

Calling an Associate Minister

A document prepared and endorsed by the DPC Session – 08.06.2021

1. What is the purpose and procedure of the Congregational Meeting after church on Sunday July 11th?

As announced during the service on Sunday May 1st 2021 the DPC Session have endorsed Rev Aaron Boyd writing to the Presbytery of Melbourne West to request that they create the position of an Associate Minister for our church, with the intention that the members of DPC can decide later on if they are willing to call Rev. Adam Humphries to fill that position.

As a part of the process the Presbytery is required to ascertain the mind of the congregation on the matter of creating the position of an Associate Minister, and this will happen at a Congregational Meeting after the church service on Sunday July 11th. A final decision about whether to call Rev. Adam Humphries to fill this position will not be made at this meeting.

In endorsing Pastor Aaron writing to the Presbytery about this matter, the Session has signalled that they support this process of creating a position of Associate Minister at DPC. To express this support the elders will do their best to be present at the start of the meeting on July 11th, but to allow members the opportunity to speak freely on the matter any elders who are present will leave the meeting following the initial welcome to the members of Presbytery who will lead the meeting. After the discussion with the congregation the elders will return to the meeting to pray and to answer any questions that the members of the Presbytery were not able to answer. Of course, Adam Humphries will not be present for any of the meeting.

Any communicant members of DPC who are unable to attend the meeting can email any expressions of support or concern that they might have about this process to Rev. Phillip Court, the Convenor of the Presbytery Committee, at philipcourt52@gmail.com.

To aid you in preparing for this meeting, and engaging thoughtfully with this process, we have prepared the following material.

2. What is the official process for calling an Associate Minister?

- The relevant steps of this process can be found under section 13 of chapter 4 of the PCV Code Book.¹ Key to this is rule 4.112 which states “A minister cannot be inducted into a pastoral charge without the issue, sustaining and accepting of a call from the congregation and the issue of an edict of induction.”
- In the Presbyterian Church the Presbytery creates positions to which a minister can be called and inducted. In the case of a church that already has a called and inducted minister (e.g. Rev. Aaron Boyd at DPC), the Presbytery creates a position for an associate or a colleague.
- Once the Presbytery creates the position the members of the congregation call their minister of choice. The Presbytery inducts a called minister into the position at the church.

¹ See 4.76 for associates. Available here: <https://pcv.org.au/resources/documents/>

- Where there is a vacant position in a church, the members of the congregation decide on their process for finding a new minister.
 - Possible methods for calling a minister: 1) Immediately add a name into the *form of call*; 2) Invite a minister to preach for a call; or 3) Appoint a selection committee to gather names and bring one at a time to the congregation.
- Once a potential candidate has been voted on by the members of a congregation at a meeting, his name is inserted into the *form of call* document. Communicant members of the church then have an opportunity to add their name to the call (adherents can sign their concurrence).² There must be at least 60% subscription to the call by the communicant members.
- The call document is then sent to the presbytery who sustain the call and hand it to the candidate who then needs to respond within 30 days. After this the ordination and induction, or induction only, can be planned.

It is important to note that any communicant member of the congregation has the right to express their concerns about the process, as per PCV Code Rule 4.127:

4.127 Dissatisfaction with proceedings

Any communicant or adherent of the congregation present at any meeting called in connection with a vacancy, who is dissatisfied with any part of its proceedings, may dissent and petition the presbytery to review the matter. The presbytery must deal with any such petition before proceeding with the call.

3. What difference does this make in the situation of Adam Humphries?³

Rev. Adam Humphries is currently employed as an Assistant to the Minister at DPC. Adam's role has and will continue to evolve over time, but if you would like to read a Position Description of the role he was employed into, and continues to serve in, you can find it here:

<https://darebinpc.elvanto.com.au/file/3cb0c943-ca40-4f60-aead-64b17633a0b6/>

The position of Assistant to the Minister is not one that needs to be filled by an ordained minister but Adam was employed because we felt he was a good fit for the position, and because we recognised the benefits of having a second ordained minister to work alongside Aaron in his work of pastoring and teaching. As an ordained Presbyterian minister, Adam can conduct the Lord's Supper and Baptisms and he has training and experience related to pastoral ministry in general, and within the Presbyterian Church of Victoria in particular.

Those who were members of DPC when we were in the process of employing a second pastor might remember that we had initially thought that we would call Adam as an Associate Minister but then thought it would be more prudent to first employ him as an assistant. This gave the congregation time to get to know Adam and gave Adam time to settle into the ministry at DPC.

² An adherent is an official church position which must be applied for by those who do not wish to become communicants. We currently have no adherents at DPC.

³ If you would like to think more generally about what qualifications an elder or pastor-teacher in the church should have you could listen to this sermon that Pastor Aaron gave on the Biblical Qualifications of Eldership in 2019: <http://www.darebinpc.com.au/sermons/2019/8/12/biblical-qualifications-for-eldership>

It is important to note that Adam's position as an Assistant to the Minister is connected to Aaron's position as the called and inducted Minister. This means that while the congregation has been involved with approving finances for Adam's employment, technically Aaron is the one who has appointed Adam, not the members of the congregation.

In calling Adam, the congregation would be deciding to have him as a minister of the congregation and to be a member of the Session.

In relation to Adam's position being connected to Aaron, it is also worth pointing out that if Aaron ceased to be a minister at DPC, Adam would automatically lose his position. By calling Adam, we could ensure continuity of ministry for DPC even if Adam was not willing or able to be the long term Senior Minister.

Furthermore, Adam is currently on a term contract but if he were called and inducted, he would remain as a minister of DPC until he resigned, accepted a call from another church, or was removed by the Presbytery due to serious doctrinal issues or moral failing. If there were financial difficulties with sustaining Adam's remuneration it is worth noting that there are mechanisms in place where the Presbytery can assist. While the specifics of Adam's role at DPC might evolve and change over time, calling him would mean that he is appointed to the congregation in an ongoing full-time basis.

Finally, it is worth noting that some key aspects of Adam's ministry at DPC are only possible because of his status as an ordained minister and special rulings made by the Presbytery. Administering the Lord's Supper and Baptism have already been mentioned. Additionally, Adam's seat on the Session is only possible because he has been appointed as an assessor by the Presbytery, which also gives him a seat on the Board of Management which has been a great blessing to Aaron, Steve (Board Secretary) and the BOM as a whole. Ordinarily an Assistant to the Minister would not receive these privileges.

In summary, if DPC called and inducted Adam as an Associate Minister:

1. Adam would become a minister of DPC in his own right.
2. Communicant members of DPC would choose to call Adam rather than him being appointed by Aaron and the Presbytery.
3. Continuity of ministry would be secured in that Adam would remain a minister of DPC regardless of what happens to Aaron.
4. Barring serious doctrinal issues or moral failing, Adam would have a permanent position at DPC unless he resigned or accepted a call from another church.

CHECKLIST FOR CALLING A MINISTER

(Current as of 07/06/21)

Once the parish is vacant⁴

- ☐ The Presbytery declares a vacancy to exist (4.100).
- ☐ The edict of vacancy is read out to the congregation (Appendix 1, Item 12; 4.105.1).
- ☐ Certification that the edict has been read is sent to the Presbytery Clerk (4.105.2).
- ☐ Presbytery appoints an interim moderator or intentional interim minister (4.106).

During vacancy

- ☐ Revise the rolls of the congregation and make an electoral register (4.111b, 4.113).
- ☐ Certify the electoral register and send a certified copy to the Presbytery Clerk who shall sign it and retain it for Presbytery records (4.113.4).
- ☐ The congregation is to arrange any outstanding payments to the previous minister or to the General Assembly or to the Presbytery (4.114.1).
- ☐ The congregation is to draw up terms of settlement, which must be approved by the Presbytery (4.114.2-3).
- ☐ The Presbytery must forward the terms of settlement to the Maintenance of Ministry for approval (4.114.3, 4.115).

Preparing for a call

- ☐ The congregation meets and decides on whether it desires to:
 - a) to proceed to an immediate call; or
 - b) before taking any further step towards a call, to invite a particular person to lead the congregation in public worship and preach; or
 - c) to proceed to the immediate appointment of a selection committee.
- ☐ If option a, follow rule 4.119.
- ☐ If option b, follow rule 4.120.
- ☐ If option c, follow rules 4.121-4.125.

Making a call

- ☐ Draw up a form of call and insert a name of the person to be called (Depending on procedure used, follow rule 4.119.2, 4.120.2, or 4.123a).
 - Note, the congregation can request this be done by ballot (4.118.3).
- ☐ Commissioners from the congregation (at least one must be a member of session) are appointed to supervise the signing of the call by those on the electoral register (4.126).
- ☐ At least 60% of the communicants must subscribe to the call before proceeding (4.126.3)
- ☐ The interim moderator presents the call and a report to the Presbytery and the congregational commissioners may speak (4.132.1)

Presbytery sustaining a call must be satisfied that: (4.132.2)

- ☐ a) the terms of the proposed settlement have been approved by any relevant General Assembly committee;
- ☐ b) the rules preliminary to the signing of the call have been complied with;
- ☐ c) no improper canvassing for the person to whom the call is addressed has occurred;

⁴ This applies for to an associate or colleague position too

- ☐ d) the person to whom the call is addressed is eligible, or entitled to become eligible, under either the rules of the General Assembly governing status or of the General Assembly of Australia governing reception of ministers from other churches, and he:
 - presents satisfactory certificates when such are required;
 - has a current Working With Children Check; and
 - has completed all relevant PCV Safe Church requirements;
- ☐ e) the number of signatures of communicants subscribed is not less than three-fifths (60%) of the number of communicants on the electoral register; and
- ☐ f) there are no petitions from persons dissatisfied with the proceedings leading to the call, or that such petitions have been disposed of.

Transmitting the call

The steps vary depending on the situation of the person being called (whether he is a licentiate who has not yet been ordained, a minister not currently inducted into a church, or which presbytery he is part of if he's already inducted).

Call to a licentiate or minister not inducted into a pastoral charge (4.134)

- ☐ Sustain the call.
- ☐ Deliver the call to the licentiate or minister (in person or post).
- ☐ He must respond within 30 days.
- ☐ He must also submit a satisfactory extract of licence (if a licentiate) or a certificate of status (if a minister).
- ☐ The Presbytery fixes the date for ordination and induction, or induction only, and orders the relevant edict to be issued and read to the congregation at least 8 days prior to the service (Edict is Appendix 1, Item 13 – days are mentioned there).
- ☐ The Presbytery arranges the service.

1. Form of Call

CALL TO REV

We, the undersigned members and adherents of the congregation/s at
..... in connection with the Presbyterian
Church of Victoria, seeking the promotion of the glory of God and the good of
the church, being also without a pastor, are well assured of the ministerial
abilities, godly character, learning and spiritual wisdom of you
....., and we are also convinced of your suitability
to our present circumstances.

We have agreed to invite and call you to undertake the office of pastor among
us for the promotion of the Christian gospel in our district and for our spiritual
welfare. On your acceptance of this call we promise you all due respect,
encouragement, and obedience in the Lord, and promise to contribute
appropriately to your support as God may prosper us.

In witness of this we have signed this call, as duly attested by:

.....

(witnesses to signatures attached at the time of the congregational meeting)

(Normally, the interim moderator and session clerk)

..... (witnesses to signatures
attached afterwards)

(Normally, the commissioners are appointed at the congregational meeting, see [rule 4.126](#))

13. Edict of ordination/induction of licentiates and ministers

(see rules [4.134.3](#), [4.137.2](#), [4.138](#), [4.139](#))

The Presbytery of, in connection with the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, having completed the necessary steps for the of as minister of the congregation at , directed that this edict be read.

If any person has anything to object to in the life or doctrine of, he/she should notify the presbytery clerk in writing by (date **).

If no relevant objection is made by this date, the presbytery will proceed to the service as arranged.

Signed: (*presbytery clerk*) Dated:

Confirmation that the edict was read:

This edict was duly announced to the congregation at, on the day of 20.....

Signed: (*normally, session clerk or interim moderator*) Dated:

** The date must be set so as to allow sufficient time for the moderator to give at least seven days' notice for an urgent meeting of the presbytery to deal with any objections that may be received and, if necessary, for the court to postpone or cancel the service of ordination and induction or induction only in an orderly fashion.