

## **An Interim Process for the Mutual Recognition of Ministries between The United Church of Canada and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines**

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In August 2015 The United Church of Canada and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) formally entered into an agreement for the Mutual Recognition of Ministries. This memo outlines the current status of the implementation of this agreement within The United Church of Canada.

The agreement is a significant and historic step of mutual recognition between the United Church of Canada and the UCCP. Its full implementation in The United Church of Canada will take several years and include the establishment of a new category of ministry called “ministry partner.” As a ministry partner, a UCCP minister would hold full presbytery membership while under appoint to a United Church of Canada local ministry. *It is important to understand that Canadian immigration requirements are separate from church processes.*

The critical aspect of the agreement is that UCCP ministers, as ministry partners, will serve in The United Church of Canada with the same status and responsibilities as ordained ministers of The United Church of Canada without being required to seek admission to The United Church of Canada ministry.

This new category can only be established through a remit to all the presbyteries of the church seeking their agreement for the change of the Basis of Union. The remit question is currently before the church and, if passed, must be subsequently approved by the 43rd General Council meeting in August 2018.

Therefore it will be a number of years before the full implementation of the agreement can be in place. However, The United Church of Canada will seek to implement the spirit of the agreement through interim appointments of “ministry partnerships” under existing policies.

Staffing arrangements for this initiative within the General Council Office are in place.

In the spirit of the Mutual Recognition Agreement, the following steps will be followed for UCCP ministers appointed to serve in The United Church of Canada.

1. When a United Church of Canada congregation/mission has identified an interest in receiving a minister from the UCCP, a profile of the congregation/mission and its ministry will be forwarded to the General Council Office.
2. The United Church of Canada General Council Office will request the Office of the General Secretary of the UCCP to recommend a candidate for the position. The candidate will be in good standing with the UCCP.
3. The General Council Office will ensure that the General Secretary/Bishop and the various instruments of the UCCP are aware of the contextual realities of ministry within The United Church of Canada as part of their discernment of a candidate.
4. The General Secretary of the UCCP will identify a candidate and submit a letter to The United Church of Canada General Council Office, which will include an assessment of why this is an appropriate candidate for serving this United Church ministry and how the candidate’s journey of faith relates to ministry in The United Church of Canada.

5. Following receipt of the letter from the General Secretary for ministry partnership, staff of The United Church of Canada General Council Office will meet online with the candidate in order to provide further information about the context and ministry of The United Church of Canada, the specific ministry request, and orientation to/preparation for the process of interview.
6. On the recommendation of the General Council Office, the candidate will be invited to an online interview with the Canadian church that has expressed interest in an appointment. A representative of the UCCP General Secretary's office and of The United Church of Canada General Council Office may also attend the interview. If the candidate is not recommended by the General Council Office, further conversation will be held with the Bishop.
7. After interviewing the candidate, The United Church of Canada congregation will advise the General Council Office of their discernment of the suitability of the candidate. If the congregation discerns that this candidate is not called to the ministry at this church, they may request through the General Council Office that the UCCP General Secretary's Office recommend another candidate for interview. If The United Church of Canada congregation indicates it desires to move to appointment of the candidate, the final decision is at the discretion of the UCCP General Secretary's office and The United Church of Canada presbytery.
8. The appointment will be for two years, renewable twice with the concurrence of the UCCP General Secretary's office and The United Church of Canada General Council Office and presbytery.
9. The UCCP minister recommended for appointment will be expected to gain an adequate understanding of the historical and cultural contexts of The United Church of Canada prior to arrival in Canada. The General Council Office will provide resources and recommended study materials for this purpose, in order that the UCCP minister be well prepared for the context and ministry of The United Church of Canada.
10. Prior to being appointed, the UCCP minister must complete two Web-based study programs that all United Church of Canada ministers are required to complete. Visit the United in Learning website (<https://www.united-in-learning.com/index.php/webinars>) to register for the following workshops: *Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Policy* (also known as *Boundary Issues for Church Leaders*), and *Racial Justice Awareness*. Each study process takes approximate 3–4 hours to complete.
11. During this period of orientation and preparation prior to arrival and for the duration of at least the first year, a United Church of Canada presbytery will appoint a mentor to accompany the UCCP minister in acclimating to Canada and The United Church of Canada.

The mutual recognition of ministry agreement between The United Church of Canada and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines is a historic commitment for both churches. While it will take some time to fully implement, the spirit of the agreement will be carried forward and celebrated in these initial steps.

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The United Church of Canada  
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