



Pastoral Transition Frequently Asked Questions

August 2020

Frequently used acronyms

COM - Connecting our Ministries Commission. These individuals are our liaisons from Donegal Presbytery.

IPNC - Interim Pastoral Nominating Committee

PNC - Pastoral Nominating Committee

Q. What is an Interim Pastor, and can this individual become our next permanent pastor?

- In the PC(USA), an Interim Pastor serves on a temporary basis, for a period of about a year, while a search for an installed, “permanent” pastor is underway.
- This individual will serve on an interim basis and will not be eligible to become the next installed pastor.

Q. Can someone who previously served as a Pastor at First Pres become the Interim?

- No, a pastor who previously served First Pres is not eligible to become the Interim; however, many ministers from the First Pres family will be preaching on Sundays prior to the Interim coming on board.

Q. How will the Interim Pastor be chosen?

- Session has asked the Transition Team to take on the responsibilities of the IPNC. This committee is receiving applications for the Interim Pastor position, screening them and determining which applicants will move through the various phases of interviews, references, etc.

Specifically, we are looking for a person who has a proven history of shepherding 1000+ member churches and staff through the pastoral transition process. Ideally, this person will be a good worship leader and administrator and have skills to facilitate any healing and trust building needed within our congregation.

Q. What responsibilities will the Interim Pastor have?

- The job description for the Interim Pastor/Head of Staff (Interim) can be found on the church website under Pastoral Transition. The Interim’s primary responsibilities will be similar to what Greg’s responsibilities had been. In addition, this individual will be responsible for facilitating a mission study to prepare for the next installed head of staff.

Q. What is a Mission Study?

- The mission study process is something every PC(USA) congregation goes through before forming a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) for the installed Head of Staff. It is usually initiated once an Interim Pastor is in place, with the expectation that the Interim would facilitate the process. The study itself may be led by the Interim or by an outside agency. It is essentially a “State of the Union” process which helps the congregation look at where it has been, name what is important to us, and express what we’re hoping to do in the next chapter of our lives together. The results of the study will help to engage applicants for the next Installed Head of Staff. All groups and individuals in the church will be invited to contribute to the study.

Q. How long will the Interim Pastor serve?

- While the tenure of the Interim is unknown right now, we can estimate that the Interim would serve for about 12 to 18 months.

Q. Will the church provide help for Pastor Caroline until an Interim is in place?

- The Personnel Committee has reviewed the responsibilities of Pastor Caroline and will provide additional support as needed and in consultation with COM. Until an Interim begins, Caroline and Jeff Somers are serving as Co-heads of staff.

Q. What is the process to choose an Installed Head of Staff?

- The process is outlined in the graphic available on the church website under the Pastoral Transition tab. The process involves electing a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC), a mission study, and discernment and prayer throughout the process.

Q. When will the PNC be in place?

- The PNC will be created once the Interim is in place and the Mission Study is underway. While everyone is anxious to move to this next phase, providing space for the transition is a necessary step which ultimately allows for a health transition.

Q. How will the PNC be chosen?

- Session will choose the number of people to serve on the PNC along with the number representatives from Session, Deacons, Trustees, and at-large representatives from the congregation. The Nominating Committee will invite the congregation to put their own or

others' names in for consideration and ultimately will put forward a slate of individuals for vote at a special congregational meeting.

Q. How long will it take to have a permanent installed Head of Staff?

- There is no specific timeline for this process. We can expect that once the PNC is elected, the search could take approximately 9 months to more than a year.