

Last Phase of the Call Process The Process of Calling a Pastor Phase Two

(Timeframe between the Initiation of the Call
through the Worship Service of Installation)

After a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) extends a verbal “call,” and the pastor they wish to call accepts, the PNC and pastor do the following before the next Committee on Ministry (COM) meeting (which is held the first Tuesday of each month):

- Work on finalizing the terms of call and filling out the forms. (Use “Pastoral Call Form”)
- Put together the names for the Administrative Commission to install (and possibly ordain). The Commission is made up of not fewer than seven (7) members, as nearly equal as possible divided among pastors and elders, with no two elders from the same congregation. (See the *Book of Order* G-9.0504b3.) The Moderator of Presbytery, or his/her designee, is ordinarily asked to Moderate. Others, such as ministers or elders outside the Presbytery, may be invited to “sit” with the commission, and may take a part in the worship service, but they are not included in the members necessary to make up an administrative commission, or to take part in the liturgy of the installation. (Download the “Administrative Commission Form” on the Presbytery’s website to fill-in-the-blanks.)
- Select a date for the Installation Worship Service
- Propose an offering recipient for the Installation Worship Service.
- Select a date for the “beginning date” of the call (when the pastor begins work – which is almost always prior to the Installation Service)

The pastor also writes a one page “Statement of Faith” to give to the COM that will be presented at the next Presbytery meeting.

[Note: The PNC and Pastor may choose to complete this process in two steps, which would be two COM meetings: 1. The approval of the terms of call and examination of the pastor can be conducted at the first meeting; 2. And then one month later, after the congregational meeting to elect the pastor, the names for the Administrative Commission, the date for the Installation Service, and the beginning date of the call may be submitted to the COM for approval. This two-step process takes longer but may be easier for the proposed pastor and PNC.]

At the Committee on Ministry meeting the pastor being called, and as many of the PNC members as can make it, will be scheduled to meet with the COM. The COM meets in Conway (unless it is the month of the retreat) the first Tuesday of the month. Examinations are ordinarily scheduled at either 11:00 am or 1:00 pm. The pastor (without the PNC members present) will be asked to share very briefly their faith journey (please remember to be brief – over five minutes is too long), and will be examined in the areas of theology, worship and sacraments, and polity on behalf of the Presbytery in accordance with G-11.0402. The examination must be sustained in order for the call to be deemed in order. Candidates who are not yet ordained will ordinarily be examined by either the Preparation for Ministry Committee of their Presbytery or ours, and will not

be examined in those specific areas by the Presbytery of Arkansas' COM. All pastors will be asked to share with the COM their sense of call to this specific congregation/ministry, and the members of the PNC in attendance will be invited to join the committee and share their sense of call to this particular pastor without the proposed pastor present.

If the examination is sustained the COM will proceed to consider approving the following and/or recommending approval to Presbytery: (if using the two-step process this approval process can be done over a two-month period)

- The Terms of Call (use "Pastoral Call Form")
- The names of the Administrative Commission to install (and ordain if relevant) – no fewer than seven (7) members, as evenly divided as possible among pastors and elders, no two elders from the same congregation. (use "Administrative Commission Form")
- The date for the installation (and ordination) service and the proposed offering recipient (If to ordain this must be scheduled following the next Presbytery meeting.)
- The "beginning date" of the call. (If an unordained candidate this must be scheduled following the next Presbytery meeting.)

The "signing of the paperwork" begins with the COM meeting. A checklist from the Stated Clerk explains this paperwork and the process through which entities must sign it. (See "Commissions to Ordain/Install" and "Certification of Call" form.) Four originals must be completed, with the terms of call specified, and The Moderator of the COM, the Moderator of the congregational meeting at which the pastor is elected, and the members of the PNC sign all four originals prior to returning the copies to the Stated Clerk.

If the pastor being called is already ordained the COM may give permission to "move to the field," and the "beginning date" of the call may be scheduled following the congregational meeting to elect and call the pastor (before the next Presbytery meeting). If the person being called is an unordained candidate the COM may not give permission to move to the field until following the examination of the candidate by the Presbytery.

If the examination of the pastor being called is sustained, the terms of call are approved, and all is found in order by the COM, the Sunday following the examination a congregational meeting to elect and call the pastor may be scheduled. The congregational meeting may not be announced or scheduled prior to the examination by the COM. This meeting must be announced two consecutive Sundays, and a time-span of ten (10) days must have elapsed between the initial notification of the congregation and the congregational meeting (See the *Book of Order* G-14.0502 through G-14.0511).

Brochures may be made and distributed about the proposed candidate (or a power point presentation shown, or however the PNC wishes to share their enthusiasm of the pastor being called), but the pastor may not preach for the congregation.

If the person being called is a candidate who has not been ordained then that person must also be examined for ordination by the Presbytery – either their own or the Presbytery of Arkansas. Candidates may not move to the field and begin their ministry until following the Presbytery meeting. Pastors who are already ordained will also be invited to briefly share their faith journey at the following Presbytery meeting. Whether a pastoral candidate or a previously ordained pastor is being called members of the calling congregation are encouraged to attend the Presbytery meeting and be welcomed (and congratulated) by the body.

The Installation Service (or ordination service) is conducted by the Presbytery through its elected Administrative Commission. But it is planned by the pastor being called and conducted at the church which has called the pastor. Invitations are to be sent to other congregations, particularly congregations of other denominations in the community and Presbyterian congregations within a 100 mile radius, but it is appropriate to invite all churches in the Presbytery. The pastor is responsible for contacting the members of the Administrative Commission and assigning roles as soon as possible upon approval of the commission. Roles include the Moderator, a Clerk, and the person to preach the sermon, and others on the Commission may be assigned appropriate roles. The calling congregation is responsible for all expenses incurred for the worship service. Communion may be served, but this must be approved by the Presbytery, through the COM, since it is a service of the Presbytery and not the congregation. The liturgical color for installation/ordination services is red – invoking the Holy Spirit. The Pastor being called concludes the service with the benediction. Suggestions for this service may be found in the Book of Occasional Services. A fellowship time should also be scheduled following the service.

See also the following documents:

- Pastoral Call Form (website under Clerk's documents in PDF document file) to be used by PNC in submitting terms of call to the COM. It will be signed at the congregational meeting when the pastor is elected.
- Certification of Call Form (website under Clerk's documents in PDF document file) to be signed by appropriate persons in the call process, beginning with the Moderator of the COM when the pastor's examination by the COM is sustained and the terms of call are deemed in order.
- Commissions to Ordain/Install; Presbytery of Arkansas (website under Clerk's documents in PDF document file)
- Administrative Commission Form. This form is to be used by the pastor being installed or ordained, and the PNC, to guide them through the process of contacting the persons they are asking to be on the Administrative Commission and to prepare for the Committee on Ministry meeting.

revised February 2, 2009