

The Ministry of Music in The United Church of Canada

Guidelines for Musicians, Communities of Faith, and Committees

December 2021



The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada

The Ministry of Music in The United Church of Canada: Guidelines for Musicians, Communities of Faith, and Committees (December 2021)



Copyright © 2021
The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada



The content of this resource is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd) Licence. To view a copy of this licence, visit creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/ca. Any copy must include the United Church copyright notice and the Creative Commons licence.

Care has been taken to trace ownership of copyright material contained in this text. The publisher will gratefully accept any information that will enable it to rectify any reference or credit in subsequent editions.

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
united-church.ca

MISSION&SERVICE
Supported by Mission & Service

Contents

About This Resource	4
Music Leadership in the United Church.....	5
Setting Directions in a Community of Faith	5
Definitions Related to Music Ministry	5
The Church Musician in the Life and Organization of the United Church.....	7
Governing Body of a Community of Faith	7
Ministry and Personnel (M&P) Committee	7
Music United in the United Church	11
Music United’s Mission Statement.....	11
Employment Guidelines.....	12
Finding a New Music Minister	12
Compensation and Benefits.....	13
Search Process	13
Employment Relationships	15
Performance Reviews	15
Professional Behaviour	15
Conflict Resolution.....	16
Screening Procedures/Vulnerable People.....	16
Sexual Misconduct, Workplace Violence and Harassment, and Anti-Discrimination.....	17
Ending a Contractual Agreement.....	17
Appendix A: Sample Advertisements, Where to Advertise, and Music United	19
Sample Advertisements	19
Where to Advertise.....	19
Music United.....	20
Appendix B: The Church Musician’s Résumé and References.....	21
The Church Musician’s Résumé	21
References	21
Appendix C: Related Support Organizations and Further Resources.....	23
Related Support Organizations.....	23
Further Resources.....	25

About This Resource

This handbook is an updated edition of the popular 2004 handbook of the same name provided by [Music United](#). Its purpose is to help enhance and enliven music ministries within United Church communities of faith.

About This Resource

This handbook is an updated edition of the popular 2004 handbook of the same name provided by [Music United](#). Its purpose is to help enhance and enliven music ministries within our communities of faith. This handbook is for both church musicians and Ministry and Personnel Committees.

Music United is a diverse association of people passionate about music that exists to promote, support, and advance music ministries and those who provide music leadership in every level and community of faith in The United Church of Canada. Music United enables and supports musicians, regardless of their age, race or cultural background, gender identity, ability, and sexual orientation. Music United provides musicians with opportunities to work together by means of communications activities, special projects, programs, workshops, consultations, and publications, all for the greater glory of God.

In this handbook we hope to empower communities of faith to seek out, select, and support music ministers whose gifts and skills match the spiritual needs of their communities. It is meant to help music ministers be more aware of their responsibilities within the structure of The United Church of Canada and to help Ministry and Personnel Committees become more informed of best practices around hiring and supporting music ministers.

There are two helpful resources that expand on the policies for Ministry and Personnel Committees found in *The Manual* (both are available at united-church.ca/handbooks):

- [*Ministry and Personnel Committees: Policy, Procedures, and Practices*](#)
- [*Ministry and Personnel Committees: Resources for Ministry and Personnel Committees*](#)

The above are referenced throughout this resource. The first resource contains policies and procedures that must be followed, as well as best practices that provide information, guidance, and advice on the recommended ways to live out mandatory policies and procedures. The second resource has best practices on giving and receiving feedback, maintaining healthy ministry teams, resources for the search for and selection of lay employees, and for annual performance reviews for staff.

The biblical image of the “body of Christ” (Romans 7:4–6; 1 Corinthians 10:14–22; 1 Corinthians 12:12–31; and Ephesians 4:1–24) may be considered the grounds for understanding a vision of music leadership in the United Church.

The musician provides musical leadership within the body of Christ and as such is a part of that body. Our hope is that this handbook will help in the development of flourishing music ministries.

Sincerely,

Alydia Smith
Program Coordinator, Worship, Music, and Spirituality
The United Church of Canada
On behalf of Music United

Music Leadership in the United Church

Setting Directions in a Community of Faith

Communities of faith are called to define the parameters of their life in Christ, as well as the breadth and depth of the ministries they wish to, and are able to, support. One of those ministries may be music ministry.

Common Examples of Music Leadership

Musical Accompanist: The musician receives a hymn list and copy of the service music weekly. They arrive before the worship service to setup and go over any special music (for example, rehearse with a soloist). During the service they play meditative music, hymns, responses, short pieces during the offering, and other pieces as required.

Music Minister: The musician is a covenanted member of the ministerial team. They meet regularly with the other ministerial staff and the worship committee to plan and choose appropriate worship music. They also help to grow and support the musical skills of the entire community.

Many people who opt to make music their ministry have articulated their desire to offer music leadership that is both about music-making *and* about how we live and work together as a faith community in mission and ministry. For them, expressing faith and living out faith become one.

Such an approach requires exploration of the notion that the church musician, especially the one who coordinates the music leadership of a community of faith, be regarded as a minister of music. That exploration includes developing an understanding of the pastoral dimension of the church musician's role, which is not solely music-maker or artist-in-residence but a leader in a community of faith. It is important that faith communities gain an appreciation for the integral nature of the role of music in congregational life before they define their music ministry.

Definitions Related to Music Ministry

The following definitions name aspects of what music leadership in the United Church may involve. The ways we talk about music leadership and the musicians who lead music in the United Church make a difference to whether the music is perceived to be an integral part of life in the faith community.

Church Musician

A **church musician** may be an organist, choir director, pianist, singer, or instrumentalist responsible for music leadership in public worship. Such dedicated musical leaders may be volunteers, independent contractors, or employees. They may have advanced musical training or little formal training. In covering a broad spectrum of activities, incumbents are charged to develop the fullest and best use of music in the life of the church. Some of the work they do is

visible; much of it is not. Both types of work are necessary regardless of the size of the program. All church musicians should be treated as professionals.

Musical Culture

Musical culture is the personality of a community of faith formed by its origins, traditions, experiences, leaders, demographics, and self-perceptions. Within the breadth of congregational culture there will be a range of musical tastes and values. A church musician respects these traits of the community of faith but always seeks to expand and deepen the worship experience by extending repertoire and integrating a range of music available to the church in the service of God.

Ministry

A Song of Faith (2006) explains that in **ministry**:

We are each given particular gifts of the Spirit.

For the sake of the world,

 God calls all followers of Jesus to Christian ministry.

In the church,

 some are called to specific ministries of leadership,
 both lay and ordered;

 some witness to the good news;

 some uphold the art of worship;

 some comfort the grieving and guide the wandering;

 some build up the community of wisdom;

 some stand with the oppressed and work for justice.

To embody God's love in the world,

 the work of the church requires the ministry and discipleship
 of all believers.

Worship

A Song of Faith defines **worship** as:

 as an outpouring of gratitude and awe
 and a practice of opening ourselves
 to God's still, small voice of comfort,
 to God's rushing whirlwind of challenge.

Through word, music, art, and sacrament,

 in community and in solitude,

 God changes our lives, our relationships, and our world.

We sing with trust.

A Song of Faith is available in its entirety on united-church.ca (search for "a song of faith 2006").

The Church Musician in the Life and Organization of the United Church

Communities of faith are urged to be intentional about inviting and encouraging church musicians to become familiar with the United Church context for ministry and to seek the assistance of their ministry personnel and lay leaders in doing so.

A church musician who is new to the United Church may be given 15 to 20 percent of their time within the first year of their ministry to learn more about United Church polity, structure, and ethos. Activities for this time could include auditing polity and worship courses at a nearby United Church theological school or online, familiarizing themselves with United Church worship resources, and connecting with other United Church music ministers through [Music United](#).

Governing Body of a Community of Faith

Music ministry is an integrated ministry; part of the musician's expectation is to attend various church meetings and to be active in the life of the community of faith. This is done so that music is understood as an integral part of the community's life and so the musician and their input are accessible to all members of the community (not just those in the music ministry program).

The musician may be a member of the United Church or not, but by reason of their leadership role, is considered an integral leader in a faith community. For staff members, especially lay employees, the governing body (church board or its equivalent) of the community of faith serves as the employer. As a lay employee, the musician cannot be a member of the governing body as it creates a conflict of interest. The situation of a lay employee serving as an elected member constitutes a conflict of interest in that the employee would serve a dual role—as both employee and employer. However, the musician can provide an important role as a resource to the worship and music committee and be actively involved in meetings of the committee. This is one way to demonstrate that the musician is more than someone who simply “provides” music on Sunday.

The voice of the music leader plays an important role in many aspects of congregational life, including worship and Christian education; consequently, they need to be included in order for mutually informative conversations to take place. Creative ministers of music are open to hearing the voices of other leaders and participants in their congregational context, and as a result are able to plan and lead more effectively.

Ministry and Personnel (M&P) Committee

The M&P Committee is a committee of the church's governing body. Its role is unique in the United Church structure for several reasons:

- Its membership does not include ministry personnel or lay employees.
- Its role as a consultative and confidential committee can be a form of ministry in making recommendations to the governing body.

- By doing so, the committee helps to clarify conversations and heighten communication within a community of faith about its mission and ministry, especially with regards to interpersonal relationships.

As for all employees of a community of faith, the M&P Committee is a supportive and consultative place available for the church musician. Because the governing body of the community of faith acts as the employer, the M&P Committee performs some functions similar to a human resources department of a larger organization. The M&P Committee meets their responsibilities by undertaking three distinct roles:

- a consultative and supportive role
- a healthy relationships role (between staff members and between staff and the community of faith)
- a supervisory role

M&P Relations

A music minister may meet with the M&P committee twice yearly, and with a liaison person from the committee on a more regular basis. These committee meetings may include a yearly evaluation and check-in about shared goals and direction for the community of faith. With the liaison person, the music minister is able to discuss joys, concerns, professional relationships, and professional development needs.

The Manual (available at united-church.ca/handbooks) outlines the responsibilities of the Ministry and Personnel Committee in section B.7.8.5:

The Responsibilities of the M&P Committee

All congregations or pastoral charges must have a committee or other body, which may be called the Ministry and Personnel Committee or a different name, with the following responsibilities:

- a) being available for consultation and support for matters involving the pastoral charge staff;
- b) overseeing the relationship of the pastoral charge staff to each other and to people in the congregation;
- c) regularly reviewing the working conditions, responsibilities, and compensation of all pastoral charge staff;
- d) making any recommendations needed as a result of these reviews to the governing body;
- e) revising position descriptions of pastoral charge staff as needed;
- f) conducting annual performance reviews of the pastoral charge staff;
- g) ensuring pastoral charge staff make use of opportunities for continuing education that they have been given; and

- h) maintaining close contact with the regional council Pastoral Relations Committee or equivalent.

The M&P Committee reviews working conditions and, where applicable, the employment contract and remuneration in order to make appropriate recommendations to the governing body. This may involve preparing and/or maintaining a position description.

The committee monitors as necessary or appropriate the collegial role of the church musician as part of the ministry team. Through their healthy relationships role, the M&P Committee will ensure that time and energy are spent in developing and maintaining healthy teams, including respect for persons with differing abilities and mandates. There are resources for developing and maintaining healthy teams in the [*Ministry and Personnel Committee: Resources*](#) document.

One of the key staff relationships in a community of faith is between the church musician and the ministry personnel, especially when both have important responsibilities in worship leadership. In many communities of faith this relationship is at the core of the ministry team. Often a ministry personnel and a church musician each have a large part of time in their position description devoted to worship. The resources for a healthy team, referenced above, can be vital to the development and nurture of this key relationship.

In the relationship between a church musician and a ministry personnel, it is important to be clear and transparent on the roles, norms, and expectations for both the church musician and the ministry personnel in their worship leadership and planning. For example, in worship planning who selects hymns? How is inclusive language used in worship and the life of the community of faith? As the M&P Committee fulfills their healthy relationships role, they can encourage collaboration and open communication. While conflict is normal in any relationship, setting a strong foundation of collaboration and good communication will allow the ministry team to work through issues as they arise. A healthy and cooperative team allows the church musician and the ministry personnel to provide Spirit-filled worship to nurture the community of faith and encourages the community of faith to thrive.

The M&P Committee may also support the musician in planning for continuing education, determining if money and time are available to pursue further studies (for example, professional conferences and master classes) that contribute to the mission goals of the community of faith and the United Church.

The committee also liaises with other appropriate church committees to ensure the funding and viability of the music ministry (for example, choir library, maintenance of instruments).

Ministry of Music as a Congregational Designated Ministry (CDM)

A ministry of music position may be classified as a Congregational Designated Ministry (CDM) position. For more information, refer to the resource [*Congregational Designated Ministers*](#). To serve as a minister of music in a CDM position, these gifts and experiences are required in addition to the core CDM competencies:

- know about the role and development of music in general and of Christian worship
- know what networking and other opportunities are available for musicians (for example, Music United)
- stimulate congregational participation and enrich their worship experience through music
- lead congregational song
- coordinate, develop, and recruit volunteers
- use and enable others to use different styles of music
- determine the direction and priorities of the music ministry in collaboration with congregational leaders
- develop programs for the congregation and wider community
- understand and appreciate the pastoral role of music in the congregation's life
- be a pastoral and caring presence for all musicians

Music United in the United Church

Music United's Mission Statement

Music United exists to promote, support, and advance music ministries, and those who provide music leadership in every level and community of faith in The United Church of Canada. Music United enables and supports musicians, regardless of their age, race or cultural background, gender identity, ability, and sexual orientation. Music United provides musicians with opportunities to work together, by means of communications activities, special projects, programs, workshops, consultations, and publications, all for the greater glory of God.

Music United has regional convenors across the country who act as a resource for both local musicians and people who are passionate about music ministry within the church. A convenor can take on a variety of different roles depending on the needs of their surrounding community. Often convenors advocate for healthy music ministries, field questions related to music, connect music ministries, promote collegiality, and represent the work of Music United nationally. To connect with your regional convenor, visit Music United's website musicunited.ca.

Employment Guidelines

Due to the expectation for excellence in music leadership for most United Church communities of faith, searching for a compatible church musician is often as important as searching for new ministry personnel. To be comprehensive, such a process requires the support of the entire community of faith. The ultimate goal is to find a good match.

Finding a New Music Minister

It can be hard for communities of faith who have had the same music minister for many years to prepare to welcome someone new. Before a community of faith is ready to hire a new music minister it is important for them to know who they are, what their musical needs are, what resources they have to offer a new music minister, what they hope their new music minister will do, and what skills they expect them to have. They should also prepare terms to offer the musician including salary, benefits, and continuing education. Ideally, they should also consider how the entire community of faith can be involved in the discernment and selection process.

The leadership of the church musician in any church's worship music program influences the shape and formation of faith in that community of faith. For many communities of faith, the leadership the musician demonstrates in preparing and leading worship music has just as much influence on the life of the faith community as the preparation and presentation of prayers and sermons on the part of ministry personnel. It is crucial to be clear about the pastoral, liturgical, and educational relationships from the beginning and to set up a framework to facilitate those relationships, including time for mutual evaluation.

Searching for a church musician and entering into an employment or agreed-upon relationship is not as simple as getting someone to "do a job," such as playing the hymns a minister has selected. Finding the right person(s) takes time and care. The church musician who carries out music as ministry will seek out the right community of faith in which to serve.

Beginning the Search Process

Regardless of the congregational setting, it is important that the community of faith engage in a two-part process—first preparing to look for the church musician, then doing the actual search. The process includes a time of preparation and examination of how music ministry connects with the mission of the community of faith and a period of searching for the right candidate.

The search process begins when the M&P Committee establishes a search team. The search team should have broad representation and include the following areas or committees: choir (or band or music team), Christian Education, Music and Worship, and congregational members particularly skilled in human resources or recruitment. The Community of Faith Profile ([*Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for a Community of Faith Profile*](#)) can be especially useful in identifying why the community of faith exists and what they may need in their music leadership.

Position Description

A position description should be developed when a community of faith prepares to search for a new church musician. A sample job description for a lay employee is found in [Ministry and Personnel Committees: Resources for M&P Committees](#). A best practice is for the job description to be developed in collaboration with the M&P Committee to ensure consistency with other position descriptions. Also, the team developing the position description will want to consult with other staff—both ministry personnel and lay employees—for their input to ensure that the position description is accurate in describing the ways the position is meant to complement, overlap, coordinate, and collaborate with their roles. In your consultations, be very clear that you are asking for their ideas related to the position—not their decision-making. Local circumstances will necessitate adapting the outline through consultation between the musician and the M&P Committee (in conjunction with the Music and Worship Committee) throughout a musician’s tenure.

Compensation and Benefits

Determining the appropriate compensation for a church musician requires close attention, since needs of the faith community, circumstances, and available candidates can vary widely. The M&P Committee will realize that just as the minister’s week consists of much more than coordinating a worship service, the church musician’s workweek extends to spiritual care, study, practice, consultation, administration, and worship preparation.

The most useful salary guide available is published by the Royal Canadian College of Organists (rcco.ca; click “Employment”). Their *Table of Recommended Salaries* is updated annually and is available on the RCCO website or in their publication *The Employment of a Church Musician: A Guide for Canadian Churches* (available for purchase through the RCCO Store). Sample contracts are also available on the RCCO website under “Employment.”

The M&P Committee ensures that all staff participate in the Pension Plan and the Group Insurance Plan. Participation in the group benefits plans is mandatory and a condition of employment for all employees of The United Church of Canada working full-time or part-time, 14 or more hours per week (on average).

Members of the Group Insurance Plan are entitled to the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) and the Restorative Care Plan. More information is available on The United Church of Canada Benefits Centre website, uccan-benefitscentre.ca.

Search Process

There is an outline of the search process called “Steps in the Recruitment and Selection of Lay Employees” in [Ministry and Personnel Committees: Resources for M&P Committees](#). The search team should aim to advertise the position widely; suggestions of where to advertise are listed in Appendix A. Some of the suggested advertising space is free of cost, some is not. A three-month lead time is required by some magazines and journals. It is a good idea to prepare an advertisement along with the position description.

There are sample interview questions for lay employees in *Resources for Ministry and Personnel Committees*. The search team may wish to ask questions specific to the role of a church musician, such as

- Describe your view of the role of music and of the musician in United Church worship.
- In what sense is music a ministry in the community of faith and in the community?
- What attracted you to a position in this community of faith?
- How has your background prepared you for this position?
- What styles of music do you prefer in the context of worship?
- Do you have an interest in exploring other styles of music?
- What is the role of a congregation in worship music?
- How do you deal with suggestions? Criticism? Praise?
- Please share some reflections on your journey of faith.

The candidate will also pose questions to the interview, which might include:

- What do you see as the musical needs and preferences of this community of faith?
- How do you see the musician's role in the ministry team?
- What budgetary provisions are made for purchasing music, purchasing copyright licenses, and repairing instruments?
- If new music activities are developed, is the church prepared to review this position description and remuneration/benefits?

If a performance audition at the committee's church is required as part of the interview process, provide rehearsal time ahead of the audition so the candidates can become familiar with the instruments and acoustics. In arranging such an audition, it is a courtesy to avoid Sunday morning in case the candidate may feel compromised in relation to current employment.

Checking References

As part of checking a candidate's references, it may also be helpful for the search team to attend a worship gathering at which the candidate is an active leader. The candidate may have already supplied the search team with recordings of the individual leading music in worship, but it may be helpful to observe candidates live. If distance prevents attendance, the search team can simply use the recordings, or if they know of someone they trust in the candidate's area, they send that person on their behalf with a list of questions to guide their observations. The search team is reminded not to do "surprise" visits! Arrange the visit with the candidate ahead of time.

Considerations when observing a musician taking part in a worship service include

- **Hymn/service music playing:** Do the candidate's choices of introduction, tempo, and (for organ) registration support and promote congregational singing?
- **Repertoire playing:** Is the music appropriate for worship? Is the playing musical?

- **Choir conducting:** How does the choir respond to the musician's leadership? Does the musician respond to the abilities and contextual interaction with choristers?

Employment Relationships

As the community of faith enters into an employment relationship with a church musician, it can be helpful to know the differences between various types of employment relationships. Whether the musician is a permanent employee or serves as a fee-for-service contractor, the community of faith (especially the M&P Committee and the governing body) needs to be aware of the nature of the relationship. There are further details about the types of employment relationships in [Ministry and Personnel Committees: Resources for M&P Committees](#).

For more information about the differences between an employee and an independent contractor, you may wish to refer to the helpful chart in the *Xtra* supplement to issue 34 of *Connex: Important Updates from PC-MEPS (2013)*. (Visit commons.united-church.ca, choose Communications and Publications, and then *Connex* to download issue 34.)

Agreements

Whether the church musician is entering into a relationship with a community of faith as an employee or independent contractor, a church and its new church musician will both be well served by a clear agreement in writing. There are checklists of what to include in a letter of offer and a contract for a lay employee in [Ministry and Personnel Committees: Resources for M&P Committees](#).

Performance Reviews

It is suggested that the M&P Committee conduct annual performance reviews of all staff members, including church musicians, in the resource [Ministry and Personnel Committees: Policy, Procedures, and Practices](#). There are detailed sample annual performance reviews in [Ministry and Personnel Committees: Resources for M&P Committees](#).

Professional Behaviour

Code of Ethics

The church musician, if they are a member of the Royal Canadian College of Organists, will adhere to the college's code of ethics (rcco.ca/Code-of-Ethics). Other church musicians may find the following best practices helpful:

- Work to foster the role of worship music and the ministry of music in the church, in cooperation with ministry personnel, church governance, and community of faith.
- Strive to perform their duties to the best of their abilities, fulfilling the terms of their employment in a professional manner.
- Respect the rights of composers and publishers as stipulated in Canadian copyright laws.

Respecting Copyright Laws

Many communities of faith are unknowingly violating copyright laws. For instance, they might be photocopying music that they have not purchased or they might be posting complete worship services online without securing the necessary copyright licenses. Adhering to copyright laws is an ethical and moral responsibility. It helps ensure that artists are justly compensated and recognized for their creative work. Many resources are available to help communities learn more about copyright laws in Canada. One starting place is the United Church's [Copyright Guide for Congregations](https://www.united-church.ca/handbooks) ([united-church.ca/handbooks](https://www.united-church.ca/handbooks)).

Recommended Training

It would be helpful for the church musician to participate in the online training below. This training is mandatory for ministry personnel, but others from communities of faith are invited to participate.

- Racial Justice Workshops
- Personal and Professional Boundaries for Church Leaders

More information about both of these training opportunities can be found at United In Learning ([united-in-learning.com](https://www.united-in-learning.com)).

Conflict Resolution

Conflict is a normal part of the life of a community. The M&P Committee supports healthy responses to issues, concerns, and conflict situations arising between ministry personnel, lay employees, and the community of faith. There is further guidance for M&P Committees on conflict resolution in the resource [*Ministry and Personnel Committees: Policy, Procedures, Practices*](#).

Screening Procedures/Vulnerable People

The governing body of the church will decide what kind of screening procedures are required for lay employees. Church musicians and their support groups are encouraged to be aware of materials developed by the United Church on protecting employees and congregational members/adherents. These resources may assist a search committee in screening applicants (for example, references, police record checks, child abuse registries) as well as in setting clear boundaries and limits in the position description for a church musician.

Risk Management

Part of responsible leadership is thinking through how to minimize, prevent, and, if possible, eliminate circumstances that could lead to injury, abuse, or harm. For instance, a music minister who leads a children's choir on their own or a volunteer who leads a hand bell choir for people living with developmental delays are both in medium risk environments. Ways to reduce the risk could include adding additional adult supervision,

ensuring that the room of the rehearsal is publicly and easily accessible, and avoiding one-on-one instruction.

The primary resource used by communities of faith to examine their duty of care is [*Faithful Footsteps: Screening Procedures for Positions of Trust and Authority in The United Church of Canada*](#) (united-church.ca/handbooks).

Sexual Misconduct, Workplace Violence and Harassment, and Anti-Discrimination

The United Church's policies and procedures on sexual misconduct and workplace discrimination, harassment, and violence apply to all lay employees, including church musicians. The following resources are available at united-church.ca/handbooks:

- [*Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures*](#)
- [*Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Violence Prevention and Response Policy*](#)

Ending a Contractual Agreement

In a highly mobile society, church musicians and other professionals move to be closer to family, to obtain better employment, or to change professions. Changes of this order should always include a confidential exit interview, an opportunity for co-workers to express appreciation, as well as a "send-off" from the worshipping community if possible. If the departure involves a strained relationship or allegations of misconduct, these matters will need careful consideration. A sample of questions for an exit interview can be found in [*Ministry and Personnel Committees: Resources for Ministry and Personnel Committees*](#).

When a church musician retires:

The musician should give adequate notice of the date of retirement to the Ministry and Personnel committee, and to the church council. Such advance notice will give the congregation time to prepare a heartfelt farewell, as well as adequate time to secure the services of an interim music leader (recommended after a long tenure) or to review the job description and arrange a search-and-screen process. The musician will also need to reach out to the United Church Benefits Centre (1-855-647-8222) at least 3 months prior to their retirement date to complete the application to receive pension payments.

Events during the farewell may include a special church service, a public concert, the establishment of a scholarship honoring the retiree, and/or a gift from the community.

When a church musician resigns to move to other employment:

Care should be taken to observe any contractual obligations related to timely indications of terminating the existing contract. Of concern is also the well-being of the existing music ministry and the people directly involved, depending on season of the year and expectations of the congregation. The desirability of a supportive letter of reference for the departing musician

should be discussed. Events to mark the appreciation of the community may include a special dinner, a party, a recital, or presentation of gifts.

When a church musician is terminated:

A church musician may be terminated for different reasons. The reasons are separated into those that are considered to be “without cause,” which include restructuring, downsizing, and position redundancy and those that are considered to be “with cause,” which include theft or other criminal behaviour, serious misconduct, neglect of duty, or ongoing performance problems for which efforts to resolve them are well documented. An employer must ensure that there is a fair process of performance management before dismissal is considered for cause.

The governing body of the community of faith, on the recommendation of the Ministry and Personnel Committee, may decide that the ministry of music is not serving identified needs or goals, a situation that can only be solved with the dismissal of the contracted musician without cause. When allegations of harassment or sexual misconduct are levied, investigations may need to occur, as outlined in the policies and procedures on sexual misconduct and workplace discrimination, harassment, and violence referenced above.

Because each province has its own employment standards legislation, it is recommended that the advice of an employment lawyer be sought prior to terminating a lay employee to ensure the community of faith complies with applicable severance and termination pay obligations. It is important to note that these obligations differ, depending on whether the termination is with or without cause.

The Ministry and Personnel committee can refer to the [Ministry and Personnel Committees: Policy, Procedures, and Practices](#) resource for further guidance on the termination of a lay employee, including details if you wish to continue benefits as part of a termination package.

When a congregation amalgamates with another congregation, and a new staffing model is adopted:

Such action on the part of a congregation usually takes months or years to plan, and future needs related to music leadership should be part of the discussion from the outset, in order to alert all parties as to possible outcomes. It may be that both congregations will benefit from having two music leaders for a defined period, or a mutual agreement may be reached regarding splitting the role according to personnel and available skills. If the employment contract of one of the musicians ceases without cause as a result of the amalgamation, acknowledgement of that person’s past ministries should occur (see above.)

Appendix A: Sample Advertisements, Where to Advertise, and Music United

Sample Advertisements

Sample 1

[Name of your United Church], an urban congregation of 150 families in Region 9 of The United Church of Canada, seeks a church musician to commence duties on *[date]*. Their responsibilities include one choir rehearsal weekly for 9 months of the year (September–May) and keyboard leadership during Sunday worship for 11 months of the year (August–June). A 1982 Casavant organ and an upright piano are provided. We see the tasks of a church musician taking up to 10 hours weekly. We are open to applicants who have a vision for the church and a sense of how music is part of Christ’s mission and ministry. Application deadline: *[date]*. For more details related to the position and the congregation, please visit our website *[church website]*.

Sample 2

[Name of your United Church], a small rural congregation in southern Manitoba (just 20 minutes outside of Winnipeg) seeks the services of a piano or organ player to accompany hymns in morning worship two Sundays a month. Hymns are chosen well in advance and the congregation sings enthusiastically. A monthly honorarium or a scholarship for music studies will be provided by the congregation. University students are encouraged to apply! Funding is available for expenses related to travel. Application deadline: *[date]*. For more information, please contact *[name]*, music director at *[contact information]*.

Sample 3

[Name of your United Church], 30 minutes southwest of London, Ontario, seeks a full-time director of music to develop a music program. Minimum requirements are a master’s degree in organ or church music and a minimum of three years’ experience in a mainline denomination. A three-manual tracker-action organ was recently installed. Salary range is according to published guidelines of the RCCO, with benefits. Application deadline: *[date]*. Start date of successful candidate: *[date]*. For an information package, please contact the church office at *[contact information]*.

Where to Advertise

- Local music schools or with local music instructors
- Theological schools (for United Church theological schools, visit united-church.ca/search/locator)
- *Broadview* magazine (broadview.org)
- The Royal Canadian College of Organists (national rcco.ca; regional rcco.ca/page-18461)
- Music United (contact your regional convenor; see musicunited.ca/contact-us/regional-convenors)
- Local or regional newspapers

- Regional council e-newsletters, websites, and other publications (for regional council websites, visit united-church.ca/search/locator)
- *The American Organist* monthly magazine (American Guild of Organists, agohq.org)

Music United

Music United (musicunited.ca) serves members and communities of faith by listing vacancies in musical leadership and providing lists of vacancies to members upon request. See also the job postings on Music United's website (musicunited.ca/category/job-postings).

Appendix B: The Church Musician's Résumé and References

The Church Musician's Résumé

There are many employment resources to help someone build a suitable resume to use when applying for a position. A resume for a church musician would normally outline a candidate's education and work/church experience. Church musicians may wish to add additional information about related skills and experience, such as

- organist
- pianist
- instrumentalist
- choral director/conductor
- instrumental director/conductor
- vocal coach
- choir member
- Christian education experience (for example, music for Sunday school)
- music coordinator
- private/conservatory music teacher
- school music or drama teacher
- hand bell director
- hand bell ringer
- soloist
- cantor
- drama director
- actor
- composer
- musical proficiencies (for example, sight-reading ability, musicality, musical literacy)
- cultural competencies
- other relevant skills and experience

References

As part of the search and selection process, an applicant should be asked to provide two or three professional references. Candidates should ask and receive consent from each of their references to share their contact information with interested communities of faith. As a candidate builds their resume, this is the time to make the requests and ensure you have the following information from each reference: name, designation, relationship to you, length of relationship, daytime phone number, evening phone number, and e-mail address.

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

Candidates can help their references be effective by

- telling them who is likely to contact them
- describing the type of position you are applying for (perhaps provide them with the job ad and/or position description)
- confirming a few things you hope they might say
- thanking them

Appendix C: Related Support Organizations and Further Resources

Related Support Organizations

Music United

The United Church of Canada
c/o Worship Desk
200-3250 Bloor St. West
Toronto, ON M8X 2Y4
Tel: 416-231-5931 (General Council Office)
E-mail: worship@united-church.ca
musicunited.ca
united-church.ca

Association of Canadian Choral Communities (ACCC)

500-59 Adelaide St. E.
Toronto, ON M5C 1K6
Tel: 647-606-2467
E-mail: info@choralcanada.org
choralcanada.org

Choristers Guild

2834 W. Kingsley Rd.
Garland, TX 75041-2498
USA
Tel: 972-271-1521
Fax: 972-840-3113
E-mail: choristers@choristersguild.com
choristersguild.org

The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada

5 Thomas Circle NW, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20005-4153
USA
Tel: 1-800-843-4966
E-mail: office@thehymnsociety.org
thehymnsociety.org

Royal Canadian College of Organists (RCCO)

414-15 Case Goods Lane
Toronto, ON M5A 3C4
Tel: 416-929-6400

E-mail: info@rcco.ca
rcco.ca

The Royal School of Church Music

Cleveland Lodge, Westhumble
Dorking, Surrey RH5 6BW
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)1722 424848
E-mail: enquiries@rscm.com
rscm.com

The Ontario Guild of English Handbell Ringers

E-mail: communications@ogehr.ca
ogehr.ca

Provincial Choral Federations

Choral NL

P.O. Box 23125
St. John's, NL A1B 4J9
E-mail: info@choraln.ca
choraln.ca

Nova Scotia Choral Federation

1113 Marginal Rd.
Halifax, NS B3H 4P7
Tel: 902-423-4688
E-mail: nscfadmin@nscf.ca
nscf.ca

New Brunswick Choral Federation

PO Box 714, Station A
Fredericton, NB E3B 5B4
Tel: 506-478-2875
E-mail: nbchoralfed@gmail.com
nbcfsite.wordpress.com

Alliance chorale du Québec

2, rue Sainte-Catherine Est, bureau 302
Montreal, QC H2X 1K4
Tel: 514-252-3020
E-mail: info@chorales.ca
chorales.ca/fr

Choirs Ontario

230 St. Clair Ave. W.
Toronto, ON M4V 1R5
Tel: 416-923-1144
E-mail: info@choirsontario.org
choirsontario.org

Manitoba Sings! (Manitoba Choral Association)

5-276 Marion St.
Winnipeg, MB R2H 0T7
Tel: 204-942-6037
E-mail: mca@manitobasings.org
manitobasings.org

Saskatchewan Choral Federation

1415-B Albert St.
Regina, SK S4R 2R8
Tel: 306-780-9230
E-mail: info@saskchoral.ca
saskchoral.ca

Choir Alberta

5708 72 Street NW
Edmonton, AB T6B 3J4
Tel.: 780-488-7464
E-mail: info@choiralberta.ca
choiralberta.ca

BC Choral Federation

P.O. Box 4397, Terminal Main
Vancouver, BC V6B 3Z8
Tel.: 604-733-9687
E-mail: bccf@bcchoralfed.com
bcchoralfed.com

Further Resources

American Guild of Organists, *The American Organist* (monthly magazine). For more information, visit agohq.org.

Barthel, Alan, and David R. Newman, ed. Paul Scott Wilson, *A Guide to Sunday Worship* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1988).

Clark, Linda J., *Music in Churches: Nourishing Your Congregation's Musical Life* (Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 1994).

Farlee, Robert B., and Eric P. Vollen, *Leading the Church's Song* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1998).

Foley, Edward, and Mark Paul Bangert, eds., *Worship Music: A Concise Dictionary* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000).

Guenther, Eileen. *Rivals or Team? Clergy-Musician Relationships in the Twenty-First Century* (St. Louis, MO: MorningStar Music Publishers, 2012).

Hook, M. Anne Burnette, *Grace Notes: Spirituality and the Choir* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1998).

Hustad, Donald P., *Jubilate II: Church Music in Worship and Renewal* (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing, 1993).

Kervin, William S., *Gathered for Worship: A Sourcebook for Worship Committees, Leaders, and Teams* (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 2010).

Long, Thomas G., *Beyond the Worship Wars: Building Vital and Faithful Worship* (Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 2001).

Royal Canadian College of Organists, *The Employment of a Church Musician: A Guide for Canadian Churches*, 3rd ed. Available at rcco.ca.

The United Church of Canada, *Celebrate God's Presence: A Book of Services* (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 2000).

Westermeyer, Paul, *The Church Musician*, rev. ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1997).

Wilson-Dickson, Andrew, *The Story of Christian Music: From Gregorian Chant to Black Gospel: An Illustrated Guide to All the Major Traditions of Music in Worship* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1996).

Wren, Brian, *Praying Twice: The Music and Words of Congregational Song* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000).