

Presbyterian Acronymns

In searching for a new installed pastor here at Hodges Boulevard Presbyterian Church, we will encounter quite a few acronyms – the Presbyterian Church is famous for them! As information, here are the ones we will likely encounter the most, along with brief explanations.

1. **BOC – Book of Confessions**. This is Part I of the two parts of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It begins with the “Nicene Creed,” which is the oldest, and until three General Assembly’s ago, the last confession was “A Brief Statement of Faith.” The newest edition of the BOC includes “The Belhar Confession,” making a total of 12.
2. **BOO – Book of Order**. This is Part II of the two parts of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This is more of a daily guide to how to be a good Presbyterian, which includes four sections: Foundations, Government, Worship, Discipline.
3. **CLC – Church Leadership Connection**. This is the denomination’s department (and website) that helps match churches and pastors who are searching. (www.pcusa.org/clc)
4. **COM – Committee on Ministry**. Ministers are not a member of a congregation, they are members of the presbytery and, in most presbyteries, are under the auspices of the COM, who appoints a liaison to walk alongside congregations as they search for a pastor.
5. **CPM – Committee on Preparation for Ministry**. When men and women are called to ministry, and typically while they are in seminary, they are typically under the care of a presbytery’s CPM, which works with, encourages, and guides them in the process of becoming a Presbyterian minister.
(In the new structure of the Presbytery of St. Augustine, the functions of the COM and CPM have been folded into one Member Preparation and Call Commission.)
6. **EP/GP – Executive Presbyter/General Presbyter**. This is an administrative member of the presbytery staff with a multitude of duties, not the least of which is to give pastoral care to ministers, work with and guide churches when they are in conflict, and serve as a resource to the many committees and commissions of the presbytery. During the search process, an Executive’s main functions will be to train the PNC, be a resource for any number of issues that may arise, and do “red flag checks” on possible candidates (a reference check of sorts with the candidate’s Executive or General Presbyter).
(In the new structure of the Presbytery of St. Augustine, there is no longer a Presbytery Executive, so we are not sure who will do this.)
7. **MIF – Ministry Information Form**. This is a ten page ministry narrative document that describes the church and the kind of pastor for whom it is searching. It is typically put together by the PNC, based on the information gathered from the congregation by various means. It is approved by the session (who actually “owns” the document), then by the presbytery (the COM), then is uploaded into the denomination’s CLC database, which is where the matching process takes place. (If it sounds similar to a computer dating program – you’re right! It is!) If you are interested in seeing what this document looks like, you can download either a Word or PDF copy of it here: <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/clc/ministry-information-form2/>
8. **PCUSA – Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**. This is the mainline denomination of which we are members. There are other Presbyterian *denominations* (Presbyterian Church of America, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Covenant Order of Presbyterians, Cumberland Presbyterian, and a few more), so it is helpful to state which one we are.
9. **PIF – Personal Information Form**. We affectionately refer to this as a “Presbyterian Resume.” When a church is searching for a pastor, it is *very* helpful for the search committee to be able to compare apples to apples when reviewing information. The PIF is similar in format to the MIF, in order for matching to take place. This is a twelve page document, including one page of instructions. You can download either a Word or PDF version at the following web address: <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/clc/personal-information-form/>
10. **PNC – Pastor Nominating Committee**. In other words, the SEARCH COMMITTEE! These are the church members who will seek to discern the person God has already identified as our next pastor. It is, indeed, a *spiritual* process. It is also an arduous, time-consuming, and oftentimes emotional process. There is no way to predict exactly how long it will take the PNC to identify God’s person, but it is usually 12-24 months (clock typically begins *when the interim arrives*, not when the former pastor leaves). The faithful servants on the PNC will be trained together, study scripture together, pray together, participate in team building exercises (which is far

more important than you might imagine), and do the hard work of the search. What they need from you more than anything is your prayerful support. Pray early, pray often!! Pray, pray, pray, **pray**, **PRAY!**