

Election and Call of Pastors

This document is consistent with the PCA *Book of Church Order 20, The Election of Pastors*

1. Selection of Candidate

- a. The Committee shall vote to select a Candidate.
 - a. This meeting should include every member. If any cannot be at the meeting, have them participate by telephone or reschedule the meeting.
 - b. An approval of no less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Committee is strongly recommended.
 - c. Call the Candidate to inform of decision and request possible dates available for candidating.
- b. Notify the Session and request suggestions for dates for candidating and holding a congregational meeting for the congregation to vote on a call.
- c. It is the Session's responsibility to call a congregational meeting, but not their right to veto the Committee's nomination.
- d. The Committee should give a report to the congregation regarding the Candidate and his upcoming visit.

2. Planning the Candidate's visit

- a. Develop a schedule for Candidate's visit
 - i. The church should pay all expenses for the trip.
 - ii. The family should be included.
 - iii. Three of four days should be allowed, to include time for:
 1. Meeting with all officers and spouses (possibly a dinner at church)
 2. Meeting with the Session
 3. The Candidate's wife meeting with the women
 4. The Candidate and family meeting the whole congregation at a family dinner or picnic
 5. Candidate and family looking at housing, schools, etc.
- b. Send the Candidate a packet of materials that includes:
 - i. A church directory
 - ii. Area maps
 - iii. Information on public and private schools
 - iv. Housing information
 - v. Church bulletins, newsletters, etc.

3. Notification of Candidate

- a. Once the Committee has made a decision regarding a particular Candidate, it should notify him in a timely manner that it is recommending him or is not recommending him.

4. Election and Call

- a. Session calls a congregational meeting to vote on a Candidate.
 - i. The meeting should *not* take place on the same weekend in which the Candidate visits the church.
 - ii. The Session shall appoint one of their number to call the meeting to order and to preside until the congregation shall elect their presiding officer.
 - iii. The Moderator shall ask the question: "Are you ready to proceed to the election of a pastor?" At this point, the *BCO* allows for other nominations, if any. The General Assembly has determined that the voting must be done by ballot and that a majority of all voters present must be required to elect.
 - iv. If a large minority are averse to the Candidate receiving a majority of votes and cannot be induced to concur on the call, the Moderator shall endeavor to dissuade the majority from pursuing the call further. However, if the electors are nearly unanimous or insist on their right to call a pastor, the Moderator shall proceed to draw a call, certifying at the same time in writing the number of those not concurring in the call.

5. The Call.

- a. The call shall be approved by the congregation in the following or like form:

The _____ Church being on sufficient grounds well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you, _____, and having good hopes from our knowledge of your labors that your ministrations in the Gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, do earnestly call you to undertake the pastoral office in said congregation, promising you, in the discharge of your duty, all proper support, encouragement and obedience in the Lord. That you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to pay you the sum of \$ _____ a year in regular monthly (or quarterly) payments, and other benefits, such as manse, retirement, insurance, vacations, moving expenses etc., during the time of your being and continuing the regular pastor of this church.

In testimony whereof we have respectively subscribed our names this _____ day of _____, A.D. _____.

Attest: I, having moderated the congregational meeting which extended the call to _____ for his ministerial services, do certify that the call has been made in all respects according to the rules laid down in the *Book of Church Order*, and that the persons who signed the foregoing call were authorized to do so by vote of the congregation.

(Moderator of the Meeting)

- b. The church may designate ruling elders and deacons or a committee to sign its call, but it shall be fully certified to the Presbytery by the minister or other person who presided, that the persons signing have been appointed for that purpose by a public vote of the church, and that the call has been in all other respects prepared as directed above.
- c. One or more commissioners shall be appointed by the church to present and prosecute the call before their Presbytery.

6. Notification of the Call

- a. The minister being called should be notified immediately by the Committee chairman or someone he designates.
- b. This notification should include the vote so that if it was divided, he may take this into consideration.
- c. The call should include such items as salary, and other benefits, such as, manse, retirement, insurance, vacations, moving expenses, etc.
- d. Once the Candidate indicates his intention to accept, the Session shall notify the clerk of the Presbytery so that his examination and reception can be docketed. Candidates for the ministry or licentiates are allowed to move onto the field prior to ordination, but ordained ministers are not to move until approved by Presbytery.
- e. Once the new man is approved and Presbytery has placed the call in his hands, a time and place are set for his installation.

7. Installation (and Ordination if Candidate is not ordained)

- a. The Installation day arrives and after the new pastor gives satisfactory answers to the constitutional questions, he is installed, and the Pulpit Search Committee is dismissed.