

# Pastoral Relations: Additional Resources for a Community of Faith

January 2019



Pastoral Relations  
Relations pastorales

The United Church of Canada  
L'Église Unie du Canada

Pastoral Relations: Additional Resources for a Community of Faith (January 2019)

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

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## About This Resource

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This is a companion to *Pastoral Relations: Community of Faith*. It provides additional tools for a community of faith in the pastoral relations process, including sample bulletin inserts about pastoral relations, worksheets for the community of faith profile, sample interview questions, and worksheets for the search team.

For more information about pastoral relations, including whom to contact, please visit [www.united-church.ca/leadership/supporting-ministry/pastoral-relations](http://www.united-church.ca/leadership/supporting-ministry/pastoral-relations).

## Communicating with the Community of Faith

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The following could be used in a worship bulletin or website update to keep a community of faith up to date on the work of those leading the pastoral relations process, while respecting the confidentiality of the search process.

*After a change in pastoral relations is announced:*

The chair of the governing body/council/session/board could write something like: “Since our minister \_\_\_\_\_ submitted their letter to request a change in pastoral relations, we have experienced a profound sense of loss. Their time among us has been very significant to our faith community. These next three months together will be an important time for each of us to say goodbye. We will inform you soon about our plans to celebrate \_\_\_\_\_’s ministry before their departure. We will soon share with you the next steps to search for a new minister.”

*When the community of faith enters the pastoral relations process:*

The chair of the governing body/council/session/board could write: “We want to assure you that we have been in touch with staff from \_\_\_\_\_ regional council about the process of searching for a new minister. Briefly, the process ahead may involve the governing body/council/session/board appointing a supply minister for the next \_\_\_\_\_ months. During this time, the governing body/council/session/board will appoint a team to develop a community of faith profile. They will invite all of you to be part of a time of consultation as they develop the profile that tells the story of our church. This profile, once approved by you, will be posted on the United Church’s online pastoral relations tool, ChurchHub. A search team will be named and they will review profiles of ministry personnel, conduct interviews, check references, and eventually make a recommendation to a meeting of our whole faith community. Our goal is to select a minister whose gifts and skills are a good match with who we are as a church. Please pray for God’s spirit of discernment to be at work both in our community and in our future minister.”

*When a team is developing the community of faith profile:*

“Your team is busy working on the first step of the pastoral relations process, which is developing the community of faith profile. You will all be involved in the consultation for this process. The first opportunity is \_\_\_\_\_.”

*When the community of faith is asked to approve the community of faith profile:*

“Our team has completed the community of faith profile. We are grateful for everyone’s input as we work to tell the story of our church. The governing body/council/session/board has approved the profile and calls a meeting of our faith community on (date) to consider approving the community of faith profile. If approved, it will be posted on the United Church’s online pastoral relations tool, ChurchHub, for viewing by ministry personnel who are searching for a new pastoral relationship.”

*When the search team is formed:*

“(List of members) have been named to our search team. Thank you for the confidence and trust you have placed in each of us who were named to the search team. Although we haven’t yet had our first training session, we have had a first gathering. We spent time getting to know each other and agreeing on how we will work together. We are feeling excited/ confident/anxious/daunted about our task. We ask you to keep us and this process in your prayers.”

*When the search team begins working with a regional council support person:*

“The work of the search team is moving ahead. Our first training from \_\_\_\_\_ regional council is scheduled for (date) and we will provide another update at that time. Here’s a reminder of those named to the search team: (list of members).”

*When the search team is initially trained:*

“Your search team members (list them here) have completed their second training. We have spent time considering how our biases are shaped by our power in society and in our church as well as our calling to reflect God’s radically inclusive love and justice. We have reviewed how human rights must be upheld throughout the pastoral relations process. We have reviewed how we will use the United Church’s online pastoral relations tool, ChurchHub, to search for potential matches for a new pastoral relationship. Pray for us as we discern among the ministry personnel profiles and our own community of faith profile.”

*As the search team reviews profiles and prepares for interviews:*

“We have spent time reviewing the skills and gifts of (number) ministry personnel along with our ministry priorities. We have decided to go ahead with our first round of interviews. (or: At this time we are not ready to proceed with interviews, but we will keep you apprised.) Please pray that we will be open to the gifts, skills, and passions of each one who responds to our profile.”

You don’t need to tell them how many interviews you are doing—just that you are moving ahead. This helps to reassure the community that you are progressing.

*When the search team is doing first interviews:*

“We have established our interview process. We will be using this process with a number of applicants over the next few weeks. Stay tuned, as there will be more to come. In the meantime, please pray for the interviewees that they will come prepared and confident—and for us, that we are able to provide a safe and welcoming environment in which each interviewee feels able to shine.”

*When checking references and discerning:*

This stage of the process is particularly confidential. Keep the community apprised of progress but with minimal details: “We are continuing to proceed with our interview process and the required follow-up. We are grateful for the continued commitment of each member of our search team who is giving of their time and talents. Please take a moment to say thank you to each one of them at some point this week. Remember that they need to maintain confidentiality in the process, so please be patient.”

*When the search team is doing second interviews:*

It is not recommended to communicate that a second interview has occurred. This can raise expectations that may not be fulfilled. Try to move through the next steps quickly to minimize what may feel like an information vacuum for those waiting in the pews. But resist the pressure to pass on information that could be misconstrued or set up people for disappointment. Maybe repeat a simple version of the previous announcement.

*When the governing body calls a meeting of the community of faith to consider a recommendation:*

“The search team is ready to make a recommendation to our community of faith. The governing body/council/session/board calls a meeting of our faith community on *(date)* to consider the recommendation of the search team.” The public notice of the meeting to receive the report of the search team and its recommendation must be read during worship and may be inserted into the order of worship (bulletin) on two successive Sundays. The meeting may then be held on the following Monday or any day after that.

*After the community of faith has voted on the recommendation for a new pastoral relationship:*

“We had a formal meeting of our community of faith on *(date)*. Approximately *(number)* people were in attendance to receive and act upon the recommendations of the search team. After the presentation by *(name of chair/presenter)*, members agreed by vote to the following: to extend a call or appointment to *(name)* effective *(date)* as per the terms that were outlined in the report; to request that \_\_\_\_\_ regional council approve this call or appointment and that the search team be disbanded, with our sincere thanks, following the covenanting service. If you have questions or wish to see the report, please request this *(how)*. There will be more information forthcoming about how we are going to welcome *(name)* into our community, so please think about this over the next few weeks. Please pray for *(name of the new minister)* and for all of us as a community of faith that we open our hearts and minds to each other’s ministry as we begin this new pastoral relationship.”

## Sample Confidentiality Agreement

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to maintain and respect the confidentiality of all information including that which is personal and privileged, which comes to me as a result of carrying out my responsibilities as a member of the search team of \_\_\_\_\_.

I will not discuss the information that comes to me with anyone beyond the bounds of the team.

I understand and agree that failure to maintain confidentiality will result in termination of my position on the search team.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understood the above information and agree to the terms.

\_\_\_\_\_

Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date



## Financial Viability Review

Community of Faith:

Date:

### 1. Do your expenses exceed your revenues?

Year	Revenues	Amount given through envelopes	Amount given through PAR	Expenses	Do expenses exceed revenues? (yes/no)	Bank balance at end of year
Current year	\$	\$	\$	\$		\$
One year ago	\$	\$	\$	\$		\$
Two years ago	\$	\$	\$	\$		\$
Three years ago	\$	\$	\$	\$		\$
Four years ago	\$	\$	\$	\$		\$
Five years ago	\$	\$	\$	\$		\$
Six years ago	\$	\$	\$	\$		\$

### Comments:

Please include any comments you think are pertinent to your consideration—renovations, special fundraising, money that comes in as revenue but you really don't have use of because it goes out to organizations, GICs, term deposits, memorial fund, support of M&S, no minister, or minister on sabbatical. These comments help you understand why expenses might grow one year and revenues another.

A recent financial statement should be appended to this document.

**2. Payroll Costs:**

At present we have called or appointed the following paid staff:

Minister: \_\_\_ hours per week

Secretary: \_\_\_ hours per week

Custodian: \_\_\_ hours per week

Other (youth, Sunday School, etc.): \_\_\_ hours per week

Cost of payroll (\$ paid plus employer contributions (EI, etc.) for everyone.

Current year	One year ago	Two years ago	Three years ago	Four years ago	Five years ago	Six years ago
\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

**3. Have you experienced a deficit for more than two consecutive years in the last five years?**

**4. Are there any outstanding loans?**

**5. Do utilities, maintenance, and repairs exceed 25% of revenues?**

Year	Utilities (Power & Water)	Fuel	Maintenance	Total	Exceeds 25% of Revenues (Yes or No)
Current year	\$	\$	\$	\$	
One year ago	\$	\$	\$	\$	
Two years ago	\$	\$	\$	\$	
Three years ago	\$	\$	\$	\$	
Four years ago	\$	\$	\$	\$	
Five years ago	\$	\$	\$	\$	
Six years ago	\$	\$	\$	\$	

**6. How many contributors support your congregation?**

<b>Current year</b>	<b>One year ago</b>	<b>Two years ago</b>	<b>Three years ago</b>	<b>Four years ago</b>	<b>Five years ago</b>	<b>Six years ago</b>

**7. How many contributors would you have in each age group this year?**

0-20 years	
21-30 years	
31-40 years	
41-50 years	
51-60 years	
61-70 years	
71-80 years	
81+ years	

**8. Is there a reliance on a few generous contributors where 50% of the revenues come from one or two contributors?**

**Contributors and Givings**

Annual giving	Number of givers: Current year	One year ago	Two years ago	Three years ago	Four years ago	Five years ago	Six years ago
\$0-\$100							
\$101-\$500							
\$501-\$1,000							
\$501-\$1,000							
\$1,001-\$5,000							
\$5,001+							

**9. Have you taken part in a stewardship project (campaign) in the past two years?**

- No project
- Letters to congregation when we have the need
- Regular information and letters sent to all members and adherents
- Program such as Called to Be the Church with information during worship, letters, and a request for commitment
- Program and information presented at a congregational get-together
- All-member visitation
- Other

If you did, what were the results?

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Have you encouraged members, yearly or more regularly, to increase PAR givings?  Yes  No

**10. Please list any investments, special funds, and other monies your community of faith holds. What are the rules/restrictions around the use of those funds?**

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*Having examined your current financial situation, you will want to examine the minister's salary schedule ([www.united-church.ca/leadership/church-administration/ministers-salary-schedule-and-cost-living-groups](http://www.united-church.ca/leadership/church-administration/ministers-salary-schedule-and-cost-living-groups)) and work with your treasurer to determine the cost of ministry personnel at different increment categories. This will include salary, allowances, and employer contributions to government plans, pension, and benefits. Your treasurer will perhaps understand these tools more clearly than members of the search team:*

- *The United Church of Canada provides Budgeting Tools for Treasurers on the General Council website for both ministry personnel and lay employees. Go to: [www.united-church.ca/leadership/church-administration/budgeting-tools-treasurers](http://www.united-church.ca/leadership/church-administration/budgeting-tools-treasurers).*
- *Please note that in addition to the employer costs noted in the tables in these United Church tools, there are employee and employer premiums for Employment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan. (Tables for these costs are available on the Canada Revenue Agency website: [www.cra-arc.gc.ca](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca))*

## **THINKING ABOUT THE DATA YOU HAVE COLLECTED**

The covenant with a minister that you call is seen to be at least a three-year commitment. Show how you will be able to meet that commitment.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

Treasurer's observations:

Search team's observations (if separate from above):

Regional council's observations (optional):

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Now that you have all of this information, what is your plan for ministry (ministry stream, highest category you feel you can afford, full- or part-time), and how are you planning to pay for this ministry for at least a three-year commitment?

Recommendation of search team, treasurer, and governing body:

\_\_\_\_ community of faith is viable to call/appoint a minister in Category \_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_ hours per week.

## Real Property Worksheet

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Please list all church property including manses, building lots, or other property held separate from the church land and building. Include the street address.

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Congregational property is sometimes listed in the name of one of the denominations that formed The United Church of Canada. Has the title for these properties been confirmed as being properly held as the property of a congregation of The United Church of Canada?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

### Cemeteries

Please list all cemeteries including any previously connected with the congregation and no longer operated by it. Please include cemeteries of congregations who may have amalgamated or from existing congregation.

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Name of Called/Appointed Minister or Pastoral Charge Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Manse Information Summary Sheet

## Identification of the manse

Street and mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street/ mailing address City Province Postal code

## Area Data

*Neighbourhood:*    Apartments    Residential    Rural    Industrial    Commercial

*Distance to:*   Schools: \_\_\_\_ km   Church: \_\_\_\_ km   Shopping: \_\_\_\_ km   Transportation: \_\_\_\_ km

*Access:*    Paved roads    Sidewalks    Other

*Services:*    Municipal water    Sewers    Well    Septic system

*Size of lot:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Type of manse:*    Bungalow    Split-level    Detached    Semi-detached  
 Apartment    Mobile home

*Number of stories:*    1    1.5    2    3

*Number of bedrooms:* \_\_\_\_ *Number of bathrooms:* \_\_\_\_ *Number of living spaces:* \_\_\_\_

*Floor plan (link to file, if available)*

## Features of the manse

### Utilities

*Electrical wiring:*    200 amps    100 amps    Cable TV    Phone service   \_\_\_\_ # of jacks

*Heating system:*    Hot water    Gravity air    Forced air    Electric

*Estimated annual heating cost:* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Fuel:*    Gas    Oil    Wood    Electricity    Other

*Outbuildings:*    Garage (size) \_\_\_\_\_    Garden shed (size) \_\_\_\_\_    Other \_\_\_\_\_

*Storms and screens:*    Wood    Aluminum

	All rooms	Some rooms	No rooms
Window shades	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curtain rods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curtains/drapes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rugs/carpets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Appliances:*    Electric stove    Gas stove    Refrigerator    Freezer    Dishwasher

Dryer    Automatic washer    Other \_\_\_\_\_

*Type of insulation:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Other equipment:*    TV aerial/cable/dish    Lawn mower    Snow removal equipment

*Safety equipment:*

Location of smoke detectors: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of carbon monoxide detectors (if gas is used): \_\_\_\_\_



Location of fire extinguishers: \_\_\_\_\_

*Insurance:* Insurance coverage on the manse has been reviewed on (date): \_\_\_\_\_

*Furniture:* Manses are generally unfurnished. If there is any furniture, a list is attached:  Yes  No

*Recent photo attached to ministry personnel copy:* (link to file, if available)

Current monthly rental market value of manse \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Attachments documenting agreed repairs and timelines:* (link to file, if available)

**The required features of a manse include heavy appliances (fridge, stove, washer and dryer), window coverings, and rugs. The pastoral charge is also responsible for the annual cost of heat over \$800.**

**Manse Committee**

The pastoral charge Manse Committee and a regional council representative confirm the information on this sheet and its attachments and agree to any suggested improvements.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Month/day/year                      Printed name: Chair of pastoral charge Manse Committee  
(or designate)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Month/day/year                      Printed name: Regional Council representative  
(or designate)

## Position Description Template

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**Position Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Position Profile:**       Full-time                       Part-time

If part-time, hours per week \_\_\_\_\_

Solo                                       Team ministry

If team, describe full ministry complement

**Position Summary:** (2–4 sentences that summarize the position)

**Autonomy in Decision-Making:** What decisions will the ministry personnel make independently (without consulting others), and what types of decisions will require consultation, and with whom. This list does not need to be exhaustive, but it should indicate what types and amounts of expenditures can be authorized by the ministry personnel, as well as relationships among other paid staff (e.g., Who has a decision-making role in music?).

### Principal Areas of Responsibility and Associated Duties

General Instructions:

1. Use your living faith story to guide how you complete this section, and/or use the categories below, which can be ordered by priorities and the amount of time, energy, and skill required to fulfill them.
2. For each “principal area,” define the duties that are associated with the area. As much as possible, indicate the frequency of the duties (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, occasionally, or yearly if applicable). BE HONEST. Don’t say something is “as needed” when you really mean “daily.”
3. Start by being specific and include everything. Then go back and delete the things that don’t really belong. The position description, in most cases, will be three to five pages.
4. Involvement in the denomination (i.e., regional council or General Council) is not optional, but rather a key component of each ministry personnel’s vocation. A community of faith cannot choose to eliminate this expectation.

You may use the following categories, based on the “Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel” (available on [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca)), which provides clarity on the definition and focus of each category.

### *Administration*

If you have specific duties associated with administration, for which you do not have administrative support, list them here: for example, creating the bulletin, scheduling, and reception. If there is administrative support, list that, and specify whether it is paid or volunteer.

### *Community Outreach and Social Justice*

Different ministries use different words to describe this category. Some refer to it as “activities that reach beyond our doors.” Others may describe it more specifically: environmental justice activities, poverty and justice activities, global justice, food sustainability, and so on. If you have specific activities related to this “principal area,” make sure you include them here: for example, if you expect the ministry personnel to be a member of a local organization’s board as part of your outreach, name this expectation here.

### *Continuing Education*

It is not necessary to list specific ways that ministry personnel further their education. You could use this wording: “Pursues personal, vocational, and professional goals for continuing education in consultation with the M&P Committee.”

### *Denomination and Communities*

Ministry personnel have responsibilities as members of The United Church of Canada to the denomination, the wider church, their communities, and the world. There should be two subsections in this category. The first section is mandatory and is United Church policy. You could use: “Is actively involved in the life of the regional council and/or General Council.”

The second section is optional, and it is a place for your community of faith to identify community partnerships that you expect your ministry personnel to engage in: for example, there may be health and social service agencies with which your local ministry collaborates, tenants in your building, or outreach ministry collaborations. This category should identify these partnerships and the type of participation that you expect (e.g., attending meetings or leading an inter-agency partnership).

### *Faith Formation and Christian Education*

Different ministries use different words—discipleship, Christian education for children and youth, adult education, small group ministry, faith formation, spiritual practices—to describe this category. Be clear about the age groups involved and expectations about specific activities (e.g., March Break camps for school-aged children).

### *Leadership*

List specific duties associated with leadership. For example, specify if the ministry personnel will provide “supervision” to any other staff person, “coordinate” the work of multiple staff members, speak publicly on behalf of the community of faith, or train/mentor a Lay Pastoral Care Team. You may also comment on the style of leadership that your community of faith needs. Remember that no one leader can be all things. Below are just a few examples: think carefully and honestly about the type of leader that best suits the personality and needs of your community of faith:

- Provides strong, charismatic leadership and direction to others.
- Leads “from behind”—motivates, encourages, and supports others to share their own gifts for ministry.
- Highly personable approach to leadership, e.g., builds relationship and consensus, delegates and shares leadership appropriately.”
- Leader not afraid to take risks, to try new things and learn through both successes and mistakes.

### *Pastoral Care*

Use this category to describe your expectations for visiting and supporting people spiritually. Describe who this care is provided to—just members and adherents, or other members of the community who seek it? Are there specific skills that the person in this ministry position requires? For example, must they have credentials for counselling (not only “pastoral care”), a certain number of Clinical Pastoral Education units, or special skills in addictions, mental health, palliative/end-of-life care, or children’s counselling.

### *Self-care*

Often ministry personnel know the best specific ways for them to engage in self-care. It isn’t necessary to list specific ways that they should take care of themselves. You can use: “Sets goals for ongoing self-care by maintaining a healthy balance of one’s own physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being to include rest, recreation, and professional development. Collaborates with the M&P Committee to meet goals.”

### *Worship*

Describe your expectations for worship. In your community of faith, worship may take several forms; be clear on the expectations for each worship opportunity you offer. Or, if your goal is to develop a number of worship alternatives beyond your existing worship locations and times, clarify the expected worship sites for this position description (including frequency, location, duration, and “tone”). For example, spell out that the ministry personnel is expected to lead a traditional Sunday morning worship service in two congregations at two different sites, as well as develop, implement, and lead a contemporary mid-week service aimed primarily at young families.

## **Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities**

This section identifies the absolute requirements of the position (not the “nice to haves”). Include expected level of education; certifications required; driver’s licence and access to car (if required); any areas of specialization; computer and technological expertise (if needed); and so on.

## **Other Preferred Assets**

If you wish, you can indicate skills, credentials, or abilities that aren’t required but are “preferred.” These may be areas that you help the ministry personnel to develop over time, e.g., if this ministry position includes maintenance of a website, then website maintenance may be a “preferred” skill, or if it involves working in a shelter or other type of outreach ministry, perhaps a preferred skill is “experience in scheduling volunteers.” On the other hand, you may have no “preferred” assets or skills for the ministry personnel.

## Human Rights Commission in Your Province or Territory

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Alberta Human Rights Commission

[www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/employment.asp](http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/employment.asp)

British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal

[www.bchrt.bc.ca](http://www.bchrt.bc.ca)

Manitoba Human Rights Commission

[www.manitobahumanrights.ca](http://www.manitobahumanrights.ca)

New Brunswick Human Rights Commission

[www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/nbhrc/human-rights-act/summary.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/nbhrc/human-rights-act/summary.html)

Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission

<https://thinkhumanrights.ca/human-rights-act>

Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission

<http://nwthumanrights.ca/resources/employment>

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

<https://humanrights.novascotia.ca/content/know-your-human-rights>

Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal

[www.nhrt.ca/english/general\\_information](http://www.nhrt.ca/english/general_information)

Ontario Human Rights Commission

[www.ohrc.on.ca/en/social\\_areas/employment](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/social_areas/employment)

Quebec—La Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse

[www.cdpcj.gc.ca/en/droits-de-la-personne/pratiques/Pages/discriminaton.aspx](http://www.cdpcj.gc.ca/en/droits-de-la-personne/pratiques/Pages/discriminaton.aspx)

[www.cdpcj.gc.ca/fr/droits-de-la-personne/pratiques/Pages/discrimination.aspx](http://www.cdpcj.gc.ca/fr/droits-de-la-personne/pratiques/Pages/discrimination.aspx)

Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commission

[www.gov.pe.ca/humanrights](http://www.gov.pe.ca/humanrights)

Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission

<http://saskatchewanhumanrights.ca/learn/the-human-rights-code>

Yukon Human Rights Commission

[www.yhrc.yk.ca/resources](http://www.yhrc.yk.ca/resources)

## 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.

## Potential Interview Questions

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### *Knowledge-based questions*

- You've had a chance to review our Community of Faith Profile. Tell us what worship means to you? And what do you see as the role of the ministry personnel in worship? (*adapt for any other area of ministry*)
- We want to explore different ways of offering Christian education activities, especially for young families—can you describe some approaches you are familiar with?
- What strengths would you bring to your ministry here?
- What continuing education have you participated in within the last two years?
- What do you consider to be your “growing edges”? What are your plans to tend to them?
- Tell us why you are considering a change in pastoral relations right now.
- *For new ministry personnel:* Tell us how you believe your theological education has prepared you for the challenge of ministry with us. Where do you see strengths? What will be the difficult parts? Where will you want help from us?
- Describe how you maintain (or will maintain) some degree of sustainable vocation-life balance in this role. What spiritual practices are meaningful to you in your daily life?
- Identify two or three qualifications, credentials, or certificates that you bring and how you see these as being particularly useful in the context of our community of faith.
- We are an inclusive and welcoming community of faith. What does inclusive and welcoming mean to you, and how do you demonstrate this in your ministry?

### *Experiential questions*

- Tell us about a mentor you've had who continues to be a model for you in terms of discipleship/stewardship/justice. Who is that person? How did you come to know them? What is it about them that speaks to you?
- Your profile says that you have spent lots of time with young people (or adults, or single moms—whatever group you want to explore). Describe a time you felt your leadership really had a positive impact. What did you do? How could you tell it was positive?
- Describe a time when you felt your leadership missed the mark. What happened? What did you do when you realized that? How did you recognize it? What would you do differently today?
- Describe an innovative piece of ministry that you led or were a part of in your current ministry. What makes it so innovative for you? How have people responded? How have you adapted it based on people's responses?
- Without divulging any confidential matters, tell us about an uncomfortable experience you've had, either in your current or previous roles, where you felt that your authority or role was being challenged. Briefly describe the situation, how you responded, how it turned out, and what you've learned. What, if anything, would you do differently now?
- What do you know today about ministry that you wish you had known when you first started? How did you gain that knowledge? How do you use it in your current ministry?
- How do you care for your own spiritual growth and nurture?

- Describe a typical workweek (recognizing that you also encounter unexpected situations). How do you organize yourself? How do you deal with competing deadlines and expectations?
- Tell us about a ministry team you've been a part of. Describe it briefly, then comment on your experiences. How do your strengths make you a solid team player? How do your weaknesses make it more challenging? And how do you use your strengths to address your weaknesses?
- Tell us about a time when you led a new initiative in your ministry. What was it? How did you involve others? How did you express your leadership? Now tell us about a time when you exercised a completely different approach to leadership. What was that style? How easy or difficult is it for you to adapt your leadership style? How might your best friend answer that last question?
- What aspect of your current ministry do you enjoy the most? Why?
- Many different theological perspectives are represented within our community of faith. Tell us about your personal theology. Then, drawing upon an experience from your past ministry, tell us about a time when you had to work with lay people or other ministry personnel whose theology differed significantly from yours.

#### *Creativity questions*

- Based on what you know today, if you could paint a picture of the ideal approach to building disciples in our community of faith, what would it look like? Who would be involved? What would be your role? How would we know it's working?
- Within our community of faith, lay people and ministry personnel work together in office responsibilities, maintenance responsibilities, the lay pastoral care team, worship team, and others. Tell us how you'd set things up so that communication happens and everyone is kept in the loop.
- In our context, you would be working as a member of a ministry team that includes paid ministry personnel and paid non-ministry staff. In your ideal vision of a highly functioning team, tell us how decisions get made, how work gets delegated or assigned, how communication is ensured, and how conflict is resolved.
- In ministry, you can almost count on the unexpected happening on a regular basis. You can't possibly be prepared for the whole gamut of human tragedies. So when you get a tragic first call telling you (*for example*) that one of your church members has had a young child killed in a drunk driving accident, what do you do before you call them back? Tell us how you prepare.
- Tell us what your ideal ministry position looks like today. How might it be different in five years—that is, where do you think you'll be in five years in terms of your ministry?
- How can this community of faith be most supportive to you in your role as minister? Tell us what "meaningful support" might look like.
- Describe the perfect day off for us. What will you do for fun and self-care, so that this position doesn't take over your life?



## Sample Reference Check Record

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Confirm that this is a convenient time to talk. Our interview will take 15 to 30 minutes. The information you provide will be recorded and kept confidentially among the search team.

Let me tell you a little bit about the position that (*interviewee*) has interviewed for. (Provide a brief overview of your community of faith and ministry position description.)

1. How long have you known (*interviewee*)? (Circle the most appropriate response.)

Less than 2 years                      2-5 years                      5-10 years                      more than 10 years

2. In what capacity do you know them? (Circle most appropriate response.)

Colleague/peer              Member of church              Regional council member              Community partner

Other (briefly describe): \_\_\_\_\_

3. How well do you believe you know them? (Circle one.)

Not well at all              Fairly well              Well              Very well

General Questions:

4. Describe their strengths, using examples from your experience with them.

5. What will be the most challenging aspects of this role for them?

More Specific Questions

6. All of us have to deal with conflict and disagreements from time to time. Tell me how (*interviewee*) deals with conflict. Tell me about a time when they disagreed with someone. How did they handle it? How did it turn out? Were they effective in addressing the conflict? What, if anything, did they appear to learn?

7. We all have different leadership styles. Describe their leadership style and give an example of how they have demonstrated this.

8. Ministers are placed in a unique position of trust and authority. Often the people they are in contact with are very vulnerable. How does (*interviewee*) demonstrate their understanding of the power they hold in pastoral relationships? How do you rate their ability to self-monitor and maintain appropriate professional boundaries? Do you have any concerns about them working with vulnerable people, whether they are children or vulnerable adults?

9. Tell us about your impression of this person's journey of faith. How has it grown and changed over time?

10. If (*interviewee*) is called or appointed to another ministry, what will you most miss about them?

11. Describe how (*interviewee*) maintains some sort of healthy balance between their call to ministry and their personal life. What do you see as their strengths and challenges in maintaining a healthy balance?

Summarizing Questions:

12. If you were looking for a minister for your community of faith, would you seriously consider (*interviewee*) for the position? Why or why not?

13. Based on the little bit you know about our community of faith and position description, would you recommend (*interviewee*) for this position? Why or why not?

14. Is there anything else that you think it's important for me to know?

Interviewer Signature:

Date: