

Appointment Process

NORTH GEORGIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE APPOINTIVE PROCESS

In consideration of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* ¶610, the process described below will be followed as closely as possible in the making and fixing of pastoral appointments. If, however, circumstances prevent this process from being followed in full, the Appointive Cabinet will attempt to remain true to the spirit of the process to the extent possible.

Per the BD&D, pastoral appointment making is a consultation process between the local congregation, clergy person, and the Conference. The role of the SPR/PPR committee is advisory, working in partnership with the Conference Superintendent and Cabinet on behalf of the whole church. Whenever possible, the committee may be given 2-3 pastoral candidates to choose from for potential pastoral interviews. While most churches will rely upon the cabinet to resource their pastoral appointments, a church may choose to lead their own search process for pastoral leadership upon the approval of the presiding elder and conference superintendent, and final interviews shall not be scheduled without the following: the approval of the pastor(s) being considered by the board of ministry, the presiding elder, and the conference superintendent. Churches and pastors have the right to decline a proposed appointment without malice – understanding that may extend the time when churches are served by pulpit supply.

The Conference Superintendent, Presiding Elders, and Connectional Elders shall constitute the Appointive Cabinet (the Cabinet) of the North Georgia Annual Conference. As the conference continues to grow, appropriate representation will be sought to best advocate for the needs of the local church and clergy. The Cabinet shall be as close to a representation of the people groups of the Conference as possible.

There will be an online database maintained by the Conference Administrative Assistant and accessible only to members of the Cabinet to house the church and clergy profiles of the NGA Annual Conference.

Assumptions:

- The appointment process is bathed in prayer and a collaborative process between the local church and the Cabinet.
- There is no guaranteed appointment.
- Every appointment is “fixed” by the Bishop.
- Cabinet members will be notified of and kept apprised of appointments in process.
- Cabinet members, pastors, and congregations should assume appointments will be long-term in nature.
- Appointments are made without regard to race, tribal or ethnic origin, gender, disability, marital status, or age.

Appointment Process

Step One: A church or clergy person seeking appointment or a change of appointment notifies their Connectional Elder. The Connectional Elder will notify the Conference Superintendent who will assign a Presiding Elder. The Presiding Elder has the SPR/PPR prayerfully complete the online Church Profile, giving attention and verbiage to the unique call God has for this congregation. The pastor is to complete the Clergy Profile, also giving attention to gifts and call. These forms are completed online and submitted to the Cabinet.

Step Two: The SPR/PPR committee forms a prayer team specifically for the purpose of seeking the Lord’s best for their circumstances. The pastor does the same for his/herself. A prayer team may be as few as two or three

people (or as many as are gifted for the work of intercession) who are willing to intentionally, regularly pray over the process.

Step Three: Once the Church and Clergy Profiles are complete the Presiding Elder will review the profiles and responds in the following manner:

- A. Congregation - The Presiding Elder will contact the SPR/PPR chair and convene a meeting with the full committee to review the church's submitted profile and to further understand the missional needs of the community and the church, as well as the spiritual gifts and leadership skills they seek in their next pastor. At this time the SPR/PPR committee may offer names of pastors whom they would like to be considered for appointment to their church.
- B. Clergy – The Presiding Elder will review the pastor's profile and confirm with the ANNUAL CONFERENCE's Board of Ministry that the pastor is properly credentialed and in good standing. A clergy person may ask to be considered for appointment to a church that is currently seeking a pastor.

Step Four: The Presiding Elder will present this information to the Cabinet for consultation and consideration with regard to the whole of the Conference.

- A. Congregation – The Cabinet will make a list of pastoral candidates that best fit the missional needs of the congregation. The church is also invited to search for available candidates within or beyond the Annual Conference and submit names to their Presiding Elder. NOTE: The list of candidates shall include a female and a person of color if those persons are available for appointment.
 - 1. After considering all candidates, the Presiding Elder will notify the congregation of the top candidates and provide their Clergy Profiles.
 - 2. The Presiding Elder SHOULD NOT as a rule arrange for candidates to be interviewed by the SPR/PPR committee of the local church (there may be exceptions negotiated in consultation with the Presiding Elder), nor should the committee members contact the candidates directly at this stage. The hope is that church leaders are discerning spiritually and faithfully the call of God rather than leaning only on secular practices. Remember: this is not a "hire;" this is an appointment. However, if the church is without a pastor and is seeking preachers to fill the pulpit, they may in consultation with their Presiding Elder contact a pastor being considered to invite them to assist with preaching needs.
 - 3. The Presiding Elder SHOULD encourage SPR/PPR committees to do their own research into pastoral candidates (i.e., watching sermon videos online, reading blogs written by the pastor, etc.).
 - 4. The SPR/PPR committee SHOULD be in fervent prayer at this time, and should keep their prayer team informed of progress as they seek the Lord for the right fit for their community.
- B. Clergy – The Cabinet will make a list of available or potentially available appointments that best fit with the pastor's gifts and skills.
 - 1. After considering all potential congregations, the Presiding Elder will notify the clergy person of the top 2-3 best fits and provide him or her with Church Profiles for each of them.
 - 2. The pastor SHOULD do his or her own research into the church and learn as much as he or she can about that church's community, ministry and mission and their history and identity.
 - 3. The pastor SHOULD NOT contact the SPR/PPR committee members or members of the congregation directly during this discernment time, directing all questions to the Presiding Elder only. Again, the hope is that all parties are seeking to spiritually discern God's best for both the church and the pastor.
 - 4. The pastor SHOULD continue to inform their prayer team of progress as they intercede, seeking the Lord for the right fit for their gifts and call.

Step Five: After the congregation(s) and pastor(s) have completed their discernment, they will notify the Presiding Elder of their preferences in order.

- A. Once the SPR/PPR identify a potential pastor AND said pastor agrees that he or she would like to serve that local church, the Presiding Elder notifies the SPR/PPR Chair and the pastor that they are entering into a more focused season of discernment which includes both prayer and conversation. This MAY include a face-to-face or zoom meeting with the pastor and SPR/PPR committee (the Presiding Elder may be present if requested). Discernment is entrusted to church leaders, the pastor, and the Holy Spirit.
- B. Following this mutual season of discernment, if the pastor and church have affirmed a desire to pursue an appointment, they will enter into an Appointment Covenant with each other and with the Conference. The Presiding Elder works with the Committee and pastor to “set” the details of the compensation package – inclusive of salary, utility allowance (where applicable), reimbursables, educational allowance – as well as pension/benefits and housing – whether housing allowance or parsonage.
- C. Once the Appointment Covenant is “set,” the Presiding Elder will arrange for an in-person meeting with the church’s SPRC/PPRC and the Pastor. The Presiding Elder will also be present at that meeting.
- D. Once the agreement is set, the Presiding Elder completes a Change of Appointment Form containing the details of the agreement and sends the form to the Conference Superintendent for approval and requesting the appointment be “fixed” by the Bishop.

On Ending Appointments

In the case that a pastoral appointment must be discontinued for purposes unrelated to misconduct, the Presiding Elder shall convene a meeting with the SPR/PPR to determine the reason for discontinuing the appointment.

Churches cannot “fire” the pastor under appointment nor shall clergy “quit” an appointment without first meeting and consulting with the SPR/PPR and his or her Presiding Elder.

The Presiding Elder shall negotiate an exit plan for the appointed pastor that shall include a gracious severance package and a realistic exit calendar.