

COM Policy for Consideration of Associate Pastors and Teaching Elders in Temporary Pastor Relationships to be the Next Installed Pastor in Mission Presbytery

Introduction:

The *Book of Order* states that an associate pastor (G-2.0504a) or a teaching elder in a temporary pastor relationship (G-2.0504b) “is ordinarily not eligible to be the next installed pastor (co-pastor, or associate pastor) of that congregation” with the exception that the associate pastor/temporary pastor may be eligible by a three-fourths vote of the presbytery if it meets the “mission strategy” of the presbytery. (see G-2.0504c). It is clear from this wording that the *Book of Order* contains a prejudice prohibiting the succession of an associate/temporary pastor as the next installed pastor, albeit even as it provides for the possibility of exceptions to this prohibition in G-2.0504c. At this time, consideration of an associate Pastor by a PNC to be the next installed Pastor of the congregation is NOT considered to be consistent with the “mission strategy” of Mission Presbytery.

The following COM procedure must be followed when a PNC desires to consider an associate pastor/temporary pastor for the open pastor position.

1. During the initial meeting with the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) the COM liaison will instruct the PNC regarding the search process, the theology of call, and Mission Presbytery Policy including, it is the policy of Mission Presbytery that temporary pastors and associate pastors are not eligible for consideration as the next installed pastor; and that interim/temporary pastors are not eligible for consideration until after a search has been conducted. The liaison will also inform the temporary pastor and all associate pastors of this policy and provide them with a copy.
2. If, after at least 3 candidates have been fully considered, the PNC discerns the need to include the temporary pastor in the search, the PNC may ask the COM for permission to do so.
3. If the COM concludes that due diligence has been exercised in the search and it meets the mission strategy of Mission Presbytery, permission may be granted for the PNC to request a PIF from the temporary pastor. (Under no circumstances may the temporary pastor self-refer or solicit an invitation.)

4. If the temporary pastor discerns that he or she should make him/herself available for consideration in response to this request, the COM liaison will counsel the pastor and the PNC regarding pastoral concerns this may create.

5. If, after completing the search process, the PNC selects the temporary pastor as their nominee, the PNC shall submit a report to COM outlining their process and discernment for selecting this candidate. If the COM concurs that due process was followed in the selection, the COM will inform the session it may call a congregational meeting and the candidate may be presented to the congregation for election. If the candidate is elected, the COM will present the request at the next presbytery meeting. A three-fourths positive vote at presbytery is required (G-2.0504c). The temporary pastor may not assume the office of pastor until after the presbytery has voted to approve the call.

6. If the COM does not agree, the PNC may follow the guidance of COM and continue the search process or they may present their reasons for proceeding with the proposed call to General Council to determine if the call meets the mission strategy of the presbytery and request their action be presented at the next stated meeting of the presbytery. The COM may elect to speak against the request, and/or to move that the request be denied. If the presbytery determines by three-fourths majority vote (G-2.0504c) to approve the request, the PNC may ask the session of the congregation to call a congregational meeting to hear and act on its report and to call the pastor. If the presbytery does not approve the request, the PNC shall resume the search process.

Approved:	COM	August 3, 2015
	General Council	September 26, 2015
	Presbytery	October 24, 2015