



# Committees on Ministerial Standing

## Discussion and Training

Monday, January 24, 2022

# Introductions



Name



Location



Relationship to COMS

## Highlights of COMS function/role

- COMS perform an essential function
- COMS are empowered to make decisions
- COMS evaluate candidates on:
  - Apostolicity
  - Calling
  - Character
  - Competency
  - Compatibility
- Types of interviews
  - First-time license
  - 3-year update for license holders
  - Finalization
  - Reactivation
  - License holder moving conferences
- Please check out the COMS website:  
[committeesministerial.covchurch.org](http://committeesministerial.covchurch.org)

## Highlights of COMS function/role

- Importance of follow-up with candidates, especially those who are asked to rewrite or delay.
  - Sample letter available on COMS website.
  - Prevents confusion and hurt feelings on the part of the candidate.
  - **Timely** follow-up is crucial.
  - Best practice from Central Conf:
    - To include something personal in the follow-up letter.
  - It seems to be more common that candidates are verbally informed of the COMS' decision after 24 hours

## Important Updates

- Ordination equivalency plans continue to be popular.
- Fitness for Ministry (FFM) pre-screening is now required for all licensing candidates.

# Important Updates

## Covenant Orientation (CO)

- In 2020, the administration of CO was moved from DL to NPTS
- Tuition reduced from \$5030 to \$2900
- Have been offering all CO classes online during the pandemic.
- CO is now more accessible to more pastors.
- Currently wrestling with what it means to offer CO classes online.
- We will be conducting a survey of key stakeholders this spring to ask for feedback. We plan to survey COMS members.

# Issue

## Issue: Concern about quality of papers

- In development in EC Conference – a potential seminar or video for finalization candidates.
- Southeast Conference has created a review and mentorship committee. Assign candidates as needed.

# Issue

Issue: Regarding candidates in dissent

- Common complaint: interview can feel more like an interrogation than a dialog. Overly focused on the one issue.
- How can we address this?



## Clarifications re: the Board of OM's practices

### Clarifications

- Candidates can finalize even if they hold a dissenting position as long as they can articulate the ECC position, are willing to publicly uphold it and live within it, not undermine it.
- The Board of OM does **not** suspend credentials of ministers simply for holding a dissenting position.

# Review of Existing Resources

- **Best Practices for COMS**
- **Protocol of Care for ECC Pastors Discerning Credentials While in Dissent**
  - Developed by Howard Burgoyne and the EC Conf staff
  - Introduced to COMS in 2018 to be used as a resource
  - An attempt to standardize care across conferences
- **Freedom and Responsibility: Dissent and Covenant Clergy**
- **COMS job description, interview types, purposes of interviews**
- **Women in Ministry – questions to ask candidates**

# Review of Existing Resources

## **ECC Values and Standards for Common Ministry**

- Created by Howard Burgoyne
- Refined and edited by DL staff
- Reviewed by Superintendents and the Board
- Your feedback?

# State of the COMS

## Virtual Interviews

- How has it gone?
- Conference Administrator feedback
  - Practice runs were essential, so that COMS members felt prepared
  - COMS seemed to get the hang of virtual interviews pretty quickly
  - Remote interviews seem to need more time
  - Some conference admins feel more disconnected from the process because they are not there in person.

# State of the COMS

## Virtual Interviews

Pros:

- Very convenient
- Cost-effective
- Flexibility in scheduling
- Some candidates more likely to participate in credentialing because cost/geography barriers are gone

# State of the COMS

## Virtual Interviews

### Cons:

- Sense of loss in not being able to meet face to face.
- More difficult for Conf Admins to feel connected and follow up. Not as available to be a resource.
- Discernment can be more challenging, especially if there are tech problems.
- No longer have the immediacy of conferring with other COMS members for extended discernment.

# State of the COMS

## Virtual Interviews

### Thoughts on the future of virtual interviews

- Is there a desire to go back to in-person?
- Consider keeping the virtual option for certain types of interviews?
  - 3-year updates
  - For those with limitations (medical/financial)

# Conference Reports



1 POSITIVE



1 BEST  
PRACTICE



1 CHALLENGE



# Wrap-up



Ordered Ministry staff is available to travel to meet with your COMS for further discussion and training.



**Contact Danielle Ng for more information.**

# Thank you!

**Many thanks for your service to the Covenant! The role of the COMS is essential to the health of the ministerium. We appreciate the time and energy you commit to this work.**

