

GS 49 TEMPORARY AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS RE: PASTORAL RELATIONS
Implementation decisions approved by the Pastoral Relations Commission, April 28, 2020.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and recognizing that the pandemic impacts the ability of some congregations to meet (not all have the capacity or ability to meet electronically), on April 15, the Executive of the General Council **temporarily** amended pastoral relations policies in *The Manual* to allow the governing body, rather than a congregational meeting, to make certain pastoral relations decisions.

Specifically, the governing body, after consultation with the congregation, may initiate a call or appointment, revise the terms of a call or appointment, or end a call or appointment when it is necessary to do so in a critical situation that cannot be effectively dealt with under any other bylaw or policy of the church.

The full bylaw passed by the Executive of General Council can be found here:

https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/gs_49_temporary_amendment_re_pastoral_relations.pdf

Because Regional Councils are responsible for implementing pastoral relations policy at the regional level, the Pastoral Relations Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council has considered some interpretation and implementation questions related to this bylaw and passed the following motion on April 28, 2020. The motion deals with what constitutes proper consultation, considerations around temporarily ending a pastoral relationship, and other matters.

**(From the minutes of the April 28, 2020 Shining Waters Regional Council
Pastoral Relations Commission)**

1. Regarding the prelude to the bylaw: **“The Executive of the General Council approve a temporary amendment to pastoral relations policies in The Manual to enable the governing body or equivalent of a community of faith to make urgent decisions on behalf of the community of faith with respect to initiating a call or appointment, revising the terms of a call or appointment, or ending of a call or appointment in circumstances where it is not practicable to follow those policies outlined in The Manual...”**

Implementation decision:

“Initiating a call or appointment” will be interpreted to include the approval by the governing body:

- a) of a Community of Faith ChurchHub profile, including the position description(s)
- b) of the appointment of a search committee

2. Regarding point “ii”: **“the governing body will consult with the community of faith in advance of making a pastoral relations decision to the extent reasonable and practicable in the circumstances to the satisfaction of the regional council;”**

Implementation decision:

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The consultation will include the following:

- a) The governing body of a Community of Faith will appoint three people to solicit and review input from the Community of Faith.
- b) The consultation will consist of an invitation to the Community of Faith to provide input by email on the pastoral relations decision being made by the governing body. For those members/adherents of the Community of Faith who are unable to provide input by email due to accessibility issues, the governing body will provide access to conference call consultations in groups of up to eight persons. (Communities of faith can use the Shining Waters Regional Council conference call system by contacting Rachael Howes – rhowes@united-church.ca)
- c) Where a change to the pastoral relationship has been requested, Ministry Personnel will be provided with the "meaningful consultation" results from the congregation and will also have the right to attend the governing body meeting and address it per Manual regulations.

3. Regarding point "iv": **"when the governing body of a community of faith requests a change of pastoral relations, the regional council will ask the ministry personnel affected if they support the request. If the ministry personnel do not support the request, the requirement that the minister is given 90 days' notice or salary and benefits in lieu of notice as provided in section I.3.1.6 will continue to apply, save for the following circumstances, where notice may be abridged or waived by the regional council upon recommendation of the governing body of the community of faith: if the change to the terms and conditions of the call or appointment is the temporary layoff of the ministry personnel relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the governing body of the community of faith has:**

- a) declared its intention on behalf of the community of faith to recall the affected minister upon cessation of the COVID-19 pandemic; and**
- b) demonstrated to the satisfaction of regional council that it has exhausted all funding sources;"**

Implementation decision:

- a) Where the ending of the pastoral relationship is the temporary layoff of the ministry personnel relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, the period of the temporary layoff (Declared Emergency Leave) will be a maximum of 90 days, after which the decision must be reaffirmed by the governing body and the Regional Council Pastoral Relations Commission.
- b) The Pastoral Relations Commission will ask the Communities of Faith Commission to determine whether a Community of Faith has exhausted all funding resources.
- c) Where the Regional Council is asked by a Community of Faith to waive the 90 days notice, the date of the change to the pastoral relationship will be the date that the Pastoral Relations Commission meets to make a decision on the request to end the pastoral relationship for temporary layoff (Declared Emergency Leave).