

COMMUNITIES OF FAITH COMMISSION: SERVICE, SUPPORT AND OVERSIGHT TO COMMUNITIES OF FAITH POLICY

This policy outlines how service, support and oversight are provided to Communities of Faith as per *The Manual 2019* Sections C.2.2. and C.2.3.

Date Approved: September 18, 2019	Review date by the Commission: September 2020
-----------------------------------	---

WHY THIS POLICY IS IMPORTANT

AUTHORITY

The Communities of Faith Commission is established in accordance with the direction provided in November 18-20, 2017 General Council Executive New Covenant Policy.

The Communities of Faith Commission will be appointed by the Regional Council or the Executive to make decisions on behalf of the region or its Executive. (*The Manual 2019 C.3.3.1*)

The decisions of the Commission are non-debatable. The Commission's decision is as effective as a decision of the region or Executive that appointed it. (*The Manual 2019 C.3.3.2*)

The Commission will report its decisions to the Regional Council Executive and the Regional Council. (*The Manual 2019 C.3.3.3*)

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Manual outlines the responsibilities of the Regional Council with respect to providing services for Communities of Faith (*The Manual 2019 C.2.2*) and service, support and oversight of communities of faith (*The Manual 2019 C.2.3*). In Shining Waters, these responsibilities are assigned to the Communities of Faith Commission.

SERVICES FOR COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

The Staff Lead: Regional and Communities of Faith Support will be the first point of contact for communities of faith on all questions with respect to services.

The Staff Lead will consult with Pastoral Relations Ministers regarding support, advice and services in human resources matters and will seek a legal opinion when necessary.

The Staff Lead will provide support, advice and services to communities of faith in dealing with congregational property. The Staff Lead may seek advice from the Commission, the Shining Waters Region or its Executive or its Grant Review Committee, Toronto United Church Council, or United Church partners including, but not limited to, Edge and Toronto United Church Council.

The United Church of Canada
Shining Waters Regional Council

- **ARCHIVES**

The Staff Lead will provide information and advice to communities of faith with respect to United Church Archives. Where appropriate, a Community of Faith liaison may be asked to provide additional support to a Community of Faith in dealing with archives.

- **LEADERSHIP TRAINING**

Where the Commission identifies a need for leadership training, a short-term task group may be appointed to develop such training opportunities. The task group will be supported by the Staff Lead or another regional staff person as appropriate.

SERVICE, SUPPORT AND OVERSIGHT OF COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

The Staff Lead: Regional and Communities of Faith Support will be the first point of contact for communities of faith on all questions with respect to service, support and oversight.

- **SELF-ASSESSMENTS**

The goal of Shining Waters Regional Council is that each Community of Faith will engage in self-assessment of their ministry at least once in a three-year cycle. Regional staff will develop a schedule for receiving 6 – 8 self-assessments monthly during the months of January, February, March, April, May, June, September, October and November. No self-assessments will be requested during Advent and Lent.

Communities of faith will be notified three months prior to their assessment date to allow time for a full review of their ministry as per the guidelines provided by the General Council Office. Regional staff will be available to answer questions on the process and will follow up on assessments that are not received. Where appropriate, a Community of Faith liaison may be asked to assist a Community of Faith in its self-assessment.

The Staff Lead or another staff person will review self-assessments and will report to the Commission, including highlights and concerns. The Commission may ask to view any self-assessments as needed for their work.

When a Community of Faith chooses to engage in their own self-assessment as part of a visioning process or a pastoral relations process, they may be exempt from providing a separate additional self-assessment during that three-year cycle.

- **EMERGING NEW MINISTRIES**

The Staff Lead will be the first point of contact for emerging new ministries.

An emerging new ministry that wishes to be a Community of Faith as a congregation or pastoral charge must meet all requirements in The Manual 2019 Sections B.1, B.2, and B.3 to B.7. An emerging new

The United Church of Canada
Shining Waters Regional Council

ministry that wishes to be a Community of Faith other than a pastoral charge or congregation must meet all requirements in The Manual 2019 Sections B.1, B.2, and B.8.

The Staff Lead, another staff person, or a Community of Faith liaison may work with an emerging new ministry to meet the requirements to be recognized as a Community of Faith. The Commission will review and approve the covenant with an emerging new ministry and the governance requirements.

The Commission may identify a need for a new ministry and may create a short-term task group to explore options for this ministry and make recommendations to the Commission.

- **SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES OF FAITH IN THEIR LIFE AND WORK, AND ARTICULATION OF MISSION AND MINISTRY**

The Staff Lead or the Minister for Communities of Faith Support are available to offer advice to communities of faith in their life and work and the articulation of mission and ministry. When the Commission determines that additional support is needed, the Minister for Communities of Faith Support or a Community of Faith liaison may be asked to work with a Community of Faith.

The Commission may determine that broader support is needed in these aspects of ministry and may appoint a short-term task group to create learning opportunities, clusters or networks around a particular aspect of the life and work or mission and ministry of communities of faith.

- **COMPLIANCE WITH THE POLICIES AND POLITY OF THE UNITED CHURCH**

When a concern is raised about a Community of Faith, the Commission may ask the Staff Lead to investigate or may appoint a listening team to meet with ministry personnel and lay leaders. The Staff Lead or the listening team will report to the Commission with recommendations. The Commission will decide on what, if any, action is required. This could include assuming control of a Community of Faith in extraordinary circumstances where the Community of Faith is unable or refuses to meet its responsibilities or acts outside of denomination policies and/or polity.

- **HEARING APPEALS FROM COMMUNITIES OF FAITH**

The Communities of Faith Commission is responsible to hear appeals by a Community of Faith or its governing body. The rules of procedure for appeals are found in The Manual 2019, section J10 and in the Appeals resource available from the General Council.

The Staff Lead will act as the secretary of the appellate body and will receive appeals from Communities of Faith or their governing bodies. The Staff Lead will advise the Commission when an appeal is received and will seek legal advice.

In consultation with the chair of the Commission and the Executive Minister, the Staff Lead will identify three to five United Church members who will be appointed by the Commission to serve as the Appeal Committee to deal with the appeal. The Commission will set the terms of reference for the Appeal Committee. The Staff Lead will keep the Commission and the Executive Minister apprised of the process of the appeal.

The United Church of Canada
Shining Waters Regional Council

- **PROMOTING AND FOSTERING MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN, YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS**

The Youth Ministries Coordinator will be the first point of contact for communities of faith regarding ministry with children, youth and young adults in the region. The Commission may identify a need for a specific program or project and may create a short-term task group to support this work. The Youth Ministries Coordinator will provide staff support to any task group created with respect to ministry with children, youth and young adults.

