Process: These considerations indicate that the process of nominating persons to the Pastor Nominating Committee is crucial. The Session itself may serve as the committee to nominate persons for the Pastor Nominating Committee to the congregation or it may ask the Congregation's Nominating Committee to do this. Whoever does the nominating, that group should be prepared to identify how persons nominated are deemed to fulfill the need of being representative of the congregation and of being responsive to the mission study process.

C.03.044 Suggested Guidelines for selecting the Pastor Nominating Committee:

1. Whoever is determined to select the nominees for the Pastor Nominating Committee should begin with an orientation provided by the Session Moderator and the COM liaison.
2. Seek agreement on what "representative" means for the congregation.
3. Those considered should be knowledgeable of the congregation and responsive to the mission study.
4. It is strongly recommended that no church staff be nominated, and that there be no alternates named.
5. A mechanism for receiving input of suggestions from the congregation should be provided.
6. Membership on the Pastor Nominating Committee is time-intensive and may extend from 6 to 9 months. The particular time demands will vary widely depending on the committee. Those asked should be told of this.
7. Membership on the Pastor Nominating Committee has many rewards: making a difference for the future of the congregation, spiritual growth, deepening relationships with others, etc. Those asked should be asked to prayerfully consider election as a call.
8. Be sure to obtain a person's permission before making the nomination.

- C.03.045 The COM liaison or COM representative should be present for the congregation meeting to elect the Pastor Nominating Committee. The COM liaison may address the congregation on the responsibilities of membership on the committee. While nominations from the floor are always in order in elections, the members of the congregation can be challenged to present equally sufficient reasons for submitting a name or names in nomination. Those nominated from the floor should be present and agree to serve.
- C.03.046 Ordinarily, the Pastor Nominating Committee meets briefly with the COM liaison following the congregation meeting to elect a convener and to set a date and time for their first meeting. The COM liaison team should be present to provide guidance at the first meeting of the Pastor Nominating Committee.
- C.03.047 The election of a Pastor Nominating Committee brings phase II of the pastoral transition to a close. It is, or should be, an exciting time for the congregation, offering a moment for celebration. A time of initial shock, hurt, or disappointment has passed. A time for moving on in seeking leadership has come.

**PASTORAL TRANSITIONS
PHASE III**

C.04.01 ORIENTATION/ORGANIZATION OF THE PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE (PNC)

C.04.011 As soon as possible after the election of the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC), that committee will be convened for two important meetings. The first meeting is for orientation to the process. The second meeting is for organization of the committee. The Committee on Ministry liaison, with other appropriate members of COM as necessary, shall be present.

C.04.012 Each PNC will receive one copy of the manual, “Pastoral Transitions” and a copy of the “Resource Packet for Pastor Nominating Committees.” This packet contains the following materials:

- So You’re On The Search Committee, Bunty Ketcham
- Church Development Reading List
- On Calling A Pastor: A Manual for Pastor Nominating Committee
- The Church Information Form Instruction Packet
- Affirmative Action Covenant for Pastor Nominating Committees
- Presbytery Compensation Program (D.01.01)
- Face to Face Idea Sheet for PNC’s
- How The Computer Matching Works
- Call Referral Services
- Receiving and Evaluating Personal Information Forms
- Privacy Guidelines for Pastor Nominating Committees
- Interview Skills for Pastor Nominating Committees
- Terms of Call for Pastors Report Forms (Manse, Housing Allowance)
(D.02.01, D.02.02) Instructions for Completing Terms of Call in CIF
(D.02.06)
- Vacancy Dues Notice
- Guidelines For Ministerial Ethics

It is recommended that each PNC member read So You’re On The Search Committee. Multiple copies may be obtained from the Alban Institute through the Presbytery Resource Center at substantial savings. Each committee member should have a copy of the “On Calling A Pastor” manual. Permission is granted to reproduce this document for use with the Pastor Nominating Committee. Other materials may be distributed as needed during the process.

C.04.013 The PNC orientation is conducted by the COM liaison team including the church COM liaison. The orientation comes in three stages during the process: an initial orientation to overall PNC work including the preparation of the Church Information Form; advice on the search process itself; and preparation for visiting, interviewing, and selecting candidates.

C.04.014 Initial Pastor Nominating Committee Orientation: The purpose of the initial orientation is (1) to get to know one another in this new assignment; (2) to share

expectations and fears; (3) to become acquainted with what is involved in the overall process; (4) to identify the decisions which need to be made in organizing; and (5) to be introduced to the first major task, the preparation of the Church Information Form. The Orientation will be greatly assisted if all members have a copy of “On Calling A Pastor.” A suggested agenda for this meeting is available in the Committee on Ministry Red Book.

C.04.015 Pastor Nominating Committee Organization: As soon as possible following the initial orientation, the PNC should meet to organize. The COM liaison should be present as an advisor. Those matters receiving attention are:

1. Election of Officers: The PNC needs a minimum of a chairperson and a secretary. The Committee on Ministry recommends a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, a secretary to record minutes and communicate with the congregation, a treasurer to handle expenses, and a correspondence secretary to handle communication with candidates. All officers are elected by the committee from within its own members and the only ex-officio participants with the committee will be the Committee on Ministry liaison team, the COM chair, and the Executive Presbyter.

2. Confidentiality: The congregation and the Session need to understand that the PNC works in extreme confidentiality and, except for regular progress reports on the process, does not consult with or report to either the congregation or the Session during its work. The PNC needs to determine how it will advise the congregation and Session of this requirement and how to respect it within its own work.

3. Budget: A budget needs to be prepared to be submitted to Session. In estimating expenses, the Committee will need to include advertizing of the position in national journals, committee travel, certain meals, telephone, copying costs, and interviewing expenses for candidates. It should be remembered that some or all PNC members will probably visit three-to- five candidates at the place of their present work, and the final candidate or candidates will need to be brought to the area at least once, the finalist probably three times before a call is finally issued by the congregation. The budget estimate may shock the Session so be prepared for discussion. It is better to estimate the expenses early on.

4. Schedule: The PNC needs to establish target dates for the completion of the Church Information Form, for beginning the search process, for completing candidate reference checks/screening and beginning interviews, for selecting a candidate, for having a new pastor on the field. These target dates may be changed, sometimes many times, but without such targets the process can go on and on. Having established target dates, the PNC needs to meet regularly to meet them. The Committee on Ministry recommends that the PNC set a regular meeting day and time and stick to it.

5. PNC Spiritual Life: This process ends in a call to your next pastor. While the process has many steps, techniques and details, it is a discernment process. The PNC

needs to give attention regularly to its own well being, sharing joys and concerns, and pausing to celebrate milestones. It needs to seek and be open to the work of the Holy Spirit in its midst. The PNC should begin each meeting with worship, and spend additional time in prayer together. Each member is urged to spend time each day in prayer and meditation. Initial plans for attending to the spiritual life of the PNC should be made at this meeting.

6. Congregational Context and Church Dynamics: The next step for the PNC is to begin work on the Church Information Form. In preparation for this important task, the committee needs to become familiar with the mission self-study and its refinements and updates as approved by Session. Copies should be in the hands of each committee member. The PNC may want to consult with members of the mission self-study committee in order to understand their report. Plans to do this should be made at the organization meeting.

It is also important to understand “church dynamics.” More is known about congregations today than ever before. What makes for healthy and effective congregations and pastoral leadership is not a mystery. It is available to anyone willing to read, and consult with others. The Resource Packet for Pastor Nominating Committees includes a reading list. Assign reading. Copies of these materials are available from the Presbytery Resource Center. You may wish to visit with the Executive Presbyter or others about trends in church dynamics. Time spent in this preparation may clarify work later in the process and actually “save time.”

C.04.02 **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY IN THE PRESBYTERY AND THE CONGREGATION (G-11.0502 g)**

C.04.021 The Presbytery of Long Island has specific policies concerning Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity for itself and for consideration by churches in search of persons for pastoral positions. The Resource Packet for Pastor Nominating Committees includes these materials. The Synod of the Northeast requires the Presbytery to attest that each call issued has met the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity criteria. It is the responsibility of the Committee on Ministry to assure that each Pastor Nominating Committee fulfills this covenant.

C.04.022 The Committee on Ministry will submit calls from congregations to pastors with recommendations for the approval of Presbytery only after it is satisfied that the provisions of the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity policy of the Presbytery has been met.

C.04.023 Before completing the Church Information Form, the COM liaison shall lead the PNC in a discussion of Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity.

C.04.03 **THE CHURCH/STAFF INFORMATION FORM**

C.04.031 The clear task of the Pastoral Nominating Committee is an exciting but arduous one

of understanding the nature and needs of the congregation and to match, as closely as possible, the information of that understanding with the capabilities, experience, and commitments of persons who may be asked (called) by the congregation to serve as a pastor for that church.

C.04.032 The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a system of receiving and circulating Personal Information Forms of ministers who are available for consideration. While this system is presently undergoing revision and refinement, the basic components remain the same. A Personal Information Form (PIF), often called a dossier, presents information about a minister. Similarly, the church also needs to provide information about itself. Thus there is the “Church/Staff Information Form” (CIF). It is used by the General Assembly Churchwide Personnel Services to gain information about a local church that can be used for personal and computer matching of churches with possible candidates for the position to be filled. It also provides information to prospective pastors about the church. It is as much their source of information about a church as the dossier is a source of information about them.

C.04.033 The Resource Packet for Pastor Nominating Committee contains guidance for completing the CIF: instructions, questions and examples. The mission self-study and refinement or update will provide much of the information needed. PNC reading in the field of church dynamics will provide a broader context for discussion of what is included about the congregation.

It is possible to work on many parts of the CIF at the same time by making assignments. Some parts may have to be revised in light of later decisions. Some sections can be assigned to individual members for writing. It is helpful, however, to have two readings of every section before its acceptance is voted upon. Other parts of the CIF require discussion and agreement of the PNC as a whole. These include: pastoral activities (skills, capacities) and variety of gifts (experiences). Be careful to discuss the meaning of each of these, and determine how these may or may not meet the particular needs and requirements for pastoral leadership in the congregation. Still other parts of the CIF may require initial drafting by a team of members and consultation with the Session (in financial matters) and the COM liaison team. These include: position descriptions, financial information and geographical choices. In these sections, careful discussion by the full PNC will be required before final approval.

The COM liaison will be available to answer questions and give advice. As the PNC makes critical decisions for the CIF, it is wise to have the COM liaison present for the discussion. The COM liaison should be present for the final approval of the document by the PNC.

When the final document is prepared, it may be appropriate for one PNC member to edit the whole document for style and presentation. It is very important for the whole document to have congruence, to “fit together”, and be consistent. The CIF is your congregation’s honest story and challenge, written to attract your future pastor.

C.04.034 Before the Church/Staff Information Form can be completed, the Session must establish parameters for the terms of call which will be included in the form. It is important to consult with the chair of the COM Compensation and Benefits sub-committee to assure that the guidelines of Presbytery are being followed before consulting with the Session. Those parameters are considered as authorization for the Pastor Nominating Committee to negotiate within them. Should it appear that, in negotiating with a candidate, the parameters will need to be exceeded, the PNC will need to return to the Session for additional authorization.

C.04.035 It is important for the PNC to be more than thoroughly familiar with the material in the CIF. They must “own” it as their own as the premise from which they engage in search for a pastor. The CIF must be the prayerful work of the PNC and the result of their deliberations.

C.04.036 The completed CIF is presented first to the Session for its approval. This is an important step for the future of the congregation. It is one where expectations can be clarified and commitment can be secured. Work closely with the Moderator of Session on how to do this.

C.04.037 The CIF is then presented to the Committee on Ministry for their approval. Copies are to be sent to each COM member at least one week prior to the meeting of the COM with the PNC representatives to approve the CIF. The COM liaison will provide you with mailing labels. Select at least two members of the PNC to present the CIF to the Committee on Ministry. The COM liaison will be present as your advocate. After approval (and sometimes final editing), be sure to secure the proper signatures of endorsement (chair, Pastor Nominating Committee; Clerk of Session; and the representative of the Committee on Ministry). The Presbytery Office will send the final form to the General Assembly Churchwide Personnel Services office.

C.04.04 **INTERIM MINISTRY CONTINUES**

C.04.041 If a church has secured an interim pastor, she or he will ordinarily be in the field serving at this point, perhaps several months into the term of service. In addition to fulfilling the regular practices of ministry and the special responsibilities outlined in the interim pastor contract, the interim pastor should be giving particular attention at this point to building relationships within the congregation and to the five developmental tasks of the pastoral transition period.

C.04.042 The Committee on Ministry will maintain its contact with the interim pastor through the COM liaison. It will conduct reviews as outlined in C.03.032. If it becomes necessary to renew the term of service during the search process, the COM liaison will work with the Session to evaluate the work of the interim pastor and develop recommendations with the interim pastor regarding continuing service.

C.04.05 **SEARCH PROCESS**

C.04.051 The search process begins with another orientation provided by the COM liaison team. This orientation will provide information on the search process, getting the

word out about your position, reading Personal Information Forms, prioritizing prospective candidates, making contacts, checking references, and exploring ways in which you can implement the commitment to Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity.

C.04.052 Completing the Church Information Form and submitting it to the General Assembly Churchwide Personnel Services is only one way to obtain names of persons interested in a new position. There are other ways. It is recommended that you use all of them.

Publications: Pastor Nominating Committees are finding three publications good places for classified ads to get self-referrals: *Monday Morning* (a monthly magazine for leaders carries the most advertizing, 502-569-5755), *Presbyterian Outlook* (a weekly independent journal with wide readership, 800-446-6008), and *Presbyterians Today* (the new nearly monthly journal for Presbyterians, 502-569-5637). Carefully created notices are worth the cost. You may want to get assistance from professionals in preparing your information.

Face-to-Face: The Synod of the Northeast conducts two events each year designed to give PNC's and ministers who are open to a move an opportunity to meet one another in brief interviews. Events are held on a weekend in the Spring and in December. This is an excellent opportunity to meet a number of "live" candidates, and to practice interview skills. Your COM liaison can get information on the next Face-to-Face for you.

Referrals: The General Assembly Churchwide Personnel Service regularly publishes an Opportunity List, listing all the open positions in the denomination. Persons seeking a call watch those lists carefully. You will no doubt get self-referrals in response. You will have members and friends who will call your attention to prospective candidates. The Executive Presbyter and Committee on Ministry liaison team may have suggestions since those looking for or open to a call often contact them for advice and suggestions. Members of the PNC itself may know persons to contact.

Networking: Networking is perhaps the most widely used process for identifying prospective candidates who may not be looking for a new call, but would be open to one if they were challenged by it. Networking means contacting people who know potential candidates: other respected ministers, chairs of former PNC's which have recently completed their work, other Executive Presbyters, various national church organizations which maintain lists of kindred spirits open to calls, etc.

C.04.053 One administrative understanding is important: for the Committee on Ministry and the Executive Presbyter to properly support the PNC, copies of all dossiers received should be provided to the Presbytery Office for use by the Executive Presbyter and the Committee on Ministry. When you receive dossiers from the General Assembly Churchwide Personnel Services office, copies of these dossiers will already have been sent to the Presbytery Office. However, those dossiers received in response to publications, Face-to-Face, referrals, and networking may not be at the Presbytery Office. Make sure a copy of each dossier is sent to the office.

- C.04.054 At this point the work of the PNC begins to be done in absolute confidentiality. Only members of the committee and those assigned ex-officio (the Committee on Ministry liaison, the COM Chair, and the Executive Presbyter) should know either the names of persons being considered or information about them. It is expected that even immediate family of PNC members and church staff will be prevented from having information about persons being considered and will not accompany committee members when candidates are visited, interviewed, or evaluated by the committee.
- C.04.055 When a church is seeking a designated pastor, the Committee on Ministry will conduct an open search process. All the dossiers will be given to a special screening sub-committee of the Committee on Ministry which will include your liaison. This sub-committee will present only three to five dossiers to the PNC for final review and selection. In this way the extensive dossier review process is reduced for the PNC.
- C.04.056 When the Churchwide Personnel Services office receives the approved Church/Staff Information Form (CIF) it will immediately begin the process of providing dossiers for consideration by the PNC. The receipt of the first dossiers is the point at which the PNC feels they are really beginning to get on with the process for which they were elected. The Churchwide Personnel Services office provides two primary services. (1) all active dossiers of ministers are “catalogued” according to the “Pastoral Activities Index” and other factors. These factors match with factors relating to the congregation as presented in the Church/Staff Information Form and are used as the basis for a computer matching program. As soon as the first processing has been done, a group of dossiers (usually 10 to 15) will be sent to the PNC for consideration. Other mailings will follow as further matching is done, or at your request for more dossiers, and will continue until you notify the Churchwide Personnel Services not to send more. (2) The Churchwide Personnel Services office also publishes your position on its Opportunity List which is available throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). From that listing, ministers may make self-referrals to a particular church.
- C.04.057 A PNC may expect to receive the first dossiers within three weeks after the Church/Staff Information Form is submitted. Numbers fluctuate depending on the position, but experience indicates that there can be as many as 3000 ministers actively available for a call and somewhat less than 1000 churches seeking a pastor at any given time. It is not unusual for a PNC to feel inundated with dossiers. However, this situation is changing in the Northeast. Beginning at mid-year in 1998, there were more vacancies than persons seeking new positions.
- C.04.058 Screening: The search process calls for the PNC to screen each dossier received with the goal of narrowing the search to 5-10 high priority prospective candidates. When the committee has reached this number, an initial reference check with several primary references should be made. If the way is clear, the potential candidate may be contacted by letter or telephone, sermon tapes secured, and information exchanged. You may wish to have a team from the PNC listen to the prospective candidate preach and visit him or her where they are presently located. It is recommended that potential candidates not be brought to the area at this point.

When the PNC has had an opportunity to evaluate this list of high priority candidates, further screening is necessary. At this point, your COM liaison should be present for the discussions. Your goal is to narrow the list to 3-5 persons based on the information you have.

When the PNC has narrowed the high priority list to 3-5 persons, extensive reference checks need to be made on each person by the PNC, the Committee on Ministry, and the Executive Presbyter. The PNC should contact all primary references, and secure written permission to check secondary references from the prospective candidate. Secondary references are especially important in getting a full understanding of the potential candidate. The entire PNC may want to meet the prospective candidates and hear them preach. If distance allows, this is an important thing to do. This is not an interview, only a get-acquainted meeting. It is important to check with the COM liaison to secure the information from the reference checks of the Committee on Ministry and the Executive Presbyter. COM agreement is necessary before entering into extensive conversation with the potential candidate.

At this point in the screening, having carefully discussed the high priority list of 3-5 prospective candidates, the PNC will be ready to rank the candidates in order of preference. The PNC must agree that each remaining candidate will be able to fill your position (if not, the candidate is eliminated). The matter before the PNC is “who is God calling to this position?” The PNC continues by inviting the top candidate for a visit, to preach in a neutral pulpit, and to engage in an interview with the PNC with the COM liaison present. It may be important for the prospective candidate to meet with the Executive Presbyter during the visit. It is recommended that you do this with several of your top candidates before prayerfully determining your choice.

C.04.059 Helpful Hints on Screening:

Give each dossier a number as it is received. In your initial discussions and screening use the number of the dossier rather than the name of the potential candidate. As your list is narrowed, begin to use numbers and names.

Each PNC member should read every dossier. Committee members have found it helpful to categorize each dossier simply “yes”, “maybe”, or “no” on first reading.

On the second reading, attention should be given to the “maybe” category, and each dossier in this category moved to either “yes” or “no”. It is important that a vote be taken on each candidate so that each member of the PNC has a fair opportunity to voice an opinion.

After reading and screening a number of dossiers, take time as a PNC to discuss what you are learning and what you are looking for in a potential candidate. Review the Church /Staff Information Form to see if this is in keeping with previous committee decisions. This discussion will help the PNC move toward a common perspective, and will assist the decision making. Some PNC’s have developed criteria to look for in dossiers at this point.

When a potential candidate is no longer under consideration, have the courtesy to write the person, thank him or her for their interest, and tell them they are no longer under consideration.

C.04.0510 The Use and Abuse of Contacts and References: It is standard procedure in search processes to list and check references. Sometimes this seems unnecessary to some. It is, however, one of the critical tasks of the search process given the long-term nature of the results of the PNC.

The primary purpose of a dossier is to secure an interview with a Pastor Nominating Committee. The listing of references is a way for a minister to give permission to a PNC to check with someone to see if the person's work, skill, and experience are what the candidate says they are.

References are checked by telephone or in writing, with the preference for the former. It is important to have at least two members of the PNC checking different references for the same prospective candidate. The PNC will need to develop a list of questions to be asked of each reference so that answers can be compared. In fairness, the same basic questions should be asked about all prospective candidates.

Procedurally, it is advisable to refrain from any direct communication with a prospective candidate until initial references have been checked by the PNC. C.04.059 above suggests the process.

When a PNC initiates direct conversation with a candidate it is customary for the candidate to request a copy of the Church Information Form. The only source of the CIF is the PNC. Providing the form is an indication of serious interest in further conversation with the candidate. It is, therefore, usually only sent after the committee has checked at least some of the prospective candidate's references.

Out of respect for privacy (some congregations do not know their pastor is available for consideration of a new call), no references should be checked, beyond the primary ones, until the committee is certain that the individual is one of the top priorities in the search process. Even then, it is inappropriate to contact persons within the candidate's present congregation unless they are listed as references on the dossier. No references, other than those listed on the dossier, may be checked without prior written approval of the candidate.

It is important for the PNC to demonstrate courtesy toward all candidates. Any dossier received as a "self-referral" from a candidate should be acknowledged by the PNC and every candidate who has demonstrated an interest in the position must be notified when they are no longer being considered.

C.04.06 **VISITING, INTERVIEWING, AND SELECTING**

C.04.061 The COM liaison should provide the PNC with additional orientation at this point. This orientation will provide information about visiting, interviewing, decision making, negotiating terms of call, scheduling consultations with the Committee on

Ministry, and preparing to present the choice to the congregation.

C.04.062 A critical part of the process of narrowing the candidate search is listening to the person preach and observing the person in conducting a worship service. This may take place before and without a formal interview as a get-acquainted session. Some or all of the PNC may be involved. PNC's have found it important to see the prospective candidate in their present situation when at all possible. The PNC needs to be cautioned at this point. A selection or rejection decision should be made on more information than the impression of one sermon.

C.04.063 Visit: When the PNC has determined the order of preference among its candidates, and the Committee on Ministry has given permission to enter into extensive conversation with the prospective candidates, plans are made to bring each candidate (and spouse) to the area for a visit. This visit should include an opportunity for the PNC to hear the prospective candidate conduct worship and preach in a "neutral pulpit," conduct an interview with the candidate, and have a social time (lunch or dinner) in addition to the formal interview. Information gleaned from casual conversation can be as important as information received in a structured setting. Arrangements for the visit will need to be made by the PNC. The COM liaison team may be of assistance. Remember that the prospective candidate will be studying the PNC as a demonstration of the congregation just as the PNC is assessing the prospective candidate.

The prospective candidates will want to visit the church, get a better understanding of the manse or housing possibilities, and become acquainted with the area. Many prospective candidates will want to explore education and employment possibilities for family members. Most prospective candidates will want to talk with the COM liaison and this is an important contact to facilitate. In some cases, the candidate will also want to talk to the Executive Presbyter. The PNC will need to be responsive to these reasonable needs.

C.04.064 Interview: There are a number of possible ways to conduct interviews. Whatever approach is chosen, it should be one which presents, as much as possible, a similar setting and similar opportunity for each person interviewed. Consistency in process and content will also make it easier for the PNC to evaluate information learned after several interviews. Plan the interviews carefully. Many PNC's practice by interviewing a nearby pastor and getting feedback. One widely used method for interviews is to determine the basic lead questions to be asked, to have a different member of the PNC ask each question in the interview, and to have a more open question/response period at the end of the interview. This approach allows each member to participate and allows the candidate to shift focus and be a bit more relaxed. It is also important to allow time for the person being interviewed to ask questions of the PNC. Be sure to begin and close the interview with prayer by a PNC member, be sure PNC members introduce themselves, and at the end of the interview indicate to the candidate what the next steps in the process are. The COM liaison should be present as an observer at the interview.

C.04.065 When a prospective candidate comes from a considerable distance for the visit and

interview, the COM liaison should be informed as soon as possible so they can advise whether part of the Committee on Ministry membership clearance function can be accomplished at the same time. This doubling could save additional time and expense.

C.04.066 Selection: When all of the final prospective candidates have visited and been interviewed, the moment the PNC has been working toward is at hand. The selection meeting is part of the discernment process. The question is “who is God calling to this position?” The meeting should include time for prayer and honest sharing among the PNC membership. Discuss what has been learned in the visit, interview and the “neutral pulpit” experience. Again, review what the PNC has been looking for in the position. Most PNC’s work for initial consensus before taking a final vote, allowing each member to share their feelings and suggestions. If there is disagreement, discuss how it can be resolved. It is important that the PNC agree on its choice. Sometimes, a prospective candidate will say “no.” This is disappointing, but there may be good reasons. The PNC may turn, after discussion, to the remaining finalists. When the selection is made the COM liaison should be informed.

Ordinarily, the PNC chair will contact the candidate and discuss the call. This needs to be carefully planned, and, sometimes, this is done by a team of PNC members. These conversations should make it clear why the candidate is the PNC’s choice, and negotiate the terms of call and start-up arrangements, and outline the next steps in the process.

The parameters of the terms of call are included in the Church/Staff Information Form. Attention turns to reaching agreement with the candidate. The current Presbytery compensation program and terms of call report forms will guide the discussion. The chair of the COM sub-committee on Compensation and Benefits may be contacted for assistance and should be consulted before any final agreement is reached. If the parameters of the terms of call included in the CIF are exceeded, it will be necessary to negotiate with the Session before finalizing agreement.

It is not unusual for a candidate to ask for time to consider the call and discuss it with family members or others. A reasonable timeline for this should be agreed upon and plans made on how to bring this time of consideration to a close. When the candidate has agreed, the COM liaison should be told so the next steps in the process can proceed.

The PNC should personally contact each of the remaining candidates informing them of the selection and next steps, thanking them for their involvement in the process, and wishing them well in their pursuit of another call. A personal note should also be sent to these candidates.

C.04.07 **ON CALLING ASSOCIATE PASTORS**

C.04.071 The Committee on Ministry requires that the search for an associate pastor begin with consultation with the Session and the Committee on Ministry which will establish the need for the position and determine whether the Session is ready to call a

congregational meeting to elect an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee. The Session should present a staff rationale indicating the need and the overall church staffing pattern, and a position description/proposed terms of call. It is desirable for the Session to conduct a mission self-study, to refocus or up-date an existing mission study, or to otherwise engage the congregation in the process of determining the need for an associate pastor and expectations of the position. The creation of an Associate Pastor position shall be approved by the Committee on Ministry at the outset.

The Associate Pastor search process eliminates the position of Assistant Pastor in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It is designed to assure the congregation's involvement in leadership selection. It prevents the direct nomination of a person by either the Pastor or the Session. It is NOT intended to by-pass the Pastor or disregard that person's legitimate concern for effective staff relationships or exclude him/her from any participation in the search process.

- C.04.072 Provisions in the Book of Order for calling an Associate Pastor are identical to those for calling a Pastor with the exception that the Book of Order requires the Nominating Committee to confer with any continuing Pastor or Co-Pastor in searching for an Associate Pastor (G-14.0502). The same search process and procedures are used. However, calling an Associate Pastor includes the dimension of initiating a compatible working relationship between two or more persons as colleagues. The Book of Order process is designed to ensure the involvement of the congregation in leadership selection. At the same time, the Book of Order recognizes that it would be ill-advised for an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee to recommend a candidate without close cooperation with the incumbent Pastor.
- C.04.073 The Committee on Ministry liaison team will begin the Associate Pastor search process by meeting with the Pastor to identify expectations and needs. With the liaison team present, the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) will negotiate with the Pastor his or her role in their search process. The Pastor should be involved in the process of congregational self-study and in the development of the position description and the Church/Staff Information Form. It is expected that the Pastor will attend any APNC training sessions provided by the Committee on Ministry liaison.
- C.04.074 Dossier reading, screening, and primary candidate selection will be done by the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee in consultation with the Pastor. When the committee interviews candidates the Pastor should be present to provide information and staff resource to the committee. It is appropriate for the Pastor to interview the primary candidates separate from the committee interview and to register with the committee any specific concerns he/she may have about a candidate. Upon determining a final group of candidates whom the Pastor also affirms, the committee will proceed to make its selection and recommendation to the congregation.

**PASTORAL TRANSITIONS
PHASE IV**

C.05.01 THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY, THE CANDIDATE, AND THE PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

C.05.011 The Committee on Ministry needs to be formally consulted before a person can be nominated to the congregation. The Book of Order is very precise about this process. Every Minister of Word and Sacrament is a member of Presbytery and pastoral relationships with congregations are established by the Presbytery. The Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) declares that a church calls a pastor through the Presbytery and the Presbytery designates the work of ministers (G-6.0201). Primary responsibilities of the Presbytery pertain to the ministry of its congregations (G-11.0103). A minister applies for membership in a Presbytery and the Presbytery grants permission for that minister to engage in a certain work (G-11.0401). The Presbytery determines who shall be its continuing members as Ministers of Word and Sacrament (G-11.0403) and is responsible to examine each minister who seeks membership in areas of Christian faith, views in theology, the Sacraments, and the government of the church (G-11.0402). It should be clearly understood that these requirements are established as a safeguard and protection for, and in no way as a restriction on, the congregations of the Presbytery.

The Presbytery of Long Island has authorized the Committee on Ministry to find in order calls for the services of ministers, to approve the examination of ministers transferring from other presbyteries required by G-11.0404, to dissolve the pastoral relationship in cases where the congregation and the pastor concur, and to dismiss ministers to other presbyteries, with the provision that all such actions be reported to Presbytery (G-11.0502 h).

C.05.012 The provision requiring the examination of all ministers seeking membership in a presbytery necessitates that the Pastor Nominating Committee and the Committee on Ministry work together closely and carefully at this point. Failing to coordinate these steps could result in extra time and expense for the church or other unnecessary difficulties.

C.05.013 The Committee on Ministry Meeting: The purpose of the Committee on Ministry meeting is to approve the call subject to the concurrence of the congregation. Approval is based upon the suitability of the match between the pastor and the congregation. And if a pastor is not a member of the Presbytery of Long Island, an examination for membership in the Presbytery will be conducted (G-11.0402). A Pastor Nominating Committee's selected candidate must appear *in person* before the Committee on Ministry prior to candidating before the congregation. These steps may be accomplished in one meeting, provided the Committee on Ministry has received the proper written material prior to the meeting.

1. Written Material: The Pastor Nominating Committee shall mail to the members

mail to the members of the Committee on Ministry, the Stated Clerk and the Executive Presbyter, a copy of the candidate's Personal Information Form and Terms of Call (using report form D.02.01 or D.02.02 as appropriate), and a letter explaining the rationale for the selection of the candidate and attesting to adherence to the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity covenant seven days before meeting with the Committee on Ministry. The candidate should include in the mailing a statement of faith reflecting her or his views of Christian faith, theology, the Sacraments, and the government of the church if these views are not adequately covered in the Personal Information Form.

2. Consultation: Ordinarily, the consultation with the Pastor Nominating Committee, the candidate, and the Committee on Ministry takes place during the regular monthly meeting of the COM. The Committee on Ministry may designate a sub-committee to conduct the consultation at another time provided COM members receive the written material in advance and there is no dissent on this procedure.

The consultation focuses upon (1) the "fitness" of the candidate for the situation as representatives of the Pastor Nominating Committee share their rationale, respond to questions, and the candidate indicates a sense of call to the position; (2) the request for Presbytery membership by the candidate and the examination; (3) a review of the terms of call according to the policy of the Presbytery. Suggested questions for the consultation are found in the Committee on Ministry Red Book (B.07.05). Where the Committee on Ministry finds these matters satisfactory, it may approve the call subject to the concurrence of the congregation.

In the case of a candidate who has no prior parish ministry experience, participation in the Early Ministry Institute of the Synod of the Northeast is expected. Any person receiving a first call to parish ministry is expected to participate in a three-year continuing education program designed to "develop quality in ministry." This program is intended to support both the congregation and the minister. The time and cost of the program should be included in the terms of call. The COM liaison will provide additional details on the program.

C.05.014 As part of the final discussion on Terms of Call with the Candidate, the Pastor Nominating Committee, the candidate and the COM liaison shall review housing arrangements for the candidate. If there is a manse, it is important to open and continue communication about the manse between the Session and the pastor. Any plans for manse improvements made earlier should be completed. Any immediate plans should be agreed to. D.02.05 b in the COM Red Book provides a guide for these discussions.

C.05.02 **THE SESSION**

C.05.021 Having completed the selection and consultation process, the Pastor Nominating Committee, with the permission of the Committee on Ministry, returns to the Session for their part in the next step. The Session must call a special meeting of the congregation to act on the report of the Pastor Nominating committee and matters related to it. The Form of Government (G-7.0303-7.0304) has specific provision for

stating the nature of matters to come before the congregation and appropriate time schedules. The Pastor Nominating Committee can recommend a time schedule but must be aware of limitations in any negotiations with a candidate.

- C.05.022 If a Pastor Nominating Committee, in its negotiations with the candidate, has determined the need to recommend terms of a call at variance from the ranges previously approved by the Session, it must also secure the approval of the Session, which has budget management responsibility, before presenting the recommendation to the congregation. Previous conversations should have taken place as recommended earlier in this process.
- C.05.023 Note also that the Pastor Nominating Committee reserves to itself the introduction of the name of the candidate. The Pastor Nominating Committee presents the name of the candidate to the Session and to the congregation at the same time.
- C.05.024 The Session, having acted to call the special congregational meeting, discusses plans for concluding the interim's service. These plans include completion of the terms of the contract, setting a date for departure, scheduling of an exit interview and evaluation, and a time for recognition of the service.
- C.05.03 **THE CONGREGATION MEETING TO CALL**
- C.05.031 Having heard the request of the Pastor Nominating Committee for a meeting of the congregation, a Session will usually call such a meeting for the time immediately following a regular Sunday worship service which the recommended candidate will lead. The Clerk of Session will arrange for appropriate announcement of the call to the meeting.
- C.05.032 The Pastor Nominating Committee will determine the method of introducing their candidate to the congregation. Several approaches can be used. One, which has received favorable reactions, has been to mail a brief biographical flyer about the candidate to the entire congregation early during the week of the congregational meeting with an invitation for the congregation to a "meet the candidate" reception on Saturday. This provides everyone an opportunity to become acquainted, celebrate a bit, and feel that the decision and vote is made on the basis of more than one "trial sermon."
- C.05.033 At the time of the meeting of the congregation, the chairperson of the Pastor Nominating Committee should make a brief final report about the work of the committee, its process, and its final decision to bring one unanimous recommendation to the congregation. Several committee members may be asked to speak on behalf of the candidate. The names of any other persons who may have been considered *are never reported*. The chairperson, at the conclusion of the report, will make one motion that the proposed candidate be called at specific terms. Note that the motion to call and the terms of the call are not separated but are considered to be a single action.
- C.05.034 At that moment the responsibility for the decision belongs totally to the congregation.

The Moderator of the meeting should inform the congregation of their right to cast negative votes but should caution the congregation that a negative vote must be cast for reason against the presented candidate rather than as a protest because the Pastor Nominating Committee did not choose another personally favored candidate or for some other extraneous reason. The Clerk of Session should be prepared with ballots so a secret ballot vote can be taken and tabulated immediately. Even though it may be a generous gesture, it is not normally wise to take an additional vote to “make the call unanimous.” People have a right to record opposition and the candidate has a right to know the strength of declared support at the outset. The numerical result of the vote must be announced to both the congregation and the candidate.

- C.05.035 It is often forgotten that, upon hearing the vote of the congregation, the candidate still has the option of accepting or rejecting the call. Rejection rarely happens, but weakness of vote support or other last-minute information may change a candidate’s sense of call to a particular situation. The vote of the congregation must also be reported to the Committee on Ministry. Ordinarily, the COM liaison is present at the congregational meeting. The Book of Order (G-14.0505) defines provisions to be followed if a substantial minority oppose issuing the call. If 10% or more of the vote is negative, a careful review by the Committee on Ministry will be needed. The Committee on Ministry will seek to understand the underlying reasons for the negative vote, consider the past history of pastoral relationships in the congregation, and counsel with the candidate as to her/his reasons for wishing to accept the call and the advisability of doing so.
- C.05.036 Assuming that the vote is affirmative and the call accepted, the congregation needs to elect at least two members of the congregation “to sign the call and to present and prosecute the call before Presbytery” (G-14.0506). The Presbytery of Long Island has authorized the Committee on Ministry to act in the matter of calls. This delegation shall attest to the Committee on Ministry that the call was completed, and shall work with the Committee on Ministry in any presentation of the pastor to the Presbytery. Ordinarily the Pastor Nominating Committee is represented in this delegation.
- C.05.037 The Pastor Nominating Committee is dismissed with thanks by the congregation, if the way be clear, after the vote of the congregation. The Committee on Ministry recommends that the former Pastor Nominating Committee be invited to participate with the Session and the COM liaison team in the Pastoral start-up process. Since the Pastor Nominating Committee has worked with the new pastor in the selection process it often happens that the committee continues a form of “de facto” service as an advisory support group for the pastor. This service often is valuable for both the pastor and the congregation but is provided informally after the elected Pastor Nominating Committee as an official committee has been discharged. Providing continuing support for a new pastor does not constitute an advocacy or arbitrator role in the relationship between the pastor and the Session.
- C.05.038 In the unusual circumstance, where a congregation does not sustain the recommendation of the Pastor Nominating Committee to extend a call, the Pastor Nominating Committee has done its best work, it has brought its best candidate; if

the congregation rejects the recommendation it must elect a new Pastor Nominating Committee and begin the search process over again.

C.05.04 APPROVAL OF CALL AND TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

C.05.041 The action of two presbyteries is sometimes necessary before the new pastoral work begins. Since the Committee on Ministry meets monthly, the schedule can usually be coordinated with other presbyteries. The presbytery of the pastor-elect's membership must act to dissolve the present pastoral relationship before the pastor-elect can leave that field of work. Sometimes this will require special meetings of the other presbytery.

C.05.042 When the congregation has approved the call, Committee on Ministry action will be complete. At the next meeting of the Presbytery, the Committee on Ministry will present the new pastor. The elected representatives of the congregation will attest to the congregation action and may participate in the presentation.

C.05.05 THE SERVICE OF ORDINATION/INSTALLATION

C.05.051 Following the approval the pastor-elect may move on to the field and begin ministry. Further events in formally establishing the pastoral relationship take place within the life of the congregation.

C.05.052 It is appropriate for the congregation to celebrate the arrival of their new pastor with a reception of some sort. This reception often follows immediately the service of ordination or installation.

C.05.053 The plans for ordination or installation are usually presented and acted upon at the Committee on Ministry meeting following the concurrence of the congregation in the call. These plans include a time and place of the worship service, confirmation of who will moderate, and the names of those nominated to serve on the Administrative Commission to act for Presbytery. The COM liaison should assist in coordinating these arrangements.

Plans for ordination or installation will proceed more smoothly if these guidelines are followed:

1. Contact the Presbytery Stated Clerk to clear the selected date and time for the Presbytery calendar.

2. Contact the Moderator of the Presbytery before making further plans to ascertain whether the moderator can participate on the preferred date and time. If this is not possible, the Moderator may propose an alternate date and time, or may appoint a vice moderator to preside.

3. The Administrative Commission, which will be approved by the Committee on Ministry to conduct the worship service, should be composed minimally of the following, one of whom is the Moderator of Presbytery (or designee): four minister

members of the Presbytery of Long Island, and four elders of the Presbytery of Long Island representing four different churches.

4. Other participants may be selected. The Committee on Ministry will invite proposed participants from outside the Presbytery bounds.

5. The order of service must include a sermon, charges to the pastor and congregation, Constitutional questions, and an offering. The order of service should be presented to the Committee on Ministry liaison for review.

6. The offering will be used by the Presbytery of Long Island through its Committee on Preparation for Ministry to aid women and men in their preparation for ministry. The offering should be promptly forwarded to the Presbytery office by the church treasurer.

7. The bulletin and invitations should reflect that the installation or ordination service is a service of the Presbytery of Long Island.

C.05.054 Candidates not previously ordained may request ordination in his/her home Presbytery. Such a request requires that the Presbytery of Long Island ask the Presbytery of care to conduct the service of ordination on its behalf. If the candidate is ordained in their home Presbytery, only an installation service will be held in the calling church.

C.05.06 **THE INTERIM MINISTRY CONCLUDES**

C.05.061 Evaluation materials are available as part of the conclusion of the interim ministry (B.05.016). The Interim will also evaluate the situation and her or his progress. The COM liaison team will conduct an exit interview with the interim and prepare an assessment report on the state of the congregation. Resources for this interview are included in the COM Red Book (B.05.017). This report will be shared with the new pastor, the Session, the Committee on Ministry, and the interim.

C.05.062 The Session and the interim pastor conclude agreements. Ordinarily the Session provides for the recognition of the interim's service and for a farewell celebration. The Clerk of Session notifies the Committee on Ministry and the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery that the Interim Pastor has concluded his/her term of service as of a certain date, and the Committee on Ministry concurs and reports this to Presbytery.

C.05.07 **THE NEW MINISTRY BEGINS**

C.05.071 The congregation usually plans a welcome for the new pastor including members of the congregation, nearby congregations, and colleagues from other Presbyterian churches. This may be a reception connected with the service of ordination or installation.

C.05.072 The Committee on Ministry will appoint a colleague to answer questions and provide initial support to the new pastor as she/he begins her/his service in the Presbytery.

The Executive Presbyter will visit with the new pastor. From time to time, there will be a new pastor orientation for those who have arrived in the Presbytery in recent months.

C.05.073 The pastoral start-up period is an important time. The Presbytery of Long Island conducts a start-up conference twice a year with nearby Presbyteries for pastors new to their fields of service. This event is an important opportunity for the new pastor. An increasing number of Sessions are delaying the final conclusions of mission self-studies until the arrival of the pastor and planning events are often scheduled during the first six months of the pastor's arrival.

C.05.074 The Committee on Ministry conducts a first year review with each new pastor to assess the start-up period. It is recommended that this review include the Session and the former Pastor Nominating Committee as initial expectations are renegotiated, and plans drawn for the future.

Procedures

Committee on Ministry

September, 1997

Revised 9/98

Revised 12/98

Revised 12/16/98

Revised 12/21/98