

CHAPTER III

SESSION CONDUCTS A CONGREGATIONAL STUDY

A. THE CONGREGATIONAL STUDY PROCESS

It is the policy of the Presbytery, whenever a church is without an installed Pastor that the Session and Congregation shall engage in a Congregation Study/Vision Process. The study process is designed to help the Pastor nominating committee and the Session understand their church and the community it serves. It helps to determine the qualifications, gifts and experience desired in the Pastor to be called. The material from the study process helps the Pastor nominating committee prepare the Ministries Information Form (MIF) which is used in the denomination's "matching" of ministers who might be interested in a call with particular churches, and with Pastors reviewing churches in which they might be interested.

Contact the Office of Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Los Ranchos to begin the process.

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A Committee on Ministry (COM) representative will attend a Session meeting to explain the procedure. Session will appoint a committee of 8 to 12 people to conduct the study. The committee reports to Session for comments, and then obtains Session approval on the final version. The study is submitted to the Congregation for review and comment.

At the end of the study, the Session may recommend that the Congregation should seek a Pastor whom the Presbytery designates for a particular function or term of service (Book of Order G-2.0504a). This role is rare but sometimes helpful. See below for a fuller description of the policies governing such a Pastorate.

B. UNDERSTANDING PASTOR OR ASSOCIATE WITH A DESIGNATED TERM

Pastor or Associate Pastor with a designated term can be full or part-time. A Teaching Elder can be called to a Pastor or an Associate Pastor position established by the Presbytery for a term of not less than two nor more than four years. The Session, Congregation and Teaching Elder all must have agreed to be considered for a designated Pastoral relationship. The Congregation, on recommendation of Session and with Committee on Ministry approval, elects a Pastor Nominating Committee to interview applicants and report back to the Congregation the nominee. This committee will only interview Teaching Elders who have agreed to this type of Pastoral call and referred by Committee on Ministry.

The search process for positions with a designated term is considerably shorter than the normal search process. Committee on Ministry will provide the PNC/APNC a limited list of Personal Information Forms on people which COM feels would be good Pastors for that church, and who have agreed to serve in a call with a designated term. The committee will do the interviewing, listening to sermons, etc. in the same manner as regular a PNC would do. The committee will make the offer to the candidate of their choice from among the names they received from COM, negotiate the terms of call and present the candidate to the Congregation for election.

After the second year, the call is renewable for periods of not more than twelve months. The terms of call may not be changed except by consent of Presbytery. If the Designated Pastor is not called as installed Pastor after 3.5 years, the relationship shall be terminated at the end of the contract then in place.

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If there was an open search process in the initial call to the Pastor with Designated Term, after at least two years of service, and with the concurrence of the Committee on Ministry, the Session may recommend that the Pastor with Designated Term become the next installed Pastor. This recommendation is taken to the Congregation for a vote. If the Congregational action is affirmative, the Presbytery shall act on a request to approve the new Pastoral relationship and install the Pastor or Associate Pastor.

C. IN SUMMARY:

1. COM approves this shortened search process for the specific church.
2. The Congregation votes to agree to participate in this type of Pastoral relationship. In order to vote with understanding, COM presents to Session and then the Congregation the information about this designated Pastoral position and the unique call process.
3. The Congregation elects a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)
4. The PNC considers ONLY those applicants referred by Committee on Ministry. These Teaching Elders must agree to be considered for a designated Pastoral position.
5. The Congregation elects the designated Pastor or Associate for a term of not less than two years nor more than four years.
6. Presbytery installs the Pastor, who is moderator of Session, or Associate Pastor.
7. An Intentional Interim serving the Congregation is not eligible for consideration as the Pastor with a designated term.
8. After at least two years of service, the Session may recommend that the Pastor become the next installed Pastor. Presbytery and the Congregation must concur with the recommendation. Session and Presbytery may also continue the Pastor relationship up to four years with a clear understanding that the individual will not be called as the installed Pastor.
9. If the call is terminated before the end of four years, then the usual dissolution procedures for an installed Pastor shall be followed. Otherwise, the relationship ends at the end of four years with no further termination provisions.