

The Fit Interview

Prior to the Interview, the COM team requests the candidate's PIF, Statement of Faith and Spiritual Autobiography

Purpose:

- Participate in the discernment of whether the candidate is a good fit (match) for the church's needs and for membership in Carlisle Presbytery. This applies to candidates for all types of calls (both temporary and installed)
- In the case of a candidate who has not been previously ordained, the purpose also includes assessment of readiness to be examined by the presbytery for ordination

Timing:

Ordinarily, a Fit interview is arranged with all candidates who are invited for an on-site interview and is incorporated into the schedule of the on-site interview days(s). The Fit Interview Team shall include both Teaching Elder and Ruling Elder members of COM. Ordinarily the COM liaison recruits the Fit Interview team and serves as the convener of the team. *The interview may take place either in person or via Zoom.*

Process: The Fit interview consists of three parts:

Part 1:

Open with prayer and introductions. General background questions are asked of the candidate and the Search Team/PNC, together. These questions may focus on the search process and how it led to a mutual sense of call. This is also a time to explore where there is resonance between the church's needs and the candidate's gifts and experiences.

Part 2:

Questions are asked of the candidate, apart from the Search Team/PNC, based on the church's MIF, the candidate's PIF and Statement of Faith. These questions:

- Explore more deeply the candidate's impressions of the opportunities and challenges ahead, for this congregation. Where does the candidate see a match between her/his gifts/experience and the needs of the church?
- Elicit a sense of the candidate's theology and talk about how it aligns with the church's theological culture.
- Ask about the candidate's potential involvement in the life of the presbytery, and sense of connection to and support of the PCUSA
- In a multiple staff setting, ask about the candidate's sense of compatibility and/or complementarity with others on the church's staff, especially other clergy.

- Give opportunity for the candidate to ask questions of the COM representatives: What more do you need to know, to inform your discernment about this call?

Part 3:

Questions are addressed to the Search Team/PNC without the candidate present:

- Explore more deeply the PNC's understanding of the opportunities and challenges ahead, for their church: Where does the PNC see a match between the candidate's gifts and experience and the needs of the church?
- Elicit the PNC's impressions of the candidate's theology in light of the theological culture of the church.
- Find out where they are in the process with this candidate and what the next steps are.

Wrap Up:

Bring the candidate back into the room and thank everyone for the conversation. Clarify that the COM team will shape a summary report and recommendation for COM's action, if and when the PNC and candidate discern this to be God's call. Close by praying for the candidate, the PNC and the congregation. After the team and candidate are dismissed the COM team debriefs and subsequently prepares a brief written summary of the interview.

After the Fit interview, if the PNC and candidate discern a call: (sequence of steps may vary, depending on circumstances)

- The PNC notifies the candidate that they wish to present her/him to the congregation for vote
- Financial terms are offered and negotiated
- If the candidate consents to the invitation and terms, the liaison requests time on the agenda of the next meeting of the COM.
- Before the meeting with COM, the Stated Clerk and/or liaison review the terms of call for completeness and compliance with presbytery minimums
- COM meets with the candidate and representatives of the PNC to for the purpose of relationship-building and confirming/celebrating God's call:
 - Hear from the PNC and candidate about their mutual sense of call
 - Hear the report of the 'Fit Interview' team;
 - Act to:
 - 1) authorize the calling of a congregational meeting to vote on this call, according to the terms presented
 - 2) receive the candidate into the membership of the presbytery, pending the congregation's affirmative vote

Note: In the case of a candidate who is not yet ordained, COM acts to recommend that the candidate be examined by the presbytery for ordination to this call and membership in the presbytery

- Following the congregation's affirmative vote, the Pastoral Call Form is signed by the PNC and moderator and forwarded to the Stated Clerk, for the signatures of those authorized to sign for the presbytery/ies.
- As applicable, the newly elected pastor, Session, Stated Clerk, and moderator of the presbytery work out arrangements to ordain and/or install the pastor.