

Charleston Atlantic Presbytery Committee on Ministry
Pastoral Transition Checklist

The Commission on Ministry has established the following checklist to assist ministers, sessions and congregations in handling the transitions from the dissolution of a pastoral relationship through the installation of a succeeding minister. This checklist does not attempt to address every eventuality, but it strives to provide a sequential outline of the process.

Minister's Departure

A. The departing minister notifies the General Presbyter and/or moderator of the Commission on Ministry of any plan to leave a church. At a session meeting the minister announces the departure plans and requests the session call a congregational meeting for the purpose of concurring in the request to dissolve the pastoral relationship.

_____ Date Completed

B. The session calls a congregational meeting with two weeks' notice.

_____ Date Completed

C. COM arranges an exit interview with the departing minister.

_____ Date Completed

D. COM arranges an exit interview with the session.

_____ Date Completed

E. The COM on behalf of the presbytery dissolves the pastoral relationship.

_____ Date Completed

F. The General Presbyter (or designee) should be asked to fill the pulpit on the Sunday after the pastor leaves in order to declare the pulpit vacant, to share with the congregation the process

involved in the transition process and to explain the partnership between the presbytery and the congregation.

_____ Date Completed

G. COM will appoint a liaison who will meet with the session to train the session in the transition process and to provide assistance in securing interim pastoral leadership and pulpit supply.

_____ Date Completed

Interim Period

H. If a long serving minister is planning a retirement, the session may request permission from the COM to appoint an interim pastor nominating committee before the minister's retirement to arrange for interim leadership beginning at or near the incumbent minister's departure.

_____ Date Completed

I. For non-retirement departures, the session and COM will cooperate in arranging pulpit supply ministers until interim arrangements for ministerial leadership can be made. The session and/or an interim pastor nominating committee in consultation with the COM may identify a minister to serve in a temporary position such as interim minister or stated supply minister. Sessions are authorized to enter contracts with ministers for temporary positions pending COM approval. Temporary contracts are for twelve months or less and are renewable.

_____ Date Completed

J. The COM should arrange for a member of presbytery leadership or the COM Liaison to welcome the interim minister and remind the congregation of the ongoing process searching for installed leadership.

_____ Date Completed

K. COM and the session should appoint an Interim Consulting Team composed of the interim minister, the COM liaison, and a serving elder. This team should meet regularly to plan and assess the progress of the interim work.

_____ Date Completed

L. The interim minister should prepare a quarterly report to be submitted to the Interim Ministry Subcommittee of COM and should meet with that group quarterly to assess the progress during the interim period.

_____ Date Completed

M. Normally, under guidance of an interim or stated supply minister, the session should lead the congregation in a study to determine the mission and future of the congregation.

_____ Date Completed

N. When the interim minister and session, after consultation with the Interim Consulting Team believes that the congregation is ready to form a pastor nominating committee, the session shall make a request through the Interim Ministry Committee to COM.

_____ Date Completed

O. The COM approves having the Session call a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing a PNC.

_____ Date Completed

P. Congregation elects a PNC chosen in accordance with G-2.0802. Normally, a PNC should be composed of five to seven members of the congregation.

_____ Date Completed

The Search Process

Q. General Presbyter or COM Moderator and COM Liaison meet with the PNC at its first meeting to instruct the Committee in the process for calling a new pastor. The Liaison continues to assist the PNC throughout the process and keeps the COM informed of progress.

_____ Date Completed

R. PNC completes the Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP), with assistance from the COM Liaison, in light of the data gathered by the PNC and the ministry study. The session should approve the MDP. The purpose of the MDP is to describe the church so that a prospective minister can clearly understand the church and its mission.

_____ Date Completed

S. PNC submits the MDP to COM for approval. After approval, PNC will submit the MDP to the Church Leadership Connection which will match potential candidates for consideration and forward Personal Discernment Profiles (PDP) to the PNC.

_____ Date Completed

T. PNC begins consideration of potential candidates. Referrals may be made from the CLC, suggestions by individuals, or self-referrals by interested candidates. Any referrals sent directly to the PNC should be forwarded to the General Presbyter for clearance. While this clearance must be received before the PNC makes initial contact with the pastor, it does not mean that candidate has been screened thoroughly. The PNC should apprise the COM Liaison of its progress and initial conversations with prospective pastors.

_____ Date Completed

U. With the assistance of the COM Liaison, the PNC should design an interview process to enable it to get to know each candidate in a uniform way. Included in this design will be an introduction to the church and community.

_____ Date Completed

V. After studying PIFs, checking personal references, listening to sermons, holding telephone/conference calls or video conference interviews, the PNC may select a priority list of three to five persons. When the PNC has created this priority list, the General Presbyter shall be contacted to perform an executive check with the staff of the candidate's current presbytery. Before inviting any potential candidate for a local interview, the PNC must provide the presbytery's Financial Administrator with necessary consent forms to conduct a nationwide background check.

_____ Date Completed

W. The General Presbyter informs the PNC Chairperson and the COM Liaison which candidates passed or failed the Executive Check.

_____ Date Completed

X. When the PNC begins serious consideration of a particular candidate, the COM liaison should contact the COM Examination Committee to arrange an examination of the candidate. The examination should not be the final step before requesting the session call a congregational meeting to report the PNC's recommendation.

_____ Date Completed

Y. The PNC should ensure that it has conducted a sufficient background check of each potential candidate which may include reviewing social media, a motor vehicle records check, and a credit check.

_____ Date Completed

Z. The Liaison will ensure that the PNC understands the examination process set forth in the Commission on Ministry Policy for Examination of Ministers, Commissioned Lay Pastors and Candidates approved by the presbytery on December 13, 2022, and will assist in implementing the policy in a timely fashion.

_____ Date Completed

AA. The Examination Committee meets with and examines the minister. Preferably, this will be an in-person meeting but may be handled electronically. The Examination Committee may review the MDP and will review the candidate's PDP, Statement of Faith, and Faith Journey. If the Committee recommends approval, the PNC and the candidate may continue discussions toward a call. The Committee's recommendation will be submitted to the full Commission on Ministry for final action.

_____ Date Completed

BB. Candidates for Ordained Ministry are also required to submit: 1. A letter from the Presbytery of Care certifying them ready to receive a call. 2. Certified transcripts of seminary work 3. The PC(USA) Ordination Exam Papers 4. The results and written verification of the Psychological Exams conducted by the Presbytery of Care.

_____ Date Completed

CC. If the Examination Committee unanimously recommends approval, the PNC will continue discussions with the minister. If the recommendation is less than unanimous approval, COM must complete its examination before the PNC takes further action.

_____ Date Completed

DD. When the PNC and the candidate believe they have jointly discerned God's call and have agreed on compensation issues, the PNC shall inform the COM which will complete the examination process. At that time, the COM will review the terms of call, the recommendation of the Examination Committee, and the background checks. COM shall record in its minutes that appropriate background checks have been completed and no disqualifying factors identified. If COM approves the examination and terms of call, it shall authorize the minister to enter the field of ministry after an affirmative vote of the congregation to extend the call.

_____ Date Completed

EE. After COM has approved the examination and the terms of call, the PNC shall request that the session call a congregational meeting at which time it will report its recommendation for calling a pastor. The session shall give appropriate notice of the meeting.

_____ Date Completed

FF. Congregational meeting is held, and active members vote to whether to extend the call. If approved by the congregation, the PNC executes the appropriate paperwork to extend the call.

_____ Date Completed

GG. The Stated Clerk effects the transfer of membership of the new minister with his/her prior presbytery.

_____ Date Completed

Installation and Assimilation

HH. The COM, the new minister and the session shall arrange for an installation service in accordance with G-2.0805. COM shall appoint an installation commission which should normally

consist of five to seven teaching and ruling elders from Charleston Atlantic Presbytery. That group may be augmented by individuals requested by the minister to be installed.

_____ Date Completed

II. Normally, the moderator of presbytery or another member of the presbytery leadership team should be a member of the commission and should ask the constitutional questions of the minister to be installed.

_____ Date Completed

JJ. Installation service shall be a service of the presbytery and normally should be held at a time other than a regularly scheduled worship service, in order to allow the substantial participation by the presbytery.

_____ Date Completed

KK. The COM shall introduce the new minister at the next meeting of presbytery after entering the field of ministry.

_____ Date Complete

LL. COM appoints a mentor/sponsor to assist in the assimilation of the new minister into the life and work of the presbytery.

_____ Date Complete