

Frequently Asked Questions: Finding a New Pastor

Q: Dale's retirement is not until December 31. What happens in the meantime?

A: We will begin the pastor search process immediately with the election of a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). This group will produce a Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP) that provides key information for prospective pastor candidates. A prerequisite to this document is for our congregation to produce a Mission Study—a self-assessment, snapshot of our church which Session has completed knowing of Dale's timeline. Church staff have also made plans for this transition that will maintain our momentum of ministry and mission.

By the end of the year, Session will have hired a Transitional Pastor who will take on some or all of Dale's duties and smooth the way for a new called pastor.

Q: How is the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) chosen?

A: Session will nominate a slate that represents the diversity of our congregation. At a congregational meeting, this committee will be elected by the congregation. Additional nominations of possible committee members can be made during that meeting.

Q: Who is eligible to become our next pastor?

A: Pastors in the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) must be ordained in our denomination or in a few allied denominations such as the Reformed Church of America. Once our PNC makes its choice the presbytery concurs with the selection and our congregation votes to extend a call.

Q: How long does the process of finding a new pastor take?

A: A: It can range from 8 to 24 months, but more likely a year or less.

Q: Will we get updated information from the PNC?

A: The work of the PNC throughout its process is completely confidential until a candidate is chosen. Neither the Session, the church staff, nor the congregation will be involved in this process. However, the PNC will provide updates to the congregation to help them know where they are in the process.

Q: How is a transitional pastor chosen?

A: Transitional pastors are hired by Session and contracted for not more than 12 months, a term that can be extended by mutual agreement of the pastor, Session, and the Presbytery.

Q: Do we save money by hiring a transitional pastor?

A: No, it is required that we pay our transitional pastor(s) the same as our outgoing pastor.

Q: Is Emily eligible to become our transitional pastor or our permanent pastor?

A: Emily is eligible to become our transitional pastor. According to Book of Order (which details our polity/church governance), an associate or transitional pastor ordinarily is not eligible to be considered as a candidate for the vacant position; however, exceptions are sometimes granted with the approval of the Presbytery.