

Making Sense of Presby-Speak

At a serious moment at the end of Jesus' life, the Savior shared some somber words with His disciples about the nature of His ministry and identity. In John 16:29, the disciples exclaim, "Finally, now You are speaking plainly and are not using a figure of speech!" In plain English they were saying, "Finally, You're making sense!"

Over the months of the pastoral search, Presby-Speak, the language of Presbyterian insiders will be bandied about with the presumption that *all* Presbyterians know what the insiders are talking about. Presbyterians aren't so good at figurative language like Jesus was, but we are good at **INITIALS !!!** Much of the search process is reduced to initials that identify people, paperwork or steps in the process. Here is a handy guide to help us all understand what people are talking about! Enjoy.

PNC - Pastoral Nominating Committee. These are the people we elected to engage in Valley Forge's search for a new pastor. Their work is confidential in nature, though they will give us periodic and generalized updates. Their meetings are closed, though we should be praying for the committee, their families, and their meetings on a daily basis. Neither the Session nor the Interim Pastor interfere with the PNC's work. The next formal word we will hear from the PNC is when they are ready to present a candidate to the congregation to become pastor of the Valley Forge Church.

CIF - Church Information Form. This document is prepared by the PNC based on the Mission Study that describes the Valley Forge congregation, its mission and community. It is filed with the denomination's main office, and is made available to pastors who are interested in learning more about the position of "pastor" at VFPC. The CIF is also employed by the national office to match potential candidates for the position.

PIF - Personal Information Form. This document is the complementary side of the search process provided by pastors who are searching for a new position. It describes individual pastors, their gifts, their experiences, and their interest in a new field of service and what they envision that field to look like. It, too, is filed with the national office and is available to PNC's, while, at the same time, it is used to match potential candidates to churches.

CLC - Church Leadership Connection. This is the national entity that oversees and assists the matching process as pastors and congregations listen to the Holy Spirit to discern the call of God in their life and ministry.

COM - Committee on Ministry. This committee is an entity of the Presbytery of Philadelphia that guides the work of the PNC through the search process. Their oversight of the search process should assure a careful, thorough vetting of candidates including background checks, approval of terms of call, and examination of a candidate's theology and statement of faith. The partnership of the PNC and COM is vital in this process.
