

**Frequently Asked Questions  
The Pulpit Search Committee  
Briarwood Presbyterian Church  
October 15, 2024**

**1. What is the Pulpit Search Committee (PSC)?**

In the Presbyterian Church in America, the Pulpit Search Committee (PSC) is a committee of the congregation, voted upon by the congregation to select a Senior Pastor. The Pulpit Search Committee (PSC), once selected, has the duty to prayerfully undertake an in-depth search process in order to offer to the congregation the pastor who the PSC believes is God's choice to be the next Senior Pastor. The congregation will vote to affirm or not affirm the PSC's choice.

**2. How was Briarwood's PSC formed?**

In July 2024, the Briarwood Session (Elders) established a process to create a Pulpit Search Committee to select and recommend a new Senior Pastor for Briarwood. The Congregation provided several hundred nominations for the Pulpit Search Committee over a two-week period. On August 25, 2024, a Congregational Meeting was held, and the Pulpit Search Committee was elected. The committee consists of 12 members and 2 alternates.

**3. What is involved in the PSC's search process?**

With much prayer, the PSC must undertake the necessary research and deep evaluation process, with input from the congregation, essential to build a profile by which to evaluate candidates. The PSC is called to dig deep into the profiles of candidates from which they can discern preaching qualities, leadership characteristics, theological correctness, pastoral qualities, and other giftedness necessary for our next Senior Pastor.

**4. What is the relationship of the PSC to the congregation?**

The PCA Book of Church Order calls for the Pulpit Search Committee to be a committee of the congregation. The PSC reports to, and is accountable to, the congregation and should carefully follow communications, reporting, and other best practices for a Senior Pastor search. While the PSC is the committee designated to recommend a candidate to the congregation, it is the role of the congregation to ultimately vote on the new Senior Pastor.

**5. What is the relationship of the PSC to the Session (Elders)?**

The PSC must honor the role and authority of the Session, as given by our Lord through the scriptures. Even so, the PSC does not report to the Session, nor is the Session given by the Book of Church Order authority over the PSC. However, the PSC should keep the Session informed of their progress and functions, with discretion, even though the Session has no authority over those functions. There are several Session members on the Briarwood PSC, including the Chair and Vice-Chair of the PSC, and they can communicate with the Session.

**6. Who is the McGowan Global Institute (MGI) and what is their role?**

MGI has been retained by the Pulpit Search Committee at Briarwood to aid in the foundational work required to conduct a search of this magnitude. MGI is an established assessment and placement ministry which functions with the PSC as a ministry partner, with a long track record of using wise best practices to aid the PSC. MGI has members who are teaching elders, ruling elders, and administrators with an expansive background in those practices, procedures, and processes that work best. As a ministry partner, MGI works to walk the search committee through practices that are “tried and true”, and to bring qualified candidates to the PSC for consideration if requested to do so. MGI will have a lead consultant working frequently with the PSC to establish patterns of prayer, establishment of various committees, establishment of vetting and profiling processes, processes on listening wisely to sermons, and discerning proper information from references and interviews.

**7. Will the congregation have an opportunity to give feedback to the PSC?**

Yes. An electronic survey will be sent to all church members through which members are encouraged to provide their input. In addition, with the help of McGowan Global Institute (MGI), there will be interviews with elders, deacons, staff, and a cross section of congregational members to gain insight into Briarwood as a church, which will help inform the profile of the pastor who can best lead Briarwood. While it is not feasible to individually interview all members, ALL members will have an opportunity to submit their input through an electronic survey. The PSC has also established a dedicated email address by which Briarwood members are encouraged to send any recommendations they may have to the search committee.

**8. How will the PSC selection and congregational meeting(s) be conducted?**

Upon selecting a final candidate for Senior Pastor, a specially called congregational meeting will be held to communicate the PSC findings and present information on the candidate. Following the congregational meeting to present the candidate, the congregation will have the opportunity to vote on the candidate. A candidate should receive a high majority of the vote—though only a majority is required.

**9. What is The Book of Church Order (BCO) and how does it prescribe information to this process?**

The Book of Church Order offers the direction by which a candidate is voted on and approved by the local church in the PCA. The local church then sends all information to the Presbytery, which approves the proposed calling, and examines and approves the candidate and installs him.

In summary, while Biblical precepts give the Session major leadership functions within a local church, the PCA, through the Book of Church Order, gives the authority of the Senior Pastor search to the Congregation, with the elected Pulpit Search Committee functioning as the committee designated to make a recommendation to the congregation for approval. It is the role of the congregation to ultimately select and vote on the new Senior pastor. It is then up to the Presbytery to review and approve the selection by the local church.