

Information Needed for Classis Approval of a Call

Pastoral Relations Committee

Background: Contrary to the understanding of some, it is the Consistory of a local church that makes the final decision whether or not to extend a 'call' to a pastoral candidate. Consistory provides for a congregational meeting so members of the church can hear about the process that has resulted in a recommendation by the Search Committee. The congregation's voice, and their vote, are extremely important, but do not constitute the final step in this process. It is the prerogative of the consistory to consider the voice of the congregation and then act upon it.

Requirement: According to the Reformed Church in America Book of Church Order (BCO), it is the responsibility of each classis to approve all calls that are extended by consistories to a pastoral candidate.

In order for classis, through its Pastoral Relations Committee, to approve a call according to its own guidelines it must receive the following information:

- 1. A copy of the call form which outlines the responsibilities being sought from a next pastor and/or a job description.**
- 2. A copy of the financial package being offered to the pastor being called.**

Providing this information to Pastoral Relations does not amount to "a letter of intent to call" (*which is used specifically regarding senior seminary students*), and does not presume what will happen at the congregational meeting, or the ensuing consistory meeting and decision.

As outlined in the classis guidelines, we have determined to complete a modest level of independent reference work prior to approving any call. This requires that the committee be provided a few days to complete their work. The goal is to complete our task prior to the congregational meeting, so as not to delay the process following a formal decision. Congregations also find it helpful to know, in advance, that the classis has already considered both the job description and financial package and have found both acceptable.