

Church Information Form (CIF) Guidelines for Pastor Nominating Committees

INTRODUCTION

Some of the sections of the CIF are self-explanatory. This Guide covers only the sections where some additional comments or clarifications could be helpful.

PART I

Church ID: check with COM moderator

Church School Curriculum: If you use more than one, list at least one adult and one children's.

Presbytery: *East Iowa*

Synod: *Lakes and Prairies*

PART II

POSITION TO BE FILLED

The list in this section is self-explanatory. Two terms may need some definition, however:

Solo: one pastor with or without secretary and/or custodian and/or organist

Head of staff: either multiple pastors or non-ordained paid ministerial persons such as a Director of Christian education, Youth Director.

EXPERIENCE “REQUIRED” OR “DESIRED”

While ‘experience’ always seems best, putting ‘required’ may deprive your PNC of some really good candidates who might be a good fit and willing and able to learn what is necessary for your church. Putting “desired” gives you the option of reviewing all who might be interested, even if their experience is not an exact match.

EXPERIENCE DESIRED

If you are only able to afford a compensation package near the presbytery minimum, it is wise to check both “newly ordained” and “less than two years.” New graduates often bring energy and enthusiasm to a congregation. Second career seminary graduates also bring life and work experience.

BRIEF CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement is a short, concise explanation of why your church is there. It should convey to the reader what your understanding of church is. This is the overview, not the specifics.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR CHURCH PROGRAMS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This is the place to focus on what *your church* does. Note that it asks about “your” church programs. Try to focus first on what you, as a congregation, actually do, not on what you would like to do. Questions to ask yourself:

Mission? Do you have a food pantry (or a pantry table)? Do you cook for the homeless? Do you collect backpacks for the school year, coats for children in winter, knit lap robes for nursing homes, collect for some mission out of the area or support a missionary or correspond with one? Do you participate in the CROP walk, run a program for neighborhood kids, do Vacation Bible School for the town? Give a 'white offering' (socks and underwear for the homeless) at Christmas? What else in mission?

Christian Education? Do you have bible studies, Advent and/or Lenten series? Is there an adult Sunday School? How about for kids? Do you use a particular model for Sunday School i.e. workshop-rotation model? Do you have a youth Christian education program? Is there a book discussion group?

Nurture/Fellowship? Do you have people who visit shut-ins regularly? Do you send cards/flowers to the ill or bereaved? Are there fellowship groups – men's, women's, youth, and/or couples. Do you have congregation wide gatherings – hymn sings, potlucks, 'fun-night,' 'game night,' coffee fellowship after worship? How about special events: outdoor worship in summer, overnight at the presbytery camp, annual picnic, dinners, breakfasts? Do you have family fun activities – family night, games for families etc?

Music? Do you have a choir, an organ or other instruments? Are there people in the congregation who play an instrument and/or sing well who help lead worship? Do you have a children's choir, a bell choir?

Youth? Do you have a youth group? What are some of their activities – mission and/or work camp? Fellowship? Worship leadership? Music? Bible study or other Christian education activities?

Worship? List only unusual events – it is assumed that you have Sunday worship as well as Christmas, most churches also have Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday services. Use this category if you have something special like a monthly Taizé service or a healing service or a midweek prayer service. How often do you celebrate the Lord's Supper?

GIFTS, SKILLS, EXPERIENCES TO FULFILL YOUR MISSION

Who are you as a congregation? Do you have people with good leadership skills – who can bring a new idea to the congregation, get others excited to join in and help to make it reality? Are there members who can teach a bible study for adults or lead a book discussion? Are there people who write well and/or edit (who do or could do your newsletter, for example) or who could write a skit for performance? Do you have carpenters, builders, heating people who work on the building and/or could use those skills in mission work? Do you have a CPA or accountant who can help with finances? Are there musical talents? How about folks with a flair for performance who might work on a drama for worship and/or fellowship and fun? Are there members who read aloud well who serve/could serve as liturgists in worship? Do you have elders who can/do preach in the pastor's absence? Are there creative people who take care of the flowers, make banners, can lead a creative workshop (making Advent wreaths for example)? Have any members gone on mission trips? Are any engaged in professions that might help your church engage in related mission e.g. social services, medicine/nursing, building?

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KEY THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

The following issues are not an exhaustive list of the possibilities, but rather something to get you started thinking about ‘theological issues.’ Another way to think about the phrase ‘theological issues’ is to think in terms of what concerns you or what problems you see in the church, in the community, in the wider area, and in the culture. When you have identified some of those, share how your congregation addresses some of them. For example, if you have a food pantry (or collect food for one) you can note that hunger, poverty/the economy are an issue of concern and then tie that to the congregation’s ministry in that area.

Possible theological issues include: in the church’s immediate neighborhood /wider area – single parent families, rate of divorce, latch-key kids, poverty, homelessness, drug/alcohol abuse, the economy, low level of church attendance/participation, unsupervised youth.

In the culture at large – prejudice, racism, inequality, education, health care issues, older adult needs, sexual issues, marriage problems.

References

Current church members are not a good idea here since you can only list 3. Any candidate who is being seriously considered will talk to the PNC and can also ask for the names of members to speak with. Good references are former pastors, neighboring pastors who know your church (maybe someone you have done Vacation Bible School with or shared Lenten services etc). Former members are certainly ok as is the COM liaison. The best is to get a variety of types of persons, i.e. not 3 former members or 3 neighboring pastors, but one or two neighboring pastors and/or former pastor and a former member.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Major Responsibilities

This is the job description. Certainly name the basics, but be sure to focus on what is unique to this position (especially when seeking a pastor in a multi-pastor church) and specifics of how you, as a congregation would define the tasks. For example, all pastors lead worship, but what is unique to your worship? Do you want someone who is comfortable with an informal worship style or someone who will be creative in developing your worship services or something else about worship – bring more music into it, involve more of the congregation etc? Do you want sermons that are strongly bible based, do you like lots of illustrations in sermons? Do you have specific expectations in terms of pastoral care, if so state them? How about education/teaching? Do you expect your pastor to teach adult Sunday school, confirmation class, train new officers, new members classes? Do you have any ongoing bible and/or book studies that you would like the pastor to lead? How much teaching will your pastor do? Will the pastor have a role with children’s programs - Christian ed or other? If so, what will it be – training teachers, acting as a resource, something else? How about the youth, will the pastor lead their group, simply be a resource to other leaders, teach them bible study/other Christian ed? All Presbyterian pastors are appointed by presbytery to moderate the session of their church, so that does not need to be stated. Do you expect

your pastor to sit in on all committees or only specific ones? Will the pastor have a role in production of the church newsletter? What administrative tasks will the pastor have to do – not so much specifics, but is there office staff that the pastor will work with?

Characteristics and qualifications needed

What do you as a congregation value in your pastor as a person? Sense of humor? Good listener? Organization? People person? Communication skills? Energy? Patience? Flexibility? Think about people you like to be around – what else?

Think about the job you are asking your pastor to do. What skills are required to get the job done?

How about a second language? Do you have Spanish speakers in the neighborhood you would like to reach? Do you want your pastor to have computer/internet skills?

In this area be careful to distinguish what you would like from what you feel you must have – for example, if half the congregation does not speak English you must have a pastor with some skill in their first language. You might like your pastor to sing well or play an instrument, but will miss many qualified candidates if you indicate that your new pastor “will” have that skill. The object is to say what your church wants and needs, but still gather the widest selection of candidates that you can.

PRIMARY SKILL CHOICES

See Attachment A at the end of this Guide for a brief definition of each skill listed in this section of the CIF.

COMPENSATION AND HOUSING

This section only asks for information on the salary and housing elements of the total compensation package that will ultimately be negotiated with the new pastor. Before completing this section, you may wish to determine the minimum compensation allowed by presbytery policy and the maximum your church is able and/or willing to pay and the amount required to attract a high caliber pastor. The church’s budget and other financial documents should help you to determine the church’s ability to pay. You may, also, wish to review the presbytery’s compensation and benefits policies included in the manual covering Compensation, Benefits, Commissioned Lay Pastors and Leadership Review Guidelines. This will provide information to allow you to estimate the cost of the entire compensation package. With this information you can more accurately determine the salary and housing elements to enter in this section.

GEOGRAPHIC CHOICES

It is likely that the question of the church paying for all or part of the cost of moving the new pastor to your community will be a part of negotiating financial arrangements between the church and the pastor or moving expenses may already be included in the PNC budget. Costs should also be anticipated to bring potential new pastors to visit your community and to neutral pulpits. You may wish to take these expenses into consideration in deciding if you want to use this section to limit the search geographically.

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Attachment A to "Church Information Form (CIF) Guidelines"

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SKILLS DEFINITIONS

Below you will find a short definition of each of the skills. These are not technical definitions, but one to two sentence descriptions.

Administration of Programs

Overseeing the delivery of planned activities or services that achieve agreed-to-objectives within budgetary, time and resource limitations. Evaluating the effectiveness of the programs of the church.

Administrative Leadership

Encouraging and enabling volunteers and/or professional staff to accomplish their duties, achieve their goals, and develop their personal and professional gifts in response to God's call upon their lives.

Adult Ministry

Providing specialized knowledge of resources and programming that meets the needs of adults.

Budget Preparation

Working from a defined project or operational plan, developing an estimate of the financial resources required that enables the effective management of the project or operation with the constraints of the funds available.

Building Renovation/Property Development

Planning, budgeting, staffing, gaining acceptance for, and implementing significant renovation or real estate development projects.

Children's Ministry

Providing specialized knowledge of resources and programming which meets the needs of Children and their families.

Communication (Written/Oral)

Expressing ideas, beliefs, and feelings in individual and group situations; adjusting language or terminology to intended audience and creating an enthusiastic response.

Community Ministries

Working directly with local community groups to establish programs responsive to local needs. Supporting a community or group by enabling the local leadership to emerge, flourish, and accomplish its own goals.

Community Service and Leadership

Leading in inter-denominational activities, and in the community concerning problem areas such as schools, housing, drug usage, etc.

Conflict Management

Negotiating or assisting in the constructive resolution of differences by defining issues, interests, demonstrating understanding of differing perspectives, and facilitating a collaborative ("win-win") solution.

Congregational Communication

Developing and monitoring the communication needs of the congregation and satisfying those information needs using a variety of media within appropriate budgetary and timing criteria.

Congregational Fellowship

Helping members and groups come together, know one another, have the opportunity to love and support one another, in response to God's call upon their lives.

Congregational Home Visitation

Planning for and participating in the visitation of members, prospective members, and members with special needs.

Congregational Redevelopment/Revitalization

Working with the leadership, members, and constituents to unify and redirect their energies to develop new forms of ministry.

Corporate Worship & Administration of Sacraments

Ordering worship and the administration of the sacraments in fresh and creative ways consistent with the Reformed Tradition.

Counseling

Helping both members and others to move toward spiritual maturity and increased comfort in a time of stress by listening, making appropriate responses, and, when needed, making referrals.

Cross-cultural Collaboration

Working across cultural and economic lines to solve problems by openly sharing information, building perceived equity in team roles/relationships, valuing all colleagues' views, and fostering joint decision making.

Curriculum Building

Developing a program of educational experiences which serves as the basis for the theological and biblical development of the members of the church/organization. Adapting/planning/writing curriculum for various age groups.

Defining Program Needs

Analyzing the educational or other programmatic needs of an organization or group of individuals.

Development of New Educational Experiences

Creating, evaluating, and refining new educational experiences based upon a needs analysis of the church/organization.

Ecumenical and Interfaith Activities

Working with other religious groups and their leaders to accomplish common goals that foster mutual understanding.

Evaluation of Program and Staff

Assessing specific programs and/or staff; encouraging and facilitating an environment of accountability, recognition, openness, and constructive feedback.

Evangelism

Leading persons to share faith in Christ as a personal savior and encouraging their identification with, and participation in the church and community.

Facility Management

Organizing and overseeing the maintenance of a physical property or building.

Family Ministry

Providing specialized knowledge of resources and programming that meets the needs of families.

Financial Management

Guiding and monitoring the investment, expenditure, or allocation of church or organization funds so the group's financial objectives are achieved.

Fund-Raising

Developing methods and programs to finance the work of a church or organization through donations and contributions from individuals and organizations.

Governing Body Ministry

Working with presbytery, synod and general assembly committees in shaping and implementing their ministries.

Group Facilitation/Dynamics

Enabling a group to define their goals, needs, concerns, etc., and to combine their gifts to achieve the desired needs.

Hospital and Emergency Visitation

Establishing a network in the congregation to keep in touch with the special needs of members and visiting them and their families.

Information Technology

Utilizing modern computer and telecommunications facilities, programs, and resources to accomplish functions on a cost-effective basis.

Involvement in Mission beyond the Local Community

Identifying specific projects or programs that enable persons and/or groups to support, study, and participate in the church's worldwide mission.

Leadership Development

Recognizing and calling forth potential of persons as leaders of the Church's ministry and providing opportunities for their training, development, and growth.

Leadership of Staff/Volunteers

Working with staff/volunteers to develop a vision for the church's/organization's future, creating a climate of involvement and enthusiasm.

Management of Building Usage

Overseeing the scheduling and application of building resources to meet the needs of users. Developing plans for expansion, remodeling, or additional furnishings if needed.

Management of Equipment Resources

Defining needs, purchasing, and overseeing the use and maintenance of equipment.

Mediation Skills

Bringing individuals, groups, or congregations together to identify interests, reframe issues, and work collaboratively seeking resolutions to differences.

New Church Development

Working with the presbytery and others to develop a new and viable church that fosters a people of faith who minister to the community and world.

Office Management

Overseeing the ongoing work of an office staff to meet schedules, budgets, and to ensure efficient operations.

Older Adult Ministry

Providing specialized knowledge of resources and programming that meets the needs of older adults.

Organizational Development

Evaluating an organization's structure, culture, processes, capabilities, to identify strengths and weaknesses and working to reinforce these factors as needed.

Organizational Systems Development

Identifying the needs for new or improved church/organizational processes which increase effectiveness. Planning and implementing efforts to meet those needs.

Organizational Leadership and Development

Developing a long-range strategic operating plan for an organization. Developing new policies and procedures that are effective within a complex organization. Working with staff or volunteers to implement office management and administrative systems that result in improvements in quality, timeliness, or efficiency of operations.

Pastoral Care

Providing support to members and constituents as they wrestle with the events of their lives.

Preaching

Relating the biblical text to the contemporary situation; bringing it to bear in the congregation's life and work.

Problem Solving/Decision Making

Systematically breaking down problems or opportunities into components by identifying relevant issues, fact-finding, and recognizing connections. Generating options, evaluating them and selecting the "best" one for implementation.

Project Development

Developing a workable plan for accomplishing a specific objective. Monitoring and facilitating progress in implementing the plan. Modifying the project objectives and resource needs as the plan unfolds.

Public Relations

Developing and delivering materials or events intended to inform, influence, or otherwise affect a general or targeted audience.

Rural Ministry

Providing pastoral leadership to congregations located in isolated or sparsely populated areas. Appreciation for the natural environment and rural life, ability to cope with isolation, willingness to travel significant distances, relational leadership style, strong people skills.

Small Membership Church

Providing pastoral leadership to congregations with fewer than 100 active participants. Demonstrates relational leadership style, flexibility, strong people skills. Enjoys visitation and fellowship opportunities.

Spiritual Development

Providing personal spiritual care, resources, guidance, and leadership for persons seeking to deepen their faith in Jesus Christ.

Staffing

Identifying the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to accomplish the functions of a church/organization and acting to identify and recruit persons for particular positions.

Stewardship and Commitment Programs

Challenging members to develop a lifestyle that demonstrates responsible stewardship and motivating them to work and contribute their resources to the work of the Church.

Strategic Planning

Working with the Session or organization to develop directional goals and activities that shape the future and relate to the church's/organization's fundamental decisions.

Teaching

Providing instruction and/or educational experiences that increase theological and biblical awareness, skill and motivation to continue learning.

Training Volunteers

Delivering specialized training that suits the skills and knowledge needs, constraints, and sensitivities of non-paid workers in the church/organization.

Transitional/Interim Ministries

Has special training and skills to assist church organizations or governing bodies in developmental and process tasks during the time between installed pastors.

Urban Ministry

Providing pastoral leadership to congregations located within urban/inner city areas. Skills include community assessment skills, understanding congregations as systems, community organizing and development skills, accessing resources, and sensitivity to cross-cultural environments.

Youth Ministry

Providing specialized knowledge of resources and programming which meets the needs of youth and their families.