Pastoral Relations:
Regional Council Liaisons

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Pastoral Relations
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The United Church of Canada
L’Église Unie du Canada

Pastoral Relations: Regional Council Liaisons (January 2019)

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The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada
3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 200
Toronto, ON
Canada M8X 2Y4
1-800-268-3781
www.united-church.ca

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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 a liaison from the regional council (either staff or a volunteer) to help train and guide communities of faith in the new pastoral relations process.

This resource contains best practices that provide information, guidance, and advice on the recommended ways to live out mandatory policies and procedures, which are found in both of the pastoral relations resources for communities of faith and ministry personnel.

This resource 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 Resources for a Community of Faith*
- *Pastoral Relations: Ministry Personnel*
- *Pastoral Relations: Supporting the Pastoral Relationship*

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.

Best Practices

Introduction

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

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

Regional Council Support

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

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

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

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

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

In this work, it is important that you know *Pastoral Relations: Community of Faith* and the Supervised Ministry Education resources. (File them next to the Bible and *The Manual!*) These resources can be found online at www.united-church.ca.

As you carefully review the material, please make notes. If you have any question, please seek help. You can find contact information—who to contact and for what—on the pastoral relations webpage at www.united-church.ca/leadership/supporting-ministry/pastoral-relations. It is important to understand the new pastoral relations process and be familiar with the related resources, because you may train both the team developing the community of faith profile and the search team. You will also field any questions they have.

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

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

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

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

Touchpoint: Any Discussion about the Pastoral Relationship

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

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

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

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

Amalgamating

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

A liaison can help a team from the amalgamating communities of faith develop new position descriptions. (Begin by pointing them to the position description template in *Pastoral Relations: Community of Faith*). The amalgamating communities of faith may not need to post a complete community of faith profile on ChurchHub, nor may the ministry personnel need to post their profile on ChurchHub. You can help the team prepare to interview existing ministry personnel, and the team will discern whether or not the individuals have the gifts and skills suitable for the positions.

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

Provisionally Calling or Appointing a Candidate

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

A liaison can help a team from the community of faith develop a new position description. (Begin by pointing them to the position description template in *Pastoral Relations: Community of Faith.*) You can also help the team prepare to interview the individual for the position, and the team will discern whether or not the individual has the gifts and skills suitable for the position.

A liaison is present at the meeting of the community of faith to approve the provisional call or appointment. You are also present at the covenanting service to celebrate the renewed pastoral relationship.

Touchpoint: When a Change in Pastoral Relations Has Been Requested

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As you prepare to meet with the team, you have an important role in performing an initial assessment to determine if the community of faith is suitable to be a learning site and if they have the capacity to meet the requirements for Supervised Ministry Education (SME), field-based education for ministry students. Your initial assessment, even before you introduce the idea of a SME learning site to the team, will determine for yourself whether it is even a possibility.

Checklist for a liaison's initial assessment of the possibility as a SME learning site:

- ☐ Able to support at least a half-time appointment.*
- ☐ Able to provide a safe and respectful learning environment in which there is clarity of expectation.
- ☐ A community of faith that is healthy and vital can provide a context for learning and growth. Communities of faith that are in conflict, that should consider intentional interim ministry following a long pastoral relationship, or that are concluding a conflicted pastoral relationship are not appropriate contexts for Supervised Ministry Education.
- ☐ Able to gather a Lay Supervision Team of four or more people who are committed to meeting with the candidate during the appointment to support and encourage learning and to explore the learning goals, and to submit evaluations as required.
- ☐ Has in place a functioning governing body and Ministry and Personnel (M&P) Committee.
- ☐ Has an ADP account through which compensation is managed.

*SME grants are available to communities of faith that need some financial support to compensate a half-time appointment. For more information about the application process and the amount of funds available, contact the Office of Vocation.

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

Areas of training include

- Holy Manners;
- an overview of the community of faith profile;
- considerations for part-time ministry;
- introduction to supervised ministry education; and
- using ChurchHub.

Holy Manners

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

Talk together and list four to six guidelines that are important for team members to use in their conversations with each other. Record them on a flip chart. Encourage the team to display the notes for everyone to see at every meeting and ensure they record them in their minutes at their next meeting.

Examples of Holy Manners:

- We will maintain confidentiality (everything that is said among this team stays only with this team—not with partners, spouses, children, neighbours, or other members of the community of faith).
- We will listen with respect to each other, even when we don't agree.
- We will listen without interrupting or having side conversations.
- We will respect each other's time by starting and ending our meetings on time.
- We will encourage those who are quiet to fully participate; we will ask those who are talkative to listen more.

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

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

Overview of the Community of Faith Profile

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

A community of faith profile includes the following:

- living faith story;
- demographics;
- financial viability;
- real property;
- position description(s);
- manse report, if applicable; and
- learning site requirements, if applicable.

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

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

Considerations for Part-Time Ministry

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

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

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

Another expectation of ministry personnel is that they will conduct weddings and funerals. Weddings are planned events and compensation time can be prearranged, but funerals are by nature unpredictable. A system of agreed-upon compensation time should be in place for emergencies and emergent meetings.

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

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

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

Introduction to Supervised Ministry Education (SME)

If in your own initial assessment you determine that the community of faith meets the criteria to possibly be a SME learning site, you can introduce this possibility to the team. (If you do not feel that the community of faith would be an appropriate learning site, do not bring up this material.)

Your role as a regional council liaison is to help an appropriate community of faith discern its call to be a SME learning site. The Office of Vocation minister may be invited to provide an educational session to the group preparing the community of faith profile and/or to members of the governing body. The conversation begins before the community of faith profile is developed. The first question is whether the community of faith wants to seriously consider being a SME learning site.

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

Along with the support offered by the Office of Vocation minister, your role as a liaison is to ensure that the community of faith has resources to understand the purpose, focus, criteria, and requirements of being a SME learning site. This could happen through an educational or informational session offered in person or remotely. It includes consideration of their willingness and ability to undertake the Commitment to Be a Supervised Ministry Education Learning Site. A suggested outline for this session is found in the Resources section. This session is designed for a community of faith that has expressed interest in becoming a SME learning site and requires more information and time for discernment on their ability and willingness to be a SME learning site.

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

Discernment may lead to one of the following paths:

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

You have an important role to ensure that the community of faith's profile meets the standards of being a SME learning site. The community of faith

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

Using ChurchHub

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

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

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

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

The purpose of the community of faith profile is to

- articulate the community of faith's witness to the gospel;
- articulate the ministry needs of the community of faith; and
- summarize the community of faith's resources and community context.

A community of faith profile that is ready to post for search and selection must include the following:

- living faith story;
- demographics;
- financial viability;
- real property;
- position description(s);
- manse report, if applicable; and
- learning site requirements, if applicable.

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

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

Touchpoint: When There Is a Search Team Appointed

Once their profile is approved by the community of faith, the governing body will also appoint a search team. The search team will have a first meeting to begin team building, set quorum for their team, and develop a team contact list and a communication strategy. After this first meeting, a liaison will engage with the search team for training.

Areas of focus for search team training include the following:

- overview of the search process;
- Holy Manners;
- bias and difference;
- human rights;
- eligibility and overview of streams of ministry;
- confidentiality and conflict of interest;

- using ChurchHub for search; and
- administrative decisions for the team (decision-making, budget, practice for covering mileage/travel or interviewing with technology).

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

Search Process Overview

To remind the search team of the upcoming steps in the rest of the pastoral relations process, you can walk them through the relevant sections of *Pastoral Relations: Community of Faith*:

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

Holy Manners

See page 10 for a description of Holy Manners. Just like the team writing the profile, the search team needs guidelines to guide their conversation and behaviour with each other.

Bias and Difference

This section of training aims to begin to identify biases individually and collectively as a search team by first examining power and privilege.

We all live and work within a specific culture. Within a culture, we hold specific ideas of what we collectively consider to be “normal.” Biases arise against those whom we see as deviating from our idea of normal. Many biases are unconscious and based on lack of exposure to those who differ from our version of normal. Because they are often unconscious, we frequently act out of these biases with no understanding of their potential impact on others, particularly, in this case, on interviewees, who are already in a highly stressful situation. Our biases also knowingly and unknowingly affect our decision-making. They affect what we see, how we act, the importance we give to the words and actions of others, and how we document the interview.

The search team is seeking the ministry personnel whose skills and gifts best match the ministry needs of their community of faith. It is in their best interest to minimize biases that might limit their ability to see a potential best match. It is also clearly in the best interest of interviewees that search teams address their biases openly and in ways that level the playing field for all interviewees.

We all have biases. If we know what they are, we have the choice of either keeping them and basing our actions on them, or working to change them by intentionally adapting our behaviours and actions so as not to reflect our biases. We develop our biases over time, based on what we see is valued by those around us, including society as a whole. As Christians in the United Church, we strive to understand and mould our biases within the context of God’s radical love for all people and seeking justice and peace for each person. This sometimes calls into question the dominant biases that we have held, individually and societally.

The search team training works on identifying and addressing all of our biases, so that team members are open to the skills and gifts of every prospective ministry personnel in the pastoral relations process.

> “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)

Here is a suggested outline for a discussion that focuses on power, privilege, and biases and how to manage them.

Let us pray. God who created Babel and Pentecost—the complexity and diversity of your creation is evident all around us in the song of birds, the arrays of flowers and trees, the incredible variations of animals, the richness of cultures and languages. Give us your feelings, your perceptions, and your heart as we examine ourselves for biases that can knowingly and unknowingly cause us to reject others. Give us humility to be open with each other. And give us courage to act in ways that are just, respectful, and compassionate. Amen.

Power is often defined as the ability to influence or impose your will on others, even if those others resist. Power is dynamic, not static. Power is fluid, not binary. Power is personal, but power is also systemic. Personal power is the power that resides in a person. Systemic or institutional power is given by society based on the position that the person holds. Finally, power is also situational.

(Ask all team members to individually complete the Power Analysis Worksheet found in the Resources section. Please ensure you have provided enough copies for everyone. Afterwards, ask them to reflect on these questions.)

- Was there anything that surprised you?
- What did you notice?
- Why is this important for your ministry context and for being a welcoming community?

The identification of power helps us to be aware of our privilege, which is grounded in power. Peggy McIntosh defines privilege as "an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious."[1] When we hold privilege, our understanding of the world is different than the understanding of those who don't have that privilege. Thus differences of power and privilege lead us to operate out of biases. Our role in this work is to become aware of our power and how that leads to biases. We need to challenge the biases that we are able to identify, either individually or as a group.

Search team members spend a few minutes reflecting quietly on the following.

- How does the power I hold reflect and/or differ from that of the larger society?
- How does the power I hold reflect and/or differ from that of my community of faith?
- How might this power create biases in our pastoral relations work?
- What biases do I hold that are inconsistent with a commitment to love radically and to seek justice? that are inconsistent with human rights legislation?
- What do I need to challenge about my own biases or those of others?
- What am I willing to do to reconsider my biases?
- What actions am I willing to take that don't reflect my biases?
- Can I commit to upholding human rights legislation even when it may not align with my biases?

[1] Peggy McIntosh, "White privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack," *Peace and Freedom Magazine* (July/August 1989): 10–12.

Next, spend time together talking about the questions above. Together identify areas where the team needs to take actions ahead of time to address widely held biases. Talk with the team about what their biases are, what actions they might consider, and what they want to be particularly aware of in human rights legislation to avoid these biases crossing into discriminatory and illegal behaviour. For example, if they collectively identify that they find it difficult to consider their minister as a person who seems to be "unlike them" on the surface, they might want to invite someone with experience in addressing those biases to come to talk with their group.

The following biases may also be at play in the search process:

Motivational Bias: This bias occurs when the interviewer and/or interviewee are motivated to provide a particular kind of outcome to please the other and thus to do better in the interview.

> *Example:* The interviewee may perceive (rightly or wrongly) that the interviewers are looking for a particular kind of response to a question. The interviewee then responds in that manner as a way of providing the "correct" answer. However, the interviewee may not actually believe the response they have given. If this kind of bias exists for the interviewee, the search team is at risk of not having accurate information from the interviewee by the end of the interview.
>
> *Example:* The interviewers may be motivated to call or appoint someone who shares their first language. As a result, they are motivated to hear the responses of interviewees who share their first language as being better than those from interviewees who do not share the same first language, even if this is not the case.

Confirmatory Bias: A confirmatory bias occurs when we hold prior information. There is a tendency to notice things that confirm the idea we already hold rather than to notice things that contrast with idea. Both interviewees and interviewers can hold confirmatory biases.

> *Example:* An interviewee may arrive to an interview having heard information about a particular community of faith from other colleagues. As a result of this negative information, they are expecting that the interviewers will be coming from a theological perspective that is quite different from their own and perhaps have some degree of potential hostility. Every question is interpreted through this lens, and the interviewee views the interviewers as trying to "catch" them in identifying a theological position that is problematic for the search team.
>
> *Example:* An interviewer may have heard that an interviewee has a passion for justice and has been experienced by a colleague as aggressive and in-your-face. As a result, the interviewer is highly sensitized to any words, tone of voice, or non-verbal actions that support this preconceived idea.

Cognitive Bias: We hold cognitive biases because they allow us to make quicker decisions. But when interviewing people for positions, cognitive biases act more as a barrier than an enabler of good decisions. They can cause us to interpret things too quickly without taking time to check out the assumptions we have made about the other person.

> *Example:* An interviewee believes that someone with something important to say speaks slowly and with frequent pauses to demonstrate the care they are taking in presenting their position. When the interviewer speaks quickly, without pauses and informally, the interviewee then decides that this person has less power or decision-making authority within the search team and decides not to give their questions as much consideration.
>
> *Example:* An interviewer believes that someone with something important to say has prepared in advance and can speak quickly, concisely, and articulately about their position. When this interviewer experiences an interviewee who speaks slowly and with many pauses, the interviewer decides that the person is unable to think on their feet, can't process information quickly, and is not the right match for this community of faith.

Observational Bias: Like cognitive bias, observational bias is one we form ourselves based on our life experiences. It is based on what we observe in the other person. We all tend to observe some physical attributes more than others and to ascribe more value to these observations.

> *Example:* An interviewee may observe that a number of the interviewers are dressed casually. Some appear to have come without taking time for a shower first. For this interviewee, dress and outward appearance of the interviewers directly reflects how seriously they consider the interview. This is very distressing and increases the person's anxiety about the interview.
>
> *Example:* An interviewer observes that an interviewee is overweight or underweight, or smokes or has poor dental hygiene, or dresses very casually or very formally for an interview, or has multiple body piercings, and so on. All of these have a "value" associated with the observation—which could be positive or negative. This interviewer is affected by their observations in how they receive and record what the interviewee says and, in turn, how they interpret the interviewee's responses.

Encourage the team to come up with an action plan of what they are going and not going to do. Discuss holding one another accountable to Holy Manners. How will they ask each other hard questions about their biases in a way that is compassionate and respectful and open to the possibility of mutual transformation? Close this discussion with prayer or a song that speaks of the diversity of God's Creation and the limitless experience of God's love. Ask for guidance, wisdom, and compassion in the discernment, growth, and decision-making that lies ahead.

If one of the biases named is related to racism, you might find it helpful to engage with *Ending Racial Harassment* (found on www.united-church.ca).

You may also introduce the search team to *Conducting Interviews with Intercultural Awareness* (found on www.united-church.ca). This resource will be helpful for a team conducting interviews with an applicant from another culture.

Human Rights

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

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

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

Eligibility

The search team needs to be oriented to the different ministry personnel that are eligible for different types of pastoral relationships. Below is a description of the different types of ministry personnel in The United Church of Canada and what types of pastoral relationships they are eligible for. There is more information about some of the streams at www.united-church.ca/leadership/entering-ministry.

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

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

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

Ministry Personnel in The United Church of Canada

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

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

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

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

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

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

Immigration

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

Intentional interim ministers are designated lay ministers, diaconal ministers, or ordained ministers who have been designated by the Office of Vocation to serve in interim ministry appointments. An interim ministry is a time-limited ministry in a community of faith, the purpose of which is to work toward specific goals decided on by the regional council and the community of faith. These goals can be mission-based, pastoral, or organizational. The interim minister does not continue to minister to the congregation after the interim period is over. For more information on interim ministry, please search for the Interim Ministry resources on the United Church website (www.united-church.ca).

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

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

Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

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

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

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

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

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

The team also needs to be aware of what a conflict of interest is. A conflict of interest may be monetary or non-monetary:

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

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

Using ChurchHub for Search

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

Team Administration

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

Decision-making

The team needs to decide if they will come to decisions by consensus or voting. Some teams may decide that they will aim for consensus and only vote if consensus cannot be reached. The results of any vote are a confidential part of the process. Introduce this topic to the search team; they can have further discussion later about how they will approach decision-making.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Setting a Budget

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

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

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

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

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

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

A liaison is present for the meeting of the community of faith that considers the search team's recommendation. You may attend in person, by telephone, or electronically.

Touchpoint: At the Covenanting Service

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

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

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

A sample liturgy for recognizing the covenant that provides the foundation for the new pastoral relationship is found in the Worship section of the United Church website (www.united-church.ca/worship). There are also supplementary resources on the website to help worship leaders plan the whole covenanting service.

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

Resources

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

Time: about 1.5 hours

Gathering and Community Building

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

Worship

Gathering Prayer

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

Scripture Suggestion

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

Question for Silent Reflection

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

Prayer Litany

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

The Role and Criteria of a Supervised Ministry Education Site

Information by the Facilitator

As the facilitator, ensure you discuss the following topics:

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

Group Discussion

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

Information about Support to SME Learning Sites

- Support by Office of Vocation staff
- relationship with educational supervisor
- any financial support information

Decision Making

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

If the decision is yes, work on the community of faith profile continues with that commitment shaping the work.

If no, work on the community of faith profile continues focusing on call/appointment.

Closing

Handling Common Questions from Search Team Members

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

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

Here are some answers to common questions that you may get:

I don't understand the matching process.

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

How do we choose our questions for the interview?

Let's go back to the section in the resource on Preparing for First Interviews and walk through it together. Remember, there is an inventory of Potential Interview Questions in *Pastoral Relations: Additional Resources for a Community of Faith*. You won't want to ask all of them; you can modify 10 or so to focus on your key priorities. Think about why you might be a potential match with the interviewee.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We are not sure what we can offer as our terms.

Let’s go back to the section in the resource on Negotiating Terms of Call or Appointment and we’ll walk through it together. Remember there is a Record of Call or Appointment Worksheet in *Pastoral Relations: Additional Resources for a Community of Faith*. It outlines the mandatory terms and offers space to include unique terms.

Do we have to use ChurchHub? Can’t we put an advertisement in the *Observer* and collect resumés?

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

Is ChurchHub secure?

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

Commitment to Be a Supervised Ministry Education Learning Site

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

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

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

Power Analysis Worksheet

The following chart will help individuals self-identify the power that they hold, personally and systemically. Please complete this chart individually.

In the first column, Your Identity, please record the way in which you self-identify. For example, in the category Age, write down how old you are. Complete the column, naming your gender, race, and other identities.

In the second column, note your perceived power in relation to your church or ministry. For example, if you have specified you are 40 years old, does that gives you more or less power in relation to your church or ministry? If you think that it gives you more power, put a checkmark in that box. Continue completing the column.

In the third column, consider your power in relation to society. Work through this column, adding checkmarks as appropriate.

If you think an important area of identity is missing, use the blank at the bottom of the chart to name this area and fill in the rest of the columns.

When you have finished, add up the number of checkmarks in the column for church/ministry and also for society.

Is there a difference between these columns? Is one column's number much higher or lower? If you are in a group setting, and if you are comfortable, share your numbers with other participants—consider who has higher and lower numbers.

Spend some time talking about the implications of this exercise.

- Was there anything that surprised you?
- Did this exercise reinforce ideas that you already had about yourself? your church/ministry? society?

	Your Identity	Power in Relation to Your Church/Ministry	Power in Relation to Society
Age			
Gender identity			
Racial identity			
Ethnicity			
Marital status			
Sexual identity			
Education			
Economic class			
Geographic location (current)			
Geographic location (origin)			
Profession			
Language			
Citizenship			
Abilities			
Family status			

Sample Living Faith Story Template

A community of faith can use the template below to develop their own living faith story. In each category, they can list the activities they are already doing and list any specific goals. If the community of faith does not currently have a goal in a specific category, that's okay. There are also some guiding questions in each section to help them think about this area of ministry. They do not need to answer all of the questions, just the questions that are helpful to their situation.

The categories in the template are from the *Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel* (available on www.united-church.ca), which provides clarity on the definition and focus of each category. The ministry personnel profiles in ChurchHub are based on the same categories.

Category Title	**Guiding Questions**
Administration	List all the activities that currently support administration. What is your specific goal related to administration? (If you don't have one at this time, that's okay.) How is your work in this area connected to your Christian faith? Why do you do what you do? How is it connected to your witness of the gospel? What level of administrative support is offered to your community of faith and to your ministry personnel? Is it staff? volunteer? What kind of information technology infrastructure does your community of faith have and use? Are there expectations around engagement using social media? What model of governance do you use in your community of faith? (e.g., council, official board, session) How frequently do you review your financial situation? How would you describe your financial position: healthy? abundant? struggling? near to crisis? other? What is the "story" behind this description? How did you get here? Describe the human gifts that you have in your midst. What are your strengths? What areas do you need to nurture and grow? How much of your budget is allocated to administration?

Category Title	Guiding Questions
Community Outreach and Social Justice	List all the activities that currently support community outreach and social justice (e.g., soup kitchens, homeless shelters, seniors' centres, vacation Bible schools, English as a second language training, food bank, Christmas hamper, used glasses donations). What is your specific goal related to community outreach and social justice? (If you don't have one at this time, that's okay.) How is your work in this area connected to your Christian faith? Why do you do what you do? How is it connected to your witness of the gospel? How do you understand community outreach and social justice to be part of your community of faith? How do you identify community needs? Who are the marginalized and vulnerable within your faith community? within your local community? To what extent do you collaborate with other groups with common goals or interests? What are the unique needs or strengths or issues facing the community right now? How have you responded? If someone were to visit your community of faith, how would they know you are involved in community outreach and social justice activities? How do you think your community of faith is seen in the local community? Would community members (people not involved in your community of faith) describe you as being involved in specific local or global or community issues? What would those issues be? If you don't think your community of faith is seen as being involved in local or global community issues, how do you feel about that? To what extent do you know and use General Council resources about specific justice issues (e.g., climate change, Indigenous justice, intercultural vision, becoming an Affirming congregation)? How are those who are involved in community outreach and social justice activities supported by others in the community of faith? How much of your budget is allocated to community outreach and social justice activities?

Category Title	Guiding Questions
Denomination and Communities	List all the activities that currently support your denomination and communities (e.g., active in your regional council or General Council, collaborating with local agencies or tenants within your building). What is your specific goal related to your denomination and communities? (If you don’t have one at this time, that’s okay.) How is your work in this area connected to your Christian faith? Why do you do what you do? How is it connected to your witness of the gospel? How is leadership by lay people and ministry personnel exercised in your community of faith? at the regional council or General Council? How is leadership exercised in your local community? How important is it for your community of faith to be involved with other local leaders (not necessarily within the church) and/or with other faith communities and their leaders? How does your minister’s ability to develop meaningful partnerships affect your community of faith’s ability to thrive and move toward your mission priorities? How important is it that your minister is well-connected with other ministers (has a support network)? with other community leaders outside the church (e.g., social service, ministerial, local politicians)? to the work of the regional council? to General Council activities? What role do lay people play in developing and nurturing effective ministry partnerships? Is this a formal team ministry position? If so, what are the relationships among the team members—who reports to whom? Or are the relationships based in co-operation and collaboration? How do you expect the ministry personnel to work with other non-ministry paid staff? with lay people?

Category Title	Guiding Questions
Faith Formation and Christian Education	List all the activities that currently support faith formation and Christian education growth (e.g., Sunday school, youth group, confirmation classes, seekers' group, Bible study, prayer circles, seniors' circles, spiritual practices, activities for families, parents of teens support group). What is your specific goal related to faith formation and Christian education? (If you don't have one at this time, that's okay.) How is your work in this area connected to your Christian faith? Why do you do what you do? How is it connected to your witness of the gospel? Describe why you think this is important or unimportant. How are these activities supported by ministry personnel? by lay people? To what extent do you think these activities are effective? How do you know they are or aren't? How important are small groups to supporting people in the formation of their identities as "disciples" and as members of this community of faith? How much of your budget is allocated to supporting faith formation and Christian education activities?

Category Title	Guiding Questions
Leadership	List all the activities that currently support leadership (e.g., lay leadership training, conflict resolution workshops). What is your specific goal related to leadership? (If you don’t have one at this time, that’s okay.) How is your work in this area connected to your Christian faith? Why do you do what you do? How is it connected to your witness of the gospel? Describe the minister whose leadership skills best matched your community of faith’s needs. What was it about their style of leadership that made a good match? What kind of leadership skills are you looking for in your minister (e.g., strong authoritative leader who sets direction and motivates others to follow; strong consensus-builder who takes time to include everyone in decision-making and enables others to participate; an able companion who supports and nurtures)? Who do you look to for leadership in your community of faith? How much responsibility for leadership is placed on ministry personnel? on lay leaders? How does your community of faith support the development of leadership skills in ministry personnel? in lay leaders? What are the barriers in your community of faith to achieving your goals? Do any areas of leadership need to be developed in order for you to achieve your goals? Are there unacknowledged areas of conflict that prevent you from moving forward? To what extent do you have the skills to address conflict and communication challenges in your community of faith? How much of your budget do you allocate to leadership development for ministry personnel? for lay leaders? for those who are not currently in leadership but who demonstrate interest and potential abilities? How do you support lay people to discern their gifts for leadership?

Category Title	Guiding Questions
Pastoral Care	List all the activities that currently support pastoral care (e.g., home visitation, caring phone calls, prayer shawl knitting). What is your specific goal related to pastoral care? (If you don’t have one at this time, that’s okay.) How is your work in this area connected to your Christian faith? Why do you do what you do? How is it connected to your witness of the gospel? How do you define pastoral care in your setting? How much time is spent on pastoral care by your current ministry personnel? To whom is pastoral care provided? (e.g., members, adherents, community members) Who (in addition to ministry personnel) provides pastoral care now? What training do they have? To what extent are they supported by the ministry personnel? Have you identified specific spiritual care needs in your community of faith or local community for which special skills are required? (e.g.. Do you have a special ministry for people struggling with addictions, or do you have a large number of seniors? How important is palliative or end-of-life care? or support for families of children with special needs?) Is there a team of trained lay people that support the pastoral care of the minister? How much of your budget is allocated to supporting pastoral care?

Category Title	**Guiding Questions**
Self-care	List all the activities that currently support self-care and spirituality within your community of faith (e.g., healing touch, spiritual practices). What is your specific goal related to self-care and spirituality within your community of faith? (If you don’t have one at this time, that’s okay.) How is your work in this area connected to your Christian faith? Why do you do what you do? How is it connected to your witness of the gospel? How do you support the development of a community of faith identity? How do you build a sense of community within your community of faith? How do you love and support one another? How do you encourage participating members to find a balance (e.g., helping people not to burn out)? How much time is spent together as a community that isn’t about raising money? How much do you like each other? How do you have fun together? How vulnerable and honest are you able to be with each other? How would you describe the spiritual life of your community of faith? How does your community of faith support the health and spiritual growth of your minister? How important is the health and spiritual growth of your minister for the health and spiritual growth of your community of faith? What do you hope your minister does to support their own health, wellness, and spiritual growth?

Category Title	**Guiding Questions**
Worship	List all the activities that currently support worship (e.g., traditional order of service with hymns, prayers led by one person, 20-minute sermon/reflection, scripture readings; contemporary with shorter sermon, more music, variety of prayer styles; reflective with lots of time for silence and contemplation). What is your specific goal related to worship within your community of faith? (If you don't have one at this time, that's okay.) How is your work in this area connected to your Christian faith? Why do you do what you do? How is it connected to your witness of the gospel? Describe the demographic profile of your community of faith at worship. (You may have to describe multiple profiles if your community of faith offers more than one worship opportunity or if you are a multi-point pastoral charge.) What makes worship inspiring for your community of faith? What aspects of the worship service are led by the minister? What aspects are often led by lay people? How do you use technology in worship? Is music most often accompanied by organ? piano? praise band? no accompaniment? What types of music are most frequently used? (e.g., classical church music, traditional hymns from *Voices United*, range of music from both *Voices United* and *More Voices*, other contemporary hymns, secular music that lends itself to worship) Is there a choir? a children's choir? other musical groups? Are there professional musicians in music leadership? What type of worship leadership is most frequently used during sermon time? (e.g., sermon delivered by minister, sermon with dialogue, dialogue based on the text, drama) Prayer: Who usually leads prayer? Do participants offer prayers aloud? in silence? Are there sung prayers? circle prayers? written-down prayer requests? What translation of the Bible are you most comfortable with? About sermons: What is meaningful for you in sermons in terms of content, relevance, academic/theoretical/historical components, length?

Category Title	Guiding Questions
Worship (continued)	How do you support the ministry personnel to grow in their worship leadership? How do you support lay people to grow in their worship leadership? How much of your budget is allocated to providing inspiring worship? How comfortable is your community of faith in experimenting with worship? Give an example of some experiments you’ve tried and what you’ve learned. How is stewardship kept visible? Who takes responsibility for it now? How comfortable is your community of faith talking about money?