

Pastoral Relations: Ministry Personnel

January 2019



Pastoral Relations
Relations pastorales

The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada



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About This Resource

This resource expands on the policy found under I. Pastoral Relations in *The Manual*. It is specifically for ministry personnel who are starting, changing, or ending a pastoral relationship.

This resource contains

- policy and procedures that must be followed
- best practices that provide information, guidance, and advice on the recommended ways to live out mandatory policies and procedures, which you are encouraged, but not required, to follow

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: Community of Faith*
- *Pastoral Relations: Additional Resource for a Community of Faith*
- *Pastoral Relations: Supporting the Pastoral Relationship*
- *Pastoral Relations: Regional Council Liaisons*

As of January 2019, these resources, available on www.united-church.ca, replace *Pastoral Relations: Engaging and Supporting* (March 2015).

For more information about pastoral relations, including whom to contact, please visit www.united-church.ca/leadership/supporting-ministry/pastoral-relations.

What Is Pastoral Relations Policy?

“Ordered ministers and designated lay ministers while in paid accountable ministry positions are office holders within The United Church of Canada. While there may be elements similar to employment, the essential nature of the relationship is a covenant.”

—Statement on Ministry in The United Church of Canada (2012)

The special status of ministry personnel requires the church to write policy that governs the paid accountable ministry relationship between ministry personnel and communities of faith. The policy that governs this relationship is pastoral relations policy.

Pastoral relations policy governs search, selection, calls, and appointments between ministry personnel and communities of faith within The United Church of Canada. Pastoral relations policy is set by the General Council and implemented cooperatively by communities of faith and regional councils.

Theological Grounding

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

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. (A Song of Faith)

A community of faith, like any community, changes.
When a minister comes into a community of faith
a covenant is made; a promise to walk together as God's people,
deepening our commitment to Jesus Christ
and growing closer to God.

God's covenant with us never changes,
but our covenants with one another do change.

(Adapted from the Book of Worship, United Church of Christ © 1986, United Church of Christ Office for Church Life and Leadership, New York, New York. All rights reserved. Used by permission.)

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

The 43rd General Council 2018 made the following changes to pastoral relations policy:

1. The definition of covenant is expanded beyond three parties.

A covenant is now defined as follows (*The Manual, 2019*, section I.1):

A “covenant” is between God, the ministry personnel, the community of faith or other ministry, and the wider United Church as represented by the regional council. The covenant may include other parties that are integral to living out the gospel in community as God calls us.

An “other ministry” may be the General Council, a regional council, or a ministry that is not accountable to the United Church.

A covenant with a community of faith is established by call or appointment. It creates a pastoral relationship and is governed by [pastoral relations policies].

A covenant with another ministry is governed by the human resource policies of the other ministry.

2. The needs assessment process is replaced with the use of profiles of ministry personnel and profiles of communities of faith.

Each community of faith within The United Church of Canada is responsible for preparing a community of faith profile. A community of faith that has completed and filed a profile with the regional council may issue a call or appointment.

Each ministry personnel is responsible for preparing and filing a ministry personnel profile. A member of the order of ministry with a profile may accept a call or appointment. A designated lay minister with a profile may accept an appointment.

3. The governing body of the community of faith is responsible for some pastoral relations actions and decisions that were previously the responsibility of a congregation.

Specifically, the governing body of the community of faith is responsible for the following:

- *decisions about supply appointments*

The governing body of the community of faith is responsible for requesting regional council approval for supply appointments.

Supply appointments are defined in *The Manual* at section I.1.8.

- *preparing the community of faith profile (replaces needs assessment)*

It is the responsibility of the governing body of the community of faith to ensure the community of faith's profile is completed and that a community of faith meeting is called to recommend the profile. The governing body is responsible to ensure that the profile is filed to meet pastoral relations requirements. The regional council is responsible for approving the community of faith profile.

- *notifying the regional council of any proposed change in covenant, and to request a liaison*

If a meeting of the community of faith is called to consider a change in pastoral relations, either to end the pastoral relationship or to make a change to terms of the pastoral relationship, the governing body is responsible to notify the regional council and request a liaison from the regional council.

- 4. The presbytery representative role is replaced with a regional council liaison as the regional council representative to communities of faith for pastoral relations/covenant processes.**

A regional council liaison is meant to offer supportive and consistent accompaniment to the community of faith throughout a change in pastoral relations.

The regional council is responsible for

- training regional council liaisons
- ensuring that the community of faith profile meets the purpose of the community profile, and contains the required elements and optional elements, where applicable and as outlined in these policies
- training the search team before interviews start
- determining where support will be offered by a regional council liaison, and where support will be offered by regional council staff

- 5. ChurchHub (ChurchHub.ca) is established and regularized as the required process for ministry personnel and communities of faith to search for calls and appointments. The United Church of Canada will support the Indigenous Church in being self-determining in whether or how they use the ChurchHub.**

Additional Policies for Ministry Personnel: Changing a Pastoral Relationship

This section is **required procedural policy** for ministry personnel who are experiencing a change in pastoral relations. The related *Manual* policy may be found in *The Manual*, I. Pastoral Relations, sections I.1 Connecting and I.3. Disengaging.

There are four stages of changing a pastoral relationship:

1. Request a change to the pastoral relationship
2. Update and file a ministry personnel profile
3. Search and selection
4. Covenant through worship

Change to the Pastoral Relationship

A change to the pastoral relationship may be requested by the ministry personnel, the community of faith, or the regional council.

A change to the pastoral relationship may be a request to change the terms of the call or appointment or a request to end the pastoral relationship.

Regional Council Support

The regional council is responsible for 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. Ministry personnel are also supported by the Office of Vocation when making a change in pastoral relations.

A regional council liaison 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;
- 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 requests a meeting of the community of faith to hear the search team's recommendation; and
- at the covenanting service.

Change to the Terms of the Call or Appointment

Is a community of faith profile always needed?

No, a request to change the terms of a call or appointment may be made without a community of faith profile if the ministry personnel, community of faith, and regional council are in mutual agreement with the change.

The ministry personnel, community of faith, or regional council may request an updated position description as part of the negotiation of new terms of call or appointment.

When is a community of faith profile needed?

A community of faith profile is needed when a community of faith is requesting a new ministry personnel position, requesting the end of a pastoral relationship, or requesting a change in terms of a call or appointment without the agreement of the ministry personnel.

A search team may not begin a search without a complete profile.

Ministry Personnel Requests a Change in Pastoral Relationship

How does a ministry personnel request a change to their current call or appointment?

If a ministry personnel requests a change to the terms of the call or appointment, the ministry personnel is responsible for

- writing a letter to the governing body of the community of faith and the regional council, notifying both councils of the request for a change in terms; and
- negotiating the new terms of call or appointment with the community of faith and the regional council.

Negotiating New Terms of Call or Appointment

In a pastoral charge, this negotiation takes place between the ministry personnel, a representative from the community of faith Ministry and Personnel Committee, a member of the governing body, and the regional council liaison.

In a community of faith that is not a pastoral charge, the negotiation takes place between the ministry personnel, a representative from the community of faith, and the regional council liaison. If there is a Ministry and Personnel Committee or a Human Resources Committee, a representative from that committee should be present as well.

- The governing body is responsible to call a meeting of the community of faith to decide whether to approve the change to the terms of call or appointment.
- The community of faith is responsible to decide whether to approve the change to the terms of call or appointment.
- The regional council is responsible to decide whether to approve the change to the terms of call or appointment.

How does a ministry personnel request an end to their call or appointment?

If a ministry personnel requests an end to a call or appointment, the ministry personnel is responsible to write a letter notifying the following parties of the request to end the pastoral relationship, including a proposed date for the change to take effect:

- to the community of faith, addressed to the chair of the governing body;
- to the regional council, addressed to the secretary of the regional council; and
- to the Office of Vocation, addressed to the Office of Vocation, General Council Office.

The ministry personnel must give at least 90 days' notice of the change in pastoral relationship, or include a specific request to the community of faith and the regional council to approve a proposed date for the change to take effect that is less than 90 days away.

The regional council is responsible to approve the request for a change in pastoral relationship. The regional council must also make a decision on the proposed date for the change to take effect.

If the proposed date is less than 90 days after the community of faith received the request, the community of faith must also approve the date.

Community of Faith Requests a Change in Pastoral Relationship

How does a community of faith request a change to the current call or appointment?

If the community of faith requests a change to the terms of the current call or appointment, the community of faith is responsible for

- writing a letter to the ministry personnel and the regional council, notifying both of the request for a change in terms; and
- negotiating the new terms of call or appointment with the ministry personnel, the governing body, and the regional council.

Negotiating New Terms of Call or Appointment

In a pastoral charge, this negotiation takes place between the ministry personnel, a representative from the community of faith Ministry and Personnel Committee, a member of the governing body, and the regional council liaison.

In a community of faith that is not a pastoral charge, the negotiation takes place between the ministry personnel, a representative from the community of faith, and the regional council liaison. If there is a Ministry and Personnel Committee or a Human Resources Committee, a representative from that committee should be present as well.

- The governing body is responsible to call a meeting of the community of faith to decide whether to approve the change to the terms of call or appointment.
- The community of faith is responsible to decide whether to approve the change to the terms of call or appointment.
- The regional council is responsible to decide whether to approve the change to the terms of call or appointment.

If the ministry personnel does not approve the change in terms of call or appointment, the changes may be made by preparing and filing a community of faith profile, as described below and in *The Manual*, section I.3.1.6.

How does a community of faith request an end to the pastoral relationship?

If the community of faith requests an end to the pastoral relationship, the governing body of the community of faith is responsible for

- ensuring that the request for the meeting to consider the pastoral relationship meets the requirements of *The Manual*, section B.5.3;
- writing a letter to the ministry personnel, notifying them of the request for the meeting, the meeting date, and the ministry personnel's right to respond to the request to end the pastoral relationship at the meeting;
- writing a letter to the regional council, notifying them of the request for the meeting, and requesting a regional council liaison; and
- reading notice of the meeting during Sunday worship, according to *The Manual*, section B.5.4.2 a.

The regional council is responsible for

- setting a date for the requested meeting and informing the person calling the meeting of the date;
- sending a representative—a regional council liaison or regional council staff—to attend the meeting of the community of faith to consider the request for a change in covenant; and
- deciding on the request for a change in pastoral relationship and notifying the Office of Vocation about any decision.

The governing body of the community of faith is responsible for informing the ministry personnel serving the community of faith of the upcoming meeting. The ministry personnel must be given the opportunity to be present and respond to it (see *The Manual*, section I.3.1.5).

If the community of faith approves the request for change in pastoral relationship, the regional council is responsible for deciding on the request for change (and its terms) and for notifying the Office of Vocation (see *The Manual*, section I.3.1.6 h).

The community of faith is responsible for giving the ministry personnel 90 days' notice or paying salary in lieu of 90 days' notice.

The representative from the regional council may attend in person, by telephone conference, or video conference.

Regional Council Ends the Pastoral Relationship

How does the regional council end a current call or appointment?

If the Board of Vocation has made a decision to place the minister's name on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary), it informs the regional council that the minister is no longer eligible to serve in a call or appointment so that the regional council may end the pastoral relationship. The regional council is responsible to notify the ministry personnel and the community of faith of the ending of the pastoral relationship.

Ministry Personnel ChurchHub Page

Each ministry personnel in The United Church of Canada will have an online ministry personnel page at ChurchHub.ca that they are responsible to maintain.

The General Council will populate all ministry personnel profiles with basic information, taken from church records. Basic information includes the following:

- name;
- address;
- phone number; and
- e-mail address.

The ministry personnel may update the basic information at any time.

Other information will be available and updated through a ministry personnel's ChurchHub page, including the following:

- *Year Book* information;
- record of service (calls and appointments);
- record of professional requirements (annual declaration; boundaries training, etc.); and
- ministry profile.

Ministry Personnel Profile

When a ministry personnel is discerning a change in pastoral relations, their profile needs to be updated.

A ministry personnel may update their profile at any time, even when they are not discerning a change in pastoral relations. Why? A minister may have completed continuing education courses or mandatory training that they would like to add to their profile and/or resumé.

A ministry personnel may request support from the Office of Vocation minister when updating their profile.

The purpose of a ministry personnel profile is

- to articulate the ministry personnel's witness to the gospel;
- to articulate the ministry personnel's call to ministry; and
- to affirm the ministry personnel's standing in the denomination.

This purpose may be achieved by completing the elements of the profile.

A ministry personnel profile that is ready to post for search and selection must include the following:

- skills and gifts profile;
- resumé; and
- record of eligibility (provided by the Office of Vocation).

At the point of posting the profile to ChurchHub, filters will need to be selected that match the profile and assist communities of faith in searching for ministry personnel profiles, as follows:

- ministry status—designated lay minister (DLM), diaconal minister (DM), ordained minister (OM), candidate supply, Supervised Ministry Education (SME);
- hours—full-time or part-time;
- regional availability—regional council 1–16;
- languages spoken—English, French, or other; and
- designated intentional interim minister.

The Office of Vocation is responsible to ensure that the ministry personnel profile meets the purpose of the profile and contains the required elements as outlined in these policies.

Search and Selection

A search process may begin once a ministry personnel profile is completed and posted as available for call or appointment on ChurchHub.ca.

Who Can See Your Profile?

A ministry personnel profile that is posted as available for call or appointment may be seen by communities of faith that are in search and have their own profiles posted.

Communities of faith that are in search may see the profiles of other communities that are also searching.

Ministry personnel who are in search of call may not see the profiles of other ministers who are in search of call or appointment.

These restrictions are intended to maintain a level of confidentiality in the search process. Members of search teams must agree to keep the search process confidential. For more information on confidentiality, see the best practices section on transparency and confidentiality.

Ministry personnel who are searching are responsible for

- using ChurchHub to search for communities of faith that match their ministry personnel profile;
- contacting communities of faith that they sense a call of ministry to;
- responding to communities of faith that request interviews;
- completing interviews;
- discerning through conversation and prayer to a decision about an offer or a call or appointment;
- negotiating with the search team about the terms of the call or appointment (*Note: A ministry personnel who is in search should only, in good faith, negotiate with one community of faith at a time.*);
- communicating a request for a change in pastoral relations to their current community of faith, after the date of the community of faith meeting; and
- signing the call or appointment form.

The governing body is responsible to

- request a meeting of the community of faith to consider the recommendation of the search team.

The regional council is responsible to

- attend the meeting via a representative, usually the liaison who has walked with the community of faith during the writing of their profile and their search process. The regional council representative may attend in person, by telephone, or electronically; and
- decide whether to approve the call or appointment.

Covenanting Service

At the beginning of every new call or appointment, a covenanting or installation service is held to celebrate the new pastoral relationship that has been established.

A covenant is between God, the ministry personnel, the community of faith or other ministry, and the wider United Church as represented by the regional council. The covenant may include other parties that are integral to living out the gospel in community as God calls us.

Ministry personnel and lay members of the regional council and neighbouring communities of faith are invited to celebrate along with the people of the community of faith and their new minister. A regional council liaison is also there.

The expectations of attendance for covenanting services are flexible and must take into consideration the community of faith's context. The regional council is encouraged to include a time to celebrate all new covenants from the past year at the annual meeting.

Best Practices

The previous sections outline elements of the pastoral relations process that must be followed. This section provides guidance, suggestions, and recommendations for additional resources on how the mandatory policies and procedures can be met, and focuses on the relational aspect of the pastoral relations process. After all, pastoral relations is about relationships between ministers and communities of people living out their faith.

Requesting a Change in Pastoral Relations

If you are in a pastoral relationship and the pastoral relationship is ending or will soon be ending, you may find this first section helpful.

Discerning

As you prepare to request a change in pastoral relations, it is vital that you take time to discern

- to provide clarity of thought and commitment to end your existing pastoral relationship well and in a way that is healthy for you, for those that are close to you, and for the community of faith;
- to provide clarity and closure for why you are leaving your current ministry; and
- to develop a sense of purpose, direction, and excitement about your future pastoral relationship.

While some people are able to undertake discernment on their own, it is strongly recommended that you consider having someone accompany you through this process. This will help to keep you focused, give you a more objective perspective, and offer a safe place for you to explore options.

Some *questions to consider*

- Regarding ending:
 - What “gifts” has this pastoral relationship offered me?
 - What “gifts” do I leave in this place?
 - What have I learned in this ministry context about myself? About ministry? About God? About how I minister?
 - What do I grieve in my leaving?
 - What can I do to end this pastoral relationship with grace?
 - Where do I see God in this leaving process?
- Regarding beginning:
 - What ministry activities, people, and circumstances give me joy and energy?
 - What are the absolute bottom line conditions that I am committed to observing in my next call or appointment?
 - Where do I perceive God’s voice or God’s presence most clearly in my current ministry? How does that inform my seeking of a new pastoral relationship?

- What do I need to be open to God’s voice in this time?
- How am I allowing the gifts I’ve been given and the things I’ve learned in my current pastoral relationship to inform my search for a new call or appointment?

Some ministry personnel will discern the need to leave the pastoral relationship and begin their process of seeking a call or appointment long before they choose to give notice to the community of faith. This is understandable, as it can take time to seek out the right call or appointment. You will choose to give notice based on your discernment of when it is most appropriate. In doing so, consider

- your ability to continue to focus on your current pastoral relationship and ministry while you are actively but confidentially seeking another call or appointment
- the reality that once you have given notice, the nature of the relationship and ministry shifts substantially

“O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love you and keep your commandments; let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer of your servant.” (Nehemiah 1:5–6, alt.)

Ending the Pastoral Relationship

As outlined above, a ministry personnel provides a request for a change in the pastoral relationship in writing to the governing body. A similar letter providing notice of a request for a change in pastoral relations is shared with the regional council and the Office of Vocation. The letter that is shared must include the ending date. It is recommended that if you have specific requests to be considered during this ending time (e.g., plans to be away on vacation or study leave), you clearly identify them in writing. If you are requesting that the pastoral relationship end with less than 90 days’ notice, you will need to include this request. In addition, a brief word of thanks for the gifts of the pastoral relationship is good to include, as well as your intention to support the community of faith through this ending time.

As you write the letter, be aware of how you are feeling. If you experience any strong feelings before, during, or after the writing, let it sit for a while before you consider it finished. Reread it. Consider having someone you know and trust read it. Does it convey a grace-filled and healthy beginning to an ending? If not, perhaps rewrite it so that it covers only the minimum requirements. If it is difficult to write the letter, it will be even more difficult to have the conversation in a way that is healthy and grace-filled for you and for those you will meet with.

While *The Manual* does not require verbal notice, it is strongly recommended that you give it. A conversation, rather than just a written notice, emphasizes the relational aspect of your pastoral relationship. It is the first step in conveying your desire to end this pastoral relationship in a grace-filled and healthy way for yourself, the people you love, and the community of faith.

It is advised that you speak directly with the chair of the governing body and the chair of the Ministry and Personnel (M&P) Committee. If your M&P Committee has identified a support person for you who is not the chair, you should also include that individual in the verbal notice.

Also think carefully about how and when to inform others you have worked closely with, for example, those in paid accountable ministry within the community of faith and others in non-ministry paid positions.

No conversation about ending a pastoral relationship is going to be easy, regardless of how positive the relationship has been. These tips can make it a little easier:

- Start with a short and positive overview of the pastoral relationship.
- Decide ahead of time if you will identify where you are moving to (depends on the timing of the other community of faith's decision-making).
- State clearly that you are requesting a change in pastoral relationship effective on a specific date. Specify how many days' notice you are giving, e.g., "This gives you a notice of 90 days, which meets the minimum requirement of *The Manual*."
- Think about what, if anything, to say about why you are leaving (if there is conflict involved in your decision, consider leaving this part out).
- Acknowledge the significance of this change and the impact on the nature of your relationship and ministry through this ending time.
- Convey your intention to minister effectively through the ending.
- Identify any needs you have during these last months (e.g., vacation or study leave).
- Ask to meet with the governing body and the M&P Committee soon to identify priorities for the last months of your relationship.
- Confirm when and how you intend to inform the community of faith (e.g., date, following worship) and ask for confidentiality until you have done so.
- End with thanks and an invitation to respond.
- Offer to end in prayer together.

The request for a change in pastoral relations is also shared with the community of faith. Nothing will prepare some of the people in your community of faith for the news you are about to share. Here are some things to think about as you prayerfully prepare for sharing this information:

- Inform the community of faith as quickly as possible after you have given notice to the governing body.
- Generally, do it following worship.
- Prepare carefully; write out exactly what you intend to say and try not to deviate.
- People will not be able to take in a lot of information, so keep it to the minimum.
- Keep to the general tone and wording that you have used in giving notice to the governing body (this avoids setting up conflict over the reasons for your leaving).
- Place your words in a context of prayer and gratitude. Ask ahead of time if the chair of the M&P Committee or of the governing body or a respected elder could be prepared with a prayer so that you are not the one leading it. In this way, the governing body demonstrates its leadership and ability to see the community of faith through this transition time, starting right now.

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.... I will no longer talk much with you.”
(John 14: 27, 30a)

Leading in Your Last Months in the Pastoral Relationship

As an Easter people, we believe that new life will indeed come to be, but skipping the grieving process is no more helpful in the ending of a pastoral relationship than it is when someone dies. Publicly acknowledge and encourage the community of faith as they begin the work of preparing a profile and a position description. You may engage in an exit interview with members of the M&P Committee (see *Resources for Ministry and Personnel Committee*).

A helpful resource during this time is *Running through the Thistles: Terminating a Ministerial Relationship with a Parish* by Roy Oswald.

Plan your last service of worship prayerfully. Consider using a liturgy that

- acknowledges unfinished business and work that wasn’t done;
- affirms mutuality of gifts;
- releases each party from the covenant that grounded the pastoral relationship (possibly using the symbols from the covenanting service); and
- blesses each other for your respective future journeys.

This type of liturgy “To mark the end of a pastoral relationship” can be found in *Celebrate God’s Presence*. In this time of transition, let people say goodbye. There is nothing worse than having the minister leave without a party or a goodbye service. It is part of your ministry to let a goodbye happen.

Disengaging

When your pastoral relationship has ended, it is important to disengage. While it can feel challenging, this is a healthy practice both for you to form a new pastoral relationship and to allow your successor to form a new one.

You are reminded that *The Manual* (I.2.5.4) states:

If a ministry personnel is asked by a member or adherent (or their families) of a community of faith where they had previously served to preside at a baptism, communion service, wedding, or funeral, the ministry personnel

- a) must refer the request to a member of the order of ministry who is currently serving under call or appointment to that community of faith; and
- b) may preside only with the approval of the community of faith’s governing body.

A few helpful hints for ending the pastoral relationship and making room for the transition to new pastoral relationships:

- Leave nothing for the next minister to take care of. If you believe it needs to be done, try to do it before you leave.
- Never be involved with choosing your successor. But do consult with the search team about what you see as the ministry needs or some of your tasks as they prepare a position description.
- Make sure the community of faith understands the process that will take place to fill the position, and give them hints on how they can make the new minister feel welcome.
- It is good to prepare the community of faith while you are still with them to understand the need for disengagement and how it might affect them. This might mean an end to ties that your family members have with the community of faith.
- Any solicitation for advice, except from the new ministry personnel, should be referred to the current minister. Don't engage as a listening partner about the new minister.
- Don't say "I'm not allowed," but rather indicate that you are declining in the interests of the community of faith, the new minister, and to support the establishment of a healthy pastoral relationship.

If you are not entering a new pastoral relationship and are planning to attend a community of faith that you previously served, it is especially important to consult with the incumbent minister concerning expectations and the level of involvement both parties would be comfortable with. A covenant agreement between former and current ministers is one strategy that can be used.

It is strongly recommended that former ministers do not attend the community of faith in which they have just served for at least a year, to allow the new minister to be settled into the life of the church. It is a good idea to establish a covenant agreement and wait for the time period designated, along with an invitation from the incumbent minister, to return. It is also recommended that you review arrangements and understandings periodically as circumstances often change.

In the case of the incumbent minister's invitation for direct involvement (e.g., preaching, serving on a committee), you need to determine if it is appropriate. It is wise to stay out of policy or governance issues. Remember, your presence in the faith community should be agreed upon with your colleague and your presence could strengthen or hurt the health of the community of faith. In situations where a minister has served in an isolated or rural pastoral charge, still lives in the area, and where there are no other easily accessible United Church communities of faith, the minister should contact regional council staff to facilitate a dialogue with the incumbent minister to determine if the past minister may worship there, and establish terms of the relationship.

A new development in the pastoral transition is how to disengage from social media. Some helpful best practices are outlined below:¹

- Prior to departure, you need to transfer administrator duties for church-related social media spaces and accounts, remove your own administrator status, and give password information to someone else in the community of faith who in turn changes the passwords and takes over administrator duties.
- Though difficult, it is recommended as a best practice for the departing ministry personnel to unfriend/unfollow all members and others with whom you've had a pastoral relationship, although there may be situations where it is appropriate to use restricted lists.² In making this change to limit your online interactions with former faith community members, you prioritize the needs of the community of faith and incoming ministry personnel over your own desires to maintain relationships (or the desires of members to stay in contact). You must be consistent with all members—either unfriend/unfollow everyone from the community of faith or move everyone to a restricted list—and you should convey this policy to the community of faith as part of your departure plan so there is no confusion.
- Following the end of your pastoral relationship, you must refrain from providing pastoral care through digital communication. Continuing to provide pastoral care through social media interferes with the ministry of your successor and with their beginning of a new pastoral relationship.
- Following a period of one year, you may discern whether you will begin to accept friend requests of former congregants and/or choose to change your privacy settings. You should not initiate friend/follow requests with members of a former community of faith.

¹ These are modified from “A Sure Foundation: resources for the relationship between pastors and congregations—social media guidelines” from The United Church of Christ (<https://uccfiles.com/pdf/ASF-SocialMediaGuidelines.pdf>).

² Adam Cleaveland makes compelling arguments for both options here: <https://alban.org/archive/pastoral-transitions-in-the-age-of-social-media/>.

Preparing to Seek a New Pastoral Relationship

Completing the Skills and Gifts Profile

The categories found in the Skills and Gifts Profile for ministry personnel may also be used by communities of faith that are seeking new ministry personnel as part of their Living Faith Story.

The Skills and Gifts Profile of ministry personnel does not replace your resumé. Rather, it is meant to be a way of telling an honest and authentic story about you as ministry personnel. (A template can be found in the Resources section.)

If you have an existing resumé, carefully review it first. Consider the following questions:

- What ministry activities have I led that made me feel the most energized or the closest to God? Think about some specific activities that lead you to this conclusion.
- Who are the people with whom I minister most effectively? Are they children? Teens? Marginalized people?
- Where have I focused my continuing education time and resources? Has this focus helped me to develop specific interests into real skills and credentials? If so, in what areas? Or, for candidates, what courses or learning circles were most interesting for me during my formal theological education? Which Learning Outcomes were affirmed as being in the category of exceptional proficiency?
- What do people compliment me for?
- What ministry activities drain me of energy?

Based on this self-reflection, identify the particular gifts and skills that you bring to each of the eight categories. Ponder how you have demonstrated your gifts and skills in each area. Write down some examples of how you live out your approach to each of the categories.

Consider the questions in each category only as prompts. It is not necessary that you answer every question in every category. But it is highly recommended that you provide some response to each of the categories. Particularly, it is helpful for you to identify the category (or categories) where you may have skills but have no interest in devoting much of your ministry to. If, in your reflection, you identify areas that truly are not your skill areas, be honest. The categories are listed alphabetically, but you will want to rank the categories according to strength or priority. The categories are from the “Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel” (available on www.united-church.ca).

Skills and Gifts Profiles for Candidates

If you are a candidate, you will need to prepare a skills and gifts profile and search for an appointment provided you are in one of the following circumstances:

- your Candidacy Board has authorized your readiness for a candidate supply appointment; or
- your Candidacy Board has authorized your readiness for Supervised Ministry Education and they have recommended that this placement be achieved through an appointment.

While you will follow part of these pastoral relations processes in searching for an appointment, further details about the requirements of both candidate supply appointments and Supervised Ministry Education are laid out in the Candidacy Pathway resources.

When you've completed a first draft of your profile, share it with someone you trust. Ask them to be honest in answering these questions:

- Does this profile provide an honest and authentic picture of who I am as ministry personnel?
- How can I be more explicit to better showcase my skills and gifts for ministry?
- Have I exaggerated anything in a way that could mislead a community of faith?

“Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.” (1 Corinthians 2:12)

Ministry personnel profiles can be written in either English or French and uploaded onto ChurchHub. If English or French is not your first language and writing in English or French is difficult, you may want to have someone else read your profile. They may have suggestions about how to make your profile more easily understood.

Communities of faith will be able to filter your profile as follows:

- ministry status—designated lay minister (DLM), diaconal minister (DM), ordained minister (OM), candidate supply, Supervised Ministry Education (SME);
- hours—full-time or part-time;
- regional availability—regional council 1–16;
- languages spoken—English, French, or other; and
- designated intentional interim minister.

What Is ChurchHub?

- A major part of our new pastoral relations system is the Office of Vocation database that holds all personnel records.
- This database includes ChurchHub—a place where ministry personnel and candidates are able to sign in and access their personal profile.
- Communities of faith are also able to sign in and access their profile.
- ChurchHub is where ministry personnel search for a new call or appointment and communities of faith search for a new minister.
- Ministry personnel may post also their profile as available for pulpit supply.
- ChurchHub is secure. The only people who can see ministry personnel profiles that are posted as available for call or appointment are communities of faith that also have profiles that are posted as available for call or appointment. The database connected to ChurchHub is housed in Canada.
- It can be found at: www.churchhub.ca.
- The Indigenous Church will be self-determining in whether or how they use ChurchHub.

Reflect on your profile again. Pray over it. Revise it one more time. You can update your profile as often as you like on ChurchHub. You will also need to upload your current resumé onto ChurchHub. Only once your profile is activated is it available for viewing by the search teams of communities of faith. When you are ready, request your Office of Vocation minister to activate your profile as “available.” As you request your profile be activated, believe that the mystery of the Holy Spirit is at play.

Preparing your References

Later on in the process, after an initial interview, ministry personnel are asked to provide two professional references. You need to ask and receive consent from each of the references to share their contact information with interested communities of faith. Now is the time to make this request and ensure that you have the following information from your reference: name, designation, relationship to you and length of relationship, daytime phone number, evening phone number, and e-mail address.

References are a key component of the interview process. The most valuable reference for a search team is someone who has worked with you and can comment on your work style, your effectiveness, your ability to work with others, your approach to conflict, and so on. Ideally, the reference has known you for more than two years.

Later, the search team will need to speak with at least one person, usually the chair of the governing body or the chair of the M&P Committee from your current pastoral relationship. However, given the confidential nature of your search process, you may not want the search team to speak with this reference until you are both closer to making a decision. You could ask them to contact your other references first and to only contact the references from your current ministry after the second interview when you have agreed to move forward into negotiating terms.

If you are a candidate and have not previously held a ministry position, you could ask for a reference from a field placement or educational supervisor or someone (like chair of the governing body or chair of the worship committee) from a community of faith where you have done pulpit supply. You will want to ask for a reference from someone who can speak to your promise and suitability for ministry leadership.

You can help your references be effective for you by

- telling them who is likely to contact them;
- describing the type of position you are applying for (perhaps providing them with the position description or asking them to review the community of faith profile documents ahead of time);
- confirming a few things you hope they might say; and
- thanking them.

“All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth.”
(Luke 4:22)

If you are leaving your current pastoral relationship because of a significant conflict and are unlikely to receive a positive reference from your current ministry, you have several options.

- You can ask the M&P Committee chair or chair of the governing body to provide a letter of reference that touches on specific areas. For example, ask them to comment on things you did well, things that you improved upon over the time that you were there, their areas of concern, and their suggestions for improvement.
- Another alternative is to ask them to provide a verbal reference after you have had a conversation together about the same kinds of things: what you did well and improved upon and their areas of concern and suggestions. This is generally the preferred option; however, it may be inappropriate in some circumstances.
- A third alternative is to decline to provide references from your current pastoral relationship. In this case, explain your reasons to the search team and provide a reasonable alternative, such as references from a previous community of faith you served and colleagues from regional council, cluster, or network projects. A community of faith always has the opportunity to call the regional council or Office of Vocation minister as a reference as well.

Exploring Community of Faith Profiles for Potential Matches

With your ministry personnel profile now viewable on ChurchHub by communities of faith (*only* those that have their own profiles posted and are searching), the process begins of reviewing profiles to look for potential matches. This is a dual process. As you review community of faith profiles and assess whether they might be a potential match, your profile is being reviewed by communities of faith too.

As ministry personnel, you can search for potential matches in ChurchHub. This is the time for you to assess how well your skills and gifts match with the community of faith profiles in ChurchHub. You can communicate with a search team through ChurchHub to invite them to assess whether your profile may be a good match and possibly invite you to an interview. Also, communities of faith will review your profile and some might initiate inviting you to an interview. Assess their profile before you agree to an interview, and discern for yourself whether that community of faith may be a good match.

Matching in ChurchHub

As you look for a match, there are further instructions on using ChurchHub on this online portal.

You can filter community of faith profiles by

- regional availability—regional council 1–16
- hours—full-time or part-time
- start date
- manse
- Supervised Ministry Education site
- solo or team ministry
- urban, suburban, or rural
- ethnocultural or linguistic specific community of faith
- Indigenous community of faith
- Affirming community of faith

Reviewing profiles can feel like an intuitive process. As part of their profile, communities of faith may have told their living faith story in different ways. You may find the individual worksheet for matching profiles (found in the Resources section) helpful. As you review a community of faith profile, you can mark it as a “good match,” “maybe match,” or “no match.” The worksheet is useful for reviewing one community of faith profile at a time. Remember that a potential match is not a good or bad judgment about you or the community of faith; it is an assessment of the match of your skills and gifts with the community of faith’s story, ministry needs, and vision.

“But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7)

Because the goal is a healthy pastoral relationship, consider your strongest and most passionate categories first; this is where there needs to be the best alignment. If you have a good match but it’s only in categories that aren’t as important to your ministry, it may not be the best overall match. Agree to an interview only with communities of faith with whom you feel there is a solid enough match to grow into a healthy pastoral relationship. Don’t waste your time or the time of others by interviewing with communities of faith with whom you don’t really match.

If you feel that you need support in reviewing profiles or inviting communities of faith to review your profile, you can seek assistance from the staff of your regional council or the regional council where you are looking. For example, as a transgender minister, you may want to have a conversation with regional council staff to discern some potential matches in their jurisdiction. Or, as a minister with a disability, you may want to seek more information about the accessibility of the building of a community of faith, if this information is not shared in their profile.

Candidates Seeking a Learning Site

If you are a candidate searching for an appointment to meet your requirement of Supervised Ministry Education, as you review profiles in ChurchHub, you will only be able to see profiles for communities of faith that have discerned that they are willing to be a learning site. In reviewing profiles, you will need to discern how the profile of the community of faith matches your learning goals. The Office of Vocation minister can help you with your search.

In reviewing potential matches, you bring your openness to experiencing God's Spirit in the process. You are looking for a community of faith with whom you feel called to minister in a particular local context. If you have not found a solid match, is God calling you to wait? Can you develop the patience and trust in God's sufficiency to wait? Do you need to seek support from regional council staff in your journey of searching for a new pastoral relationship?

Preparing for Interviews

As a community of faith prepares for a first interview, spend time preparing yourself for the interview. Review your resumé and your skills and gifts profile, and consider the following:

- What is your goal for the interview? What are the key things you want to convey?
- What goals do you have for your ministry in the next five years?
- What have you learned in your current ministry?
- Where are the areas of fit that you see with this community of faith, and why? Where are areas that may not fit? How might you address or explore this?
- What are your absolute bottom lines (e.g., salary, geography, hours of work, location, type of ministry)?
- If you are a candidate, what are your learning goals for Supervised Ministry Education and how will you discuss them during the interview?

Be sure to bring a hard copy of your ministry personnel profile and references to the interview. And bring a list of questions that you have for the search team.

You can also prepare by anticipating some questions and preparing answers in advance. You could ask someone to rehearse an interview with you and provide feedback. If you are a candidate, the Circle of Accompaniment is a resource for this type of preparation. While a search team can develop its own interview questions, you may find it helpful to review the interview questions in *Pastoral Relations: Additional Resources for a Community of Faith* (available on www.united-church.ca). You may not be asked all the same questions, but they could give you an idea of the themes of the interview.

Another element of interview preparation is getting to know the community of faith before the interview. You will want to demonstrate to the search team that you have put care and effort into your preparations. Familiarize yourself with their website, their community of faith profile, and any other sources of information you can acquire about them. You may even want to reference these sources of information in your interview to demonstrate your level of preparation and interest in a potential new pastoral relationship.

Part of gaining knowledge about the community of faith is learning about the local community before the interview. You don't want to make assumptions about the local context where you are interested in serving. In addition to the community of faith profile, you can consult the websites of local newspapers, the municipality, or the chamber of commerce.

Don't forget to pray during the preparation process. What is the Holy Spirit calling you to?

The First Interview

The first interview is an opportunity to have a conversation about how your skills and gifts might fit with the ministry of this community of faith. Enjoy the sacred time in conversation with the search team as together you discern where the Spirit is calling you all.

Here are some tips for the interview:

- Wear comfortable clothing and footwear appropriate for a professional interview.
- If you live far away, it may be appropriate to arrange an interview using Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime. You will want to practise the connection ahead of time with a member of the search team. The search team will be aware of any bias they might have when comparing an electronic interview with an in-person interview.
- If in person, look up the transportation directions well in advance and confirm them with the search team contact person.
- Come ten minutes ahead of time—long enough ahead to get comfortable but not so long that you are likely to run into the interviewee ahead of you. Give yourself time alone to centre yourself for the interview.
- See this interview as an opportunity for a “holy encounter” in which you are seeking to convey your hope and optimism for this potential match, while also seeking the information you need to help you make a decision.
- Ask them to summarize the next steps at the end of the interview. Ask questions like “Do you need my references now or shall I wait till I hear from you?” “When can I expect to hear from you?” “Will I hear from you even if I am unsuccessful?” “If I am unsuccessful will you provide me with some constructive feedback?”

Human rights

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 that are unrelated to job requirements, qualifications, or performance. If you want more specific information about the prohibited grounds of discrimination in your jurisdiction, contact information for the human rights commission or equivalent in your province or territory is contained in the Resources section of *Pastoral Relations: Additional Resources for a Community of Faith*.

As part of their preparation, the search teams have been trained to honour human rights at all times and have been trained to avoid asking questions that are discriminatory. Occasionally, in an interview, you may offer information about your family, gender, or political affiliation. The search

team must not ask for further information, or use the information as evaluation criteria. If you are asked a question that you feel is a violation of your human rights, you could ask for clarification: “I’m not sure I understand your question. Can you rephrase that so I can give you a helpful response?” If you are uncomfortable, you do not have to answer discriminatory questions. Try not to make assumptions about the individual asking or the search team. The search team training should allow the team to be mutually accountable, and if a team member inadvertently makes an error, another search team member should remind the team that the question is inappropriate. If you are concerned, you can consult with regional council staff after the interview.

Preparing references for a call

After the first interviews, the search team will identify one person who presents as a good match. The search team will then check the references of this one potential match.

Earlier in the process, you prepared your references and obtained consent to share their information with a search team. Now is the time to alert them of who they will be hearing from and approximately when. Tell your references about the position you have applied to, and brainstorm with them about specific examples of your work that relate to the position you’re applying for. Finally, express your gratitude for their willingness to be your reference.

For the search team, the final step of reference checking is a final confirmation of eligibility for a call or appointment with your Office of Vocation minister.

A visit during worship

As part of reference checking, the search team may want to attend a worship gathering at which you are an active leader. Or you may have shared sermons or recordings of worship with the search team, so they have an idea of how you lead worship. If distance prevents attendance, they may ask you for recordings or they may send someone they trust in your area on their behalf.

This can be an important step; worship is a critical component of the life of most communities of faith. However, not all position descriptions require a significant amount of worship leadership. The search teams are trained to never surprise you with a visit. If they wish to visit, they are reminded to arrange it with you ahead of time.

“Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind.” (1 Kings 3:12)

Managing expectations

Following an unsuccessful interview, you can follow up with your contact person from the search team to ask for some feedback. While it may be difficult to make such a request, the feedback can be immensely helpful as you continue in the search process with another community of faith. As part of your correspondence with the search team, be sure to include an expression of gratitude for the interview opportunity and their sharing of feedback.

The right match may take time. This can be a difficult time of waiting during a transition. Ensure that you practise helpful self-care and engage your support system during this time.

The Second Interview

The purpose of a second interview is to dig deeper into the match. It gives more time for responses to a few questions from the search team and questions from you. A second interview tends to be more conversational in style and less formal than the first interview. The goal is to continue discerning fit and to continue to listen to where the Holy Spirit is calling you and the community of faith.

If you are sure after the first interview that you do not wish to pursue a pastoral relationship with this community of faith, decline the second interview.

However, if you are interested in continuing to explore the potential of a new pastoral relationship, the second interview is an opportunity for you and the search team to identify needs regarding the call or appointment terms without getting into negotiating the actual terms. In general, a second interview is highly recommended. If the first interview was held over the internet, ensure that the second interview takes place face-to-face.

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

During the second interview, the search team may follow up with you about something that came up in the first interview or in the reference checks. But it is also a time for you to bring more questions.

Some topics you might bring to a second interview include the following:

- Clarification on responsibilities or relationships in the community of faith profile, especially the position description.
- Questions that you failed to ask after the first interview but wish that you had.
- Where do you see yourself and where does the community of faith see themselves in five years?
- Any specific questions you have about the community and any needs that you or your family have within the community.
- What specific terms and conditions must be met for you to seriously consider a call or appointment? This isn't a time for negotiation but to provide clarity on needs during negotiation.

Negotiating Terms

If the second interview confirms the sense of both you and the search team that God is calling you all to enter into a new pastoral relationship, the next step is to negotiate the terms of the call or appointment.

Only negotiate terms with one community of faith at a time. At no time should you negotiate with more than one community of faith at once. Similarly, a community of faith will only negotiate with their top applicant. It is unethical to negotiate with more than one community of faith or minister at a time.

The two members of the search team will negotiate the terms of the call or appointment directly with you, while keeping within the parameters provided by the governing body. Ideally, this discussion takes place in a face-to-face meeting, but where this is not feasible, over the internet can also work well.

All terms of call or appointment must be written down. While this is a covenantal relationship, it is also a legal relationship. In the Resources section, there is a worksheet that both ministry personnel and the community of faith may find helpful in their negotiation. It outlines the necessary information required for a record of call or appointment.

A community of faith cannot extend a call or appointment that does not meet the minimum requirements as set out by *The Manual*, even if the governing body has approved the parameters. If you become aware that the parameters do not meet the minimums, ask the search team to go back to the governing body to revise them accordingly. Also, if the search team and the ministry personnel wish to negotiate outside of the budget set by the governing body, the search team must first take a recommendation back to the governing body to approve an increase to the budget.

The reality is that some communities of faith will only pay the minimum salary. A community of faith may offer a call or appointment at the minimum salary, with standard terms included (see Minimum Salary and Allowances for Ministry Personnel on www.united-church.ca). Other communities of faith will consider paying a percentage or amount above the minimum salary with standard terms included. If you are offered an amount above the minimum, the amount will lose value with future salary increases. However, if you are offered a percentage above the minimum, the percentage amount relative to the salary will keep pace with future salary increases.

You can approach negotiation as a positive activity that is not combative or demanding. It can be done in a manner that encourages

- adequate income for you to fulfill your role without undue concern about current and future financial needs;
- fair consideration for your investment in education, talent, experience, and effort;
- appreciation for the demands of the position and degree of responsibility;
- responsible and caring action by the community of faith; and
- a healthy and vital relationship between you, the community of faith, and its ministry.

“In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.” (1 Corinthians 9:14)

Negotiation Misconceptions

A few misconceptions can arise when communities of faith negotiate salaries with ministry personnel.

Some communities of faith may say:

“We can pay less because the minister’s spouse is a high earner.”

Nowhere else in the working world are employee salaries reduced to account for spousal earnings. Your efforts are worth no less when your spouse earns a good income.

“We can pay less because the minister has modest needs.”

Although you may live modestly, a church has no right to pay a less-than-fair wage simply because it makes assumptions about how you will spend the money.

“We can pay less because the minister is young and has no family, or is older and has established themselves, or is part-time and can earn more elsewhere.”

Fair and equitable compensation should be based on your education, talent, experience, effort, and responsibility. Non-work related factors should not influence what you are paid.

Some ministry personnel may say:

“Members will dislike me if I request a higher salary.”

People appreciate honesty and would rather know how you are feeling than deal with unexpressed frustrations. People pay more attention to what you do than what salary you ask for. People know that ministers are called to be God’s servants but sometimes forget that servants deserve fair wages for their labours.

“I’m a proclaimer of the gospel, I shouldn’t be preoccupied with such material concerns.”

The scripture acknowledges time and again that church leaders must be cared for and compensated for their labour. Paying a fair wage is one way your community of faith acknowledges that it respects its own ministry leaders. Being silent and passive can cause your feelings to emerge in defensive ways that are not productive to God’s work.

“My church is poor. It can’t afford to do better.”

Some churches are doing all they can financially. However, perception and reality may not always align. Use any tools at hand to determine if this is the case, including the financial viability element of the community of faith profile.

“The church’s Mission & Service giving will go down if my salary goes up.”

Your church’s first priority is to appropriately provide for its members and pastoral leaders. They are essential for church growth and effective Mission & Service giving.

Tips for Constructive Negotiations

- Conduct negotiations in a spirit of good will and positivity.
- Know what you want and what you absolutely need, and prioritize your requests. It is important to have thought through these matters before the negotiation begins. Being unprepared diminishes your credibility. (If you are unprepared, they may think, “How important can this be? They didn’t even know what they wanted.”)
- Whenever possible, point out the positive impact your requests will have on you and the ministry of the community of faith.
- Be an active listener and try to understand the logic of others’ positions; restate your understanding of your counterparts’ understanding to gain added credibility.
- Be realistic in your expectations. You may not be able to achieve all your goals at once. Expect to give up on some requests and compromise on others.
- Understand that in some communities of faith, money anxiety is real and discussions about money are not easy.

A helpful tool for approaching your negotiations is the “Negotiating Worksheet for Ministry Personnel” found at www.united-church.ca/leadership/supporting-ministry/pastoral-relations. This tool allows you to estimate a personal budget and then determine the gross salary required to meet your needs. It can be helpful to determine a goal for salary negotiations or a re-evaluation of personal expenses.

The financial viability element of the community of faith profile is helpful in assessing the financial state of the faith community. Another helpful resource in preparing for negotiation is *The United Church of Canada Year Book: Volume 1*. The Year Book provides statistical and financial information for pastoral charges. You can use the Year Book to look up information about the pastoral charge, including

- salary history;
- size of community of faith and weekly worship attendance;
- financial condition (assets, liabilities, income and expenses); and
- number of households under pastoral care, and those who are financially contributing.

As well, it can be helpful to compare salaries of similar-size United Churches in the area.

Unique Terms

Sometimes communities of faith and ministry personnel will come up with unique terms to address their specific circumstances. All terms, whether unique or not, must be written down. Unique terms cannot be substituted for minimum requirements.

The following are examples of unique terms:

- additional compensation provided not through monetary terms but through additional Sundays or time off (e.g., the Sunday after Christmas and Easter off)
- additional funds above the minimum continuing education allowance and/or additional study leave
- funds for computer/mobile phone above the minimum telephone amount

If you are a candidate, you might consider asking for additional time to do part of the requirements of your theological education. For example, candidates enrolled in the Atlantic School of Theology Summer Distance program may negotiate with the community of faith to have the six weeks of the residential program considered as continuing education leave. Candidates enrolled at St. Andrew's College may negotiate to have all of their learning circle time considered continuing education leave. Candidates in the Designated Lay Ministry program may negotiate to have the four weeks of the residential learning circles considered continuing education leave. However, candidates who have completed their theological training and are serving in a Supervised Ministry Education student supply appointment as the last phase of their preparation for ordination receive the standard three weeks of continuing education leave.

In other situations, you may make requests to consider terms that are specific to your unique circumstances. For example, working only from a home office rather than from the office usually provided by the community of faith. The community of faith is under no obligation to agree to these kinds of terms. The community of faith representatives will need to consider the terms carefully before committing or declining. The negotiators will want to know the following:

- How will this request enhance your ability to fulfill your obligations in this position?
- What suggestions do you have for addressing the challenges associated with this unique term or condition?
- Who else might be unintentionally and negatively affected by this term?
- Are there others whose input should be sought prior to making a mutual decision?

Reasonable Accommodation

Sometimes you will have a health-related situation that will impact the way in which you perform your role. Ministry personnel are not required to provide a diagnosis, prognosis, treatment, or any other health-related information. Ministry personnel are required to provide information about what specific challenges they have in performing the role and to identify how these challenges could be accommodated. At the search team's discretion, they may request that you have your doctor review a position description or requirements and answer questions regarding limitations to the performance of essential duties so that attempts at appropriate accommodation can be mutually determined.

Here are some examples:

- The ministry personnel has a service dog to assist them in their day-to-day work.
- The ministry personnel needs a two-hour break a couple of times during the working day. Together, the search team and ministry personnel discuss what a typical working day would look like that accommodates these breaks.

In these health-related situations, the community of faith must take appropriate steps to address accessibility to the workplace, while balancing this with the needs of others. The community of faith must also consider the potential impact on others and balance the ability to accommodate the prospective ministry personnel's needs with the needs of the community of

faith (e.g., members who have allergies to dogs or are afraid of animals will not be able to access the ministry personnel). When addressing any of these unique terms, negotiators from the search team need to consult with the governing body. In these kinds of situations, it might be helpful to all parties to seek assistance from regional council staff.

Other Points in Negotiation

If the pastoral charge owns a manse, and includes the manse as part of the terms of call or appointment, it is the responsibility of the governing body to visit the manse and report on its condition, including any necessary repairs or maintenance. The call or appointment will not be issued until the recommendations have been adequately addressed.

For communities of faith that own a manse, ministry personnel have the first right of refusal to reside in the manse. This is outlined in section 10.4.2 of the Basis of Union, which states: “Every member of the Order of Ministry called or appointed to a Pastoral Charge shall, subject to the rules and regulations of the United Church have the right of occupancy of the manse in connection with the Pastoral Charge.”

If you are planning on residing in the manse, inform the search team of your choice. It is good to know the timeline for any repairs and whether they will be done before your arrival. If you are being called or appointed to a part-time ministry, discern whether it is advantageous to live in the manse or receive a comprehensive salary based on the cost-of-living group.

Another item for negotiation might be moving expenses. If you are moving in response to a call or appointment, the community of faith is responsible for paying the moving expenses. However, you must negotiate the arrangements for the move with the search team ahead of time. For example, how many quotes do they expect you to provide? What is the budget for the move?

Record of Call or Appointment

The record of call or appointment is completed on ChurchHub. The record of call or appointment worksheet (found in the Resources section) can be helpful in negotiating the terms before they are approved.

Both you and the community of faith complete different pieces of the record of the call or appointment form in ChurchHub. Because you each have a sign-in with an individual password to access your profiles in ChurchHub, this is equivalent to a signature.

Once the community of faith has approved the call or appointment, the record of call or appointment is reviewed and approved by the regional council. Once it is approved, it is submitted in a finalized form into the Office of Vocation database in ChurchHub and can be accessed in the future.

“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)

Reappointment

Pastoral relationships that are appointments have a specified end date and may be renewed. A community of faith needs to make a request to the regional council to renew an appointment. A ministry personnel does not need to post a profile to accept an appointment renewal.

Beginning the New Pastoral Relationship

You can keep the search team informed of your start date and any help you need in making the transition to the new community of faith. This may involve moving and transitions for your family.

“I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God’s grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.” (Philippians 1:3–11)

As you begin your new pastoral relationship, you may want to access the resources of the United Fresh Start program (<https://unitedfreshstart.ca>) to help in building a healthy pastoral relationship. Ask the regional council staff if there is a United Fresh Start facilitator available to work with you and community of faith leaders in the first two years of your new pastoral relationship. Also, it might be helpful to work through “United Fresh Start in your Congregation,” a modified version of four of the key modules of the United Fresh Start curriculum.

You may also contact your regional council to find out about the work of clusters and networks in your area, the existence of ministerial support groups, the upcoming meeting of your regional council, and any governance or program work of the regional council that you might want to become involved in.

Covenanting Service

The liaison to the search team may continue to be the representative of the regional council during the covenanting service. You and your new community of faith coordinate with the liaison or another regional council representative about 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)

There are more details about the covenanting service in *Pastoral Relations: Community of Faith*. A sample liturgy for recognizing the covenant that provides the foundation for the new pastoral relationship is found in the Worship section of the United Church website (www.united-church.ca/worship) under the theme Milestones and Transitions. There are also supplementary resources on the website to help worship leaders plan the whole covenanting service.

On the Journey to a New Pastoral Relationship

For assistance in your pastoral relations journey, including whom to contact, please visit www.united-church.ca/leadership/supporting-ministry/pastoral-relations. You can also contact staff in the Ministry and Employment Unit of the General Council Office.

A Prayer to Ground You During the Pastoral Relations Process

Holy One, Holy Three,
who has entered into a covenant with all of your people,
you call your disciples to follow in your way.
In times when we are not sure of the path,
give us courage.
In times when we need to discern
help us to listen to your still small voice.
In times when we are doubtful,
reassure us of your promise to never forsake us.

As we journey with you,
help us to be filled with your hope.
Amen.

Resources

Ministry Personnel Skills and Gifts Profile Template

Category Title	These are the skills and gifts that I bring to my ministry vocation:
Administration	<p>What are your specific interests, strengths, and gifts in this area? How have you demonstrated your skills and gifts in this area?</p> <p>What level of expertise do you have in using information technology?</p> <p>How much administrative support do you need to support your effective ministry?</p> <p>How are your financial skills and ability to read budgets?</p> <p>How meaningful or rewarding is attending and/or leading administrative meetings?</p> <p>How do you support gift discernment in the community of faith?</p> <p>What continuing education (including reading, attending courses and workshops, being mentored, etc.) have you done in this area?</p>
Community Outreach and Social Justice	<p>How meaningful or satisfying is it for you to be actively involved in justice and outreach ministries? What priority have justice and outreach played in your ministry to date? What priority do you want them to play?</p> <p>What are your specific strengths and gifts in this area (e.g., community assessment, building effective partnerships in the community, participating in activities that others lead)? What accomplishments are you really proud of? How have you demonstrated your skills and gifts in this area?</p> <p>What specific justice-related concerns are you passionate about?</p> <p>What continuing education have you done in this area?</p> <p>How important is the leadership of lay people for you in the areas of justice and outreach?</p>
Denomination and Communities	<p>What is the significance for you of your regional council? General Council?</p> <p>What experience do you have with shared ministry (e.g., United Church clusters, ecumenical projects, overseas partners, amalgamations)?</p> <p>How important is it for you to build and nurture effective ministry partnerships in the community?</p> <p>Who have been your key partnerships in your ministry and community contexts?</p> <p>What kind of community partnerships have you been involved in? How do you go about finding community partners?</p> <p>What values underpin community ministry partnerships for you?</p> <p>What continuing education have you done in this area?</p> <p>Describe a community partnership that was healthy and effective. What did you contribute?</p>

Category Title	These are the skills and gifts that I bring to my ministry vocation:
Faith Formation and Christian Education	<p>What are your specific strengths and gifts in this area (e.g., youth, children, young adults, seniors, small groups, adult education, and spiritual practices)? How have you demonstrated these skills and gifts?</p> <p>What continuing education have you done in this area?</p> <p>How meaningful or satisfying for you is the development of people as disciples?</p> <p>What specific credentials do you have in this area?</p> <p>What is your vision for discipleship in a community of faith?</p> <p>What role do you see for yourself and for lay people to provide faith formation?</p> <p>What accomplishments do you feel good about? What made them good? What did you contribute? What would you do differently if you were doing it again?</p>
Leadership	<p>How do you describe your leadership style? How would a friend describe your leadership style?</p> <p>Do you have a preference for working in solo ministry or shared leadership?</p> <p>What skills do you bring to solo ministry? To shared leadership?</p> <p>What experiences do you have in team ministry?</p> <p>What continuing education have you done in this area?</p> <p>What leadership qualities are you looking for in lay leaders?</p> <p>Describe some of your experiences with discerning/engaging lay leadership (e.g., prayer teams, youth leaders, council members).</p> <p>What do you see as the relationship between leadership and ministry?</p> <p>What support are you seeking from the community of faith to continue to develop your leadership skills?</p>
Pastoral Care	<p>How meaningful or satisfying is providing pastoral care for you?</p> <p>What are your specific strengths and gifts in this area (e.g., seniors, people with addictions or mental health challenges, palliative or end-of-life care)? How have you demonstrated these skills and gifts?</p> <p>What continuing education have you done in this area?</p> <p>Do you have specific credentials in this area?</p> <p>How important is it to you that lay people work with you in providing pastoral care? What is your role when working with lay people to provide this care?</p> <p>Describe some times when you have felt you provided good care. What made it good? How was it received? Would you do anything differently?</p>

Category Title	These are the skills and gifts that I bring to my ministry vocation:
Self-care	<p>How do you practise self-care? How do you support your own vitality, wellness, and spiritual growth?</p> <p>What are some of your skills and gifts in the area of healthy relationships?</p> <p>What continuing education have you done in this area?</p> <p>How do you encourage lay people to find balance in their lay ministry and not burn out?</p> <p>How do you have fun in ministry?</p>
Worship	<p>What do you most enjoy about worship leadership?</p> <p>What does “inspiring worship” mean for you?</p> <p>What are your specific strengths and gifts in this area? How have you demonstrated these skills and gifts?</p> <p>Describe your experiences sharing worship leadership among musicians, ministry personnel, and lay people.</p> <p>To what extent do you prefer (or hope) to use technology to support worship?</p> <p>What kinds of music do you most enjoy in worship? What kinds do you use?</p> <p>What other liturgical arts do you practise or encourage in worship (e.g., banners, dance, puppetry, clowning)?</p> <p>What continuing education have you done in this area?</p> <p>What is the purpose of preaching? How do you incorporate contemporary relevance, historical context, academic perspective, and so on?</p> <p>How do you usually deliver a sermon (e.g., a 20-minute sermon, short informal message, dialogue)?</p> <p>How does prayer fit within your usual worship service? Who leads it? What form(s) does it take?</p> <p>What translation of the Bible are you most comfortable with?</p> <p>Are you most comfortable following the lectionary? Topical sermons? Series of sermons? Other?</p> <p>What are your experiences and vision for alternate worship (e.g., youth worship, experiential stations, small groups)?</p> <p>To what extent are you comfortable with worship experimentation?</p> <p>What is your understanding of stewardship? How do you see the roles of ministry personnel and lay people complementing each other?</p> <p>How rewarding is leading or supporting stewardship initiatives?</p>

Individual Worksheet for Matching

Category	Ranking for ministry personnel	“Match” (Good, No, Maybe)	Examples of why you assess it this way (a few words to remind yourself later)
Administration			
Community Outreach and Social Justice			
Denomination and Communities			
Faith Formation and Christian Education			
Leadership			
Pastoral Care			
Self-care			
Worship			

Choose “Good Match” if you see common words, common phrases, or common themes in the community of faith profile and your ministry personnel profile. Choose “No Match” if you see words/phrases/themes that seem to significantly contrast or even conflict with the community of faith profile. Choose “Maybe” if there is some resonance, commonality, or dissonance or something you can’t put your finger on, but it seems intriguing and worth a second look.