

# Congregational Designated Ministers

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March 2020



Pastoral Relations  
Relations pastorales

The United Church of Canada  
L'Église Unie du Canada

Pastoral Relations: Congregational Designated Ministers (March 2020)



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## About This Resource

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This resource expands on the policy found under I.1.11 “Lay Ministry” in *The Manual*. It is specifically for communities of faith that would like to create a lay ministry position accountable to the governing body of the community of faith, and for baptized lay people who are considering appointment to congregational accountable positions.

This resource contains

- policy and procedures that must be followed; and
- additional resources, including position categorization guidelines and lay ministry competencies

Other resources that may prove helpful to a community of faith that is considering a lay ministry position, or that has appointed a layperson to a congregationally accountable position, are *Ministry and Personnel Committees: Policy, Procedures, Practices* and *Ministry and Personnel Committees: Resources for Ministry and Personnel Committees* (available on the [Handbooks](#) page of united-church.ca).

## What Is Congregational Designated Ministers Policy?

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Congregational designated ministers policy is policy that

- defines a congregational designated minister
- defines congregational designated ministry
- defines the employment relationship between the person appointed and the community of faith
- defines the role of the regional council in oversight of congregation designated ministry, including
  - categorization of positions, and
  - discipline of congregational designated ministers

Please refer to *The Manual*, I.1.11 “Lay Ministry” and J.8 “Conflict Resolution and Discipline – Lay People” (on the [Handbooks](#) page of united-church.ca).

**Congregational Designated Ministers** are baptized lay people who are appointed to lay ministry positions in communities of faith. Congregational designated ministers are accountable to the governing body of the community of faith in all matters except discipline. In matters of discipline, the person is accountable to the regional council.

**Congregational designated ministry** is paid lay ministry within communities of faith that serves in a team with called or appointed ministry personnel and is accountable to the governing body of the community of faith. The positions are focused on one or more specific areas of the community’s ministry; responsibilities do not extend to the wider church.

## Theological Grounding

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We are each given particular gifts of the Spirit.  
For the sake of the world,  
God calls all followers of Jesus to Christian ministry.

In the church,  
some are called to specific ministries of leadership,  
both lay and ordered;  
some witness to the good news;  
some uphold the art of worship;  
some comfort the grieving and guide the wandering;  
some build up the community of wisdom;  
some stand with the oppressed and work for justice.

To embody God's love in the world,  
the work of the church requires the ministry and discipleship  
of all believers. (*A Song of Faith*)

## Manual Policy: What Has Changed

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The 43rd General Council made the following change to congregational designated ministers policy:

Lay ministry positions accountable to the governing body may only be filled by congregational designated ministers.

In the previous version of *The Manual, 2016*, the policy stated:

### **I.1.8.3 Filling Positions Accountable to Governing Body**

**A position that is accountable to the governing body may be filled by**

- (a) a member of the order of ministry; or
- (b) a congregational designated ministry under section I.1.8.3 below  
(Employment of a Congregational Designated Minister)

The current version of *The Manual, 2019*, states:

### **I.1.11.3 Filling Positions Accountable to Governing Body**

A position that is accountable to the governing body may be filled by a congregational designated minister under section I.1.11.4 below.

The governing body is responsible for deciding on a search process to fill the

position.

If a community of faith wishes to call or appoint a member of the order of ministry to a position that has been classified as a congregationally accountable position, the community of faith would have to request that the regional council approve the position and call or appoint the ministry personnel through pastoral relations processes.

## Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice

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Congregational designated ministers (CDMs) are employees of the community of faith and are accountable to the governing body of the community of faith as stipulated in their position description. For the purposes of disciplinary oversight, congregational designated ministers are accountable to the regional council (see section J.8 of *The Manual*).

The policy that defines the effectiveness of congregational designated ministers and ministry personnel, known as the *Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel*, was approved by the 38th General Council. Please familiarize yourself with these standards (available on the [Handbooks](#) page of united-church.ca).

## Additional Policies for Community of Faith: Search and Selection, Categorization Guidelines, and Ministry Competencies

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### Search and Selection

#### Congregation Proposes CDM Position

Congregational designated ministry is community-based ministry that addresses a specific area of need within a community of faith.

The needs may be identified through the regular review of the community of faith's profile, from the governing body, or from another part of the community that is living out the ministry and reasons that lay ministry leadership would be of benefit.

The governing body of the community of faith or a team develops a position description that meets the identified needs. The categorization guidelines and ministry competencies for congregational designated ministers may be of assistance in this task.

The governing body then submits the position description to the regional council using the Community of Faith Request for Categorization of Lay Ministry Position form (available on the [Forms](#) page of united-church.ca).

### **Regional Council Assesses Position Description**

The regional council assesses the position description, referencing the categorization guidelines. The regional council

- affirms the position as congregationally accountable (i.e., lay employee or congregational designated minister), or
- recommends that the position be a denominationally accountable ministry position (i.e., ministry personnel)

The regional council records its decision on position categorization on the Request for Categorization form. The form is returned to the community of faith; the regional council retains a copy for its records.

If the regional council categorizes the position as *congregationally* accountable, the community of faith may proceed with a search process to fill the position.

If the regional council categorizes the position as *denominationally* accountable, the community of faith may enter into a dialogue with the regional council to determine

- whether the position description may be altered to fit within the scope of a congregational designated minister, or
- what process is needed to appoint or call ministry personnel to the community of faith.

Filling a denominationally accountable position either prompts the completion of a profile, if the community of faith has not recently completed one, or requires the posting of a position followed by a search process. A denominationally accountable position may be filled by any ministry personnel: a designated lay minister, a diaconal minister, or an ordained minister.

### **Congregation Undertakes Search Process**

The search process for a congregational designated minister may be undertaken by the governing body or a search team identified by the governing body.

If the search process proceeds to fill a congregational designated minister position, the search team is responsible for ensuring that the successful applicant has, or is willing to acquire through a continuing education plan, the core competencies required of a congregational designated minister.

The governing body of the community of faith and the search team are responsible for identifying and testing for competencies specific to the needs of their community, as reflected in the position description. For reference, competencies specific to youth ministry, parish nursing, pastoral care, education, outreach, worship, and music ministry can be found starting on page 18.

### **Governing Body Makes an Appointment**

Once the search team has made a decision about an applicant, it brings a recommendation to the governing body for a decision. The congregational designated minister must be appointed

for a specified period of time, to be determined by the governing body. The appointment may later be renewed.

Upon appointment, the applicant whose name is before the governing body of the community of faith is responsible for providing an original, current vulnerable sector (level 2) police records check (dated within the last six months), of which the governing body may retain a copy. A new police records check must be provided to the governing body every sixth year as the appointment is renewed.

### **Terms of Appointment**

- In negotiating terms, all federal and provincial employment standards must be met.
- For reference, please see *Ministry and Personnel Committees: Policy, Procedures, Practices and Faithful Footsteps: Screening Procedures for Positions of Trust and Authority in The United Church of Canada* (available on the [Handbooks](#) page of united-church.ca).
- A congregational designated minister serving 14 hours a week or more must be enrolled in the United Church Pension and Benefits Plans.
- The community of faith is responsible for determining a continuing education budget and time allotment for the congregational designated minister at the time of appointment. Congregational designated ministers meet very specific needs within faith communities. Effective and dynamic leadership requires continuous education and learning. The congregational designated minister, in collaboration with the Ministry and Personnel Committee of the community of faith, discerns the best use of the continuing education resources in the context of the congregational appointment.

### **Accountability, Supervision, and Oversight**

- Congregational designated ministers are appointed by and accountable to the governing body of the community of faith. A congregational designated minister may only be appointed to a community of faith being served by a member of the order of ministry or a designated lay minister.
- The regional council is the primary court of discipline for a congregational designated minister. For the purpose of oversight and discipline, the policies and procedures for lay members are adapted as necessary (*The Manual*, J.8.).

### **Categorization Guidelines**

These are guidelines for affirming that a congregational designated ministry position, prepared by a congregation in response to specific needs identified within the community, is congregationally accountable.

Each participant in a congregation brings gifts and skills that contribute to the congregation's well-being and to its capacity to be in mission. As the work of one and the same Spirit, each contribution counts toward equipping the saints for ministry. When a paid leadership position is involved, it is necessary, for the purposes of accountability, good order, stewardship, and



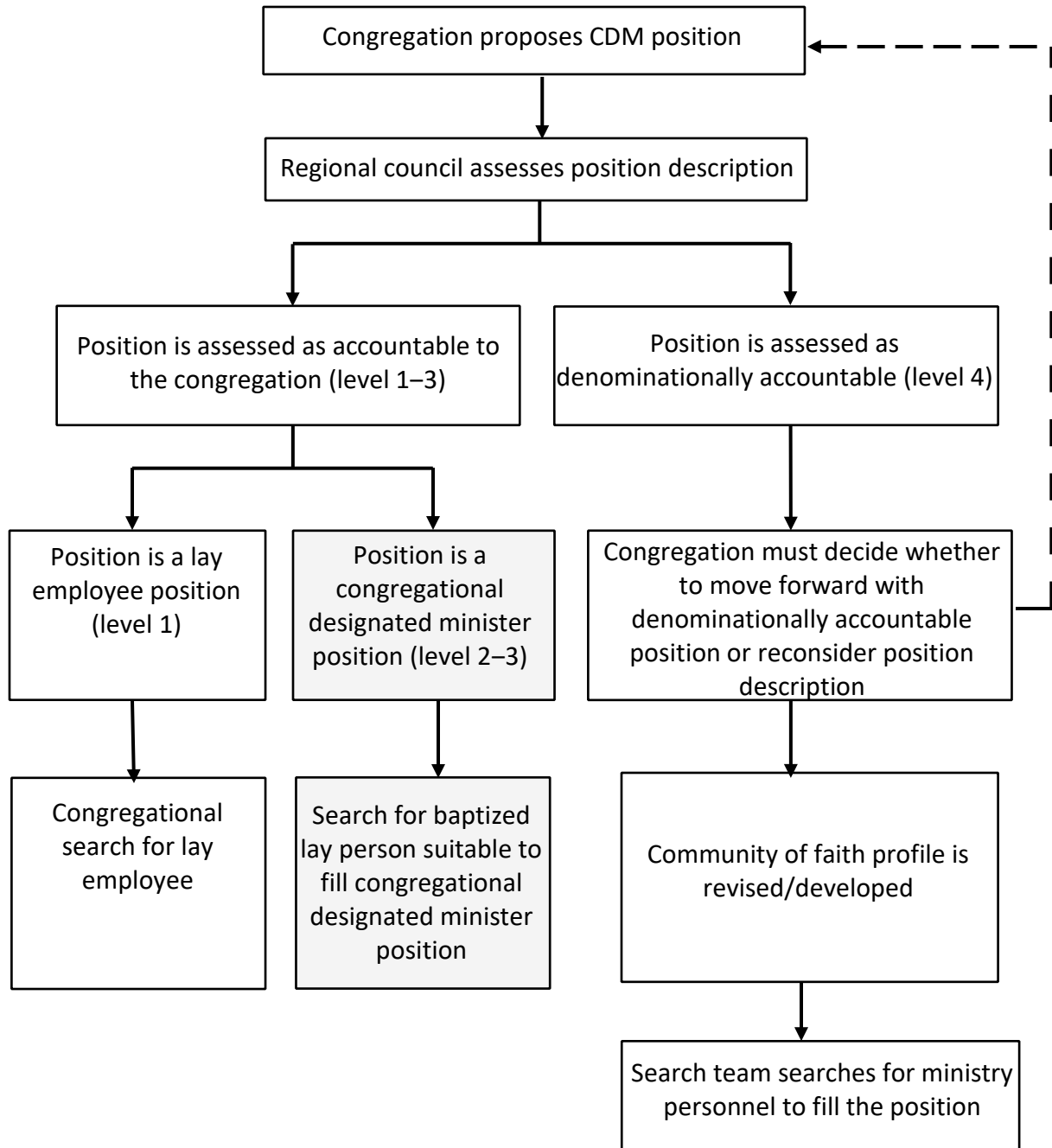
justice, to make some determinations about the equitable relationship of one paid position to another in the context of mutuality in mission.

The following guidelines assist in determining whether a position is congregationally accountable or denominationally accountable. It is the role of the regional council to receive congregational designated ministry position descriptions from communities of faith and to assess the positions to determine that they fit within the scope of a congregationally accountable appointment.

### **Process of Categorization by the Regional Council Pastoral Relations Committee**

1. Review the proposed position description for clarity by answering the following questions:
  - What are the roles and responsibilities of the position?
  - What is the purpose of the position?
  - What skills and education are needed to accomplish the role?
2. Review the categorization criteria and the definitions. It is possible that the level for the position can be determined simply on the basis of the definitions and the criteria. If so, complete part B on the Position Categorization Worksheet (page 16) and part C on the Request for Categorization form (available on the [Forms](#) page of united-church.ca), and forward them to the regional council for approval.
3. If the Detailed Rating Process is being used, read through the guiding principles in each section, determine the rating (1–4) that best fits the position, and record it on part C of the worksheet.
4. When all sections have been completed, total the points on the worksheet. The level of the position has now been determined. Positions in levels 1–3 are congregationally accountable, and positions in level 4 are denominationally accountable.
5. Record the level in Part C on the Request for Categorization form and forward it to the regional council for approval.

## Position Categorization Process



## Definitions

<b>Congregationally Accountable</b>		<b>Denominationally Accountable</b>
<b>Level 1: Lay Employee</b>	<b>Levels 2–3: Congregational Designated Minister (CDM)</b>	<b>Level 4: Ministry Personnel</b>
<p><b>Definition</b></p> <p>An individual carrying out one particular task related to the community of faith’s ministry—e.g., coordinating a community meal once a week, organizing the church nursery.</p> <p>An individual working on a time-limited (a few weeks to 12 months) project of the community of faith—e.g., a survey of seniors’ needs, a summer outreach program.</p>	<p><b>Definition</b></p> <p>A baptized layperson employed by a community of faith in a specified ministry position designated by the regional council as accountable to the governing body of the community of faith.</p> <p>An individual whose work encompasses one or more specific areas of the community of faith’s ministry/ mission—e.g., youth worker, parish nurse, adult educator—and whose position responsibilities do not extend to the wider church.</p>	<p><b>Definition</b></p> <p>Those people who are members of the order of ministry, those lay people under appointment as a designated lay minister, candidates serving under appointment, and those from other denominations under appointment as a diaconal supply or ordained supply. Ministry personnel does not include those serving as congregational designated ministers.</p> <p>Denominationally accountable positions require breadth and depth of knowledge and formal education. They involve a high degree of responsibility, entail overall congregational leadership, and are accountable to the denomination.</p>
<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <p>Has experience and skills related to the particular requirements of the position description.</p>	<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <p>Has gifts, competencies, and experience related to the specific areas of ministry work required in the position description.</p>	<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <p>Is a member of the order of ministry or a layperson eligible to serve as a designated lay minister.</p>

## Criteria

Each position is a collection of tasks, duties, and responsibilities. It is sometimes difficult to make accurate and explicit comparisons of one complete position description to another. For this reason, the categorization process outlined below determines the weight of each position's contribution to the ministry of the community of faith according to four criteria found in all positions.

- **Breadth and depth of experience/knowledge required:** every kind of knowledge and skill needed for acceptable performance
- **Accountability and decision making:** the accountability for actions and their consequences, freedom to act, how and where decisions are made
- **Complexity of focus:** the number of programs and areas of congregational life involved, problem solving, dealing with ambiguity and long-range considerations, analytical thinking, the ability to evaluate, create, and reason
- **Boundaries on involvement:** impact of actions and sphere of influence/representation

## Detailed Rating Process

### Section I: Breadth and depth of experience/knowledge required

This criterion measures every kind of knowledge and skill needed for acceptable performance—e.g., specialized knowledge and skills, coordinating and integrating skills, and human relations skills.

Rating	Guiding Principles
1	<p>Basic knowledge of job fundamentals in a position that is very specific with regard to its purpose, who is being served, and how the work will be performed.</p> <p>The position requires experience in applying procedures that generally are well defined and straightforward, with occasional discretion required.</p> <p>Human relations skills: interactions are within a well-defined group, and maintaining courteous, healthy working relationships within the group is important; does not involve facilitating the leadership of others.</p>
2	<p>Experience in and knowledge of one particular area of the community of faith's ministry/mission, such as youth group leadership, church school coordination, or pastoral visiting, with the ability to apply a similar program in a different context.</p> <p>Human relations skills: the ability to listen; the ability to interact appropriately with individuals and groups/committees connected to or interested in the activities undertaken; appropriate awareness of related activities in the congregation.</p> <p>Accomplished in planning and implementing activities and/or practical procedures that are moderately complex.</p>

3	<p>Knowledge and experience for oversight, planning, and implementing a key program of the congregation, such as Christian education for all ages, a youth program, or a community outreach program. Skills in several activities with basic understanding of underlying theology, theory, and principles.</p> <p>Human relations skills: the ability to function pastorally; the ability to interpret the program and to facilitate the involvement of others in leading, supporting, and developing the program.</p> <p>Ability to give leadership in a congregational program/process that involves varied activities and has an impact on other aspects of the congregation's ministry and mission.</p>
4	<p>Knowledge and experience needed for oversight of a major program (or several key programs) that incorporates most dimensions of congregational life (worship, pastoral care, education, outreach).</p> <p>Well-grounded in theology, biblical knowledge, theories, principles, and the complex techniques/activities involved in community of faith leadership.</p> <p>Human relations skills: insight into how individuals are motivated; understanding of how to encourage growth in discipleship in order to fulfill the community of faith's ministry; ability to deal constructively with conflict.</p> <p>Ability to plan, guide, and assess a major congregational program/process that has substantial functional diversity and requires involvement with the congregation's overall ministry and mission goals.</p>

## Section II: Accountability and decision making

This criterion covers freedom to act, accountability for actions and their consequences, and where and how decisions are made.

Rating	Guiding Principles
1	<p>Position has well-defined procedures related to an activity within one area of the community of faith's ministry (e.g., coordinating the church nursery, leading a small group on a weekly basis), and is overseen by an individual or a small committee.</p> <p>Ability to make decisions is determined by established procedures and by supervisor/liaison person or coordinating group.</p>
2	<p>Position has relatively well-defined procedures, but latitude is given to deal with some ambiguous situations. Oversight of this position is provided by appropriate community of faith governance.</p> <p>Most decisions about activities and procedures are made in consultation with ministry personnel, a community of faith leader, and/or committee(s) within the community of faith.</p>

	<p>Decisions made without consultation are subject to precedents and well-defined policy.</p> <p>Accountability resides at the committee level.</p>
3	<p>Position responsibilities are defined within the broader context of the community of faith’s ministry and mission and may be changed, depending upon circumstances. Ability to deal with ambiguous situations will be part of this position, and there is considerable scope for freedom of action.</p> <p>Works closely with one or more committees to produce desired outcomes in one or more areas of community of faith life. May work jointly with other ministry staff for coordination purposes. This position is accountable at the committee level (e.g., Christian Education Committee, Health Ministries Committee), but some decisions about this work may be made by the governing body of the community of faith and require the involvement of the ministry personnel.</p>
4	<p>Position is very broadly defined and dealing with ambiguity will be a large part of this position.</p> <p>Accountability is at the governing body level as well as with the denomination. Input about decisions and actions is required from various community of faith committees, leaders, and the regional council. Freedom to act, within the boundaries of ministry personnel, will rest with the incumbent.</p> <p>The incumbent for this position will act in a community of faith capacity very similar to that of an order of ministry person.</p> <p>The position has responsibilities involving significant activities and resources of the community of faith and is the sole paid position accountable for the outcomes of the work involved.</p>

**Section III: Complexity of focus**

This criterion covers problem solving, dealing with ambiguity, difficulty of the thinking required, and the number of programs and areas of congregational life involved.

Rating	Guiding Principles
1	<p>Situation is consistent and problems are resolved by making decisions on fairly common issues, by simple choice among known options, with very little need to consider alternative ways of approach.</p> <p>Thinking within well-defined, somewhat diversified procedures; many precedents covering most situations and/or readily available assistance.</p>
2	<p>The situation has some variation requiring the search for solutions within an area of learned approaches. Having experience in dealing with similar situations will be very helpful. There is a need to deal with some degree of ambiguity, and life/work experience will come into play in thinking through situations.</p> <p>Precedents cover many but not all situations and there is access to assistance.</p>

3	<p>Situations are quite different, requiring a search for solutions mainly within the area of learned approaches. Some theological, analytical, and constructive thinking is required. Decisions take into account community of faith policy, where <i>what</i> is stated but not <i>how</i>.</p> <p>Thinking about one or more areas of the community of faith's ministry within a frame of reference related to the congregation's overall mission, with considerable scope for making choices about how to carry out responsibilities.</p>
4	<p>Situations are varied, requiring analytical, interpretive, evaluative, and/or constructive thinking skills. Ability is needed to access biblical and theological perspectives, to develop new concepts, and to help people comprehend the larger picture.</p> <p>Thinking within concepts, principles, and broad guidelines related to the church's ministry and mission goals and objectives; many intangibles or unstructured aspects to the context.</p>

#### Section IV: Boundaries of involvement

This criterion measures impact of action, representative authority, and sphere of influence.

Rating	Guiding Principles
1	<p>Work is done with a specific supervisory person and/or with a small group. Influence is limited to one specific activity within the congregation.</p>
2	<p>Work is done with one or more committees of the community of faith, and the position is understood as having authority in regard to a specific area of the community of faith's ministry, such as pastoral visiting or coordination of the church school. Impact of actions taken is limited to one area of congregational life.</p>
3	<p>Work is done with community of faith leaders, committees of the community of faith, and possibly with the governing body. The position may have authority to represent the congregation in certain circumstances. Impact of decision making is broader and may affect more than one aspect of community of faith life.</p>
4	<p>Work is done jointly with individuals, groups, and committees throughout the community of faith, along with the governing body and regional council involvement. Decisions made will impact the congregation and the wider church and community, and will affect the overall well-being of the community of faith and its ministry. This position is seen as having representative authority for the community of faith and at times for the wider church.</p>

## Position Categorization Worksheet

### Part A

Position title:	
Community of faith:	
Regional council:	

### Part B

The category for this position is \_\_\_\_\_ and has been determined on the basis of the definitions and criteria.

*or*

### Part C

Rating (1–4)	Guiding principles	
	Section I: Breadth and depth of experience/knowledge required	
	Section II: Accountability and decision making	
	Section III: Complexity of focus	
	Section IV: Boundaries of involvement	
	<b>Total points</b>	
Determining accountability		
Total points	Level	Accountability
4–6 points (mainly ratings of 1)	Lay employee Level 1	Congregationally accountable; congregation is the primary court of oversight and discipline. Salary is at the discretion of the community of faith.
7–9 points (mainly ratings in the 2 range) 10–13 points (mainly ratings in the 3 range)	Congregational designated minister Level 2 Level 3	Congregationally accountable; regional council is the primary court of oversight and discipline. Remuneration must include salary, continuing education amount, and vacation time. Negotiated salary is at the discretion of the congregation but should take into account the level of the CDM.



14–16 points (mainly ratings in the 4 range)	Ministry personnel Level 4	Denominationally accountable. Salary and allowances in compliance with the minimums set for ministry personnel.
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The category for this position is \_\_\_\_\_, with a level of \_\_\_\_\_.

# Competencies for Congregational Designated Ministers

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## Core Competencies

- Is a baptized person
- Understands and is willing to articulate the theology and polity of the United Church
- Has a basic understanding of scripture and of its authority within the United Church
- Can participate in the leadership of formal worship
- Can plan and lead informal worship
- Has the ability to draw on spiritual resources to sustain self and others
- Demonstrates knowledge and support of the justice-making policies of the United Church
- Understands the responsibilities of a ministry leader regarding duty of care, confidentiality, and authority/trust
- Possesses program planning skills
- Possesses basic administrative skills—e.g., budgeting, time management, report writing
- Is able to exercise basic listening and empathetic skills
- Has communication skills related to team building and conflict resolution

## Position-Specific Competencies

These gifts and experiences are requirements to work in a specific area as a congregational designated minister.

### Youth Ministry

In addition to the core CDM competencies:

- Understanding of youth culture and child/adolescent development, particularly faith development
- Educational and leadership skills in the areas of group facilitation and program planning/implementation/evaluation
- Ability to recruit, develop, and coordinate volunteers
- Familiarity with youth ministry resources of the United Church and from other appropriate sources

To fulfill these competencies, participation in a youth ministry program recognized by the United Church is strongly recommended.

### Parish Nursing

In addition to the core CDM competencies:

- The parish nurse core competencies as identified by the Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Ministry

To review the parish nurse core competencies, for more information on parish nursing, or for information on parish nursing education programs, please refer to the Canadian Association for [Parish Nursing Ministry](#) website.

### **Pastoral Care**

In addition to the core CDM competencies:

- Ability to provide pastoral care to people in various stages of life
- Ability to listen and be empathetic as well as ability to discern when a referral to a counsellor/social agency is needed
- Knowledge of the spiritual issues involved in family relationships, life passages, aging, suffering, and death, and of resources to support needs in such areas
- Ability to provide advocacy in pastoral issues
- Ability to draw on spiritual resources (e.g., spoken prayer, scripture) for use in pastoral care situations

### **Education**

In addition to the core CDM competencies:

- Knowledge of faith development theories
- Ability to use and to equip others to use different teaching/learning styles, teaching methodologies, and learning practices
- Ability to work with congregational leaders to determine overall educational goals and values for the congregation's educational program
- Ability to stimulate congregational participation in educational opportunities
- Ability to assess curriculum for various settings
- Skills in coordinating, developing, and recruiting volunteers
- Knowledge of educational resources of the United Church and other appropriate educational sources and institutions

### **Outreach**

In addition to the core CDM competencies:

- Awareness of the social context of a particular ministry
- Knowledge of the traditions of Christian social teachings and ability to speak with a prophetic voice
- Awareness of the United Church's social justice ministries and initiatives
- Understanding of social systems and ability to do social analysis
- Ability to access advocacy and mediation mechanisms for addressing legal, social, and economic needs
- Ability to access United Church financial resources and to network with other outreach initiatives and ecumenical initiatives in the community
- Ability to work with community of faith leaders to determine the direction and priorities of the outreach ministry

## **Worship**

In addition to the core CDM competencies:

- An appropriately prayerful and integrated spirituality
- Ability to preside and preach effectively
- A working knowledge of theological themes, and of the history of the United Church and the wider church
- Ability to relate sensitively to a wide range of people
- Ability to share with others a faith informed by Christian hope and openness to the Spirit

## **Musician**

In addition to the core CDM competencies:

### **Knowledge**

- Know role and development of music in general and of Christian worship
- Know what networking and other opportunities are available for musicians—e.g., Music United

### **Skills**

- Stimulate congregation participation and enrich their worship experience through music
- Lead congregational song
- Coordinate, develop, and recruit volunteers
- Use and enable others to use different styles of music
- Determine direction and priorities of the music ministry in collaboration with congregational leaders (Level 3)
- Develop programs for congregation and community (Level 3)

### **Faith**

- Understand and appreciate the pastoral role of music in the congregation's life
- Be a pastoral presence for the choirs
- Be actively engaged in a personal life of faith

A church musician position can be designated either Level 2 or Level 3 CDM. The descriptions below outline the distinctions between these two levels.

### **Level 2 Musician**

- Have the skills to play piano or organ for worship
- Have the skills to rehearse and lead choir
- Arrange for substitutes and guest soloists as needed
- Play for weddings, funerals, etc.
- Meet with personnel and worship committees
- Oversee care and use of instruments

- Foster musical opportunities for youth
- Maintain music library

### **Level 3 Musician**

- Have the skills, gifts, experience, and abilities to fulfill Level 2 responsibilities
- Meet with worship leaders to select music
- Respect and advocate awareness of and adherence to copyright laws
- Develop and support music programs for youth and other groups in the congregation
- Develop worshippers' repertoire
- Support or direct any church musical ventures
- Meet with local music directors for ecumenical services
- Develop community musical outreach.



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