

PRESBYTERY OF MILWAUKEE GUIDE FOR TRANSITIONS

Transition Process

When it is acknowledged by the session, the pastor, and the COM that a Dissolution of Pastoral Relationship is imminent, a COM liaison will meet with the Session to provide information on the pastoral transition process.

G-2.0504b Temporary Pastoral Relationships

Temporary pastoral relationships are approved by the presbytery and do not carry a formal call or installation. When a congregation does not have a pastor, or while the pastor is unable to perform her or his duties, the session, with the approval of presbytery, may obtain the services of a minister of the Word and Sacrament, candidate, or ruling elder in a temporary pastoral relationship. No formal call shall be issued and no formal installation shall take place. Titles and terms of service for temporary relationships shall be determined by the presbytery. A person serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is invited for a specified period not to exceed twelve months in length, which is renewable with the approval of the presbytery. A minister of the Word and Sacrament employed in a temporary pastoral relationship is ordinarily not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor.

There are four basic models for pastoral transition in the Presbytery of Milwaukee: Bridge, Designated, or Transitional/Interim Pastor, and Commissioned Pastor. Each model speaks to the temporary relationship needed to supply pastoral care and support during the time of transition. The COM will work with the session to help determine which model is most appropriate. With the exception of the Designated Pastor model, transitional/temporary pastors are not ordinarily eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor.

Bridge Pastor: This model helps to provide stability through consistent week-to-week pastoral leadership. This model can either be used as the session and congregation go through the process to call and install their next pastor or an interim. When serving as a bridge to a called and installed pastorate, this model is best suited to congregations who have experienced otherwise stable and positive leadership and are not in conflict, significant congregational transition, or dealing with concerns that are better suited to a Transitional/Interim or Designated Pastor. When serving as a bridge to Transitional/Interim or Designated Pastor, this model is appropriate for congregations that need more immediate and consistent pastoral support when the interim search is prolonged or it is otherwise deemed prudent.

The Position Description can be posted and advertised for a full-time or part-time position. Candidates for the Bridge Pastor may be referred by the Presbytery but are interviewed and chosen by a committee elected by the Session. The Pastor is hired by the session not the congregation for a specified term not to exceed twelve months but which is renewable.

Transitional/Interim Pastor: This model, in addition to providing stability, is one for which some pastors have received additional training in areas of conflict management, working through grief, looking at past patterns and evaluating their impact, listening for concerns/issues

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and guiding in mutual problem solving, and other areas needing additional time and energy beyond basic week-to-week pastoral leadership. This model is best suited to congregations which are facing the search process after: a conflictual relationship with a previous pastor, the death of a pastor, the end of a long-term pastoral relationship, conflict in the congregation, significant congregational change, or any other area for which COM discerns the need for a Transitional Pastor/Interim.

The Position Description can be posted and advertised and can be full-time or part-time. Candidates may apply and may be referred by the Presbytery. They are interviewed and chosen by a committee elected by the Session (usually an Interim Pastor Nominating Committee). Candidates preferably have specialized training in interim work. The Transitional Pastor is hired by the session not the congregation usually for a 1-year term of contract that is renewable annually.

Commissioned Pastor: Commissioned Pastors are elders who have gone through training and the process of becoming Commissioned Pastors as verified by the CPM and the COM of the Presbytery of Milwaukee. A Commissioned Pastor may be commissioned to limited pastoral service in a congregation based on approval of COM and the Presbytery. In this capacity, Commissioned Pastors have the same pastoral authorization as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament in regard to officiating over the Lord's Supper, baptisms, and weddings as well as moderating session meetings. This model is available in instances where a Minister of the Word and Sacrament is unavailable to serve as a Bridge Pastor and/or in instances when the pastoral leadership needed is limited due to a congregation's size or finances.

Designated Pastor: A Designated Pastor is a called and installed pastorate with a designated term of service as determined by the presbytery, in consultation with the congregation. The Designated Pastor model is best suited for congregations: engaged in transformation and its redirecting its ministry; wanting to test a new direction or new model of leadership; that have been wounded by conflict or by a "revolving door" in the pastor's office through which a number of pastors have come and gone in a relatively few years; considering engaging in shared ministry; or needing a different pastoral leadership style.

The Designated Pastor (DP) is a plan wherein carefully selected pastors and churches are matched (prescreened) by the COM, potentially greatly reducing the time required to call a pastor. Candidates are then interviewed and chosen by a PNC through a formalized search process. The MIF can be posted and advertised for full-time or part-time. The DP is elected by the congregation for a term of two to four years with the option to make it permanent at the end of the designated term. The terms of call are approved by the COM.

Dissolution of a Pastoral Relationship

The following are examples of why a pastoral relationship with a congregation would/may be dissolved:

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- Retirement
- New Call/Life Change
- Result of Conflict
- Death of a Pastor
- Closing of a Congregation

Contact the Presbytery Associate for Ministry Vitality or Moderator of COM to notify pending dissolution

Meeting with Session, Pastor, and member of COM to discuss dissolution and necessary steps
Pastor/Clerk of Session sends a letter to the congregation announcing dissolution

COM Transition Team conducts separate exit interviews with Pastor and Session

COM appoints a moderator of session and consults with session on pulpit supply and other assistance needed until a Temporary Pastor is appointed

The Transition Process for Congregation's using the Bridge Pastor Model

-Soon after the pastor's final date, the COM will consult with the session on the process of conducting a Mission and Ministry Study

-The session, in consultation with the COM (through its liaison or other designated party), will create a job description for the Transitional Pastor position

-Upon approval by COM, the position will be posted to the presbytery by the appropriate presbytery staff member. (It may also be posted in our neighboring presbyteries and with ecumenical partners).

-The COM liaison (or other designated party) will work with the session through the search and interview process for the Bridge Pastor; and upon completion of an agreed contract and Fit interview, the session may hire the Bridge Pastor. (see guidelines and contract form for Bridge Pastor)

-Upon completion of the Mission and Ministry Study and approval of COM, the session calls a congregational meeting for the purpose of forming a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)

Work of the PNC

-Once the congregation has elected a PNC, the first meeting of the PNC will occur with the COM liaison (or designated party) to walk through the call process.

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-The PNC completes the Ministry Information Form (MIF), which upon approval of both session and the COM, the PNC posts to the Church Leadership Site. (The Associate for Ministry Vitality can assist the PNC in posting the MIF.)

-The PNC begins receiving PIFs

-The Associate for Ministry Vitality or Presbytery Executive provide EP reference checks for top candidates

-PNC conducts initial phone interviews and reference checks, and prior to in-person interviews the PNC requests background checks on top candidates via the presbytery office

-When a candidate has been selected, the PNC extends a Call and negotiates the Terms of Call

-The COM approves the Call and Terms and conducts a Fit Interview with the candidate

-The PNC requests Session to call a Congregational Meeting to elect pastor

-The formal Terms of Call are completed and signed and sent into the presbytery office to be signed by the COM moderator. A completed copy is held at the presbytery office and sent to both the pastor and the Clerk of Session.

-The pastor begins the process for Ordination/Installation

The Transition Process for Congregation's using the Transitional/Interim Pastor Model

-Soon after the pastor's final date, COM will consult with the session on the process of conducting a Mission and Ministry Study

-Session appoints an Interim Pastor Nominating Committee (IPNC) to nominate a candidate

-Session and IPNC, in consultation with COM liaison (or designated party), develop a job description and/or MIF along with a compensation package for the Transitional/Interim Pastor- COM approves job description and compensation package

-IPNC and the COM liaison (or designated party) conduct the search for T/I Pastor

-IPNC negotiates contract with preferred candidate (see guidelines and contract form for Transitional/Interim Pastor please note that because of the nature of the work of a T/I Pastor the minimum hours necessary are 25/week)

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- Based on approval of contract, COM conducts Fit Interview with Interim Candidate

- Session elects Interim for the transition period

- Upon completion of the Mission and Ministry Study and approval of the COM, the session calls a congregational meeting for the purpose of forming a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)

Work of the PNC

- Once the congregation has elected a PNC, the first meeting of the PNC will occur with the COM liaison (or designated party) to walk through the call process.

- The PNC completes the Ministry Information Form (MIF), which upon approval of both session and the COM, the PNC posts to the Church Leadership Site. (The Associate for Ministry Vitality can assist the PNC in posting the MIF.)

- The PNC begins receiving PIFs

- The Associate for Ministry Vitality or Presbytery Executive provide EP reference checks for top candidates

- PNC conducts initial phone interviews and reference checks, and prior to in-person interviews and conducts background checks on top candidates

- When a candidate has been selected, the PNC extends a Call and negotiates the Terms of Call

- The COM approves the Call and Terms and conducts a Fit Interview with the candidate

- The PNC requests Session to call a Congregational Meeting to elect pastor

- The formal Terms of Call are completed and signed and sent into the presbytery office to be signed by the COM moderator. A completed copy is held at the presbytery office and sent to both the pastor and the Clerk of Session.

- The pastor begins the process for Ordination/Installation

The Transition Process for Congregation's using the Commissioned Pastor Model

This model follows the same steps as the Transitional Pastor model with the exception that the CP must be approved by the Presbytery in addition to the session and the COM. Please see the guidelines and contract form for CPs.

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The Transition Process for Congregation's using the Designated Pastor Model

-Soon after the pastor's final date, COM will consult with the session on the process of conducting a Mission and Ministry Study

-The session and COM agree that a Designated Pastor search is the best option for the congregation at this time

-The session with the help of the COM liaison create a plan of pastoral leadership during the Designated Pastor search

-The session gains approval from the COM to call a congregational meeting to elect a Designated Pastor Search Committee(DPNC)

-The COM liaison or other designated party meets with the DPNC for the initial meeting which includes orientation the selection of DPNC leadership

-The Session, with as needed assistance from the COM, works with the DPNC on MIF parts regarding church's mission, position description, and parameters for compensation (the Associate for Ministry Vitality will provide access and support in using CLC)

-The session and the COM approve the MIF

-The MIF directs all PIF submissions to come directly to the Associate for Ministry Vitality or her/his designee

-The COM provides a team to review PIFs and initiate matches

-The COM team requests EP reference checks on top candidates

-The COM team forwards the name of select candidates to the DPNC for consideration

-DPNC conducts phone/skype interviews and reference checks and takes measures to assess candidates

-DPNC requests background checks on top candidates from presbytery staff before bringing candidates for in-person interviews

-DPNC negotiates terms of call and requests COM Fit interview with final Candidate

-With approval of the COM, the session interviews the Candidate before requesting permission from the COM to call a congregation meeting at which DPNC presents the Candidate

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for a vote. The Candidate may meet with officers/members before the Congregational and lead in worship.

-The formal Terms of Call are completed and signed and sent into the presbytery office to be signed by the COM moderator. A completed copy is held at the presbytery office and sent to both the pastor and the Clerk of Session.

-The pastor begins the process for Ordination/Installation