

Pastoral Relations: Ministry Personnel

December 2019



Pastoral Relations
Relations pastorales

The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada



Copyright © 2019
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 <http://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 printings.

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.

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



Supported by
Mission & Service

Contents

- About This Resource 4
- What Is Pastoral Relations Policy? 5
- Theological Grounding 6
- Manual Policy: What Has Changed*..... 7
- Additional Policies for Ministry Personnel: Changing a Pastoral Relationship..... 9
 - Request a Change to the Pastoral Relationship..... 9
 - Ministry Personnel and ChurchHub..... 12
 - Search and Selection..... 14
 - Covenanting Service..... 15
- Best Practices 16
 - Requesting a Change in Pastoral Relations..... 16
 - Preparing to Seek a New Pastoral Relationship..... 22
 - Beginning the New Pastoral Relationship..... 40
- Resources 42
 - Ministry Personnel Skills and Gifts Profile Template..... 42
 - Individual Worksheet for Matching..... 45
 - Completing the Record of Call or Appointment in ChurchHub 46

About This Resource

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

This resource contains

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

This is one in a series to guide the church in the area of pastoral relations. Other resources in this series are as follows:

- *Pastoral Relations: Policy for a Community of Faith*
- *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for Search and Selection*
- *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for a Community of Faith Profile*
- *Pastoral Relations: Supporting the Pastoral Relationship*
- *Pastoral Relations: Regional Council Liaisons*

As of January 2019, these resources, available on the [Handbooks](#) page of The United Church of Canada website, replace *Pastoral Relations: Engaging and Supporting* (March 2015).

For assistance in your pastoral relations journey, including whom to contact in your regional council, please visit the [Pastoral Relations page](#) on The United Church of Canada website.

What Is Pastoral Relations Policy?

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

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

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

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

Theological Grounding

We are each given particular gifts of the Spirit.
For the sake of the world,
 God calls all followers of Jesus to Christian ministry.
In the church,
 some are called to specific ministries of leadership,
 both lay and ordered;
 some witness to the good news;
 some uphold the art of worship;
 some comfort the grieving and guide the wandering;
 some build up the community of wisdom;
 some stand with the oppressed and work for justice.
To embody God's love in the world,
 the work of the church requires the ministry and discipleship
 of all believers

—A Song of Faith: A Statement of Faith of The United Church of Canada (2006)

A community of faith, like any community, changes.
When a minister comes into a community of faith
a covenant is made; a promise to walk together as God's people,
deepening our commitment to Jesus Christ
and growing closer to God.
God's covenant with us never changes,
but our covenants with one another do change.

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

Manual Policy: What Has Changed

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- *decisions about supply appointments*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The regional council is responsible for

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

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

Additional Policies for Ministry Personnel: Changing a Pastoral Relationship

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

There are four stages of changing a pastoral relationship:

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

Request a Change to the Pastoral Relationship

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

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

Regional Council Support

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

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

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

- for any discussion about the pastoral relationship
- when a change in pastoral relations has been requested
- when the community of faith begins writing their profile
- when the community of faith is ready to post their profile
- when a search team is appointed
- when the governing body requests a meeting of the community of faith to hear the search team's recommendation
- at the covenanting service

Change to the Terms of the Call or Appointment

Is a community of faith profile always needed?

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

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

When is a community of faith profile needed?

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

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

Ministry Personnel Requests a Change in Pastoral Relationship

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

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

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

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

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

- to the community of faith, addressed to the chair of the governing body
- to the regional council, addressed to the secretary of the regional council
- to the Office of Vocation, addressed to the Office of Vocation, General Council Office (officeofvocation@united-church.ca)

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

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

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

Community of Faith Requests a Change in Pastoral Relationship

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

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

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

Negotiating New Terms of Call or Appointment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- reading notice of the meeting during Sunday worship, according to *The Manual*, section B.5.4.2 a

The regional council is responsible for

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

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

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

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

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

Regional Council Ends the Pastoral Relationship

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

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

Ministry Personnel and ChurchHub

Ministry Personnel Contact Page

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

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

- name
- address
- phone number
- e-mail address

Ministry personnel can update their basic information at any time.

Other information is updated by the General Council Office to a ministry personnel's ChurchHub page, including the following:

- regional council membership
- minister type (candidate, designated lay minister, diaconal minister, or ordained minister)
- record of service (calls and appointments)
- professional requirements (annual declaration; mandatory training, etc.)
- intentional interim minister designation

This data cannot be updated by ministry personnel. If there are errors in this data, please contact the General Council Office.

Ministry Personnel Profile Page

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

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

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

The purpose of a ministry personnel profile is to

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

This purpose can be achieved by completing the elements of the profile. A ministry personnel profile that is ready to post for search and selection must include the following:

- skills and gifts profile
- education profile
- profile summary
- record of eligibility (provided by the Office of Vocation)

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

- hours—full-time or part-time
- regional council availability
- languages spoken—English, French, or other
- intentional interim minister designation (provided by the Office of Vocation)

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

Search and Selection

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

Who Can See Your Profile?

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

Communities of faith that are in search can see a brief profile summary of other communities that are also searching.

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

These restrictions are intended to maintain a level of confidentiality in the search process. Members of search teams must agree to keep the search process confidential.

Ministry personnel who are searching are responsible for

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

The governing body is responsible for

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

The regional council is responsible for

- attending the meeting via a representative, usually the liaison who has accompanied the community of faith during their search process. The regional council representative may attend in person, by telephone, or electronically.
- deciding whether to approve the call or appointment.

Covenanting Service

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

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

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

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

Best Practices

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

Requesting a Change in Pastoral Relations

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

Discerning

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

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

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

Some questions to consider

- Regarding ending:
 - What gifts has this pastoral relationship offered me?
 - What gifts do I leave in this place?
 - What have I learned in this ministry context about myself? About ministry? About God? About how I minister?
 - What do I grieve in my leaving?
 - What can I do to end this pastoral relationship with grace?
 - Where do I see God in this leaving process?
- Regarding beginning:
 - What ministry activities, people, and circumstances give me joy and energy?
 - What are the absolute bottom line conditions that I am committed to observing in my next call or appointment?

- Where do I perceive God’s voice or presence most clearly in my current ministry?
How does that inform my seeking of a new pastoral relationship?
- What do I need in order to be open to God’s voice in this time?
- How am I allowing the gifts I’ve been given and the things I’ve learned in my current pastoral relationship to inform my search for a new call or appointment?

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

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

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

Ending the Pastoral Relationship

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

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

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

It is advised that you speak directly with the chair of the governing body and the chair of the Ministry and Personnel (M&P) Committee. If your M&P Committee has identified a support person for you who is not the chair, also include that individual in the verbal notice. Think carefully about how and when to inform others you have worked closely with—for example, those in paid accountable ministry within the community of faith and others in non-ministry paid positions.

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

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

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

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

demonstrates its leadership and ability to see the community of faith through this transition time, starting right now.

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

Leading in Your Last Months in the Pastoral Relationship

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

A helpful resource during this time is *Running through the Thistles: Terminating a Ministerial Relationship with a Parish* by Roy Oswald (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).

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

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

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

Disengaging

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ These are modified from The United Church of Christ, [A Sure Foundation: Resources for the Relationship between Pastors and Congregations—social media guidelines](#).

² Adam Cleaveland makes compelling arguments for both options in his *Alban Weekly* article "[Pastoral Transitions in the Age of Social Media](#)."

Preparing to Seek a New Pastoral Relationship

Completing Your Ministry Profile

Your ministry profile is made up of three components:

- skills and gifts profile
- education and experience profile
- profile introduction

The categories found in the skills and gifts profile for ministry personnel can also be used by communities of faith that are seeking new ministry personnel as part of their living faith story.

The skills and gifts profile does not replace your résumé. Rather, it is meant to tell an honest and authentic story about you as ministry personnel. (A template can be found in the Resources section.)

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

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

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

Consider the questions in each category only as prompts. It is not necessary to answer every question in every category, but it is highly recommended that you provide some response to each of the categories. Particularly, it is helpful for you to identify the category (or categories) where you may have skills but have no interest in devoting much of your ministry to. If, in your reflection, you identify areas that truly are not your skill areas, be honest. The categories are listed alphabetically, but rank them according to strength or priority. The categories are from the *Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel* on the [Handbooks](#) page.

Skills and Gifts Profiles for Candidates

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

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

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

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

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

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

In ChurchHub, there is also a template for the skills and gifts profile that contains the same questions found in the template in the Resources section below. Delete the template questions in ChurchHub and add your own profile.

Besides the skills and gifts profile, there is space in ChurchHub to add pieces of your current résumé. You can add your academic educational history in the education and experience profile. You can add your work and volunteer history, as well as significant continuing education, here too. As you work on the three different parts of a ministry profile, you might key your profile elements into your word processing software and then cut and paste them into ChurchHub. Because there is a 50,000-character limit on the profile elements, you may need to upload an element (like the skills and gifts profile) into your documents folder in ChurchHub and then provide a link to the document in the profile window in ChurchHub.

To upload your skills and gifts profile (or other element of your ministry profile):

1. Click the View/Upload tab on your My Ministry page in ChurchHub.
2. In the next screen, click the Upload button in the ribbon bar and select the file to upload.
3. Once uploaded, click the circle to the left of the filename to select it (it appears when you hover over the filename).
4. Click Copy Link in the ribbon bar. You now have a link to your uploaded document.
5. In the Skills & Gifts box on your profile page, add some text that says, "Please see my skills and gifts profile, which is available here:" and paste in the link to the file.

To help you update your ministry profile in ChurchHub, you can watch a video called *Ministry Personnel: How to Use ChurchHub* on the [ChurchHub](#) webpage.

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

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

- hours: full-time or part-time
- regional council availability
- languages spoken: English, French, or other
- intentional interim minister designation (provided by the Office of Vocation)

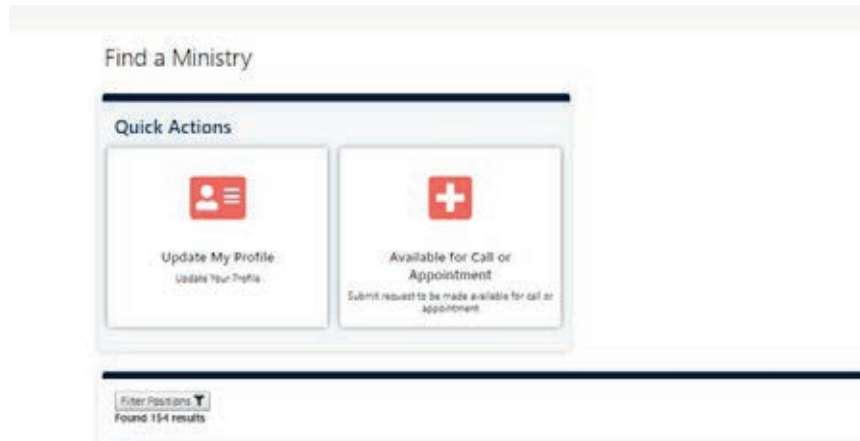
What Is ChurchHub?

- A major part of our new pastoral relations system is the Office of Vocation database that holds all personnel records.
- This database includes ChurchHub—a place where ministry personnel and candidates are able to sign in and access their personal profile via a unique e-mail address.
- Communities of faith are also able to sign in and access their profile via a unique e-mail address.
- ChurchHub is where ministry personnel search for a new call or appointment, and communities of faith search for a new minister.
- ChurchHub is secure. The only people who can see ministry personnel profiles that are posted as available for call or appointment are communities of faith that also have profiles that are posted as available for call or appointment. The database connected to ChurchHub is housed in Canada.
- It can be found at [ChurchHub.ca](#).
- The Indigenous Church will self-determine whether or how they use ChurchHub.
- More information about ChurchHub, including links to educational videos, can be found on the [ChurchHub webpage](#).
- If you have not received your invitation to ChurchHub, please e-mail ministry@united-church.ca.
- Google Chrome is the optimal browser for the best ChurchHub experience. This is especially true if you are using an iPad, iPhone, or MacBook.
- ChurchHub is compatible with mobile phones and tablets. However, the Update My Profile form will work better on a tablet or computer due to the number and length of some elements. All other functions should work on most smartphones.

Reflect on your profile again. Pray over it. Revise it one more time. You can update your Ministry Profile as often as you like on ChurchHub. As you update, the database that stores your profile updates every 24 hours. Only once your profile is activated is it available for viewing only by communities of faith that are searching for a new minister.

Requesting to Be Made Available for Call or Appointment

When you are ready, ask your Office of Vocation minister to activate your profile by submitting a request to be made available for call or appointment on your Find a New Ministry page in ChurchHub, as shown in the image below. As you request that your profile be activated, believe that the mystery of the Holy Spirit is at play.

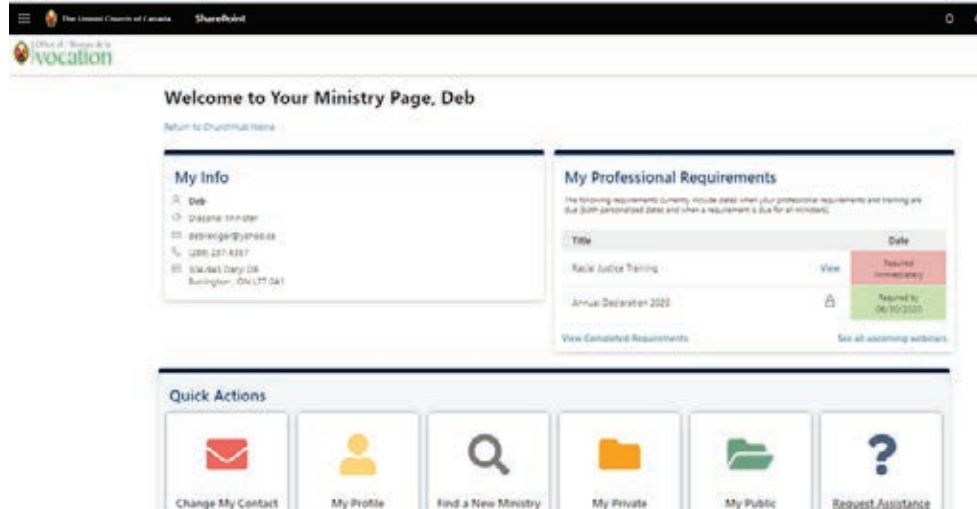


Your Office of Vocation minister will review your request and confirm your eligibility by checking the following:

- that you are in good standing as defined by *The Manual 2019*
- that you have done your mandatory training in Racial Justice and Personal and Professional Boundaries for Church Leaders
- that you have completed your annual declaration of no criminal charges

Good standing as defined by *The Manual 2019* means there are no outstanding Office of Vocation orders for you; and you are not on the Discontinued Service List Voluntary or Disciplinary or on the Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment list.

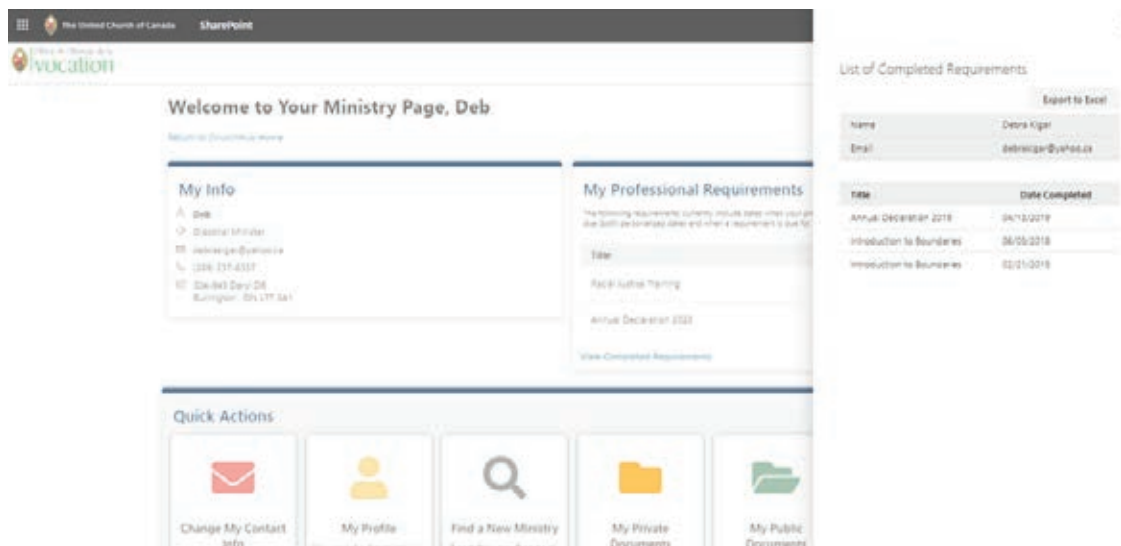
Your mandatory training data is on your ChurchHub My Ministry Page under My Professional Requirements, including when you are next scheduled to complete any refresher.



Your annual declaration of no criminal charges is also completed on your ChurchHub My Ministry Page under My Professional Requirements. According to the Police Records Checks (2019) policy,

Each year, by June 30, each candidate or ministry personnel will certify that no criminal charges have been filed against them in the preceding year. This certification will be done online. Failure to provide such certification annually will require that you provide a current (dated within six months) level 1 and level 2 police records check to bring you back into good standing.

However, if you are in good standing but have not completed your annual declaration or do not have updated mandatory trainings, your request will not be approved until you are compliant. Your Office of Vocation minister will contact you first if they cannot locate certificates of completion in your file, in case you have valid copies.



If you need to complete either the Racial Justice training or the Personal and Professional Boundaries training, they are both offered at various times throughout the year online via

webinar. Dates for these training events can be found at [United in Learning](#). If it has been more than five years since your last Personal and Professional Boundaries, you will need to sign up for refresher training. On occasion, in-person Personal and Professional Boundaries training may be offered in your area by Office of Vocation staff.

When all three elements are satisfactory, your Office of Vocation minister will “approve” your request to be made available for call or appointment, and communities of faith will receive access to your profile. However, the Office of Vocation minister does not review the contents of your profile.

If you need help with this process, you can find some answers in a video called *Ministry Personnel: How to Find a New Ministry* on the [ChurchHub](#) webpage.

Preparing Your References

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

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

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

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

You can help your references be effective for you by

- telling them who is likely to contact them

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

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

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

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

Exploring Community of Faith Profiles for Potential Matches

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

Before being approved as available for call or appointment, you can review the list of available positions, but you will only see a summary of the community of faith profiles. After you have been approved, you can see the entire community of faith profiles, including contact information to reach out to a search team if you feel that their community of faith could be a potential match.

As ministry personnel, you can search for potential matches in ChurchHub. This is the time for you to assess how well your skills and gifts match with the community of faith profiles in ChurchHub. You can communicate with a search team through ChurchHub to invite them to assess whether your profile may be a good match and possibly invite you to an interview. Also,

communities of faith will review your profile and some might initiate inviting you to an interview. Assess their profile before you agree to an interview, and discern for yourself whether they may be a good match.

Matching in ChurchHub

You can filter community of faith profiles by

- regional council
- hours: full-time or part-time
- Supervised Ministry Education (learning site)
- ethnocultural or linguistic-specific community of faith
- Indigenous community of faith
- Affirming community of faith
- interim ministry
- short-term supply

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

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

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

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

profile. In either of these examples, the pastoral relations minister may connect you to the regional council liaison working with the community of faith for further conversation about their experience with that community and to provide you with further information as you discern whether it is an appropriate community of faith where you could see yourself serving.

Candidates Seeking a Learning Site

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

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

Preparing for Interviews

Spend time preparing for the first interview. Review your résumé and your skills and gifts profile, and consider the following:

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

Be sure to bring hardcopies of your ministry profile and references to the interview, and a list of questions you have for the search team.

You can also prepare by anticipating some questions and developing answers in advance. You could ask someone to rehearse an interview with you and provide feedback. If you are a candidate, the Circle of Accompaniment is a resource for this type of preparation. While a search team can develop its own interview questions, you may find it helpful to review the questions in *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for Search and Selection* on the [Handbooks](#) page. You may not be asked all the same ones, but they could give you an idea of the themes of the interview.

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

Part of gaining knowledge about the community of faith is learning about its local community. You don't want to make assumptions about a place where you are interested in serving. You might consult the websites of local newspapers, the municipality, or the chamber of commerce.

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

The First Interview

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

Here are some tips for the interview:

- Wear comfortable clothing and footwear appropriate for a professional interview.
- If you live far away, it may be appropriate to arrange an interview using Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime. Practise the connection ahead of time with a member of the search team, who will be aware of any bias they might have when comparing an electronic interview with an in-person interview.
- If in person, look up directions to the location well in advance and confirm them with the search team contact person.
- Arrive 10 minutes early—long enough ahead to get comfortable but not so long that you are likely to run into the interviewee ahead of you. Give yourself time alone to centre yourself.
- See this interview as an opportunity for a holy encounter in which you are seeking to convey your hope and optimism for this potential match, while also seeking the information you need to help you make a decision.
- Ask the search team to summarize the next steps at the end of the interview. Ask questions like “Do you need my references now, or shall I wait till I hear from you?” “When can I expect to hear from you?” “Will I hear from you even if I am unsuccessful?” “If I am unsuccessful, will you provide me with some constructive feedback?”

Human rights

The United Church of Canada supports the protection of human rights, abolition of discrimination in all its forms, and adherence to legislated provincial/territorial human rights codes. Human rights law is based on the principle that employment decisions should be based on the applicant's ability to do the job rather than on factors that are unrelated to job requirements, qualifications, or performance. If you want more specific information about the prohibited grounds of discrimination in your jurisdiction, contact information for the human

rights commission or equivalent in your province or territory is contained in the Resources section of *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for Search and Selection* on the [Handbooks](#) page.

As part of their preparation, the search teams have been trained to honour human rights at all times and to avoid asking questions that are discriminatory. Occasionally in an interview you may offer information about your family, gender, or political affiliation. The search team must not ask for further information or use the information as evaluation criteria. If you are asked a question that you feel violates your human rights, you could ask for clarification: “I’m not sure I understand your question. Can you rephrase that so I can give you a helpful response?” If you are uncomfortable, you do not have to answer discriminatory questions. Try not to make assumptions about the individual asking or the search team. Their training should allow the team to be mutually accountable, and if a team member inadvertently makes an error, another search team member should remind the team that the question is inappropriate. If you are concerned, you can consult with regional council staff after the interview.

Preparing references for a call

After the first interviews, the search team identifies one person who seems to be a good match. The team then checks the references of this individual.

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

For the search team, the final step of checking references is also the time for them to confirm with the Office of Vocation minister that the ministry personnel is still eligible for call or appointment.

A visit during worship

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

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

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

Managing expectations

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

The right match may take time, and it can be difficult to wait in the meantime. Remember to practise self-care and call on support system during this time.

The Second Interview

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

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

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

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

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

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

Negotiating Terms

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

Negotiate terms with only one community of faith at a time. It is unethical to negotiate with more than one community at a time. Similarly, a community of faith must negotiate with only their top applicant.

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

All terms of call or appointment must be written down. While this is a covenantal relationship, it is also a legal relationship. In the Resources section below, there are screenshots of the online form that both ministry personnel and the community of faith may find helpful in their negotiation. It outlines the necessary information required to complete the record of call or appointment. If you have further questions about how a community of faith completes the form, you can review the guidance provided to them in *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for Search and Selection* on the [Handbooks](#) webpage.

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

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

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

- adequate income for you to fulfill your role without undue concern about current and future financial needs
- fair consideration for your investment in education, talent, experience, and effort

- appreciation for the demands of the position and degree of responsibility
- responsible and caring action by the community of faith
- a healthy and vital relationship between you, the community of faith, and its ministry

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

Negotiation Misconceptions

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

Some communities of faith may say:

- “We can pay less because the minister’s spouse is a high earner.”
Nowhere else in the working world are employee salaries reduced to account for spousal earnings. Your efforts are worth no less when your spouse earns a good income.
- “We can pay less because the minister has modest needs.”
Although you may live modestly, a church has no right to pay a less-than-fair wage simply because it makes assumptions about how you will spend the money.
- “We can pay less because the minister is young and has no family, or is older and has established themselves, or is part-time and can earn more elsewhere.”
Fair and equitable compensation should be based on your education, talent, experience, effort, and responsibility. Non-work related factors should not influence what you are paid.

Some ministry personnel may say:

- “Members will dislike me if I request a higher salary.”
People appreciate honesty and would rather know how you are feeling than deal with unexpressed frustrations. People pay more attention to what you do than what salary you ask for. People know that ministers are called to be God’s servants but sometimes forget that servants deserve fair wages for their labour.
- “I’m a proclaimer of the gospel; I shouldn’t be preoccupied with such material concerns.”
The scripture acknowledges time and again that church leaders must be cared for and compensated for their labour. Paying a fair wage is one way your community of faith acknowledges that it respects its own ministry leaders. Being silent and passive can cause your feelings to emerge in defensive ways that are not conducive to God’s work.
- “My church is poor. It can’t afford to do better.”
Some churches are doing all they can financially. However, perception and reality may not always align. Use any tools at hand to determine whether this is the case, including the financial viability element of the community of faith profile.
- “The church’s Mission & Service giving will go down if my salary goes up.”
Your church’s first priority is to appropriately provide for its members and pastoral leaders. They are essential for church growth and effective Mission & Service giving.

Tips for Constructive Negotiations

- Negotiate in a spirit of goodwill and positivity.
- Know what you want and what you absolutely need, and prioritize your requests. Think through these matters before beginning to negotiate. Being unprepared diminishes your credibility and implies to the search team that the terms are unimportant to you.
- Whenever possible, point out the positive impact your requests will have on you and the community of faith's ministry.
- Actively listen and try to understand the logic of others' positions; restate your understanding of what others say to gain added credibility.
- Be realistic in your expectations. You may not be able to achieve all your goals at once. Expect to give up on some requests and compromise on others.
- Understand that in some communities of faith, money anxiety is real and discussions about money are not easy.

A helpful tool for approaching your negotiations is the “Negotiating Tools for Ministry Personnel” found on the [Pastoral Relations](#) page. This spreadsheet helps you estimate a personal budget and then determine the gross salary required to meet your needs. It can be helpful in determining a goal for salary negotiations or to re-evaluate personal expenses.

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

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

It can also be helpful to compare salaries of similar-size United Churches in the area.

Unique Additional Terms

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

The following are examples of unique terms:

- additional, non-monetary compensation in the form of additional Sundays or time off (e.g., the Sunday after Christmas and Easter off)
- additional funds above the minimum continuing education allowance and/or additional study leave
- funds for computer/mobile phone above the minimum telephone amount

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

In other situations, you might make requests for terms that are specific to your unique circumstances—for example, working from a home office rather than from the church office. The community of faith is under no obligation to agree to these kinds of terms, and will need time to consider them carefully before committing or declining. The negotiators will want to know the following:

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

Reasonable Accommodation

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

Here are some examples:

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

In these health-related situations, the community of faith must take appropriate steps to address accessibility to the workplace, while balancing this with the needs of and potential impact on others. For example, members who have allergies to dogs or are afraid of animals will not be able to access ministry personnel who have a service dog. When addressing any of these unique terms, negotiators need to consult with the governing body, and it might be helpful to all parties to seek assistance from regional council staff.

Other Points in Negotiation

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

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

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

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

Record of Call or Appointment

The record of call or appointment is completed on ChurchHub. In the Resources section below are screenshots of the online form that you may find helpful in negotiating the terms before they are approved. Much of the information is automatically filled, and the minimum salary amounts are input according to your minister type and eligible years of service. Both you and the community of faith accept the terms of the record of the call or appointment in ChurchHub. Because you each have a sign-in with an individual password to access ChurchHub, this is equivalent to a signature.

Once the community of faith has met and voted to accept the terms of call or appointment, they will finish completing the record of call or appointment on ChurchHub. Then, you will receive an e-mail notification to indicate your acceptance of the terms. Once you have accepted the terms, the record of call or appointment is reviewed and approved by the regional council. Once it is approved by the regional council, a copy of the final form is submitted to your documents folder (and the documents folder of the community of faith) in ChurchHub and can be accessed in the future.

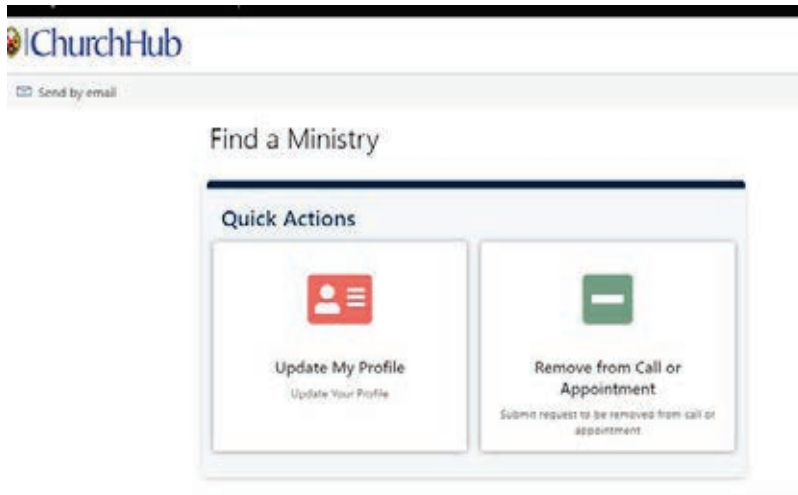
But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Jeremiah 31:33)

Reappointment

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

Removing Your Availability

Once you have completed a record of call or appointment, you need to remove yourself and your profile from the list of available ministry personnel. Return to your Find a New Ministry page in ChurchHub, and select Remove from Call or Appointment, as shown below.



Beginning the New Pastoral Relationship

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

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

As you begin your new pastoral relationship, you may want to access the resources of the [United Fresh Start](#) program to help in building a healthy pastoral relationship. Ask the regional council staff if there is a United Fresh Start facilitator available to work with you and community of faith leaders for the first two years. Also, it might be helpful to work through “United Fresh Start for Your Community of Faith,” a modified version of four key modules of the curriculum, which is available to everyone on the United Fresh Start website.

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

Covenanting Service

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

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

A sample liturgy for recognizing the covenant that provides the foundation for the new pastoral relationship is found in the [Milestones and Transitions](#) worship page. There are also supplementary resources to help worship leaders plan the whole covenanting service.

A Prayer to Ground You during the Pastoral Relations Process

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

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

Resources

Ministry Personnel Skills and Gifts Profile Template

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

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

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

Individual Worksheet for Matching

Category	Ranking for Ministry Personnel	Match (Good, No, Maybe)	Examples of Why You Assess It This Way (a few words to remind yourself later)
Administration			
Community Outreach and Social Justice			
Denomination and Communities			
Faith Formation and Christian Education			
Leadership			
Pastoral Care			
Self-care			
Worship			

Choose “Good Match” if you see common words, phrases, or 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, dissonance, or something you can’t put your finger on that seems intriguing and worth a second look.

Completing the Record of Call or Appointment in ChurchHub

Once the community of faith has met and voted to accept the terms of call or appointment, they will finish completing the record of call or appointment on ChurchHub. Then, you will receive an e-mail notification to indicate your acceptance of the terms. You will find the form in your ChurchHub account. If you have further questions about how a community of faith completes the form, you can review the guidance provided to them in *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for Search and Selection* on the [Handbooks](#) page.

The following screenshots give a sense of the information required on the form. A lot of the information is auto-filled from information already in the United Church database or entered by the community of faith.

Community of Faith	Terms for Remuneration and Expenses
Name of community of faith Test Community of Faith -Prolevis	Community of Faith ADP Company Code *
Community of faith type Congregation	Eligible service (in years) * 0
Regional Council Test Regional Council	Step/increment category (1-2 or A-F)
Is there a manse? Yes	Is Manse Included? Yes
Cost of Living Group Assignment 4	Minimum Full-Time Annual Salary 0.00 Click here to see the current published Salary Schedule
Minister Role Christian Education Minister	Prorated Annual Salary 0.00
	Additional Salary (in \$) % 0.00
	Total Salary
Ministry Personnel	Reimbursable Expenses
Select Ministry Personnel	Phone/Communications 0.00
Name	Continuing Education 0.00
Member/Pension no.	Other (describe below) 0.00
City	
Telephone	Total Remuneration 0.00
E-mail	View Standard Terms
Current regional council membership	Adequate administrative assistance defined as
Minister Type	Additional Terms of this Call or Appointment
Intentional Interim Designation No	
Is this minister retired (receiving a United Church of Canada pension)? No	
Pastoral Relationship	Action of Community of Faith
Assignment Type * Call	<input type="checkbox"/> Acceptance of Standard Terms
Changes to Assignment None	<input type="checkbox"/> Acceptance of Additional Terms
	By selecting Accept, you are confirming that the Community of Faith has met and agreed to these terms
	If cancelling this form, please provide adequate justification
	Cancel Form Save Draft Accept
	Please select a minister before accepting the form

As you complete the form, different instructions appear in red under the Cancel Form button. These indicate what mandatory information you need to complete to move on to another section of the form.

To view the standard terms, click the View Standard Terms button. You need to view these before clicking Accept at the end of the form.

Standard Terms of Call or Appointment

All the parties agree that

- This covenant is in accordance with and subject to the relevant policies found in *The Manual* (current version) of The United Church of Canada.
- Calls and appointments may be terminated with 90 days' notice subject to the provisions of *The Manual* (current version) of The United Church of Canada.
- A minimum of three weeks (21 days) of study leave within each pastoral year, including Sundays.
- For members of the order of ministry and recognized designated lay ministers, a minimum of three months of sabbatical leave after five consecutive years of service to the pastoral charge/local ministry unit.
- Basic telephone expenses (excluding personal long distance calls).
- A minimum of one month of vacation (including 5 Sundays) within each pastoral year.
- Moving expenses (based on reasonable estimates and receipts).
- Travel expense reimbursement (based on the current Minimum Salaries and Reimbursements for Ministry Personnel document found at <https://www.united-church.ca>).
- The community of faith agrees to provide remuneration through the pastoral charge payroll service unless the General Council Office has granted a formal exemption.
- The community of faith has reviewed the Premiums and Taxable Benefit Calculator (search "payroll" at <https://www.united-church.ca>) and understands the additional employer costs of pension and benefits.

Ministry Personnel agrees to

- Promote the work of God and the good of the church.
- Be subject to the oversight and discipline of the Office of Vocation of The United Church of Canada.
- Give reasonable care to the manse and furnishings and obtain insurance coverage for personal contents, if the terms of this call/appointment include a manse.
- Arrange study leave, dates of vacation, and sabbatical (if applicable) in consultation with the Ministry and Personnel Committee or equivalent.
- Repay moving expenses to the community of faith in the event that I request a change in pastoral relations before completing three years of service in this call or appointment.
- Acknowledge that this call or appointment requires approval by the regional council.

For intentional interim ministry appointment, the parties also agree that

- The community of faith agrees to appoint five to seven members to an Interim Ministry Transition Committee.
- The regional council agrees to appoint two members to an Interim Ministry Transition Committee.
- The Interim Minister will not apply for call to a succeeding pastoral relationship based on a change of ministry personnel status or open ministry position in the community of faith.
- The goals for the Interim Ministry will be completed by the Interim Ministry Transition Committee in consultation with the Interim Minister and presented to the community of faith for approval; preliminary goals are attached to this form.
- The community of faith that is party to this appointment agrees to contribute to the Interim Ministry Sabbatical Leave Fund of The United Church of Canada in an amount equivalent to two weeks' comprehensive salary (or salary plus fair rental value of the manse as applicable). This is to be calculated for each year of interim service, or prorated for service of less than a year. The payment(s) will be remitted to the Financial Assistance Committee of the Ministry and Employment Unit of the General Council Office no later than January 31st of each year following the year in which the interim ministry appointment began.
- The parties of this Interim Ministry appointment agree to abide by the policies and guidelines of The United Church of Canada relating to Interim Ministry.

If you have negotiated additional terms to this call or appointment, such as additional vacation time, these will be listed under Additional Terms of this Call or Appointment.

Once you have reviewed all of the necessary information, you can select the two checkboxes under Action of Minister. With these boxes selected, you will be able to click the Accept button. In reviewing the form, if there is a discrepancy between what you negotiated and what appears on the copy of the record of call or appointment sent to you, you can decline the form. If you need to decline it, please provide some explanation in the textbox before clicking Decline. You can also contact the search team to clarify your reasons and determine the way forward.

Once you have accepted the terms of call or appointment, the record of call or appointment is reviewed and approved by the regional council. Then a copy of the finalized form is submitted to your documents folder (and the documents folder of the community of faith) in ChurchHub and can be accessed in the future.