

The Pastoral Call Process

UPDATE

August, 2026

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) follows a thoughtful and time-tested process for calling a new pastor. While the process includes several steps, it is designed to support prayerful discernment and ensure a strong match between pastor and congregation.

Phase I: From Pastor's Departure to Calling an Interim Pastor

During Phase I, the Trinity Session guided the ongoing life and ministry of the church, ensuring that worship continued, we had pastors to lead us each Sunday, staff was supported, and the congregation was cared for. Now that we have found an Interim Pastor, Rev. Randy Hyde, he takes over the substantive duties of a "normal" permanent pastor – preaching, pastoral care, staff supervision, budget oversight, and serving as Moderator of Session meetings. With that established, Trinity is quickly moving into Phase II, the Interim Period and Mission Study.

Phase II: The Interim Period and Mission Study

With Pastor Hyde on board, the Trinity Session quickly assigned the job of the Mission Study to the members of the Pastoral Nominating Committee, chaired by Harrison Hickman. In preparing the Mission Study, the PNC's work includes listening to the congregation, reflecting on its history, assessing its strengths and opportunities, and discerning how God is calling the church forward. The Mission Study lays the essential foundation for calling the next permanent pastor, and is a prayerful and reflective process that helps the church clarify its identity, sense of call, and direction for the future. Harrison and the PNC will be assisted in the Mission Study by Pastor Hyde, as well as our Presbytery Liaison, Rev. Robert Lowry, who has substantial experience in developing mission studies with other churches.

This work has already begun with the preparation of the first step in the Mission Study, a Congregational Assessment or Questionnaire. After receiving responses to the Congregational Assessment, Trinity's congregation will meet in a live Listening Session, during which we will discuss the responses to the Congregational Assessment as a group. Ultimately, the information gathered will be used with other materials to produce the final written Mission Study.

Phase III: Searching for and Calling a New Pastor

When the Mission Study is concluded, it will be used by the PNC to guide the search for the next permanent pastor. The PNC will use the Mission Study to develop a detailed ministry profile and works through the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) to review and discern potential candidates. This process is thoughtful and prayerful and is conducted with appropriate confidentiality, as it involves personnel matters, particularly if the pastor candidate is currently serving another congregation. In fact, once the Mission Study is concluded and the search

begins, questions asked of the PNC will likely be met with noncommittal, frustrating answers, such as “We’re making progress.”

As the PNC identifies a final candidate, they work with the Presbytery’s Committee on Ministry to ensure readiness for the call and to finalize terms. Ultimately, the congregation will be called into a meeting to vote on whether to extend the call to the PNC’s recommended new pastor.

While each search is unique, the exact timeline for calling a permanent pastor can’t be determined. If you have questions about this process, please contact a member of Session or the Clerk of Session.