Pastoral Relations:
Guidelines for Search and Selection

April 2020

Pastoral Relations
Relations pastorales
The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada

Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for Search and Selection (April 2020)

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

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About This Resource

This resource largely contains recommended ways to live out mandatory policies and procedures found under I. Pastoral Relations in *The Manual* and within *Pastoral Relations: Policy for a Community of Faith* (available on the Handbooks page of The United Church of Canada website). You are encouraged, but not required, to follow the best practices outlined in this resource. For clarity, the policy related to a community of faith profile is also repeated.

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: Ministry Personnel*
- *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for a Community of Faith Profile*
- *Pastoral Relations: Policy for a Community of Faith*
- *Pastoral Relations: Supporting the Pastoral Relationship*
- *Pastoral Relations: Regional Council Liaisons*

As of January 2019, these new pastoral relations 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 Pastoral Relations page of The United Church of Canada website.

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

Policy

Search and Selection

This policy is also found in *Pastoral Relations: Policy for a Community of Faith*, but is provided again here for clarity.

A search process may begin once a community of faith profile and additional elements (position description and financial viability review) have been completed and filed on ChurchHub and approved by the regional council.

The governing body is responsible for naming a search team. This may be the same group of people who put together the profile, including the living faith story, or it may be a different group. Depending on the church size and context, the governing body may be able to take on this role, or it may be done by the whole congregation.

The regional council is responsible for training the search team. The search team begins holding interviews only once its members have been trained by the regional council.

Ministry personnel profiles are also posted to ChurchHub. Only communities of faith that are in a search process can see profiles of ministry personnel who are in search of call or appointment.

Confidentiality in the Search Process

The reason that only churches that are in a search process can see ministry personnel profiles is to maintain a level of confidentiality. Members of search teams must agree to keep the search process confidential. Privacy, confidentiality, and transparency are essential for building trust. Secrecy, on the other hand, impedes trust.

Privacy belongs to one individual only. Most people are aware of the importance of respecting the right to privacy—that is, honouring an individual's control over how and with whom personal information can be shared. This right is protected by Canadian law in the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA).

Confidentiality means ensuring that information gained in private discussion is not disclosed to others inappropriately or used out of context. To maintain trust and the integrity of a process, it may be necessary to withhold some information. Confidentiality is a required condition for participants of certain groups to ensure that what is said in the group stays in the group. This enables people to speak freely about private or controversial issues without being held to account beyond the group and context where the words are spoken.

Transparency means that methods and procedures are clear and open and can be questioned. It operates on the democratic principle that people have a right to know about the systems that affect their well-being. It means that people know and have a say in how information is used, who sees it, and how it fits into the larger picture. Transparency supports the principle of keeping a community of faith well informed about pastoral relations work.

> *Secrecy* is the opposite of transparency. It is the condition of withholding information for the purpose of control. It is a situation in which only a few initiates are privy to certain information and everyone else is excluded, whether or not the information could potentially affect them. When people suspect, rightly or wrongly, that a few "insiders" are making decisions for others, mistrust can take hold.

The search team is responsible for

- using ChurchHub to search for ministry personnel profiles that complement the community of faith profile, in whole or in part
- creating a short list of ministry personnel to interview, and inviting the ministers to an interview
- completing first-round interviews and shortlisting for second-round interviews
- holding reference checks for the ministry personnel who is moving to second-round interviews
- holding second-round interviews
- discerning through conversation and prayer a decision about a successful applicant
- contacting the successful applicant and beginning negotiations
- communicating to the ministry personnel who were not successful after the date for the community of faith meeting has been set
- extending a call or appointment to the successful applicant
- making a recommendation, including negotiated terms for the call or appointment, to the community of faith

The successful applicant is given the opportunity to confirm the invitation.

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.
- decide whether to approve the call or appointment.

Best Practices

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.

Communicating with the Community of Faith

Throughout the pastoral relations process, you will want to share updates with your community of faith. The Resources section below has some suggested communications you can share at the various stages of your journey. They could be used in a worship bulletin or website update to keep the community of faith up to date on the work, while respecting the confidentiality of the process.

There are four main parts to the pastoral relations process:

1. Request a change in pastoral relations. Your regional council liaison and regional council minister support this process.
2. Community of faith/ministry personnel profiles. Guidance and a toolbox of options for your community of faith profile are included in a partner resource called *Guidelines for a Community of Faith Profile*.
3. Search and selection.
4. Covenanting.

Forming the Search Team

The governing body is free to appoint as many members to the search team as it deems necessary to represent the community and function well. The community of faith has the flexibility to appoint the people it considers most suitable for its search team, whether they are full members or adherents. In a pastoral charge with two or more congregations, there should be representation from each congregation. Ministry personnel who are currently serving in the community of faith should not be on the search team, even if the community of faith is considering growing a team ministry. Other staff members should also not be on the search team. Rather, staff are consulted as the community of faith profile is prepared.

People with these qualities make good team members:

- They have the confidence of the community of faith.
- They reflect the various areas of the community of faith's life and work: committees or groups, age, gender, and involvement in the community of faith.
- They are able to listen, consult, and discern with people; gather and analyze data; write clearly; and follow through with paperwork.
- They are comfortable with the language of theology.
- It is helpful to have someone with background and skills in human resources management.

- They are able to maintain confidentiality.

In forming the search team, avoid the following:

- The Ministry and Personnel Committee, as a whole committee, should not replace the search team. A member of the M&P Committee can serve on the search team but preferably not as the committee's chair.
- Anyone who will have a conflict of interest in the process.
- More than one member of the same family, if possible.

First Meeting

The team needs to be intentional in building community and setting the expectations for their work. This occurs before you begin working with a liaison from your regional council. At the first meeting, take time to get to know one another:

- Pray as you begin (and end) your meeting. Keep this practice up in subsequent meetings.
- Express your excitement, hopes, and fears.
- Share the gifts each person brings to the process.
- Do you have reflections or observations on how the community of faith feels about the change?

The search team's tasks include the following:

- Communicate with the community of faith about their progress. (This can be done at meetings of the governing body, in worship, or in a newsletter—see the Resources section below for templates.)
- Ensure that all team members review the relevant sections of this resource; it is the guide for the work of your team.
- Keep the minutes/record of each meeting.
- Set the quorum for the group.
- Compile and share a contact list of team members.

If the search team decides that they need a chair, the chair must be willing to spend time familiarizing themselves with the pastoral relations process. It is helpful if the chair is a good facilitator or listener. It would also be helpful if the chair has a level of awareness to be able to discern when the group is not being culturally sensitive.

During the first meeting of the search team, set the quorum for the group. While attendance and participation of team members is important, at times not all team members will be able to make a meeting. Two-thirds is often agreed to, and in cases of multi-point pastoral charges, you might agree that the quorum is two-thirds of the team members with representation from each of the points.

Meeting Format

A standard meeting format can help keep you focused on the task and give everyone—including those who might not otherwise speak up—a sense of confidence.

Here's a suggested format. It can be adjusted to reflect the nature of your team.

- Gathering together:
  - Look at the agenda and confirm we understand our task(s) for the meeting.
  - Check in; what do we need to let go of in order to be fully present in this meeting?
- Prayer for our meeting and for the specific tasks we are undertaking.
- Review of follow-up items from last meeting's minutes; did people do what they committed to?
- New content or new task: Is there new learning we need to undertake before we can attempt this task?
- Work on the task(s).
- Fifteen minutes before scheduled end of meeting:
  - Where are we at? Have we accomplished what we needed to? If not, what is our plan to do so?
  - Confirm date, time, and purpose of next meeting so participants can prepare.
  - Confirm to-do items and preparation for next meeting.
- Closing:
  - Share any concerns or fears you have right now about the process. Offer these to God and to each other.
  - Offer thanks to each other for specific gifts that were offered. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to share.
  - Close with a song, silence, or spoken prayer.

Search Team Training by Regional Council

Areas of focus for this training include the following:

- overview of the search process
- Holy Manners
- bias and difference (this material is available for review in the Resources section below)
- human rights
- eligibility and overview of streams of ministry
- introduction to Supervised Ministry Education
- confidentiality and conflict of interest
- using ChurchHub for search
- administrative decisions for the team (decision-making, budget, practice for covering mileage/travel or interviewing with technology)

As you work through the process of search and selection, keep your liaison updated on where you are in the process.

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 can 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. Everyone with ChurchHub access can see the beginning paragraph of the position summary for all available positions. 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 of The United Church of Canada website.
- 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 devices and tablets. However, the Submit a New Position form will work better on a tablet or computer due to the number and length of some elements. All others should work on most smartphones.

Exploring Ministry Personnel Profiles for Potential Matches

You will have learned how to log in to ChurchHub in your training or from posting your community of faith profile. On this portal, you can review profiles of ministry personnel who are searching for a pastoral relationship, and your community of faith will be tagged as searching for a new pastoral relationship. The process begins with reviewing ministry personnel profiles to look for potential matches. As you review these profiles and assess whether they are a potential match, your profile is being reviewed by ministry personnel too.

Matching in ChurchHub

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

You can filter ministry personnel profiles by

- hours: full-time or part-time
- regional council availability
- languages spoken: English, French, or other
- designated intentional interim minister

Ministry personnel profiles are based on a similar format of describing different areas of ministry according to the categories from the *Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel* (available on the Handbooks page). You may find the individual worksheet for matching profiles (found in the Resources section below) helpful. As you review a ministry personnel profile, you can mark it as a "good match," "maybe match," or "no match." The worksheet is useful to review one ministry personnel profile at a time. Remember that a potential match is not a good or bad judgment about you or the ministry personnel; it is an assessment of the match between your community of faith's ministry needs, vision, and story and the ministry personnel's skills and gifts.

> 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 most important areas of ministry first; this aspect needs to have 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. Invite ministry personnel to an interview only if you feel there is a solid enough match to grow into a healthy pastoral relationship.

> **For Potential Supervised Ministry Education Appointment**
>
> As candidates review community of faith profiles, they can filter to see profiles for communities of faith that have discerned that they are willing to be a learning site.

As ministry personnel review your community of faith profile, they may communicate with you via the search team e-mail address provided in the profile. Assess their profile before you invite them to an interview, and discern for yourself whether that ministry personnel might be a good match.

In reviewing potential matches, you bring your openness to experiencing God's Spirit in the process. You are looking for a ministry personnel whom you feel is called to minister in a particular local context. If you have not found a solid match, is God calling you to wait? Do you need to seek some support from regional council staff or your support person in your process of searching for a new pastoral relationship?

> Applications from candidates seeking a SME student appointment include learning goals approved by the Candidacy Board. Reviewing the learning goals in relation to the position description is a useful part of assessing applications.

If You Are Considering a Supervised Ministry Education Appointment

Communities of faith may choose to make their vacancy open to both candidates seeking a SME appointment and accredited ministry personnel seeking a call or appointment. However, this creates the difficulty of trying to assess applicants who are offering very different skills and experiences of ministry.

At the time of shortlisting applicants, you need to decide whether to proceed to fill the vacancy as a SME learning site or as a call or appointment for accredited ministry personnel. This allows the interview process to be focused on how the candidates' learning goals, or how the skills and gifts of an accredited ministry personnel, fit with your community of faith. It also avoids the difficulty of comparing people who are preparing for ministry leadership with people who are experienced in ministry.

Preparing for First Interviews

Having shortlisted some ministry personnel after reviewing profiles in ChurchHub, the search team meets to prepare for first interviews. Use this gathering to develop the interview process and interview questions, and review the team's biases, identified earlier in training.

The goal of the interview is to enable the interviewee to have the best possible experience and, thus, be able to articulate how they are the best applicant for your vacancy. That will give you the best possible information as a basis for your discernment and decision.

Therefore, for good interviews, the search team

- is welcoming and well organized
- recognizes the interview as a holy and mutual encounter for all who are present and strives to provide a culturally safe environment for all interviewees
- protects basic human rights and adheres to all legislated provincial/territorial human rights codes
- enables each interviewee to respond to a consistent set of questions that allows them to clearly identify their passions, skills, interests, and areas for continued growth, and why they see this as the right position for them
- evaluates responses in a consistent and transparent way
- honours each person's worth and value during and after the interview by respectfully and prayerfully discerning as they evaluate each interviewee and collectively make their decision

Organizing for Interviews

Here are some tips for being welcoming and organized at each interview:

- Contact the interviewee well in advance to offer an interview. Assist in arranging transportation, directions, and/or accommodation (if appropriate).
- Determine the best location for the interview. If an interviewee lives far away, it may be appropriate to arrange an interview using Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime. However, be aware of any bias the team might have when reviewing interviews and discerning between an electronic interview and an in-person interview. If an interview will be in person it could be held at the church, but if the search team is worried about

maintaining confidentiality, it could be held offsite. Explore holding interviews at a community space, like a community room in a local library or at a community centre.

- Ask the person to arrive about 10 minutes ahead of time. Offer the use of washroom facilities, a glass of water, and a quiet place to sit for a few minutes if they so choose.
- Interview in a comfortable location that gives people adequate personal space.
- Plan for no more than a 60-minute interview. This allows for
  - greeting, introductions, overview of the interview process, and opening prayer
  - 10 questions (*Note:* In some cultures storytelling is very important. You may not get to all of your questions in a 60-minute period, so plan appropriately.)
  - questions from the interviewee to the search team
  - thanks and next steps
  - closing prayer
- Allow 15 minutes (but no more) just in case you go over.
- Allow two hours for the entire interview process: greeting, closing, accompanying the interviewee out, reviewing how it went, and break.
- Try not to schedule more than three interviews back to back. It's difficult to listen as well by the end of a third interview.

Roles for Interviews

One way to organize the search team during interviews is to assign roles to team members.

A. Host

- May be the contact person who has already been in touch with the interviewees.
- Makes sure search team members wear name tags.
- Greets the interviewee.
- Helps to make them comfortable before the interview begins (e.g., washroom, water).
- Opens interview with introductions; explains who will do what during the interview.
- Closes the interview and thanks the interviewee. Explains the next steps realistically (e.g., "X will be back in touch with you by such and such a time").
- Offers to accompany the interviewee out.

B. Timekeeper

- Lets the interviewee know when they have taken more than five minutes to respond to a question. (The interviewee can continue if desired, but it means they will have to spend less time on subsequent questions.)
- Tells the team and the interviewee when 50 minutes have elapsed. At this point, move into the period for the interviewee to ask questions.
- Tell the team when 60 minutes have elapsed, at which point the host begins to move toward closure.

C. Question Askers

- Ask specific questions assigned to them ahead of time.

D. Response Recorders

- Jot down responses as they are able. When asking a question, they do not jot down responses because they should really listen to the interviewee. The records of other recorders then become more important.
- Share their records, understanding that they belong to the team and are useful information among the team only.
- May be comfortable taking notes during the interview, may instead want to use an interview worksheet created by the team, or may be most comfortable listening and then jotting a few notes at the end of the interview.

A Holy Encounter in Interviews

The work of the search team is different from an organization's human resource department selecting an employee. The hope is for the interview to feel like a holy encounter. As they move through the pastoral relations process, the search team partners with God's Spirit in their work. The host may invite someone to offer prayer—but that person should not be the interviewee!

Here's a sample opening prayer:

> God who welcomes us, we thank you for the gift of (*person's name*) who has joined us here, and for the gifts and skills that they bring. Be with us now as we talk together. Give us open hearts and minds to perceive the movement of your Spirit among us. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Another crucial aspect of holy encounter is the idea of mutuality. The interview should not just be about asking one-way questions of the interviewee. Rather, it is meant to be a conversation that allows at least a little time for the interviewee to also ask questions of the search team.

A holy encounter respects the United Church's call to become an intercultural church. The search team establishes an environment that is culturally safe for all interviewees. A culturally safe interview is one in which interviewers

- are aware of their biases and have taken steps to minimize the impact of these on the interview
- express empathy and demonstrate a genuine desire to understand the experience and gifts of the interviewee regardless of their culture, ethnicity, first language, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other identity
- communicate with care and check for the interviewee's understanding
- establish a relationship with the interviewee through attending behaviours, such as making appropriate eye contact, nodding, and leaning forward
- convey respect and openness to each interviewee by appearing warm, relaxed, supportive, and non-judgmental, particularly in cross-cultural interviews where the interviewee may need substantial reassurance
- respectfully ask interviewees to speak more slowly or repeat a response if the interviewer has not understood

Close with a prayer as a reminder to all that this process is not merely one to fill a position but a spiritual process. Here's a sample closing prayer:

> Loving Creator, we thank you for this time together. We ask that you bless all of us with your wisdom and your spirit of discernment as we leave each other. Grant us safety as we return to our places. Amen.

Human Rights

As you prepare for your first interviews, remember your earlier training on bias, difference, and human rights. Ensure you address your biases and that you honour human rights throughout the search process. You can refer to this material again in the Resources section below. Occasionally, in an interview, an applicant may offer information about their family, gender, or political affiliation. The search team must not ask for further information or use the information as evaluation criteria.

No part of the pastoral relations process, including interviews, can include questions that relate directly or indirectly to prohibited grounds of discrimination. Asking questions to solicit information in any of these areas is inappropriate and could be challenged as a violation of human rights.

What Questions to Ask

Ask the same questions of each interviewee. If you will spend no more than 60–75 minutes per interview, plan for no more than 10 questions.

Use a variety of approaches:

- *Knowledge-based or theoretical questions:* Ask the interviewee to describe what they believe or think, or how they have learned what they believe.
- *Experiential questions:* Ask interviewees to use specific examples from their experience to demonstrate what they believe or think.
- *Creative or abstract questions:* Ask questions that require the interviewee to paint a picture.
- *Good times and hard times:* Ask questions that tease out both moments of great achievement and ones that were hard. Each of us learns differently from positive and negative experiences. It's important to hear how the interviewee responds to both.

A variety of question types gives the search team better and more encompassing information. Equally important, different people find it easier or more difficult to respond to different kinds of questions, so give each interviewee different ways to show their strengths. The Resources section below includes an inventory of potential questions. They can be easily adapted to fit any particular category by changing a few words. You can use some as is or to prompt your own questions.

When choosing wording, be straightforward and clear. When an interviewee responds to a question based on misunderstanding it, their response can be inconsistent with what you had hoped to hear. The interviewers may interpret the response as reflecting the interviewee's personality, theological perspective, interpersonal approach, or communication skills, when in reality the problem stemmed not from the interviewee but from the wording of the question. This is called "notational bias."

The following are tips for wording questions, particularly when there are cross-cultural or first-language differences between the interviewee and the interviewers:

- Keep questions as short as possible without limiting their complexity or what you are trying to elicit.
- Avoid jargon and short forms that only those who have grown up in your local context, in Canada, or in The United Church of Canada will understand.
- Avoid metaphors and analogies, and use straightforward language.

When ordering the questions, start with at least one easy one. Generally, knowledge questions are much easier than experiential or creative questions. Tell the interviewee what the question is about and that they can ask you to repeat a question. Remember that your job is to help each interviewee have the best possible interview.

First Interviews

The search team arrives before the start of the scheduled interviews. The same people should be present for every interview. Confirm each team member's role. You might also review the interviewee's profile and discuss briefly whether there is something that you want to remember in the interview from the profile.

Create a welcoming and organized space for the interviews, as well as a sacred space to enable a holy encounter. Remember your training and discussion about bias. Human rights must be honoured at all times. Occasionally, in an interview, an applicant may offer information about their family, gender, or political affiliation. The search team must not ask for further information or use the information as evaluation criteria. Enjoy the sacred time in conversation with each interviewee as together you discern whether God is calling you all to enter into a new pastoral relationship together.

Debriefing and Discerning after First Interviews

Gather the search team to consider each interviewee:

- What impressed or excited you?
- What concerned you, if anything?
- Did you hear anything that you need to set aside because it is unrelated to the position description and could unfairly bias your perspective (e.g., you didn't ask but heard that the interviewee is in the process of adopting a child)?

As the team moves into discernment, work through this process for each interviewee:

- Picture them again in your mind's eye. Thank God for their gifts, skills, and willingness to come and meet.
- Have each team member indicate their overall assessment in simple terms ("Wow! Excellent," etc.).

- Ask everyone to share a couple of the notes they jotted down to justify their assessment. Is there agreement? Find out why there was disagreement: Did you hear things differently? Did someone pick up something that others didn't? Do others agree?
- Gently and in a spirit of courageous love, challenge each other.
- Overall, what would you individually assign as your assessment of the match: "Strong Match," "Potential Match," or "Not a Good Match."
- Compare these individual assessments within the team.
- Is a consensus emerging? How are your biases at play in your discernment?
- If there are strong feelings, it could well be because you're getting tired and not just because you're disagreeing with each other. Agree to come back together to make your decision. Review your decision-making agreements.
- Whatever you do, end in prayer with thanksgiving for the diversity of perspectives and gifts on your team.

Checking References

Through the first interviews, the search team identifies one person who seems to be a good match. Determine the questions to be asked in the reference checks about this individual, and then delegate the task of checking references to one or more members. The results of a minimum of two reference checks are provided to the search team and discussed before making further decisions. The reference checks are recorded, signed, and dated. This step includes a final confirmation of eligibility with your Office of Vocation minister.

It is strongly encouraged that at least one reference be provided by the chair of the governing body or chair of the M&P Committee of the individual's current pastoral relationship. If the interviewee prefers you not contact either of these individuals, ask why, and ask that the interviewee provide an equivalent reference from the pastoral relationship that immediately preceded the current one. Alternatively, you could wait to contact the references from their current ministry until after the second interview, when you have agreed to move forward into negotiating terms.

If you are checking references for a candidate or someone who has not yet been in a pastoral relationship, a reference will come from a field placement or educational supervisor or someone (like the chair of the governing body or chair of the worship committee) from a community of faith where they have done occasional worship leadership and preaching.

The following are qualities of a good reference check:

- It is based on people who have known and worked closely with the interviewee in the recent past.
- It seeks to confirm or question what you already know based on the interviewee's information and interview.
- It provides opportunity for additional information that you can follow up on if needed.

You will find a Reference Check Sample Worksheet in the Resources section below.

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

As part of checking references, it is also helpful to attend a worship gathering at which the ministry personnel is an active leader. They may have already supplied you with sermons or recordings of worship, so you have an idea of how they lead worship. If distance prevents attendance or if they are a candidate who does not lead worship regularly, ask for recordings, or if you know of someone you trust in their area, send that person on your behalf with a list of questions you want them to comment on.

If your position description does not require a significant amount of worship leadership, this step is not required. Importantly, don't do "surprise" visits! Arrange the visit with the ministry personnel ahead of time.

Debriefing and Discerning after Checking References

After the reference checks are completed, gather the search team and have the members present the results. Invite questions from the rest of the team. If there are no questions, sit in silence for a few moments. Go around the circle asking each person for a comment about what they have heard. How does what you've heard affirm or challenge your sense about this individual's match with your community of faith? Sit in silence again for a few moments. You may want to pray together.

Then check to see if people are ready to make a decision about proceeding to a second interview. If so, go around the circle again and ask each person to comment on where they are at. For example:

- I feel positively enough about our match to proceed to a second interview.
- I need some more time to talk together.
- I'd like to ask for one more reference.
- I do not feel confident with this match. I do not feel that we should proceed further.

Take the time you need for this step. Use your decision-making rules (consensus, majority, majority threshold). If you are using majority vote but aren't really ready, then agree to wait, or agree to do another reference check. Have an action plan. Whatever point you arrive at, end in prayer.

Second Interviews

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

It also offers the opportunity for the search team and the interviewee to identify their needs for 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 the second interview takes place face to face.

If this is a team situation, you might also incorporate a meet-and-greet that involves other ministry and non-ministry staff.

> Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind… (1 Kings 3:12)

Planning Second Interviews

The search team meets to confirm the process ahead of time. Be organized as in the first interview: have a host and a timekeeper, and agree who will ask questions and who will keep notes.

If you are unsure about how to word your questions to avoid any potential miscommunication, consult with your regional council liaison to make sure you are asking in appropriate and effective ways. Also offer an opportunity for the interviewee to ask questions.

Suggested format:

- Opening prayer
- Re-introductions; purpose and informal nature of the interview—digging deeper into a potential match
- No more than three or four questions following up on what you heard in the first interview
- Questions from the interviewee
- Understanding each other’s needs for potential terms of the call or appointment:
  - Share your needs for timing, some anticipated terms of call, etc.
  - Ask the interviewee’s needs for timing, terms of call, etc.
- Agreement on next steps
- Closing prayer

Discerning and Decision-Making after Second Interview

You have completed the first interview, the reference checks, and a second interview, and you may have held a meet-and-greet with other staff. Here are some suggestions for discernment and decision-making:

- Spend time in individual reflection.
- Ask for an initial show of hands in response to the question “Can I support a recommendation to extend a call or appointment to this individual?”
- Have a discussion, giving each person three to five minutes to reflect on the following:
  - How have I seen this person describe or demonstrate the skills, gifts, and passions that will help us to achieve our ministry priorities?
  - Do I believe we can offer this person the right kind of ministry context in which they can truly respond to their call?

- If the discussion becomes disrespectful in any way, call yourselves back to your Holy Manners. Spend time in prayer again, asking for a spirit of compassion and respect to fall among and within you.

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

After the time of discussion and prayer, make your decision in the way you have agreed. Any disagreement over the final choice must be kept confidential to give the community of faith and the ministry personnel the best starting point for their pastoral relationship.

You can also agree to defer your decision. If you do, decide what you are doing in the meantime: What additional information are you seeking? What are you expecting to happen by deferring?

Record your decision in the minutes. Extend thanks to each other and to God.

Sometimes this is a relatively straightforward process. In that case, you can move right into a discussion about the parameters of the terms two members of the search team will negotiate with the individual.

Negotiating Terms of Call or Appointment

Two members of the search team will negotiate the terms of the call or appointment directly, while keeping within the parameters provided by the governing body (e.g., "Up to a certain salary grid level" or "Up to a certain amount for continuing education, technology, etc.").
Ideally, this discussion takes place face to face, although meetings over the Internet can also work. It is important to do this as quickly as possible, but allow the time needed to do it well.

Negotiate terms only with your top applicant. At no time should you negotiate with more than one person at a time. Similarly, ministry personnel should negotiate with only one community of faith at a time. Negotiating with more than one community of faith or ministry personnel at a time is unethical.

Minimum requirements of a call or appointment are set out in *The Manual*. These minimums must be met by the terms the governing body approves. If the search team and the ministry personnel wish to negotiate outside of the budget set by the governing body, the search team must first take a recommendation back to the governing body to approve an increase to the budget. For compensation information, please refer to Minimum Salaries and Reimbursements for Ministry Personnel at www.united-church.ca (search "salary").

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 record of call or appointment that the 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 your new pastoral relationship is with a candidate fulfilling their Supervised Ministry Education requirements, they are appointed to paid accountable ministry.

> “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)

Unique Additional Terms

Sometimes communities of faith and ministry personnel come up with unique terms to address their specific circumstances. Take care to consider the potential impacts on others of agreeing to unique terms. Consult with the governing body as well as with the regional council liaison before making any such commitments.

All terms, whether unique or not, must be written down and agreed to by both the community of faith and the ministry personnel without manipulation or coercion. 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

There may also be unique terms if your new pastoral relationship is a Supervised Ministry Education appointment. You may be asked to provide additional time (more than the minimum three weeks for continuing education leave) for the candidate to do part of the requirements of their 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 all 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 SME student supply appointment as the last phase of their preparation for ordination receive the standard three weeks of continuing education leave.

Reasonable Accommodation

Sometimes the ministry personnel will have a health-related situation that will impact the way they perform their 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. The search team may request that the applicant have their doctor review a position description or requirements and answer questions regarding limitations to performing of essential duties so that attempts at appropriate accommodation can be mutually determined.

Here are some examples:

- The ministry personnel has a service dog to assist them in their day-to-day work.
- The ministry personnel needs a two-hour break a couple of times during the 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.

In other situations, the ministry personnel may make requests for terms that are specific to their unique circumstances. In your discussion with them, consider the following:

- Who else might be unintentionally and negatively affected by this term?
- Are there others whose input we should seek before making a mutual decision?

Recommendation to the Community of Faith

Once the terms have been successfully negotiated, the governing body is notified that the search team is ready to make a recommendation to the community of faith. The governing body calls a meeting of the community of faith to consider the search team's recommendation.

As a courtesy, before the public notice, the other ministry personnel in the community of faith and the regional council should be notified of the date of the meeting in writing.

All members of the search team should attend the meeting. All members and adherents of the community of faith are invited and encouraged to attend. Full members of the community of faith are eligible to vote on pastoral relations matters, including calls and appointments, and can extend voting privileges to adherents of the community of faith.

Meeting Agenda

- Opening prayer and call to order
- Confirming the recording secretary for the meeting
- Extending voting privileges to adherents
- Introducing the search team
- Presenting the search team report and recommendation
- Motion and associated discussion

Your liaison can provide you with a sample motion for the meeting.

A search team representative should contact the ministry personnel immediately following this meeting to confirm the results. The search team is responsible for ensuring that the record of the call or appointment is completed in ChurchHub.

> 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)

The search team also provides an update in the bulletin/website for anyone who was unable to attend the meeting.

Record of Call or Appointment

The record of call or appointment is completed in ChurchHub. In the Resources section below are screenshots of the online form that the ministry personnel and the community of faith may find helpful. Much of the information is automatically filled, and the minimum salary amounts are inputted according to the minister type and eligible years of service of the ministry personnel. You can find a link to a video to assist you in completing the Record of Call or Appointment on the ChurchHub webpage.

Both you and the ministry personnel 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 your community of faith has met and voted to accept the terms of call or appointment, you will finish completing the record of call or appointment on ChurchHub. Then, the ministry personnel will receive an e-mail notification to indicate their acceptance of the terms. Once they 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 ministry personnel) in ChurchHub and can be accessed in the future.

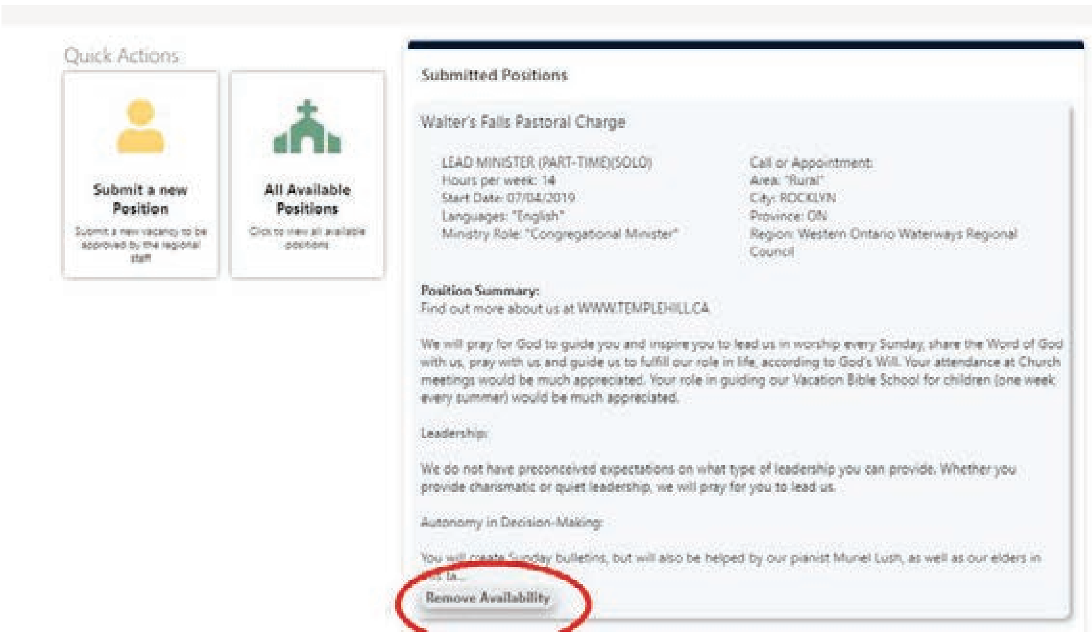
> **Support for Supervised Ministry Education Appointments**
>
> If you are making an appointment to fulfill a Supervised Ministry Education requirement, note that the Office of Vocation will provide training for the Lay Supervision Team and orientation for all learning covenant partners (candidate, educational supervisor, Lay Supervision Team). Also, the Office of Vocation, through the Candidacy Board, will appoint an educational supervisor.

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. The community of faith does not need to post a profile to make this request.

Removing the Available Position

When the call or appointment has been approved by the regional council, you need to remove the position from the list of available positions. This helps ministry personnel who are reviewing community of faith profiles know that your position is no longer available. To remove your position from the list, you return to your Find a New Minister page, and under your position, click the Remove Availability button.



Notifying Unsuccessful Applicants

The search team delegates one or two people to contact the other interviewees to notify them and provide them with at least one piece of constructive feedback. Taking the time to do this well demonstrates your respect for each of the interviewees.

Suggested overview of the conversation:

- Confirm who you are and why you are calling.
- Indicate that you will not proceed with a further interview.
- Give them an example of something the search team felt was a strength they brought to their interview or something the search team really liked.
- Thank them sincerely for their time and willingness to offer themselves.
- Extend best wishes to them in their continued search.

Preparing for the Start of the New Pastoral Relationship

The following are some best practices for welcoming your new ministry personnel and beginning the pastoral relationship in a positive way.

Offer Support for the Transition to the New Community

As a team, think about what you would need if you were moving to a new community, and offer this information to the new ministry personnel far in advance. You can designate someone from the search team to stay connected with the ministry personnel so they have someone to contact if they encounter hurdles.

Consider the following:

- Ideas about housing (if there is no manse): rentals or real estate. Are there good realtors you can refer them to? Does anyone know of appropriate rental housing?
- If you have a manse, make sure it is truly in move-in condition.
    - Make sure it's thoroughly cleaned, including carpets and windows.
    - Does it need to be painted, or is this something you will work out when the ministry personnel arrives?
    - Is everything in working order? Is anything due for an inspection (e.g., chimney/fireplace, furnace, roof)?
    - Are there working smoke and carbon dioxide detectors in appropriate areas?
    - Does anything need to be replaced?
    - Is the lawn mowed or the snow shovelled?
- School information, if school-aged children are involved.
- Information about family physicians who are taking new patients.
- Information about local sports teams, arts and culture activities, community groups, or other community-specific information that will be helpful.
- Notice to the local Welcome Wagon or equivalent—or alternatively, put together your own "welcome wagon" basket to give them upon arrival.

Plan the Orientation

Meet with the M&P Committee to set up the orientation process. A well-prepared orientation speaks volumes about how excited you are to welcome the ministry personnel to your community.

Consider the following as a draft list, and modify it as needed:

- Tour of the building: washrooms, offices, fire exits and extinguishers, light switches, furnace and heating, etc.
- Introduction and welcome to other paid staff (ministry personnel and lay employees) and key lay people in positions of leadership
- Keys/passwords/codes to buildings and offices
- How to use the phone system, including voicemail
- Access to computer and computer files (passwords, etc.)
- Location of important documents such as the historic roll, deed, minutes of meetings
- Parking (if relevant)
- Set up a time for them to meet with key people to discuss roles and how they will work together:

    - Church administrator: What does the order of service look like? What are the timelines for the bulletin? Who edits it, and who manages its content? How does the photocopier and other equipment work? Who schedules and rents meeting space? Where is the master schedule to avoid double-booking?
    - Music director(s)/musician(s): How are decisions made about music? What is the repertoire of the community of faith? How often will you meet to talk about worship and music?
    - Maintenance person: What to do in an emergency (e.g., water pump breaks, furnace doesn't come on) when they are not available?
    - Treasurer/bookkeeper/accountant: Overview of roles, financial statements, and budgeting process
    - Other ministry personnel: What are their roles, and how will they collaborate and support each other? How often will they meet? How will they deal with conflict?
    - Chair of the governing body and committee chairs: How does the governance structure work? What has the role of the ministry personnel been? What do you need from each other to fulfill your respective roles?
- Introductions and tours in local hospitals and retirement and long-term care homes they are expected to visit
- Introduction to local ministerial association
- Other things that are relevant to your context

Be a Welcoming Presence

Consider what would make you feel welcome when you arrive in a new community and move into a new home, and then do those things for the new ministry personnel. Even if they are is not moving, offer a welcoming presence. Extend a welcome that communicates your commitment to and excitement about the pastoral relationship. How you choose to do that will be a reflection of your community of faith. Be as creative as you want to be.

Beginning the New Pastoral Relationship

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 your new minister 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 of the key modules of the curriculum, which is available to everyone on the United Fresh Start website. During this beginning time, it can be helpful to work through the Exit and Entrance module and intentionally share how the transition is going for everyone.

> "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)

Follow-up Work

The work of the search team is nearly done. There is still a bit of tidy-up left. This includes making sure you have taken steps to protect the privacy of individuals whose personal documents you now have, and debriefing before you disband as a team.

Managing Personal Documents

As a search team, you have had access to information about individuals that is private, and you need to continue to treat it confidentially. Take care not to share any of this information outside the search team.

Here are some suggestions for dealing with personal documents:

- Ask each member of the search team to bring all their documents together for your last time together.
- Keep one copy of the ministry personnel profile and the interview notes for each interviewee. In addition, keep the minutes of the search team, including a copy of your report and recommendations. Designate one person to keep these items for six months in case there are any calls from an interviewee about the process. The documents need to be kept in a locked filing cabinet and then later shredded or burned.
- The documents related to the called or appointed ministry personnel have been given to the M&P Committee, including a copy of the record of call or appointment.
- The search team's report and recommendation are provided to the secretary of the governing body to include in their regular documents.

- Put all the other documents together and either shred or burn them.

Debriefing and Disbanding

Be intentional about ending your time together as the search team, and prepare to return to your roles as members or adherents of your community of faith.

Here is a suggested process for closure:

- Meet for a meal or dessert and coffee.
- Shred or burn the documents to be disposed of. As you do so, ask someone to pray for each of the people you encountered through this process.
- Talk about the following, and have someone record notes to give feedback to the regional council liaison:
  - What worked well?
  - What didn’t work well?
  - What suggestions do we have?
  - What additional resources would have been helpful?
  - Other comments
- Ask each other to reflect on the following:
  - Something I learned in this process
  - Something or someone I am grateful for
  - Where I sensed the presence of God most during this process
  - What I will most remember from this process

End with a prayer of gratitude and thanksgiving.

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

Communicating with the Community of Faith

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

After a change in pastoral relations is announced

The chair of the governing body could write something like:

> Since our minister _________ submitted their letter to request a change in pastoral relations, we have experienced a profound sense of loss. Their time among us has been very significant to our faith community. These next three months together will be an important time for each of us to say goodbye. We will inform you soon about our plans to celebrate ____________'s ministry before their departure. We will soon share with you the next steps to search for a new minister.

When the community of faith enters the pastoral relations process

The chair of the governing body could write:

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

When a team is developing the community of faith profile

> Your team is busy working on developing the community of faith profile. You will all be involved in the consultation for this process. The first opportunity is ________.

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

> Our team has completed the community of faith profile. We are grateful for everyone's input as we work to tell the story of our church. The governing body has approved the profile and calls a meeting of our faith community on (*date*) to consider approving it. If approved, it will be posted on the United Church's online pastoral relations tool,

ChurchHub, for viewing by ministry personnel who are searching for a new pastoral relationship.

When the search team is formed

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

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

The work of the search team is moving ahead. Our first training from ______ Regional Council is scheduled for (*date*), and we will provide another update at that time. Here's a reminder of those named to the search team: (*list of members*).

When the search team is initially trained

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

As the search team reviews profiles and prepares for interviews

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

You don't need to tell your community how many interviews you are doing—just that you are moving ahead. This helps to reassure everyone that you are progressing.

When the search team is doing first interviews

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

When checking references and discerning

This stage of the process is particularly confidential. Keep the community apprised of progress but with minimal details:

> We are continuing to proceed with our interview process and the required follow-up. We are grateful for the continued commitment of each member of our search team who is giving of their time and talents. Please take a moment to say thank you to each of them at some point this week. Remember that they need to maintain confidentiality in the process, so please be patient.

When the search team is doing second interviews

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

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

> The search team is ready to make a recommendation to our community of faith. The governing body calls a meeting of our faith community on (*date*) to consider the recommendation of the search team.

The public notice of the meeting to receive the report of the search team and its recommendation must be read during worship and may be inserted into the order of worship (bulletin) on two successive Sundays. The meeting may then be held on the following Monday or any day after that.

After the community of faith has voted on the recommendation for a new pastoral relationship and your new ministry personnel has informed their community of faith of a change in pastoral relations

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

Sample Confidentiality Agreement

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

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

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

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

____

Name

____

Signature

____

Date

Examining Bias and Difference with the Search Team

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Opening Prayer

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

Identifying Power and Privilege

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

Ensure all team members individually complete the Power Analysis Worksheet found below. Afterwards, reflect on these questions:

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

Identifying power helps us to be aware of our privilege, which is grounded in power. Peggy McIntosh defines privilege as “an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was ‘meant’ to remain oblivious.”[1] When we hold privilege, our understanding of the world is different from the understanding of those who don’t have that privilege.

Thus differences of power and privilege lead us to operate out of biases. Our role in this work is to become aware of our power and how that leads to biases. We need to challenge the biases that we are able to identify, either individually or as a group.

As a search team, spend some time reflecting individually on the following:

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

Discussion

Next, spend time together talking about the questions above. Together, identify areas where the team needs to take actions ahead of time to address widely held biases. Discuss with your

[1] Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” *Peace and Freedom Magazine* (July/August 1989): 10–12.

team what your biases are, what actions you might consider, and what you want to be particularly aware of in human rights legislation to avoid these biases crossing into discriminatory and illegal behaviour.

For example, if you collectively identify that your team finds it difficult to consider their minister as a person who seems to be "unlike them" on the surface, you might want to invite someone with experience in addressing those biases to come talk with your group.

As you examine the presence of power and bias in your search process, you may find a set of four videos from our partners in The United Church of Christ (USA) helpful in raising your awareness of the presence of ableism, racism, heterosexism, and sexism in your search process. The videos can be found on Vimeo.

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

Motivational Bias

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

> *Example:* The interviewee perceives (rightly or wrongly) that the interviewers are looking for a particular kind of response to a question. The interviewee then responds in that manner as a way of providing the "correct" answer. However, the interviewee may not actually believe the response they have given. If this kind of bias exists for the interviewee, the search team is at risk of not having accurate information from the interviewee by the end of the interview.

> *Example:* The interviewers are motivated to call or appoint someone who shares their first language. As a result, they are motivated to hear the responses of interviewees who share their first language as being better than those from interviewees who do not share the same first language, even if this is not the case.

Confirmatory Bias

A confirmatory bias occurs when we hold prior information. We tend to notice things that confirm the ideas we already hold rather than notice things that contrast with our ideas. Both interviewees and interviewers can hold confirmatory biases.

> *Example:* An interviewee arrives at an interview having heard negative information about the community of faith from colleagues. As a result of this negative information, the interviewee expects that the interviewers have a very different theological perspective from their own and perhaps thinks that the interviewers could be hostile. The interviewee interprets every question through this lens, and views the interviewers as trying to "catch" the interviewee identifying a theological position that is problematic for the search team.

> *Example:* An interviewer has heard that an interviewee has a passion for justice and has been experienced by a colleague as aggressive and in-your-face. As a result, the interviewer

is highly sensitized to any words, tone of voice, or non-verbal actions that support this preconceived idea.

Cognitive Bias

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

Example: An interviewee believes that someone with something important to say speaks slowly and with frequent pauses to demonstrate the care they are taking in presenting their position. When the interviewer speaks quickly, without pauses and informally, the interviewee decides this person has less power or decision-making authority in the search team and decides not to give their questions as much consideration.

Example: An interviewer believes that someone with something important to say has prepared in advance and can speak quickly, concisely, and articulately about their position. When an interviewee speaks slowly and with many pauses, the interviewer decides the person is unable to think on their feet, can't process information quickly, and is not the right match for the community of faith.

Observational Bias

Like cognitive bias, observational bias is based on our life experiences. It involves what we observe in other people. We all tend to observe some physical attributes more than others and to ascribe more value to these observations.

Example: An interviewee observes that a number of the interviewers are dressed casually. Some appear to have come without taking a shower first. For this interviewee, dress and outward appearance of the interviewers directly reflects how seriously they consider the interview. This is very distressing and increases the interviewee's anxiety about the interview.

Example: An interviewer observes that an interviewee is overweight or underweight, or smokes or has poor dental hygiene, or dresses very casually or very formally for an interview, or has multiple body piercings, and so on. All of these have a "value" associated with the observation—which could be positive or negative. This interviewer is affected by their observations in how they receive and record what the interviewee says and, in turn, how they interpret the interviewee's responses.

Taking Action

With your search team, come up with an action plan of what you are going and not going to do. Discuss holding one another accountable to Holy Manners. How will you ask each other hard questions about your biases in a way that is compassionate, respectful, and open to the possibility of mutual transformation?

Close this discussion with prayer or a song that speaks of the diversity of God's creation and the limitless experience of God's love. Ask for guidance, wisdom, and compassion in the discernment, growth, and decision-making that lie ahead.

If one of the biases you've named is related to racism, you might find *Ending Racial Harassment* helpful (found on the Racial Justice Training page).

If your search team needs further education about gender diversity or has questions in preparation for interviewing a transgender applicant, you might find *Celebrating Gender Diversity: A Toolkit on Gender Identity and Trans Experiences for Communities of Faith* helpful (found on the Gender, Sexuality, and Orientation page).

You could also introduce the search team to *Conducting Interviews with Intercultural Awareness* (found on the Ways of Becoming an Intercultural Church page).

Power Analysis Worksheet

The following chart will help individuals self-identify the power they hold personally and systemically. Please complete this chart individually. If you are using it with your search team, make enough copies of these instructions and the chart for everyone.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Spend some time talking about the implications of this exercise.

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

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

Provincial and Territorial Human Rights Commissions

Alberta Human Rights Commission: Human rights in the workplace

British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal

Manitoba Human Rights Commission

New Brunswick Human Rights Commission: Summary of the Human Rights Act

Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission: Your Human Rights

Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission: Employers and Employees

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission: Know Your Rights

Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal

Ontario Human Rights Commission: Employment

Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commission

Quebec: La Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse:
Human rights (English)
Droits de la personne (français)

Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission: The Human Rights Code

Yukon Human Rights Commission: Resources

Individual Worksheet for Matching

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

Good Match: You see common words, phrases, or themes in the community of faith profile and your ministry personnel profile.

No Match: You see words/phrases/themes that seem to significantly contrast or even conflict with those in the community of faith profile.

Maybe Match: There is some resonance, commonality, dissonance, or something you can't put your finger on, but it seems intriguing and worth a second look.

Potential Interview Questions

Knowledge-Based Questions

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

Experiential Questions

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

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

Creativity Questions

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

Sample Reference Check Record

Confirm with the reference that this is a convenient time to talk. The interview will take 15–30 minutes. The information the reference provides will be recorded and kept confidentially among the search team.

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

1. How long have you known (*interviewee*)?

   ❑ Less than 2 years ❑ 2–5 years ❑ 5–10 years ❑ more than 10 years

2. In what capacity do you know them?

   ❑ Colleague/peer ❑ Member of church

   ❑ Regional council member ❑ Community partner

   Other (briefly describe): ______________________________

3. How well do you believe you know them?

   ❑ Not well at all ❑ Fairly well ❑ Well ❑ Very well

General Questions

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

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

More Specific Questions

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

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

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

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

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

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

Summarizing Questions

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

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

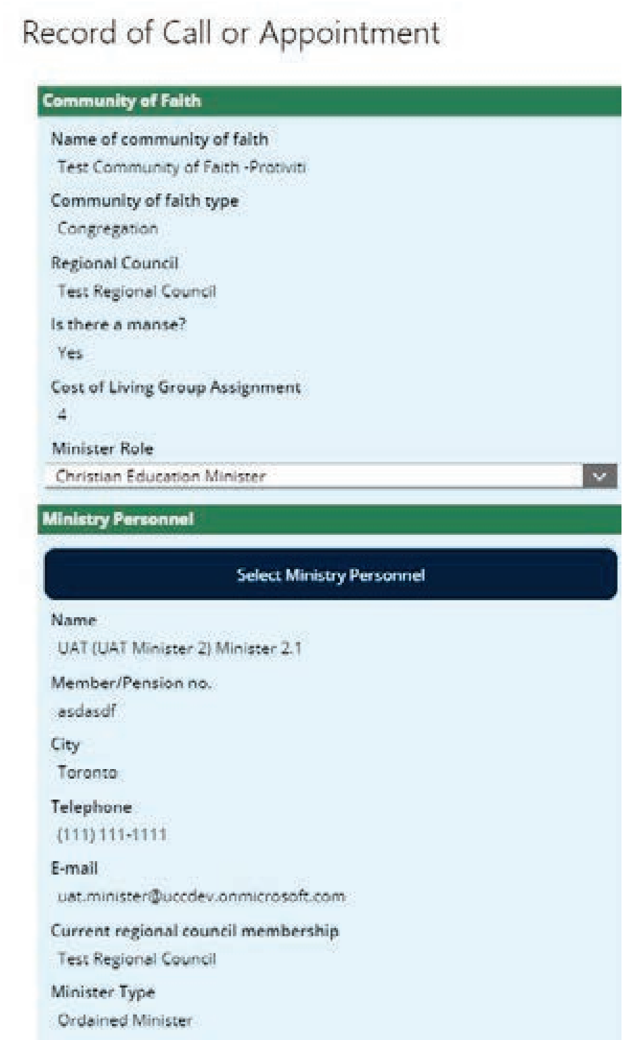
14. Is there anything else that you think is important for me to know?

Interviewer signature: ____ Date: _______________

Completing the Record of Call or Appointment in ChurchHub

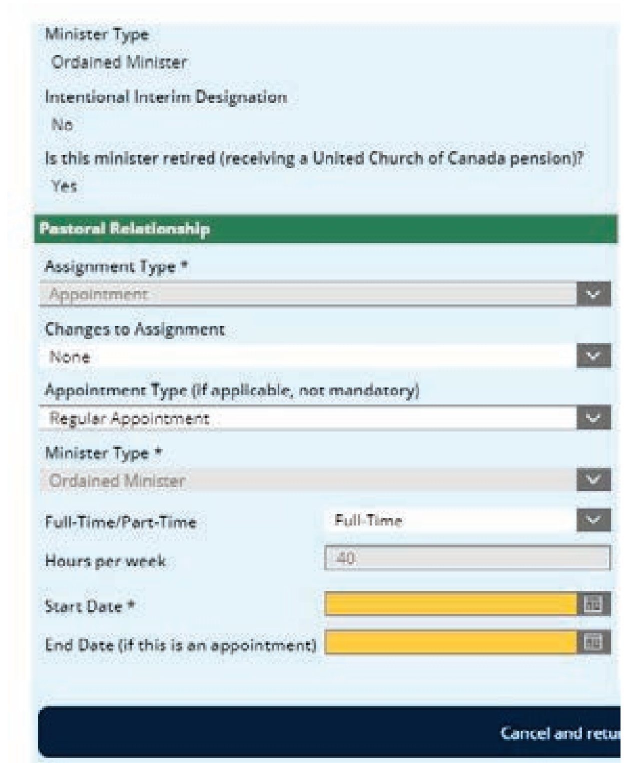
You can begin completing the record of call or appointment at any time and save it as a draft. The screenshots of the form below can help you to complete it.

A lot of the information about your community of faith is auto-filled from the information already in the United Church database. However, you need to select an option from the Minister Role dropdown menu.



Next, click the Select Ministry Personnel button. A pop-up window will appear asking you to enter the name (first or last or preferred) of the ministry personnel you wish to call or appoint. After you enter the name, press Search, and a list of ministry personnel that match your query will appear. If a list of multiple ministry personnel with a similar name appears, select the ministry personnel you are planning to call or appoint, according to their city and e-mail address. When you select the ministry personnel, their information will be auto-filled on the form.

You need to enter information in the fields under Pastoral Relationship. You can use the Assignment Type drop-down menu to select call or appointment.



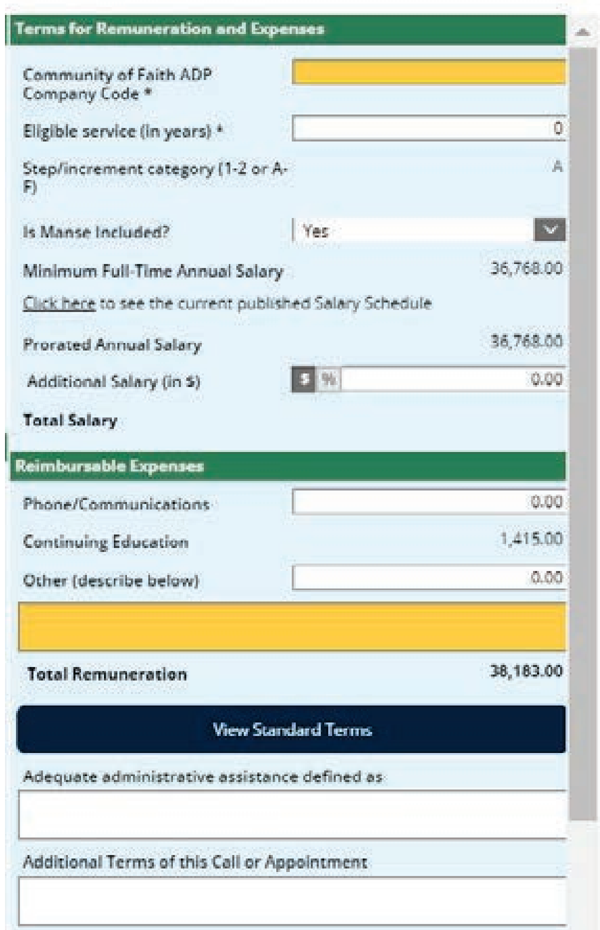
You can select Changes to Assignment, including none, renewal of appointment, or change in terms of existing call/appointment. This is also where you can select a provisional call or appointment prior to ordination, commissioning, or recognition.

If this is a specific type of appointment type, select it in the Appointment Type field. The options in the drop-down menu include

- Regular appointment
- Interim ministry appointment (an intentional interim minister is appointed to help set and meet the goals of interim ministry with the community of faith)
- Supervised Ministry Education (a candidate is appointed to meet the goals of an SME; the community of faith is designated as a learning site)
- Short-term supply (a ministry personnel is appointed to meet supply needs until a ministry position is filled or during the temporary absence of the called or appointed minister)

The Minister Type field will be auto-filled. However, if this form is for a provisional call or appointment, you need to select whether the ministry personnel will soon be a designated lay minister, diaconal minister, or ordained minister in the Minister Type drop-down menu.

If your position is part-time, enter the hours per week of the call or appointment. Include a start date; the end-date is required only for an appointment.



Some of the fields under Terms for Remuneration and Expenses are auto-filled according to the information already entered. However, you have to add your Community of Faith ADP Company Code (available from your treasurer) and answer whether a manse is included in the terms of the call or appointment.

The years of eligible service are used to calculate the salary categorization of the ministry personnel. If you or the ministry personnel are uncertain of the years of eligible service, contact the General Council Office at ministry@united-church.ca to ask for a salary categorization.

The information provided is used to calculate the minimum annual salary (according to the data in the annual salary schedule). If the call or appointment is part-time, you will see the prorated annual salary. If you have negotiated additional salary (as a dollar amount or a percentage above minimum), enter the figure in the field and select either “$” or “%” so the additional salary can be calculated.

Under Reimbursable Expenses, enter the negotiated amount for phone/communications. The minimum continuing education amount is auto-filled and prorated for part-time positions. If you have negotiated above the minimum for continuing education or other reimbursable expenses, add the figure to the Other field and add a description in the text box below.

Click the View Standard Terms button. You need to view the terms before selecting Accept at the end of the form.

Standard Terms of Call or Appointment

All the parties agree that

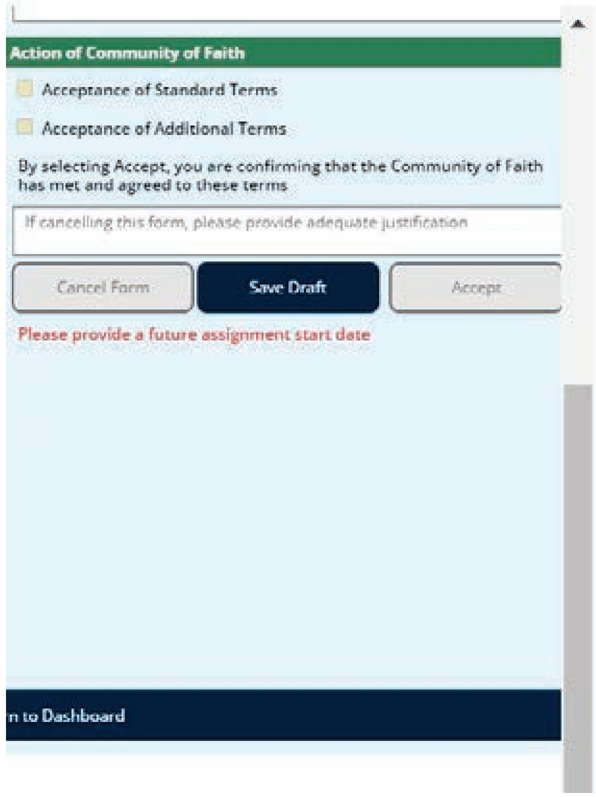
- This covenant is in accordance with and subject to the relevant policies found in *The Manual* (current version) of The United Church of Canada.
- Calls and appointments may be terminated with 90 days' notice subject to the provisions of *The Manual* (current version) of The United Church of Canada.
- 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.



You also need to enter a description of adequate administrative assistance in the text box below View Standard Terms. If you have negotiated additional terms to this call or appointment, such as additional vacation time, describe these in the text box.

As you complete the form, you will notice different instructions in red print under the Cancel Form button. These are a guide to mandatory information you need to complete to move on to another section of the form.

At this point, click Save Draft to save the form.

Once you have entered all of the necessary information and the community of faith has accepted the terms of the call or appointment, you can select the two checkboxes under Action of Community of Faith. With these boxes selected, you will be able to click the Accept button. As you work on the draft, if you need to cancel the form, please provide some explanation in the text box before clicking Cancel Form.

Once you select Accept, the ministry personnel will receive an e-mail notification asking them to indicate their acceptance of the terms of call or appointment. Once they 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 ministry personnel) in ChurchHub and can be accessed in the future.