
Selecting Those who will Discern and Nominate a PNC

Selecting a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) is a significant step in calling a new pastor/associate pastor. A central tenet of *reformed* Christianity and polity is that a congregation has a right to elect its leaders AND those who nominate them for election. That's why congregation's always hold congregational meetings to elect elders and deacons and the nominating committee for elders and deacons is a committee of the *congregation*, rather than the session/council. Same with the PNC. Here are some guidelines to help ensure a process where the congregation is involved and engaged for the health of the whole congregation.

If the bylaws of the congregation define the composition and selection process for a Pastor Nominating Committee then the session should take special care to communicate with the congregation and enroll them in understanding, supporting and participating in the process. If the bylaws of the congregation do not define the composition and selection process for a PNC then the session and congregation ought to work together to decide how the PNC will be composed and selected.

I encourage you to do that by the session calling for a special congregational meeting to recommend how the PNC will be selected and allowing the congregation to confirm your recommendation, ask questions, etc. Here are some of the things to go into your recommendation:

- 1) Who will recruit, assess, interview and consider potential PNC members for nomination. Usually that is the congregation's nominating committee or the session.
- 2) What will the composition of the PNC be? How many members? Should the members be from any part of the congregation's ministry (deacons, elders, new members, women, men, youth, etc.) The EP or COM liaison can consult with you on this question.
- 3) What is the expectation for serving on a PNC? What kind of person will serve well? Any active member of the congregation is *eligible* to serve on the PNC, but not all people are well-suited or called to serve on the PNC. Toward that end we provide a sample PNC Position Description that we encourage you to modify for your congregation. It will provide a guide to the qualities and characteristics of people who serve well on a PNC. It will also set forth expectations for service.
- 4) If a congregant would like to recommend someone be considered for service on the PNC, who should they contact?

Then after you have agreement and confirmation of how you will nominate the PNC you can empower the nominating committee or session to do that work and call a congregational meeting to consider electing a slate of members to be the PNC and go to work!

Congregational Meeting to Elect a PNC

- 1) The nominating committee or session that has been charged to recruit, assess and consider potential PNC members will present a slate of people who they have discerned are called and suited to serve.
- 2) The session shall call a special congregational meeting to elect a PNC for that purpose.
- 3) The slate of nominees should be communicated to the congregation when the meeting is called for.
- 4) Before the congregational meeting the Moderator should consult with the Presbytery staff/liaison in order to review the process, make sure it is fair and open, and prepare for the meeting.
- 5) During the congregational meeting the moderator will open as usual and then call on the chair of the team of people who have recruited, assessed and considered this slate to introduce who they are placing in nomination.
- 6) The moderator will ask if there are nominations from the floor.
- 7) If someone is nominated from the floor they should have read and agreed to the position description OR the moderator can communicate the expectations and qualities of a PNC member with that person and ask if they agree to live by those and make those commitments. They should be able to say yes to all that if their name is to be placed in nomination. Everyone else has already gone through a careful assessment and discernment process. We should try to do something similar with nominees from the floor.
- 8) During the meeting the moderator should call all those nominated to come forward and share something briefly about their spiritual life, their motivations for service, and why they sense God may be calling them to serve.
- 9) Then generally a written ballot is passed out which contains the names of all those who have been placed in nomination, with several blanks to write in names of people nominated from the floor.
- 10) Then the moderator will ask for people to check the names of # people which matches the # of people the congregation has agreed will serve on the PNC.
- 11) The first # of people (whatever number of people you have set the PNC size to) who receive a majority of the votes of those members who are present are elected to serve.

NWC Presbytery's COM and Executive Presbyter will provide training and orientation for the PNC to carry out their mission and they can get started!

Questions or Comments feel free to contact Presbytery Staff or COM Liaison.