

The Manual 2016



The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada

The Manual, 2016



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PREFACE

This is the 37th (2016) edition of *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada, and comes into effect on September 28, 2016.

It incorporates remits approved during the 2012–2015 triennium and enacted by the 42nd General Council 2015. It also incorporates additional changes approved by the 42nd General Council 2015 and the Executive of the General Council. The changes to the Basis of Union and by-laws in this edition are indicated by the year 2016 in parentheses in the right-hand margin at the end of the changed text.

The text of *The Manual* is now available in a number of ways, including online and in translation. The 42nd General Council 2015 approved the French version of *The Manual* available on the United Church website as the official French translation. If there is any discrepancy between these versions, the most recent English-language printed edition will govern.

Nora M. Sanders,
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INTRODUCTION

The first edition of *The Manual* was issued in 1928, under the authority of the Second General Council (1926). Since then, *The Manual* has been a valuable resource for members and organized bodies of The United Church of Canada. Its purpose and use need to be clearly understood.

The need for a document such as *The Manual* is an acknowledgment of our human limitations, both individual and corporate, and of our desire to point to God's dominion in our interactions with others.

Limitations shaped by a form of Christianity rooted in European origins had a profoundly negative impact upon the Indigenous peoples of Canada. Growing awareness of this tragic history has also made us more conscious of the ways our contemporary practices may continue to hamper our embrace of diversity as a fundamental spiritual reality. Desire to open ourselves to this dimension of God's call has brought the 2012 General Council to expand our common Declarations within *The Manual*, and to include the Indigenous church within the story of the Formation of The United Church of Canada.

The purpose of law within the church is to order procedures and to provide for the consistent resolution of differences, and so to help to achieve order and justice. As an elaboration and extension of the Basis of Union, *The Manual* was intended to cover correct procedures for most foreseeable contingencies. The succeeding editions, which all share this purpose, thus embody the wisdom of those who have gone before.

The Manual is a living, working document that is regularly amended. Members of the United Church share a common belief that God's will for the church is continually being revealed, and that the church must therefore be "always reformed." But this belief cannot always be translated promptly and adequately into changes in *The Manual*. Contingencies that had not been foreseen need to be addressed; agreement cannot always be achieved on the wisest way of dealing with a contingency. So *The Manual* continues to be a document of compromise, and therefore is not without ambiguity, some perhaps intentional.

The Manual is one of the means by which the United Church does its work and safeguards its members. It protects the minority, and provides the means by which any member may express convictions and seek justice, from the Congregation through to the General Council. *The Manual* likewise assists the majority in making necessary decisions and carrying out policies and plans.

Freedom and responsibility under law not only are part of the heritage of our conciliar church. They also place inescapable demands upon every member of the church.

DECLARATIONS

from the Basis of Union:

1. The name of the Church formed by the union of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational Churches in Canada shall be “The United Church of Canada.”
2. It shall be the policy of the United Church to foster the spirit of unity in the hope that this sentiment of unity may in due time, so far as Canada is concerned, take shape in a Church which may fittingly be described as national.

from *The United Church of Canada Act, 14–15 George V, c. 100, s. 28:*

3. Notwithstanding anything in this Act contained, it is hereby declared:
 - (a) That the said union of negotiating Churches (Preamble: The Presbyterian Church in Canada, The Methodist Church, and The Congregational Churches of Canada) has been formed by the free and independent action of the said Churches through their governing bodies and in accordance with their respective constitutions, and that this Act has been passed at the request of the said Churches in order to incorporate the United Church and to make necessary provision with respect to the property of the negotiating Churches and the other matters dealt with by this Act.
 - (b) That nothing in this Act contained shall be deemed to limit the independent and exclusive right and power of the United Church to legislate in all matters concerning its doctrine, worship, discipline and government, including therein the right and power from time to time to frame, adopt, alter, change, add to or modify its laws, subordinate standards and formulas, and to determine and declare the same or any of them, but subject to the conditions and safeguards in that behalf contained in the Basis of Union.
 - (c) That the United Church, by virtue of its independent and exclusive right and power to legislate in respect of the matters mentioned in the next preceding subsection, has the right to unite with any other Church or religious denomination without loss of its identity upon such terms as it may find to be consistent with the principles, doctrines and religious standards set forth in the Basis of Union, or any amendment thereof made by the General Council under the provisions of the Basis of Union.

from the Declaration of Faith:

The following Declaration of Faith, based upon ten years' experience of the United Church, was adopted by the Executive and approved by the General Council: “On this its Tenth Anniversary, The United Church of Canada reaffirms before the world its faith in the ideals and principles which brought it into being. In the light of ten years' experience it has found these ideals to be eminently practicable in their out-working, and in the quest of them its members have found an enriched and deepened fellowship, human and divine. In a renewed conviction of the worth of inclusive Christian fellowship, The United Church of Canada enters its second decade, prepared, as the opportunity may offer and as God may direct, to seek with other Christian communions further development of its ideals, whether by increased co-operation, organic union, or otherwise, and so fulfill its purpose of being not merely a united, but a uniting Church.”

This Declaration was reaffirmed in 1950, which marked the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Union.

The ideals of inclusive Christian fellowship that moved the founders of The United Church of Canada were only very imperfectly practised in the relationship of the churches with the Indigenous peoples. The incoming European Christians brought along with the gospel a conviction of cultural superiority. Believing that spiritual values amongst the Indigenous peoples were inferior or even non-existent, they did not recognize or acknowledge the profound spirituality that was practised. These attitudes led to the imposition of cultural norms and institutions that were European in origin. This then encouraged agreement and co-operation with the government's goal of assimilation to the non-Indigenous society.

The practices of The United Church of Canada for many years resulted in the exclusion of Indigenous peoples from visioning, leadership, and decision-making. We are still struggling to address the consequences of this tragic history.

Apology to First Nations Peoples (1986)

Long before our* people journeyed to this land your people were here, and you received from your Elders an understanding of creation and of the Mystery that surrounds us all that was deep, and rich, and to be treasured.

We did not hear you when you shared your vision. In our zeal to tell you of the good news of Jesus Christ we were closed to the value of your spirituality.

We confused Western ways and culture with the depth and breadth and length and height of the gospel of Christ.

We imposed our civilization as a condition for accepting the gospel.

We tried to make you be like us and in so doing we helped to destroy the vision that made you what you were. As a result you, and we, are poorer and the image of the Creator in us is twisted, blurred, and we are not what we are meant by God to be.

We ask you to forgive us and to walk together with us in the Spirit of Christ so that our peoples may be blessed and God's creation healed.

General Council: 31st General Council, 1986

Record of Proceedings Page Ref. ROP, pp. 83–85, 94, 230–44, 666.

*Original document reads "my." Changed with permission of the Very Rev. Robert Smith.

Living into this struggle, The United Church of Canada continues to seek new ways of addressing old patterns of silencing and exclusion. In 2006 at the 39th General Council, The United Church of Canada committed itself to becoming an intercultural church, inviting the Aboriginal, francophone, ethnic, and other minority constituencies to lead the way.

THE FORMATION OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

The spirit of fellowship, which has always been distinctive of Canadian life, found expression in the political union of Canada in 1867, and in a succession of unions within various branches of the Christian church from 1817 to the early years of the twentieth century. The four sections of Presbyterianism then existing united in 1875, taking the name "The Presbyterian Church in Canada"; the four sections of Methodism united in 1884, forming "The Methodist Church"; and the various Congregational churches organized "The Congregational Union of Canada" in 1906. The desire for wider fellowship and closer church relationships was expressed in 1874 by the Quebec Diocese of the Church of England in the appointment of a committee to promote church union, and by The Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec in a resolution in favour of union with other churches; in 1885 by the Ontario Provincial Synod of the Church of England in inviting the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches to confer on church union, and in arranging a conference the following year; in 1892 by the Presbyterian General Assembly in approaching the Congregational Church, and in 1893 in appointing a committee to confer with other churches on the general subject of church union; and in 1894 by the Methodist General Conference in proposing a plan of federation of local congregations. These developments deepened the sense of Christian fellowship, revealed more clearly the hindrances to the Christian church through unnecessary overlapping in the work of its different branches, and prepared the way for various forms of co-operation.

The Indigenous peoples of the lands that became Canada welcomed those who brought the Christian Gospel, finding in it a confirmation of their understanding of relationship with the Creator, and in Jesus Christ an inclusiveness that embraced the wider human community. Under the Wesleyan Methodist Board of Foreign Missions a church was begun among the Mohawks on the Grand River in Ontario in 1822, and three years later with the Mississauga on Grape Island in the Bay of Quinte. In the late 1830s Wesleyan Methodist clergy, both Ojibwa and English, began ministering in what are now Northwest Ontario and the Prairie provinces. Within months of the arrival of Ontario Methodist ministers on Vancouver Island in 1859, there were ministries being established amongst the various Indigenous peoples in several areas of the future British Columbia. For their part, Canadian Presbyterians came into the Prince Albert region of the Northwest in 1866. Beginning in 1899 formal collaboration between the Boards of Home Missions of the Presbyterian and Methodist churches was a precursor to the union movement.

The actual negotiations leading up to the consummation of Church Union on June 10, 1925, began 26 years earlier, when the Presbyterian General Assembly, on the request of its Board of Home Missions, appointed a committee "to confer with representatives from other evangelical Churches, having power to enter into any arrangement with them that will tend to bring about a more satisfactory state of things in our Home Mission fields, so that the overlapping now complained of may be prevented." The General Board of Missions of The Methodist Church appointed a similar committee. After three joint meetings, an effective plan of co-operation was adopted.

The next step was taken by the Methodist General Conference in 1902, when it was declared that in its opinion the time was opportune for a definite movement, concentrating attention on, and aiming at, the organic union of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, The Congregational Churches of Canada, and The Methodist Church. It also resolved that it would regard with gratification a movement with this object in view, would facilitate the formulation of a Basis of Union, and would educate the people interested into that deeper spirit of unity and mutual concession on which the successful consummation of such movements ultimately depends. A committee on Church Union was appointed, "to confer with committees that may be appointed by such Churches, and report to the next General Conference."

Each of the Churches named appointed committees. The first meeting of the Joint Union Committee was held in Toronto, on April 21, 1904. It reached the unanimous conclusion "that organic union is both desirable and practicable." The experience of the Canadian Churches, which had united their own various branches, was vitally related to certain positive spiritual convictions. Among these was the belief, held by these Churches in common, that the church is the body of Christ; that Canada's deepest need could be met only by Christ's gospel, and that, being by their very constitution and history uniting churches, their task of preaching his gospel and building his kingdom throughout the Dominion would be more effectively accomplished through organic union than as separate religious bodies. The Committee further commended the whole subject to the sympathetic and favourable consideration of the chief assemblies of the Churches concerned, for such further action as they might deem wise and expedient. Following this meeting, a friendly letter was sent to the Church of England in Canada and the Baptist Churches in Canada, explaining the decisions already reached by the Joint Union Committee and extending cordial invitations to them to send delegates to participate in the further discussion of Church Union, should they consider it advisable to do so. These Churches replied in courteous terms, but did not appoint committees to participate in the negotiations.

The Joint Union Committee met year by year to consider the reports of its special Committees on Doctrine, Polity, the Ministry, Administration, and Law. In 1908 it agreed upon a Basis of Union. This was sent to the supreme courts of the three Churches with the recommendation that they submit it to their lower courts and to the membership of their respective Churches. The Basis as then prepared was approved in general by the supreme courts in 1909, 1910, and 1911, and referred to the lower courts and to the membership, according to the constitutional procedure of each Church.

Under this plan the vote was taken throughout these Churches. In the Presbyterian Church, 50 Presbyteries voted for approval and 20 Presbyteries non-approval (793 votes for and 496 against); in the Methodist Church, 11 Conferences voted for approval and 1 Conference non-approval (1,579 votes for and 270 against).

The vote of the elders, office bearers, and membership in the respective Churches was as follows. In the Congregational Church the vote was on the Basis, and, of 10,689 members, 2,933 voted for and 813 against. In the Presbyterian Church two questions were submitted, seeking the attitude first toward organic union and second toward the Basis. The vote on the first question was, of 9,675 elders, 6,245 voted for and 2,745 against; of 287,944 communicants, 106,755 voted for and 48,278 against; of adherents, 37,175 voted for and 14,174 against. The vote on the second question was 5,104 elders voted for and 2,197

against; 77,993 communicants voted for and 27,197 against; 27,756 adherents voted for and 10,316 against. In the Methodist Church the vote concerned the Basis only. The result of the vote was, of 29,820 officials, 23,475 voted for and 3,869 against; of 293,967 members 18 years of age and over, 150,841 voted for and 24,357 against; of 29,373 members under 18 years of age, 17,198 voted for and 2,615 against; of adherents, 42,115 voted for and 7,234 against.

Subsequent to these plebiscites, the supreme courts of the respective Churches adopted the following resolutions.

The Congregational Union, whose membership had voted some months previous to the vote in the other Churches, stated: "We consider the action already taken as sufficient and will now wait until the other negotiating bodies have had an opportunity of testing to a corresponding degree the feeling of their constituencies."

The Methodist General Conference Special Committee declared "that the Methodist Church is now prepared to proceed toward the Union of the three negotiating Churches on the Basis of Union heretofore agreed upon."

The Presbyterian General Assembly resolved "that in view of the extent of the minority, which is not yet convinced that organic union is the best method of expressing the unity sincerely desired by all, the Assembly deems it unwise to immediately proceed to consummate the union, but believes that by further conference and discussion practically unanimous action can be secured within a reasonable time."

The yearly meetings of the Joint Union Committee were continued. Progress towards consummation was continuously manifest. In 1914, acting upon suggestions from the negotiating Churches, the Basis was revised in some of its statements, and the name "The United Church of Canada," with the names of its courts, approved.

The Presbyterian General Assembly in 1915 approved the revised Basis of Union, and submitted it to the lower courts and membership with the following result: of 76 Presbyteries, 53 approved, 13 disapproved, 3 tied, 2 sent irrelevant returns, 1 rejected, and 4 did not reply; of pastoral charges, 1,331 approved and 494 disapproved; of elders, 7,066 approved and 3,822 disapproved; of communicants, 106,534 approved and 69,913 disapproved; of adherents, 36,942 approved and 20,004 disapproved. When this report was received, the General Assembly of 1916, by a vote of 406 for union and 90 against, resolved "that this General Assembly now resolves to unite with the Methodist Church, and the Congregational Churches of Canada, to constitute The United Church of Canada, on the Basis of Union approved by the General Assembly of 1915, and by the majority of Presbyteries since consulted under the Barrier Act; that a Committee be appointed to carry out the policy of the Assembly," and "report to the first Assembly following the end of the first year after the close of the War." In 1921 the General Assembly reached the decision "to take such steps as may be deemed best to consummate Church Union with the above named Churches as expeditiously as possible."

In the meantime, there came into existence in Western Canada a large number of local union churches, which formed "The General Council of Local Union Churches." From 1921 representatives of this Council were welcomed to the yearly meetings of the Joint Union Committee. The negotiating Churches also, in anticipation of organic union, developed

practical plans of co-operation, including delimitation of territory, local church union by affiliation with one or other of these Churches, and other methods. By the year 1924 there were in union in various forms, and with the approval of the parent Churches, more than 1,200 pastoral charges, including in them not less than 3,000 congregations or worshipping units.

By the time of Church Union there were Methodist and Presbyterian Indigenous congregations from Quebec to Vancouver Island, all under the denominational Boards of Home Missions. Some of these congregations were informed and even consulted before 1925, but none were given any role in the actual decision making. Nonetheless, at least 60 Indigenous congregations, predominantly Methodist, entered The United Church of Canada in 1925 on the decision of Home Missions.

Draft bills for Parliament and legislatures were prepared and carefully considered during the years 1921 to 1924. These were approved by the supreme courts of the Churches. The necessary legislation was enacted in 1924 by the Parliament of Canada, and in 1924 to 1926 by the legislatures of the various provinces. The dominion United Church of Canada Act recites that The Presbyterian Church in Canada, The Methodist Church, and the Congregational Churches of Canada had represented that they had the right to unite without loss of their identity, and declares that the said Churches, "by their free and independent action, through their governing bodies and in accordance with their respective constitutions," had united to form The United Church of Canada. Congregations were given the right to decide by majority vote not to enter the Union. Those that voted non-concurrence retained their congregational property, and provision was made through the appointment of a dominion Commission by which they would receive their equitable share of the general property of the Church to which they formerly belonged. In certain provinces Commissions were appointed for the adjustment of cases of extreme hardship of minorities in relation to congregational property.

On June 10, 1925, the union of the three Churches was solemnly consummated in the Mutual Street Arena, Toronto, in the presence of more than 8,000 members of the Church. The Basis of Union was formally signed by the chief officers of the supreme courts of the uniting Churches. This historic act was followed by prayer constituting the First General Council of The United Church of Canada (1925). This Council was composed of 350 Commissioners: the General Conference of The Methodist Church and the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada each having appointed 150; The Congregational Union of Canada having appointed 40; and 10 having been appointed by The General Council of Local Union Churches. The Commissioners and the assembled Church members participated in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and in the service of hallowing and consummating the Union, as the three streams of Christian life flowed together and formed the United Church. The approximate strength of the United Church at the time of Union was 8,000 congregations, 600,000 members, and 3,800 ministers.

The concluding words of the final report of the Joint Union Committee are these: "We draw attention to the fact that the spirit of unity has characterized the Churches of Canada from the dawn of her history. Each of the Churches now uniting is itself a United Church. The present Union, now consummated, is but another step toward the wider union of Evangelical Churches, not only in Canada, but throughout the world."

From 1855 until 1874, the Wesleyan Methodists of Bermuda were organized as a District of the Wesleyan Conference of Eastern British America and became part of the Nova Scotia Conference when the Methodist Church of Canada was formed in 1874. As such, they passed into the legal corporation known as The Methodist Church, Canada, Newfoundland and Bermuda, when that church was formed in 1884. In 1925 a foreign religious corporation could not hold property in Bermuda, and various factors led the Methodists there to decide not to become part of The United Church of Canada. An arrangement was approved by the Fourth General Council (1930) whereby the Synod of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Bermuda affiliated with The United Church of Canada as a Presbytery of the Maritime Conference, without interference with the rights and powers conferred on the Synod by the Legislature of Bermuda.

A further significant step was indeed taken by the 22nd General Council (1966) when it adopted unanimously the Plan of Union between the Canada Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and The United Church of Canada. The Plan was the result of extensive discussion between the two bodies. Urgency had been given to it by the impending union in the United States of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren to form the United Methodist Church. The Canadian negotiation was independent, but received encouragement and approval from the parent Evangelical United Brethren Church. The actual union took place at the beginning of January, 1968, and the service of inauguration took place in Zion (Evangelical United Brethren) Church, Kitchener, Ontario, on January 10, 1968, although the Western Canadian Conference elected to stay out of the union, as did a very small number of ministers and congregations of the Canada Conference. The Canada Conference brought into the United Church 58 congregations, 9,898 members, and 40 ministers. Among the assets it brought to the United Church were two fine camp sites, at Silver Lake and Golden Lake.



The Basis of Union

AS PREPARED BY THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA, THE METHODIST CHURCH, AND THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF CANADA, AND APPROVED BY THE SUPREME COURTS OF THESE CHURCHES, AS AMENDED BY THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

GENERAL

- 1.1 The name of the Church formed by the union of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational Churches in Canada shall be “The United Church of Canada.”
- 1.2 It shall be the policy of the United Church to foster the spirit of unity in the hope that this sentiment of unity may in due time, so far as Canada is concerned, take shape in a Church which may fittingly be described as national.

DOCTRINE

- 2.1 The United Church recognizes the primacy of scripture. (2013)
- 2.2 The United Church recognizes as doctrine the following standards subordinate to scripture: (2013)
 - 2.2.1 the 20 articles of doctrine, set out in sections 2.3.0 through 2.3.20; (2013)
 - 2.2.2 “A Statement of Faith, 1940,” set out in sections 2.4.0 through 2.4.12; (2013)
 - 2.2.3 “A New Creed,” set out in section 2.5; and (2013)
 - 2.2.4 “A Song of Faith,” set out in section 2.6. (2013)

Twenty Articles of Doctrine

- 2.3.0 We, the representatives of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational branches of the Church of Christ in Canada, do hereby set forth the substance of the Christian faith, as commonly held among us. In doing so, we build upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. We affirm our belief in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the primary source and ultimate standard of Christian faith and life. We acknowledge the teaching of the great creeds of the ancient Church. We further maintain our allegiance to the evangelical doctrines of the Reformation, as set forth in common in the doctrinal standards adopted

by The Presbyterian Church in Canada, by The Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, and by The Methodist Church. We present the accompanying statement as a brief summary of our common faith and commend it to the studious attention of the members and adherents of the negotiating Churches, as in substance agreeable to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

- 2.3.1 Article I. *Of God.*** We believe in the one only living and true God, a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being and perfections; the Lord Almighty, who is love, most just in all His ways, most glorious in holiness, unsearchable in wisdom, plenteous in mercy, full of compassion, and abundant in goodness and truth. We worship Him in the unity of the Godhead and the mystery of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, three persons of the same substance, equal in power and glory.
- 2.3.2 Article II. *Of Revelation.*** We believe that God has revealed Himself in nature, in history, and in the heart of man; that He has been graciously pleased to make clearer revelation of Himself to men of God who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit; and that in the fullness of time He has perfectly revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. We receive the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, given by inspiration of God, as containing the only infallible rule of faith and life, a faithful record of God's gracious revelations, and as the sure witness of Christ.
- 2.3.3 Article III. *Of the Divine Purpose.*** We believe that the eternal, wise, holy, and loving purpose of God so embraces all events that, while the freedom of man is not taken away, nor is God the author of sin, yet in His providence He makes all things work together in the fulfilment of His sovereign design and the manifestation of His glory.
- 2.3.4 Article IV. *Of Creation and Providence.*** We believe that God is the creator, upholder, and governor of all things; that He is above all His works and in them all; and that He made man in His own image, meet for fellowship with Him, free and able to choose between good and evil, and responsible to his Maker and Lord.
- 2.3.5 Article V. *Of the Sin of Man.*** We believe that our first parents, being tempted, chose evil, and so fell away from God and came under the power of sin, the penalty of which is eternal death; and that, by reason of this disobedience, all men are born with a sinful nature, that we have broken God's law, and that no man can be saved but by His grace.
- 2.3.6 Article VI. *Of the Grace of God.*** We believe that God, out of His great love for the world, has given His only begotten Son to be the Saviour of sinners, and in the Gospel freely offers His all-sufficient salvation to all men. We believe also that God, in His own good pleasure, gave to his son a people, an innumerable multitude, chosen in Christ unto holiness, service, and salvation.
- 2.3.7 Article VII. *Of the Lord Jesus Christ.*** We believe in and confess the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, who, being the Eternal Son of God, for us men and for our salvation became truly man, being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, yet without sin. Unto us He has revealed the Father, by His word and Spirit, making known the perfect will of God. For our redemption, He fulfilled all righteousness, offered Himself a perfect sacrifice on the Cross, satisfied Divine justice, and made propitiation for the sins of the whole world. He rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven, where He ever intercedes for us. In the hearts of believers He abides forever as the indwelling Christ; above us and over us all He rules; wherefore, unto Him we render love, obedience, and adoration as our Prophet, Priest, and King.

- 2.3.8 Article VIII. *Of the Holy Spirit.*** We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who moves upon the hearts of men to restrain them from evil and to incite them unto good, and whom the Father is ever willing to give unto all who ask Him. We believe that He has spoken by holy men of God in making known His truth to men for their salvation; that, through our exalted Saviour, He was sent forth in power to convict the world of sin, to enlighten men's minds in the knowledge of Christ, and to persuade and enable them to obey the call of the Gospel; and that He abides with the Church, dwelling in every believer as the spirit of truth, of power, of holiness, of comfort, and of love.
- 2.3.9 Article IX. *Of Regeneration.*** We believe in the necessity of regeneration, whereby we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus by the Spirit of God, who imparts spiritual life by the gracious and mysterious operation of His power, using as the ordinary means the truths of His word and the ordinances of divine appointment in ways agreeable to the nature of man.
- 2.3.10 Article X. *Of Faith and Repentance.*** We believe that faith in Christ is a saving grace whereby we receive Him, trust in Him, and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered to us in the Gospel, and that this saving faith is always accompanied by repentance, wherein we confess and forsake our sins with full purpose of and endeavour after a new obedience to God.
- 2.3.11 Article XI. *Of Justification and Sonship.*** We believe that God, on the sole ground of the perfect obedience and sacrifice of Christ, pardons those who by faith receive Him as their Saviour and Lord, accepts them as righteous, and bestows upon them the adoption of sons, with a right to all privileges therein implied, including a conscious assurance of their sonship.
- 2.3.12 Article XII. *Of Sanctification.*** We believe that those who are regenerated and justified grow in the likeness of Christ through fellowship with Him, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and obedience to the truth; that a holy life is the fruit and evidence of saving faith; and that the believer's hope of continuance in such a life is in the preserving grace of God. And we believe that in this growth in grace Christians may attain that maturity and full assurance of faith whereby the love of God is made perfect in us.
- 2.3.13 Article XIII. *Of Prayer.*** We believe that we are encouraged to draw near to God, our Heavenly Father, in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and on our own behalf and that of others to pour out our hearts humbly yet freely before Him, as becomes His beloved children, giving Him the honour and praise due His holy name, asking Him to glorify Himself on earth as in Heaven, confessing unto Him our sins, and seeking of Him every gift needful for this life and for our everlasting salvation. We believe also that, inasmuch as all true prayer is prompted by His Spirit, He will in response thereto grant us every blessing according to His unsearchable wisdom and the riches of His grace in Jesus Christ.
- 2.3.14 Article XIV. *Of the Law of God.*** We believe that the moral law of God, summarized in the Ten Commandments, testified to by the prophets, and unfolded in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, stands for ever in truth and equity, and is not made void by faith, but on the contrary is established thereby. We believe that God requires of every man to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God; and that only through this harmony with the will of God shall be fulfilled that brotherhood of man wherein the Kingdom of God is to be made manifest.

- 2.3.15 Article XV. *Of the Church.*** We acknowledge one Holy Catholic Church, the innumerable company of saints of every age and nation, who being united by the Holy Spirit to Christ their Head are one body in Him and have communion with their Lord and with one another. Further, we receive it as the will of Christ that His Church on earth should exist as a visible and sacred brotherhood, consisting of those who profess faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him, together with their children and other baptized children, and organized for the confession of His name, for the public worship of God, for the administration of the sacraments, for the upbuilding of the saints, and for the universal propagation of the Gospel; and we acknowledge as a part, more or less pure, of this universal brotherhood, every particular church throughout the world which professes this faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him as divine Lord and Saviour.
- 2.3.16 Article XVI. *Of the Sacraments.*** We acknowledge two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which were instituted by Christ, to be of perpetual obligation as signs and seals of the covenant ratified in His precious blood, as a means of grace, by which, working in us, He doth not only quicken but also strengthen and comfort our faith in Him, and as ordinances through the observance of which His Church is to confess her Lord and be visibly distinguished from the rest of the world.
- 2.3.16.1** Baptism with water into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is the sacrament by which are signified and sealed our union to Christ and participation in the blessings of the new covenant. The proper subjects of baptism are believers and infants presented by their parents or guardians in the Christian faith. In the latter case the parents or guardians should train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and should expect that their children will, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, receive the benefits which the sacrament is designed and fitted to convey. The Church is under the most solemn obligation to provide for their Christian instruction.
- 2.3.16.2** The Lord's Supper is the sacrament of communion with Christ and with His people, in which bread and wine are given and received in thankful remembrance of Him and His sacrifice on the Cross; and they who in faith receive the same do, after a spiritual manner, partake of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to their comfort, nourishment, and growth in grace. All may be admitted to the Lord's Supper who make a credible profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus and of obedience to His law.
- 2.3.17 Article XVII. *Of the Ministry.*** We believe that Jesus Christ, as the Supreme Head of the Church, has appointed therein an ordained ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care and a diaconal ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care, and calls men and women to these ministries; and that the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recognizes and chooses those whom He calls, and should thereupon duly ordain or commission them to the work of the ministry.
- 2.3.18 Article XVIII. *Of Church Order and Fellowship.*** We believe that the Supreme and only Head of the Church is the Lord Jesus Christ; that its worship, teaching, discipline, and government should be administered according to His will by persons chosen for their fitness and duly set apart to their office; and that although the visible Church may contain unworthy members and is liable to err, yet believers ought not lightly to separate themselves from its communion, but are to live in fellowship with their brethren, which fellowship is to be extended, as God gives opportunity, to all who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

2.3.19 Article XIX. *Of the Resurrection, the Last Judgement, and the Future Life.*

We believe that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, through the power of the Son of God, who shall come to judge the living and the dead; that the finally impenitent shall go away into eternal punishment and the righteous into life eternal.

2.3.20 Article XX. *Of Christian Service and the Final Triumph.* We believe that it is our duty, as disciples and servants of Christ, to further the extension of His Kingdom, to do good unto all men, to maintain the public and private worship of God, to hallow the Lord's Day, to preserve the inviolability of marriage and the sanctity of the family, to uphold the just authority of the State, and so to live in all honesty, purity, and charity, that our lives shall testify of Christ. We joyfully receive the word of Christ, bidding His people go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, declaring unto them that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and that He will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. We confidently believe that by His power and grace all His enemies shall finally be overcome, and the kingdoms of this world be made the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ.

A Statement of Faith, 1940

2.4.0 Introduction.

No attempt is made to answer all the questions which devout men may reasonably ask in regard to God and man and salvation. But we believe that we have included what is essential to the life of the Church. If our purpose were apologetic we should have to use more of the language of modern science and philosophy. Because our purpose is affirmative we have as far as possible adopted rather the language of Scripture, a language which matches the supreme facts it tells of, God's acts of judgment and of mercy.

The Church's faith is the unchanging Gospel of God's holy, redeeming love revealed in Jesus Christ. It is declared in Scripture; it is witnessed to both in the creeds of the Universal Church and in the Confessions of the Reformed Churches; and it is formulated for a specific purpose in our Basis of Union. But Christians of each new generation are called to state it afresh in terms of the thought of their own age and with the emphasis their age needs. This we have attempted to do for the people of The United Church of Canada—seeking always to be faithful to Scripture and to the testimony of the Universal Church, and always aware that no statement of ours can express the whole truth of God.

2.4.1 I. God

We believe in God, the eternal personal Spirit, Creator and Upholder of all things.

We believe that God, as sovereign Lord exalted above the world, orders and overrules all things in it to the accomplishment of His holy, wise, and good purposes.

We believe that God made man to love and serve Him; that He cares for him as a righteous and compassionate Father; and that nothing can either quench His love or finally defeat His gracious purpose for man.

So we acknowledge God as Creator, Upholder, and Sovereign Lord of all things, and the righteous and loving Father of men.

2.4.2 II. Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, Who, for us men and our salvation became man and dwelt among us.

We believe that He lived a perfect human life, wholly devoted to the will of God and the service of man.

We believe that in Him God comes face to face with men; so that they learn that God loves them, seeks their good, bears their sorrows and their sin, and claims their exclusive faith and perfect obedience.

We believe that in Jesus Christ God acted to save man, taking, at measureless cost, man's sin upon Himself; that the Cross reveals at once God's abhorrence of sin and His saving love in its height and depth and power; and that the Cross is for all time the effectual means of reconciling the world unto God.

We believe that Jesus was raised victorious over death and declared to be the Son of God with power; and that He is alive for evermore, our Savior and our Lord.

So we acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Son of God Incarnate, the Savior of the world.

2.4.3 III. The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit by whom God is ever at work in the minds and hearts of men, inspiring every right desire and every effort after truth and beauty.

We believe that the Spirit of God moves men to acknowledge their sins and accept the divine forgiveness and grace.

We believe that the Spirit was present with power at the beginning of the Church, enabling the disciples to bear witness to what they had seen and heard, filling them with love of the brethren, and hope of the coming Kingdom, and sustaining them in the sense of Christ's continuing presence in their midst.

We believe that by the same Spirit the Church is continually guided and empowered, and her members fortified against temptation, fear and doubt, and built up in faith and holiness unto salvation.

So we acknowledge the Holy Spirit as the Lord and Giver of life, through whom the creative, redeeming love of God is ever at work among men.

2.4.4 IV. The Holy Trinity

Knowing God thus, as Creator and Father, as Redeemer in Christ, and as Holy Spirit working in us, we confess our faith in the Holy Trinity.

So we acknowledge and worship one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2.4.5 V. Man and Man's Sin

We believe that God gave to man, as He did not to the lower creatures, capacity to share His thought and purpose, and freedom to choose whether he would or would not love and serve Him.

We believe that man has used his freedom of choice for low and selfish ends, thus estranging himself from God and his brother man, and bringing upon himself the judgment and wrath of God, so that he lives in a world of confusion and distress, and is

unable of himself to fulfill God's high purpose for him.

So we acknowledge man's sin, God's righteous judgment, and man's helplessness and need.

2.4.6 **VI. Redemption**

We believe that in the greatness of His love for man God has in Christ opened up a way of deliverance from the guilt and power of sin.

We believe that Christ, by living our life without sin, by dying at the hands of sinful men with faith unshaken and unfaltering love, has done for man what man could not do for himself. On the Cross He bore the burden of sin, and He broke its power; and what He did there moves men to repentance, conveys forgiveness, undoes the estrangement, and binds them to Himself in a new loyalty.

We believe that by His resurrection and exaltation Christ stands victorious over death and all evil, and that He fills those who commit themselves to Him with such grace and strength that in Him they, too, are conquerors. His redemption of man is at once an awful mystery and a glorious fact; it is the Lord's doing and marvelous in our eyes.

So we acknowledge the unmerited love and the mercy of our God in giving His only-begotten Son that we might not perish but have everlasting life.

2.4.7 **VII. The Church**

We believe that the Church, the society of the redeemed, was brought into existence by God Himself through the work and risen power of Christ, Who in calling men into fellowship with Himself calls them by the same act into fellowship with one another in Him.

We believe that the Church is the organ of Christ's mind and redemptive will, the body of which He is the Head. Under Him the Church is called to the proclamation of the everlasting Gospel with its offer of salvation, to the worship of God, Creator and Redeemer, to the loving service of mankind, and to the care and nurture of the flock.

We believe that all members of the Church are one in Him, and that the life of the Church in every age is continuous with that of the first apostolic company. The groups commonly known as "churches" are called to share in the life of the whole Church, of all ages and of all lands, entering freely into the full heritage of thought, worship, and discipline, and living together in mutual confidence.

We believe that for the fulfillment of her mission in the world God has given to the Church the Ministry, the Scriptures and the Sacraments.

So we acknowledge one holy, catholic, apostolic Church, the Body of Christ, the household and family of God.

2.4.8 **VIII. The Ministry**

We believe that God has appointed a Ministry in His Church for the preaching of the Word, the administration of the Sacraments, and the pastoral care of the people.

We believe that the Church has authority to ordain to the Ministry by prayer and the laying on of hands those whom she finds, after due trial, to be called of God thereto.

We believe that, for the due ordering of her life as a society, God has appointed a government in His Church, to be exercised, under Christ the head, by Ministers and representatives of the people.

So we acknowledge the Holy Ministry appointed by God for the spread of the Gospel and the edification of His Church.

2.4.9 IX. The Holy Scriptures

We believe that the great moments of God's revelation and communication of Himself to men are recorded and interpreted in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

We believe that, while God uttered His Word to man in many portions progressively, the whole is sufficient to declare His mind and will for our salvation. To Israel He made Himself known as a holy and righteous God and a Savior; the fullness of truth and grace came by Jesus Christ. The writings were collected and preserved by the Church.

We believe that the theme of all Holy Scripture is the redemptive purpose and working of God, and that herein lies its unity.

We believe that in Holy Scripture God claims the complete allegiance of our mind and heart; that the full persuasion of the truth and authority of the Word of God contained in the Scripture is the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts; that, using Holy Scripture, the Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us for our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

So we acknowledge in Holy Scripture the true witness to God's Word and the sure guide to Christian faith and conduct.

2.4.10 X. The Sacraments

We believe that the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are effectual means through which, by common things and simple acts, the saving love of God is exhibited and communicated to His people, who receive them in faith.

We believe that in Baptism men are made members of the Christian society. Washing with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit signifies God's cleansing from sin and an initial participation in the gifts and graces of the new life. The children of believing parents are baptized and nurtured in the family of God so that they may in due time take upon themselves the yoke of Christ.

We believe that the Lord's Supper perpetuates the fellowship between Christ and His disciples sealed in the upper room, that at His table He is always present, and His people are nourished, confirmed, and renewed. The giving and receiving of bread and wine accompanied by His own words signifies the gracious self-giving of Christ as suffering and living Lord in such wise that His faithful people live in Him and He in them.

So we acknowledge Baptism as God's appointed means of grace at initiation into the Christian fellowship; and the Lord's Supper as His appointed means of maintaining the fellowship in health and strength, and as the act of worship in which the whole soul of man goes out to God and God's grace comes freely to man.

2.4.11 XI. Christian Life and Duty

We believe that the Christian life is the life lived in fellowship with Christ and His Church. It begins with repentance and faith. In repentance men turn from sin to serve the holy and forgiving God with new and glad obedience. In faith they entrust themselves to Christ and rest upon Him alone for salvation.

We believe that by the teaching and example of Jesus the Holy Spirit shows men the way and the end of the Christian life, what it means to love God with all the heart and soul and mind and strength, and to love their neighbour as themselves.

We believe that Christian men are called to abide within the fellowship of the Church, to maintain its peace and unity, and to give diligent heed to prayer, to the reading of Scripture, to common worship and the sacraments.

We believe that they are likewise called to live as those who are of the Kingdom of God, and to seek His righteousness both in individual and social life, serving their fellow-men in love for Christ's sake, and striving and waiting in prayer for an ordered common life where the will of God for the well-being and peace of men shall be done over all the earth.

We believe that in denying themselves and in following Christ men are enabled by the Spirit of God more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness; that they are, under the hand of a faithful Father, in labour, love, and duty, in suffering, sorrow and defeat, renewed in the inner man after the image of the crucified and victorious Christ; and that they receive in this life a foretaste of the final redemption, assurance of the divine favour, peace and joy, and the confidence that He is able to keep them to the end.

So we acknowledge the Christian life as the life lived within the family of God, with the graces and privileges, the duties and discipline, through which the Christian man grows up in all things into Christ.

2.4.12 XII. The Consummation

We believe that the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, following on His crucifixion, gives assurance that the long struggle between sin and grace will have an end, the Kingdom be revealed in its fullness, and God's eternal purpose accomplished.

We believe that God will judge all men by Jesus Christ, the Son of Man.

We believe that, while salvation is offered to all, God does not take away or override the freedom with which He has endowed men. If they stubbornly refuse His mercy and prefer sinful ways they shut themselves out from the light and joy of salvation and fall under the righteous judgment of God.

We believe that those who accept the offer of salvation and persevere in the Christian way do after death enter into the joy of their Lord, a blessedness beyond our power to conceive. They see God face to face, and in the communion of saints are partakers with the Church on earth of its labours and prayers.

So we acknowledge the righteous and merciful judgment of God and we wait for the coming of the Kingdom which shall have no end.

"We know Whom we have believed, and are persuaded that He is able to keep that which we have committed to Him."

"To the only wise God our Savior be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever." (2013)

A New Creed

2.5 We are not alone,
we live in God's world.

We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.
We are not alone.

Thanks be to God. (2013)

A Song of Faith

2.6 God is Holy Mystery,
beyond complete knowledge,
above perfect description.

Yet,
in love,
the one eternal God seeks relationship.

So God creates the universe
and with it the possibility of being and relating.
God tends the universe,
mending the broken and reconciling the estranged.
God enlivens the universe,
guiding all things toward harmony with their Source.

Grateful for God's loving action,
We cannot keep from singing.

With the Church through the ages,
we speak of God as one and triune:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
We also speak of God as
 Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer
 God, Christ, and Spirit
 Mother, Friend, and Comforter
 Source of Life, Living Word, and Bond of Love,
 and in other ways that speak faithfully of
the One on whom our hearts rely,
the fully shared life at the heart of the universe.

We witness to Holy Mystery that is Wholly Love.

God is creative and self-giving,
 generously moving
 in all the near and distant corners of the universe.
Nothing exists that does not find its source in God.
Our first response to God's providence is gratitude.
We sing thanksgiving.

Finding ourselves in a world of beauty and mystery,
 of living things, diverse and interdependent,
 of complex patterns of growth and evolution,
 of subatomic particles and cosmic swirls,
we sing of God the Creator,
the Maker and Source of all that is.

Each part of creation reveals unique aspects of God the Creator,
 who is both in creation and beyond it.
All parts of creation, animate and inanimate, are related.
All creation is good.
We sing of the Creator,
 who made humans to live and move
 and have their being in God.
In and with God,
 we can direct our lives toward right relationship
 with each other and with God.
We can discover our place as one strand in the web of life.
We can grow in wisdom and compassion.
We can recognize all people as kin.
We can accept our mortality and finitude, not as a curse,
 but as a challenge to make our lives and choices matter.

Made in the image of God,
we yearn for the fulfillment that is life in God.
Yet we choose to turn away from God.
We surrender ourselves to sin,
 a disposition revealed in selfishness, cowardice, or apathy.
Becoming bound and complacent
 in a web of false desires and wrong choices,
 we bring harm to ourselves and others.
This brokenness in human life and community
 is an outcome of sin.
Sin is not only personal
 but accumulates
 to become habitual and systemic forms
 of injustice, violence, and hatred.

We are all touched by this brokenness:
 the rise of selfish individualism
 that erodes human solidarity;
 the concentration of wealth and power
 without regard for the needs of all;
 the toxins of religious and ethnic bigotry;
 the degradation of the blessedness of human bodies
 and human passions through sexual exploitation;
 the delusion of unchecked progress and limitless growth
 that threatens our home, the earth;
 the covert despair that lulls many into numb complicity
 with empires and systems of domination.
We sing lament and repentance.

Yet evil does not—cannot—
 undermine or overcome the love of God.
God forgives,
 and calls all of us to confess our fears and failings
 with honesty and humility.
God reconciles,
 and calls us to repent the part we have played
 in damaging our world, ourselves, and each other.
God transforms,
 and calls us to protect the vulnerable,
 to pray for deliverance from evil,
 to work with God for the healing of the world,
 that all might have abundant life.
We sing of grace.

The fullness of life includes
 moments of unexpected inspiration and courage lived out,
 experiences of beauty, truth, and goodness,
 blessings of seeds and harvest,
 friendship and family, intellect and sexuality,

the reconciliation of persons through justice
and communities living in righteousness,
and the articulation of meaning.

And so we sing of God the Spirit,
who from the beginning has swept over the face of creation,
animating all energy and matter
and moving in the human heart.

We sing of God the Spirit,
faithful and untameable,
who is creatively and redemptively active in the world.

The Spirit challenges us to celebrate the holy
not only in what is familiar,
but also in that which seems foreign.

We sing of the Spirit,
who speaks our prayers of deepest longing
and enfolds our concerns and confessions,
transforming us and the world.

We offer worship
as an outpouring of gratitude and awe
and a practice of opening ourselves
to God's still, small voice of comfort,
to God's rushing whirlwind of challenge.
Through word, music, art, and sacrament,
in community and in solitude,
God changes our lives, our relationships, and our world.
We sing with trust.

Scripture is our song for the journey, the living word
passed on from generation to generation
to guide and inspire,
that we might wrestle a holy revelation for our time and place
from the human experiences
and cultural assumptions of another era.
God calls us to be doers of the word and not hearers only.

The Spirit breathes revelatory power into scripture,
bestowing upon it a unique and normative place
in the life of the community.
The Spirit judges us critically when we abuse scripture
by interpreting it narrow-mindedly,
using it as a tool of oppression, exclusion, or hatred.

The wholeness of scripture testifies
to the oneness and faithfulness of God.
The multiplicity of scripture testifies to its depth:
two testaments, four gospels,
contrasting points of view held in tension—
all a faithful witness to the One and Triune God,
the Holy Mystery that is Wholly Love.

We find God made known in Jesus of Nazareth,
and so we sing of God the Christ, the Holy One embodied.

We sing of Jesus,
a Jew,
born to a woman in poverty
in a time of social upheaval
and political oppression.
He knew human joy and sorrow.
So filled with the Holy Spirit was he
that in him people experienced the presence of God among them.
We sing praise to God incarnate.

Jesus announced the coming of God's reign—
a commonwealth not of domination
but of peace, justice, and reconciliation.
He healed the sick and fed the hungry.
He forgave sins and freed those held captive
by all manner of demonic powers.
He crossed barriers of race, class, culture, and gender.
He preached and practised unconditional love—
love of God, love of neighbour,
love of friend, love of enemy—
and he commanded his followers to love one another
as he had loved them.

Because his witness to love was threatening,
those exercising power sought to silence Jesus.
He suffered abandonment and betrayal,
state-sanctioned torture and execution.
He was crucified.

But death was not the last word.
God raised Jesus from death,
turning sorrow into joy,
despair into hope.
We sing of Jesus raised from the dead.
We sing hallelujah.

By becoming flesh in Jesus,
 God makes all things new.
In Jesus' life, teaching, and self-offering,
 God empowers us to live in love.
In Jesus' crucifixion,
 God bears the sin, grief, and suffering of the world.
In Jesus' resurrection,
 God overcomes death.
Nothing separates us from the love of God.

The Risen Christ lives today,
 present to us and the source of our hope.
In response to who Jesus was
 and to all he did and taught,
 to his life, death, and resurrection,
 and to his continuing presence with us through the Spirit,
we celebrate him as
 the Word made flesh,
 the one in whom God and humanity are perfectly joined,
 the transformation of our lives,
the Christ.

We sing of a church
 seeking to continue the story of Jesus
 by embodying Christ's presence in the world.
We are called together by Christ
 as a community of broken but hopeful believers,
 loving what he loved,
 living what he taught,
 striving to be faithful servants of God
 in our time and place.
Our ancestors in faith
 bequeath to us experiences of their faithful living;
 upon their lives our lives are built.
Our living of the gospel makes us a part of this communion of saints,
 experiencing the fulfillment of God's reign
 even as we actively anticipate a new heaven and a new earth.

The church has not always lived up to its vision.
It requires the Spirit to reorient it,
 helping it to live an emerging faith while honouring tradition,
 challenging it to live by grace rather than entitlement,
for we are called to be a blessing to the earth.

We sing of God's good news lived out,
a church with purpose:
faith nurtured and hearts comforted,
gifts shared for the good of all,
resistance to the forces that exploit and marginalize,
fierce love in the face of violence,
human dignity defended,
members of a community held and inspired by God,
corrected and comforted,
instrument of the loving Spirit of Christ,
creation's mending.
We sing of God's mission.

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.

In grateful response to God's abundant love,
we bear in mind our integral connection
to the earth and one another;
we participate in God's work of healing and mending creation.
To point to the presence of the holy in the world,
the church receives, consecrates, and shares
visible signs of the grace of God.
In company with the churches
of the Reformed and Methodist traditions,
we celebrate two sacraments as gifts of Christ:
baptism and holy communion.
In these sacraments the ordinary things of life
—water, bread, wine—
point beyond themselves to God and God's love,
teaching us to be alert
to the sacred in the midst of life.

Before conscious thought or action on our part,
we are born into the brokenness of this world.
Before conscious thought or action on our part,
we are surrounded by God's redeeming love.
Baptism by water in the name of the Holy Trinity
is the means by which we are received, at any age,
into the covenanted community of the church.
It is the ritual that signifies our rebirth in faith
and cleansing by the power of God.
Baptism signifies the nurturing, sustaining,
and transforming power of God's love
and our grateful response to that grace.

Carrying a vision of creation healed and restored,
we welcome all in the name of Christ.
Invited to the table where none shall go hungry,
we gather as Christ's guests and friends.
In holy communion
we are commissioned to feed as we have been fed,
forgive as we have been forgiven,
love as we have been loved.
The open table speaks of the shining promise
of barriers broken and creation healed.
In the communion meal, wine poured out and bread broken,
we remember Jesus.
We remember not only the promise but also the price that he paid
for who he was,
for what he did and said,
and for the world's brokenness.
We taste the mystery of God's great love for us,
and are renewed in faith and hope.

We place our hope in God.
We sing of a life beyond life
and a future good beyond imagining:
a new heaven and a new earth,
the end of sorrow, pain, and tears,
Christ's return and life with God,
the making new of all things.
We yearn for the coming of that future,
even while participating in eternal life now.

Divine creation does not cease
until all things have found wholeness, union, and integration
with the common ground of all being.

As children of the Timeless One,
our time-bound lives will find completion
in the all-embracing Creator.

In the meantime, we embrace the present,
embodying hope, loving our enemies,
caring for the earth,
choosing life.

Grateful for God's loving action,
we cannot keep from singing.
Creating and seeking relationship,
in awe and trust,
we witness to Holy Mystery who is Wholly Love.

Amen. (2013)

POLITY

- 3.0** The Joint Committee, after an examination of the forms of Church government of the negotiating Churches and the practical working thereof, is greatly gratified to find:
- 3.1** That while the officers and courts of the negotiating Churches may bear different names, there is a substantial degree of similarity in the duties and functions of these officers and courts.
- 3.2** That, engaged in the same work, with the same object in view, and earnestly endeavouring to meet the conditions confronting the Churches in Canada, the negotiating Churches have been steadily approximating more nearly to each other, both in forms of church government and in methods of administration.
- 3.3** That there are distinctive elements in each which would add to the efficiency of a united Church, and which can be preserved with great advantage in the form of polity to be adopted for the United Church.
- 3.4** That in this view it is possible to provide for substantial local freedom, and at the same time secure the benefits of a strong connexional tie and co-operative efficiency.

The following recommendations are submitted as setting forth the Polity proposed for The United Church of Canada.

I. The Church

- 4.1** The members of the United Church shall be the members of the negotiating Churches, and such others as may hereafter become members.
- 4.2** The unit of organization for the United Church shall be the Pastoral Charge. A Pastoral Charge may consist of more than one local church; a local church is a body of persons meeting for public worship in one place.
- 4.3** The governing bodies or courts of the Church, higher than those of the Pastoral Charge, shall be: the Presbytery; the Conference; the General Council.

II. The Pastoral Charge (Circuit or Congregation)

A. Charges Existing Previous to the Union

- 5.1** In the management of their local affairs, the various churches, charges, circuits, or congregations of the negotiating Churches shall be entitled to continue the organization and practices (including those practices relating to membership, church ordinances, Sunday schools, and young people's societies) enjoyed by them at the time of the Union, subject in general affairs to the legislation, principles, and discipline of the United Church. Their representatives in the next higher governing body or court shall be chosen as at present.

- 5.2 The plan of organization prescribed for Pastoral Charges to be formed subsequent to the Union may at any time be adopted by any church, charge, circuit, or congregation existing at the time of the Union.
- 5.3 Subject to the provisions of the next succeeding paragraph hereof, all property, real and personal, under the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada, held in trust for or to the use of a church, charge, circuit, or congregation of any of the negotiating Churches shall be held by trustees appointed by or on behalf of such church, charge, circuit, or congregation, upon trusts set forth and declared in a Model Trust Deed. This Model Trust Deed should be a schedule to the Act, and should contain, among others, a provision to the following effect: that the property is held for the church, charge, circuit, or congregation as a part of the United Church, and that no property so held shall be sold, exchanged, or in any manner encumbered, unless the Presbytery shall, at the instance of the church, charge, circuit, or congregation, have given its sanction, subject to an appeal, if desired, to the Conference.
- 5.4 Any property or funds owned by a church, charge, circuit, or congregation at the time of the Union solely for its own benefit, or vested in trustees for the sole benefit of such church, charge, circuit, or congregation, and not for the denomination of which the said church, charge, circuit, or congregation formed a part, shall not be affected by the legislation giving effect to the Union or by any legislation of the United Church without the consent of the church, charge, circuit, or congregation for which such property is held in trust.
- 5.5 Churches, charges, circuits, or congregations received subsequent to the Union, into the United Church, with the approval of Presbyteries, shall be entitled, if they so desire, to the privileges of sections 5.1, 5.2, and 5.4.

B. Charges to Be Formed Subsequent to the Union

- 5.6 The liberty of the Pastoral Charge shall be recognized to the fullest extent compatible with:
- 5.6.1 the oversight of the spiritual interests of the Pastoral Charge by the member(s) of the Order of Ministry settled in the Pastoral Charge, and a body of persons elected and set apart or ordained for that work, who shall jointly constitute the Session; (2010)
- 5.6.2 the efficient co-operation of the representatives of the various departments of the work of the Pastoral Charge by means of a meeting to be held at least quarterly;
- 5.6.3 the hearty co-operation of the various Pastoral Charges in the general work of the Church; and
- 5.6.4 the exercise by the higher governing bodies or courts of their powers and functions, hereinafter set forth.
- 5.7 New Pastoral Charges or local churches shall be formed with the consent of a Presbytery by persons residing within its bounds who declare their adherence to the principles of the United Church, and their desire for the formation of such Pastoral Charge or local church. Missions may be organized as Pastoral Charges by Presbytery of its own motion, or on the suggestion of the Missionary Superintendent or the Minister, under such regulations as the General Council may pass. Before sanctioning the formation of a Pastoral Charge or local church, the Presbytery shall be required to hear and consider the representations of any Pastoral Charge that may be affected by the proposed action.

- 5.8.1** The members of the Church entitled to all church privileges are those who, on a profession of their faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him, have been received into full membership. The children of such persons and all baptized children are members of the Church, and it is their duty and privilege, when they reach the age of discretion, to enter into full membership. Admission to full membership and granting of certificates of transfer or removal shall be:
- (1) by the action of the Session or by the action of those in full membership when desired by the Pastoral Charge; or
 - (2) by a Chaplain in the Canadian Forces, with the approval of, and in association with, two or more members in full communion with the United Church, for persons under that Chaplain's pastoral care.
- 5.8.2** The members of a local church who are entitled to vote at all meetings are persons in full membership, whose names are on the roll of that church. With the consent of these, adherents who contribute regularly to the support of the church may vote on temporal matters.
- 5.8.3** The members of a local church shall meet annually, and more frequently if they deem it advisable.
- 5.8.4** It shall be the duty of the Congregation to elect representatives, in full church membership, of the Congregation to the Presbytery. (2010)
- 5.9.1** The Session shall have oversight of the spiritual interests of the Pastoral Charge. The management of its temporal and financial affairs shall be entrusted to a Committee of Stewards. The Official Board, consisting of the Session and Committee of Stewards, with representatives in full church membership of such other departments of church work as may be agreed upon by the General Council, shall meet quarterly, and more frequently if they deem it advisable, for the consideration of matters of joint interest.
- 5.9.2** The members of the Session, other than the member(s) of the Order of Ministry settled in the Pastoral Charge, shall be elected by those in full church membership, and shall hold office under regulations to be passed by the General Council. If there is a vacancy, the Session may fill the vacancy until the Pastoral Charge elects a replacement. (2016)
- 5.10.1** It shall be the duty of the Session to have the oversight of:
- (1) the admission of persons into full membership, their removal, and the granting of certificates of transfer;
 - (2) the conduct of members, with power to exercise discipline;
 - (3) the administration of the sacraments;
 - (4) the religious training of the young, and the organization of meetings for Christian fellowship, instruction, and work;
 - (5) the order of public worship, including the service of praise and the use of the church edifice; and
 - (6) the care of the poor, and the visiting of the sick.
- 5.10.2** It shall also be its duty:
- (1) to receive and judge Proposals, appeals, etc., from members;
 - (2) to transmit Proposals, appeals, etc., to Presbytery;

(3) to recommend to Presbytery suitable lay members to be licensed as Licensed Lay Worship Leaders; (2010)

(4) to recognize suitable lay members as Inquirers; and

(5) to recommend to Presbytery suitable Inquirers to be Candidates.

5.11 The Stewards shall be elected by the local church, and, wherever practicable, should be persons in full membership. It shall be the duty of the Committee of Stewards to secure contributions for the purposes of the local church, and to disburse the monies received for these purposes. (2010)

5.12 It shall be the duty of the Official Board:

5.12.1 to secure contributions for missionary and other general objects of the Church;

5.12.2 to submit to the Pastoral Charge or local church for its consideration reports on life and work, including a full statement of receipts and expenditures, of indebtedness, and of estimates for the ensuing year;

5.12.3 to transmit from the Pastoral Charge to the Presbytery representations concerning the pastoral relationship; and

5.12.4 to attend to matters affecting the Pastoral Charge not assigned to any of the other bodies.

5.13 All lands, premises, and property acquired for the use of a local church or a Pastoral Charge of the United Church shall be held, used, and administered under the trusts of the above Model Trust Deed.

III. The Presbytery

6.0 The Presbytery shall consist of:

6.1 members of the Order of Ministry:

6.1.1 who have been settled in Pastoral Charges, Missions, or Outreach Ministries within the bounds of the Presbytery;

6.1.2 who have been appointed to special ministries or other Church appointments by General Council, or by a Conference, Presbytery, or institution of the United Church; (2007)

6.1.3 who have been appointed by the Presbytery to serve a Pastoral Charge or Mission within the bounds of the Presbytery;

6.1.4 who are retired;

6.1.5 who at the time of ordination or commissioning have been granted leave for post-graduate studies, until subsequent action by the Transfer Committee;

6.1.6 of another denomination whose credentials have been approved in accordance with the procedures established by the General Council and who have been appointed by Presbytery to a Pastoral Charge, Mission, or Outreach Ministry within its bounds; or (2007)

6.1.7 who have been retained on the rolls of Presbytery and Conference by decision of the Conference; (2010)

6.2 lay members of the United Church:

6.2.1 appointed by the Presbytery/District as Designated Lay Ministers to serve a Pastoral Charge or other Presbytery/District Accountable Ministry within the bounds of the Presbytery/District; (2013)

- 6.2.2** retained on the roll at the end of an appointment; (2013)
- 6.2.3** who are Candidates appointed by the Presbytery to serve a Pastoral Charge, Mission, or Outreach Ministry within the bounds of the Presbytery;
- 6.2.4** receiving long-term disability benefits as a result of a disability that occurred at the time they were serving as Designated Lay Ministers within the bounds of the Presbytery; (2007)
- 6.2.5** elected by Congregations and Missions of the United Church, whether or not the Congregation or Mission is served by a member of the Order of Ministry. Such representatives are to be elected on the following basis for each Congregation or Mission: (2010) (2016)
- (1)** one representative from each Congregation or Mission with 100 or fewer resident members; (2010)
 - (2)** two representatives from each Congregation or Mission with between 101 and 200 resident members; (2010)
 - (3)** three representatives from each Congregation or Mission with between 201 and 300 resident members; (2010)
 - (4)** four representatives from each Congregation or Mission with 301 or more resident members; (2010)
- 6.2.6** elected, on the same basis as those in section 6.2.5, by an inter-denominational congregation or mission, including Canadian Forces Bases, in which the United Church is one of the participating denominations and which is recognized by Presbytery; (2010)
- 6.2.7** representing each of the following: the Presbyterian United Church Women, the Presbytery United Church Men, or those organizations which are their successors, one from each;
- 6.2.8** representing youth and young adults, selected as follows: at least one youth representative (age 13 to 18 years) and at least one young adult representative (age 18 to 30 years);
- 6.2.9** one representative from each Presbytery Accountable Ministry within the bounds of the Presbytery; and (2016)
- 6.2.10** who are Past Moderators who reside within the bounds of the Presbytery;
- 6.2.11** who are Past Presidents or Past Leading Elders of a Conference, whose congregational membership is within the jurisdiction of the Presbytery, and which Presbytery is within the Conference that they served as President or Leading Elder; (2010)
- 6.2.12** Every Presbytery shall have the authority to appoint annually up to ten lay members at large.
- 6.3** people in formal ministry leadership in congregations or ministries:
- (1)** of other denominations;
 - (2)** that have been granted associate membership in the United Church in accordance with policies adopted by the Executive of the General Council; and
 - (3)** that are located within the bounds of the Presbytery. (2016)
- 6.4** The Presbytery shall include as corresponding members:
- 6.4.1** lay Overseas Personnel for whom it is their home Presbytery; and
- 6.4.2** Candidates for the Order of Ministry sponsored by the Presbytery who are not appointed to a Pastoral Charge or Mission. (2016)

- 6.5** It shall be the duty of the Presbytery:
 - 6.5.1** to have the oversight of the Pastoral Charges within its bounds, review their records, and form new Pastoral Charges or local churches;
 - 6.5.2** to receive and dispose of Proposals and appeals from the lower governing bodies or courts;
 - 6.5.3** to transmit Proposals and appeals to the higher governing bodies or courts;
 - 6.5.4** to license as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader a member of the laity who has been recommended by a Session and who has successfully completed the course of study in accordance with the procedures established by the General Council and after examination is approved by the Presbytery; (2010)
 - 6.5.5** to examine and where appropriate:
 - (1)** to receive an Inquirer who has been recommended by a Session (or its equivalent) as a Candidate for the Order of Ministry; and
 - (2)** to certify each Candidate to a United Church theological school;
 - 6.5.6** to exercise faithful supervision of each Candidate; to enquire each year into the genuine call to ministry, personal character, motives, academic record, doctrinal beliefs, and general fitness for ministry of each Candidate; and to receive annual reports for each Candidate from the theological school;
 - 6.5.7** to make a recommendation to the Conference regarding each Candidate for the Order of Ministry upon completion of the prescribed requirements for ordination or commissioning;
 - 6.5.8** to provide an Act of Covenant through which a new relationship is established between an individual and a Pastoral Charge, the Presbytery itself, or a United Church related ministry accountable to the Presbytery;
 - 6.5.9** to participate in any Act of Covenant provided for by another court (Presbytery, Conference, or General Council) through which a new ministry relationship is established between an individual member of the Presbytery and that other court (or one of its agencies);
 - 6.5.10** to deal with matters sent down by the higher governing bodies or courts;
 - 6.5.11** to adopt measures for promoting the religious life of the Pastoral Charges within its bounds;
 - 6.5.12** to consult at the earliest possible date with a Pastoral Charge or the Official Board when the Minister dies, becomes disabled, or is unable to perform their duties due to an emergency. The Presbytery shall ensure that appropriate arrangements for pastoral care are made;
 - 6.5.13** to elect lay members to the Conference, of whom at least a majority shall have been previously elected by a Pastoral Charge to represent them at Presbytery;
 - 6.5.14** to elect one member of the Order of Ministry and one lay member to the Conference Settlement Committee; and (2010)
 - 6.5.15** to have the oversight of the conduct of members of the Order of Ministry on its roll.

IV. The Conference

- 7.0** The Conference shall consist of:
- 7.1.1** the members of the Order of Ministry who are on the roll of the Presbyteries within its bounds;
- 7.1.2** the lay persons who are under appointment within its bounds as in sections 6.2.1, 6.2.2, and 6.2.3;
- 7.2** lay members elected as provided for in section 6.5.13, at least equal in number to the members in sections 7.1.1 and 7.1.2; (2007)
- 7.3** the Chairpersons of Conference Committees and the President of the Conference United Church Women, who are not members of any Presbytery but who, at the discretion of the Conference, may be added to its membership;
- 7.4** persons who are corresponding members of Presbytery under sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 shall be corresponding members of the Conference; (2016)
- 7.5** representatives of lay organizations which may be recognized by the Conference from time to time, with the number of representatives to be determined by the Conference or its Executive.
- 7.6** It shall be the duty of the Conference:
- 7.6.1** (1) to meet at least every third year, or more frequently, as determined by the Conference; (2013)
- (2) to elect an Executive; (2010)
- 7.6.2** to determine the number and boundaries of the Presbyteries within its bounds, have oversight of them, and review their records;
- 7.6.3** to receive and dispose of appeals and Proposals, subject to the usual right to appeal;
- 7.6.4** to see that, as far as reasonably possible, every Pastoral Charge within its bounds shall have a pastorate without interruption, and that, as far as reasonably possible, every effective member of the Order of Ministry shall have a Pastoral Charge, and to effect this through a Settlement Committee;
- 7.6.5** to ordain or commission each Candidate for the Order of Ministry as examined and approved who has fulfilled the prescribed requirements and has been recommended by a Presbytery;
- 7.6.6** to admit to the Order of Ministry of the United Church a diaconal minister or the equivalent or an ordained minister from another denomination, subject to the regulations of the General Council;
- 7.6.7** to deal with matters referred to it by the General Council;
- 7.6.8** to elect to the General Council an equal number from each of two groups:
- (1) members of the Order of Ministry and Designated Lay Ministers; and (2016)
- (2) lay members other than Designated Lay Ministers; and (2007)
- 7.6.9** to have oversight of the religious life of the Church within its bounds, and to adopt such measures as may be judged necessary for its promotion.

V. The General Council

- 8.0** The General Council shall consist of:
- 8.1** an equal number, elected by the Conference, from each of two groups:
- 8.1.1** members of the Order of Ministry and Designated Lay Ministers; and (2016)
- 8.1.2** lay members other than Designated Lay Ministers; (2007)
- 8.2.1** the immediate Past Moderator, the retiring Moderator, and the General Secretary of the General Council, who shall be ex officio commissioners; (2010)
- 8.2.2** the Chairperson or alternate of each of the Permanent Committees of the Executive of the General Council, who shall be ex officio commissioners; (2010)
- 8.2.3** ten members elected by the General Council to serve on the Executive of the General Council (other than those elected by the Conferences to serve on the Executive of the General Council, or the Chairperson of each of the Permanent Committees of the Executive of the General Council), who shall be ex officio commissioners; (2010)
- 8.3.1** the President or President-Elect or the Leading Elder or Leading Elder-Elect of each Conference, who shall be ex officio commissioners; (2016)
- 8.3.2** the persons elected by the Conferences to serve on the Executive of the General Council, who shall be ex officio commissioners; and (2010)
- 8.4** three Overseas Personnel who are lay members of the United Church or members of the Order of Ministry and who are elected by Overseas Personnel. Overseas Personnel shall not be eligible for election as commissioners to the General Council by a Conference. (2016)
- 8.5** Its regular meeting shall be held every third year, except that the General Council or its Executive shall have the power, in circumstances that it deems exceptional, to defer the date of the regular meeting to the fourth year or to advance the date of the regular meeting to the second year. Its presiding officer shall be the chief executive officer of the Church, and for the term of office may be relieved of pastoral or other duties.
- 8.6** The General Council shall have full power:
- 8.6.1** to determine the number and boundaries of the Conferences, have oversight of them, and review their records;
- 8.6.2** (1) to legislate on matters respecting the doctrine, worship, membership, and government of the Church, subject to the following conditions:
- (a) First, that before any rule or law relative to these matters can become a permanent law, it must receive the approval of a majority of the Presbyteries, and, if advisable, Pastoral Charges also. It shall be considered advisable to obtain the approval of a majority of Pastoral Charges also only if the General Council has determined that the proposed rule or law involves a substantive change that, in the opinion of the General Council: (2007)
- i. alters the nature of the courts of the Church; (2007)
- ii. significantly changes the structures of the Church; (2007)
- iii. redefines the Church's understanding of ministry; (2007)

- iv. affects the articles of faith except for gender language applied to human beings; (2007)
 - v. changes the baptismal formula or vows made upon ordination or commissioning; (2007)
 - vi. moves a section from this Basis of Union to the By-Laws; or (2007)
 - vii. alters the Church's understanding of membership. (2007)
- (b) Second, that no terms of admission to full membership shall be prescribed other than those laid down in the New Testament.
- (c) And third, that the freedom of worship at present enjoyed in the negotiating Churches shall not be interfered with in the United Church;
- (2) to legislate on all matters respecting property, subject to the limitations elsewhere provided in the Basis of Union, and subject also to the approval of the Conference in which the property is situated;
- 8.6.3** to prescribe and regulate the courses of study for Candidates for the Order of Ministry and to regulate the admission of diaconal ministers (or their equivalent) and ordained ministers from other denominations;
- 8.6.4** to receive and dispose of Proposals;
- 8.6.5** to dispose of appeals;
- 8.6.6** to determine the missionary policy of the Church, and to provide for the conduct of its missions;
- 8.6.7** to have charge of the colleges of the Church, and to take what measures are deemed advisable for the promotion of Christian education;
- 8.6.8** to appoint committees and officers for the different departments of Church work, and to receive their reports and give them instruction and authority; (2007)
- 8.6.9** to correspond with other Churches; and
- 8.6.10** in general to enact such legislation and adopt such measures as may tend to promote true godliness, repress immorality, preserve the unity and well-being of the Church, and advance the Kingdom of Christ throughout the world.

THE ORDER OF MINISTRY

- 9.0 The Order of Ministry shall be open to both men and women.
- 9.1 The pastoral relationship, when initiated by call and/or settlement, shall be without time limit.
- 9.2 The policy of the Church shall be that, as far as reasonably possible, every Pastoral Charge shall have a pastorate without interruption, and that, as far as reasonably possible, every effective member of the Order of Ministry shall have a Pastoral Charge.
- 9.3 Every member of the Order of Ministry duly settled in a Pastoral Charge shall have the right to conduct services in the church, churches, or other places of worship in connection with the Pastoral Charge; and the right of occupancy of the manse in connection with the Pastoral Charge, subject to the rules and regulations of the United Church.

I. The Settlement Committee

- 9.4 There shall be a Settlement Committee for each Conference. On this Committee each Presbytery within the bounds of Conference shall be represented by one member of the Order of Ministry and one lay member elected by the Presbytery. (2010)
 - 9.4.1 It shall be the duty of this Committee to consider placing all Candidates for the Order of Ministry who have chosen, by the date during the year in which they are recommended for commissioning or ordination, set by the General Council, to be settled by the process of transfer and settlement. (2013)
 - 9.4.2 It shall also be the duty of this Committee to consider all applications for settlement from: (2013)
 - (1) members of the Order of Ministry;
 - (2) Candidates for the Order of Ministry who have chosen, by the date during the year in which they are recommended for commissioning or ordination, set by the General Council, to seek a call or an appointment; or
 - (3) Pastoral Charges, Presbytery Accountable Ministries, or Presbytery Recognized Ministries within the bounds of the Conference; (2013)which are transmitted by Presbyteries. For this purpose the Committee shall meet at least annually.
 - 9.4.3 A member of the Order of Ministry by his or her own action, and a Pastoral Charge through its constitutional representatives, may seek a change of pastoral relation by means of an application in writing to the Presbytery. If the Presbytery acts to declare a vacancy based on such a request, this will be reported promptly to the Settlement Committee. (2007)
 - 9.4.4 While settlements shall ordinarily be made at the annual meeting, the Settlement Committee shall have authority, through its Executive, to effect settlements during the Pastoral Year.

- 9.5** A member of the Order of Ministry, a Pastoral Charge at a meeting properly called to consider the pastoral relationship, any other Presbytery Accountable Ministry, or any other Presbytery Recognized Ministry may decide to apply through the Presbytery to be settled by the Settlement Committee. All such applications shall be in writing. (2010)
- 9.6** A member of the Order of Ministry shall have the right to appear before the Settlement Committee to represent their case in regard to their request for settlement. A Pastoral Charge, or Official Board when authorized by the Pastoral Charge, may appoint no more than two persons, who are members in good standing of that Pastoral Charge, to represent it before the Settlement Committee regarding a request for settlement. Such representatives shall be authorized at a meeting properly called to consider the pastoral relationship and such authorization shall be in writing. Any other Presbytery Accountable Ministry or Presbytery Recognized Ministry may appoint in writing no more than two persons to represent it before the Settlement Committee regarding a request for settlement.
- 9.6.1** A Pastoral Charge, where a vacancy has been declared by Presbytery, may extend a call to a member of the Order of Ministry who is eligible for call, but the right of settlement shall rest with the Settlement Committee, which shall report to the Conference for information only.
- 9.6.2** While the right of settlement shall rest with the Settlement Committee, it shall comply as far as possible with the expressed wishes of:
- (1)** members of the Order of Ministry and Pastoral Charges, other Presbytery Accountable Ministries, and other Presbytery Recognized Ministries; and (2013)
 - (2)** Candidates for the Order of Ministry who have chosen, by the date during the year in which they are recommended for commissioning or ordination, set by the General Council, to seek a call or an appointment, and Pastoral Charges, other Presbytery Accountable Ministries, and other Presbytery Recognized Ministries. (2013)
- 9.7** When a Pastoral Charge, with a vacancy declared by Presbytery, fails to extend a call by the end of the Pastoral Year (June 30), the Settlement Committee may make the settlement. (2010)
- 9.7.1** The Settlement Committee shall have authority to initiate communications with members of the Order of Ministry and with Pastoral Charges, other Presbytery Accountable Ministries, and other Presbytery Recognized Ministries, in order to effect settlements.
- 9.7.2** When a member of the Order of Ministry requested by a Pastoral Charge, other Presbytery Accountable Ministry, or other Presbytery Recognized Ministry cannot be settled, the Pastoral Charge, or its Official Board if so authorized by the Pastoral Charge, Presbytery Accountable Ministry, or Presbytery Recognized Ministry may place another name before the Settlement Committee. (2010)

II. The Transfer Committee

- 9.8 There shall be a Transfer Committee on which each Conference shall be represented.
- 9.8.1 The Transfer Committee shall have authority to transfer members of the Order of Ministry and Candidates for the Order of Ministry from one Conference to another, according to the Basis of Union.
- 9.9 The Transfer Committee shall have authority to transfer Candidates for the Order of Ministry recommended for commissioning or ordination who have chosen, by the date during the year in which they are recommended for commissioning or ordination, set by the General Council, to be settled by the process of transfer and settlement, to the Conference where, in the judgement of the Transfer Committee, their skills and gifts best match the needs and gifts of Presbytery Accountable Ministries and other Presbytery Recognized Ministries. (2016)

III. Training for the Order of Ministry

- 10.1 No person shall be received as a Candidate for the Order of Ministry unless first recommended by a Session, Official Board, or Pastoral Charge.
- 10.2 The duty of inquiry into the personal character, doctrinal beliefs, and general fitness for ministry of a Candidate for the Order of Ministry recommended by a Session, Official Board, or Pastoral Charge shall be laid upon the Presbytery, and such inquiry shall be repeated each year until a recommendation is made to the Conference for ordination or commissioning.
- 10.3 It shall be left to the General Council to determine, from time to time, the course of study leading to ordination and commissioning.
- 10.4 Provision shall be made, as far as possible, within the institutions of theological education for instruction in the courses of study in Theology as approved by the General Council.

IV. Commissioning, Ordination, and Admission

- 11.1 The Conference shall make the final inquiry into the personal character, doctrinal beliefs, and general fitness for ministry of Candidates recommended for ordination or commissioning and of those recommended for admission to the Order of Ministry of the United Church.
- 11.2 The Conference shall examine each Candidate on the Statement of Doctrine of the United Church and shall, before ordination, commissioning, or admission, be satisfied that such Candidate is in essential agreement therewith, and as a member of the Order of Ministry of the United Church accepts the statement as being in substance agreeable to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.
- 11.3 In the service to ordain, commission, or receive persons to the Order of Ministry, those presenting themselves shall, after hearing the following preamble, answer the questions which follow: (2007)
- “Jesus Christ came into the world to be the servant of God and all people. As servant Lord, Jesus calls his Church to a ministry of worship, witness, and reconciliation. In baptism we

were received as members of his Church and at confirmation we committed ourselves to its ministry. In order that this ministry of the whole Church may be fulfilled, God has given the ordained ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care, and the diaconal ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care. It is the responsibility of the Church to seek, train, and set apart those whom God calls so to serve.

1. (to each Candidate) Do you believe in God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and do you commit yourself anew to God?
2. (to each Candidate being ordained) Do you believe that God is calling you to the ordained ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care, and do you accept this call?
(to each Candidate being commissioned) Do you believe that God is calling you to the diaconal ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care, and do you accept this call?
3. (to each Candidate) Are you willing to exercise your ministry in accordance with the scriptures, in continuity with the faith of the Church, and subject to the oversight and discipline of The United Church of Canada?"

ADMINISTRATION

I. Missions

- 12.1 In the administration of the mission work of the United Church there shall be two departments: (a) Home, including all the mission work within the Dominion of Canada, Newfoundland, and the Bermudas; (b) Foreign, including the missions already established or that may be established in other countries.
- 12.2 For the oversight and administration of these two departments there shall be two Boards, to be known as the Board of Home Missions and the Board of Foreign Missions, to be elected in such a manner and endowed with such powers as the General Council may determine.
- 12.3 In recognition of the very valuable services rendered by the Women's Societies, the union, constitution, and lines of work of these societies shall be determined by the joint action of their Boards, subject to the approval of the General Council.
- 12.4 There shall be placed under the administration of the Home Mission Board of the United Church the monies now administered under the caption of the Sustentation Fund and Church and Parsonage Aid Fund of the Methodist Church; the Home Mission and Augmentation Funds, French Evangelization Fund, and Church and Manse Fund (except that under the Foreign Mission Board) of the Presbyterian Church; the Home Mission Fund of the Congregational Churches; and such portion of the Mission Fund now raised by the Methodist Church and the Foreign Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church, as is now expended in Canada, Newfoundland, and the Bermudas.

- 12.5 There shall be placed under the administration of the Foreign Mission Board of the United Church the Foreign Mission Fund of the Congregational Churches and that portion of the Mission Fund of the Methodist Church and of the Foreign Mission Fund of the Presbyterian Church now expended in other lands.
- 12.6 There shall be placed under the administration of the Board of Evangelism and Social Service and the Board of Sunday Schools and Young People's Societies of the United Church the funds now raised for the work of the Departments of Social Service and Evangelism and the Department of Sunday Schools and Young People's Societies of the negotiating Churches.
- 12.7 Inasmuch as certain expenses in connection with the various courts of the Church will have to be met, the ways and means of raising these funds shall be left to the General Council.

II. Publishing Interests

- 13.0 It shall be left to the General Council of the United Church to determine how far the publications now issued by the negotiating Churches shall be amalgamated.

III. Colleges

- 14.1 All the educational institutions connected with the three negotiating Churches shall, as far as possible, sustain the same relation to the United Church as, under their charter, they sustained to the respective Churches before Union, until the General Council shall determine otherwise and necessary legislation shall give effect to changes made thereby.
- 14.2 The policy of the Church shall be the maintenance of a limited number of thoroughly equipped theological schools, due regard being paid to the needs of different parts of the country. In furtherance of this policy amalgamation shall be effected as soon as possible in localities where two or more theological schools are doing the same type of work.
- 14.3 In addition to the Governing Boards of the several theological institutions, the General Council shall have general oversight of the educational interests of the Church. (2007)
- 14.4 The budget of the General Council shall include such funds as are needed to supplement the revenues of the several educational institutions, to assist students in their preparation for the ministry of the church, and for such other purposes and under such regulations as the General Council may from time to time determine. (2010)
- 14.5 The several educational institutions shall be encouraged to obtain permanent endowments for their maintenance, may receive contributions for this and other purposes at any time, and, with the consent of the General Council, may proceed to appeal for such funds. (2007)

IV. Reorganization

- 15.0 The General Council is empowered to effect from time to time a reorganization of the Boards and Committees of the Church, whether by way of amalgamation, rearrangement, or otherwise howsoever, and to amend the same from time to time; to place under the administration of the Boards, Committees, and Departments established by it the funds appropriate thereto; and to declare that sections 12.1, 12.2, 12.4, 12.5, and 12.6 of the

Administration Section of the Basis of Union under the heading Missions and sections 14.3, 14.4, and 14.5 under the heading Colleges be repealed or amended as the case may be to conform with the constitution and powers of the new Boards and Departments so established; and that such repeal or amendment shall come into effect on the dates set by the General Council in such declaration, and thereupon the said paragraphs shall stand repealed or amended as set forth in such declaration.

V. The Pension Fund

- 16.0** Whereas there exist, in some form, in all the negotiating Churches funds to aid aged and retired ministers, and widows and orphans of ministers, provision for similar purposes shall be made in the constitution of the United Church by such amalgamation or modification of existing methods as may be found practicable; and such provision shall embrace the following particulars.
- 16.1** The rights of present and prospective claimants on existing funds in any of the negotiating Churches shall be adequately protected. To this end:
- 16.1.1** the present capital investments of the various benevolent funds of the negotiating Churches, and the income now contributed to those funds by publishing interests shall be combined into a "common trust," if practicable. The rights of present claimants and of prospective claimants (the latter being computed as of the date of the Union) shall be a first charge on the revenue from this trust. If it be found that differences in the constitution and administration of the several funds are such as to necessitate separate trusts, instead of a common trust, this shall not be a bar to the carrying out of the general plan, because in that case their revenues shall be combined.
- 16.1.2** the General Council of the United Church shall provide for:
- (1)** the assessing of each Minister who is a member of any of the existing funds at the date of the Union and of all members of the Order of Ministry received into, ordained, or commissioned in the United Church after the Union, on the basis of stipend or age, or both stipend and age, as the General Council may determine; and
 - (2)** the collecting of contributions, which shall be obligatory upon all local churches, based upon an equitable allocation or assessment under the rules to be formulated by the General Council, the minimum of such allocation or assessment being the amount which, together with the revenue from said trust or trusts and the foregoing assessment upon members of the Order of Ministry, is requisite to make good the claims of claimants upon the Superannuation Fund to be instituted by the General Council.
- 16.2** Claimants on the proposed Fund shall include the following:
- 16.2.1** all Ministers who, at the time of the Union, are beneficiaries of existing funds;
- 16.2.2** all Ministers who, at the time of the Union, are regular contributors to existing funds on the scale provided by their respective denominations;
- 16.2.3** all Ministers' widows and orphans who are now, or may hereafter become, entitled to participate in the proposed Fund;
- 16.2.4** all Ministers, not members of or contributors to existing funds, who may signify their desire to become members of and contributors to the proposed Fund, on the basis of payments sanctioned by the General Council of the United Church. Provision shall be

made whereby Ministers so applying may, by a certain scale of payments, be entitled to have their claim upon the proposed Fund date from the time of their reception into the ministry of any of the negotiating Churches instead of from the date of the Union;

- 16.2.5** all members of the Order of Ministry received into, ordained, or commissioned in the Church after the Union inasmuch as they shall be required at the time of their reception, ordination, or commissioning to become members of and contributors to the proposed Fund;
 - 16.2.6** lay missionaries appointed by the Board of Overseas Missions and such persons employed by the General Council, the Divisions, or Departments, as the General Council may designate; and
 - 16.2.7** Diaconal Ministers, i.e., those members of the Order of Ministry who have been commissioned or formerly designated or set apart as Deaconesses and Certified Churchmen.
- 16.3** The sources of revenue of the proposed Fund shall be the following:
- 16.3.1** contributions of Ministers who are members of said Fund at its inception, and those who afterward become members, on a scale to be adopted by the General Council of the Church;
 - 16.3.2** offerings in all local churches based upon an equitable allocation to be made by the Board of Management of said Fund, under regulations sanctioned by the General Council;
 - 16.3.3** legacies and donations given for the purpose;
 - 16.3.4** such grants from the profits of the publishing interests of the Church as may from time to time be determined under regulations to be framed by the General Council; and
 - 16.3.5** proceeds of any investments that may be made in the interests of the said Fund.
- 16.4** The General Council shall have power to use such part of the Pension Fund of the United Church as it may deem necessary for the purchase of annuities from the Dominion of Canada for such beneficiaries of the said Fund as the General Council may deem expedient.

Bylaws

These bylaws work best when applied in a spirit of open conversation. All those who are involved in making a particular decision, or who will be affected by its outcome, are strongly encouraged to consult with each other. Depending on the situation, this may include members, adherents, ministry personnel, officers, staff, congregations, pastoral charges, courts, committees, or other bodies.

The For Your Information symbol is used for additional information that will help in understanding and using the bylaws.



The cross-reference symbol is used to direct readers to other sections of The Manual that may apply.



The book symbol is used to indicate resources outside of The Manual that contain additional policies, procedures, and information, and where to find them.



A. INTRODUCTION TO GOVERNANCE IN THE UNITED CHURCH

1. Outline of Church Structure

The basic unit of organization for the United Church is the pastoral charge. A pastoral charge may be made up of one or more congregations.

The United Church is organized into four levels, or courts. The four courts are

- (a) the governing body of the pastoral charge;
- (b) the presbytery;
- (c) the Conference; and
- (d) the General Council.

Each pastoral charge must have a group of members to oversee its life and work. In these bylaws, this group is called the governing body of the pastoral charge. The governing body is the court of the pastoral charge.

The governing body of the pastoral charge may be the Session/Stewards/Official Board, Church Board, Church Council, or some other structure. See B. Local Ministry Unit 7.



This section, A. Introduction to Governance in the United Church, sets out basic requirements that apply to congregations, pastoral charges, and all courts.

2. Decision-Making

The members of a congregation, pastoral charge, or court make decisions

- (a) on the basis of an understanding of scripture and of the ethos of the United Church;
- (b) in the light of Christian experience; and
- (c) under the guidance of the Holy Spirit moving in the discussion during the meeting of such a body.

They decide themselves how they will vote in any matter. They are not bound by the opinions, directions, or previous decisions of the body that elected or appointed them.



See The Rules of Debate and Order included as an appendix for information on the process for making decisions.

3. Responsibilities

Congregations, pastoral charges, and the courts of the United Church work in relationship with each other in the spirit of the opening words of A New Creed: “We are not alone.”

These bodies share responsibility for the life and mission of the United Church.

Each body has been assigned certain actions that it has the duty to take, and other actions that it has the power to take if it chooses. Both kinds of actions are the responsibilities of that body.

4. Meetings

Congregations, pastoral charges, other local ministry units and courts are responsible for deciding how to hold their meetings. They have the following options:

- (a) in person;
- (b) by telephone conference call; or
- (c) in any other way where participants can communicate with each other at the same time. For example, by instant messaging or webcam simulcast technology.



People may meet together at the same time through technology. This allows for the Spirit to move in the way that happens when “two or more are gathered.” It often draws us in directions we did not expect.



There are specific requirements that must be followed for meetings of congregations, pastoral charges, congregational trustees, and courts. See the following sections on meetings in these bylaws: B. Local Ministry Unit 5, B. Local Ministry Unit 7.7, C. Presbytery 5, D. Conference 4, E. General Council 3, and G. Congregational Life 3.6.

5. Records

5.1 Meaning of “Records”

A record is any kind of recorded information, including membership rolls, meeting minutes, baptismal and marriage registers, letters and other documents, plans, maps, drawings, graphic works, photographs, film, microfilm, sound recordings, videotapes, and any other kind of recorded information. It may be recorded in print form, on film, electronically, or in any other way.

5.2 Value of Records

Church records have historical and legal value.

5.3 Keeping Records

Congregations, pastoral charges, and courts are responsible for

- (a) creating their own records;
- (b) making sure the records are accurate and complete; and
- (c) keeping the records safe, secure, and under their control until the records are transferred to the appropriate archives.

There are procedures for creating, keeping, transferring, and depositing records.

*These procedures must be followed by congregations, pastoral charges, and courts. See *Guidelines for the Content of Presbytery Meeting Minutes, Guidelines for Minutes and Notes of Meetings, Privacy Issues: Recordkeeping and Archives, and What Do the Archives Want? A Basic Guide for Congregations.**

These resources are available from the General Council Office.



5.4 Ownership of Records

All church records belong to the United Church. They may not be taken or kept by any member, minister, or other person except where allowed in these bylaws or under the archives policy.

The archives policy for the General Council Archives is available on request from the General Council Office. The archives policy for a Conference Archives is available from the Conference office.



5.5 Reviewing Records

Presbyteries, Conferences, and the General Council are responsible for reviewing the records of the courts that they oversee. They must ensure that these courts are carrying out their responsibilities for records.

5.6 Archiving Records

Congregations, pastoral charges, presbyteries, and Conferences are responsible for placing their records and other documents in the Conference Archives when they are no longer regularly needed.

The General Council is responsible for placing its records and other documents in the General Council Archives when they are no longer regularly needed.

5.7 Removing Documents from Archives

A document may only be removed from the General Council Archives or Conference Archives if

- (a) its removal is required by a civil court order; or
- (b) permission is given under the archives policy.

6. Website Posting of Minutes and Decisions

6.1 Application

This section (A.6) applies to the General Council, Conferences, presbyteries, congregations, pastoral charges, and other local ministry units. (2016)

6.2 Posting Draft Minutes

The court is responsible for posting the draft minutes of meetings of the court, its executive, its sub-executive, and commissions. (2016)

6.3 Website or Alternative

The court must post these draft minutes on its website or, if there is no website, by any other means that makes them available to its members promptly. Minutes of governing bodies of local ministry units must be posted in some way that makes them available to members of the local ministry unit. (2016)

6.4 Decisions

Minutes must clearly indicate any decisions that have been made. (2016)

6.5 Approved Minutes

The court must post the minutes again after approval. (2016)

7. Membership of Courts

7.1 Voting Members

A court consists of members who are

- (a) appointed or elected to the court; or
- (b) automatic members of the court because of the offices they hold.

Both kinds of members have the right to vote at meetings of the court.

7.2 Corresponding Members

A court may also have corresponding members. These are people who have been given one or more of the following privileges by the court:

- (a) receiving notice of a meeting;
- (b) attending a meeting;
- (c) taking part in some or all of the court's discussion at a meeting; or
- (d) receiving minutes of a meeting.

Corresponding members may not vote at meetings of the court.

B. LOCAL MINISTRY UNIT

1. Types of Local Ministry Units

There are four main types of local ministry units in the United Church: congregations, pastoral charges, missions, and outreach ministries.



For a quick overview of the different kinds of ministry units and their requirements, see the Overview of Local Ministries chart available from the General Council Office.

1.1 Congregation

A congregation is a group of people that meets for public worship. It has been formed by the presbytery as a congregation of the United Church.

Membership in the church happens at the congregational level. That is, to be a lay member of the United Church, one must be a member of a congregation of the United Church.

1.2 Pastoral Charge

A pastoral charge, the basic unit of organization of the United Church, consists of one or more congregations. It has been formed by the presbytery as a pastoral charge of the United Church.

1.3 Mission

A mission is a group of people that meets for public worship like a congregation. A mission is a less formal structure than a congregation and may be a time-limited or transitional one. It is recognized by the presbytery as part of the United Church.

1.4 Outreach Ministry

An outreach ministry is an active ministry that

- (a) is recognized as an outreach ministry by the presbytery, the Conference, or a General Council working unit;
- (b) relates to that body through supervision or in some other way;
- (c) may receive funding from that body; and
- (d) is not a congregation, pastoral charge, or mission.

There are different kinds of outreach ministries in the United Church, for example, hospitals, social service centres, community projects, and chaplaincies.

1.5 Other Types of Local Ministry Units

Ministry can happen in other ways.

It arises within communities and in response to local needs, at the bidding of the Spirit.

Local ministry units may be intended as time-limited, transitional, or ongoing. A local ministry unit may be recognized as a distinctive ministry initiative within the United Church. The local ministry unit must first work with the presbytery to determine appropriate governance, oversight, and accountability structures and requirements. A formal structure may not be needed. It depends on the circumstances.

2. Structure of Local Ministry Units

A governance structure is a framework for the life and work of the local ministry unit. It must free people to live out their commitment to God and to each other.

2.1 Congregations and Pastoral Charges

These bylaws set out all of the United Church's requirements for membership, responsibilities, organization, and meetings of congregations, pastoral charges, and their governing bodies.

2.2 Missions

2.2.1 Specific Requirements

The governance requirements for congregations and pastoral charges do not automatically apply to missions.

There are no specific governance requirements for a mission in these bylaws, with one exception: a mission elects representatives to the presbytery on the same basis as a congregation.

For information on how a mission elects representatives, see section B.4.2 below.



2.2.2 Responsibility for Governance

The presbytery is responsible for ensuring that the mission has a governance structure in place that the presbytery has approved.

2.2.3 Setting Up the Governance Structure

The mission works with the presbytery to set up a governance structure. The membership, responsibilities, organization, and meeting requirements for the mission must be clear. The mission may follow the governance requirements for congregations and pastoral charges or customize them for its own needs and circumstances.

2.2.4 Accountability

A mission is accountable to the presbytery.

2.3 Outreach Ministries

2.3.1 Specific Requirements

The governance requirements for congregations and pastoral charges do not automatically apply to outreach ministries.

There are no specific governance requirements for an outreach ministry in these bylaws, with one exception: If an outreach ministry is incorporated, it must meet all of the United Church's requirements for incorporated ministries.



For more information on incorporated ministries, see section B.8 below.

2.3.2 Responsibility for Governance

A presbytery, Conference, or General Council working unit may start an outreach ministry. It may also name an existing ministry as an outreach ministry.

In either case, it is responsible for ensuring that the outreach ministry has a governance structure in place.

2.3.3 Setting Up the Governance Structure

A new outreach ministry works with the body that recognizes it (presbytery, Conference, or General Council working unit) to set up a governance structure. The membership, responsibilities, organization, and meeting requirements for the outreach ministry must be clear. The outreach ministry may follow the governance requirements for congregations and pastoral charges or customize them for its own needs and circumstances.

2.3.4 Accountability

The outreach ministry and the body that recognizes it must decide on their ongoing relationship. This includes approval of governance structure, accountability, supervision, and any funding to be given to the outreach ministry.

2.4 Other Terms for Local Ministry Units

The term "presbytery-accountable ministry" refers to any kind of local ministry unit that is accountable to the presbytery. It includes congregations, pastoral charges, missions, and any outreach ministry or other ministry accountable to the presbytery.

The term "presbytery-recognized ministry" is broader than "presbytery-accountable ministry." It includes

- (a) all presbytery-accountable ministries; and
- (b) any other local ministry units that are not accountable to the presbytery but are recognized by it as valid expressions of Christian ministry.



The presbytery must follow criteria set by the appropriate General Council working unit in deciding whether to recognize a local ministry unit that is not accountable to the presbytery. See the Pastoral Relations: Engaging and Supporting resource available from the General Council Office.

3. Membership and Other Participation in a Congregation

*The congregation is the most common type of local ministry unit in the United Church.
Other local ministry units may be created with the approval of the presbytery.*



*The requirements set out here for membership in a congregation may be customized for other local ministry units, with the approval of the presbytery.
For more information, see sections B.1 and B.2 above.*



3.1 General

The congregation consists of

- (a) members;
- (b) full members;
- (c) adherents; and
- (d) members of the order of ministry whose names have been added to the congregation's membership roll.

The process for adding the name of a member of the order of ministry to the congregation's membership roll is set out in section B.3.5.2 below.



3.2 Members

The members of a congregation are

- (a) children of full members; and
- (b) children who have been baptized but have not yet become full members.

3.2.1 Baptism of Children

Children may be baptized

- (a) with the advance approval of the governing body or a chaplain in the Canadian Forces; and
- (b) if one or both of their parents are full members in good standing.

The governing body may make exceptions to these requirements.

3.2.2 Emergency Baptism

In an emergency where there is no time to get advance approval of a baptism, the person who baptizes must inform the governing body at its next meeting, and ask the governing body to confirm the decision to baptize.

3.3 Full Members

3.3.1 Approval

A person becomes a full member of the congregation with the approval of

- (a) the governing body;

- (b) the congregation, if the congregation decides to take on this responsibility; or
- (c) a chaplain in the Canadian Forces and two full members of the United Church, if the person is under the chaplain's pastoral care.

3.3.2 Readiness

In order to become a full member, a person must have enough knowledge about the Christian faith and the United Church to make their commitment with understanding.

3.3.3 Process

A person becomes a full member through one of the following ways:

- (a) adult baptism and profession of faith;
- (b) confirmation, if the person was baptized as a child and has now reached the age of understanding;
- (c) reaffirmation of Christian faith, if the person has already been baptized and made a profession of faith at an earlier time;
- (d) through a certificate of transfer of membership in good standing from another congregation or church; or
- (e) if the person cannot get a certificate of transfer of membership from another church, they may transfer their membership if the governing body is satisfied that they
 - (i) have been baptized;
 - (ii) became full members of their church after they made a profession of Christian faith;
 - (iii) are of good Christian character; and
 - (iv) have valid reasons for transferring to the United Church.

Certificates of Transfer: If a certificate of transfer of membership is presented (see paragraph (d) above) that is more than one year old, the governing body must check that the person is still in good standing with their congregation. If the certificate is more than three years old, the governing body must be satisfied with the person's explanation for the time lapse.

3.4 Adherents

3.4.1 Meaning

An adherent of a congregation is a person who contributes regularly to the life and work of the congregation but is not a member or full member.

3.4.2 Application

The governing body is responsible for deciding who is an adherent.



Many people establish long-standing, committed relationships with congregations without formally becoming "full members" under section B.3.3.3 above. These people are often valued participants in the life of congregations as "adherents."

3.5 Members of the Order of Ministry

3.5.1 Members Settled in or Appointed to the Pastoral Charge

A member of the order of ministry who has been settled in or appointed to a pastoral charge is not a member of the congregation, and is not eligible to have their name added to the membership roll.

3.5.2 Other Members of the Order of Ministry

Any other member of the order of ministry may make a request to the governing body to have their name added to the membership roll of the congregation. The governing body is responsible for making a decision on the request.

3.6 Membership Records

3.6.1 Keeping Records

The governing body is responsible for

- (a) keeping a record of all baptisms in the congregation;
- (b) keeping the membership roll of the congregation;
- (c) keeping the historic membership roll of the congregation; and
- (d) recording, in its minutes, all decisions to admit people as full members.

3.6.2 Revising the Roll

The governing body is responsible for revising the membership roll at least annually by

- (a) removing the names of members who have died;
- (b) removing the names of members who have transferred to other congregations;
- (c) removing the names of members who have resigned;
- (d) removing the names of members who, in the governing body's opinion, have been absent for too long without a reasonable excuse;
- (e) recording, in its minutes, all decisions to remove a name from the roll; and
- (f) encouraging members who have moved away from the area to become members of congregations closer to their new homes.

3.6.3 Restoring Names to the Roll

A person whose name has been removed from the membership roll or who is under discipline may ask to become a full member in good standing again. The governing body is responsible for making a decision on the request.

3.6.4 Historic Roll

The governing body is responsible for keeping the historic roll, which includes the membership roll and the names of members removed under section B.3.6.2 above.

3.7 Who May Vote

3.7.1 Full Members May Vote

All full members whose names are on the membership roll have the right to vote at all meetings of the congregation.

3.7.2 When Adherents May Vote

Adherents may vote at meetings of the congregation if

- (a) the full members decide to allow adherents to vote; and
- (b) the vote is on a financial or administrative matter.

3.7.3 When Adherents May Not Vote

Adherents may not vote

- (a) on anything involving the pastoral relationship, including searches, calls, and appointments;

Ministry personnel serve a pastoral charge or other local ministry unit through a “pastoral relationship.” A pastoral relationship starts with a call and settlement, settlement, or appointment, depending on the circumstances. The pastoral relationship is between the ministry personnel, the pastoral charge or other local ministry unit, and the presbytery. Each pastoral relationship has its own terms and conditions in addition to the general terms set out in these bylaws.

- (b) in elections or appointments of the governing body, committees, trustees, and presbytery representatives, and of other bodies and officers;
- (c) on anything involving the order of worship;
- (d) on amalgamating, disbanding, or realigning the congregation or pastoral charge; and
- (e) on property matters needing presbytery consent.

4. Responsibilities of a Congregation

The requirements set out here for the responsibilities of a congregation may be customized for other local ministry units, with the approval of the presbytery.

4.1 General

The congregation is responsible for

- (a) deciding on a governance model for the congregation;
- (b) electing a chair and secretary of the annual meeting;
- (c) electing a governing body;
- (d) electing a chair of the governing body;
- (e) electing the members of the committees;
- (f) appointing the trustees for the congregation;
- (g) electing representatives to the presbytery;

- (h) approving a budget for the congregation;
- (i) calling or requesting settlement of a member of the order of ministry; and
- (j) requesting the ending of a pastoral relationship.

4.2 Election of Presbytery Representatives

The congregation is responsible for electing representatives of the congregation to the presbytery. Representatives must be full members. The number of representatives depends on the size of the congregation:

- (a) one representative if the congregation has 100 or fewer resident members;
- (b) two representatives if the congregation has 101 to 200 resident members;
- (c) three representatives if the congregation has 201 to 300 resident members; and
- (d) four representatives if the congregation has more than 300 resident members.

“Resident members” are full members of the congregation who participate regularly in the life of the congregation. To “participate regularly” means to participate as much as a person is able, considering their health and other circumstances.

5. Meetings of a Congregation or Pastoral Charge

The requirements set out here for congregational meetings may be customized for other local ministry units, with the approval of the presbytery.



5.1 Frequency

The congregation or pastoral charge must meet annually. This meeting must be held as early as possible in the calendar year. The congregation or pastoral charge may also decide to meet more often than annually.

5.2 Annual Meeting

At the annual meeting, the congregation or pastoral charge is responsible for

- (a) electing a chair and a secretary of the annual meeting;
- (b) receiving the annual reports from the governing body, committees, and other groups in the congregation or pastoral charge;
- (c) electing the governing body and presbytery representatives; and
- (d) considering and making a decision on the draft annual budget.

5.3 Calling Meetings

5.3.1 Who May Call a Meeting

Meetings of the congregation or pastoral charge must be called by one of the following people:

- (a) the chair of the annual meeting;
- (b) a member of the order of ministry settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge;

- (c) a designated lay minister recognized by the appropriate court and appointed to the pastoral charge; or
- (d) the pastoral charge supervisor.

5.3.2 When They May Call a Meeting

Any of these people may call a meeting on their own initiative at any time.

5.3.3 When They Must Call a Meeting

- a. **Written Request:** They must call a meeting when they have received a written request from
 - (i) the governing body; or
 - (ii) 10 full members of the congregation or pastoral charge. (2016)
- b. **Meetings about Trustees:** They must call a meeting when the purpose of the meeting is to appoint or remove trustees and they have received a written request from
 - (i) the governing body;
 - (ii) a trustee; or
 - (iii) seven members of the congregation or pastoral charge.
- c. **When Presbytery Orders a Meeting:** They must call a meeting when required to do so by the presbytery.

5.3.4 When the Meeting Must be Held

The meeting must be held within 15 days of receiving the request.

There is an exception to this requirement for meetings called for pastoral relations matters as set out in section B.5.4.2 b below. (2016)

5.3.5 Presbytery May Call a Meeting

The presbytery may also call a meeting of the congregation or pastoral charge at any time. If it calls a meeting, it must decide who will chair the meeting.

5.4 Notice of Meeting

5.4.1 Who Gives Notice

The person who calls the meeting is responsible for giving advance notice of the meeting.

If the presbytery is calling the meeting, the advance notice must be given by

- (a) the pastoral charge supervisor, if there is one; or if none
- (b) another member of the presbytery other than the ministry personnel settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge or the pastoral charge supervisor.

5.4.2 How Notice Is Given

There are different processes for giving notice, depending on the purpose of the meeting. All notices must indicate the purpose of the meeting.

- a. Needs Assessment and Searches:** This section applies if the purpose of the meeting is to
- (i) elect representatives of the pastoral charge to a Joint Needs Assessment Committee;
 - (ii) receive and act upon a report of a Joint Needs Assessment Committee; or
 - (iii) elect representatives of the pastoral charge to a Joint Search Committee.

Before giving notice to the congregation or pastoral charge, the person calling the meeting must give notice to the secretary of the presbytery and to the ministry personnel settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge.

Notice of the meeting must be read during public worship on two Sundays. After notice has been read on the second Sunday, the meeting may take place on the next day (Monday) or on any day after that. (2016)

- b. Pastoral Relations Matters:** This section applies if the purpose of the meeting is to deal with the pastoral relationship in any way, including considering whether to approve a new pastoral relationship or whether to request the ending of an existing one.

The person calling the meeting must give notice to the secretary of the presbytery and to the ministry personnel settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge.

The chair of the presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee or equivalent is responsible for setting the date of the meeting and informing the person calling the meeting of that date.

Notice of the meeting must be read during public worship on two Sundays by the person calling the meeting. After notice has been read on the second Sunday, the meeting may take place on the next day (Monday) or on any day after that, as set by the chair of the presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee or equivalent. (2016)

- c. Amalgamations and Disbanding:** This section applies if the purpose of the meeting is to consider making a decision to
- (i) amalgamate with one or more congregations; or
 - (ii) disband.

Notice of the meeting must be read during public worship on two Sundays. After notice has been read on the second Sunday, the meeting may take place on the next day (Monday) or on any day after that. (2016)

- d. Electing/Removing Governing Body:** This section applies if the purpose of the meeting is to elect or to remove members of the governing body.

Notice of the meeting must be read during public worship on two Sundays. After notice has been read on the second Sunday, the meeting may take place on the next day (Monday) or on any day after that.

- e. Decisions about Trustees of the Congregation:** This section applies if the purpose of the meeting is to

- (i) consider the resignation of a trustee;
- (ii) consider making a decision that a person is no longer a trustee for any other reason; or
- (iii) appoint new trustees.

Notice of the meeting must be read from the pulpit by the minister or other officiant during public worship on two Sundays. After notice has been read on the second Sunday, the meeting may take place the same day or on any day after that.

There may be cases where a trustee is personally responsible for a debt of the congregation. In those cases, if the purpose of the meeting is the one listed in paragraph (ii) above, all trustees must be given at least eight days' advance notice of the congregational meeting.



There are further requirements for cases where a trustee is personally responsible for a debt of the congregation. See G. Congregational Life 3.3.6 c. The requirements for giving advance notice to the trustees are set out in section G. Congregational Life 3.6.2.



For congregational meetings about trustees, the notice requirements are very precise. They come from The United Church of Canada Act. They could only be changed through federal legislation.

- f. Other Meetings:** This section applies if the purpose of the meeting is different from any of those covered in sections B.5.4.2 a, b, c, d, or e above.

Notice of the meeting must be read during public worship at least once before the meeting. After notice has been read, the meeting may take place the same day or on any day after that.

(2016)

5.5 Quorum—Minimum Number of Members Present

A meeting of the congregation or pastoral charge may take place only if a minimum number of full members is present, as follows:

- (a) for congregations or pastoral charges with 100 or more full members, at least 20 full members must be present;
- (b) for congregations or pastoral charges with between 30 and 99 full members, at least 10 full members must be present; and
- (c) for congregations or pastoral charges with fewer than 30 full members, at least 1/3 of the full membership must be present.

(2016)

5.6 Voting

Voting must be by show of hands unless the congregation or pastoral charge decides on another way of voting. Proxy voting or voting by mail-in ballots is not permitted. (2016)

Voters must be participants in the meeting where the voting takes place. They vote under the guidance of the Spirit moving in the discussion during the meeting. This allows the Spirit to move in the way that happens when “two or more are gathered.” It often draws us in directions we did not expect. For this reason, proxy voting and voting by mail-in ballots are not permitted.



6. Organization—Officers of the Congregation or Pastoral Charge

6.1 Chair

6.1.1 Election

The congregation or pastoral charge is responsible for electing a chair at its annual meeting. The chair

- (a) must be a full member of the congregation; and
- (b) holds office until the next annual meeting.

6.1.2 Responsibilities

The chair is responsible for

- (a) chairing all meetings of the congregation or pastoral charge except for meetings called by the presbytery;

If the presbytery calls a meeting of the congregation or pastoral charge, the presbytery will decide who will chair the meeting. It may be the chair of the annual meeting or some other person. See section B.5.3.5 above.



- (b) taking votes and announcing the results; and
- (c) voting only if there is a tie.

6.2 Secretary

The congregation or pastoral charge is responsible for electing a secretary at its annual meeting. The secretary

- (a) is responsible for taking minutes at all meetings of the congregation or pastoral charge; and
- (b) holds office until the next annual meeting.

7. Organization—Governing Body of the Congregation or Pastoral Charge

fyi

The requirements set out here for a governing body of a congregation or pastoral charge may be customized for other local ministry units, with the approval of the presbytery.

7.1 Responsibilities of the Congregation or Pastoral Charge

A congregation or pastoral charge is responsible for having a governing body. It must

(a) decide on a governance model for the congregation or pastoral charge; and

X

When the congregation or pastoral charge has decided on its governance model, it must seek presbytery approval. See section B.7.2 below.

(b) elect the members of the governing body.

X

Some people are automatically members of the governing body because of the position they hold in the congregation or pastoral charge. See section B.7.3.1 below. These people are not elected by the congregation or pastoral charge.

The governing body is accountable to the congregation or pastoral charge.

7.2 Requirements for the Governing Body

The governing body may be any structure that

(a) fulfills all of the responsibilities of a governing body in these bylaws;

(b) fulfills the membership and other requirements for a governing body in these bylaws;

(c) is approved by the congregation or pastoral charge; and

(d) is approved by the presbytery.

fyi

The governing body may take any shape the congregation or pastoral charge chooses, with the approval of the presbytery. For example, a very small congregation may choose to have the entire membership of the congregation serve as the governing body.

The congregation or pastoral charge works with the presbytery to set up the structure of its governing body. The following three structures are common:

(a) *the Session/Stewards/Official Board model;*

(b) *a unified board model, called the Church Board; and*

(c) *a council structure, called the Church Council.*

fyi

A congregation or pastoral charge that has one of these structures may continue with it. The presbytery's approval is not required.

Some congregations and pastoral charges include elders in their governance structure. Elders are people elected by the congregation or pastoral charge for their wisdom, caring, spiritual discernment, and other gifts of the Spirit. They must be members of the congregation or pastoral charge unless the presbytery makes an exception. Elders may act as the governing body of the congregation or pastoral charge. They may also exercise leadership in other ways, with the approval of the congregation or pastoral charge and the presbytery.

fyi

7.2.1 Changes to Governing Body Structure

The congregation or pastoral charge may make changes to the structure of its governing body as long as

- (a) the new structure meets the requirements of paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of section B.7.2 above;
- (b) the congregation or pastoral charge informs the presbytery of each change promptly; and
- (c) the congregation or pastoral charge makes any adjustments to the new structure that the presbytery may direct.

(2016)

The presbytery may set a policy guideline to indicate the kinds of changes to a congregation's governance model that the presbytery typically accepts.



7.2.2 Multi-point Pastoral Charges

If the pastoral charge has more than one congregation,

- (a) there must be a governing body for the pastoral charge; and
- (b) there may also be a governing body for each congregation to deal with matters that involve only that congregation.

If there is more than one governing body, the congregations and pastoral charge are responsible for dividing the responsibilities among the governing bodies, with the approval of the presbytery.

7.3 Membership of the Governing Body

7.3.1 General

The governing body has the following members:

- (a) the full members of the congregation elected by the congregation or pastoral charge;
- (b) the members of the order of ministry who have been settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge;
- (c) the designated lay ministers who have been recognized by the appropriate court and appointed to the pastoral charge;
- (d) the pastoral charge supervisor, if there is no such member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister; and
- (e) any other full members that the congregation or pastoral charge includes in the membership of its governing body. This may include full members who hold specific positions in the congregation or pastoral charge.

There is one exception to the requirement in paragraphs (a) and (e) above for governing body members to be full members of the congregation: People who are not full members may be elected in special circumstances with the presbytery's approval.

7.3.2 Term of Office

The congregation or pastoral charge is responsible for setting the term of office for the elected members of the governing body.

7.3.3 Admission to Office

The congregation or pastoral charge may choose to admit the members elected to the governing body in a formal way.

7.3.4 Resignation

A member of a governing body may resign.

7.3.5 Removal from Office

A member of a governing body may be removed from office

- (a) by the governing body through a discipline process;
- (b) by the governing body if the member has been absent from meetings for a year without adequate reason;
- (c) by the congregation or pastoral charge; or
- (d) by the presbytery if the presbytery decides it is in the best interests of the pastoral charge.

7.3.6 Vacancies

The governing body is responsible for informing the pastoral charge when there are vacancies on the governing body. The governing body may fill the vacancy until the pastoral charge elects a replacement.

(2016)

7.4 Responsibilities of the Governing Body

The governing body is the court of the congregation or pastoral charge. It has the following responsibilities.

7.4.1 Spiritual Matters

The governing body oversees the spiritual interests of the congregation or pastoral charge, including

- (a) admitting people as full members;
- (b) removing people as full members;
- (c) granting certificates of transfer of membership;
- (d) the discipline of members;
- (e) the administration of the sacraments;
- (f) Christian education;
- (g) public worship;
- (h) the use of the church building;
- (i) pastoral care and visiting; and
- (j) outreach in evangelism and social action.

7.4.2 Financial Matters

The governing body has general oversight of the finances of the congregation or pastoral charge, including

- (a) fundraising;
- (b) disbursement of funds; and
- (c) the budget approved by the congregation or pastoral charge.

It may also authorize borrowing funds for the pastoral charge.

The governing body's responsibilities and other requirements for finances are set out in G. Congregational Life 4.



7.4.3 Pastoral Relations Matters

The governing body deals with pastoral relations matters as directed by the pastoral charge.

"Pastoral relations" matters involve the ministry personnel, and the terms and conditions on which they serve the pastoral charge or other local ministry unit. These terms are set through a call and settlement, settlement, or appointment.



7.4.4 Proposals

The governing body receives, makes decisions on, and transmits proposals to the other courts.

7.4.5 Recommending Members to Presbytery

The governing body recommends suitable members for the presbytery's consideration as

- (a) licensed lay worship leaders;
- (b) sacraments elders;
- (c) inquirers; and
- (d) designated lay ministers.

7.4.6 Property Matters

The governing body gives orders and directions to the trustees on property matters.

7.4.7 Representing the Pastoral Charge to Presbytery

The governing body represents the pastoral charge when the pastoral charge has authorized it to communicate with the presbytery about

- (a) the pastoral relationship; or
- (b) the amalgamation, realignment, re-forming, or disbanding of the congregation or pastoral charge.

7.4.8 Reporting

The governing body reports to the pastoral charge at least annually on

- (a) the life and work of the pastoral charge; and
- (b) the pastoral charge's financial situation, with details of all income, expenses, assets, and liabilities.

7.4.9 Records

The governing body keeps the following records:

- (a) the membership roll of the congregation;
- (b) the historic membership roll of the congregation; (2016)
- (c) the record of children and adherents; and
- (d) the register of baptisms, marriages, and burials.



The term "adherent" is explained in section B.3.4.1 above. It means a person who contributes regularly to the life and work of the congregation but is not a member or full member.

7.4.10 Sharing Reports from the Wider Church

The governing body shares reports it receives on action by the presbytery, Conference, and General Council with the pastoral charge.

7.4.11 Completing Statistical Forms

The governing body completes the annual pastoral charge statistical and information forms, and returns them to the General Council Office by the required date.

7.4.12 General Responsibility

The governing body has general responsibility for leadership in the care and oversight of the spiritual life and the interests of the congregation or pastoral charge.

7.5 Organization of the Governing Body—Executive and Commissions

7.5.1 Executive

A congregation or pastoral charge may establish an executive of the governing body. The executive must fulfill the responsibilities that the governing body assigns to it.

7.5.2 Commissions

- a. **Acting by Commission:** The governing body or its executive may appoint one or more United Church members as a commission to
 - (i) take on a specific delegated task; and
 - (ii) make decisions on its behalf.

- b. **Decision Is Non-debatable:** The commission's decision is as effective as a decision of the governing body or executive that appointed it. The governing body or executive may not debate the commission's decision and come to a different decision.
- c. **Reporting:** The commission is responsible for reporting its decision to the body that appointed it. The decision must be included in the minutes of that body.

7.6 Organization of the Governing Body—Officers

7.6.1 Chair

- a. **Election:** The pastoral charge is responsible for electing a chair of the governing body.
- b. **Eligibility:** The following people are eligible for election:
 - (i) full members of the congregation;
 - (ii) a member of the order of ministry who has been settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge;
 - (iii) a designated lay minister who has been recognized by the appropriate court and appointed to the pastoral charge; and
 - (iv) the pastoral charge supervisor.
- c. **Responsibilities:** The chair is responsible for
 - (i) presiding and keeping order at meetings of the governing body;
 - (ii) taking votes and announcing the results;
 - (iii) voting only if there is a tie; and
 - (iv) holding office until the next annual meeting or for another term set by the pastoral charge.

7.6.2 Secretary

- a. **Election:** The governing body is responsible for electing a secretary. This person must be a member of the governing body.
- b. **Responsibilities:** The secretary is responsible for
 - (i) taking minutes at all meetings of the governing body;
 - (ii) receiving and sending correspondence for the governing body;
 - (iii) ensuring the minutes, the membership roll, registers, records, and all other documents of the governing body are kept safe; and
 - (iv) sending the minutes, membership roll, and other records to the presbytery annually for review.

7.6.3 Treasurers

The governing body is responsible for electing

- (a) a treasurer for the pastoral charge. This person must be a member of the governing body; and

- (b) a treasurer for the Mission and Service Fund and other funds for the mission of the wider church.

The same person may serve as treasurer of both.



The treasurers' responsibilities and other requirements for finances are set out in more detail in G. Congregational Life 4.

7.7 Meetings of the Governing Body

7.7.1 Frequency

A governing body must meet at least once quarterly. It may decide to meet more often.

7.7.2 Calling Meetings

- a. **Who May Call a Meeting:** Meetings of the governing body must be called by one of the following people:
 - (i) the chair of the governing body;
 - (ii) a member of the order of ministry settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge;
 - (iii) a designated lay minister recognized by the appropriate court and appointed to the pastoral charge; or
 - (iv) the pastoral charge supervisor.
- b. **When They May Call a Meeting:** Any of these people may call a meeting on their own initiative at any time.
- c. **When They Must Call a Meeting:**
 - (i) **Written Request:** They must call a meeting when they have received a written request from at least five members of the governing body. The meeting must be held within 14 days of receiving the request.
 - (ii) **When Presbytery Orders a Meeting:** They must call a meeting when required to do so by the presbytery.

7.7.3 Notice of Meeting of Governing Body

- a. **Who Gives Notice:** The person who calls the meeting is responsible for giving advance notice of the meeting.
- b. **Information to Be Included with Notice:** A notice of a meeting must indicate the purpose of the meeting.
- c. **How Notice Is Given:** Notice of the meeting must be given in one of the following ways:
 - (i) read during public worship;
 - (ii) inserted in the printed order of worship of the congregation or pastoral charge; or
 - (iii) given in person or in writing to the members of the governing body.

7.7.4 Quorum

- a. **Minimum Number of Members Present:** A meeting of the governing body may take place only if at least 1/3 of its members are present.

The congregation or pastoral charge may also set a higher minimum number of members that must be present for the meeting of the governing body to take place.

Corresponding members are not counted for this purpose. (2016)

- b. **Minister Must Be Present:** A meeting of the governing body may take place only if one of the following people is present:
- (i) a member of the order of ministry who has been settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge;
 - (ii) a designated lay minister who has been recognized by the appropriate court and appointed to the pastoral charge;
 - (iii) the pastoral charge supervisor; or
 - (iv) another person appointed by the presbytery to attend the meeting.

7.8 Committees of the Pastoral Charge

7.8.1 General

The pastoral charge and its governing body may fulfill their responsibilities with the help of committees, task groups, steering groups, teams, commissions, and other bodies. In this section (B.7.8), the term “committees” includes all of these bodies.

Committees may either be

- (a) committees that exist only for a particular time or to complete a particular task; or
- (b) committees that exist on an ongoing basis without any time limit. These committees may be called “standing committees” or “permanent committees.”

The only mandatory committee is a Ministry and Personnel Committee, described in section B.7.8.5 below.

7.8.2 Setting Up Committees

The congregation or pastoral charge is responsible for deciding

- (a) the number and size of committees;
- (b) qualifications for election to each committee; and
- (c) the responsibilities assigned to each committee other than the Ministry and Personnel Committee. (The responsibilities of the Ministry and Personnel Committee are listed in section B.7.8.5 below.)

For standing or permanent committees, the approval of the presbytery is also required.

The presbytery's approval is not required under section B.7.8.2 for a congregation or pastoral charge that has one of the following structures and is continuing with it:



- (a) *the Session/Stewards/Official Board model;*
- (b) *a unified board model, called the Church Board; or*
- (c) *a council structure, called the Church Council.*

7.8.3 Electing Committee Members

The congregation or pastoral charge is responsible for electing the members of the committees. It may also choose the members in any other way that it decides.

7.8.4 Ministry Personnel on Committees

All ministry personnel settled in or appointed to a pastoral charge are automatically members of all committees of the congregation or pastoral charge, except they may not be members of the following: (2016)

- (a) a Joint Needs Assessment Committee;
- (b) a Joint Search Committee;
- (c) the Ministry and Personnel Committee; and
- (d) the Nominations Committee.

7.8.5 Ministry and Personnel Committee

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

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



There are resources to assist Ministry and Personnel Committees with their responsibilities. See the Ministry and Personnel Committees resource available from the General Council Office.

7.8.6 Responsibility for Other Areas of Work

The areas of work for a pastoral charge include those named below. The congregation

or pastoral charge must assign these areas of work to committees, or do the work in another way.

- a. **Christian Education:** Meeting the faith formation and Christian education needs of the congregation or pastoral charge.
- b. **Manse:**
 - (i) Maintaining the manse and equipment; and
 - (ii) ensuring the manse is suitable accommodation for the ministry personnel.
- c. **Stewardship:**
 - (i) Educating the congregation or pastoral charge on the mission of the United Church, both locally and in the wider church;
 - (ii) educating the congregation or pastoral charge on the funds needed for this mission and how they will be used;
 - (iii) encouraging commitment and participation from the congregation or pastoral charge in this mission; and
 - (iv) reviewing regularly the balance of funds given for local purposes and funds given for the Mission and Service Fund.
- d. **Nominations:** Recommending people who are eligible, suitable, and willing to serve in positions in the congregation or pastoral charge.

7.9 Organizations in the Pastoral Charge

7.9.1 Accountability

All organizations and groups in the congregation or pastoral charge are accountable to the governing body.

7.9.2 Approval of New Organizations

The governing body is responsible for approving new organizations and groups in the congregation or pastoral charge.

8. Incorporated Ministries

8.1 Application

An incorporated ministry is another form of local ministry unit. This section (B.8) on incorporated ministries applies to any corporation that

- (a) carries on any activities related to United Church activities;
- (b) uses the name of The United Church of Canada, in whole or in part;
- (c) indicates to others that it is connected to the United Church in some way; or
- (d) takes on financial responsibility or any other kind of responsibility that might also create responsibility for the United Church.

The corporation must comply with all of the requirements for incorporated ministries in the United Church.



There is a policy for incorporated ministries. It deals with the incorporation process and with the ongoing relationship between the church and the corporation. See the Incorporated Ministries resource available from the General Council Office.

8.2 Incorporation

Pastoral charges, courts, and other bodies accountable to the United Church may incorporate a ministry. They must follow the United Church's process for incorporation and meet the United Church's requirements for incorporated ministries. If the incorporation is approved, the corporation is called an "incorporated ministry."

8.3 Conference Responsibility for Corporations

The Conference has the following responsibilities for applications for incorporation and incorporated ministries:

- (a) deciding whether to approve applications to incorporate ministries that will carry on activities in the Conference;



The Conference makes the decision itself or through its executive or sub-executive.

- (b) exercising oversight of the incorporated ministries that carry on activities in the Conference; and
- (c) exercising oversight, if assigned by General Council, of incorporated ministries that carry on activities in more than one Conference.

8.4 General Council Responsibility for Corporations

The General Council has the following responsibilities for applications for incorporation and incorporated ministries:

- (a) deciding whether to give administrative approval to incorporate ministries that will carry on activities in one Conference;



The General Council makes the decision whether to give administrative approval through the General Secretary, General Council.

- (b) deciding whether to approve applications to incorporate ministries that will carry on activities in more than one Conference; and
- (c) exercising oversight of incorporated ministries that carry on activities in more than one Conference, or assigning oversight to a Conference.

C. PRESBYTERY

In Newfoundland and Labrador Conference, the “district” fulfills the role and responsibilities of the presbytery.

1. Membership

The presbytery consists of members of the order of ministry, lay members of the United Church, and leaders of associate member ministries as set out in section C.1.3 below. (2016)

1.1 Members of the Order of Ministry

The following members of the order of ministry are members of the presbytery:

- (a) those who have been settled in pastoral charges, missions, or outreach ministries in the presbytery;
- (b) those who have been appointed by the presbytery to serve a pastoral charge, mission, or outreach ministry;
- (c) those who have been appointed to a United Church position by the General Council, a Conference, a presbytery, or an institution of the United Church;

As a matter of practice, members of the order of ministry appointed to a United Church position are members of either the presbytery in which they reside or the presbytery within whose bounds they serve. The member and the presbyteries involved discern together the appropriate presbytery for membership.



- (d) those who are retired;

As a matter of practice, retired members of the order of ministry are members of the presbytery from which they retire unless they are under appointment by another presbytery under paragraph (b) above. If a member moves to live within the bounds of another presbytery, the member and the presbyteries involved discern together the appropriate presbytery for membership.



- (e) those who were granted leave for postgraduate studies at the time of commissioning or ordination;

As a matter of practice, members of the order of ministry on leave for postgraduate studies are members of either their presbytery of membership at the time they were commissioned or ordained or of the presbytery within whose bounds they are studying. The member and the presbyteries involved discern together the appropriate presbytery for membership.



- (f) those who are from another denomination if
 - (i) their credentials have been approved through General Council procedures; and
 - (ii) they have been appointed by the presbytery to a pastoral charge, mission, or outreach ministry; and
- (g) those who have been retained on the rolls of the presbytery and Conference.

1.1.1 Keeping the Order of Ministry Roll

The presbytery is responsible for

- (a) keeping a roll of members of the order of ministry under its oversight; and
- (b) revising the roll annually.

1.2 Lay Members

The lay members of the presbytery are full members of the United Church who are not members of another presbytery and who are

- (a) appointed by the presbytery as designated lay ministers to serve a pastoral charge or other presbytery-accountable ministry in the presbytery;
- (b) retained on the roll at the end of an appointment as designated lay ministers;
- (c) candidates appointed by the presbytery to serve a pastoral charge, mission, or outreach ministry in the presbytery;
- (d) receiving long-term disability benefits as a result of a disability that occurred when they were serving as designated lay ministers in the presbytery;
- (e) elected by congregations and missions on the following basis:
 - (i) one representative from each congregation or mission with 100 or fewer resident members;
 - (ii) two representatives from each congregation or mission with 101 to 200 resident members;
 - (iii) three representatives from each congregation or mission with 201 to 300 resident members;
 - (iv) four representatives from each congregation or mission with more than 300 resident members;



The term “resident member” is explained in B. Local Ministry Unit 4.2. Resident members are full members of the congregation who participate regularly in the life of the congregation. To “participate regularly” means to participate as much as a person is able, considering their health and other circumstances.

- (f) elected on the same basis as in the previous paragraph by an interdenominational congregation or mission, including a Canadian Forces Base, if it is recognized by the presbytery and the United Church is one of the participating denominations;
- (g) one representative from the presbyterial United Church Women or a successor organization;
- (h) one representative from the presbytery United Church Men or a successor organization;
- (i) at least one youth representative (age 13 to 18) appointed by the presbytery;
- (j) at least one young adult representative (age 18 to 30) appointed by the presbytery;
- (k) one representative from each presbytery-accountable ministry in the presbytery;
- (l) past Moderators who live in the presbytery;
- (m) past presidents or leading Elders of a Conference if
 - (i) they are members of a congregation in the presbytery; and
 - (ii) the presbytery is in the Conference where they served as president or leading Elder; and
- (n) up to 10 lay members at large appointed by the presbytery. (2016)

1.3 Leaders of Associate Member Ministries

The presbytery includes people in formal ministry leadership in those congregations or ministries

- (a) of other denominations;
- (b) that have been granted associate membership in the United Church based on policies adopted by the Executive of the General Council; and
- (c) that are located within the bounds of the presbytery. (2016)

1.4 Corresponding Members

The presbytery includes the following corresponding members:

- (a) lay overseas personnel from that presbytery; and
- (b) candidates from that presbytery who are not under appointment to a pastoral charge, mission, or outreach ministry and who are not otherwise members of the presbytery under section C.1.2 above. (2016)

For information on incorporated ministries, see B. Local Ministry Unit 8.



2. Presbytery Membership of Members of the Order of Ministry

2.1 General

Each member of the order of ministry

- (a) is a member of a presbytery;
- (b) may only be a member of one presbytery at any one time; and
- (c) is under the oversight and discipline of that presbytery.

2.2 Effective Date

This section applies to members of the order of ministry who are settled in a pastoral charge.

They become members of a presbytery effective July 1, which is the start of the pastoral year. If they are settled at another time during the pastoral year, the Executive of the Conference Settlement Committee is responsible for setting the effective date.

2.3 Temporarily without Settlement or Appointment

This section applies to members of the order of ministry who are temporarily left without settlement or appointment.

They remain members of the same presbytery until the next meeting of the Conference. At that meeting, the Conference is responsible for placing these members on the roll of a presbytery. The Conference takes this action on the recommendation of the Conference Settlement Committee.

They may only continue as members of the presbytery if they are retained on the roll of the presbytery under section C.2.5 below.

2.4 Other Full-Time Employment or Election/Appointment to Public Office

This section applies to members of the order of ministry settled in or appointed to a pastoral charge who

- (a) accept full-time employment outside of the United Church; or
- (b) are elected or appointed to a public office. (2016)

They are responsible for calling a meeting of the governing body promptly. The purpose of the meeting is to initiate any necessary changes to the call or appointment.

If the call or appointment is ended, the member is responsible for applying to be retained on the roll of the presbytery.

2.5 Left without Settlement or Appointment

2.5.1 Application

This section (C.2.5) applies to members of the order of ministry who are not

- (a) settled in or appointed to a presbytery-recognized ministry; or
- (b) under another United Church appointment.

It does not apply to retired members.

2.5.2 Retained on the Roll: Member's Responsibility

These members of the order of ministry may only continue as members of the presbytery if they are retained on the roll of the presbytery.

They are responsible for applying to be retained on the roll. They must

- (a) apply annually for each year they wish to be retained;
- (b) be in a covenant relationship with a pastoral charge or other presbytery-recognized ministry, unless the presbytery makes an exception; and
- (c) provide other information that the presbytery may require.

2.5.3 Presbytery Action on Application

The presbytery must decide whether to recommend to the Conference that the member's name be

- (a) retained on the roll for a maximum of one year; or
- (b) placed on the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary).

2.5.4 Conference Action on Presbytery Recommendation

The Conference must decide whether

- (a) to retain the member's name on the roll for a maximum of one year; or

(b) to place the member's name on the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary).

If the Conference places the member's name on the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary), it must also decide on the functions of ministry that the member may continue to perform, if any.

2.5.5 Members Who Do Not Apply for Retention

This section applies to members of the order of ministry who

- (a) have been notified by the presbytery that they must apply to be retained on the roll; and
- (b) have not applied to be retained on the roll for two consecutive years after notification by the presbytery.

The presbytery must make a recommendation to the Conference that the member's name be placed on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary).

The Conference is responsible for making a decision on the recommendation.

2.6 Members Who Accept a Position in Another Religious Body

This section applies to members of the order of ministry who request a change in a pastoral relationship in order to accept a position in another religious body.

The presbytery must make a recommendation to the Conference on whether or not the member's name is to be placed on the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary).

The Conference is responsible for making a decision on the recommendation.

If the Conference decides not to place their name on the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary), the member is responsible for applying to be retained on the roll of the presbytery.

2.7 Members Who Become Ministers of Another Denomination or Faith Tradition

This section applies to members of the order of ministry who become ministers of another denomination or faith tradition. It does not apply to members who are serving as overseas personnel.

The presbytery must make a recommendation to the Conference that the member's name be placed on the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary).

The Conference is responsible for making a decision on the recommendation.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Oversight of Pastoral Charges and Other Local Ministry Units

3.1.1 General

The presbytery is responsible for the oversight of the pastoral charges and other local ministry units in the presbytery. This responsibility includes

- (a) reviewing their records;
- (b) taking action to promote their religious life;
- (c) directing or recommending that they make changes to the structure of their governing bodies that the presbytery may consider necessary; and (2016)
- (d) ensuring that they comply with the policies and the polity of the United Church.

The “polity” of the United Church means the form of organization and government of the United Church as it is set out in these bylaws.



As part of this oversight, the presbytery may receive and consider regular reports from the presbyterial United Church Women, the presbytery United Church Men, and other United Church lay groups in the presbytery.

3.1.2 Presbytery’s Responsibility in the Congregational Life Cycle

The presbytery is responsible for

- (a) forming new congregations, pastoral charges, and missions;
- (b) making decisions on requests from congregations of other churches to enter the United Church; and
- (c) amalgamating, realigning, re-forming, relocating, or disbanding congregations, pastoral charges, or missions in the presbytery.



The presbytery’s responsibilities in the congregational life cycle are set out in more detail in G. Congregational Life 1.

3.1.3 Action by Presbytery

The presbytery is responsible for taking action if

- (a) in the presbytery’s opinion, a pastoral charge is not functioning effectively;
- (b) a pastoral charge fails to meet its responsibilities in a way that the presbytery considers appropriate; or
- (c) a pastoral charge asks the presbytery to take action on its behalf.

The presbytery must take the action that it considers necessary in the situation.

3.2 Oversight of Ministry Personnel

The presbytery is responsible for the oversight of all ministry personnel on its roll.

3.3 Pastoral Relationship

The presbytery is responsible for making decisions on the beginning, changing, or ending of pastoral relationships.

The presbytery makes a decision to begin a new pastoral relationship by

- (a) approving a call to a member of the order of ministry, or
- (b) appointing a ministry personnel to a pastoral charge or other presbytery-recognized ministry.

3.4 Relationships with Other Courts

3.4.1 Conference Lay Members

The presbytery is responsible for electing lay members to the Conference as follows:

- (a) those elected must be full members of the United Church;
- (b) the majority must be people who were elected by a pastoral charge or other United Church local ministry unit as presbytery representatives; and
- (c) the election must take place at a regular presbytery meeting before the meeting of Conference.

For more information on the election of lay members of the Conference, see D. Conference 1.2.



3.4.2 Proposals

The presbytery is responsible for

- (a) dealing with proposals that it receives from governing bodies, members of the presbytery, and committees of the presbytery; and
- (b) when required, passing these proposals on to the Conference.

3.4.3 Appeals

The presbytery is responsible for hearing appeals from governing bodies.

3.4.4 Matters from Other Courts

The presbytery is responsible for dealing with matters sent to it by the Conference or the General Council.

3.4.5 Annual Report to Conference

The presbytery is responsible for presenting an annual report to the Conference on

- (a) the life and work of the pastoral charges in the presbytery; and
- (b) the oversight exercised by the presbytery.

3.4.6 Conference Committees

The presbytery is responsible for appointing, electing, or nominating members to serve on Conference committees as required by the Conference.

3.5 Property

The presbytery is responsible for

- (a) making decisions on requests from congregations to acquire, sell, mortgage, exchange, lease, or otherwise deal with congregational property;
- (b) making decisions on the meaning of the terms “other major assets” and “major renovations” for that presbytery;



The importance of the terms “other major assets” and “major renovations” is explained in G. Congregational Life 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

- (c) communicating the meanings of those terms to each congregation and pastoral charge in the presbytery; and
- (d) making decisions on requests from congregations for approval of sites for church buildings or manses, building plans, and financial proposals.

3.6 Assessments

The presbytery is responsible for assessing pastoral charges in the presbytery. The presbytery sets an amount for each pastoral charge to pay as a contribution to the life and work of the presbytery. The amount of an assessment must be sufficient to meet presbytery expenses, including the Conference assessment.

4. Organization

4.1 Executive

4.1.1 Appointment

The presbytery is responsible for appointing an executive to do the continuing work of the presbytery between regular meetings.

4.1.2 Membership

The executive must consist of at least five people, including

- (a) one layperson other than a designated lay minister; and
- (b) one member of the order of ministry or a designated lay minister.

If there are more than five members, at least 1/5 of them must be lay people other than designated lay ministers.

For example, consider a presbytery executive that has 15 members.

One of them must be a member of the order of ministry or a designated lay minister.

Three of them must be lay people who are not designated lay ministers.



The other 11 executive members may be any combination of lay people, designated lay ministers, or members of the order of ministry.

4.1.3 Responsibilities

The executive has all of the responsibilities of the presbytery, unless the presbytery has decided otherwise.

4.1.4 Reporting

The executive must report its actions to the presbytery for information and for inclusion in the presbytery minutes.

4.2 Sub-Executive

4.2.1 Appointment

The executive may appoint a sub-executive to do the continuing work of the executive between regular meetings, unless the presbytery has decided otherwise.

4.2.2 Responsibilities

The sub-executive has all of the responsibilities of the executive, unless the presbytery has decided otherwise.

4.2.3 Reporting

The sub-executive must report its actions through the executive to the presbytery for information and for inclusion in the presbytery minutes.

4.3 Commission

4.3.1 Acting by Commission

The presbytery or its executive may appoint one or more United Church members as a commission

- (a) to take on a specific task for the presbytery or its executive; and
- (b) to make decisions on behalf of the presbytery or its executive.

4.3.2 Decision Is Non-debatable

The commission's decision is as effective as a decision of the presbytery or executive that appointed it. The presbytery or its executive may not debate the commission's decision and come to a different decision.

The same right of appeal is available for a commission's decision as for a decision made by the presbytery or its executive. See J. Oversight, Conflict Resolution, and Discipline 13.2 and 13.3.



4.3.3 Reporting

The commission is responsible for reporting its decision to the body that appointed it. The decision must be included in the minutes of that body.

4.4 Officers

4.4.1 Chair

- a. **Election:** The presbytery is responsible for electing a chair annually from among its members.
- b. **Responsibilities:** The chair is responsible for
 - (i) formally opening meetings;
 - (ii) presiding and keeping order at meetings;
 - (iii) taking votes and announcing the results;
 - (iv) directing the presbytery's business generally;
 - (v) serving as a member of all presbytery committees; and
 - (vi) fulfilling other responsibilities as assigned by the presbytery, Conference, or General Council.
- c. **Administering Communion:** A chair who is a diaconal minister or a layperson may administer communion at regular meetings of the presbytery and its executive.
- d. **Temporary Absence:** The presbytery must elect an acting chair if the chair is absent or in a conflict of interest on any business under consideration.
- e. **Permanent Absence:** The presbytery must elect a chair to complete the unexpired term if the chair dies, is removed, or develops a permanent disability that prevents the person from fulfilling their responsibilities as chair.

4.4.2 Secretary

- a. **Election:** The presbytery is responsible for electing a secretary from among its members.
- b. **Responsibilities:** The secretary is responsible for
 - (i) keeping minutes and transmitting them annually to the Conference for review;
 - (ii) keeping the roll of presbytery members;
 - (iii) providing certified extracts from the minutes when the presbytery or any presbytery member asks for them;
 - (iv) sending the names of all candidates that the presbytery will recommend for commissioning or ordination that year to the executive secretary or speaker of the Conference by April 1 each year;
 - (v) sending detailed information about the presbytery to the executive secretary or speaker of the Conference upon request annually;



There is a policy setting out the detailed information that the presbytery secretary must provide to the Conference executive secretary or speaker. See the Reporting Between Courts resource available from the General Council Office.

- (vi) notifying the appropriate General Council working unit promptly of the death of any ministry personnel;

- (vii) receiving and sending correspondence and other documents on behalf of the presbytery;
- (viii) performing other secretarial duties as assigned by the presbytery; and
- (ix) having possession of all presbytery documents, unless the presbytery directs otherwise.

4.4.3 Treasurer

The presbytery is responsible for

- (a) electing a treasurer to receive and disburse any funds under the presbytery's control as directed by the presbytery; or
- (b) fulfilling the responsibilities of a treasurer in some other way.

4.5 Committees of the Presbytery

4.5.1 General

The presbytery may fulfill its responsibilities with the help of committees, task groups, steering groups, teams, commissions, and other bodies.

In this section (C.4.5), the term "committees" includes all of these bodies.

4.5.2 Mandatory Standing Committees

The presbytery must have

- (a) a standing Nominations Committee;
- (b) a standing Stewardship Committee;
- (c) standing committees to relate to the standing committees of the Conference;
- (d) standing committees to relate to the working units and permanent committees of the General Council; and
- (e) standing committees to do the work listed in section 4.5.3 or some other way of doing this work.

4.5.3 Fulfilling Named Committee Responsibilities

In these bylaws and other approved policies and procedures, responsibilities have been assigned to the following presbytery committees:

- (a) Education and Students Committee;
- (b) Pastoral Oversight Committee; and
- (c) Pastoral Relations Committee.

The presbytery must have committees in place to fulfill those responsibilities or provide for their work to be done in some other way. The committees may have the names above or different names.

There is a policy for the membership, responsibilities, and procedures for the committees or other bodies that do the work listed in section C.4.5.3. See the Presbytery Committees resource available from the General Council Office.



4.5.4 Setting Up Committees

This section applies to all committees except for those listed in section C.4.5.3 above.

The presbytery is responsible for deciding

- (a) the number and size of committees;
- (b) the qualifications for election to each committee;
- (c) the responsibilities assigned to each committee;
- (d) the process for electing the members of the committees or for choosing them in some other way; and
- (e) the terms of office for members of the committees.

4.5.5 Suggested Committees

The presbytery may choose to establish the following standing committees:

- (a) Archives;
- (b) Communication;
- (c) Extra Campaigns;
- (d) Finance;
- (e) Inter-Church and Inter-Faith Relations;
- (f) Manse;
- (g) Mission in Canada;
- (h) Pension and Group Insurance;
- (i) Property; and
- (j) World Outreach.



There is a resource with suggestions for the membership and responsibilities of these committees and the processes for their work. See the Presbytery Committees resource available from the General Council Office.

5. Meetings

5.1 Regular Meetings

5.1.1 Frequency

The presbytery must meet regularly. It must decide how often it will meet.

5.1.2 Setting Meeting Time and Place

The presbytery must

- (a) set the date, time, and place of the next meeting before ending a meeting; or
- (b) refer this issue to the chair and secretary or executive for decision.

5.1.3 Alternative Date

If it is impossible to hold a meeting at a set date, the chair and secretary are responsible for setting another date.

They must give at least 10 days' notice of the rescheduled date to all presbytery members and also to those corresponding members who receive notice of presbytery meetings.

5.2 Special Meetings for Urgent Business

5.2.1 Calling a Special Meeting

The chair and secretary are responsible for calling a special meeting to deal with any urgent business. They must name the business when they give notice of the meeting to all presbytery members and also to those corresponding members who receive notice of presbytery meetings.

5.2.2 Business at a Special Meeting

At the special meeting

- (a) the chair and secretary must explain their reasons for calling the meeting at the meeting; and
- (b) the presbytery may only deal with the business set out in the notice for the meeting.

5.3 Meetings during Conference

The presbytery may hold a meeting while the Conference is meeting if

- (a) the presbytery set the meeting date at the last presbytery meeting before the Conference meeting; or
- (b) notice of the presbytery meeting is given to all members of the presbytery.

5.4 Meetings during General Council

The presbytery must not meet while the General Council is meeting.

5.5 Calling Meetings

All meetings of the presbytery must be called by the chair and secretary. If one of them dies or develops a disability that prevents them from acting, the other may call the next meeting.

5.6. Quorum—Minimum Number of Members Present

5.6.1 Presbytery

The presbytery may meet only if a minimum number of members is present. The presbytery has two options for determining the minimum number. The presbytery must decide by June 30 each year on the option that it will use in the coming pastoral year. The “pastoral year” is the period from July 1 of one year to June 30 of the next year.

Option 1:

- (1) at least 1/3 of the settled, retained, or appointed members of the order of ministry and appointed designated lay ministers on the roll of presbytery must be present; and
- (2) at least 1/3 of the lay members on the roll of presbytery (other than those appointed as designated lay ministers) must be present.

Option 2:

- (1) at least 1/5 of the members of presbytery who are entitled to vote must be present;
- (2) at least 1/3 of the members present must be members of the order of ministry or designated lay ministers; and
- (3) at least 1/3 of the members present must be lay members on the roll of the presbytery other than those appointed as designated lay ministers.

Corresponding members are not counted under either option.

5.6.2 Option for Counting Pastoral Charge Supervisors

This section applies if there is a pastoral charge in the presbytery that does not have a settled or appointed member of the order of ministry or a designated lay minister.

In that case, the presbytery may, with the approval of Conference, count the pastoral charge supervisor of that pastoral charge in the same group as members of the order of ministry and designated lay ministers.

5.6.3 Executive or Sub-Executive

The executive or sub-executive may meet only if a minimum number of members is present, as follows:

- (a) For an executive or sub-executive that has fewer than 60 members, at least 1/3 of them must be present.
- (b) For an executive or sub-executive that has 60 or more members, there must be at least 20 members present.

Corresponding members are not counted for this purpose.

5.7 Voting on Ministry Status

This section applies if the presbytery is making a decision about the membership or standing of a member of the order of ministry.

The presbytery makes the decision by adopting or defeating a motion. The vote on the motion takes place by ballot.

The vote may take place by voice or show of hands instead, but only if the following requirements are met:

- (a) the presbytery first adopts a motion to vote in that other way; and
- (b) the motion in paragraph (a) above is adopted with unanimous consent.

Unanimous consent means all members who vote on the motion vote in favour of it, and no member votes against it.



A presbytery decision about the membership or standing of a member of the order of ministry includes a recommendation by the presbytery that a candidate be commissioned or ordained or that the name of a member of the order of ministry be placed on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary) or Discontinued Service List (Voluntary).



D. CONFERENCE

1. Membership

The Conference consists of members of the order of ministry and lay members of the United Church.

1.1 Members of the Order of Ministry

Those members of the order of ministry who are on the rolls of the presbyteries in the Conference are members of the Conference.

1.2 Lay Members

The lay members of the Conference are

- (a) those appointed by a presbytery as designated lay ministers to serve a pastoral charge or other presbytery-recognized ministry in the Conference;
- (b) those candidates appointed by a presbytery to serve a pastoral charge, mission, or outreach ministry in the Conference;
- (c) those elected by presbyteries based on the following requirements:
 - (i) a majority must have been previously elected by pastoral charges as representatives to presbytery; and
 - (ii) the number of members elected under this paragraph must be equal to or greater than the total number of members in section D.1.1 above and paragraphs D.1.2 (a) and (b) above combined;

The number of members to be elected under paragraph (c) of section D.1.2 could also be expressed as follows:

Step 1. Add together the following four numbers:

- (a) *number of members from section D.1.1*
- (b) *number of members from section D.1.2 (a)*
- (c) *number of members from section D.1.2 (b)*

Step 2. The total of Step 1 is the minimum number of members that must be elected under section D.1.2 (c).



There is no maximum number of lay members that may be elected by the presbytery. As a matter of practice, the number of lay members of the Conference is approximately equal to the number of members of the order of ministry.

- (iii) if presbyteries have not elected the minimum number of lay members required under paragraph D.1.2 (c)(ii) above, the Conference must, in consultation with the presbyteries, appoint additional lay members to reach the minimum number required; and

- (d) representatives of lay organizations recognized by the Conference. The Conference is responsible for deciding the number of these representatives. (2016)

1.3 Additional Lay Members

The Conference may decide to include the following lay members as members of the Conference, even if they are not members of a presbytery:

- (a) the chairs of Conference committees; and
- (b) the president of the Conference United Church Women or an appropriate delegate from an alternative structure.

1.4 Corresponding Members

The Conference includes the following corresponding members. They are also corresponding members of presbyteries in the Conference:

- (a) lay overseas personnel from each presbytery; and
- (b) candidates from each presbytery who are not under appointment to a pastoral charge, mission, or outreach ministry and who are not otherwise members of the Conference under sections D.1.2 or D.1.3 above. (2016)

1.5 Keeping the Roll

The Conference is responsible for

- (a) keeping a roll of its membership; and
- (b) finalizing the roll before it elects commissioners to the General Council.

1.6 Honouring Deceased Members of the Conference

The Conference is responsible for honouring its deceased members in an appropriate way. (2016)

2. Responsibilities

2.1 General

The Conference is responsible for the oversight of the religious life in the Conference. It must take whatever action it considers necessary to promote that religious life.

As part of this oversight, the Conference may receive and consider regular reports from the Conference United Church Women and other United Church lay groups in the Conference.



2.2 Oversight of Presbyteries

2.2.1 General

The Conference is responsible for the oversight of the presbyteries in the Conference. This responsibility includes

- (a) deciding the number of presbyteries and their boundaries;
- (b) reviewing the records of the presbyteries; and
- (c) receiving and studying annual reports from the presbyteries.

2.2.2 Action by Conference

The Conference is responsible for taking action if

- (a) in the Conference's opinion, a presbytery is not functioning effectively;
- (b) a presbytery fails to meet its responsibilities in a way that the Conference considers appropriate; or
- (c) a presbytery asks the Conference to take action on its behalf.

The Conference must take the action that it considers necessary in the situation.

2.3 Proposals

The Conference is responsible for

- (a) dealing with proposals that it receives from presbyteries, members of the Conference, and committees of the Conference; and
- (b) when required, passing these proposals on to the General Council.

2.4 Appeals

The Conference is responsible for hearing appeals from presbyteries, except for appeals from decisions by a Formal Hearing Committee.



The term "Formal Hearing Committee" is defined in J. Oversight, Conflict Resolution, and Discipline 12.4.

2.5 Electing Commissioners to General Council

2.5.1 General

The Conference is responsible for electing commissioners to the General Council.

2.5.2 Equal Representation

It must elect an equal number from each of the following two groups:

- (a) members of the order of ministry and designated lay ministers, and (2016)
- (b) lay members other than designated lay ministers.

2.5.3 Time of Conference Membership

Commissioners who are members of the order of ministry or designated lay ministers must be members of the Conference that elected them at the time of the election and at the time that the General Council meets.

Commissioners who are lay members must be members of a congregation within the Conference that elected them at the time of the election and at the time that the General Council meets.

(2016)

2.5.4 Eligibility for Election

The Conference may not elect overseas personnel.

The term "overseas personnel" is defined in E. General Council 1.2. Overseas personnel are eligible for election as commissioners under a separate process. See E. General Council 1.2.



The Conference may elect

- (a) any other lay member in any pastoral charge in the Conference as a lay commissioner; and
- (b) any other member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister on the roll of the Conference.

2.5.5 Determining the Number of Commissioners for Each Conference

- a. **Formula:** The following calculation determines the total number of commissioners that each Conference may elect.

Multiply the total number of commissioners to be elected by all the Conferences by the average of the ratios of the number of

- (i) resident members,
- (ii) identifiable givers,
- (iii) households under pastoral care, and
- (iv) ministry personnel

in the Conference to the number in the whole (national) United Church.

Round the answer to the nearest whole even number.

The term "resident member" is explained in B. Local Ministry Unit 4.2. Resident members are full members of the congregation who participate regularly in the life of the congregation. To "participate regularly" means to participate as much as a person is able, considering their health and other circumstances.



This calculation may be expressed by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Conf RM}}{\text{Nat RM}} + \frac{\text{Conf IG}}{\text{Nat IG}} + \frac{\text{Conf Hh}}{\text{Nat Hh}} + \frac{\text{Conf Min}}{\text{Nat Min}} \div 4 \times N = \text{TCC}$$

- where
- RM = number of resident members
 - IG = number of identifiable givers
 - Hh = number of households under pastoral care
 - Min = number of ministry personnel who have been settled in or appointed to pastoral charges, missions, outreach ministries, or special ministries
 - N = total number of commissioners representing all Conferences, set by the General Council from time to time (currently 298)
 - TCC = total number of commissioners to be elected by the Conference

b. Adjustment for Minimum Number of Commissioners: Each Conference must elect as commissioners at least

- (i) six members of the order of ministry or designated lay ministers; and
- (ii) an equal number of lay members other than designated lay ministers.

The total number of commissioners to be elected may need to be adjusted for some or all Conferences to meet this minimum number.

c. Method of Election: The Conference is responsible for deciding how to elect its commissioners.

d. Alternate Commissioners: The Conference is also responsible for electing a number of alternate commissioners.

2.6 Electing Members to the Executive of the General Council

The Conference is responsible for electing two members to the Executive of the General Council, as follows:

- (a) one member must be a member of the order of ministry or a designated lay minister;
- (b) one member must be a lay member other than a designated lay minister;
- (c) each member is elected for a six-year term;
- (d) the Conference must elect one member every three years so that one member starts their six-year term at the mid-point of the other member's six-year term; and
- (e) the Conference must also elect alternate members to the Executive of the General Council.

2.7 Other Responsibilities Relating to General Council

2.7.1 General Council Committees

The Conference is responsible for appointing, electing, or nominating members to serve on General Council committees as required by the General Council.

2.7.2 Referred Matters

The Conference is responsible for dealing with matters referred to it by the General Council.

2.8 Members of the Order of Ministry

The Conference is responsible for

- (a) commissioning and ordaining candidates for the order of ministry;
- (b) admitting diaconal ministers or the equivalent and ordained ministers from other denominations to the order of ministry; and
- (c) placing the names of members of the order of ministry on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary) or Discontinued Service List (Voluntary).

2.9 Licence to Administer the Sacraments

The Conference is responsible for granting a licence to administer the sacraments to diaconal ministers, designated lay ministers, people who retired while serving as designated lay ministers, and sacraments elders, as set out in I. Pastoral Relations 2.4.

2.10 Pastoral Relations

The Conference is responsible for seeing that, as far as reasonably possible,

- (a) every pastoral charge in the Conference has a pastorate without interruption; and
- (b) every effective member of the order of ministry has a pastoral charge.

The Conference must meet this responsibility through a Conference Settlement Committee.

2.11 Property

The Conference is responsible for making a decision on the use of

- (a) the property from amalgamating congregations that the presbytery has declared surplus; and
- (b) the property of a congregation that remains after the congregation has disbanded.

There are three exceptions to the Conference's responsibility for making this kind of decision about congregational property. They are set out in G. Congregational Life 2.2.2, 2.2.3, and 2.2.4.



2.12 Incorporated Ministries

The Conference is responsible for approving applications for incorporation and exercising oversight of incorporated ministries as set out in B. Local Ministry Unit 8.3.

2.13 Financial Plan

The Conference is responsible for establishing

- (a) a unified plan of finance for meeting the needs of the Conference; and
- (b) a central fund to meet those needs.

2.14 Assessments

The Conference is responsible for assessing the presbyteries in the Conference for an amount sufficient to meet Conference expenses.

3. Organization

3.1 Executive

3.1.1 Election

The Conference is responsible for electing an executive to do the continuing work of the Conference between its regular meetings.



The General Council recommends that the Conference executive include at least one of the two Conference representatives to the Executive of the General Council.

3.1.2 Responsibilities

The executive has the responsibilities that the Conference assigns to it.

3.1.3 Reporting

The executive must report its actions to the Conference for information and for inclusion in the Conference minutes.

3.1.4 Exception to Executive's Power

The executive may not elect

- (a) commissioners to the General Council; or
- (b) a president or leading Elder.

3.2 Sub-Executive

3.2.1 Appointment

The executive may appoint a sub-executive to do the continuing work of the executive between regular meetings, unless the Conference has decided otherwise.

3.2.2 Responsibilities

The sub-executive has all of the responsibilities of the executive, unless the Conference has decided otherwise.

3.2.3 Reporting

The sub-executive must report its actions through the executive to the Conference for information and for inclusion in the Conference minutes.

3.3 Commission

3.3.1 Acting by Commission

The Conference or its executive may appoint one or more United Church members as a commission

- (a) to take on a specific task for the Conference or its executive; and
- (b) to make decisions on behalf of the Conference or its executive.

3.3.2 Decision Is Non-debatable

The commission's decision is as effective as a decision of the Conference or Conference executive that appointed it. The Conference or its executive may not debate the commission's decision and come to a different decision.

The same right of appeal is available for a commission's decision as for a decision made by the Conference or its executive. See J. Oversight, Conflict Resolution, and Discipline 13.2 and 13.3.



3.3.3 Reporting

A commission is responsible for reporting its decision to the body that appointed it. The decision must be included in the minutes of that body.

3.3.4 Exception to Commission's Power

A commission may not elect

- (a) commissioners to the General Council; or
- (b) a president or leading Elder.

3.4 Officers

3.4.1 President or Leading Elder

- a. **Election:** The Conference is responsible for electing a president or leading Elder from among its members.

The Conference may not delegate the election of a president or leading Elder to the executive, the sub-executive, or a commission.

- b. **Term of Office:** The Conference is responsible for deciding the term of the president or leading Elder. It may be a term of one, two, or three years.
- c. **President-Elect:** The Conference may also elect a president-elect to serve as the next president.
- d. **Responsibilities of President or Leading Elder:** The president or leading Elder is responsible for
- (i) formally opening the meetings of the Conference;
 - (ii) presiding and keeping order at meetings;
 - (iii) taking votes and announcing the results;
 - (iv) directing the Conference's business;
 - (v) ensuring the names of members of the order of ministry transferred into and out of the Conference are reported to the Conference immediately after the roll is called at the annual meeting; and
 - (vi) fulfilling other responsibilities as assigned by the Conference or the General Council.
- e. **Committee Membership:** The president or leading Elder is automatically a member of all Conference committees.
- f. **Right to Preside at Services and Administer Communion:** A president or leading Elder who is a diaconal minister or a layperson may
- (i) preside at services of commissioning and ordination; and
 - (ii) administer communion at regular meetings of the Conference and its executive.
- g. **Acting President or Leading Elder:** If the president or leading Elder dies, resigns, is removed, or cannot serve for any other reason, an acting president or leading Elder must take their place.

The acting president or leading Elder will be the most recent past president or leading Elder who is still a member of the Conference. This acting president or leading Elder will complete the term.

There is one exception. If there is a president-elect, that person will be the acting president. This acting president will complete the term and then continue in office for the next term.

3.4.2 Executive Secretary or Speaker

- a. **Appointment:** The Executive of the General Council is responsible for appointing an executive secretary or speaker. It must consult with the Conference before making the appointment. The executive secretary or speaker must be a member of the United Church.

There is a process for appointing a Conference executive secretary or speaker. See the Human Resources Policy Manual available from the General Council Office.



- b. **Responsibilities:** The executive secretary or speaker is responsible for
- (i) keeping a record of the Conference proceedings and sending it to each General Council for review;
 - (ii) keeping the roll of Conference members;
 - (iii) providing certified extracts from the minutes when the Conference or any Conference member asks for them;
 - (iv) notifying the appropriate General Council working unit of all Conference decisions that affect the status of any member of the order of ministry on its roll;
 - (v) receiving and sending correspondence and other documents on behalf of the Conference;
 - (vi) ensuring that the following material is sent to the secretary of the Transfer Committee each year:
 - (1) all applications for transfer; and
 - (2) the names of all candidates for the order of ministry who are recommended by their presbyteries for commissioning or ordination;
 - (vii) ensuring that the following information is given to the Settlement Committee each year:
 - (1) the names of pastoral charges and missions in the Conference;
 - (2) the names of members of the order of ministry on the rolls of the presbyteries in the Conference; and
 - (3) the pastoral charges that are in arrears to the pension plan;
 - (viii) ensuring that the following information is included in the Conference Record of Proceedings after the Settlement Committee has presented its report to the Conference:
 - (1) the names of pastoral charges and missions, with the name and designation of the person settled in or appointed to that pastoral charge or mission, and the name of the secretary of the governing body;
 - (2) names and addresses of the lay members of the Conference; and
 - (3) names of candidates;

There is a policy setting out the form and details for the information that the Conference executive secretary or speaker must provide. See the Reporting between Courts resource available from the General Council Office.



- (ix) ensuring the Conference Record of Proceedings is printed and distributed;
- (x) interpreting Conference policies and procedures;
- (xi) having possession of all Conference documents, unless the Conference directs otherwise; and
- (xii) performing other secretarial duties as assigned by the Conference.

3.4.3 Treasurer

The Conference is responsible for

- (a) electing a treasurer to receive and disburse any funds under the Conference's control, as directed by the Conference; or
- (b) fulfilling the responsibilities of a treasurer in some other way.

3.5 Program Staff

The Conference is responsible for

- (a) appointing Conference program staff;
- (b) consulting with the appropriate General Council working unit before making an appointment; and
- (c) arranging a service of covenant for new program staff, with the involvement of the appropriate presbytery, congregation, or pastoral charge.

Conference program staff are accountable to the Conference.

3.6 Committees of the Conference

3.6.1 General

The Conference may fulfill its responsibilities with the help of committees, task groups, steering groups, teams, commissions, and other bodies.

In this section (D.3.6), the term "committees" includes all of these bodies.

3.6.2 Mandatory Standing Committees

The Conference must have

- (a) a standing Nominations Committee;
- (b) a standing Stewardship Committee;
- (c) standing committees or other bodies to relate to the working units and permanent committees of the General Council; and
- (d) standing committees to do the work listed in section D.3.6.3 below or some other way of doing this work.

3.6.3 Fulfilling Mandatory Committee Responsibilities

In these bylaws and other approved policies and procedures, responsibilities have been assigned to the following bodies:

- (a) Conference Settlement Committee;
- (b) Conference Interview Board; and
- (c) Conference Education and Students Committee.

The Conference must ensure it has committees in place to fulfill those responsibilities or provide for their work to be done in some other way. The committees may have the same names as above or different names.

There is a policy for the membership, responsibilities, and procedures of the committees or other bodies that do the work listed in section D.3.6.3. See the Conference Committees resource available from the General Council Office.



3.6.4 Setting Up Committees

This section applies to all committees except for the ones listed in section D.3.6.3 above.

The Conference is responsible for deciding

- (a) the number and size of committees;
- (b) the qualifications for election to each committee;
- (c) the responsibilities assigned to each committee;
- (d) the process for electing the members of the committees or for choosing them in some other way; and
- (e) the terms of office for members of the committees.

3.6.5 Suggested Standing Committees

The Conference may choose to establish the following standing committees:

- (a) Archives;
- (b) Communication;
- (c) Extra Campaigns;
- (d) Finance;
- (e) Inter-Church and Inter-Faith Relations;
- (f) Interim Ministry;
- (g) Internship;
- (h) Mission in Canada;
- (i) Pension and Group Insurance; and
- (j) World Outreach.

There is a resource with suggestions for the membership and responsibilities of these committees and the processes for their work. See the Conference Committees resource available from the General Council Office.



4. Meetings

4.1 Regular Meetings

4.1.1 Frequency

The Conference must meet at least once every third year. It may decide to meet more often.

4.1.2 Time and Place

The Conference or its executive is responsible for setting the date, time, and place of meetings.

4.2 Special Meetings for Urgent Business

4.2.1 Calling a Special Meeting

The president or leading Elder and the executive secretary or speaker of the Conference may call a special meeting for urgent business. They must name the business of the meeting when they give notice of it.

4.2.2 Business at a Special Meeting

The Conference may only deal with the business set out in the notice of the meeting.

4.3 Quorum—Minimum Number of Members Present

4.3.1 Conference

The Conference may meet only if a minimum number of members is present. The minimum number is as follows:

- (a) at least 1/5 of the members of the Conference who are entitled to vote must be present;
- (b) at least 1/3 of the voting members present must be members of the order of ministry or designated lay ministers;
- (c) at least 1/3 of the voting members present must be lay people other than those appointed as designated lay ministers; and
- (d) there must be members present from at least two presbyteries.

Corresponding members are not counted for this purpose.

4.3.2 Executive or Sub-Executive

The executive or sub-executive may meet only if a minimum number of members is present, as follows:

- (a) for an executive or sub-executive that has fewer than 60 members, at least 1/3 of them must be present;

- (b) for an executive or sub-executive that has 60 or more members, there must be at least 20 members present; and
- (c) there must be members present from at least two presbyteries.

Corresponding members are not counted for this purpose.

4.4 Voting on Ministry Status

This section applies if the Conference is making a decision about the membership or standing of a member of the order of ministry.

The Conference makes the decision by adopting or defeating a motion. The vote on the motion takes place by ballot.

The vote may take place by voice or show of hands instead, but only if the following requirements are met:

- (a) the Conference first adopts a motion to vote in that other way; and
- (b) the motion in paragraph (a) above is adopted with unanimous consent.

Unanimous consent means all members who vote on the motion vote in favour of it, and no member votes against it.



A Conference decision motion about the membership or standing of a member of the order of ministry includes a decision that a candidate be commissioned or ordained or that the name of a member of the order of ministry be placed on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary) or Discontinued Service List (Voluntary).



E. GENERAL COUNCIL

1. Membership

1.1 Commissioners

The General Council consists of the following commissioners. They must all be members of the United Church:

- (a) an equal number of people elected by the Conferences from each of the following two groups:
 - (i) members of the order of ministry and designated lay ministers; and (2016)
 - (ii) lay members other than designated lay ministers;
- (b) members elected by overseas personnel;
- (c) the immediate past Moderator;
- (d) the retiring Moderator;
- (e) the General Secretary of the General Council;
- (f) the chair or alternate of each of the permanent committees of the Executive of the General Council;
- (g) 10 members elected by the General Council to serve on the Executive of the General Council (other than those listed in paragraphs (f) and (i));
- (h) the president or president-elect or leading Elder or leading Elder-elect of each Conference; and (2016)
- (i) those elected by the Conferences to serve on the Executive of the General Council.

1.2 Election of Commissioners by Overseas Personnel

“Overseas personnel” are members of the order of ministry or lay people who have been appointed by the appropriate General Council working unit to work overseas with partner churches or agencies.

Overseas personnel are responsible for electing three commissioners to the General Council. Any overseas personnel who is a lay member or member of the order of ministry is eligible for election.

The General Secretary of the General Council is responsible for conducting the election, in consultation with the lead staff of the appropriate General Council working unit. (2016)

2. Responsibilities

2.1 General

The General Council has the responsibility to set policy for the United Church on

- (a) doctrine;
- (b) worship;
- (c) membership; and
- (d) government.

2.2 Limitations

There are three limitations on the General Council's responsibility to set policy.

2.2.1 Changes to the Basis of Union

The General Council may change the Basis of Union only if the change is approved through a remit.

2.2.2 Terms of Admission to Full Membership

The General Council may not set any requirements for admission to full membership other than those laid down in the New Testament.

2.2.3 Freedom of Worship

The General Council may not interfere with the freedom of worship that the negotiating churches had at the time of church union.

The term "negotiating churches" means The Presbyterian Church in Canada, The Methodist Church, the Congregational Churches of Canada, and the Local Union Church congregations.



2.3 Oversight of Conferences

2.3.1 General

The General Council is responsible for the oversight of the Conferences. This responsibility includes

- (a) deciding on the number of Conferences and their boundaries; and
- (b) reviewing the records of the Conferences.

2.3.2 Action by General Council

The General Council is responsible for taking action if

- (a) in the General Council's opinion, a Conference is not functioning effectively;
- (b) a Conference fails to meet its responsibilities in a way that the General Council considers appropriate; or
- (c) a Conference asks the General Council to take action on its behalf.

The General Council must take the action that it considers necessary in the situation.

2.4 Proposals

The General Council is responsible for dealing with proposals that it receives from Conferences, commissioners, and committees of the General Council.

2.5 Appeals

The General Council is responsible for hearing

- (a) appeals from formal hearings held by a pastoral charge governing body, presbytery, or Conference; and



The term “formal hearing” is defined in J. Oversight, Conflict Resolution, and Discipline 12.1.

- (b) any other kind of appeal from a Conference.

2.6 Mission Policy

The General Council is responsible for

- (a) setting the mission of the United Church; and
- (b) ensuring the United Church is equipped to carry out its mission.

2.7 Education

The General Council is responsible for

- (a) setting the courses of study for candidates; and
- (b) making a decision on a candidate’s request for an exception to these educational requirements.

2.8 Theological Schools Related to the United Church

The General Council is responsible for

- (a) fulfilling the responsibilities of the United Church in its relationship with the theological schools related to the United Church;
- (b) taking the actions that it considers advisable to promote Christian education; and
- (c) giving and revoking the power of a theological school related to the United Church to issue a testamur.

2.9 Property

The General Council is responsible for setting policy on property for the United Church, including for congregations and pastoral charges. There are exceptions where the approval of the Conference or a congregation is required.



These exceptions are set out in G. Congregational Life 1.5.7, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, and 2.2.4.

2.10 Incorporated Ministries

The General Council is responsible for approving applications for incorporation and exercising oversight of incorporated ministries as set out in B. Local Ministry Unit 8.4.

2.11 Human Resources Policies

The General Council is responsible for setting human resources policies for General Council and Conference staff.

2.12 Executive of the General Council

The General Council is responsible for appointing an executive and deciding on the executive's responsibilities and powers.

3. Meetings

There are procedures for meetings of the General Council. They are available from the General Council Office prior to each meeting of the General Council.



3.1 Regular Meetings

The regular meeting of the General Council must be held every third year.

3.2 Exceptional Circumstances

If it decides the circumstances are exceptional, the General Council or its executive has the power

- (a) to defer the date of the regular meeting to the fourth year; or
- (b) to advance the date of the regular meeting to the second year.

3.3 Constituting the Meeting

The meeting of the General Council must be formally opened, or constituted, with

- (a) public worship;
- (b) communion; and
- (c) a formal declaration by the Moderator.

3.4 Quorum—Minimum Number of Members Present

The General Council may meet only if a minimum number of members is present, as follows:

- (a) at least 1/5 of the commissioners must be present;
- (b) at least 1/3 of the commissioners present must be members of the order of ministry or designated lay ministers; and
- (c) at least 1/3 of the commissioners present must be lay people other than those appointed as designated lay ministers.

4. Organization

4.1 Moderator

4.1.1 Election

The General Council is responsible for electing a Moderator. The Moderator must be a commissioner.



There is a process for nominating and electing a Moderator. It is available from the Office of the Moderator and General Secretary of the General Council Office prior to each regular meeting of the General Council.

4.1.2 Term

The Moderator serves for a term of three years. This three-year period begins when the Moderator is installed at one General Council, and ends when the next Moderator is installed at the following General Council.

4.1.3 Responsibilities

As the senior elected officer of the United Church, the Moderator has the following responsibilities.

- a. **Giving Leadership:** The Moderator gives leadership to the United Church, especially in spiritual things, quickening in the hearts of the people a sense of God as revealed in Christ, and heartening and strengthening the whole United Church.
- b. **Presiding:** The Moderator presides at the meetings of the General Council, its executive, and its sub-executive.
- c. **Visiting:** The Moderator visits throughout the United Church, giving sympathetic guidance and counsel, and reporting to the General Council and its executive.
- d. **Serving as Spokesperson:** The Moderator serves as the primary spokesperson and representative for the United Church.

4.1.4 Committee Participation

The Moderator is automatically a member of all committees established by the General Council, and of the permanent committees of the Executive of the General Council.

4.1.5 Right to Administer Communion

A Moderator who is a diaconal minister or layperson may administer communion at regular meetings of the General Council, its executive, and its sub-executive.

4.1.6 Deputy Moderator

If the Moderator dies, resigns, or cannot serve for an extended period for any other

reason, the Executive of the General Council is responsible for appointing a deputy Moderator to assume the Moderator's responsibilities for the period required.

4.1.7 Review of Role

The Executive of the General Council is responsible for reviewing the following at least once every 10 years:

- (a) the United Church's needs in a Moderator;
- (b) the Moderator's responsibilities; and
- (c) the opportunity a Moderator has to pursue themes and initiatives.

The executive must make recommendations to the General Council based on these reviews.

4.2 General Secretary

4.2.1 Appointment

The Executive of the General Council is responsible for appointing a General Secretary of the General Council.

The General Secretary must be a member of the United Church.

4.2.2 Term

The General Secretary of the General Council continues in office until the Executive of the General Council appoints a successor.

4.2.3 Responsibilities

The General Secretary is the senior staff and administrative officer of the General Council, its executive, and its sub-executive.

The General Secretary is responsible for

- (a) assisting the Executive of the General Council in discharging its responsibilities;
- (b) preparing for the meetings of the General Council, its executive, and its sub-executive;
- (c) preparing and circulating a report of the meetings of the General Council, its executive, and its sub-executive;
- (d) arranging for implementation of the decisions by the General Council, its executive, and its sub-executive;
- (e) facilitating the work of the committees and commissions of the General Council;
- (f) ruling on questions about the polity, procedures, and practice of the United Church;
- (g) preparing draft changes to *The Manual* for the General Council or its executive to consider;
- (h) overseeing publication of *The Manual*;

- (i) preparing the annual budget of the General Council for the Executive of the General Council to consider;
- (j) having possession of the corporate seal of the United Church and the documents and records of the General Council;
- (k) serving as an automatic member of any committee established to direct planning or research;
- (l) serving as a general liaison officer for the courts of the United Church; and
- (m) performing other duties as assigned by the General Council.

4.2.4 Acting General Secretary

If the General Secretary dies, resigns, is removed, or cannot serve for any other reason for an extended period of time, the Executive of the General Council is responsible for appointing an acting General Secretary for the period required.

4.3 Officers

The General Council or its executive is responsible for appointing General Council officers. It is also responsible for setting the number of General Council officers from time to time.

The General Council officers are responsible for

- (a) acting for the General Secretary when required by the General Secretary on a short-term basis; and
- (b) performing other duties as assigned by the General Council or the General Secretary.

4.4 Documents Signed by The United Church of Canada

The General Council is responsible for ensuring there is a corporate seal for The United Church of Canada. The following requirements apply to documents signed by The United Church of Canada under corporate seal:

- (a) the document must be signed by two people;
- (b) one of those people must be the Moderator, the General Secretary of the General Council, a General Council officer, or the executive officer, finance;
- (c) that person must arrange for the corporate seal to be imprinted; and
- (d) the other person must be the Moderator, the General Secretary of the General Council, a General Council officer, the executive officer, finance, or one of up to six people that the Executive of the General Council has appointed to sign documents.

4.5 Executive of the General Council

4.5.1 General

The General Council is responsible for appointing an Executive of the General Council.

4.5.2 Equal Representation

The Executive of the General Council must have, as nearly as possible, an equal number from each of these two groups:

- (a) members of the order of ministry and designated lay ministers; and
- (b) lay members other than designated lay ministers.

4.5.3 Membership

The Executive of the General Council consists of

- (a) the Moderator, the immediate past Moderator, and the General Secretary of the General Council;
- (b) two people or their alternates elected by each Conference;
- (c) the chair of the General Council Planning Committee;
- (d) the chair of the General Council Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee;
- (e) the chair of each of the permanent committees of the Executive of the General Council;
- (f) six people from the Aboriginal Ministries Council;
- (g) four members at large:
 - (i) two of these members at large must be youth and young adult representatives; and
 - (ii) all the members at large must be elected for two three-year terms;
- (h) two people from the francophone constituency, one of whom must be a lay member other than a designated lay minister;
- (i) two people from the ethnic ministries constituency, one of whom must be a lay member other than a designated lay minister; and
- (j) a representative to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches if that person is a member of the United Church.

4.5.4 Corresponding Members

The corresponding members of the Executive of the General Council are the following:

- (a) an elected officer of the National United Church Women;
- (b) the General Council officers;
- (c) the executive secretaries or speakers of the Conferences;
- (d) the chair of the Board of Directors of Observer Publications Inc.;
- (e) an archivist employed by the United Church;
- (f) a global partner representative; and
- (g) other people named by the Executive of the General Council when the executive wants their expertise or wisdom.

4.5.5 Member Transferring to Another Conference

This section applies to members of the Executive of the General Council who were elected by a Conference.

If such a member is transferred to another Conference, they are no longer a member of the Executive of the General Council. Their former Conference must elect a new member to serve for the remainder of the term.

4.5.6 Responsibilities of the Executive of the General Council

The Executive of the General Council has the following responsibilities and powers.

- a. **General:** The Executive of the General Council must study, promote, and protect the general interests of the United Church.
- b. **For General Council:** The Executive of the General Council is responsible for
 - (i) reviewing the agenda and the proposals for the General Council;



There is a policy for the form and content of proposals to the General Council. It is available from the General Council Office prior to each regular meeting of the General Council.

- (ii) making recommendations to the General Council;
- (iii) consulting with the church and then referring to the General Council any denomination-shaping or faith-shaping issue that arises for the executive;
- (iv) reporting its actions to the General Council;
- (v) dealing with matters referred to it by the General Council;
- (vi) ensuring that the decisions and recommendations of the General Council are carried out, or explaining why they were not carried out;
- (vii) calling special meetings of the General Council;
- (viii) overseeing remits; and



The Executive of the General Council oversees remits authorized by the General Council. The executive may not authorize a remit itself. See F. Initiating Action and Change 2 for more information.

- (ix) approving changes to *The Manual* to
 - (1) implement General Council decisions; or
 - (2) improve the wording or organization of *The Manual* where it is redundant, ambiguous, or unclear.

The Executive of the General Council may only approve changes if the policy that prompted the change is clear. If the executive decides that the policy is not clear, it must refer the policy to the next General Council for clarification.

- c. **For the Executive of the General Council:** The Executive of the General Council is responsible for
 - (i) filling vacancies in its membership, other than vacancies of members elected by the Conferences;
 - (ii) communicating its decisions to all courts and all commissioners; and
 - (iii) making rules for carrying out its business.
- d. **For Committees:** The Executive of the General Council is responsible for
 - (i) appointing an Advisory Committee for the Moderator;
 - (ii) appointing a General Secretary's Supervision Committee; and
 - (iii) receiving and reviewing reports at least annually from the permanent committees and other committees established by the General Council or its executive.

- e. For General Council Working Units and Staff:** The Executive of the General Council is responsible for
- (i) ensuring there is a General Council Office with working units to carry out the ongoing work of the General Council;
 - (ii) deciding on
 - (1) the number of working units;
 - (2) their names;
 - (3) their internal organization; and
 - (4) their responsibilities;
 - (iii) receiving and reviewing reports at least annually from the General Council working units through the permanent committees;
 - (iv) setting human resource policies for General Council and Conference staff;
 - (v) appointing General Council officers, executive ministers or officers, and Conference executive secretaries or speaker; and

There are processes for recruiting and appointing Conference executive secretaries or speaker, General Council officers, and executive ministers or officers. See the Human Resources Policy Manual available from the General Council Office.



- (vi) deciding on the office accommodation of the General Council working units.
- f. For Theological Schools Related to the United Church:** The Executive of the General Council has the following responsibilities for theological schools related to the United Church
- (i) making decisions on proposed incorporations, charter amendments, or dissolutions of schools;
 - (ii) making decisions on setting up or discontinuing academic chairs in the schools, and making or terminating academic chair appointments;
 - (iii) consulting with governing boards of schools about the appointment of principals;
 - (iv) appointing principals and faculty members;
 - (v) making appointments to the governing boards of schools; and
 - (vi) appointing an advisory committee on educational matters to help it meet these responsibilities for the schools.

The executive must follow the school's charter and any agreement between the United Church and the school in fulfilling these responsibilities.

- g. For Pension Plan and Group Insurance:** The Executive of the General Council is the legal administrator of the pension plan. It is responsible for
- (i) appointing the pension board for the pension plan;
 - (ii) amending the constitution of the pension plan based on the recommendation of the pension board; and
 - (iii) amending the group insurance plan contract based on the recommendation of the appropriate permanent committee.

h. For Financial and Property Matters: The Executive of the General Council is responsible for

- (i) making a decision on the annual budget of the United Church;
- (ii) supervising the unified plan of finance, the Mission and Service Fund, and all other funds for the mission of the United Church;

There is a policy for the unified plan of finance and a procedure for funding the work of the United Church through the Mission and Service Fund. See the Unified Plan of Finance: Mission and Service Fund resource available from the General Council Office.



- (iii) approving loans and overdrafts on the United Church's bank accounts;
- (iv) making a decision on any proposal to seek funds from the pastoral charges of more than one Conference for any purpose other than the Mission and Service Fund; and
- (v) approving sales and mortgages of United Church property that is administered by the General Council working units. The Executive of the General Council may set policy for the General Secretary to give these approvals.

i. For Past Moderators: The Executive of the General Council is responsible for seeking ways for the United Church to benefit from the accumulated wisdom and experience of past Moderators.

j. For Associate Member Agreements: The Executive of the General Council is responsible for setting policies for

- (i) associate member agreements between the United Church and a congregation or other ministry in Canada that is part of another denomination outside of Canada; and
- (ii) recognition of people serving in formal ministry leadership in congregations or other ministries of other denominations under associate membership agreements with the United Church.

k. For Routine or Emergency Action: The Executive of the General Council is responsible for taking any routine or emergency action that the General Council itself may take. The General Council may place limits on this responsibility.

4.5.7 Meetings—Quorum

The Executive of the General Council may meet only if at least 1/3 of its members or more are present. If the membership of the executive is increased to 60 or more members, it may meet only if at least 20 members are present.

Corresponding members are not counted for this purpose.

4.6 Sub-Executive

4.6.1 Appointment

The General Council is responsible for appointing a sub-executive to do the continuing work of its executive between regular meetings.

4.6.2 Responsibilities

The sub-executive has all of the responsibilities of the Executive of the General Council, with the following exceptions:

- (a) it may not fulfill the responsibilities of the executive for permanent committees as set out in section E.4.9.2 below; and
- (b) the General Council or its executive may place other limits on the responsibilities of the sub-executive.

4.6.3 Reporting

The sub-executive is responsible for reporting its actions through the executive to the General Council for information and for inclusion in the minutes.

4.6.4 Meetings—Quorum

The sub-executive may meet only if at least 1/3 of its members are present. Corresponding members are not counted for this purpose.

4.7 Commission

4.7.1 Acting by Commission

The General Council or its executive may appoint one or more United Church members as a commission

- (a) to take on a specific task for the General Council or its executive; and
- (b) to make decisions on behalf of the General Council or its executive.

4.7.2 Decision Is Non-debatable

The commission's decision is as effective as a decision of the General Council or the executive that appointed it. The General Council or its executive may not debate the commission's decision and come to a different decision.

The same right of appeal is available for a commission's decision as for a decision made by the Executive of the General Council itself. See J. Oversight, Conflict Resolution, and Discipline 13.3. This right applies to commissions appointed by the Executive of the General Council. There is no right of appeal for decisions made by commissions appointed by the General Council.



4.7.3 Reporting

A commission is responsible for reporting its decision to the body that appointed it. The decision must be included in the minutes of that body.

4.8 Committees of the General Council

4.8.1 General

The General Council may fulfill its responsibilities with the help of committees, task groups, steering groups, teams, commissions, and other bodies.

In this section (E.4.8), the term “committees” includes all of these bodies.



There is a policy for recruiting and appointing the membership of committees. See the Governance Handbook available from the General Council Office.

4.8.2 Mandatory Committees

The General Council must have committees to do the work listed in section E.4.8.3 below.



There is a policy for the membership, detailed responsibilities, and procedures for each of the committees or other bodies that do the work listed in section E.4.8.3 below. See the Governance Handbook available from the General Council Office.

4.8.3 Mandatory Committee Responsibilities

- a. **Archives and History Committee:** The Archives and History Committee is responsible for coordinating and promoting archival and historical activity for the United Church.
- b. **Audit Committee:** The Audit Committee is responsible for
 - (i) overseeing the United Church’s financial reporting, control, and audit functions; and
 - (ii) overseeing the United Church’s pension plan on behalf of the pension board.
- c. **Judicial Committee:** The Judicial Committee is responsible for dealing with all appeals of
 - (i) decisions of other courts to the General Council;
 - (ii) decisions of the Executive of the General Council; and
 - (iii) rulings of the General Secretary of the General Council.
- d. **Manual Committee:** The Manual Committee is responsible for assisting the General Secretary with
 - (i) preparing *The Manual*; and
 - (ii) conducting remits.
- e. **Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee:** The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee is responsible for helping the church in expressing
 - (i) its longing for God;
 - (ii) its theological identity; and
 - (iii) its commitment to whole world ecumenism.

- f. **Transfer Committee:** The Transfer Committee is responsible for transferring members of the order of ministry and candidates from one Conference to another.

4.9 Committees of the Executive of the General Council

4.9.1 General

The Executive of the General Council may fulfill its responsibilities with the help of committees, task groups, steering groups, teams, commissions, and other bodies.

In this section (E.4.9), the term “committees” includes all of these bodies.

There is a policy for recruiting and appointing the membership of committees of the Executive of the General Council. See the Governance Handbook available from the General Council Office.



4.9.2 Permanent Committees

The General Council or its executive is responsible for setting up permanent committees of the Executive of the General Council. It must decide

- (a) the number of permanent committees;
- (b) their names;
- (c) their mandates;
- (d) the number of members on each permanent committee; and
- (e) the chair and membership of the permanent committee.

These responsibilities may not be delegated to the sub-executive.

4.9.3 Responsibilities of Permanent Committees

Permanent committees are responsible for

- (a) serving as a resource to the Executive of the General Council;
- (b) reviewing work to be considered by the Executive of the General Council to ensure it is in a coherent, integrated, and manageable form;
- (c) coordinating and presenting policy recommendations;
- (d) making decisions in any area that the General Council or its executive assigns to them;
- (e) delegating work (but not decision-making) to working units, staff, subcommittees, or other bodies;
- (f) collaborating with staff and maintaining healthy working relationships; and
- (g) fulfilling other responsibilities as assigned.

F. INITIATING ACTION AND CHANGE

The courts of the United Church work in relationship with each other in different ways on governance matters. Two of those ways are through

- (a) proposals; and
- (b) remits.

The four courts of the United Church work in relationship with each other in the spirit of the opening words of A New Creed: “We are not alone.” A pastoral charge governing body works in relationship with the presbytery, the presbytery with the Conference, and the Conference with the General Council. Starting with the General Council, the membership of each court comes from the previous court. All court membership ultimately begins with the pastoral charge, as the members of the pastoral charge governing body are chosen from the pastoral charge.



1. Proposals

1.1 Introduction

A “proposal” is a formal request for a court to take action. It is one way that a United Church member may raise an issue that is important to them and ask for the church to take action on it.

In this section (F.1), the court that is being asked to take action is called the “court of action.”

1.2 Starting a Proposal

1.2.1 Proposals by Members of a Congregation

In general, a proposal may be started by any one member of a congregation.

If the proposal asks for the following kinds of action, it must be started by 10 members of a congregation:

- (a) action concerning the pastoral relationship;
- (b) action by the presbytery to review the pastoral charge; or
- (c) action by the presbytery to review ministry personnel.

1.2.2 Proposals by Others

A proposal may also be started by

- (a) a member of a court;
- (b) a committee or other church body of a court; or
- (c) a court.

1.3 Process for a Proposal

The process for dealing with a proposal is set out below.

Members and courts are responsible for completing the parts of the process assigned to them.

1.3.1 Proposal by Member(s) of a Congregation

Member(s) of congregation The member(s) give the proposal to the governing body of their pastoral charge.



Pastoral charge → When the governing body receives the proposal:

If the governing body is the court of action, it makes a decision on the proposal (see section F.1.4 below).

If the presbytery is the court of action:

- (a) The governing body decides if it agrees with the proposal.
- (b) *If it agrees*, the governing body must pass the proposal on to the presbytery.
- (c) *If it does not agree*, the governing body decides whether or not to pass the proposal on to the presbytery.

If the governing body does not agree with a proposal, it normally passes it on to the presbytery only if there is a compelling reason.



- (d) The governing body may include its own recommendations when passing a proposal on to the presbytery.

If the Conference or General Council is the court of action:

- (a) The governing body passes the proposal on to the presbytery.
- (b) The governing body may include its own recommendations when passing a proposal on to the presbytery.



Presbytery → When the presbytery receives the proposal:

If the presbytery is the court of action, it makes a decision on the proposal.

If the Conference is the court of action:

- (a) The presbytery decides if it agrees with the proposal.
- (b) *If it agrees*, the presbytery passes the proposal on to the Conference.
- (c) *If it does not agree*, the presbytery decides whether or not to pass the proposal on to the Conference.

If the presbytery does not agree with a proposal, it normally passes it on to the Conference only if there is a compelling reason.



- (d) The presbytery may include its own recommendations when passing a proposal on to the Conference.

If the General Council is the court of action:

- (a) The presbytery passes the proposal on to the Conference.
- (b) The presbytery may include its own recommendations when passing a proposal on to the Conference.



Conference → When the Conference receives the proposal:

If the Conference is the court of action, it makes a decision on the proposal.

If the General Council is the court of action:

- (a) The Conference decides if it agrees with the proposal.
- (b) *If it agrees*, it passes the proposal on to the General Council.
- (c) *If it does not agree*, it decides whether or not to pass the proposal on to the General Council.



If the Conference does not agree with a proposal, it normally passes it on to the General Council only if there is a compelling reason.

- (d) The Conference may include its own recommendations when passing the proposal on to the General Council.



General Council → When the General Council receives the proposal, it makes a decision on it (see section F.1.4 below).

1.3.2 Process for a Proposal by a Court

When a court makes a proposal, the first step is for the court to pass the proposal on to the next court.

Then, the same steps as in section F.1.3.1 above are followed, starting with the next court (presbytery, Conference, or General Council).

1.3.3 Process for a Proposal by a Member of a Court

When a member of a court makes a proposal, the first step is for the member to pass the proposal on to that court.

Then, the same steps as in section F.1.3.1 above are followed, starting with that court (governing body, presbytery, Conference, or General Council).

1.3.4 Process for a Proposal by a Committee of a Court

When a committee of a court makes a proposal, the first step is for the committee to pass the proposal on to that court.

Then, the same steps as in section F.1.3.1 above are followed, starting with that court (governing body, presbytery, Conference, or General Council).

1.4 Response by Court of Action

The court of action is responsible for making a decision on the proposal. It has the following options:

- (a) taking the action requested in the proposal;
- (b) taking the action requested in the proposal with some changes;
- (c) taking different action on the same subject matter as the proposal;
- (d) referring the proposal;
- (e) receiving the proposal but taking no further action; or
- (f) taking some other action that the court of action decides is appropriate.

*The chart on the next five pages is a summary of the process for proposals.
Please refer to section F.1 above for the full requirements.*





Process for Proposals: Summary

Proposal description	First step	Action by pastoral charge governing body	Action by presbytery	Action by Conference	Action by General Council
Proposal started by member(s) or committee of congregation, requesting action by pastoral charge governing body	The member(s) or committee gives the proposal to the pastoral charge governing body.	The pastoral charge governing body makes a decision on the proposal.*	N/A	N/A	N/A
Proposal started by member(s) or committee of congregation, requesting action by presbytery	The member(s) or committee gives the proposal to the pastoral charge governing body.	The pastoral charge governing body decides whether it agrees with the proposal. <i>If it agrees</i> , it must pass the proposal on to the presbytery. <i>If the pastoral charge governing body does not agree with the proposal</i> , it decides whether or not to pass it on to the presbytery. If it passes the proposal on to the presbytery, the governing body may include its own recommendations.	The presbytery makes a decision on the proposal.*	N/A	N/A

* The decisions available to the court of action are listed in section F.1.4 above.

Proposal description	First step	Action by pastoral charge governing body	Action by presbytery	Action by Conference	Action by General Council
Proposal started by member(s) or committee of congregation, requesting action by Conference	The member(s) or committee gives the proposal to the pastoral charge governing body.	The pastoral charge governing body passes the proposal on to the presbytery. The governing body may include its own recommendations.	The presbytery decides whether it agrees with the proposal. <i>If it agrees</i> , it must pass the proposal on to the Conference. <i>If the presbytery does not agree with the proposal</i> , it decides whether or not to pass it on to the Conference. If it passes the proposal on to the Conference, the presbytery may include its own recommendations.	The Conference makes a decision on the proposal.*	N/A
Proposal started by member(s) or committee of congregation, requesting action by General Council	The member(s) or committee gives the proposal to the pastoral charge governing body.	The pastoral charge governing body passes the proposal on to the presbytery. The governing body may include its own recommendations.	The presbytery passes the proposal on to the Conference. The presbytery may include its own recommendations.	The Conference decides whether it agrees with the proposal. <i>If it agrees</i> , it must pass on the proposal to the General Council. <i>If the Conference does not agree with the proposal</i> , it decides whether or not to pass it on to the General Council. If it passes the proposal on to the General Council, the Conference may include its own recommendations.	The General Council makes a decision on the proposal.*
Proposal started by pastoral charge governing body, requesting action by presbytery	(See Action by pastoral charge governing body. →)	The pastoral charge governing body gives the proposal to the presbytery.	The presbytery makes a decision on the proposal.*	N/A	N/A

* The decisions available to the court of action are listed in section F.1.4 above.

Proposal description	First step	Action by pastoral charge governing body	Action by presbytery	Action by Conference	Action by General Council
Proposal started by pastoral charge governing body, requesting action by Conference	(See Action by pastoral charge governing body. →)	The pastoral charge governing body gives the proposal to the presbytery.	The presbytery decides whether it agrees with the proposal. <i>If it agrees</i> , it must pass the proposal on to the Conference. <i>If the presbytery does not agree with the proposal</i> , it decides whether or not to pass it on to the Conference. If it passes the proposal on to the Conference, the presbytery may include its own recommendations.	The Conference makes a decision on the proposal.*	N/A
Proposal started by pastoral charge governing body, requesting action by General Council	(See Action by pastoral charge governing body. →)	The pastoral charge governing body gives the proposal to the presbytery.	The presbytery passes the proposal on to the Conference. The presbytery may include its own recommendations.	The Conference decides whether it agrees with the proposal. <i>If it agrees</i> , it must pass the proposal on to the General Council. <i>If the Conference does not agree with the proposal</i> , it decides whether or not to pass it on to the General Council. If it passes the proposal on to the General Council, the Conference may include its own recommendations.	The General Council makes a decision on the proposal.*

* The decisions available to the court of action are listed in section F.1.4 above.

Proposal description	First step	Action by pastoral charge governing body	Action by presbytery	Action by Conference	Action by General Council
Proposal started by member(s) or committee of presbytery, requesting action by Conference	The member(s) or committee gives the proposal to the presbytery.	N/A	The presbytery decides whether it agrees with the proposal. <i>If it agrees</i> , it must pass on the proposal to the Conference. <i>If the presbytery does not agree with the proposal</i> , it decides whether or not to pass it on to the Conference. If it passes the proposal on to the Conference, the presbytery may include its own recommendations.	The Conference makes a decision on the proposal.*	N/A
Proposal started by member(s) or committee of presbytery, requesting action by General Council	The member(s) or committee gives the proposal to the presbytery.	N/A	The presbytery passes the proposal on to the Conference. The presbytery may include its own recommendations.	The Conference decides whether it agrees with the proposal. <i>If it agrees</i> , it must pass the proposal on to the General Council. <i>If the Conference does not agree with the proposal</i> , it decides whether or not to pass it on to General Council. If it passes the proposal on to the General Council, the Conference may include its own recommendations.	The General Council makes a decision on the proposal.*
Proposal started by presbytery, requesting action by Conference	(See Action by presbytery. →)	N/A	The presbytery gives the proposal to the Conference.	The Conference makes a decision on the proposal.*	N/A

* The decisions available to the court of action are listed in section F.1.4 above.

Proposal description	First step	Action by pastoral charge governing body	Action by presbytery	Action by Conference	Action by General Council
Proposal started by presbytery, requesting action by General Council	(See Action by presbytery. →)	N/A	The presbytery gives the proposal to the Conference.	The Conference decides whether it agrees with the proposal. <i>If it agrees</i> , it must pass the proposal on to the General Council. <i>If the Conference does not agree with the proposal</i> , it decides whether or not to pass it on to General Council. If it passes the proposal on to the General Council, the Conference may include its own recommendations.	The General Council makes a decision on the proposal.*
Proposal started by member(s) or committee of Conference, requesting action by General Council	The member(s) or committee of Conference give the proposal to the Conference.	N/A	N/A	The Conference decides whether it agrees with the proposal. <i>If it agrees</i> , it must pass the proposal on to the General Council. <i>If the Conference does not agree with the proposal</i> , it decides whether or not to pass it on to General Council. If it passes the proposal on to the General Council, the Conference may include its own recommendations.	The General Council makes a decision on the proposal.*
Proposal started by Conference, requesting action by General Council	(See Action by Conference. →)	N/A	N/A	The Conference gives the proposal to the General Council.	The General Council makes a decision on the proposal.*

* The decisions available to the court of action are listed in section F.1.4 above.

2. Remits

The General Council may change the Basis of Union only if the change is approved through a remit. A “remit” is a vote by presbyteries or by presbyteries and pastoral charges to change the Basis of Union.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada, The Methodist Church, the Congregational Churches of Canada, and the Local Union Church congregations united in 1925 to form The United Church of Canada. Their agreement was set out in a document called the Basis of Union. This document was part of the federal and provincial legislation that created the United Church. It contains a statement of faith and an outline of the structure and basic policies of the United Church. See current Basis of Union at pages 11–44.



2.1 Categories of Remits

There are three categories of remits.

2.1.1 Category 1 Remits

Category 1 remits are for wording or editorial changes to the Basis of Union, including

- (a) replacing existing words or phrases with updated terms;
- (b) reorganizing text;
- (c) giving corresponding membership in a court to a specific office or position; or
- (d) changing the gender language used for human beings in the Articles of Faith in the Basis of Union.

2.1.2 Category 2 Remits

Category 2 remits are for changes to the Basis of Union that are significant but not denomination-shaping, including

- (a) changing the composition of the courts with minimal impact;
- (b) reflecting general practice within the United Church;
- (c) changing a process or procedure; or
- (d) establishing or changing requirements for specific policies or processes.

2.1.3 Category 3 Remits

Category 3 remits are for substantive changes to the Basis of Union that affect denominational identity, including

- (a) altering the nature of the courts;
- (b) significantly changing the structures of the church;
- (c) redefining the church’s understanding of ministry;
- (d) affecting the articles of faith, except for gender language applied to human beings;
- (e) changing the baptismal formula or vows made upon commissioning or ordination;
- (f) moving a section from the Basis of Union to the bylaws; or
- (g) changing the church’s understanding of membership.

2.2 Process for All Categories of Remits

If the General Council adopts a resolution to change the Basis of Union, it is responsible for carrying out the following process for a remit. This process applies to all categories of remits.

2.2.1 Authorizing

The General Council must authorize the remit. This responsibility may not be fulfilled by the Executive or Sub-Executive of the General Council.

2.2.2 Assigning the Category

The General Council must decide if the remit is in category 1, 2, or 3. If the General Council does not decide on a category, the remit will be considered a category 3.

2.2.3 Preparing the Remit

The General Secretary of the General Council must

- (a) prepare the remit and all necessary documents;
- (b) determine the deadline for presbyteries—and for category 3 remits, pastoral charges—to vote on the remit and reply to the General Secretary; and
- (c) send the remit and all necessary documents to presbyteries—and for category 3 remits, to pastoral charges.

2.2.4 Considering the Remit

Presbyteries—and for category 3 remits, pastoral charges—must consider the remit at a regular meeting or a special meeting called for that purpose.

2.2.5 Replying to the Remit

Presbyteries—and for category 3 remits, pastoral charges—must reply that they are either in favour or not in favour of the remit. They may not include conditions or comments with their reply.

2.2.6 Reporting Results of the Remit

The General Secretary must report the voting results to the Executive of the General Council and to the next General Council.

2.2.7 Enacting the Remit

If a remit has been approved by the required majority of all presbyteries, the General Council must decide whether or not to enact it.

If a remit has not been approved, the General Council may not enact it.

2.2.8 Repeating the Remit

If a remit has not been approved, a future General Council may authorize the same remit again.

2.3 Additional Process for a Category 1 Remit

The General Council is also responsible for the following additional steps that apply to a category 1 remit.

2.3.1 Setting Effective Date of Change

The General Council must pass a resolution naming the date that the remit will come into effect if it passes.

The date must be at least 90 days after publication of the Record of Proceedings of that General Council.

For this resolution to pass, it must be approved by at least 2/3 of the General Council commissioners voting on it.

2.3.2 Sending Remit Out Immediately

The remit must be sent to presbyteries immediately after the meeting of the General Council.

The deadline for presbyteries to reply must leave enough time for the remit change to be included in the next edition of *The Manual*.

2.3.3 Declaring Remit Approved

If 2/3 of all the presbyteries reply that they have voted in favour of the remit, the Executive of the General Council may declare that the remit has been approved.

2.3.4 Updating *The Manual*

If the remit has been approved, the change will be included in the next edition of *The Manual*.

2.4 Additional Process for a Category 2 Remit

The General Council is also responsible for the following additional steps that apply to a category 2 remit.

2.4.1 Review by Executive of the General Council

The Executive of the General Council must review a category 2 remit before it is sent to presbyteries.

2.4.2 Information and Study Materials

A category 2 remit must be sent to presbyteries along with information and study materials.

2.4.3 Commissioners

The Executive of the General Council is responsible for ensuring that a copy of the remit and accompanying materials are sent to commissioners.

2.4.4 Deadline

The deadline for presbyteries to reply must be no later than 18 months following the meeting of the General Council.

2.4.5 Approval

A category 2 remit requires the approval of a majority of all the presbyteries.

2.5 Additional Process for a Category 3 Remit

The General Council is also responsible for the following additional steps that apply to a category 3 remit.

2.5.1 Additional Procedures for Pastoral Charges

The General Council must decide on any additional conditions and procedures that apply to pastoral charges for the category 3 remit.

2.5.2 Review by Executive of the General Council

The Executive of the General Council must review a category 3 remit before it is sent to presbyteries.

2.5.3 Information and Study Materials

A category 3 remit must be sent to presbyteries and pastoral charges along with information and study materials.

2.5.4 Commissioners

The Executive of the General Council is responsible for ensuring that a copy of the remit and accompanying materials are sent to commissioners.

2.5.5 Deadline

The deadline for presbyteries and pastoral charges to reply must leave at least 24 months for study and information sharing.

2.5.6 Approval

A category 3 remit requires the approval of a majority of all the presbyteries and a majority of all the pastoral charges.

G. CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

The congregation is the most common type of ministry unit in the United Church. Other ministry units may be created with the approval of the presbytery. The requirements set out here for congregational life may be customized for other ministry units, with the approval of the presbytery. For more information, see B. Local Ministry Unit 1 and 2.



1. Life Cycle of a Ministry Unit

1.1 Beginning

There are three different ways for a United Church congregation or ministry unit to come into existence.

1.1.1 Congregation from Before Church Union

The congregation may have existed before church union and come into the United Church as part of church union.

Methodist, Congregationalist, many Presbyterian, and Local Union Church congregations became United Church congregations as part of church union in 1925. Many congregations of the Evangelical United Brethren Church came into the United Church as part of church union in 1968.



1.1.2 Congregation from Another Denomination

A congregation from another denomination may enter the United Church.

It must first make a request to the presbytery. The presbytery may approve the request if it is satisfied that the congregation

- (a) is free to enter the United Church;
- (b) approves the principles and polity of the United Church;
- (c) has no irregularities in the way that it functions; and
- (d) has provided a roll of its membership.

The General Council must also approve the request before the congregation may enter the United Church.

1.1.3 New Congregations and Ministry Units

New congregations and other ministry units may be created. The presbytery is responsible for forming them.

Other congregations, pastoral charges, and missions may be affected when a new ministry unit is formed. The presbytery must consult with those who will be affected before deciding to form a new ministry unit.

1.2 Lifetime

1.2.1 Living Out Commitment

The people of the ministry unit live out their commitment to God and to each other by celebrating God's presence, living with respect in Creation, loving and serving others, seeking justice and resisting evil, and proclaiming Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.

A ministry unit carries out its ministry under the oversight of the presbytery.



The membership, responsibilities, organization, and meeting requirements for a congregation are set out in these bylaws in B. Local Ministry Unit.

1.2.2 Mission Strategy

Congregations are responsible for reviewing their mission regularly. They must reflect on their understanding of their identity and their community context. They may consider

- (a) their accomplishments;
- (b) the present opportunities and challenges; and
- (c) the resources required for meeting those opportunities and challenges.

As a result of this review, the congregation may approve a revised or new mission strategy. It may also summarize this strategy in a brief statement. The congregation may decide to significantly change the focus of ministry or decide to conclude a ministry. The presbytery participates as a partner in this review, offering resources and support from the wider church.

1.3 Changes during the Ministry Unit's Lifetime

A ministry unit may experience one or more of the following changes during its lifetime:

- (a) amalgamating with one or more other ministry units;
- (b) becoming a pastoral charge, part of a pastoral charge, or part of a different pastoral charge;
- (c) relocating; and
- (d) concluding its ministry.

All of these changes require approval by the presbytery.

1.4 Amalgamation of Congregations

The process for an amalgamation is set out below. The congregation, presbytery, and Conference are each responsible for the steps assigned to them.

1.4.1 Decision by Congregations

Each congregation meets separately to make a decision on a proposal to amalgamate.

1.4.2 Presbytery Consultation

The presbytery holds separate meetings with each congregation to hear their opinions on the proposed amalgamation.

1.4.3 Presbytery Decision on Amalgamation

The presbytery makes a decision on whether to approve the amalgamation. If presbytery approves the amalgamation, it may include conditions.

1.4.4 Property

The presbytery consults with the congregations on the property needs of the new amalgamated congregation. A congregation may ask its governing body to represent it in this consultation.

- a. **Surplus Property of Amalgamating Congregations:** The presbytery decides how much of the congregations' property will be needed for the new amalgamated congregation. Any property that will not be needed is called "surplus property."
- b. **Use of Surplus Property:** The Conference is responsible for all surplus property after the amalgamation. It is up to the Conference to decide on how to use the surplus property for the benefit of the United Church.
- c. **Change in Property Ownership:** Before an amalgamation, the trustees of a congregation hold all property for that congregation. After an amalgamation, the trustees
 - (i) hold the surplus property for the United Church, to be used as the Conference decides; and
 - (ii) hold all other property for the new amalgamated congregation.

This change is automatic when the amalgamation takes place.

1.4.5 Amalgamations Involving More Than One Presbytery

If the amalgamation involves congregations in different presbyteries, the presbyteries involved must

- (a) each approve the amalgamation;
- (b) agree on any conditions to be included; and
- (c) get the Conference's approval.

1.4.6 Congregation Continues to Exist

A congregation's life does not end when it amalgamates with another congregation. Rather, the congregation continues to exist in ministry as the new amalgamated congregation.

1.4.7 Gifts and Bequests

This section applies to gifts made to a congregation that has amalgamated, whether the gifts are made before or after the amalgamation. "Gifts" include bequests made in a person's will.

The gift automatically goes to the new amalgamated congregation, even if the gift document refers to the congregation by its former (pre-amalgamation) name.



There are resources about amalgamations to assist congregations and presbyteries. See the Congregational Board of Trustees Handbook available from the General Council Office.

1.5 Ending

A congregation ceases to exist when the presbytery makes a decision to disband the congregation.

The process for disbanding is set out below. The congregation, presbytery, and Conference are each responsible for the steps assigned to them.

1.5.1 Decision by Congregation

The congregation decides to disband.

1.5.2 Decision by Presbytery

The presbytery makes a decision on whether to approve the disbanding of the congregation.

The presbytery may also decide to disband the congregation on its own initiative, without a decision by the congregation.

1.5.3 Effective Date of Disbanding

When the presbytery makes a decision to approve the disbanding, it may specify a future date that the disbanding will come into effect. If not, the disbanding comes into effect when the presbytery makes the decision.



The presbytery makes the decision to disband when it passes a motion approving the disbanding.

1.5.4 Property

Section G.1.5.4 applies before the disbanding comes into effect. It applies if the presbytery has not yet made the decision to approve the disbanding or if the presbytery has made the decision and specified a future effective date for the disbanding.



The congregation makes a proposal to the presbytery for dealing with the congregation's property, which must be used for the mission of the congregation or the wider United Church. The presbytery makes a decision on the proposal. Both must follow the requirements for dealing with congregational property.

The presbytery may decide to approve the congregation's proposal as presented, or it may approve the proposal with changes, or it may decide to deal with the congregation's property in some other way than as set out in the proposal.



The requirements for dealing with congregational property are set out in section G.2 below.



1.5.5 Transfer of Members

The congregation helps its members to transfer to other congregations as they choose.

The faith life of the people in the congregation continues after the disbanding through other congregations or ministry units or in other ways.



1.5.6 Records

The congregation gives its records to the presbytery to forward to the Conference Archives. The presbytery must ensure that the records are sent to the Conference Archives.

1.5.7 Remaining Property

Section G.1.5.7 applies after the disbanding comes into effect. See section G.1.5.3 above.



If there is any remaining congregational property after the disbanding is effective, the Conference is responsible for this remaining property. It is up to the Conference, after consulting with the presbytery, to decide how to use that property for the benefit of the United Church.

The General Council may not change the Conference's responsibility for remaining property without the Conference's approval.

There are resources about disbanding to assist congregations and presbyteries. See the Congregational Board of Trustees Handbook available from the General Council Office.



2. Property

2.1 Congregational Property—Meaning of Terms

The following are the meanings of terms used in this section (G.2).

2.1.1 “Congregational Property”

The term “congregational property” means any kind of property that a congregation might own. It includes

- (a) land;
- (b) buildings;
- (c) any other land rights;
- (d) money;
- (e) investments;
- (f) furniture; and
- (g) equipment.

2.1.2 “Other Major Assets”

There are two processes for sales and other transactions involving congregational property. One process applies to land, buildings, other land rights, and “other major assets.” The other process applies to all other congregational property. It is important to understand the meaning of “other major assets” so that the correct process is followed.

Each presbytery is responsible for deciding which congregational property is considered “other major assets” for that presbytery.

The presbytery must consider all congregational property that is not land, buildings, or other land rights. This includes the kinds of property listed in paragraphs (d) to (g) of section G.2.1.1 above. The presbytery may decide that some or all of this congregational property is “other major assets”.

The presbytery is responsible for informing the pastoral charges in the presbytery about the meaning of “other major assets” in that presbytery.

The presbytery may decide to define “other major assets” in any way that seems reasonable to it. For example, a presbytery may set an amount and decide that all property worth more than that amount is considered “other major assets.”

2.1.3 “Major Renovations”

Each presbytery is responsible for

- (a) deciding on the meaning of “major renovations” for that presbytery; and
- (b) informing the pastoral charges in the presbytery of the meaning of “major renovations.”

The presbytery may decide to define “major renovations” in any way that seems reasonable to it. For example, a presbytery may base the definition on the cost of the renovations so that all renovations costing more than some particular amount are considered “major renovations.”



2.2 Rules for Property Ownership

2.2.1 General Rule

All congregational property is held by the congregation’s trustees. This includes land, buildings, funds and investments, and any other kind of property.

The trustees hold the congregational property for the congregation as part of the United Church. They must comply with the United Church’s requirements for trustees and congregational property.

There is a resource for congregations that sets out the United Church requirements for trustees and congregational property in more detail. It also contains information on best practices for trustees. See the Congregational Board of Trustees Handbook available from the General Council Office. Resources for congregational property may also be available from the Conference office.



There are three exceptions to this general rule.

2.2.2 Exception: Former Presbyterian and Congregationalist Congregations

This exception applies to congregations that existed before church union in 1925 if they were

- (a) Presbyterian congregations in Alberta or Saskatchewan; or
- (b) Congregationalist congregations anywhere in Canada.

It applies to property that was owned by those congregations before church union if they still own it.

The United Church’s requirements for congregational property do not automatically apply to that property. The requirements apply only if the congregation decides that they will.

The congregation makes a decision by passing a motion at a congregational meeting.



2.2.3 Exception: Property of Congregations Entering the United Church after Church Union

This exception applies where an existing congregation enters the United Church any time after church union in 1925.

The United Church's requirements for congregational property do not automatically apply to the property of that congregation. The requirements apply only if the congregation decides that they will.



The congregation makes a decision by passing a motion at a congregational meeting.

2.2.4 Exception: Property for Special Use

This exception applies where a trust that was set up for a congregation before church union still exists.

The property in the trust may be held, used, and administered in the same way as it was before church union.

The requirements in these bylaws do not apply to the property in the trust.

The General Council may not make policy that affects how this property may be held, used, or administered.

2.3 Congregational Property Transactions

2.3.1 Types of Transactions

This section (G.2.3) applies to all transactions involving congregational property. These transactions include

- (a) sales;
- (b) purchases;
- (c) mortgages;
- (d) any other borrowing secured by congregational property; (2016)
- (e) leases;
- (f) major renovations;
- (g) demolition; and
- (h) construction of a new building.

2.3.2 Requirements for Transactions—Land, Buildings, Other Land Rights, and “Other Major Assets”

This section applies to transactions involving land, buildings, other land rights, or “other major assets.”

The process for a transaction is set out in sections a–g below.

The trustees, the governing body of the congregation or pastoral charge, and the presbytery are each responsible for completing the steps of the process assigned to them.

The governing body or presbytery may have additional steps in the process to be followed under their organizational structures.

- a. **Governing Body Decision:** The governing body decides to enter into a congregational property transaction.
- b. **Consultation with Presbytery:** The governing body consults with the presbytery on how the congregation or pastoral charge will use any proceeds it receives in the transaction. The governing body must ensure that the transaction costs and any trustee debt are paid out of the proceeds.
- c. **Governing Body Directs Trustees:** The governing body directs the trustees to proceed with the transaction and seek presbytery approval.
- d. **Trustee Decision:** The trustees hold a special meeting. They follow the direction of the governing body and decide to proceed with the transaction and seek presbytery approval.
- e. **Request for Presbytery Approval:** The trustees ask the presbytery to approve the transaction. They give the presbytery all the information and documentation about the transaction that the presbytery requires to make a decision. This includes full details of
 - (i) the terms of the transaction;
 - (ii) the proposed source of any funds the congregation or pastoral charge requires for the transaction; and
 - (iii) the proposed use of the proceeds that the congregation or pastoral charge will receive in the transaction.
- f. **Consultation for New Buildings:** If the transaction is to construct a new church building or manse, other congregations or pastoral charges may be affected. The presbytery must consult with them and consider their opinions before making a decision on the transaction.
- g. **Presbytery Decision:** The presbytery makes a decision whether to approve
 - (i) the transaction; and
 - (ii) the use of any proceeds received by the congregation or pastoral charge in the transaction.

2.3.3 Requirements for Transactions—Congregational Property That Is Not Land, Buildings, Other Land Rights, or “Other Major Assets”


This section applies to transactions involving congregational property other than land, buildings, other land rights, and “other major assets.”

The process for a transaction is set out below:


- (a) the governing body is responsible for making a decision to enter a congregational property transaction;
- (b) the governing body is responsible for directing the trustees to proceed with the transaction;
- (c) the trustees are responsible for following the direction of the governing body and proceeding with the transaction; and
- (d) presbytery approval is not required.

There may be additional steps to follow under the organizational structure of the governing body.

3. Trustees



This section (G.3) is based on the Model Trust Deed. That document was part of The United Church of Canada Act and may only be changed through legislation. Section G.3 is intended to be a faithful interpretation of the Model Trust Deed. If there is any discrepancy between this section and the Model Trust Deed, the Model Trust Deed prevails. It is available from the General Council Office.



There is a resource for congregations that sets out the United Church requirements for trustees and congregational property in more detail. It also contains information on best practices for trustees. See the Congregational Board of Trustees Handbook available from the General Council Office.

3.1 General

The congregation is responsible for having a board of trustees for the congregation.

3.2 Multi-point Pastoral Charges

A pastoral charge with two or more congregations may, in addition to the board of trustees for each congregation, have a board of trustees for the pastoral charge.

The same requirements apply to both types of boards of trustees, with one change. For a pastoral charge board of trustees, the pastoral charge fulfills the responsibilities given to the congregation below.

3.3 Membership

3.3.1 Appointing Trustees

The congregation is responsible for appointing the trustees at a congregational meeting.

There are specific notice requirements for a congregational meeting to appoint trustees. See B. Local Ministry Unit 5.4.2 e.



3.3.2 Eligibility

A majority of the trustees must be members of the United Church.

Under secular law, a person must be of the legal age of majority in their province in order to serve as a trustee.



3.3.3 Automatic Trustee Membership

One of the following people is automatically a trustee because of their position:

- (a) the member (or one of the members) of the order of ministry who has been settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge;
- (b) the designated lay minister who has been recognized by the appropriate court and appointed to the pastoral charge; or
- (c) the pastoral charge supervisor.

3.3.4 Number

The congregation is responsible for deciding on the number of its trustees. There must be a minimum of three and a maximum of 15, including the one person who is automatically a trustee.

- a. **Vacancies:** The trustees may continue to act even if there are vacancies, as long as there are at least three trustees.
- b. **More Than 15 Trustees:** If there are more than 15 trustees, the trustees may continue to act. But no vacancies may be filled until the number of trustees is reduced below 15.
- c. **Fewer Than Three Trustees:** This section applies if there are only one or two trustees remaining for any reason.
 - (i) The chair or secretary of the presbytery automatically becomes a trustee and continues to serve along with the remaining trustees until the full number of trustees has been appointed.
 - (ii) The presbytery may give notice to the congregation requiring it to appoint the full number of trustees.
 - (iii) The person presiding at public worship reads the notice to the congregation on two consecutive Sundays.

- (iv) The congregation has four weeks after the second Sunday to appoint new trustees. If the congregation does not appoint them, the presbytery may.
- (v) The new trustees take office when the presbytery gives notice of their appointment to the congregation during public worship.

3.3.5 Term

The congregation is responsible for setting a trustee's term of office.

3.3.6 Ceasing to Be a Trustee

The congregation may decide that a person is no longer a trustee even if their term of office has not ended.

- a. **How the Congregation Makes the Decision:** The decision is made at a congregational meeting and requires 2/3 of the members present to vote in favour of it.



There are specific notice requirements for a congregational meeting to consider accepting a trustee's resignation or remove a trustee. See B. Local Ministry Unit 5.3.3 b and 5.4.2 e.

- b. **Reasons for the Congregation's Decision:** The congregation may decide that a person is no longer a trustee when the person resigns, moves away, leaves the United Church, does not attend trustee meetings for at least a year, or for any other reason that the congregation considers appropriate.
- c. **Trustee's Personal Responsibility:** There may be cases where a trustee is personally responsible for the debt of a congregation.

In this situation, the congregation may only decide that the person is no longer a trustee if there are arrangements in place to protect the person from this personal responsibility.



In a situation involving a trustee's personal responsibility, the trustees must be given notice of the congregational meeting as set out in B. Local Ministry Unit 5.4.2 e and section G.3.6.2 below.

3.4 Responsibilities

3.4.1 Holding Congregational Property

The trustees are responsible for holding all congregational property for the congregation as part of the United Church. There are three exceptions to this general rule. They are set out in sections G.2.2.2, G.2.2.3, and G.2.2.4 above.

The trustees must give the same care and attention to congregational property as a reasonable person would give to their own property.

3.4.2 Compliance with Decisions and Other Requirements

The trustees must comply with

- (a) all decisions about congregational property that are made by the governing body, the presbytery, or the Conference; and
- (b) all other United Church requirements for trustees and congregational property.

There is a resource available for trustees. It sets out the United Church requirements for trustees and congregational property in more detail, and contains information on best practices for trustees. See the Congregational Board of Trustees Handbook available from the General Council Office.



3.4.3 Books and Records

The trustees are responsible for

- (a) keeping records of all funds that are received and disbursed by them;
- (b) keeping records of all their meetings, which clearly indicate any decisions made at those meetings; and
- (c) making those records available upon request to any of the following:
 - (i) a representative named by the governing body;
 - (ii) the member of the order of ministry who has been settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge;
 - (iii) the designated lay minister who has been recognized by the appropriate court and appointed to the pastoral charge; or
 - (iv) the pastoral charge supervisor.

3.4.4 Trustees Not Liable

A trustee is not personally responsible for any loss or damage to any congregational property.

There is an exception. A trustee is liable for loss or damage if

- (a) it was caused by the trustee's own action;
- (b) the trustee's action was intentional or negligent; and
- (c) the trustee was not meeting the requirements of the United Church or of secular law for trustees.

The word "action" here includes an "omission," where a trustee does not take a particular action, either intentionally or unintentionally.

3.5 Organization

Any of the following may decide to be the chair of the board of trustees:

- (a) the member of the order of ministry who has been settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge;

- (b) the designated lay minister who has been recognized by the appropriate court and appointed to the pastoral charge; or
- (c) the pastoral charge supervisor.

If the person decides not to be the chair, they may appoint another trustee as deputy chair. If the chair and the deputy chair are both unavailable for a meeting, the trustees at the meeting may elect a chair.

3.6 Meetings

3.6.1 Calling Meetings

All meetings of the trustees must be called by one of the following:

- (a) a member of the order of ministry settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge;
- (b) a designated lay minister recognized by the appropriate court and appointed to the pastoral charge;
- (c) the pastoral charge supervisor; or
- (d) two or more of the trustees.

3.6.2 Notice of Meeting

The person calling the meeting is responsible for giving advance notice of the meeting.

For regular trustee meetings, notice may be given by announcement at a public worship service.

For special trustee meetings, the notice must

- (a) be in writing;
- (b) specify the date, time, place, and purpose of the meeting; and
- (c) be mailed or delivered to each trustee at their home or work address. If a trustee does not receive notice of the meeting because the person calling the meeting did not know the trustee's current home or work address, any decisions made at the meeting will still be valid.

3.6.3 Advance Notice

The advance notice for meetings must be at least

- (a) one day before the meeting for regular trustee meetings; and
- (b) seven days before the meeting if the meeting's purpose is to consider a sale, mortgage, building alterations, or other congregational property transaction or any legal action involving the trustees.

3.6.4 Quorum—Minimum Number of Trustees Present

A meeting of the trustees may take place only if a minimum number of trustees is present, as follows:

- (a) For boards of trustees with 10 or more members, at least five members must be present.
- (b) For boards of trustees with nine or fewer members, a majority of the trustees must be present.

3.6.5 Voting

The trustees make all decisions by the majority vote of the trustees present at a meeting. The chair votes only if there is a tie in the voting.

4. Finance

4.1 Annual Budget

4.1.1 Responsibility for Budget

The congregation or pastoral charge is responsible for having an annual budget.

4.1.2 Preparation of Draft Budget

The governing body is responsible for preparing a draft budget for the congregation or pastoral charge for the coming year. The draft budget must include a full statement for the coming year of estimates of the following:

- (a) receipts and expenses;
- (b) assets and liabilities;
- (c) current receipts and current expenses; and
- (d) capital expenses.

The governing body presents the draft budget to the congregation or pastoral charge at the congregation or pastoral charge's annual meeting.

4.1.3 Action by Congregation or Pastoral Charge

The congregation or pastoral charge must consider the draft budget and make a decision

- (a) to approve the budget without any changes;
- (b) to make changes to the budget and approve the budget with those changes;
- (c) to refer the budget to the governing body to make changes for the congregation or pastoral charge to consider at another meeting; or
- (d) to take other action that would help the congregation or pastoral charge to approve an annual budget.

4.1.4 Changes to Approved Budget

The governing body may make changes to the approved budget if it believes the changes are not major. The approval of the congregation or pastoral charge is not required.

If the governing body believes the proposed changes are major, the approval of the congregation or pastoral charge is required. The governing body must present the proposed changes to the congregation or pastoral charge for consideration at a congregational meeting. The notice of the meeting must indicate the purpose of the meeting.

4.2 Governing Body's Ongoing Responsibilities

4.2.1 Treasurers

The governing body is responsible for electing

- (a) a treasurer for the congregation or pastoral charge. This person must be a member of the governing body; and
- (b) a treasurer for the Mission and Service Fund and other funds for the mission of the wider church.

The same person may serve as treasurer of both.

4.2.2 General Oversight

The governing body is responsible for

- (a) overseeing fundraising for the ministry of the congregation or pastoral charge and of the wider United Church;
- (b) ensuring that funds received for the ministry of the congregation or pastoral charge are disbursed as set out in the approved budget;



There is an order of priority that must be followed when funds are being disbursed. See section G.4.2.4 below.

- (c) presenting independently reviewed financial statements to the congregation or pastoral charge at the annual meeting for
 - (i) the receipts and expenses of the congregation or pastoral charge;
 - (ii) the receipts and expenses of the trustees of the congregation or pastoral charge; and
 - (iii) the receipts and payments of money given to the Mission and Service Fund; and
- (d) overseeing the financial situation of the congregation or pastoral charge between its annual meetings.



The term "independent review" is explained in section G.4.4 below.

4.2.3 Loans and Investments

The governing body is responsible for

- (a) deciding whether the congregation or pastoral charge needs to borrow money at any time;
- (b) deciding on the terms of any loan;
- (c) directing the trustees to enter into any loan transaction;

- (d) deciding on the investment of funds belonging to the congregation or pastoral charge; and
- (e) directing the trustees on the investment of any of these funds.

Loans and investments may require the presbytery's approval. The requirements are set out in sections G.2.3.2 and G.2.3.3 above.



4.2.4 Disbursement of Funds—Order of Priority

The governing body is responsible for ensuring all funds received for the ministry of the congregation or pastoral charge are disbursed in the following order of priority:

- (a) the remuneration of the ministry personnel serving the pastoral charge;
- (b) the assessments payable to the United Church pension fund and the group insurance plan;
- (c) the salaries of other staff of the congregation or pastoral charge;
- (d) the assessment to meet presbytery and Conference expenses; and
- (e) other capital and current expenses of the congregation or pastoral charge.

4.3 Treasurers' Responsibilities

There is a resource available for treasurers. It sets out the United Church requirements for treasurers and congregational finances in more detail, and contains information on best practices for treasurers. See the Financial Handbook for Congregations available from the General Council Office.



4.3.1 Treasurer of Congregation or Pastoral Charge

The treasurer of the congregation or pastoral charge has the following responsibilities:

- (a) receiving all funds for the ministry of the congregation or pastoral charge from offerings and other sources;
- (b) disbursing these funds under the direction of the governing body;
- (c) keeping records of all receipts and disbursements; and
- (d) reporting on the funds as required by the governing body or committee responsible.

4.3.2 Treasurer for Mission and Service Fund

The treasurer for the Mission and Service Fund is responsible for

- (a) receiving all funds given for the Mission and Service Fund and other funds for mission of the wider United Church;
- (b) keeping a record of the funds given by each donor in an account separate from the other funds of the congregation or pastoral charge;
- (c) sending the funds to the appropriate General Council working unit monthly; and
- (d) reporting on the funds as required by the governing body or committee responsible.

4.4 Independent Reviews

4.4.1 Meaning of an “Independent Review”

An independent review is an examination of financial records following the procedures set out in section G.4.4.4 below.

4.4.2 Purpose

The purpose of an independent review is to

- (a) determine the accuracy of financial statements;
- (b) determine whether financial transactions have been recorded properly;
and
- (c) identify potential weaknesses in the accounting systems.

4.4.3 Who May Perform the Independent Review

The person performing the independent review must be

- (a) a public accountant; or
- (b) a person familiar with bookkeeping who understands the purpose of an independent examination of financial records.



It is not necessary for the person performing the independent review to be a member or adherent of the congregation.

4.4.4 Procedures for an Independent Review

The person independently reviewing a report or financial statement is responsible for

- (a) ensuring that at least two unrelated people are responsible for signing all cheques and transaction documents;
- (b) examining the records of meetings of the governing body;
- (c) examining the books that record cash receipts, cash disbursements, payroll, and general ledger transactions for accuracy;
- (d) ensuring that all transactions were authorized properly;
- (e) reviewing bank reconciliations for the year;
- (f) ensuring that all funds given for the Mission and Service Fund have been sent to the appropriate General Council working unit monthly;
- (g) reviewing the procedures used for keeping records to ensure that the chance of error or fraud is minimized;
- (h) ensuring that cash receipts match the charitable donation receipts that have been issued; and
- (i) ensuring that the annual information return was completed and submitted to governmental authorities within six months after the end of the previous financial year.

4.5 Stewardship—Engaging the Congregation

The congregation or pastoral charge is responsible for ensuring that it has a structure or process in place to do the following work:

- (a) educating the congregation or pastoral charge on the mission of the United Church, both locally and in the wider church;
- (b) educating the congregation or pastoral charge on the funds needed for this mission and how they will be used;
- (c) encouraging commitment and participation from the congregation or pastoral charge in this mission; and
- (d) reviewing regularly the balance of funds given for local purposes and funds given for the Mission and Service Fund or other wider church purposes.

H. ENTERING MINISTRY

1. Forms of Paid Accountable Ministry in the United Church

All ministers, members, and adherents in the United Church are engaged in ministry.

The term “paid accountable ministry” refers to the work of a minister who

- (a) is a member of the order of ministry or a designated lay minister;
- (b) is accountable to a court of the United Church; and
- (c) receives a salary or other compensation from a pastoral charge, court of the United Church, presbytery-accountable ministry, or presbytery-recognized ministry.

The terms “presbytery-accountable ministry” and “presbytery-recognized ministry” are explained in section B. Local Ministry Unit 2.4. A “presbytery-accountable ministry” refers to any kind of local ministry unit that is accountable to the presbytery. It includes congregations, pastoral charges, missions, and any outreach ministry or other ministry accountable to the presbytery. A “presbytery-recognized ministry” is broader than “presbytery-accountable ministry.” It includes all presbytery-accountable ministries and any other local ministry units that are not accountable to the presbytery but are recognized by it as valid expressions of Christian ministry.



1.1 Order of Ministry

A member of the United Church may be called to serve as a member of the order of ministry. The “order of ministry” in the United Church refers to diaconal ministers and ordained ministers.

1.1.1 Diaconal Ministry

A “diaconal minister” is commissioned to the diaconal ministry of education, service, and pastoral care.

1.1.2 Ordained Ministry

An “ordained minister” is ordained to the ministry of word, sacrament, and pastoral care.

1.2 Designated Lay Ministry

A layperson may serve in paid accountable ministry as a “designated lay minister.”



See the Statement on Ministry adopted by the 41st General Council 2012, available from the General Council Office.

1.3 Requirements

There are requirements in these bylaws for people preparing to serve in the order of ministry or in designated lay ministry. The first step in the path to any of these forms of paid accountable ministry is to discern

- (a) the person's response to God's call to ministry; and
- (b) the person's suitability for ministry in the United Church.

2. Vocation in Ministry

Any member of the United Church may consider a vocation in ministry. Ministry personnel and other church members share a responsibility to encourage them.

There are people in congregations with the personal character, faith, and witness that may indicate a call to Christian ministry. The governing bodies of congregations have special responsibility for seeking out these people and nurturing and celebrating their vocation in ministry.

Here is an outline of the procedural steps for a layperson to become a member of the order of ministry.

- (1) *The governing body of the congregation decides to recognize the person as an inquirer.*
- (2) *The inquirer goes through a period of discernment.*
- (3) *The presbytery decides to receive the inquirer as a candidate.*
- (4) *The candidate meets the United Church's educational requirements to become a member of the order of ministry.*
- (5) *The presbytery and Conference examine the candidate for suitability and readiness for ministry in the United Church.*
- (6) *The Conference makes a final decision on suitability and readiness for ministry.*
- (7) *The Conference commissions the candidate to diaconal ministry or ordains the candidate to ordained ministry.*



3. Discernment for Ministry

3.1 Recognition as an Inquirer

3.1.1 Policy

Members of the United Church who believe that they have been called to ministry may ask to test that call through a process called discernment.

A member in the discernment process is called an "inquirer."

A member must be recognized as an inquirer before beginning the discernment process.

3.1.2 Requirements

A member must meet the following requirements before the governing body of the congregation considers whether to recognize them as an inquirer:

- (a) member of the United Church for at least 24 months;
- (b) active in a congregation for at least 24 months; and
- (c) currently in close association with a congregation.

The governing body is responsible for deciding whether the member has been active enough in the congregation to meet requirement (b).

3.1.3 Decision

The governing body of the member's congregation or pastoral charge is responsible for deciding whether the person may become an inquirer.



There are policies and procedures for the recognition of inquirers. See the Entering Ministry resource available from the General Council Office.

3.2 The Discernment Process

3.2.1 Policy

Through discernment, the inquirer and the United Church explore and determine the inquirer's suitability for ministry in the United Church. They consider the inquirer's

- (a) call to ministry;
- (b) personal character;
- (c) motives; and
- (d) faith.

3.2.2 Decisions

The governing body of the inquirer's congregation or pastoral charge is responsible for deciding whether to recommend to the presbytery that the inquirer be recognized as

- (a) a candidate for the order of ministry; or
- (b) an applicant for designated lay ministry.

This decision is made at the end of the discernment process.



There are policies and procedures for the discernment process. See the Entering Ministry resource available from the General Council Office.

4. Preparation for Ministry

4.1 Applicants for Designated Lay Ministry

There are policies and procedures for the education and other preparation to serve as a designated lay minister.

For policies and procedures for preparation to serve as a designated lay minister, see the Designated Lay Ministers resource available from the General Council Office.



4.2 Candidates for Diaconal Ministry or Ordained Ministry

4.2.1 Policy

The formal process of preparation for diaconal or ordained ministry is called the candidacy process.

A person in the candidacy process is called a “candidate.”

- a. **Recognition by the Presbytery:** An inquirer must be recognized by the presbytery as a candidate before beginning the candidacy process.

Candidates are under the supervision of the presbytery throughout their candidacy.

- b. **Future Participation in Pension and Group Insurance Plans:** Upon commissioning or ordination, a member of the order of ministry must become a member of the United Church pension plan and group insurance plan.

The presbytery is responsible for informing inquirers of this requirement, and it must not recognize an inquirer as a candidate until the inquirer has agreed to it.

4.2.2 Decisions

The presbytery is responsible for

- (a) deciding whether to recognize an inquirer as a candidate; and
- (b) deciding annually whether the candidate will continue in the candidacy process

There are policies and procedures for the recognition of candidates and the candidacy process. See the Entering Ministry resource available from the General Council Office.



4.3 Education for Diaconal Ministry or Ordained Ministry

4.3.1 Program of Study

The General Council has set the program of study for candidates. It includes different options for a candidate’s education.

A candidate is responsible for following and completing the program of study approved from time to time by the General Council or its executive.

For the details of the program of study for candidates, see the Entering Ministry resource available from the General Council Office.



4.3.2 Theological School

The United Church needs ministers who are trained for ministry in the United Church and who have knowledge and an appreciation of the United Church's polity, ethos, traditions, and theology.

The United Church relies on the theological schools related to the United Church to provide the training, knowledge, and appreciation required for ministry in the United Church.

There are policies and procedures that apply to any candidate for ordained ministry who already has a degree from a theological school that is not related to the United Church.



For these policies and procedures for candidates with degrees, see the Entering Ministry resource available from the General Council Office.

4.3.3 Completion of Program of Study

- a. **Diaconal Ministry:** A candidate for diaconal ministry must obtain a diploma in diaconal ministries from the Centre for Christian Studies.
- b. **Ordained Ministry:** A candidate for ordained ministry must complete (2016)
 - (i) a bachelor of divinity or master of divinity degree from a theological school recognized by the appropriate General Council working unit;
 - (ii) a program for ordained ministry from a United Church Native ministry theological centre recognized by the appropriate General Council working unit; or (2016)
 - (iii) another degree in theology approved by the appropriate General Council working unit.

4.4 Supervised Ministry Education

4.4.1 Policy

Each candidate for ordained ministry must satisfactorily complete a supervised ministry education program that involves learning goals, reflection on the practice of ministry, and regular supervision and evaluation.



There are policies and procedures for the supervised ministry education program. They are available from the General Council Office.

4.4.2 Decisions

The presbytery Education and Students Committee is responsible for deciding

- (a) whether to approve a candidate's application for a supervised ministry education program; and
- (b) whether a candidate has satisfactorily completed the supervised ministry education program.

4.5 Possibility of Appointment

The presbytery may appoint a candidate to a vacancy.

*There are procedures for appointing a candidate to a vacancy.
See the Entering Ministry resource available from the General Council Office.*



4.6 Application to Be Commissioned or Ordained

A candidate who is close to completing the requirements for commissioning or ordination may apply to be commissioned or ordained. The application is made to the presbytery Education and Students Committee. It must include

- (a) a personal statement of faith and theology; and
- (b) assurance from the theological school that the candidate is eligible to complete the required program of study before the anticipated date of commissioning or ordination.

5. Transfer and Settlement, or Call or Appointment

5.1 Ministry of the United Church

Every candidate for the order of ministry is a candidate for the ministry of the United Church, not merely for the ministry of any particular Conference.

5.2 Transfer and Settlement

5.2.1 Process

Transfer and settlement is a process that normally takes place once a year. It is an option for candidates recommended for ordination and commissioning under section H.5.3 below.

Members of the order of ministry who have not retired may also apply to be transferred and settled into a position in a presbytery-recognized ministry.

5.2.2 Transfer Committee

The Transfer Committee of the General Council is responsible for placing these candidates and members of the order of ministry in a Conference. The Transfer Committee

- (a) considers the skills and gifts of the candidates and members of the order of ministry;
- (b) considers the needs and gifts of presbytery-recognized ministries; (2016)
- (c) places each candidate and member of the order of ministry in a Conference with a presbytery-recognized ministry that the Transfer Committee believes is the best match. (2016)

*These decisions made by the Transfer Committee are final.
They do not need to be approved by the General Council.*



5.2.3 Settlement Committee

The Settlement Committee of each Conference is responsible for placing these candidates and members of the order of ministry in a presbytery-recognized ministry. After all the transfers have been made, the Settlement Committee places each candidate and member of the order of ministry transferred to its Conference in a presbytery-recognized ministry that the Settlement Committee believes is the best match.



Candidates may also be placed in special ministries, as approved by the General Council, that the Transfer Committee and Settlement Committee have decided to fill.



These decisions made by the Settlement Committee are final. They do not need to be approved by the Conference.

5.3 Options for Candidates

A candidate who is recommended for commissioning or ordination is responsible for choosing one of the following options for work in paid accountable ministry following commissioning or ordination:

- (a) to be transferred and settled into a position by action of the Transfer Committee and Settlement Committee; or
- (b) to seek a call or appointment.

The candidate must make the choice within the time limit set by the appropriate General Council working unit. A candidate who does not meet the time limit is no longer eligible for transfer and settlement in that year, but may seek a call or appointment.



A candidate may pursue further studies following commissioning or ordination with the approval of the presbytery and Conference, in consultation with the appropriate General Council working unit. The candidate is not required to choose transfer and settlement or seek a call or appointment. See section H.6.4 below.



There are policies and procedures for choosing transfer and settlement, or call or appointment, and for the transfer and settlement process. See the Pastoral Relations: Engaging and Supporting resource available from the General Council Office.



There are financial and other incentives for candidates who choose transfer and settlement. For more information, see the Pastoral Relations: Engaging and Supporting resource available from the General Council Office.



The policy for call or appointment is described in I. Pastoral Relations 1.2.2 and 1.3.

5.4 Moving Expenses

The appropriate General Council working unit is responsible for paying the moving expenses of candidates and members of the order of ministry who are settled through the transfer and settlement process.

This includes travelling expenses and expenses connected with moving the person's possessions. It also includes the moving expenses of the person's immediate family if they move with the person or within a year of the settlement.

6. Requirements for Commissioning or Ordination

A candidate may be commissioned or ordained when all of the following requirements have been met.

6.1 Completion of Program of Study

A theological school provides a certificate or other form of assurance to confirm that a candidate has satisfactorily completed the program of study required for candidates. This is called the “testamur.”

The candidate must complete the program of study required of candidates so as to meet the requirements of the testamur.

The theological school is responsible for reporting to the presbytery on whether the candidate

- (a) has completed the program of study required for candidates; and
- (b) is recommended by the school for commissioning or ordination to ministry in the United Church.

Candidates may be in an experimental program of study. For these candidates, the General Council must make suitable alternative arrangements to have the testamur granted on the recommendation of the appropriate General Council working unit.



6.2 Minimum Time of Involvement

The candidate must meet certain minimum time requirements for their membership and involvement in the United Church.

For the minimum time requirements for a candidate's membership and involvement in the United Church, see the Entering Ministry resource available from the General Council Office.



6.3 Final Examinations and Approval

The presbytery and Conference must each conduct a final examination of the candidate and make a decision whether to approve the candidate for commissioning or ordination. A candidate may only be commissioned or ordained with the approval of both the presbytery and the Conference.

6.3.1 Examination and Approval by Presbytery

The presbytery is responsible for examining the candidate through its Education and Students Committee

- (a) to determine the candidate's readiness for ministry by examining their call to ministry, personal character, motives, academic records, doctrinal beliefs, and general fitness for ministry;
- (b) to satisfy itself that the candidate is in essential agreement with the statement of doctrine of the United Church; and

- (c) to satisfy itself that the candidate will comply with the polity of the United Church.

The presbytery Education and Students Committee makes a recommendation to the presbytery on the candidate's readiness for commissioning or ordination.

The presbytery must decide whether to make a recommendation to the Conference that the candidate be commissioned or ordained.

6.3.2 Examination and Approval by Conference

If the presbytery has recommended a candidate for commissioning or ordination, the Conference is responsible for examining the candidate

- (a) to determine the candidate's readiness for ministry by examining their call to ministry, personal character, motives, academic records, doctrinal beliefs, and general fitness for ministry;
- (b) to satisfy itself that the candidate is in essential agreement with the statement of doctrine of the United Church;
- (c) to satisfy itself that the candidate, as a member of the order of ministry, will accept the statement of doctrine as being in substance agreeable to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures; and
- (d) to satisfy itself that the candidate will comply with the polity of the United Church.

The Conference may fulfill this responsibility through the Conference Education and Students Committee. In that case, the Education and Students Committee makes a recommendation to the Conference on the candidate's readiness for commissioning or ordination.

The Conference must make the final decision whether to commission or ordain a candidate.



There are additional requirements for these examinations of a candidate by the presbytery and Conference. See the Entering Ministry resource available from the General Council Office.

6.4 Transfer and Settlement or Other Approved Option

The candidate must have one of the following before commissioning or ordination:

- (a) assurance of transfer and settlement into a full- or part-time position by the beginning of the next pastoral year;



The term "pastoral year" is defined in I. Pastoral Relations 2.1.7 as the period from July 1 of one calendar year to June 30 of the next calendar year.

- (b) assurance of a call or appointment to begin by the date the next meeting of the Conference ends, if the candidate did not choose transfer and settlement; or
- (c) approval from the presbytery and Conference, in consultation with the appropriate General Council working unit, to pursue postgraduate studies.

7. Ordination, Commissioning, and Reception

7.1 Service of Ordination, Commissioning, and Reception

The Basis of Union, 11.3, reads as follows:

In the service to ordain, commission, or receive persons to the Order of Ministry, those presenting themselves shall, after hearing the following preamble, answer the questions which follow:

“Jesus Christ came into the world to be the servant of God and all people. As servant Lord, Jesus calls his Church to a ministry of worship, witness, and reconciliation. In baptism we were received as members of his Church and at confirmation we committed ourselves to its ministry. In order that this ministry of the whole Church may be fulfilled, God has given the ordained ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care, and the diaconal ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care. It is the responsibility of the Church to seek, train, and set apart those whom God calls so to serve.

1. (to each Candidate) Do you believe in God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and do you commit yourself anew to God?
2. (to each Candidate being ordained) Do you believe that God is calling you to the ordained ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care, and do you accept this call?
(to each Candidate being commissioned) Do you believe that God is calling you to the diaconal ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care, and do you accept this call?
3. (to each Candidate) Are you willing to exercise your ministry in accordance with the scriptures, in continuity with the faith of the Church, and subject to the oversight and discipline of The United Church of Canada?”

7.2 Commissioning or Ordination by Another Conference

A candidate may be commissioned or ordained by another Conference

- (a) at the request of the candidate, if approved by the presidents or leading Elders of both Conferences; or
- (b) at the request of the candidate’s Conference.

The candidate’s Conference must add the candidate’s name to its own roll following the candidate’s commissioning or ordination by another Conference.

7.3 Alternative in Case of Illness or Emergency

If a candidate has been approved for ordination or commissioning but is unable to be present at the scheduled time due to illness or another emergency, the Conference may appoint a commission with power to commission or ordain the candidate.

8. Admission from Other Denominations

8.1 Policy

The United Church recognizes that diaconal or ordained men and women who are admitted from other recognized global Christian traditions make a valuable contribution to the United Church's wide variety of ministries and missions.

The United Church is committed to inclusiveness in its evolving mission in the Canadian context, including the full and equal participation in ministry of all persons, regardless of their race, gender, or sexual orientation. It is also committed to becoming a racially and culturally diverse intercultural denomination that meets the needs of all of its faith communities.

8.2 Readiness and Suitability for Admission

A minister from another denomination may be admitted to the order of ministry of the United Church if

- (a) they have an understanding of the ethos, polity, and history of the United Church that they have acquired through education;
- (b) they are in essential agreement with the doctrine of the United Church as stated in the Basis of Union; and
- (c) they agree to comply with the polity of the United Church.

8.3 Decisions

The appropriate General Council working unit is responsible for deciding whether a minister from another denomination may enter the admission process.

The Conference is responsible for the final decision on whether to admit a minister of another denomination to the order of ministry of the United Church. The Conference considers the presbytery's recommendation when making this decision.



There are policies and procedures for the admission of ministers from other denominations. See the Admission to the Order of Ministry resource available from the General Council Office.

9. Readmission to the Order of Ministry

9.1 Policy

A person whose name has been placed on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary) or the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary) may apply for readmission to the order of ministry. The application is made to the presbytery where the person was a member at the time their name was placed on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary) or (Voluntary).

9.2 Requirements for Readmission

A person applying for readmission must reaffirm

- (a) that they will comply with the polity of the United Church; and
- (b) that they are in essential agreement with the doctrine of the United Church.

9.3 Decision

The Conference is responsible for deciding whether to readmit a person to the order of ministry. The Conference considers the presbytery's recommendation when making this decision.

9.4 Subsequent Application If Readmission Is Not Approved

If the Conference does not approve the application for readmission, the applicant may not apply again for at least three years from the date of the Conference decision.

*There are policies and procedures for the readmission of ministers.
See the Entering Ministry resource available from the General Council Office.*



I. PASTORAL RELATIONS

This section has been organized under three general themes:

1. *Connecting—policy that relates to establishing a pastoral relationship*
2. *Supporting—policy that relates to an ongoing pastoral relationship*
3. *Disengaging—policy that relates to the ending of a pastoral relationship or of a ministry personnel's service in paid accountable ministry*



1. Connecting

“Ministry personnel” is a general term that refers to members of the order of ministry, designated lay ministers, candidates serving under appointment, diaconal supply, and ordained supply.

Ministry personnel serve in paid accountable ministry positions in the United Church and in other ministries.

Depending on the circumstances a pastoral relationship with a pastoral charge begins in one of three ways:

- (a) *settlement;*
- (b) *call and settlement; or*
- (c) *appointment.*

The pastoral relationship is between three parties: the ministry personnel, the pastoral charge, and the wider United Church as represented by the presbytery.

Ministry personnel may also serve under appointment to ministry positions in the United Church or in other ministries. Members of the order of ministry may also be settled to these ministry positions.



“Ministry partner” is a minister of another denomination with which the United Church has a mutual recognition agreement. A ministry partner may be eligible for appointment in the United Church, with the terms and details as set out in the applicable mutual recognition agreement.

1.1 Transfer

1.1.1 Policy

Every member of the order of ministry is a member of a Conference.

A member of the order of ministry may be transferred from one Conference to another.

A member of the order of ministry called to a pastoral charge in another Conference must be transferred to that Conference.

1.1.2 Transfer Committee

The Transfer Committee of the General Council is responsible for transferring members of the order of ministry from one Conference to another.

There are policies and procedures for the work of the Transfer Committee. See the Pastoral Relations: Engaging and Supporting resource available from the General Council Office.



1.2 Settlement and Call

1.2.1 Policy

A pastoral relationship may be initiated by settlement, or by call and settlement.

There is no time limit on the pastoral relationship. The United Church expects that a pastoral relationship initiated by settlement or by call and settlement will continue for at least three years.

1.2.2 Call

- a. **Eligibility to Issue or Accept a Call:** A pastoral charge with a vacancy may issue a call to any member of the order of ministry of the United Church. Any member of the order of ministry of the United Church may accept a call. There is one exception, for retired members of the order of ministry.

The term “vacancy” is explained in section I.1.4.3 below.



- b. **Exception—Retired Members of the Order of Ministry:** Retired members of the order of ministry are not eligible to accept a call unless the Conference returns them to active standing.

They must apply to the Conference through their presbytery for active standing. The Conference is responsible for making a decision on the application.

A member of the order of ministry returns to “active standing” when they resume making contributions to the United Church’s pension plan as they did before their retirement.

- c. **Presbytery Approval:** When a call is issued by a pastoral charge, the presbytery is responsible for
- (i) deciding whether to approve the call; and
 - (ii) if the call is approved, making a recommendation to the Conference Settlement Committee that the member of the order of ministry be settled in the pastoral charge.

There are procedures for the presbytery to follow if it approves a call. See the Pastoral Relations: Engaging and Supporting resource available from the General Council Office.



1.2.3 Settlement

Settlement refers to the action by the Conference Settlement Committee to place a member of the order of ministry in a pastoral charge or other presbytery-recognized ministry.

A settlement may be made in response to

- (a) a call that has been issued to and accepted by a member of the order of ministry, and approved by the presbytery; or
- (b) a request for settlement, as part of the transfer and settlement process. Any member of the order of ministry who has not retired, or any pastoral charge or presbytery-recognized ministry, may apply for settlement.

1.2.4 Conference Settlement Committee

The Conference Settlement Committee is responsible for

- (a) making decisions on applications for settlement from members of the order of ministry, or from pastoral charges or other presbytery-recognized ministries in the Conference;
- (b) making decisions on recommendations from presbyteries for each call issued to a member of the order of ministry by a pastoral charge in that presbytery;
- (c) meeting with members of the order of ministry and the representatives of pastoral charges and other presbytery-recognized ministries, on their request, before making a decision; and
- (d) complying as far as possible with the expressed wishes of all the parties.



There are policies and procedures that apply to the work of the Conference Settlement Committee. See the Pastoral Relations: Engaging and Supporting resource available from the General Council Office.

1.2.5 Settlement Criteria

- a. **Minimum Time Requirement for Position:** A pastoral charge or other presbytery-recognized ministry may request settlement for a ministry position of a minimum of eight hours per week.
- b. **Unfilled Vacancy:** If a pastoral charge fails to issue a call to fill a vacancy by June 30, the end of the pastoral year, the Conference Settlement Committee may
 - (i) settle a member of the order of ministry in the pastoral charge; or
 - (ii) give the pastoral charge additional time to issue a call.
- c. **Pastoral Charge Suggests Members:** A pastoral charge with a vacancy may identify several members of the order of ministry that it considers suitable and give the Conference Settlement Committee their names. The Joint Search Committee must approve this action in advance.



For more information on the Joint Search Committee, see section I.1.6.2 below.

The Conference Settlement Committee may choose one of the identified members of the order of ministry. It must get the member's approval before settling them in the pastoral charge.

- d. **Financial Issues:** The Conference Settlement Committee is not required to settle a member of the order of ministry to a pastoral charge that
 - (i) has failed to pay its assessment to the United Church pension fund;
 - (ii) has not enrolled in the pastoral charge payroll service;
 - (iii) is in arrears of payroll payment; or
 - (iv) is in arrears of group insurance contributions.
- e. **Mission Support Grant:** If a pastoral charge will need a larger mission support grant to fund the settlement than it is already receiving, the Conference Settlement Committee may not settle a member of the order of ministry to the pastoral charge unless the Conference gives approval.
- f. **Ecumenical Shared Ministries:** A member of the order of ministry serving in an ecumenical shared ministry must be settled following the same policies and procedures as if they were serving a United Church pastoral charge.

1.2.6 Covenanting

The presbytery is responsible for providing an act of covenant for each new pastoral relationship between a member of the order of ministry, the presbytery, and a pastoral charge or other presbytery-recognized ministry.

The act of covenant must include any other ministry personnel and staff in the pastoral charge.

The presbytery must ensure that the member of the order of ministry has been settled in the pastoral charge or presbytery-recognized ministry before providing the act of covenant.

This assurance may be a letter or other communication from the Settlement Committee confirming that the settlement has been made, or a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Settlement Committee where that action was taken.



1.3 Appointment

1.3.1 Appointment to Pastoral Charge—Unfilled Vacancy

This section (1.1.3) applies if

- (a) the presbytery has not declared a vacancy; or
- (b) the presbytery has declared a vacancy and the pastoral charge needs a supply minister until the vacancy can be filled.

The presbytery may appoint one of the following to the pastoral charge: a designated lay minister, a diaconal supply, an ordained supply, a candidate, or a member of the order of ministry.

1.3.2 Appointment to Pastoral Charge—Filling Vacancy

The presbytery may appoint a designated lay minister to fill a vacancy.

1.3.3 Appointment to Other Presbytery-Accountable Ministry—Policy

The presbytery may appoint a member of the order of ministry or a designated lay minister to a presbytery-accountable ministry.



There are procedures for appointments. See the Pastoral Relations: Engaging and Supporting resource available from the General Council Office.

1.3.4 Other Staff Appointments

- a. **Who May Appoint:** A member of the order of ministry may be appointed to a staff position by another presbytery, a Conference, the General Council, a presbytery-accountable ministry, or a presbytery-recognized ministry.
- b. **Presbytery Consultation:** The appointing body must consult with the member's presbytery before making the appointment.

The member of the order of ministry must consult with their presbytery before accepting an appointment to a staff position by a presbytery-recognized ministry.

1.3.5 Term and Renewal of Appointments

For appointments of ministry personnel to pastoral charges and other presbytery-accountable ministries,

- (a) the presbytery must specify the term of the appointment;
- (b) it may also renew any appointment; and



There is an additional requirement for renewing the appointment of a diaconal supply or ordained supply. See section I.1.3.7 below.

- (c) the term of an appointment or renewal may not extend beyond June 30 of any year without approval in advance from the Conference Settlement Committee.

1.3.6 Designated Lay Ministers

A “designated lay minister” is a member of the United Church who has been appointed by the presbytery to meet a specific need of a pastoral charge or other presbytery-accountable ministry for paid accountable ministry.

In order to be appointed as a designated lay minister, a person must

- (a) be in essential agreement with the doctrine of the United Church; and
- (b) agree to comply with the polity of the United Church.

There are additional policies and procedures to be followed for the education, appointment, accountability, discipline, and recognition of designated lay ministers. See the Designated Lay Ministers resource available from the General Council Office.



1.3.7 Diaconal Supply or Ordained Supply

- a. **Definition:** A “diaconal supply” is a diaconal minister or equivalent of another denomination. An “ordained supply” is an ordained minister of another denomination.
- b. **Eligibility:** To serve as a diaconal supply or ordained supply, the minister must be in the process of admission to the order of ministry of the United Church. There is one exception, for ethnocultural or linguistic specific congregations.

To be eligible for appointment as diaconal supply or ordained supply, the minister must first complete certain steps in the admission process. For policies and procedures for the admission of ministers from other denominations, see the Admission to the Order of Ministry resource available from the General Council Office.

See also H. Entering Ministry 8.



- c. **Exception—Ethnocultural or Linguistic Specific Congregation:**
The presbytery may appoint a diaconal supply or ordained supply to a congregation that has been designated as an ethnocultural or linguistic specific congregation by the appropriate General Council working unit. That minister does not have to be in the admission process.

There are additional policies and procedures for appointing and reappointing a diaconal supply or ordained supply. See the Admission to the Order of Ministry resource available from the General Council Office.



1.3.8 Ecumenical Shared Ministries

A member of the order of ministry may be appointed to an ecumenical shared ministry following the same policies and procedures as for appointment to a United Church pastoral charge. (See section I.1.3.1 above.)

1.3.9 Covenanting

For all appointments made by the presbytery for a term of at least six months,

- (a) the presbytery is responsible for providing an act of covenant for each new pastoral relationship between a ministry personnel, the presbytery, and a pastoral charge or other presbytery-recognized ministry; and
- (b) the act of covenant must include any other ministry personnel and staff in the pastoral charge.

1.4 Ministry Positions

1.4.1 Policy

A pastoral charge, mission, or outreach ministry may create a full- or part-time ministry position accountable to the presbytery, with the presbytery’s approval.

1.4.2 Presbytery's Responsibilities for New Position

The presbytery is responsible for

- (a) ensuring the pastoral charge, mission, or outreach ministry has completed a satisfactory needs assessment;



For information on needs assessment, see section I.1.5 below.

- (b) ensuring the position description is adequate, and meets the United Church's standards for salary, allowances, and benefits; and
- (c) setting the minimum qualifications required to fill the position.



The presbytery may also designate the position as accountable to the governing body of the pastoral charge or mission rather than to the presbytery. See section I.1.8.2 below.

1.4.3 Vacancy

The presbytery may declare a vacancy if it decides a ministry position is open to being filled through settlement, or through call and settlement.

The pastoral charge may then

- (a) request settlement; or
- (b) initiate the search process set out in section I.1.6 below.

A vacancy is filled when a member of the order of ministry is settled in or called to and settled in the pastoral charge, or when a designated lay minister is appointed to the pastoral charge.

1.4.4 Multiple Staff

The following requirements apply to a pastoral charge with two or more ministry personnel. The division of responsibilities between the ministry personnel and the accountability of each ministry personnel must be

- (a) clarified by the pastoral charge governing body and the ministry personnel;
- (b) approved by the presbytery; and
- (c) reviewed by the pastoral charge Ministry and Personnel Committee at least annually.

1.5 Needs Assessment

1.5.1 Definition

"Needs assessment" is a process used to study the ministry personnel needs of a congregation or pastoral charge. The process is conducted by a committee called the Joint Needs Assessment Committee.

1.5.2 Initiating Needs Assessment

The presbytery is responsible for initiating the needs assessment process in any of the following situations:

- (a) the pastoral charge or a ministry personnel in the pastoral charge asks the presbytery to end the pastoral relationship;
- (b) the pastoral charge, its governing body, or a ministry personnel in the pastoral charge asks for needs assessment;
- (c) the presbytery recognizes that a change of pastoral relations is needed because the minister has died or is incapacitated because of a disability;
- (d) the pastoral charge is considering reducing or increasing the number of ministry personnel positions;
- (e) the pastoral charge is considering changing the terms of the pastoral relationship to the disadvantage of either the pastoral charge or the ministry personnel; or
- (f) as part of the discipline or oversight of a ministry personnel or the pastoral charge.

There are procedures for initiating needs assessment, meetings of the Joint Needs Assessment Committee, notices of meetings, notices to the presbytery and ministry personnel, and reporting to the governing body. See the Pastoral Relations: Engaging and Supporting resource available from the General Council Office.



1.5.3 Membership of Joint Needs Assessment Committee

The Joint Needs Assessment Committee consists of

- (a) two representatives of the presbytery, elected by the presbytery; and
- (b) representatives of the pastoral charge, elected by the pastoral charge or its governing body.

1.5.4 Process of Joint Needs Assessment Committee

The Joint Needs Assessment Committee is responsible for setting the process that it will follow. This may include delegating tasks beyond the committee.

The needs assessment process may be customized to the circumstances of the particular pastoral charge. For example, the entire process may be completed in a single day or it may extend over a period of several weeks. The key concern in this process is to ensure that the congregation has greater clarity about its purpose and its call so that it can share more effectively and faithfully in God's mission.



1.5.5 Responsibilities of Joint Needs Assessment Committee

The Joint Needs Assessment Committee is responsible for

- (a) studying the ministry personnel needs of the pastoral charge;
- (b) gathering information on these needs using a process that is open and allows the entire congregation to participate;
- (c) analyzing the information gathered;

- (d) presenting a report to the governing body that includes all of the following topics:
 - (i) the community of the pastoral charge;
 - (ii) the ministry of the pastoral charge;
 - (iii) the resources of the pastoral charge, including a manse report;
 - (iv) the ministry personnel position descriptions on which the committee has made recommendations;
 - (v) the skills and knowledge required of ministry personnel; and
 - (vi) the terms that may be offered to implement any recommendations; and
- (e) making recommendations to the governing body about the pastoral charge's ministry personnel needs and/or the existing pastoral relationships.



These recommendations by the Joint Needs Assessment Committee may include recommending changes to the existing pastoral relationship(s).

1.5.6 Governing Body Action in Response to Needs Assessment

After a Joint Needs Assessment Committee has presented its report and recommendations, the governing body must

- (a) make a decision on each of the recommendations made by the Joint Needs Assessment Committee; and
- (b) present its decisions, as well as a summary of the Joint Needs Assessment Committee's report and recommendations, at a meeting of the pastoral charge.



There are notice requirements for this meeting of the pastoral charge. See B. Local Ministry Unit 5.4.2 a.

1.5.7 Pastoral Charge Action in Response to Needs Assessment

When the governing body has presented its decisions on the report and recommendations of the Joint Needs Assessment Committee, the pastoral charge is responsible for making a decision on each of the Joint Needs Assessment Committee's recommendations.

1.5.8 Changes to the Pastoral Relationship

- a. **Changes to Terms:** The pastoral charge may decide to request changes to the terms of an ongoing pastoral relationship. The changes must be approved by the pastoral charge, ministry personnel, and presbytery.
- b. **Ending a Pastoral Relationship:** The pastoral charge may decide to request the ending of a pastoral relationship. There are procedures to be followed for making this kind of decision.



For the procedures for a pastoral charge to request the ending of a pastoral relationship, see section I.3.1.4 below.

1.5.9 Presbytery Action in Response to Needs Assessment

When the presbytery receives a needs assessment report and a copy of the decisions that the pastoral charge has made in response, the presbytery is responsible for

- (a) ensuring that the Joint Needs Assessment Committee, governing body, and pastoral charge have each met their responsibilities in the needs assessment process;
- (b) deciding whether to declare a vacancy; and
- (c) making a decision on each of the other requests and recommendations that the pastoral charge has made in response to the recommendations of the Joint Needs Assessment Committee.

1.6 Search and Selection

1.6.1 Search Process

A search process must be used when the pastoral charge calls a member of the order of ministry to fill a vacancy declared by the presbytery.

A search process may also be used when the presbytery appoints a ministry personnel to the pastoral charge.

1.6.2 Joint Search Committee

The search is conducted by a committee called the Joint Search Committee. The Joint Search Committee consists of

- (a) two representatives of the presbytery, elected by the presbytery; and
- (b) representatives of the pastoral charge, elected by the pastoral charge or its governing body.

There are procedures for meetings of the Joint Search Committee, notices of meetings, notices to the presbytery and ministry personnel, and reporting to the governing body. See the Pastoral Relations: Engaging and Supporting resource available from the General Council Office.



1.6.3 Process

The Joint Search Committee is responsible for setting the process that it will follow. Its work is confidential.

1.6.4 Recommendation for Call

This section applies when the pastoral charge is calling a member of the order of ministry to fill a vacancy.

The Joint Search Committee is responsible for recommending a member of the order of ministry for the call to the pastoral charge.

It may recommend only one member of the order of ministry for each position at any one time.

1.6.5 Recommendation for Appointment

This section applies when the presbytery is appointing a ministry personnel to the pastoral charge and the search process has been used.

The Joint Search Committee is responsible for recommending a ministry personnel for the appointment to either the pastoral charge or its governing body.

It may recommend only one ministry personnel for each position at any one time.

1.7 Interim Ministry

In the life and work of the pastoral charge, the time between ministers often provides a critical opportunity for reassessment and growth. For most pastoral charges, this time of transition can be both exciting and challenging. For some, it may be a time of distress or conflict. The pastoral charge may need the leadership of ministry personnel with special skills to help it deal with the past, continue in the present, and prepare for effective ministry in the future.



1.7.1 Meaning

An “interim ministry” is a time-limited ministry in a pastoral charge. The purpose of the interim ministry is to work toward specific goals decided on by the presbytery and the pastoral charge.

An “interim minister” is a member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister who has been designated by the Conference to serve in interim ministry.

1.7.2 Designation as Interim Minister

The Conference may designate a member of the order of ministry or a designated lay minister as an interim minister.

The Conference must be satisfied that the person

- (a) has been recommended by their presbytery;
- (b) is suitable for interim ministry; and
- (c) has, or is taking, appropriate training and education for interim ministry.

The designation is valid for the duration of the initial appointment of the interim minister.

(2016)



There are procedures for the designation of interim ministers. See the Interim Ministry resource available from the General Council Office.

1.7.3 Terms of Interim Ministry

The presbytery may approve a pastoral charge for interim ministry on the pastoral charge’s request, or in any case where the presbytery decides that interim ministry is appropriate.

The presbytery and pastoral charge must decide on

- (a) the needs and goals for the interim ministry;
- (b) the terms of the appointment; and

- (c) the processes for accountability and evaluation of the interim minister.

1.7.4 Interim Ministry Transition Committee

The search for an interim minister is conducted by an Interim Ministry Transition Committee. This committee consists of

- (a) one or two representatives of the presbytery, elected by the presbytery; and
- (b) five to seven representatives of the pastoral charge, elected by the pastoral charge or its governing body. They must all be full members of the pastoral charge.

1.7.5 Appointment

The process for appointing an interim minister to the pastoral charge is set out below. The Interim Ministry Transition Committee, pastoral charge governing body, and presbytery are each responsible for completing the steps of the process assigned to them.

- a. **Recruitment:** The Interim Ministry Transition Committee recruits an interim minister and recommends their appointment to the pastoral charge governing body.
- b. **Recommendation:** The pastoral charge governing body recommends an interim minister for the interim ministry to the presbytery.
- c. **Decision:** The presbytery makes a decision whether to appoint the interim minister to the pastoral charge.

1.7.6 Evaluation after Initial Appointment

The Conference must evaluate the effectiveness of the interim minister after the initial period of interim ministry. The Interim Ministry Transition Committee participates in this evaluation. The Conference may renew the designation for five years if the Conference is satisfied that the person is effective as an interim minister.

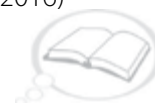
(2016)

1.7.7 Subsequent Renewal of Designation

The Conference must evaluate the effectiveness of the interim minister on the expiry of each five-year period of designation. The Conference may renew the designation for five years if the Conference is satisfied that the person continues to be effective as an interim minister.

(2016)

There are additional procedures for interim ministry and the appointment and evaluation of an interim minister. See the Interim Ministry resource available from the General Council Office.



1.7.8 Serving Pastoral Charge after Interim Ministry

The interim minister may not serve the pastoral charge in any call, settlement, or appointment immediately after their appointment as interim minister ends.

1.8 Lay Ministry

1.8.1 Categories of Lay Ministry

There are three ways in which a layperson may serve in paid accountable ministry in the United Church:

- (a) They may be employed as a “congregational designated minister” to fulfill a specific ministry function in a pastoral charge. See sections I.1.8.2–I.1.8.4 below.
- (b) They may be licensed to lead worship as a “licensed lay worship leader.” See section I.1.8.5 below.
- (c) They may be appointed as a “designated lay minister.” See section I.1.3.6 above.

(2016)

1.8.2 Ministry Positions Accountable to Governing Body

This section applies when

- (a) the pastoral charge is considering employing a person to fill a full- or part-time ministry position; and
- (b) the pastoral charge believes the position should be accountable to the governing body rather than to the presbytery.

The pastoral charge must give the position description to the presbytery. The presbytery is responsible for deciding whether to designate the position as accountable to the governing body.

1.8.3 Filling Positions Accountable to Governing Body

A position that is accountable to the governing body may be filled by

- (a) a member of the order of ministry; or
- (b) a congregational designated minister under section I.1.8.3 below.

The governing body is responsible for deciding on a search process to fill the position.

1.8.4 Employment of Congregational Designated Minister

A pastoral charge may appoint a person as a “congregational designated minister” if the presbytery has designated the ministry position as one that is accountable to the governing body of the pastoral charge. The following requirements apply:

(2016)

- (a) the person must be a baptized Christian;
- (b) the person must agree to comply with the polity of the United Church;
- (c) the appointment must be for a specified term, which may be renewed; and
- (d) there must also be a member of the order of ministry or a designated lay minister settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge.

A congregational designated minister is accountable to the governing body except in matters of discipline. They are accountable to the presbytery in matters of discipline.

There are additional policies and procedures for congregational designated ministers and their employment and accountability. See the Congregational Designated Ministers resource available from the General Council Office.



1.8.5 Licensed Lay Worship Leaders

The presbytery may license a person as a “licensed lay worship leader.” The following requirements apply:

- (a) the person must be a member of a congregation in that presbytery; and
- (b) the licence must be for a specified term, which may be renewed.

A licensed lay worship leader serves under the direction of the presbytery.

If a licensed lay worship leader becomes a member of a congregation in another presbytery, the person must be recognized by that other presbytery in order to continue serving as a licensed lay worship leader.

There are additional policies and procedures for the education, qualifications, licensing, and recognition of licensed lay worship leaders. See the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders resource available from the General Council Office.



2. Supporting

2.1 Remuneration for Ministry Personnel

2.1.1 Policy

The pastoral charge or other presbytery-accountable ministry is responsible for

- (a) paying adequate remuneration to all ministry personnel settled in or appointed to it; and
- (b) reviewing the remuneration annually.

The pastoral charge is also responsible for ensuring salary is paid at least monthly through the pastoral charge payroll service.

There is a policy for the pastoral charge payroll service. See the Financial Handbook for Congregations available from the General Council Office.



2.1.2 Amount of Remuneration

The amount of the remuneration must be based on

- (a) the service required from the ministry personnel;
- (b) the circumstances of the pastoral charge; and
- (c) the cost of living in the area.

It must also meet the minimum requirements set by the General Council for that year.

2.1.3 Remuneration for Part-Time Positions

A ministry personnel in a part-time position must be paid a corresponding percentage of the full-time salary and benefits. The percentage is based on a 40-hour workweek.

2.1.4 Manse or Housing Allowance

The pastoral charge must provide a manse for the ministry personnel or an equivalent housing allowance.



There are policies for utility costs, furnishings, and other matters related to the manse. See the Financial Handbook for Congregations available from the General Council Office.

- a. **Calculation of Housing Allowance:** The housing allowance must be
 - (i) based on the fair rental value of accommodation equivalent to a manse in the area;
 - (ii) approved by the presbytery at the start of the pastoral relationship; and
 - (iii) reviewed by the presbytery at least once every three years.



There are procedures for calculating a housing allowance. See the Minimum Salary and Allowances for Ministry Personnel schedule (revised annually) available from the General Council Office.

- b. **Part-Time Positions:** For a ministry personnel serving in a part-time position, the housing allowance is pro-rated based on their hours of service compared to a full-time position. If a manse is provided, no deduction or other adjustment is made to the remuneration.

2.1.5 Travel Allowance

If the ministry personnel must use a vehicle or public transit to fulfill the responsibilities of the call, settlement, or appointment, the pastoral charge is responsible for making a contribution to their travel costs. If the ministry personnel uses a vehicle, the amount contributed must meet the minimum rate per kilometre set by the General Council for that year.

2.1.6 Telephone

The pastoral charge is responsible for providing the minister with a telephone.

2.1.7 Vacation

The pastoral charge is responsible for giving the ministry personnel at least one month's vacation each pastoral year. A "pastoral year" is the period from July 1 of one calendar year to June 30 of the next calendar year.



For vacation purposes, a "month" may be a single calendar month including five Sundays, or 23 working days.

A ministry personnel may move from one pastoral relationship to another at any time during the pastoral year. The two pastoral charges involved have the following responsibilities for vacation pay:

- (a) if the ministry personnel moves between July 1 and August 31, the new pastoral charge is responsible for the vacation pay for the entire pastoral year starting July 1; and
- (b) if the ministry personnel moves between September 1 and June 30, the two pastoral charges are each responsible for a portion of the vacation pay for that pastoral year. Their portions are based on the length of time the ministry personnel served in each pastoral relationship during that pastoral year.

2.1.8 Secretarial Assistance

The pastoral charge is responsible for providing the ministry personnel with adequate secretarial assistance.

2.1.9 Moving Expenses

The pastoral charge is responsible for paying the moving expenses of the ministry personnel called and settled in or appointed to it. This includes travelling expenses and expenses connected with moving the ministry personnel's possessions. It also includes the moving expenses of the ministry personnel's immediate family.

There are policies and procedures for the payment of moving expenses. See the Pastoral Relations: Engaging and Supporting resource available from the General Council Office.



For candidates and for members of the order of ministry settled in the pastoral charge, moving expenses are shared by the pastoral charge and the appropriate General Council working unit.



2.1.10 Reimbursement of Moving Expenses

- a. **Relationship Established by Settlement or Call:** If the presbytery approves a request from a member of the order of ministry to end a pastoral relationship established by settlement or by call and settlement within the first three years,
 - (i) the member is responsible for reimbursing the pastoral charge and/or the appropriate General Council working unit for a portion of the moving costs paid at the start of the pastoral relationship.

This portion is based on the actual length of the pastoral relationship and the United Church's expectation that a pastoral relationship established by settlement or by call and settlement will last at least three years; and

Here are some examples of how this portion is calculated. If the actual pastoral relationship lasts two years, the member is responsible for reimbursement of 1/3 of the moving costs. If the actual pastoral relationship lasts one year, the member is responsible for reimbursement of 2/3 of the moving costs. If the actual pastoral relationship lasts six months, the member is responsible for reimbursing 5/6 of the moving costs.



- (ii) the presbytery must ensure that the member of the order of ministry fulfills this responsibility. The presbytery may waive this requirement in exceptional cases.

- b. **Relationship Established by Appointment:** If the presbytery approves a request from a ministry personnel to end a pastoral relationship established by appointment before the end of the term of the appointment, the presbytery may require the ministry personnel to repay a portion of the moving expenses paid at the start of the pastoral relationship.

2.2 Disability

2.2.1 Policy

The United Church is responsible for providing disability care and benefits for ministry personnel and lay employees who become unable to carry out the duties and responsibilities of their position because of illness or injury. (2016)

2.2.2 Who Is Covered by This Policy

Disability insurance benefits are available to those who

- (a) are serving in paid accountable positions;
- (b) are members of the group insurance plan;
- (c) are not receiving a United Church pension; and
- (d) have a disability that prevents them from working, as confirmed following the applicable United Church process. (2016)

2.2.3 Short-term and Long-term Benefits

The United Church provides disability benefit plans applicable to two distinct situations:

- (a) short-term disability (for absences of up to six months); and
- (b) long-term disability (for absences beyond an initial six-month period).

The disability programs will focus on treatment and restoration. (2016)



There are additional policies and procedures that apply to these disability benefit plans. See the resource available from the General Council Office.



Discrimination on the basis of a disability is prohibited under secular law. The pastoral charge and presbytery must comply with secular law requirements in any action they take concerning the pastoral relationship when a ministry personnel has a disability. The pastoral charge and presbytery should consult first with the appropriate Conference and General Council staff.

2.3 Leaves

Ministry personnel serving in a paid accountable ministry position may be entitled to take a leave of absence for a particular reason.

The following leaves are available to ministry personnel.



There are additional policies and procedures that apply to each of the leaves set out in section I.2.3. See the Pastoral Relations: Engaging and Supporting resource available from the General Council Office.

2.3.1 Maternity and Parental Leave

Maternity leave is an unpaid leave of absence available to a biological mother on the birth of her child. Ministry personnel taking maternity leave may be entitled to benefits under a government insurance plan.

Parental leave is an unpaid leave of absence available to a biological or adoptive parent while caring for a newborn or newly adopted child. Ministry personnel may be entitled to benefits under a government insurance plan.

2.3.2 Bereavement Leave

Bereavement leave is a paid leave of absence for four days plus travel time. It is available on the death of a member of a ministry personnel's immediate family or of another significant person in the ministry personnel's life.

A "significant person" is a person such as a close friend or relative of the ministry personnel.



2.3.3 Compassionate Leave

Compassionate leave is a paid leave of absence. The length depends on the circumstances.

Normally, a compassionate leave is for a maximum of 14 days. It may be extended to one month or longer where the life partner or child of the ministry personnel has died.



Compassionate leave may be given to extend bereavement leave.

Alternatively, it may be available in situations where the ministry personnel is the only person appropriate to respond to the circumstances, or when the ministry personnel is unable to carry out pastoral responsibilities because of the circumstances.

The Ministry and Personnel Committee of the local ministry unit is responsible for making decisions about compassionate leave.

2.3.4 Study Leave

Study leave is a paid leave of absence for three weeks per year. It is available to ministry personnel in pastoral charges or other presbytery-accountable ministries.

The pastoral charge or other presbytery-accountable ministry and the ministry personnel are responsible for sharing the cost of the ministry personnel's continuing education. Every call, settlement, or appointment must include funding for the ministry personnel for study leave. The amount of the funding must meet the minimum amount set by the General Council from time to time.

The presbytery is responsible for overseeing the continuing education of ministry personnel settled in or appointed to a pastoral charge or other presbytery-accountable ministry.

2.3.5 Sabbatical Leave

Sabbatical leave is a paid leave of absence for at least three months. It is available to ministry personnel settled in or appointed to a pastoral charge. These ministry personnel are eligible for a sabbatical each time they have completed five years of continuous service in the same pastoral relationship. Every call, settlement, or appointment must include provision for sabbatical leave.

(2016)



Normally, a pastoral relationship may not be ended at the initiative of the ministry personnel or pastoral charge within 12 months of the ministry personnel's return from a sabbatical.

Sabbatical leave is also available to interim ministers.

2.3.6 Other Leaves of Absence

If requested by the ministry personnel, the pastoral charge may grant a leave of absence for another reason. This leave of absence may be paid or unpaid, as agreed by the pastoral charge and ministry personnel. The presbytery must approve any leave of absence that will last more than three months.

2.4 Licences to Administer Sacraments

2.4.1 Policy

The Conference may grant a licence to administer the sacraments to

(a) any ministry personnel other than an ordained minister;



Members of the order of ministry who have been ordained to the ministry of word, sacrament, and pastoral care do not require a licence to administer the sacraments.

(b) lay people who were serving as a designated lay minister at the time of their retirement and who had been recognized by the appropriate court as a designated lay minister; and



The presbytery may recognize a designated lay minister under the policies and procedures that apply to designated lay ministers. See the Designated Lay Ministers resource available from the General Council Office.

(c) members of congregations without a settled or appointed member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister. A member holding a licence to administer the sacraments is called a "sacraments elder."



There are policies for the qualifications, assessment, and education of lay people to be sacraments elders. See the Sacraments Elders resource available from the General Council Office.

2.4.2 Process

The presbytery is responsible for recommending to the Conference that a person be granted a licence. The pastoral charge may initiate the process by making a request to the presbytery that a licence be granted.

2.4.3 Terms of Licence

Licences to administer the sacraments have different terms, depending on the status of the person who holds the licence:

- (a) A diaconal minister may administer the sacraments in the presbytery where they have been settled or appointed, for the duration of the settlement or appointment.
- (b) A designated lay minister who has been recognized by the appropriate court may administer the sacraments in the presbytery where they are a member for the duration of the appointment.
- (c) A candidate or diaconal supply who has been appointed to a pastoral charge may administer the sacraments in that pastoral charge for the duration of the appointment.
- (d) A member who was serving as a designated lay minister at the time of their retirement and who had been recognized by the appropriate court as a designated lay minister may administer the sacraments within the presbytery that recommended them for a licence. They must act in co-operation with the governing body of the pastoral charge where they are administering the sacraments.
- (e) A sacraments elder may administer the sacraments in their pastoral charge for a 12-month term that may be renewed. The licence automatically ends if a member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister is settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge.

2.5 Resource and Support to the Pastoral Relationship

2.5.1 Consultation with Pastoral Relations Committee

Members of pastoral charges and ministry personnel may consult the presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee (or equivalent presbytery body) for advice about the pastoral relationship.

This is a confidential consultation. The Pastoral Relations Committee may not tell anyone that a consultation has taken place, or reveal any of the matters discussed in the consultation. The only exceptions are

- (a) if the person consulting the Pastoral Relations Committee gives permission to the committee to share this information; or
- (b) if the Pastoral Relations Committee has reasonable concern that the health or safety of any person is at risk. In that case, the Pastoral Relations Committee must report the matter to the presbytery.

Under secular law, there are mandatory requirements for reporting suspected child abuse and, in some provinces, suspected abuse of other vulnerable individuals. These requirements override the confidentiality of any consultation under section I.2.5.1.



2.5.2 Pastoral Charge Supervisor

- a. **Appointment:** If a pastoral charge has no settled or appointed member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister who has been recognized by the appropriate court, the presbytery is responsible for appointing a member of presbytery to the pastoral charge as a “pastoral charge supervisor.”

The presbytery may also appoint a pastoral charge supervisor in any other situation where the presbytery decides it is appropriate.

- b. **Responsibilities:** The pastoral charge supervisor is responsible for
- (i) supporting any ministry personnel serving the pastoral charge;
 - (ii) general supervision of the work of the pastoral charge;
 - (iii) ensuring that a chair is elected for the pastoral charge governing body, the trustees, and meetings of the congregation and pastoral charge;
 - (iv) ensuring that the sacraments are administered and new members are received following the requirements of these bylaws;
 - (v) if there are ministry personnel serving the pastoral charge, delegating responsibility for the functions of ministry in the pastoral charge to the ministry personnel as appropriate; and
 - (vi) reporting to the presbytery on the state of the pastoral charge.

2.5.3 Functions of Ministry—Outside Pastoral Relationship

At any time that ministry personnel are not settled in or appointed to a pastoral charge, they may carry out the functions of ministry in the United Church only if

- (a) they have a formal association with a pastoral charge, are acting on behalf of that pastoral charge, and have the approval of the pastoral charge’s governing body; or



An example of a “formal association” with a pastoral charge would be where the minister has been designated as a “voluntary associate minister” or “honorary associate minister” by the pastoral charge or its governing body.

- (b) they have been appointed to a United Church ministry or presbytery-recognized ministry to exercise the functions of ministry associated with it.

2.5.4 Request—Previous Pastoral Charge

If a ministry personnel is asked by a member or adherent (or their families) of a pastoral charge where they had previously been settled or appointed to preside at a baptism, communion service, wedding, or funeral, the ministry personnel

- (a) must refer the request to a member of the order of ministry who is settled in or appointed to that pastoral charge; and
- (b) may preside only with the approval of the pastoral charge governing body.

3. Disengaging

3.1 Changes in Pastoral Relations

3.1.1 Meaning of “Change in Pastoral Relations”

There are three participants in a pastoral relationship: the ministry personnel, the pastoral charge, and the presbytery.

A “change in pastoral relations” means

- (a) a change in the terms of an ongoing pastoral relationship; or
- (b) the ending of a pastoral relationship.

Either kind of change requires the presbytery’s approval.

3.1.2 Who May Initiate a Change in Pastoral Relations

A change in pastoral relations may be initiated by

- (a) the ministry personnel;
- (b) the pastoral charge; or
- (c) the presbytery.

3.1.3 Change Initiated by Ministry Personnel

- a. **Request:** A ministry personnel initiates a change in pastoral relations by sending a written request for the change to the governing body of the pastoral charge and the presbytery.

The request must indicate a proposed date for the change to take effect.

- b. **Approval:** The presbytery is responsible for making a decision on the request.

If the presbytery approves the request, it must also make a decision on the proposed date for the change to take effect. If the proposed date is less than 90 days after the pastoral charge received the request, the pastoral charge must also approve the date.

There is a policy for giving and receiving requests and other written documents. See J. Oversight, Conflict Resolution, and Discipline 14. This policy sets out how and when a person or court “receives” a written document.



3.1.4 Change Initiated by Pastoral Charge

- a. **Decision to Request:** A pastoral charge initiates a change in pastoral relations by deciding at a meeting of the pastoral charge to request a change.

The decision must indicate the proposed date for the change to take effect.

- b. **Requirements for Pastoral Charge Meeting:** The requirements for advance notice must be followed for this meeting of the pastoral charge. They are

set out in B. Local Ministry Unit 5.4.2 b. The chair of the presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee or equivalent is responsible for setting a date for the meeting that ensures compliance with the requirements set out in section I.3.1.4 c and d below.

The meeting must be chaired by the chair of the presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee or someone appointed by that chair. (2016)

- c. Ministry Personnel Entitled to Be Heard:** At the meeting of the pastoral charge, the ministry personnel settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge must be given an opportunity
- (i) to speak about the proposed change; and
 - (ii) to respond to any questions asked or comments made about the ministry personnel or the pastoral relationship.

The ministry personnel is entitled to this opportunity before the pastoral charge votes to request a change in pastoral relations.

- d. People Requesting the Meeting:** At the meeting of the pastoral charge, at least one of the people requesting the meeting must be given an opportunity to speak about the proposed change. (2016)

- e. Ministry Personnel Entitled to Advance Notice of Change:** For all changes of pastoral relations under this section (I.3.1.4), the ministry personnel is entitled to
- (i) 90 days' advance notice of the change in pastoral relations; or
 - (ii) 90 days' salary and benefits in the same amounts as payable before the change.

The ministry personnel may be given a combination of some advance notice and some salary and benefits, as long as the total meets the 90-day requirement.

The presbytery is responsible for giving the notice under section I.3.1.6 below. The pastoral charge is responsible for paying the salary and benefits.

- f. Notice of Pastoral Charge Decision:** The pastoral charge must give notice of its decision to request a change in pastoral relations after the meeting to
- (i) each ministry personnel settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge;
 - (ii) all employees of the pastoral charge; and
 - (iii) the presbytery.
- g. Presbytery's Decision:** The presbytery is responsible for
- (i) ensuring that all requirements in these bylaws have been met for requesting a change in pastoral relations;
 - (ii) reviewing any relevant disability, oversight, or discipline concerns; and

- (iii) making a decision on the request and on the proposed date for the change to take effect.

3.1.5 Change Initiated by Presbytery

The presbytery may act on its own initiative and decide on a change in pastoral relations. The presbytery may make this decision only

- (a) as part of a process for the oversight or discipline of the ministry personnel or pastoral charge; and
- (b) if the presbytery follows the requirements in these bylaws for the oversight or discipline process.

See J. Oversight, Conflict Resolution, and Discipline for the requirements for oversight and discipline processes.



3.1.6 Presbytery's Responsibility to Give Notice

If the presbytery decides to make or approve any change in pastoral relations, the presbytery must give notice of the decision and the date it will take effect to

- (a) the pastoral charge;
- (b) each ministry personnel settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge;
- (c) the Conference Settlement Committee; and
- (d) the appropriate General Council working unit.

3.2 Retirement

3.2.1 Care and Oversight

The presbytery is responsible for caring pastorally for retired members of the order of ministry on its rolls.

It is also responsible for the oversight and discipline of retired members of the order of ministry.

3.2.2 Appointment or Call

Retired members of the order of ministry are eligible for appointment to a pastoral charge or other presbytery-accountable ministry.

They are not eligible to accept a call unless they first are returned to active standing. See section I.1.2.2 b above for more information.

3.2.3 Pension

Ministry personnel must enrol in and contribute to the United Church's pension plan for as long as they are required to do so under the terms of the plan.

They are entitled to receive pension benefits based on their age at retirement, years of service, and all other terms of the United Church's pension plan.

3.3 Discontinued Service Lists

3.3.1 Responsibility for Keeping Lists

The General Council, through the appropriate working unit, keeps three kinds of discontinued service lists:

- (1) Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List;
- (2) Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary); and
- (3) Discontinued Service List (Voluntary).

It places a name on the applicable list when it receives notice of

- (a) the presbytery's decision to place a layperson's name on the Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List; or
- (b) the Conference's decision to place the name of a member of the order of ministry on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary) or the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary).

3.3.2 Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List

- a. **Placing Name on List:** The presbytery may decide to place the name of a layperson serving as a designated lay minister or a congregational designated minister on the Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List.

It may make this decision when it has terminated their appointment as an act of discipline.

Designated lay ministers were formerly known as lay pastoral ministers, lay pastoral ministers-in-training, and in some cases, staff associates.

The Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List also includes the names of lay members who served in those former categories and whose names were placed on the list by presbytery action.



- b. **Removing Name from List:** Any layperson whose name is on the Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List may apply to the presbytery to have their name removed from the list.

The presbytery is responsible for

- (i) making a decision on the application; and
- (ii) notifying the appropriate General Council working unit of the decision.



There is a process for an application to remove a layperson's name from the Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List. It is available from the General Council Office.

If the presbytery decides not to approve the application, the member may apply again after three years from the date of the presbytery's decision.

3.3.3 Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary)

The Conference may decide to place the name of a member of the order of ministry on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary). It may take this action

- (a) on the recommendation of a Formal Hearing Committee;
- (b) on the recommendation of the presbytery under C. Presbytery 2.5.5 or J. Oversight, Conflict Resolution, and Discipline 9.8 and 9.9; or

C. Presbytery 2.5.5 deals with members of the order of ministry who have not applied to be retained on the roll. J. Oversight, Conflict Resolution, and Discipline 9.8 and 9.9 deal with members who have not met the presbytery's requirements under an oversight process.



- (c) on the recommendation of the presbytery, if the member has been convicted of a criminal offence.

A member of the order of ministry is entitled to a formal hearing or similar process before their name is placed on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary). This is a requirement under secular law. See the Formal Hearings resource from the General Council Office.



3.3.4 Discontinued Service List (Voluntary)

The Conference may decide to place the name of a member of the order of ministry on the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary). It may take this action

- (a) at the member's own request when accepted by the presbytery; or
- (b) on the recommendation of the presbytery under C. Presbytery 2.5.3, 2.6, or 2.7.

C. Presbytery 2.5.3, 2.6, and 2.7 deal with members of the order of ministry who have not applied to be retained on the roll, who have accepted a position in another religious body, or who have become a minister of another church.



3.3.5 Consequence of Name Being Placed on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary) or (Voluntary)

Those whose names have been placed on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary) or the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary) are not recognized as ministry personnel of the United Church. Their names are removed from the rolls of the presbytery and of the Conference.

They may not perform the functions of ministry in the United Church, with one exception: the Conference may decide to allow a person whose name is on the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary) to perform one or more specific functions of ministry.

They are not eligible for appointment to a pastoral charge or other presbytery-recognized ministry, with one exception: the presbytery or Conference may require a person to serve in an appointment as part of the readmission process.

3.4 Death of Ministry Personnel

3.4.1 Who Is Entitled to Financial Support

The financial support under this section (I.3.4) is for the spouse or, if there is no spouse, the dependent children of a ministry personnel who

- (a) had been settled in or appointed to a pastoral charge, mission, or outreach ministry at the time of their death;
- (b) was a member of the group insurance plan; and
- (c) was not receiving a United Church pension.

3.4.2 Salary and Benefits—Six-Month Period

The spouse or dependent children of a ministry personnel are entitled to receive the ministry personnel's salary, housing allowance, and benefits for six months. This includes the use of the manse or alternative accommodation if there is no housing allowance. It does not include a travel allowance.

They are entitled to the same amount of salary, housing allowance, and benefits as the ministry personnel was receiving at the date of death.

The six-month period starts following the end of the month in which the death took place. The month in which the death took place is not counted.

There is one exception, set out in section I.3.4.3 below.

3.4.3 Calculation of Six-Month Period

This section applies where the ministry personnel was receiving disability benefits under section I.2.2 above.

The combined benefit under section I.3.4.2 above and under I.2.2 is for a maximum of six months. The month in which the death took place is not counted even if disability benefits were paid for that month.

3.4.4 Responsibility to Pay

The pastoral charge, mission, or outreach ministry is responsible for providing the salary and benefits.

It may ask for financial assistance if it is unable to fulfill this responsibility. The request is made through the presbytery to the appropriate General Council working unit.

3.4.5 Presbytery's Responsibility

When a ministry personnel dies, the presbytery must

- (a) ensure that appropriate arrangements for pastoral care are made for the ministry personnel's family and the pastoral charge; and
- (b) ensure that arrangements are made for payment of the financial benefits under section I.3.4.2 above.

3.4.6 Alternative Accommodation

The pastoral charge, presbytery, and appropriate Conference staff person must consult with the ministry personnel's spouse or dependent children (through the children's legal guardian) about their special circumstances or needs related to alternative accommodation.

The pastoral charge is normally responsible for the reasonable moving costs of the ministry personnel's spouse or dependent children to the alternative accommodation.

3.4.7 Requirements on Appointment to Presbytery-Recognized Ministry

This section applies when

- (a) a ministry personnel is appointed to a presbytery-recognized ministry;
and
- (b) the presbytery, Conference, or General Council is making or approving the appointment.

The appointing or approving body (presbytery, Conference, or General Council) is responsible for ensuring the ministry personnel's spouse or dependent children will be entitled to death benefits under section I.3.4.2 above even if the presbytery-recognized ministry will not provide them as part of the appointment.

The appointing or approving body may commit to paying the death benefits under section I.3.4.2 itself, or it may arrange to have them paid from some other source.



J. OVERSIGHT, CONFLICT RESOLUTION, AND DISCIPLINE

1. Presbytery Oversight of Local Ministries

The presbytery has oversight of pastoral charges and other presbytery-accountable ministries. As part of this responsibility, the presbytery works with pastoral charges and presbytery-accountable ministries in the following ways.

1.1 Annual Reports

The presbytery Pastoral Oversight Committee receives annual reports and other relevant information from pastoral charges each year. The committee reviews this information and reports annually to the presbytery on the state of the pastoral charges.

The presbytery reports annually to the Conference on its findings and on any follow-up action that it considers necessary.

1.2 Visits

The presbytery Pastoral Oversight Committee visits each pastoral charge and presbytery-accountable ministry at least once every three years. The committee reports to the presbytery annually on the state of the pastoral charges visited during that year.

The presbytery reports annually to the Conference on its findings and on any follow-up action that it considers necessary.



There are processes for presbytery visits to pastoral charges and presbytery-accountable ministries. See the Pastoral Oversight Visits resource available from the General Council Office.

1.3 Financial Assistance

The presbytery

- (a) annually visits each pastoral charge and presbytery-accountable ministry requesting financial support, and receives a budget and financial statement from each of them;
- (b) applies to the Conference for mission support grants for these pastoral charges and presbytery-accountable ministries;
- (c) makes recommendations to the Conference on applications from pastoral charges for assistance from the Property Fund; and
- (d) makes recommendations to the appropriate General Council working unit on applications from pastoral charges for assistance from the Capital Assistance Fund.

1.4 Ministry Personnel Remuneration

The presbytery works with the pastoral charge to ensure that the pastoral charge pays its ministry personnel at least the minimum salary and travel allowance required by the General Council. If the presbytery cannot arrange for the pastoral charge to pay at least the minimum salary and travel allowance, it applies for a mission support grant for the pastoral charge.

1.5 Lay Employees—Pension and Group Insurance

The presbytery works with the pastoral charge to ensure that the lay employees of pastoral charges are enrolled in the United Church's pension and group insurance plans if they were hired after December 21, 1988, and meet hours-of-work criteria.

1.6 Completing Statistical Forms

The presbytery works with the pastoral charge to ensure that the pastoral charge completes the annual statistical and information forms and submits them to the appropriate General Council working unit by the required date.

2. Police Records Checks

The United Church has processes to determine suitability for ministry. One process requires individuals who are, or are seeking to be, in ministry positions to obtain a police records check on an ongoing basis.

Ministry personnel, inquirers, and candidates are responsible for getting a police records check and giving it to a court or a committee at various times in their life in ministry. Courts and committees are responsible for ensuring that this responsibility is properly fulfilled.

There are additional policies and procedures that apply to police records checks. They include details about the types of police records checks required, the times they are required, and the courts and committees that must receive them.

The policies and procedures for police records checks are available from the General Council Office.



3. Presbytery Oversight of Ministry Personnel

The presbytery has responsibility for the oversight of ministry personnel. It fulfills the responsibilities for ministry personnel that have been assigned to it in these bylaws in this section (J. Oversight, Conflict Resolution, and Discipline) and under C. Presbytery and I. Pastoral Relations.

4. Letters of Good Standing

The presbytery is responsible for issuing letters of good standing for ministry personnel. Any ministry personnel who is in good standing may request a letter of good standing.

A letter of good standing confirms that

- (a) there are no outstanding presbytery orders for that ministry personnel;
and



The presbytery may make orders for ministry personnel under the presbytery's responsibility for the oversight and discipline of ministry personnel. See, for example, sections J.9.4 and J.12.7 below.

- (b) the ministry personnel's name is not on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary), the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary), or the Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List.

5. Principles of Conflict Resolution

Whenever there is a conflict between people in the body of Christ, there is pain and anxiety on all sides. Conflicts may arise because of strongly held and differing ideas, violations of rights, and our own human imperfections. When conflicts go unresolved, the body suffers wounds. The longer the body suffers, the deeper the wounds go. Conflicts also take time, energy, and other resources away from our work in mission.

Some conflicts may be preventable. There are processes in the church to address the possibility of conflict in a proactive way.



See section J.1 above and I. Pastoral Relations 2.5 for some policies and processes that may help to prevent conflict.

Where conflict does arise, the church is called to resolve it and to deal pastorally with the pain that it causes. This requires compassionate love, forgiveness, wholeness, and humility. It also requires that justice be done, and be seen to be done. There can be no shalom without justice.

Conflicts must be resolved as quickly and as fairly as possible. The church has informal processes that people involved in a conflict may use to try to resolve the conflict themselves. They may call on others who are experienced in these processes to help them with resolving the conflict.

Early reconciliation of conflict is not always possible. The church has formal processes in which people outside of the conflict decide the outcome for those who are in it.

Everyone involved in a formal process must remember that, individually and collectively, they are all accountable to and under the overall authority of Jesus Christ.



There are Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel available from the General Council Office. The standards may be used as a resource in any informal or formal process that involves ministry personnel.

6. Informal Conflict Resolution Processes

6.1 First Consideration

If a conflict arises, the people involved must try to resolve it themselves wherever possible.

6.2 Possible Next Steps

If a conflict is not resolved

- (a) the court of accountability for any of the people involved may take action in response to the conflict; or

For information on the court of accountability, see section J.7 below.

- (b) one of the people involved in the conflict may make a formal complaint to the court of accountability under section J.11 below.



6.3 Dispute Resolution Process

There is a process for the resolution of conflicts. It includes the assistance of a conflict resolution facilitator appointed by the court of accountability.

See the Dispute Resolution resource available from the General Council Office.



6.3.1 When the Dispute Resolution Process Is Mandatory

The dispute resolution process must be followed if the court receives a formal complaint under section J.11 below. There is one exception. For formal complaints under the United Church's Sexual Abuse Policy, the process under that policy must be followed.

The General Council has approved the Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures to deal with formal complaints of sexual abuse. This policy and procedures are referred to as the "Sexual Abuse Policy" in these bylaws. They are available from the General Council Office. More information is also found in section J.15.1 below.



6.3.2 When the Dispute Resolution Process Is an Option

The dispute resolution process may be followed in any case where the court decides it is appropriate.

7. Courts of Accountability

All ministry personnel, members, committee members, and other people holding offices in the United Church are accountable to a court. The courts of accountability are

- (a) the governing body of a pastoral charge, for members, adherents, committee members, and other people holding offices in the pastoral charge, except for congregational designated ministers;
- (b) the governing body of a pastoral charge, for the accountability of congregational designated ministers;
- (c) the presbytery, for the discipline of congregational designated ministers;
- (d) the presbytery, for a pastoral charge, ministry personnel, candidates, and anyone else who has been appointed to a position by the presbytery;
- (e) the Conference, for a presbytery or a person who has been appointed to a position by the Conference and is not included in paragraphs (a) or (d) above; and
- (f) the General Council, for a Conference or a person who has been appointed to a position by the General Council and is not included in paragraphs (a), (d), or (e) above.

8. Presbytery Action—Pastoral Charges

The presbytery is responsible for the oversight of pastoral charges. It must take seriously any concerns that come to its attention about the state of a pastoral charge in the presbytery. These concerns may be raised by

- (a) the presbytery itself, including any member or committee of the presbytery;
- (b) the ministry personnel settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge;
- (c) the pastoral charge supervisor;
- (d) the governing body of the pastoral charge; or
- (e) a proposal signed by 10 full members of the pastoral charge that the pastoral charge's governing body has passed on to the presbytery.

The presbytery must decide on the appropriate action to take in response to the concerns.

See the Pastoral Charge and Ministry Personnel Reviews resource available from the General Council Office. It contains information to help presbyteries decide on the appropriate action, including guidelines for conducting a review of the state of the pastoral charge.



9. Presbytery Action—Ministry Personnel

The presbytery may use the Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel as a resource in its oversight of ministry personnel. They are available from the General Council Office.



9.1 Application

References in this section (J.9) to ministry personnel also include congregational designated ministers.

However, there are differences in these two categories. When applied to congregational designated ministers, the policies for ministry personnel are to be adapted as necessary.

9.2 Concerns about Ministry Personnel

The presbytery is responsible for the oversight of ministry personnel. It must take seriously any concerns that come to its attention about any ministry personnel. These concerns may be raised by

- (a) the presbytery itself, including any member or committee of the presbytery;
- (b) a ministry personnel settled in or appointed to the same pastoral charge;
- (c) the pastoral charge supervisor;
- (d) the governing body of the pastoral charge; or
- (e) a proposal signed by 10 full members of the pastoral charge that the pastoral charge's governing body has passed on to the presbytery.

9.3 Presbytery's Response—Ordering a Review

The presbytery must decide if the concerns raise a question for the presbytery as to whether the ministry personnel

- (a) is effective; or
- (b) recognizes the authority of the presbytery.

If the presbytery decides that either or both of these questions are raised, it must order a review of the situation. The review will be postponed if the ministry personnel is on maternity or parental leave.

There does not have to be a formal complaint under section J.11 below for the presbytery to order a review. The dispute resolution process started by a formal complaint is a different process from a review.



The presbytery may also decide that no question has been raised that requires a review. It may choose to take some other action to deal with the concerns.

See the Pastoral Charge and Ministry Personnel Reviews resource available from the General Council Office. It contains information to help presbyteries in responding to concerns about ministry personnel, including guidelines for conducting a review.





There is no mandatory process for a review. The presbytery must, however, conduct the review in a way that meets the requirements for procedural fairness under secular law. The Pastoral Charge and Ministry Personnel Reviews resource available from the General Council Office sets out these requirements. It also provides guidance on how the review might be conducted in order to meet these requirements.

9.4 Decisions Resulting from a Review

The review may indicate that further action is necessary. In that case, the presbytery may make one or more of the following decisions:

- (a) to discipline the pastoral charge;
- (b) to require the ministry personnel to take a directed program for the improvement of pastoral skills;
- (c) to require the ministry personnel to undergo a medical, psychiatric, and/or psychological examination by qualified professionals acceptable to the presbytery and to provide relevant information from that examination to the Pastoral Relations Committee;
- (d) to require the ministry personnel to take a directed program for rehabilitation and/or training in some other vocation;
- (e) to dissolve the pastoral relationship;
- (f) to suspend the ministry personnel from functioning as ministry personnel for six months or for another time period set by the presbytery; and
- (g) to take other action that the presbytery decides is in the best interests of the pastoral charge and the ministry personnel.

9.5 No New Call or Appointment during Remedial Period

This section applies if the presbytery requires the ministry personnel to undertake any of the actions in paragraphs J.9.4 (b) or (d).

Until the ministry personnel has completed the required action and received a satisfactory evaluation under section J.9.8 below, the presbytery may not approve their call or appointment to another pastoral charge or presbytery-accountable ministry.

The presbytery must inform the ministry personnel of this policy promptly after it has made the decision.

9.6 Supervision

If the presbytery requires the ministry personnel to undertake any of the actions in paragraphs J.9.4 (b), (c), or (d), the Pastoral Relations Committee is responsible for supervising the required action.

9.7 Financial Support

This section applies if

- (a) the presbytery requires the ministry personnel to undertake any of the actions in paragraphs J.9.4 (b), (c), or (d), and the ministry personnel is not serving in a pastoral charge or other presbytery-recognized ministry while taking the required action; or
- (b) the presbytery suspends the ministry personnel under paragraph J.9.4 (f).

The ministry personnel is entitled to financial support for the time period set by the presbytery. The financial support must be equal to the minimum salary, housing, and other allowances set by the General Council. It will be discontinued if the ministry personnel does not undertake or complete the action required.

9.8 Evaluation by Presbytery When Action Completed

This section applies when the ministry personnel has completed the action required by the presbytery under paragraphs J.9.4 (b), (c), (d), or (g).

The presbytery must decide whether the ministry personnel has completed the action to the presbytery's satisfaction and is ready to return to paid accountable ministry.

If the presbytery decides that the ministry personnel is not ready to return to paid accountable ministry, it must

- (a) recommend to the Conference that the person's name be placed on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary), if the person is a member of the order of ministry; or
- (b) place the person's name on the Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List, if the person is a designated lay minister or congregational designated minister.

9.9 Failure to Take Action Required

If the ministry personnel does not take all the action required by the presbytery under paragraphs J.9.4 (b), (c), (d), or (g), the presbytery may

- (a) recommend to the Conference that the person's name be placed on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary), if the person is a member of the order of ministry; or
- (b) place the person's name on the Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List, if the person is a designated lay minister or congregational designated minister.

10. Ministry Personnel—Criminal Charges

10.1 Application

References in this section (J.10) to ministry personnel include congregational designated ministers.

10.2 Responsibility to Inform

A ministry personnel who is charged with a criminal offence must inform the presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee immediately.

10.3 Decision by Presbytery Officers

On receiving notice under section J.10.2 above, the chair of the presbytery, the chair of the presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee, and the secretary of the presbytery must

- (a) consult with the governing body of the pastoral charge served by the ministry personnel, or any other bodies that they consider appropriate;
- (b) consult with the ministry personnel who has been charged;
- (c) decide whether or not it is appropriate for the person to continue to function as ministry personnel until the final disposition of the criminal charges; and



There is "final disposition" of the criminal charges when all of the secular court process for the criminal charges has been completed. That includes any appeals or, where there is no appeal, the expiry of the time period for starting an appeal.

- (d) communicate their decision to the ministry personnel, the governing body of the pastoral charge, the presbytery, and other bodies that they consider appropriate.

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10.4 Ministry Personnel's Responsibility to Comply with Decision

If the presbytery officers named in section J.10.3 above decide that it is inappropriate for the ministry personnel to continue to function as ministry personnel, the person must comply with the decision and stop immediately.

10.5 Further Action

The presbytery is responsible for taking one of the following actions either before or promptly after the final disposition of the criminal charges:



The presbytery must obtain legal advice from or through the General Council Office before deciding to take any of these actions.

- (a) making a formal complaint against the ministry personnel under section J.11 below;
- (b) dealing with a formal complaint already made against the ministry personnel under section J.11 below;
- (c) if the person is a member of the order of ministry, initiating a formal hearing into the fitness of the person for ministry by recommending to the Conference that the person's name be placed on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary);
- (d) if the person is a ministry personnel (but not a member of the order of ministry), making a decision to place the person's name on the Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List;
- (e) making one of the decisions under section J.9.4 above; or
- (f) making a decision that the person may resume functioning as ministry personnel if they have been suspended under section J.10.3 above.

11. Formal Complaints

The Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures must be followed for formal complaints of sexual abuse as set out in that policy. The "Sexual Abuse Policy" is available from the General Council Office.



A formal complaint is a written document that meets the requirements set out in section J.11. When a formal complaint is made, it starts a dispute resolution process that must be followed. See the Dispute Resolution resource available from the General Council Office.



A person may wish to raise concerns about a ministry personnel without making a formal complaint under section J.11. The concerns may be brought to the attention of the presbytery for its consideration and decision on any action necessary. See sections J.9.2 and J.9.3 above. The dispute resolution process does not apply.



11.1 Who May Make a Formal Complaint

A formal complaint may be made by

- (a) a member;
- (b) an adherent;
- (c) an employee of the United Church, its courts, or its congregations;
- (d) any ministry personnel; or
- (e) a court.

There are additional people who may make a formal complaint under the Sexual Abuse Policy. See section J.15.1 below.

The person or court making the formal complaint is called the "complainant."

11.2 Basis for a Formal Complaint

The complainant must have personal knowledge (if the complainant is a person) or reasonable and probable grounds for believing (if the complainant is a court) that

- (a) a member;
- (b) an adherent; or
- (c) a ministry personnel

has acted in a way that is a proper ground of discipline.

This may involve an action taken by the member, adherent, or ministry personnel, or an action that the complainant believes the person should have taken but did not take.

The person named in the complaint is called the "respondent."

11.3 Where the Formal Complaint Is Made



The formal complaint is made to the court of accountability.

The court of accountability is described in section J.7 above.

There are two exceptions:

- (a) if the complainant is a court, the formal complaint is made to the court that has oversight of the complainant court; and
- (b) if the complainant is the General Council, the formal complaint is made to the Judicial Committee of the General Council.



There is a dispute resolution process that must be followed when a formal complaint is made under section J.11. See the Dispute Resolution resource available from the General Council Office.

12. Formal Hearing

12.1 Rules of Procedure

A formal hearing is a process like a trial in a civil court. It is used to resolve a formal complaint or an issue in a formal way. There are rules of procedure that must be followed in all formal hearings.



The rules of procedure for formal hearings are set out in the Formal Hearings resource available from the General Council Office.

12.2 Who May Hold a Formal Hearing

A formal hearing may be held by

- (a) the governing body of a pastoral charge, the presbytery, or the Conference for any matter within its responsibility; or
- (b) the Judicial Committee of the General Council for any matter within the General Council's responsibility.

12.3 When a Formal Hearing Is Held

A formal hearing is held for a formal complaint when

- (a) a court orders a formal hearing; or
- (b) a Formal Hearing Committee orders a formal hearing in response to a request under section J.12.5 below.

A court may also order a formal hearing to decide any matter within its responsibility.



For example, a formal hearing may be ordered by the Conference to deal with a presbytery recommendation that the name of a member of the order of ministry be placed on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary).

12.4 Appointment of Formal Hearing Committee

The court of accountability is responsible for appointing three to five United Church members to serve as the Formal Hearing Committee. The court must name the chair and secretary of the committee.

If the court of accountability is the General Council, the Executive of the Judicial Committee of the General Council has this responsibility.

12.5 Requesting a Formal Hearing

This section applies to formal complaints other than formal complaints under the Sexual Abuse Policy.

The court may decide on its own initiative to order a formal hearing of the formal complaint. If it does not, the complainant or respondent may request a formal hearing.

The process for ordering or requesting a formal hearing is set out in the Formal Hearings resource available from the General Council Office.



12.6 Decisions and Recommendations

The Formal Hearing Committee is responsible for making decisions and recommendations that are

- (a) within its terms of reference; and
- (b) within the authority of the court that appointed it.

12.7 Decision on Formal Complaint

In a formal hearing of a formal complaint, the Formal Hearing Committee is responsible for deciding whether the formal complaint has been proven.

If a formal complaint has been proven, the Formal Hearing Committee must decide on the appropriate action to be taken in response. The action must include one or more of the actions described below:

- (a) **Admonition:** The respondent may be admonished. This is a private reprimand;
- (b) **Rebuke:** The respondent may be rebuked. This is a more severe reprimand and may be done in public;
- (c) **Suspension of Ministry Personnel:** A respondent who is a ministry personnel may be suspended from functioning as ministry personnel, including from the offices they hold, for a period named by the Formal Hearing Committee;
- (d) **Suspension of Layperson:** A respondent who is a layperson may be suspended from one or more offices that they hold for a period named by the Formal Hearing Committee;
- (e) **Deposition of Ministry Personnel:** A respondent who is a ministry personnel may be permanently removed from the offices they hold. This may include dissolving the pastoral relationship;

- (f) **Deposition of Layperson:** A respondent who is a layperson may be permanently removed from the offices they hold;
- (g) **Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary):** The name of a respondent who is a member of the order of ministry may be placed on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary). A Formal Hearing Committee appointed by the presbytery may recommend that the Conference take this action. A Formal Hearing Committee appointed by the Conference may take this action;
- (h) **Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List:** The name of a respondent who is a ministry personnel (but not a member of the order of ministry) or congregational designated minister may be placed on the Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List. A Formal Hearing Committee appointed by the presbytery may take this action. A Formal Hearing Committee appointed by the Conference may recommend that the presbytery take this action;
- (i) **Expulsion:** A respondent may have their membership in the United Church removed;
or
- (j) **Restitution:** A respondent may be required to pay financial compensation or to make some other form of restitution.

12.8 Other Decisions

A Formal Hearing Committee appointed by the presbytery may also make one or more of the decisions set out in section J.9.4 above. In that case, sections J.9.6 to J.9.9 above also apply. A Formal Hearing Committee appointed by the Conference may recommend that the presbytery take this action.

12.9 Implementation of Decisions

12.9.1 Formal Hearing of Formal Complaint

Where a formal hearing is held in response to a formal complaint, the decision of the Formal Hearing Committee comes into effect on the date specified by the committee. If no date is specified by the Formal Hearing Committee,

- (a) a decision to suspend the respondent comes into effect when the committee gives a copy of the decision to the court that appointed it and to the parties to the formal hearing; and
- (b) any other decisions come into effect 15 days after the respondent receives the decision under section J.14 below.

12.9.2 Other Formal Hearing

Where a formal hearing is held for any reason other than a formal complaint, the decision of the Formal Hearing Committee comes into effect on the date specified by the committee. If no date is specified by the Formal Hearing Committee, the decision comes into effect when the committee gives a copy of the decision to the court that appointed it and to the parties to the formal hearing.

12.10 Court's Response to Decision

The decision of a Formal Hearing Committee is the decision of the court that appointed it. The court may not debate the decision or change it in any way.

12.11 Court's Responsibility for Decision

The court is responsible for

- (a) making a decision on any recommendations made to that court by the Formal Hearing Committee; and
- (b) deciding whether to share the decision with others beyond the parties and the court, either in whole or in part.

13. Appeals

There is a policy for giving notices and other documents in the appeal process. This policy must be followed. See section J.14 below.



13.1 Rules of Procedure

There are rules of procedure that must be followed in all appeals.

The rules of procedure for appeals are set out in the Appeals resource available from the General Council Office.



13.2 What May Be Appealed

In general, the following may be appealed:

- (a) decisions by a court or commission; and
- (b) rulings of the General Secretary of the General Council.

There are some exceptions, set out below.

13.3 Exceptions: Decisions That May Not Be Appealed

The following decisions may not be appealed:

- (a) a decision by a court or commission making policy in any area for which it has responsibility;

A court may make a decision that makes policy or sets out the court's position on a particular matter. The court is acting in its legislative capacity, and the decision may not be appealed.



- (b) initiation of a call or settlement;
- (c) a decision to designate, not to designate, to renew the designation of, or not to renew the designation of a person as an interim minister;

- (d) initiation of an appointment;
- (e) implementation of a decision that is being appealed;
- (f) a decision by an Appeal Committee on whether to hold an appeal hearing under section J.13.9.1 below;
- (g) acceptance or rejection of a medical certificate;
- (h) a decision by a pastoral charge to request a change in the pastoral relationship;
- (i) a decision by a presbytery on whether to approve a request from a member of the order of ministry for a change in the pastoral relationship;
- (j) a decision by a court on whether to hold a formal hearing;
- (k) a decision by a Formal Hearing Committee on whether to hold a formal hearing;
- (l) a decision by a court to make a formal complaint;
- (m) a decision by a presbytery to initiate a review under section J.9.3 above;
- (n) elections; and
- (o) in general terms, all decisions that are interim steps rather than final steps in a process.



*A decision to make a recommendation or a request may not be appealed.
It is an interim step in a process.*

13.4 Who May Appeal

An appeal may be made by a person or court directly affected by the decision or ruling. The Appeal Committee will decide who is directly affected. In an appeal to the Judicial Committee of the General Council, its executive is responsible for making this decision.



The term "Appeal Committee" is explained in section J.13.9.1 below. It means the committee of three to five United Church members appointed to deal with the appeal.

A decision of a Formal Hearing Committee may only be appealed by a party to the formal hearing. In a formal hearing held to deal with a formal complaint, the parties to the formal hearing are the complainant and the respondent.

A decision of the presbytery about congregational property may be appealed by any five members of the congregation.

The person or court that is appealing is called the "appellant."

13.5 Where an Appeal Is Made

The "appeal court" is the court to which the appeal is made.

A decision of a court is appealed to the next court that has oversight of it.



*A decision of the governing body of a pastoral charge is appealed to the presbytery.
A decision of the presbytery is appealed to the Conference. A decision of the
Conference is appealed to the Judicial Committee of the General Council.*

In the following cases the Judicial Committee of the General Council is the appeal court:

- (a) a decision of a Formal Hearing Committee is appealed;
- (b) a decision of the Executive of the General Council is appealed; and
- (c) a ruling of the General Secretary of the General Council is appealed.

13.6 Grounds for Appeal

An appeal must be made on one or more of the following grounds:

- (a) the court that made the decision failed to consider the matter as completely as practicable;
- (b) the decision was not in accordance with the rules of natural justice;
- (c) the decision was not reasonable based on the evidence;
- (d) the decision was not in accordance with the polity of the United Church; or
- (e) there is evidence available that could not have been produced earlier and that may be relevant.

13.7 Starting the Appeal

13.7.1 Communication Date

There are time limits in the appeal process that must be followed. The first step is to determine the “communication date.” This is the date that the appellant is considered to have formal notice of the decision.

The appellant may have learned of the decision at an earlier time in some other way. Those other ways are not relevant in determining the communication date.

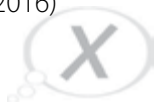


The communication date is the earlier of

- (a) the day the appellant receives the decision as set out in section J.14.4 below; and
- (b) 15 days after the court posts the draft minutes of the meeting at which the decision was made.

(2016)

Courts are required to post minutes of their meetings. See A. Introduction to Governance 6.



If the minute of the decision is changed when the court approves the minutes, the communication date is the earlier of

- (c) the day the appellant receives the changed decision as set out in J.14.4 below; and
- (d) 15 days after the court posts the changed minutes of the decision.

(2016)

13.7.2 Notice

The appellant must send a notice indicating that they are appealing the decision or ruling. The following requirements apply:

- (a) the notice must be sent to the secretary of the appeal court;

- (b) the appellant must send the notice within 30 days of the communication date; and
- (c) the notice must be sent in one of the ways set out in J.14.4 below.



There are requirements for the secretary of the appeal court and the parties to send additional documents in the appeal process, including deadlines. These requirements are set out in the Appeals resource available from the General Council Office.

13.8 Implementation of Decision During an Appeal Process

A decision is automatically implemented even if it is being appealed.

There is one exception. The court that made the decision may decide not to implement the decision until the conclusion of the appeal process. The court may make this decision on its own initiative or at the request of the appellant.



The process for an appellant to ask for a decision not to be implemented is set out in the Appeals resource available from the General Council Office.

13.9 Appeal Process



This section contains some of the steps in the process for an appeal. The full process is set out in the Appeals resource available from the General Council Office.

13.9.1 Deciding Whether to Hear the Appeal

The appeal court appoints three to five United Church members to serve as the Appeal Committee to deal with the appeal.

The Appeal Committee is responsible for deciding whether or not to hear the appeal.

If the Appeal Committee decides to hear the appeal, it holds an appeal hearing.

If the Appeal Committee decides not to hold an appeal hearing, that is the end of the appeal process. There is no further right of appeal.

13.9.2 Appeal Hearing

The Appeal Committee holds an appeal hearing following the rules of procedure.



The rules of procedure for appeal hearings are set out in the Appeals resource available from the General Council Office.

After the appeal hearing, the Appeal Committee may decide to

- (a) allow the appeal, with or without conditions;
- (b) dismiss the appeal, with or without conditions; or
- (c) order a formal hearing of the matter to be held by the appeal court or the court that made the original decision.

13.9.3 Decisions of Appeal Committees

This section applies to appeals if the appeal court is the presbytery or the Conference.

The decision of an Appeal Committee made under section J.13.9.2 above is the decision of the court that appointed it. That court may not debate the decision or change it in any way. It may, however, appeal the decision to the next court.

13.9.4 Decisions of Judicial Committee

- a. **Final until General Council:** All decisions of the Judicial Committee of the General Council made under section J.13.9.2 above are final and binding on all parties until the next regular meeting of the General Council.
- b. **Report to General Council:** The General Secretary of the General Council is responsible for reporting all decisions made by the Judicial Committee since the previous regular meeting of the General Council.
- c. **Review of Decision by General Council:** The General Council may review but not rehear any decision of the Judicial Committee that has been reported to it and
 - (i) affirm the decision; or
 - (ii) refer the decision to the Judicial Committee for further hearing.
- d. **Grounds for Review:** A review may be made on one or more of the following grounds:
 - (i) the Judicial Committee failed to consider the matter as completely as practicable;
 - (ii) the decision was not in accordance with the rules of natural justice;
 - (iii) the decision was not reasonable based on the evidence;
 - (iv) the decision was not in accordance with the polity of the United Church; and
 - (v) there is evidence available that could not have been produced earlier and that may be relevant.
- e. **Final Decision:** The decision of the Judicial Committee is considered to be the final decision of the General Council if
 - (i) it has been reported to the General Council and not reviewed; or
 - (ii) it has been reported to the General Council, reviewed, and affirmed.

14. Documents—Giving and Receiving

14.1 Application

This section (J.14) applies to the notices and other documents that are given and received as part of the formal hearing and appeal processes.

14.2 Documents in Writing

All documents must be in writing.

14.3 Address for Giving Documents

A document must be given to the person

- (a) at the address or fax number that the person has given to the court in writing; or
- (b) if no address or fax number has been given, at the address for the person as shown in the records of the court.

14.4 How to Give Documents

There are five ways to give documents. One of these ways must be used:

- (a) **Personally:** The document may be given to the person personally. It is considered received by them on the date it is given;
- (b) **Fax:** The document may be given to the person by sending it by fax if the person has given their fax number to the court in writing. The document is considered received by them on the day it is sent;
- (c) **Assured Delivery:** The document may be given to the person by sending it by assured delivery (registered mail). It is considered received by them on the 10th day after it is sent;
- (d) **Courier Delivery:** The document may be given to the person by sending it by courier. It is considered received by them when that person has signed to acknowledge receipt of the document; or
- (e) **E-mail:** The document may be given to the person by sending it by e-mail. It is considered received when the recipient confirms to the sender that the document has been received.

The sender must include the sender's name, the sender's e-mail address, the date and time of transmission, and the name and telephone number of a person to contact if there are transmission problems.

14.5 Calculating Notice Period

If the notice period for giving or receiving a document is seven days or less, the following days are not counted: Saturdays, Sundays, statutory holidays, and the time between December 25 and January 1.

15. Policies

15.1 Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures

The United Church will not tolerate, and will seek to eradicate, any behaviour by its members, lay and order of ministry, adherents, or employees that constitutes sexual abuse or child abuse.

The United Church is committed to providing a safe environment for worship, work, and study in all pastoral charges, congregations, institutions, agencies, organizations, or other bodies that operate under its name. Complaints of sexual abuse or child abuse will be taken seriously and will be dealt with in a spirit of compassion and justice.

The General Council has approved the Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures to deal with formal complaints of sexual abuse. These policies and procedures are referred to as the "Sexual Abuse Policy" in these bylaws. They must be followed.

The Sexual Abuse Policy is available from the General Council Office.



The United Church seeks to protect from abuse all people who use the pastoral or professional services of the United Church, whether or not they are members or adherents. Any person who has used the professional or pastoral services of ministry personnel or employees of the United Church for purposes of pastoral care, counselling, marriage workshops, daycare, and so on, has the right not to be abused in any way. They are entitled to make a formal complaint under the Sexual Abuse Policy.



Definitions

The following terms have particular meanings given to them in these bylaws. Please consult the section indicated for these definitions.

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Appendix

THE RULES OF DEBATE AND ORDER

1. Presiding Officer

The function of the Presiding Officer is to preside, with all that that implies. The Presiding Officer should not attempt to control the decision of the Court, but may express opinions on any matter before the Court. If the Presiding Officer wishes to introduce a motion or to present a report, the Presiding Officer shall ask another member to preside, and while out of the Chair shall be an ordinary member of the Court and must not assume the chair until the matter is disposed of. The Presiding Officer does not vote except in the event of a tie.

2. Questions of Privilege and Order

- (a) A point of order may be raised while a matter is pending or while another member has the floor. When a point of order is raised it must be dealt with by the Presiding Officer without debate. If a member has the floor when a point of order is raised by another member, that member must yield the floor until the Presiding Officer has made a ruling.
- (b) Any member of the Court may appeal from a ruling of the Chair, but only at the time when the ruling is made. But where a ruling is a precedent the general question of its correctness may be brought up later when there is no business pending, but cannot then affect the business transacted under the ruling.
- (c) When an appeal from a ruling is made, the Presiding Officer should state the point at issue, and may give reasons for the ruling. The Secretary shall then put the question in the following form: "Is the ruling of the Moderator (or such other title by which the Presiding Officer is known) sustained?" If the vote is a tie, the Presiding Officer is sustained. The Secretary shall declare the result.

3. Orders of the Day

- (a) When an agenda has been adopted that does not specify the time for its items, such items are considered without time limit, unless the Court decides otherwise by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those voting.
- (b) When an agenda has been adopted that specifies the time for particular items, such time shall be strictly adhered to, unless the Court decides otherwise by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those voting. (2010)

4. Order of Priority on Motions

- (a) To close. (2010)
- (b) To fix the time to adjourn.
- (c) To adjourn.
- (d) To take an immediate vote (two-thirds (2/3) vote required).
- (e) To limit or extend limits of debate (two-thirds (2/3) vote required).
- (f) To postpone definitely.
- (g) To commit or refer.
- (h) To amend.
- (i) To postpone indefinitely.
- (j) To deal with main motions.

5. Procedures on Motion

- (a) A member of the Court proposes a motion.
- (b) It is seconded. If there is no seconder, the motion fails.
- (c) When the motion is duly moved and seconded, the Presiding Officer states the motion and declares it open for discussion. If the mover has not already done so, the mover has the right to introduce the discussion.
- (d) A motion is out of order when it conflicts with a resolution previously passed at the same session unless it is a motion to reconsider.
- (e) Without the permission of the Court, no member may speak more than once on any motion or on any amendment thereto.
- (f) The mover of a motion has the right of reply before any vote is taken thereon or on any amendment thereto. Even when the Court has directed that an immediate vote be taken on a motion, the mover still has the right of reply.
- (g) When a motion has two (2) or more clearly defined parts or points of issue, and any two (2) members request that it be divided, a separate vote must be taken on each part.
- (h) Any motion may be withdrawn but only with the consent of its mover and seconder.
- (i) After a motion is under consideration a question of order cannot be raised against it unless the motion is *ultra vires*.

6. Procedure on Amendments

- (a) Any member except the mover or the seconder of the motion may move a relevant amendment thereto.
- (b) An amendment must be seconded, and if there is no seconder it fails.
- (c) A motion is amended by striking out certain words or clauses, adding certain words or clauses, or striking out all after the word "Resolved" (or the word "that"), and inserting another motion that will dispose of the matter. An amendment that merely negatives a motion before the Court is out of order.
- (d) There may be an amendment to the amendment, provided it has been duly seconded.

- (e) There is no limit to the number of amendments, but at any one time there can be before the Court only the motion, the amendment, and the amendment to the amendment.
- (f) When an amendment is disposed of, other relevant amendments may be proposed.
- (g) The discussion is always on the immediately pending question, and it must be voted on first. When a motion, an amendment, and an amendment to the amendment are before the Court, the two first named are “pending questions” and the last is the “immediately pending question.” When the immediately pending question is disposed of, the one above it then becomes the immediately pending question, until the whole matter is disposed of.
- (h) When an amendment carries, it is not thereby adopted as the finding of the Court, but only changes the proposition under discussion.
- (i) When a motion, an amendment, and an amendment to the amendment are before a Court, three (3) separate votes including “for” and “against” must be taken. The first determines whether the amendment shall be amended, the second determines whether the motion shall be amended, and the third determines whether the motion, in whatever form it is then before the Court, shall be adopted or rejected.

7. Procedure on Voting

- (a) A vote is generally taken viva voce or by a show of hands. The Presiding Officer may ask for a standing vote. Upon motion duly passed, the vote shall be taken by ballot. In all actions of Church Courts regarding membership in the Order of Ministry requiring voting procedure, the vote shall be taken by ballot unless waived by unanimous consent; that is, on motion to waive, no dissenting vote is cast. See also sections C.5.7 and D.4.4 of the bylaws.
- (b) In the event of a tie, the Presiding Officer shall cast the deciding vote.
- (c) An affirmative vote on a motion does not validate any motion that is ultra vires of the Court, or that contravenes a decision of a higher Court.
- (d) In the conduct of United Church business, voting by proxy or by mail-in ballot is not permitted. Voting by telephone or by email is permitted only when it occurs during a meeting that is held in a manner that allows all of the persons participating to communicate with one another simultaneously and instantaneously. (2010)

8. Procedure on Motion to Reconsider

- (a) A motion to reconsider may be made at any time when the floor is vacant; but the actual reconsideration has only the same priority as the motion to be reconsidered.
- (b) A motion to reconsider must be moved by a member who voted with the majority. Any member may second.
- (c) If a motion to reconsider is dealt with at the same meeting in which the original motion was adopted, it will fail unless two-thirds (2/3) of those voting are in favour thereof. If a motion to reconsider is dealt with at a subsequent meeting of the Court, a majority of those voting determines the question.
- (d) When any motion to reconsider has been duly seconded, all action on the original motion is suspended until the motion to reconsider has been disposed of. No motion to reconsider can be entertained by the Court where action has already been taken under the original motion.

- (e) A motion cannot be reconsidered twice unless materially changed on the first reconsideration. If a motion to reconsider has been lost, it cannot be repeated.
- (f) A motion to reconsider is debatable only when the motion to be reconsidered is debatable. It cannot be amended, postponed indefinitely, or committed.

9. Motion to Refer

A motion to refer is debatable, but only as to the wisdom and manner of the proposed referral. It requires only a majority of those voting.

10. Motion to Postpone Indefinitely

A motion to postpone indefinitely, when in order, must be put without debate. If the motion is lost, it cannot be repeated or reconsidered. If carried, the motion along with all amendments is removed from debate. At any time it may be brought back before the Court by motion duly seconded and carried. In such case the question is before the Court in exactly the position it held at the time it was removed from debate. A motion to postpone indefinitely can have no conditions attached to it. If a time is specified, it immediately ceases to be a motion to postpone indefinitely and becomes a motion to postpone definitely and is debatable. (2007)

11. Motion to Take an Immediate Vote

If a motion to take an immediate vote (for which a two-thirds (2/3) vote is required) is carried, the vote shall be taken immediately. The mover of the main motion, however, shall have the right to reply before the vote is taken. If such a motion fails, debate on the main motion shall continue. A motion to take an immediate vote is not debatable.

12. Motion to Adjourn

A motion to adjourn is intended to suspend a meeting until another time. A motion to adjourn is in order only if there is already an agreed-upon time and place for resuming the meeting, or if the motion specifies a time and place for resuming the meeting. A motion to adjourn requires a seconder. Only the conditions attached to the motion to adjourn, such as time and place for resuming the meeting, are debatable; the wisdom of adjourning is not debatable. (2010)

13. Closing a Meeting

- (a) A motion to close is intended to terminate a meeting. A new meeting may commence, at a future time, by previous agreement or by call. There can be no conditions attached to a motion to close. A motion to close requires a seconder. A motion to close is not debatable. (2010)

- (b) When all the business and purposes of a meeting have been attended to and the Presiding Officer is satisfied that there is no further business before the Court, the Presiding Officer may declare that the meeting is closed, without the need for a motion to close. (2010)

14. Committee of the Whole

- (a) Any Court, for greater freedom of discussion, may, on motion duly made, seconded, and carried, move into a Committee of the Whole. Any such motion is neither debatable nor amendable, except only as to the scope of the subject to be discussed. The motion is not in order if there is a pending motion to adjourn the meeting or to postpone discussion on the subject. (2007)
- (b) The first act of the Committee of the Whole is to appoint a chairperson and a secretary. A separate minute of the proceedings is taken. (2007)
- (c) The ordinary limitations of debate do not prevail in the Committee of the Whole. The chairperson restates the matter(s) to be considered. Discussion is then opened and is conducted informally. Motions need not be seconded. Unless the resolution creating the Committee of the Whole imposes restrictions, there are no restrictions, within reason, on the number of times a member may speak or on the length of speeches, except that priority is given to a member who has not yet spoken. (2007)
- (d) When the deliberations of the Committee of the Whole are concluded, the Committee will dispose of a motion that the Committee rise and report; this motion does not require seconding and is neither debatable nor amendable. When this motion is passed, a report is prepared and submitted to the chairperson of the main meeting, who reconvenes the main meeting. (2007)
- (e) A Committee of the Whole can neither adjourn nor terminate; it only can report back to the main meeting. It can, of course, recess briefly to prepare its report. (2007)

15. General

- (a) When a member utters language that another member considers offensive, the latter may require that the words be taken down. The speaker is then allowed to proceed. When the speaker yields the floor, the words complained of may be considered and dealt with. Such words may not be privileged.
- (b) Members of any Court should at all times therein conduct themselves with dignity, fairness, and understanding. The prime concern should be the good order and welfare of the church.
- (c) In any point not covered in *The Manual*, the parliamentary rules accepted in Canada (Bourinot) shall be followed.



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