Pastoral Relations:

Regional Council Liaisons

January 2020

Pastoral Relations
Relations pastorales
The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada

Pastoral Relations: Regional Council Liaisons (January 2020)

Gratitude: The production of this resource and the new pastoral relations process has been assisted by the testing of the Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships projects across many Conferences. We are grateful for the print and online resources from the test Conferences, which have contributed to some of the material in this resource.

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About This Resource

This resource expands on the policy found under I. Pastoral Relations in *The Manual* and within *Pastoral Relations: Policy for a Community of Faith* (available on the Handbooks page of The United Church of Canada website). It is specifically for a liaison from the regional council (either staff or a volunteer) to help train and guide communities of faith in the new pastoral relations process.

This resource contains best practices that provide information, guidance, and advice on the recommended ways to live out mandatory policies and procedures.

This is one in a series to guide the church in the area of pastoral relations. Other resources in this series are as follows:

- Pastoral Relations: Ministry Personnel
- Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for a Community of Faith Profile
- Pastoral Relations: Policy for a Community of Faith
- Pastoral Relations: Supporting the Pastoral Relationship
- Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for Search and Selection

As of January 2019, these resources, available on the Handbooks page of The United Church of Canada website, replace *Pastoral Relations: Engaging and Supporting* (March 2015).

For assistance in your pastoral relations journey, including whom to contact in your regional council, please visit the Pastoral Relations page.

Best Practices

Introduction

Thank you for your willingness to be a regional council liaison to the community of faith group (a team developing the community of faith profile, a search team, the governing body, or the whole community of faith) offering leadership in the pastoral relations process, as the community of faith seeks a new pastoral relationship through a new call or appointment.

Unlike the previous role of presbytery representative to Joint Search Committees, a liaison's role as a support person is much more limited. It may also be flexible, depending on the situation and how your regional council is providing support to the pastoral relations process. There may be a need for a few in-person meetings (depending on your context and ability to travel), but the vast majority of this work can be completed via phone, e-mail, or over the Internet.

Regional Council Support

The regional council is responsible for providing support through the pastoral relations process.

All regional councils have trained members, called regional council liaisons, who are called to this work on the part of the regional council. The regional councils also have paid accountable staff—regional council ministers—who support the pastoral relations process and pastoral relationships. It is the regional council's responsibility to decide what support a community of faith and ministry personnel need, and to send that support.

A regional council liaison or another regional council representative will, at minimum, touch base with a community of faith and a ministry personnel at the following times:

- for any discussion about the pastoral relationship
- any time support is needed to explore a living faith story, whether or not the community of faith is experiencing a change in pastoral relations
- when a change in pastoral relations has been requested
- when the community of faith begins writing their profile
- when the community of faith is ready to post their profile
- when a search team is appointed
- when the governing body calls a meeting of the community of faith to hear the recommendation of the search team
- at the covenanting service

Some of a regional council liaison's tasks may be completed by staff, and some may be completed by volunteers who act as liaisons between the regional council and a community of faith in the pastoral relations process. If you are a volunteer, only you will know how much time and energy you can give. We value your ministry and hope you will stand by your own personal boundaries and limits. As a volunteer liaison, you will have an ongoing relationship with the regional council minister for pastoral relations. This person will be your primary contact and source of support.

In this work, it is important that you know all of the community of faith profile and pastoral relations resources and the Supervised Ministry Education resources (file them next to the Bible and *The Manual*!). These resources can be found online on the Handbooks page.

As you carefully review the material, please make notes. If you have any questions, please seek help. You can find contact information—whom to contact and for what—on the Pastoral Relations webpage. It is important to understand the new pastoral relations process and be familiar with the related resources because you may train both the team developing the community of faith profile and the search team. You will also field any questions they have.

It is best to develop a relationship with one or two people on the team you are working with, who can contact you for support and questions; then you won't be overwhelmed by different members of the same team.

Whenever you receive a call from a team member, ask the caller to identify what the issue or question is and where in the resource they have looked for a possible answer. If they haven't looked at the resource when they call you, walk them through how to find the first answer there. (In other words, try to build their capacity to use the resources independently. You should be their second resource, not the first.)

You also have an important relationship with the regional council that you represent and from whom you will receive support. You have a responsibility to liaise with the regional council committee responsible for pastoral relations. You will have opportunities to share with the regional council what is happening in the communities of faith you are supporting. You can also report back to the regional council on behalf of the community of faith about any help they require or about how they are currently functioning.

> "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom God will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you." (John 14:26, alt.)

Touchpoint: Any Discussion about the Pastoral Relationship

As a member of the covenant that is foundational to the pastoral relationship, the regional council participates in any conversation about the pastoral relationship. During these conversations, a liaison represents the regional council. A liaison is a resource to the community of faith during their process to begin a new pastoral relationship. In addition, a liaison engages in conversations around either of the following:

- a request by either the community of faith or ministry personnel to renegotiate the terms of the current pastoral relationship
- an addition of ministry personnel to the community of faith to form a team ministry, and subsequent changes to the job descriptions of existing ministry personnel

> "Speak, for your servant is listening." (1 Samuel 3:10)

There are two specific changes in pastoral relations—amalgamations and provisional calls or appointments—where a liaison can help the community of faith navigate a modified process of calling or appointing ministry personnel. However, it is up to the regional council to decide how the pastoral relations process should be followed during these two specific instances.

Amalgamating

When two communities of faith amalgamate, the current pastoral relationships end. But if the amalgamating communities of faith plan to create new ministry positions and fill these positions internally from their existing ministry personnel, they do not need to complete all the steps of the pastoral relations process.

A liaison can help a team from the amalgamating communities of faith develop new position descriptions. (Begin by pointing them to the position description template in *Guidelines for a Community of Faith Profile*, available on the Handbooks page). The amalgamating communities of faith may not need to post a complete community of faith profile on ChurchHub, and the ministry personnel may not need to post their profile on ChurchHub. You can help the team prepare to interview existing ministry personnel, and the team will discern whether the individuals have the gifts and skills suitable for the positions.

The liaison and the regional council pastoral relations minister can help with completing the record of call or appointment in this case. Because the ministry personnel is not completing a profile and is not asking to be made available for call or appointment in ChurchHub, a workaround is required for the community of faith to complete the record of call or appointment.

A liaison is present at the meeting of the community of faith to decide on calling or appointing the ministry personnel. You are also present at the covenanting service to celebrate the renewed pastoral relationship(s).

Provisionally Calling or Appointing a Candidate

When a candidate is searching for a provisional call or appointment before commissioning, ordination, or recognition, the community of faith (where the candidate had been serving under a candidate supply appointment) and the candidate may both prefer that the individual be called or appointed to the same community of faith after their commissioning, ordination, or recognition. Because the position is being filled internally, neither the community of faith nor the candidate may need to post their profiles on ChurchHub and engage in the complete pastoral relations process.

A liaison can help a team from the community of faith develop a new position description. (Begin by pointing them to the position description template in *Guidelines for a Community of Faith Profile*, available on the Handbooks page.) You can also help the team prepare to interview the individual for the position, and the team will discern whether the individual has the gifts and skills suitable for the position.

The liaison and the regional council pastoral relations minister can help with completing the record of call or appointment in this case. Because the candidate is not completing a profile and is not asking to be made available for call or appointment in ChurchHub, a workaround is required for the community of faith to complete the record of call or appointment. A liaison is present at the meeting of the community of faith to approve the provisional call or appointment. You are also present at the covenanting service to celebrate the renewed pastoral relationship.

Touchpoint: When a Change in Pastoral Relations Has Been Requested

The regional council is involved in a change of pastoral relations that is either of the following:

- a change in the terms of a call or appointment in an ongoing pastoral relationship
- the ending of a pastoral relationship

When a liaison is called on for a conversation on changes to the terms of a call or appointment, you can help the members of the community of faith and the ministry personnel enter into the conversation with honesty, spiritual grounding, and Holy Manners. The following practices may be helpful as you engage in this type of conversation:

- Meet separately with each of the parties ahead of the conversation to confirm that the community of faith and the ministry personnel are in mutual agreement with the change.
- Use your best communication practices during the conversation:
    - Listen with your full self.
    - Reframe and repeat what you have heard to enable all parties to hear each other.
    - Check that all parties have been heard.
- Make notes of the meeting.
- Ask each party to name what they want and why.
- Observe the dynamics in the meeting and how they contribute to potential actions.
- Help the group gain clarity on a new job description.

- Determine what else is needed from the regional council to help.

> "Take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed…." (Matthew 18:16)

When a liaison is called on to assist when a community of faith wants to end the pastoral relationship, ensure that *The Manual,* section I.3.1.6, is followed. While you may not chair the meeting, you can encourage that Holy Manners are followed.

Touchpoint: When the Community of Faith Begins to Write Their Profile

A liaison offers assistance to a community of faith any time support is needed to explore a living faith story or to complete their community of faith profile. This may be when a community of faith is beginning the process to form a new pastoral relationship. You help the team tasked with developing their community of faith profile prepare for their work.

You will gather (either in person or via the Internet) with the team (or equivalent) shortly after their appointment to begin the training.

Areas of training include

- Holy Manners
- an overview of the community of faith profile
- using ChurchHub
- if the community of faith profile is being prepared for a search:
  - considerations for part-time ministry; and
  - introduction to supervised ministry education.

Holy Manners

Help the team establish guidelines for their conversation and behaviour with each other. This is an important first step to becoming a team. The team is responsible for holding each other individually and collectively accountable to Holy Manners. A version of Holy Manners is found in the Appendix of *The Manual*.

Together, list four to six guidelines that are important for team members to use in their conversations with each other. Record these on a flip chart. Encourage the team to display the guidelines for everyone to see at every meeting, and ensure these are recorded in the minutes at the next meeting.

Examples of Holy Manners:

- We will maintain confidentiality (everything that is said among this team stays only with this team—not with partners, spouses, children, neighbours, or other members of the community of faith).
- We will listen with respect to each other, even when we don't agree.
- We will listen without interrupting or having side conversations.

- We will respect each other's time by starting and ending our meetings on time.
- We will encourage those who are quiet to fully participate; we will ask those who are talkative to listen more.

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." (Matthew 18:20)

As long as the job of tending to Holy Manners belongs to only one person, no one will ever take it seriously. It is not just the responsibility of the chair or facilitator; it is everyone's job to be responsible for their own actions and to help each other be accountable. If you can do this in a spirit of love and respect, you can truly have wonderfully diverse conversations that lead to good decision-making and communities of faith that are known by their love.

Overview of the Community of Faith Profile

A liaison can guide the team through the pieces they will need to knit together for the community of faith profile. If they have further detailed questions about the search portion of the process, those questions can be included in your training of the search team.

When a community of faith is not searching for a new pastoral relationship, the profile must include the following:

- living faith story
- financial statement
- demographics
- manse report, if applicable
- real property
- learning site requirements, if applicable

When a community of faith is experiencing a change in pastoral relations, its profile needs to be updated. A community of faith profile that is ready to post for search and selection must include the following additional elements:

- financial viability review
- position description(s)

Descriptions of the elements of the community of faith profile can be found in *Guidelines for a Community of Faith Profile,* which also outlines flexible options for what a community of faith can use for its living faith story. If you are working with a team that thinks their community of faith does not have anything existing to use as the basis for their living faith story, a template is in the Resources section of *Guidelines for a Community of Faith Profile.* The template may initially seem overwhelming. Reassure the team they do not need to answer all the questions but rather use them as a guide to articulate their faith and ministry needs according to the category headings.

As you help the team think about their community of faith profile, keep asking one question: But why? The responses to this question can help the team meet many of the purposes of the community of faith profile. As the team thinks about their living faith story, this question can help the team articulate the community of faith's witness to the gospel. As the team discerns parts of the position description, this question can help them articulate their ministry needs.

Using ChurchHub

Introduce the team to ChurchHub. Show them how to log in, and have one or two team members practise logging in using their community of faith's login information. Show them how to upload their community of faith profile when they are ready. (In training the search team, you will review how they can search and filter ministry personnel profiles within ChurchHub and other, later pieces of the pastoral relations process.)

After your training, the team will work at completing their community of faith profile. *Guidelines for a Community of Faith Profile* outlines the consultations they need to undertake to develop their profile and contains worksheets to gather the data to complete pieces like the demographics, real property, financial viability, and manse report (if applicable). During this process, they can contact you with questions. Please encourage them to reach out to you so there are no surprises when you next meet with the team to review their profile and decide whether it is ready to post on ChurchHub.

Considerations for Part-Time Ministry

As the community of faith develops their profile, they may soon realize their resources are adequate only for part-time ministry personnel. If they have carefully and prayerfully looked at their stewardship of financial resources and concluded this, you could help them consider what it means.

The United Church designates full-time ministry as 40 hours. Therefore, half-time is 20 hours and three-quarter time is 30 hours. Can the ministry they have in mind be done within the time allotment? If not, what must be left undone by the ministry personnel and done instead by volunteers?

Consider that it takes at least 8–12 hours to prepare and conduct a worship service. The ministry personnel's remaining time is divided among pastoral care, education, and administration. In addition, there are regional council responsibilities: ministry personnel are required to attend regional council meetings and may participate in the work of the regional council.

Ministry personnel are also expected to conduct weddings and funerals. Weddings are planned events so compensation time can be prearranged, but funerals are by nature unpredictable. A system of agreed-upon compensation time should be in place for emergencies and emergent meetings.

That may leave very little time for pastoral care. People do not always fully understand the concept of part-time ministry, and they may complain that the minister is not spending enough time among the community of faith. The team will have to be prepared to explain why part-time ministry is necessary and what it will mean.

An active Ministry and Personnel Committee is essential to helping everyone understand and accept their roles. Here are some issues the M&P Committee may help to address:

- The minister needs a second part-time job to survive, and this job demands as much loyalty as their relationship with the community of faith.
- Is the community of faith willing to consider that the part-time minister may not lead worship every week?
- The need for volunteer support is very important with part-time ministry.
- Is a pastoral care team in place?
- Are lay preachers and worship leaders available in the community of faith or nearby?
- Does the community of faith accept that their minister will not always be available?
- The position description will need to be regularly reviewed to determine priorities in a given year.
- You can view other community of faith profiles on ChurchHub to learn whether nearby communities of faith with a part-time position posted are interested in working together to share a minister.

Introduction to Supervised Ministry Education (SME)

If the team is preparing a community of faith profile to search for a new ministry personnel, you have an important role in determining whether the community is suitable to be a learning site for Supervised Ministry Education (SME). SME is field-based education for ministry students. Before you introduce the idea of a SME learning site to the team, determine for yourself whether it is even a possibility:

Your role as a regional council liaison is to help an appropriate community of faith discern its call to be a SME learning site. The first question is whether the community of faith wants to seriously consider being a SME learning site.

This initial exploration could be the work of the whole governing body or the team named to prepare the community of faith profile. An interest in being a SME learning site could come up before beginning to develop the profile, as the community of faith contemplates the upcoming position.

Along with the support offered by the Office of Vocation minister, your role as a liaison is to ensure the community of faith has resources to understand the purpose, focus, criteria, and requirements of being a SME learning site. This could happen through an information session offered in person or remotely. It includes considering the community's willingness and ability to undertake the commitment to be a Supervised Ministry Education learning site. A suggested outline for a session on this can be found in the Resources section.

> Some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry…. (Ephesians 4:11–12)

Discernment may lead to one of the following paths:

- a decision to proceed, with the specific intention of filling the position through a SME appointment
- a decision to proceed, with the intention of filling the position through either a SME appointment or by call or appointment of other eligible ministry personnel
- a decision to proceed, with the intention of filling the position by call or appointment of other eligible ministry personnel, and not to become a SME learning site

You have an important role in ensuring that the community of faith's profile meets the standards of being a SME learning site. To meet the standards, the community of faith

- has reviewed the requirements for a SME learning site and understood the community of faith's obligations
- has the financial capacity to resource the SME candidate supply appointment
- has people to serve on a Lay Supervision Team
- is *not* in significant transition or conflict
- has met with a regional council liaison and/or Office of Vocation minister and discerned together the appropriateness of being a SME learning site
- has agreed to the terms of the Commitment to Be a Supervised Ministry Education Learning Site
- has a functioning governing body and M&P Committee and is enrolled with ADP for payroll

Touchpoint: When the Community of Faith Is Ready to Post Their Profile

Before the completed community of faith profile is filed, a liaison works with the governing body to ensure that the profile meets the purpose and has all of the required elements.

The purpose of the community of faith profile is to

- articulate the community of faith's witness to the gospel
- articulate the ministry needs of the community of faith

When a community of faith is not searching for a new pastoral relationship, the profile must include the following:

- living faith story
- financial statement
- demographics
- manse report, if applicable
- real property
- learning site requirements, if applicable

When a community of faith is experiencing a change in pastoral relations, its profile needs to be updated. A community of faith profile that is ready to post for search and selection must include the following additional elements:

- financial viability review
- position description(s)

> So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith. (Galatians 6:10)

When you judge that the profile is complete and meets its purpose, the community of faith meets to approve the profile. They submit it to the regional council, which then marks it as available to search and becomes viewable by ministry personnel searching for a new pastoral relationship, as well as other communities of faith that are searching.

A helpful video to point the community of faith to as they update their information on ChurchHub is *Community of Faith: How to Use ChurchHub* found on the ChurchHub webpage.

Touchpoint: When a Search Team Is Appointed

If the community of faith is searching for new ministry personnel, once their profile is approved, the governing body will also appoint a search team. The search team will have a first meeting to begin team building, set quorum for their team, and develop a team contact list and communication strategy. After this first meeting, a liaison will meet with the search team for training.

Areas of focus for search team training include

- overview of the search process
- Holy Manners
- bias and difference
- human rights
- eligibility and overview of streams of ministry
- confidentiality and conflict of interest
- using ChurchHub for searches
- administrative decisions for the team (decision-making, budget, practice for covering mileage/travel or interviewing with technology)

If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. (Galatians 5:25)

Search Process Overview

Remind the search team of the upcoming steps in the rest of the pastoral relations process by walking them through the relevant sections of *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for Search and Selection*:

- Exploring ministry personnel profiles for potential matches
- Preparing for first interviews
  - Organizing for interviews
  - Roles for interviews
  - A holy encounter in interviews
  - Human rights
  - What questions to ask
- First interviews
  - Debriefing and discerning after first interviews
  - Checking references
  - Debriefing and discerning after checking references
- Second interviews
  - Discerning and decision-making after second interview(s)
- Negotiating terms of call or appointment
- Recommendation to the community of faith
- Notifying unsuccessful applicants
- Preparing for the start of the new pastoral relationship
  - Offering support in transition to the new community
  - Planning orientation
  - Being a welcoming presence
- Beginning the new pastoral relationship
- Follow-up work
  - Managing personal documents
  - Debriefing and disbanding
- Covenanting service

Holy Manners

See page 9 for a description of Holy Manners. Just like the team developing the profile, the search team needs guidelines to guide their conversation and behaviour with each other.

Bias and Difference

The Resources section of *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for Search and Selection* includes an outline of an important piece of education that may be the most important part of the training you do with a search team: "Examining Bias and Difference with the Search Team." It is included in their resource so they can review this material regularly. Take time to review it with them, and lead the team through the Power Analysis Worksheet. If you realize the search team requires further education, please ask your regional council pastoral relations minister for further resources.

Human Rights

Ensure that the search team is aware how serious the need is to honour human rights throughout the search and selection process. The United Church of Canada supports the protection of human rights, abolition of discrimination in all its forms, and adherence to legislated provincial/territorial human rights codes. Human rights law is based on the principle that employment decisions should be based on the applicant's ability to do the job rather than on factors unrelated to job requirements, qualifications, or performance. Prohibited grounds of discrimination in various Canadian jurisdictions include race, colour, disability, political affiliation, ancestry, family status, age, record of offences, place of origin, gender, marital status, receipt of public assistance, citizenship, and sexual orientation. Please see the Resources section of *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for Search and Selection* for the link to the human rights commission or equivalent in your province or territory. Make sure everyone is aware of the prohibited grounds of discrimination in your jurisdiction.

> As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. (Colossians 3:12)

Each person has a mutual accountability to themselves, the rest of the search team, and the interviewees to ask questions and seek information that does not contravene human rights legislation. Sometimes we might do so inadvertently. For example, let's say in making small talk before the interview, a member of the search team asks in a friendly way, "Tell me about your family. Are they excited about you coming here for an interview?" Many people would respond to this in a positive way when they recognize the intention is to make them feel comfortable. Others, though, may find this an intrusion into their personal lives, and depending on their previous experiences, may consider it discriminatory. Team members should discuss among themselves what topics of conversation to choose or avoid.

Eligibility

The search team needs to be oriented to the different types of ministry personnel that are eligible for different types of pastoral relationships. Below are descriptions of these. More information about some of the streams is available on the Entering Ministry webpage.

> "Ministry personnel" is a general term that refers to members of the order of ministry, designated lay ministers, candidates serving under appointment, diaconal supply, and ordained supply.

A search team can pursue a new pastoral relationship only with ministry personnel who are eligible for a call or appointment within the United Church. All ministry personnel whose profiles can be viewed on ChurchHub have been confirmed as eligible by the Office of Vocation. Later on in the search process, checking references will include a final confirmation of continued eligibility with an Office of Vocation minister.

If someone applies through another means outside of ChurchHub and has not yet been declared eligible by the Office of Vocation, the search team needs to refer them to regional council staff before proceeding any further. *All ministry personnel must enter the search for a new pastoral relationship through ChurchHub.*

Ministry Personnel in The United Church of Canada

Members of the order of ministry: The Statement on Ministry in The United Church of Canada (2012) describes members of the order of ministry as follows:

> Diaconal ministers serve in all aspects of ministry and are formally called to education, service, social justice, and pastoral care. Diaconal ministry, rooted in the tradition and history of diakonia, "encourages a growing faith, speaks truth to power, seeks mutual empowerment, proclaims prophetic hope, nurtures life-giving community, fosters peaceful, right relationship within the church and the whole of creation…."
>
> Ordained ministers serve in all aspects of ministry and are formally called to word, sacrament, and pastoral care. This involves presiding in worship and sacrament, nurturing and strengthening the beloved community of God, making the wisdom of the ages relevant for today, and being representatives of Christ in the world in seeking justice and wholeness for all of creation.

Designated lay ministers are lay members of The United Church of Canada who are recognized to serve in paid accountable ministry; as such, they are eligible for appointments in solo or team ministry. Depending on the regulations of your regional council, it may be possible to appoint a designated lay minister to a community of faith for more than one year. Designated lay ministers are not eligible for call, but a request can be made to the regional council for them to be licensed for sacraments.

Candidates are lay members of The United Church of Canada who are in the formal process—called Candidacy Pathway—for preparation for designated lay, diaconal, or ordained ministry. Candidates are eligible for appointments. Candidates for designated lay ministry and ordained ministry must also complete Supervised Ministry Education (SME) requirements, which can be done in a candidate supply appointment. In order for a candidate to fulfill SME requirements through a candidate supply appointment, the community of faith must meet the criteria for suitability to be a SME learning site.

Admission applicants are diaconal or ordained ministers from other denominations who are applying to be admitted into the order of ministry of The United Church of Canada. Admission applicants must be approved by the Office of Vocation before they are eligible for an appointment. An admission applicant serving in an appointment is termed either ordained supply or diaconal supply.

Ministry partners are ministers of another denomination, with which the United Church has a mutual recognition agreement, who are eligible to seek a call or appointment as determined by the specific contents of the agreement. Mutual recognition of ministries is an agreement between the United Church and another denomination under which each denomination agrees to accept the credentials of the members of the other denomination's order of ministry. Before a minister seeks a call or appointment in a community of faith, authorization for the ministry partner must be granted by the Office of Vocation. A ministry partner, while under call or appointment, is equivalent to an ordered minister of the United Church in respect to membership and responsibilities in all councils of the church.

Immigration

Admission applicants from outside Canada or ministry partners are subject to immigration laws; this may have implications for the community of faith.

Intentional interim ministers are designated lay ministers, diaconal ministers, or ordained ministers who have been designated by the Office of Vocation to serve in interim ministry appointments. An interim ministry is a time-limited ministry in a community of faith whose purpose is to work toward specific goals decided on by the regional council and the community of faith. These goals can be mission-based, pastoral, or organizational. The interim minister does not continue to minister to the congregation after the interim period is over. For more information on interim ministry, see the Interim Ministry webpage.

Retired ministry personnel: All retired diaconal and retired ordained ministers are eligible for supply appointments in communities of faith. Retired ministry personnel who receive a pension are not eligible for a new call.

When someone retires while serving as a designated lay minister, they return to being a layperson in the church. However, they can seek to remain on the Office of Vocations' registry of accredited ministry personnel. If they remain on the registry and meet the eligibility requirements for an appointment, they may be able to seek an appointment while they receive their pension, similar to members of the order of ministry.

The team may also be aware of **congregational designated ministers,** who are baptized lay people employed by a pastoral charge in a specified ministry position designated as accountable to the community of faith's governing body. These are individuals whose work encompasses one or more specific areas of the congregation's ministry (e.g., youth worker, parish nurse, adult educator) and whose position responsibilities do not extend to the wider church. This category does not include those serving as candidate supply. Ordered ministry personnel, including ordered ministers from other denominations, are not eligible to serve in congregationally designated positions, and congregational designated ministers are not ministry personnel. A congregational designated minister may only serve in a congregation where a ministry personnel is called or appointed.

Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

When you introduce confidentiality to the search team, it is important to differentiate between privacy, confidentiality, transparency, and secrecy. Privacy, confidentiality, and transparency are essential for building trust. Secrecy, on the other hand, will impede trust.

- *Privacy* belongs to one individual only. Most people are aware of the importance of respecting the right to privacy—that is, honouring an individual's control over how and with whom personal information can be shared. This right is protected by Canadian law in the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA).
- *Confidentiality* means ensuring that information gained in private discussion is not disclosed to others inappropriately or used out of context. To maintain trust and the integrity of a process, it may be necessary to withhold some information. Confidentiality is a required condition for participants of certain groups to ensure that what is said in the group stays in the group. This enables people to speak freely about private or controversial issues without being held to account beyond the group and context where the words are spoken.
- *Transparency* means that methods and procedures are clear and open and can be questioned. It operates on the democratic principle that people have a right to know about the systems that affect their well-being. It means that people will know and have a say in how information is used, who sees it, and how it fits into the larger picture. It supports the principle of keeping a community of faith well informed about pastoral relations work.
- *Secrecy* is the opposite of transparency. It is the condition of withholding information for the purpose of control. It is a situation in which only a few are privy to certain information and everyone else is excluded, whether or not the information could potentially affect them. When people suspect, rightly or wrongly, that a few "insiders" are making decisions for others, mistrust can take hold.

When people are anxious that something going on could upset or harm them, they may become suspicious and confuse secrecy and confidentiality. Some matters discussed must be kept confidential within the team. It is important to be clear about what can and cannot be shared beyond the search team. But it is also very important that the team communicates its intentions and processes clearly and conducts its work transparently.

Without breaching the confidentiality of its meetings and private conversations, the team can communicate clearly about its work, timelines, and progress. Some guidance for this communication is offered in the Resources section of *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for Search and Selection.*

Confidentiality is also important when using technology in the search process. Do members of the search team have an e-mail address that is shared with other family members? Do search team members save log-in information to the community of faith profile on a computer that allows ChurchHub to be accessed by others in the household? These are important questions to review. To emphasize the importance of confidentiality, all members of the search team may be asked to complete a confidentiality agreement (a sample is found in the Resources section of *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for Search and Selection*).

The team also needs to be aware of what a conflict of interest is:

- A monetary conflict arises when the team is considering a decision that may have a monetary effect, positive or negative, on a member of the team or a person close to the member (relative or friend).
- A non-monetary conflict arises when a member of the team is constrained in any way from acting in the best interests of the United Church. That could occur if a member of the team or person close to the member stands to benefit in some way from a decision the team is considering.

Remember that, even if there is no actual conflict of interest, from the outside it may look like there is one. Avoid both actual and perceived conflicts of interest. If someone participates in a decision when they are in a conflict of interest, either real or apparent, the decision may be subject to appeal or a legal challenge.

Using ChurchHub for Search

If the search team includes members who worked on developing the community of faith profile, the team may already have a member who is familiar with ChurchHub. However, the team may need you to orient them to ChurchHub and show them how to review ministry personnel profiles.

Team Administration

Finally, highlight for the search team some important decisions they need to make.

Decision-Making

The team needs to decide whether they will come to decisions by consensus or voting. Some teams decide that they will aim for consensus and only vote if consensus cannot be reached.

The results of any vote are a confidential part of the process. Introduce this topic to the search team; they can have further discussion later about how they will approach decision-making.

There are a number of different approaches to decision-making, each with advantages and disadvantages. It helps to talk about and agree on how decisions will be made before having to make any.

Consensus

Consensus decision-making is a group decision-making process that seeks the consent of all participants. Consensus can be defined as an acceptable resolution that each member can support, even if it is not their favourite option. In a consensus model, the team can require either unanimous agreement or unanimous consent. Each person must feel fully able to voice their perspective and make their choice free of coercion, force, or undue influence.

An advantage of this style of decision-making is that it results in decisions that are agreed to by all parties. However, to do it well takes patience, a commitment to listening and respect, and time. Consensus can also be manipulated if people do not feel they have equal power within the group.

Voting

In a majority vote process, each person has one vote. The decision is made based on a simple majority: 50percent plus one vote. This well-understood and familiar process is frequently used in meetings. It generally follows a conversation in which individuals present their perspectives and attempt to influence the vote in a particular direction. The team can determine whether votes will be cast verbally, by a show of hands, or by a secret ballot. As much as possible, search teams should aim to build confidence and trust within the team so secret ballots are not used.

Rather than a simple majority, the search team can identify a threshold that is required for a decision. For example, the threshold might be quorum plus two; so, if there are nine people on the search team and quorum is set at six, then the threshold for a decision is eight votes for or against. In a three-point pastoral charge with representatives from each of the points, a team might decide to go with a majority vote as long as there is at least one vote in agreement from each preaching point.

One advantage of voting is that it generally takes less time. But a disadvantage, especially with simple majority voting, is that the decision can feel like a win–lose proposition. Teams can mitigate this to some extent with a majority threshold or by using voting only to assess how close they are to making a decision.

> And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles. (Acts 1:26)

Setting a Budget

The search team recommends a budget for the search process, which requires approval by the governing body. Included in the budget are expenses for interviewees' travel and other expenses of the search team. The team may also want to invite the governing body to discuss their limits on moving expenses if moving is required as part of the new pastoral relationship.

The team needs to discuss their practice for reimbursing interviewees for mileage, travel, and accommodation. What limits does the team want to set for first interviews? for second interviews? If an interviewee lives far away, it may be appropriate to arrange an interview using Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime. However, be aware of any bias the team might have when reviewing interviews and discerning between remote and in-person interviews. If the first interview was held over the Internet, it is recommended that the second interview be face to face. Whatever practices the search team decides on need to be consistently applied to all interviewees.

After you train them, the team should have all the tools they need to complete the search and selection process. *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for Search and Selection* provides a lot of guidance for searching for potential matches in ChurchHub, preparing for interviews, interviewing, and discerning. During this process, the team is free to contact you with questions. Encourage the team to reach out to you so the pastoral relations process is followed in just and equitable ways and human rights are upheld.

Touchpoint: When the Governing Body Requests a Meeting of the Community of Faith to Hear the Search Team's Recommendation

After the search team training, you'll next engage with the community of faith when they meet to consider the search team's recommendation. The search team will have completed a huge piece of work. You do not need to participate in all of the interviews unless this is required by your regional council.

> But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Jeremiah 31:33)

A liaison is present for the meeting of the community of faith that considers the search team's recommendation. You can attend in person, by telephone, or electronically. The Resources section that follows includes a sample outline of the agenda and motions for the meeting, which you can provide to the search team.

Touchpoint: At the Covenanting Service

After the new pastoral relationship begins, a liaison participates in the covenanting service. You are the representative of the regional council as the covenant among God, the community of faith, the ministry personnel, the regional council, and other parties that are integral to living out the gospel in community is celebrated.

The ministry personnel and a member of the search team will ask you to coordinate the best time to hold the covenanting service.

> What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. (Acts 6:5–6)

A sample liturgy for recognizing the covenant that provides the foundation for the new pastoral relationship can be found in the Milestones and Transitions worship page of the United Church website.

The covenanting service may be the last time you engage with this community of faith. Be sure to offer your gratitude to the people you worked with on the community of faith profile and the search team. However, if you have developed relationships with key leaders in this faith community, you may be called on again to represent the regional council in subsequent conversations about the pastoral relationship.

Resources

Sample Supervised Ministry Education Information Session by a Regional Council Liaison or Office of Vocation Minister

Time: about 1.5 hours

Gathering and Community Building

Share your name and a learning experience you have had that you value.

Worship

Gathering Prayer

Holy One, in Christ you call us to be the church,
and we gather now to ask for your wisdom
as we explore understandings of leadership
and seek to discern opportunities for leadership
and partnership in this community of faith. Amen

Scripture Suggestion

> The gifts [Christ] gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11–13)

Question for Silent Reflection

Is our community of faith called "to equip the saints for the work of ministry"?

Prayer Litany

We are called to be Christ's body, blessed with different gifts and different calls.
Grant us the wisdom to discern the gifts we have been given.
We are invited to encourage each other and to build up the whole body.
Grant us a learning spirit that seeks to grows in community.
Each of us is called into the church through our baptism;
together we help each other understand and live into the fullness of our call.
In faithfulness and openness, we seek Christ's leading
in discerning the gifts and call of this community of faith.
Gracious God, walk with us as we seek to be fully alive in Christ. Amen

The Role and Criteria of a Supervised Ministry Education Site

Information by the Facilitator

As the facilitator, ensure you discuss the following topics:

- The role of Supervised Ministry Education in the formation of a person preparing for leadership in ministry
- What makes a good learning experience
- Appropriate ministry expectations for candidates serving in a candidate supply appointment to fulfill SME requirements
- Expectations of the community of faith:
    - financial
    - Lay Supervision Team
    - context of ministry
    - M&P Committee
    - differences between the work of the Lay Supervision Team and the M&P Committee
- A look at the Commitment to Be a Supervised Ministry Education Learning Site
- Models of SME within theological education programs:
    - Designated Lay Ministry
    - Atlantic School of Theology Summer Distance Program
    - SME following completion of academic program
    - St. Andrew's College Ministry Residency

Group Discussion

1. Questions or clarification about SME.
2. What has prompted our interest in being a SME learning site?
3. What do we think we could offer that would "equip the saints for the work of ministry"?
4. What are our concerns about filling the vacancy as a SME learning site?

Information about Support to SME Learning Sites

- Support by Office of Vocation staff
- Relationship with educational supervisor
- Any financial support information

Decision-Making

In preparing the community of faith profile, provision may be made for being a SME learning site. Is the group ready to make a decision?

- If the decision is yes, work on the community of faith profile continues with that commitment shaping the work.
- If no, work on the community of faith profile continues focusing on call/appointment.

Closing

Handling Common Questions from Search Team Members

For support and questions, it is best to develop a relationship with one or two people on the search team you are working with. You don't want to be overwhelmed by contact from too many different members of the same team.

Whenever you receive a call from a team member, ask them to identify both what the issue or question is and where in the resources they have looked for an answer. If they haven't yet looked at the resources, walk them through how to find the first answer there. (In other words, try to build their capacity in using the pastoral relations resources. You should be their second resource, not the first.)

Here are some answers to common questions you may get:

I don't understand the matching process.

Let's go back to the section in the resource on Exploring Ministry Personnel Profiles for Potential Matches and we'll walk through it together. We can go online at the same time and walk through one profile together, referring to the Individual Worksheet for Matching in the Resources section of *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for Search and Selection.*

How do we choose our questions for the interview?

Let's go back to the section in the resource on Preparing for First Interviews and walk through it together. Remember, there is an inventory of Potential Interview Questions in the Resources section of *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for Search and Selection.*

You won't want to ask all of them; you can modify 10 or so to focus on your key priorities. Think about why you might be a potential match with the interviewee.

We interviewed someone and want to check their references, but they won't give us references for their current pastoral relationship. What should we do?

Generally, people decline to provide current references for one of two reasons:

- They have not yet disclosed that they are looking for a change.
- They are in a situation of conflict and don't wish to have references used from their current pastoral situation.

Start by clarifying why. If the interviewee has not yet disclosed that they are looking for a change, encourage the team to ask for other references and check these first. Then, after the second interview, ask for a reference from the current pastoral relationship.

If it is because of a conflict, encourage the interviewee to consider asking for a written letter of reference. (They can review it ahead of time and provide some context to the search team.) Remind the interviewee that there's more detail about this option in *Pastoral Relations: Ministry Personnel*.

When do we get a chance to go see the interviewee lead worship?

Let’s go back to the section in the resource on Checking References. Remember that it’s important not to do a surprise visit. With a large geographical distance and current technology, you may also want to ask for a recording of the interviewee leading worship.

Do we have to do a second interview? We don’t want to because we think it’s a waste of time.

Let’s go back to the section in the resource on Second Interviews. You may feel very clear about your potential match after your first interview and references, but it is important to conduct a second interview. It provides a chance for the search team to ask any questions they may have, and it gives space for the interviewee to ask important questions there wasn’t necessarily room for in the first interview. If distance is a concern and you’ve already interviewed face to face, you can use technology for a second interview.

Do we have to use ChurchHub? Can’t we put an advertisement in magazine and collect résumés?

All new pastoral relationships need to use ChurchHub. The eligibility check of ministry personnel is completed through ChurchHub, as is the record of call or appointment. You are free to advertise, but ministry personnel need to connect with you through ChurchHub.

Is ChurchHub secure?

Yes. Only communities of faith with profiles posted as available for call or appointment can see ministry personnel profiles posted as available for call or appointment. The database connected to ChurchHub is housed in Canada.

Commitment to Be a Supervised Ministry Education Learning Site

Include this material as part of the community of faith profile if the community of faith discerns their willingness to be a SME learning site.

We have been oriented to supervised ministry education (SME) by our regional council liaison or Office of Vocation minister. We are open to being a SME learning site. We understand our responsibilities and our ability of fulfill them. Therefore, we agree to the following:

1. Providing a safe and respectful learning environment in which there is clarity of expectation
2. Being a community of faith that is healthy and vital that can provide a context for learning and growth
3. Gathering a Lay Supervision Team of four or more people who are committed to being oriented and then meeting with the candidate during the appointment to support and encourage learning and to explore the learning goals, and to submit evaluations as required
4. Having in place a functioning governing body and an M&P Committee
5. Working along with a pastoral charge supervisor for the length of the SME appointment
6. Having an ADP account through which compensation is managed

Community of Faith Meeting Template to Consider Recommendation of the Search Team

____ Pastoral Charge
Congregational Meeting to Call or Appoint a New Minister

Date: ___________________________

Agenda

1. Meeting called to order at (state time): _____________________

   Chairperson: _______________________________________

   Recording secretary: ________________________________

2. Attendance sign in

3. Voting privileges: Motion to allow adherents to vote [once the members vote to allow this, adherents may vote on ALL matters (*The Manual* B.3.7.2)]

   Moved: _______________________ Seconded: ____________________________

   Carried/Defeated

4. Introduction of recommended applicant and terms of call/appointment

5. Motion to accept recommendation of the search team

   Moved: _______________________ Seconded: _________________________

(If this is a part-time call/appointment please fill in prorated amount of salary and benefits. Please note that telephone/communications allowances are not to be prorated.)

"that ________________ Pastoral Charge concur with the recommendation of the search team that _____________ be called to the _______________ Pastoral Charge with the following terms:

- Category ______ (A–F)
- Cost of Living category ______ (1–6)
- Effective date of ________________
- ______ hours per week (______%)
- Minimum annual salary of $________ plus ____% for a total annual salary of $_________
- Telephone/communication allowance of $_________

- Support for continuing education at $____________ each pastoral year
- Minimum one month (5 Sundays) vacation
- Three weeks' study leave (including Sundays) in each pastoral year
- Administrative assistance defined as ______________________
- Participation in the centralized payroll service; pension and group insurance payments as assessed
- Travel expense reimbursement as logged based on minimum General Council rate
- ___________________________________ additional terms

and that this request be forwarded to the ___________________________ Regional Council for approval of the call/appointment."

Carried/Defeated

6. As the stated business of the congregational meeting has been completed, meeting declared closed at (state time) __________________.

Signature of Chairperson: ____

Signature of Recording Secretary: __________________________________