

JOHN KNOX PRESBYTERY DESIGNATED PASTOR POLICY

DEFINITION

A Designated Pastor or Co-Pastor(s) is a Teaching Elder approved by the Committee on Ministry to be elected for a term of not less than two nor more than four years by the vote of the congregation and concurrence by John Knox Presbytery.

THE DESIGNATED PASTOR PLAN

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SESSION

The Committee on Ministry discusses the Designated Pastor Plan with the Session.

If the Session agrees to proceed with the Plan, they take official action and call a Congregational Meeting at which the Plan is outlined and discussed with the Congregation who then take official action.

The Session may act as the Nominating Committee and provide names to the Congregation for election to the Pastor Nominating Committee.

The Session is responsible for providing the Financial information for the Church Information Form. This includes the suggested Terms of Call.

Upon hearing that the Pastor Nominating Committee is prepared to present a Candidate to the Congregation, the Session will call a Congregational Meeting for the purpose of election.

Following election and concurrence of the Call by the COM and the Presbytery, the Session, along with the Designated Pastor, PNC, and COM representative will plan an installation service for the Designated Pastor.

The Session will welcome the Committee on Ministry for regularly scheduled evaluations of the Designated Plan. (6 month Entry Visit; One year visit, Two year visit etc.)

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CONGREGATION

The Congregation, at a called Congregational Meeting, will have the Plan explained and the reasons given for participation in the Plan. The Congregation will then hear the recommendation of the Session and take official action.

The Congregation, if affirming the Plan, then hears the names of the Nominees who would serve as the Pastor Nominating Committee. These nominees are presented by the Session, acting as the Nominating Committee, or by the Church's Nominating Committee. The Congregation has the privilege to place names in nomination. The Congregation then elects a PNC.

When the Pastor Nominating Committee is prepared to present a candidate for the position of Designated Pastor, the Session calls a Congregational Meeting at which the Congregation will vote, by ballot, upon the recommendation.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The PNC meets with a representative of the Committee on Ministry who will outline the requirements for forms (Church Information Form) and process.

In addition, a time-line is established. The PNC then completes all requirements.

The PNC will be given 3-5 names of persons selected by a Task Force of the Committee on Ministry. These person have been pre-screened by the Task Force and have indicated their desire to be considered as a Designated Pastor for the particular church.

The PNC will decide from among these persons. This decision will be made following an interview with the candidate(s) and hearing the person lead worship either in their home church or at the site of a neutral pulpit.

When the PNC has made its choice as to a candidate, the Session is asked to call a congregational meeting for the purpose of election. The PNC Chair will make the recommendation to the Congregation.

If the PNC is unable to make a choice from the names given by the Committee on Ministry, the Session and Congregation are informed and the PNC may begin the regular search process.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

When a vacancy occurs in a church, a representative from the COM meets with the Session to outline the alternatives available to the congregation in seeking a new pastor.

If the Session chooses the Designated Pastor Plan, the COM representative outlines the steps that are necessary for implementation.

Upon recommendation of the Session, concurrence of the Congregation, and the election of a PNC, the COM Representative will outline with the PNC the process to be used and assist in the development of a Church Information Form.

Upon completion of the Church Information Form, a Task Force of the Committee on Ministry will review all dossiers from individuals interested in the Designated Pastor Plan. This will include contacting the persons to determine their availability and to make all reference checks. The Task Force will then present to the Pastor Nominating Committee the names of 3-5 persons for consideration. If none of these persons are chosen by the PNC, the COM representative will inform the PNC that they are free to engage in the full calling process.

A Task Force from the COM will interview the potential candidate(s) prior to the Candidate meeting with the PNC.

Upon a call being extended to a Designated Pastor, the Call will be presented to the COM for action and recommendation to the Presbytery.

Representatives from the Committee on Ministry will conduct a six-month entry interview with the Designated Pastor and with the Session.

At the completion of each year of the Designated Pastor contract, representatives from the COM will meet with the Pastor and the Session to review the ministry.

If the Session determines to extend a call to the Designated Pastor after year three of the agreement, a COM representative will meet with the Session and the Designated Pastor to determine the terms of the call. If the congregation concurs with the call, the COM will act on the call and make its recommendation to the Presbytery. If concurrence with the call is received, the COM representative will assist in planning an installation service of the Designated Pastor as Pastor.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRESBYTERY

The Presbytery acts upon the Call of a Designated Pastor presented to it by the COM.

If Presbytery concurs with the Call of a Designated Pastor, Presbytery then establishes a Commission to install the Designated Pastor.

If, after year three of the Designated Pastor contract, the Congregation calls the Designated Pastor as Pastor, the Presbytery acts upon the Call, after hearing the recommendation of the COM. If Presbytery concurs with the congregation, the Presbytery then establishes a Commission to install the Designated Pastor as Pastor.

If during the contract period of the Designated Pastor position there is a change in terms of call, the Presbytery will act upon the terms offered.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE DESIGNATED PASTOR PLAN

1. What is the Designated Pastor Plan?
The Designated Pastor Plan is an alternative way to call a Pastor which the COM may recommend to a congregation under special circumstances.
2. How is this different from a Durable Pastoral relationship?
A Durable Pastoral relationship is a working relationship between the session, pastor and presbytery. A Designated Pastor is a called relationship between the congregation, pastor and presbytery.
3. Does the Designated Pastor Plan take away a congregation's right to select a Pastor?
No! The congregation still elects a Pastor Nominating Committee. The difference is the number of ministers whom the PNC will consider. The Committee on Ministry will recommend 3-5 Pastors who have been pre-screened and interviewed. The PNC will consider only these persons.
4. What if the PNC cannot decide on one of the persons recommended by the COM?
At any time the COM can recommend, or the PNC may request, that the Designated Pastor plan no longer be pursued and the usual calling procedure be used. If the PNC makes such a request, the request must receive concurrence from the Session and the Congregation.

5. How does the COM know what ministers may be open to the Designated Pastor Plan?
In many cases the COM is aware of ministers in their own or nearby Presbyteries who would find an immediate move to be helpful. There are other ministers who prefer this kind of service as an alternative to the usual calling process. At some point, the General Assembly Vocations Ministry Unit may be able to provide some networking services and to suggest names.
6. What happens if the arrangement turns out to be satisfying to both the congregation and the Pastor?
After year three of the contract the Designated Pastor can be called as Pastor with the concurrence of the Designated Pastor, the Congregation, and the Presbytery.
7. What if the relationship is not satisfactory?
Normally, the contract with the Designated Pastor ends at the agreed upon time. One year prior to the end of the contracted time, the Session, the Congregation, the Designated Pastor, and the COM meet and agree to discontinue the relationship at the end of the contract period. The Designated Pastor is then given the opportunity to have up to one year to secure a new call. After an effective date of the dissolution of the pastoral relationship has been established, a full search process can begin.
8. Under what circumstances should the Designated Pastor Plan be considered?
When Churches need:
 - time to test new possibilities for growth or to gain a firmer financial position before entering a permanent pastoral relationship
 - stability after a period of conflict
 - a few years for planning for new mission or ministry
 - self-confidence in their ability to call a Pastor rather than continuing a Stated Supply relationship
 - an alternative way to call a Pastor when the usual Call Process has not been effective

REVIEW OF THE DESIGNATED PASTOR PLAN

Representative from the Committee on Ministry, along with the Session and the Designated Pastor will meet for review of the Plan and the effectiveness of this ministry at the completion of each year of the contract. As is the Committee on Ministry policy, representatives from the COM will meet with the Session and the Designated Pastor six months following the installation of the Designated Pastor for an Entry Interview.

BASIC STEPS IN CALLING A DESIGNATED PASTOR

COM consults with the Session of a vacant church, outlines the Designated Pastor Plan and answers questions.

Session votes to recommend the Designated Pastor Plan to its congregation, nominates a Pastor Nominating Committee and calls a congregational meeting to act upon these recommendations.

The Congregation meets, approves the Designated Pastor Plan, elects a Pastor Nominating Committee, and approves the Presbytery's EEO policy.

Session and PNC meet together to be sure they understand each other's roles in the search process. Both groups approve the EEO policy.

PNC prepares the Church Information Form with input from Session regarding finances; CIF is then approved by the Session and the COM.

The search process begins with a COM Task Force seeking Personal Information Forms and reading them; the COM Task Force recommends 3-5 possible candidates to the PNC.

The PNC interviews their top choice(s), listen to him or her preach, and makes a decision. Financial negotiations are completed. They inform the Session that they have made a decision.

The Session calls a Congregational Meeting; the candidate is presented, preaches, and the congregation votes.

The Designated Pastor is installed by Presbytery; there is a celebration for all parties involved!

Six months following the beginning of the Designated Pastor relationship, an Entry Visit will be conducted by the COM.

An Evaluation will be conducted by the COM, Session, and Designated Pastor at the completion of each year of the contract.