

Transition from Installed Pastor to New Pastor Arrival

(General Outline for Congregation)

Initial Phase

1. Installed pastor announces to Session their plan to depart.
2. Session contacts COM and works out dissolution agreement with pastor.
3. **Congregation** votes to dissolve pastoral relationship. Dissolution must be approved by Presbytery.
4. To prepare for the period after the pastor leaves, the Session arranges for worship leadership and asks COM to appoint a temporary moderator.

Transitional Pastor

5. Session appoints a transitional pastor search committee.
6. Search committee completes an MDP (Ministry Discernment Profile); Session and COM approve.
7. The MDP is posted and the search for a transitional pastor begins.
8. **The congregation** prays for the search committee and all potential candidates during the search.
9. When the final candidate is selected, checks are done by COM and others. Session has the final say on hiring the transitional pastor. The terms of the covenant are approved by the session.
10. The work of the transitional pastor is outlined in the covenant, typically including worship leadership, pastoral care, administrative duties, support to church leaders and the congregation, and preparing the congregation to welcome a new installed pastor, including assistance with the self-study.

Self Study

11. **The congregation** typically completes a self-study. This is a process of discernment for the congregation to determine who they are, why they exist, and who God is calling them to be. The end product will be a Congregational Self-Study Report.
12. The Self-Study Report is approved by Session and COM.

Search for Installed Pastor

13. **The congregation** elects a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC).
14. The PNC completes an MDP (Ministry Discernment Profile), with input from the self-study.
15. The MDP is posted and the search for an installed pastor begins.
16. The PNC reads through Personal Discernment Profiles (PDPs) to find top candidates. The process includes interviews, watching online worship services led by candidates, contacting references, and more. Confidentiality during the search process is critical; the PNC will not share information about any candidates during its search.
17. **The congregation** prays for the PNC and all potential candidates during the search.
18. Once the top candidate is selected, additional checks are done by the COM and the Presbytery Leader, and a criminal background check is completed.
19. The top candidate typically visits the area and meets in-person with the PNC.
20. When the PNC and the candidate agree that God is calling this candidate to this position, a date is set for the candidate to visit, meet the congregation, and lead a worship service.
21. A congregational meeting is typically held after the worship service in which the candidate participates. **The congregation** votes on calling the candidate to serve as their installed pastor.
22. After a positive vote, the called individual will be examined by the presbytery.
23. A worship service of installation is the final step in the process!

Abbreviations

COM: Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery of Geneva

PNC: Pastor Nominating Committee

MDP: Ministry Discernment Profile (description of the church and the position to be filled)

PDP: Personal Discernment Profile (description of a person seeking a position)