

Designated Pastor Policy
Presbytery of the James
COM Approved: October 10, 2024
POJ Approved: February 15, 2025

G-2.0504a: Installed Pastoral Relationships

The installed pastoral relationships are pastor, co-pastor, and associate pastor. A teaching elder may be installed in a pastoral relationship for an indefinite period or for a designated term determined by the presbytery in consultation with the congregation and specified in the call.

Designated Pastor, Designated Co-Pastor, Designated Associate Pastor

A designated pastor is called and installed for a specified term of not less than 3 years nor more than 5 years. Candidates for the position of Designated Pastor may be provided to the congregation's Designated Pastor Nominating Committee by the Commission on Ministry. In consultation with the Commission on Ministry a congregation may:

- 1) call the Designated Pastor as Pastor, or
- 2) dissolve the relationship at the end of the term.

Process for Calling a Designated Pastor (or Associate Pastor)

Potential advantages are: shorter timeline; commitment by congregation only for designated term. Potential disadvantage: fewer candidates to evaluate.

1. When a pastoral transition is announced, the Clerk of Session contacts the Commission on Ministry (COM). COM will provide assistance during the process, including an orientation and consultation regarding options for future pastoral leadership. COM shall appoint liaison(s) to work with the congregation during the search process.
2. Possible reasons/rationale for calling a Designated Pastor/Designated Associate Pastor:
 - a. When the congregation needs to transform its future direction in ministry and transitional leadership is needed for longer than the typical Interim Pastorate.
 - b. When the session and COM wonder if financial trends indicate that full-time pastorate is still feasible for the congregation. The designated contract period permits the session and the designated pastor to work towards building sustainable financial health, but also permits termination of the pastorate at the end of the contract period if warranted without contracting severance responsibilities.
 - c. When the congregation needs to engage in transforming conflict and to develop new systems that are rooted in resilience and health.
3. If the Session discerns that the congregation will best be served by a Designated Pastor, it shall request that COM concur with this determination. The Session shall

also empower the church's nominating committee to recruit nominees for the DPNC. If COM approves, the Session shall call a congregational meeting for the purpose of educating the congregation about Designated Pastoral relationships and for the congregation to vote on whether to proceed with calling a Designated Pastor and to elect a Designated Pastor Nominating Committee (DPNC or DAPNC)

4. The DPNC creates a Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP) and a position description for a Designated Pastor. The MDP and position description are presented to Session for approval and then forwarded to COM for final approval.

5. The DPNC reviews the Personal Discernment Profiles (PDPs), conducts interviews, and selects the candidate.

6. When the DPNC identifies a finalist to whom they wish to extend a call, the DPNC shall contact the Presbytery and request an "executive check" on the candidate. If the way is clear, the DPNC shall negotiate terms of call with the candidate. Once completed the DPNC and candidate shall meet with the Examinations Committee for a suitability interview. If the EC approves the relationship they will make the recommendation to the COM for approval.

7. The DPNC then requests that Session call a congregational meeting to receive the report of the DPNC and to act on their recommendation.

8. If the congregation elects the candidate, the Presbytery shall act on the call at its next meeting and welcome the candidate. The candidate can then begin to arrange for a service of installation. The commissions for installation shall be submitted to the COM for approval. .

9. The call is for 3 to 5 years, after which time the congregation in consultation with COM may choose to end the relationship or elect the Designated Pastor as Pastor. If they choose to end the relationship with the Designated Pastor, they shall form a new search committee to seek a new pastor, or the position may be eliminated.

10. The designated pastorate can have two endings: a congregation can extend the call to be the installed pastor or to end-the DP relationship. Both can be appreciated as ways that God helps move congregations and pastors forward in faithfulness and service. Regardless of the outcome, the designated pastorate should end with expressions of appreciation for growth that has occurred during the transitional time.