

Filling a Ministerial Vacancy in a Congregational Placement

Before a JNC Process

1. Church Council writes to the secretary of Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) prc-sec@ppw.victas.uca.org.au indicating that they would like to start the process of seeking a new minister and requesting that a mission study be completed.
 - (a) Dates and a time frame of when the incumbent minister is finishing or leaving is required if applicable
 - (b) The amount of leave left for the minister to take. Church councils should keep a record of the ministerial leave. All ministerial leave must be used before moving placements and or retiring.
 - (c) Any requirements regarding supply ministry i.e. long- or short-term supply, occasional preachers etc.
2. PRC could also be advised by the departing minister of acceptance of another call or an intention to retire. Ministers are normally required to give three months' notice of intention to vacate a placement.

Please note that all Presbytery Committees meet once a month

PRC: First Tuesday of the month except Nov when they meet on the second Tuesday

APF: Second Tuesday of the month

MSE: Third Tuesday of the Month

Synod Placements ACOMP meet on the third Wednesday of the month

3. PRC will note the request and appoint two (2) Presbytery Liaison People (PLP's) One Presbytery person will be the chair of the Joint Nominating Committee (JNC). These people may or may not be involved in the Mission Study.
4. PRC Secretary will notify and liaise with the Mission, Strategy and Education Committee (MSE) requesting them to organise a mission study with the congregation and or PSC to do a Life and Witness Review.
5. A Mission Study Team will be appointed by MSE. (this may or may not include the PLP's)
 - The Mission Study Team Leader will contact the church council chair and treasurer to explain the process and develop dates and a timeline.
 - A mission study will consist of a survey of congregational members about missional goals and activities, a mission study day (approx. 3-5 hours).
 - A 5-year budget and an audited set of financials are required at this time and should be sent by the treasurer to the Chair of Administration, Property and Finance Committee. The mission study leader will be able supply the email for this person. APF will report back to the Mission Team (who will present any findings to the church council) and PRC.
 - The Team will make a presentation of the mission study to the church council. The Church Council can have some input into the mission study report.
6. **Concurrently** with the mission study the congregation can appoint members to the Joint Nominating Committee (JNC). There are usually between 4 – 6 people + the two PLP's on the JNC. The people from the congregation need to be representative of the congregation. i.e. young, old, male, female, cultural diversity
7. **PRC will approve the Mission Study (depending on the recommendations)**
 - (a) **At this time PRC may not allow the JNC to continue as there is further work to be done by the Presbytery and the Congregation re viabilities, regional cooperation etc.**

Filling a Ministerial Vacancy in a Congregational Placement

The JNC Process

8. The JNC meets to familiarise itself with its responsibilities and processes, and work through the JNC training kit. The JNC operates in a confidential way until there is agreement with a minister as to when confidentiality is no longer required.

<https://www.victas.uca.org.au/UCA%20Resources/Pages/Placements.aspx>

9. The JNC meet to prepare a congregational profile. See Attachment. The mission study provides most of the information needed for the profile. This profile must be approved by the Church Council
10. The completed Congregational Profile is sent to the secretary of PRC (address above). The secretary will arrange a time for 2 -3 people to present the profile to the PRC IN PERSON and answer any questions.
 - (a) PRC may approve the profile – continue to step 12
 - (b) PRC may send the Profile back to the JNC for more work
 - (c) PRC may not approve the Profile
15. PRC will complete the Presbytery Comments Page and then the secretary will forward the profile to the SYNOD Placements Committee - This committee meets once a month on the Third Wednesday of the Month except January.
16. The Placements committee may
 - (a) Approve the profile for listing or
 - (b) Send the profile back to the PRC for further work
 - Congregations CANNOT advertise for a minister without Placement's approval
17. Once a profile is listed with placements committee then names of ministers can be 'put against it'. Once names are approved by placements, their names and profiles are given to the JNC through the chairperson of the JNC.
18. The Secretary of the Placements Committee will send a letter outlining the Placements Committee's reasons for proposing names and make copies of profiles of Minister and placement available to the other party. This needs to happen within 7 days of the Placements Committee meeting. Copies of profiles of the proposed Minister(s) should be circulated to all members of JNC but not copied further (and must be collected and shredded when the conversation has concluded).

19. THIS PART IS CONFIDENTIAL – The ministers' name/s MUST NOT be made public.

The JNC proceeds to have a number of conversations (either online and or in person) with the ministers. There is no limit to the number of conversations that the JNC can have.

- (a) At NO time will the minister come and preach at the church and meet all the members of the church
 - (b) During this time the minister's name will NOT be revealed to the congregation.
 - (c) A minister can come and see the church/manse/area and meet people from the JNC and possibly other staff members. This must be done confidentially.
 - (d) In line with the confidentiality of this process it is not permitted for JNC members to go to worship at the minister's current congregation.
20. At any time during the conversations EITHER the JNC OR and Ministers can feel that this is not a good fit and leave the conversation. If the JNC decides this then a letter must be sent to Placements indicating this. Likewise, the minister can forward a letter to the JNC chair indicating that they do not wish to continue the conversation.

If the JNC is not happy with any names presented, then the Placements Committee will send further names through to them as names become available.

21. Until a Call is issued **either** party may withdraw from the conversation.

Filling a Ministerial Vacancy in a Congregational Placement

The Call Process

22. Once the JNC has discerned that they would like to commence a call to a particular minister, the chair of the JNC
 - a. will contact the PRC for approval
 - b. Contact the minister with the JNC's intention and request their preparedness to accept a call
 - c. Contact the Chair of the Congregation to organise a Congregational Meeting (2 weeks' notice must be given to the congregation of this meeting).
23. The Congregational meeting will be chaired by the chair of the JNC. The Minister WILL NOT be present; however, a video introduction may be played to the congregation. The chair of the JNC will present the reasons why the JNC is recommending the minister. The members of the JNC should be available for questions.
 - (a) There will be a secret ballot of the congregation and the results will be announced by the chair of the JNC.
 - (b) At this point the congregation may be asked to hold this information confidential for a further period of time so that the minister can tell his/her placement (at the other end).
24. The JNC chair will call the minister immediately following the meeting with the result and with the chair of the church council will negotiate matters for the terms of placement; living arrangements, start date etc.
25. A hard copy of the letter of call and terms of placement will be posted to minister for signing.
 - (a) The minister has two weeks in which to respond in writing.
 - (b) The Minister has the right to not accept the call at this stage.
 - (c) The Minister must sign and return the terms of placement and an acceptance letter to the chair of the JNC.
 - (d) The minister will give 3 months' notice to their current ministry placement
26. An Induction Service Date will be organised by the Presbytery in consultation with the congregation.
27. The Minister takes up responsibilities in the new placement by the 15th day of the month (or the 21st day of the month if an inter-synod move or a move across Bass Strait is involved).
(NB placements normally date from the first day of a month, but removal leave is granted.)
28. The Chair of the JNC completes with the JNC an evaluation form. This gives the Presbytery feedback and ways to improve Presbytery processes.
29. After six months the PLPs, together with the other members of the JNC, the minister and members of the church council meet to discuss how the settling in process has been, the priorities for ministry and how the minister's and the church council members' lived experience of these has been.