

Pastoral Relationship Equity Research Project

The Pastoral Relationship Equity Research Project is a qualitative research project that seeks to identify patterns of inequity experienced by ministry personnel across all regions of The United Church of Canada, and to make recommendations for change.

Why this project? What is it about?

Racism, ableism, heterosexism, sexism, and other forms of oppression continue to exist in The United Church of Canada. These systemic inequities are experienced by many across the church, including ministry personnel. Inequities negatively impact pastoral relationships and admissions processes, among other consequences.

While everyone in the church is impacted by inequities, it is often Indigenous, racialized, Deaf, people who speak English as an additional language, disabled, Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+, and female-identifying ministry personnel—as well as their pastoral relationships—that are most acutely affected.

This qualitative research project seeks to identify patterns in these inequities in The United Church of Canada and ways they can be prevented or mitigated through denominational actions such as proactive education, early intervention, pastoral support, and systemic change. The research project is running throughout 2022.

Who is involved?

There are two primary researchers: Kimiko Karpoff and Marcie Gibson. Their design, methodology, and interpretation will be guided by a Reference Group of six individuals. The research team and Reference Group will also consult with other stakeholder parties, such as the Indigenous Office of Vocation's Grandmothers' Circle, the National Elders Council, and equity-seeking ministry groups to design an equitable and effective process. General Council Office staff support will be collaboratively offered by the Office of Vocation and by Anti-Racism and Equity.

More information will be coming about how ministry personnel can participate in this research project!

What other related projects exist?

The Pastoral Relationships Equity Research Project is also one of two data collection and statistical projects exploring equity for ministry personnel in The United Church of Canada. The other project is [Leadership Counts](#), a voluntary identity survey of United Church ministry personnel, staff of General Council and regional council offices, and General Council committee members to gather demographics. While these projects are taking place separately and raw data will not be shared, the results and findings will be gathered to enable more comprehensive analysis and strategic planning.