

**Collaborative Ministry
Handbook
for Communities of Faith:**

**Exploring Collaborative
Ministry,**

and

**Developing a
Collaboration Agreement**

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Introduction to this Handbook

This resource contains guidance to communities of faith that are exploring collaborative ministry, working together, sharing ministry personnel and resources.

Opportunities for shared ministry may present themselves when communities of faith are experiencing declining membership, resources, and financial instability. As communities of faith meet, new ways are suggested for redefining, exploring, and producing positive growth.

The key question is: what are the opportunities for cooperation, even as each community of faith continues to develop as a distinct congregation?

As communities of faith come together to begin exploring the possibility of sharing ministry personnel, the beginning stages of a Collaboration Agreement may be developed. It may become evident that common issues and challenges suggest there is much to be gained from increased collaboration.

Doing work together can strengthen each party in their commitment to God's mission. Partnership opens new possibilities!

Throughout this process, communities of faith will be supported by staff from Shining Waters Regional Council.

Shining Waters Regional Council Commitment to Collaborate

Our commitment and intention to collaborate in healthy life-giving ways is rooted in our sense of call:

To love one another as we are beloved:

To band together to create a world where broken relationships are healed and the wolf and the lamb lie down together, where deserts blossom, and where tools of violence are turned into tools to nurture life;

To seek justice, love kindness and walk humbly together in peace upon this earth;

To be intentional about how we are in relationship so that the power that reigns is love.

*Based on John 12, Jesus' Baptism, Isaiah Vision, Micah,
One Earth Community, Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action,
Ephesians 4, Kingdom of God Parables*

Exploring Collaborative Ministry – The Process

1. Explore the possibility of sharing ministry personnel with neighbouring community of faith through preliminary conversations.
Included in this handbook is a sample letter of invitation for conversation, and sample agenda for communities of faith to use when exploring collaborative ministry (See pages 18 - 20 for sample letter and agenda).
 - Ensure board/council chairs, ministers and regional reps from each community of faith are involved with initial conversations
 - List the opportunities for partnership and what you are already doing together
 - Enter into intentional discussions around cooperation
 - Seek support from staff of Shining Waters Regional Council
2. Consult with congregational members to pursue this possibility.
A sample letter to communities of faith to provide updates on the process is included in this handbook (See page 21 for sample letter).
 - How did the conversation begin to explore collaborative ministry?
 - What is a Collaboration Agreement?
 - What is not in a Collaboration Agreement?
 - What are the benefits?
3. If there is approval from each community of faith to move forward, develop a Joint Committee with representatives from each community of faith to develop the Collaboration Agreement.
 - Ensure equal representation from each community of faith is on the Joint Committee
 - Ensure all components of policy are discussed and included (See pages 22-27 for a sample Collaboration Agreement)
 - Your Collaboration Agreement will reflect the uniqueness of your shared ministry (There may be more than one ministry personnel, different percentage of times and more than two communities of faith).
4. Each community of faith needs to update their Community of Faith Profile. (See *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for a Community of Faith Profile* handbook at www.united-church.ca/handbooks)
5. The Collaboration Agreement is presented to each governing body for approval, then a meeting of each community of faith for approval.
6. The Collaboration Agreement is sent to The Communities of Faith Commission at Shining Waters Regional Council for approval.

7. The Joint Committee develops a joint Position Description based on the needs of each community of faith's Living Faith Story and the Collaboration Agreement.
8. Each community of faith posts their profile and joint position description to ChurchHub when it is approved by the Pastoral Relations Liaison.
9. The Joint Search Committee is appointed with equal representation from each community of faith, and trained by a Pastoral Relations Liaison, Shining Waters Regional Council. The Search Committee will follow the guidelines found in the handbook, *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for Search and Selection*, www.united-church.ca/handbooks.
10. **The Collaboration Team** will be elected with equal representation from each community of faith to oversee decisions of the approved Collaboration Agreement. (See page 10 for guidelines and responsibilities of Collaboration Team)

Shining Waters Regional Council Policy: Collaboration Agreements Between Communities of Faith Sharing Staff

This policy outlines the process for two or more communities of faith to enter into an agreement to share staff.

PURPOSE:

To ensure a well thought out and agreed upon process for two or more communities of faith to enter into an agreement to share staff.

POLICY AND STEPS:

In order to facilitate a strong foundation for two or more communities of faith to share staff, it will be required that the communities of faith involved will develop a Collaboration Agreement together before they enter into a shared staff arrangement. The agreement will guide their relationship and their decision-making.

Once the Collaboration Agreement has been approved by all communities of faith involved, it will be sent to the Communities of Faith Commission for approval.

Upon approval, the Agreement will become part of the Covenant between the communities of faith and the Regional Council

The Collaboration Agreement will be evaluated by participating communities of faith on an annual basis, or more frequently if issues arise. That evaluation will be included in their annual self- assessment. If substantive changes (changes the relationship) are necessary it will be sent to the Communities of Faith Commission for approval.

The Collaboration Agreement at a minimum will include agreement and strategy in the following areas:

1. The election of a **Collaboration Team** will include representation from M&P, the governing body, worship, the minister(s) and will follow the guidelines outlined in this handbook in the sections entitled “**Collaboration Team**” and “**Ministry and Personnel Committee Guidelines and Responsibilities**”.
2. The Collaboration Team will make decisions by consensus on details that will impact each community of faith. The Team will function like a commission, which means they have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the bodies that elected them within their area of responsibility. (*The Manual of The United Church of Canada, 2019 - B.7.5.2*)

3. The **Collaboration Agreement** (See sample Agreement, starting on page 24) will honour the governance model of each community of faith, with clear guidelines for reporting.
4. The Collaboration Agreement must take into account how the communities of faith will collaborate to ensure the best use of time for the ministry personnel. Considerations need to include, but may not be limited to:
 - A) **Worship and Preaching** -
 - Worship Service Times
 - Worship Service Location
 - Special Worship Services
 - Pulpit Supply (to ensure 9 weeks covered annually)
 - Service Bulletin and Preparation
 - Announcements and Emails
 - B) **Pastoral Care**
 - C) **Programming re: Christian Development and Outreach**
 - D) **Administration and Finance** -
 - Administration
 - Office Hours and Services
 - Travel
 - Vacation and Leave
 - Salary and housing
 - Web Site
 - E) **Intentions for Revitalization** and how that will be woven into the job description for staff

The Communities of Faith Commission, with staff, will continue to identify best practices for living into a collaborative model of shared staff.

Pastoral Relations Liaisons will be trained to provide support for the development of the Collaboration Agreement. They will continue to work with the communities of faith who are part of the Collaboration Agreement as the Pastoral Relations Liaison for the search and call process.

COLLABORATION TEAM GUIDELINES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The **Collaboration Team** will be elected with equal representation from the communities of faith and will consist of a minimum of three people and maximum of four people from each community of faith.
2. At least one member will be from the M&P Committee, one member from the Worship Committee and one member from the governing body of each community of faith.
3. Ministry personnel will actively participate as *ex officio*.
4. The Collaboration Team will make decisions by consensus on details that will impact both communities of faith. They will function like a commission which means they have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the body that elected them within their area of collaboration responsibility. (*The Manual of The United Church of Canada, 2019 - B.7.5.2*)
5. The Collaboration Team will meet regularly throughout the year (minimum of three times).
6. The representative from each local governing body will report on all the coordinated details to their governing body.
7. The M&P representatives will report to their community of faith's M&P Committee as required.
8. The administrative and organizational details that need to be coordinated will be done through the Collaboration Team.
9. The Collaboration Team will coordinate with the minister(s) for time off: continuing education, vacation and sabbaticals.
10. A shared calendar will be used to track events within the communities of faith to be updated by the ministry personnel or designate, shared and added to at Collaboration Team meetings, and then shared with the governing bodies.
11. The Collaboration Team will be responsible to provide support for ministry personnel in regard to the collaborative efforts.
12. As per Shining Waters' Policy on Collaboration Agreements, the Collaboration Team will take responsibility for evaluation of the Agreement. The Collaboration Agreement will be evaluated yearly, or more frequently if issues arise. If substantive changes (changes the relationship) are necessary, it will be sent to the Communities of Faith Commission for approval.
13. If a situation arises in one community of faith that affects the collaboration agreement the Collaboration Team will consider and respond.
14. It will be the responsibility of the Collaboration Team to have conflict resolution guidelines so that they are ready and in place if needed. The goal will be to deal with conflict or changing circumstances in a healthy and timely way to ensure ongoing life-giving relationships.

MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE GUIDELINES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A) Ministry and Personnel Committee Responsibilities and the Collaboration Team

1. The Collaboration Team, which will include trained M&P reps, will be responsible for the coordination aspects of timing for vacation, sabbatical and continuing education.
2. Issues that affect both communities of faith will be managed by the Collaboration Team or the Joint M&P Committee depending on which body is responsible for the area of concern.
3. The M&P reps on the Collaboration Team will be responsible to call together the Joint M&P Committee for their work.

B) Joint Ministry and Personnel Committee Responsibilities

1. The full M&P Committees from each community of faith will form a Joint M&P Committee to meet each year in November to prepare budget recommendations on salary and any other required information about shared staffing costs.
2. At this yearly meeting, the Committee will ensure that continuing education, vacations and sabbaticals are being planned for and taken (note Collaboration Team plans the dates and M&P is responsible to ensure staff is planning for and taking time off.)
3. The M&P representatives on the Collaboration Team are responsible to call any required meetings of the Joint M&P Committee.
4. The Joint M&P Committee will respond to any requests for compassionate leave (while normally M&P is a recommending body only, the one thing M&P Committees have authority over is to grant compassionate leaves).
5. At any time, ministry personnel can request a meeting with the Joint M&P Committee for support, supervision or consultation. Likewise, the Joint M&P Committee can request a meeting with ministry personnel.

C) Ministry and Personnel Committee of each Community of Faith

1. Each community of faith will have a Ministry and Personnel Committee with one representative from each M&P Committee being an active member on the Collaboration Team.
2. All members of the M&P Committee are also members of the Joint M&P Committee.
3. The M&P Committee for each community of faith will ensure tasks, not covered by the Joint M&P and the Collaboration team, are completed which include:
 - a. conducting the required annual reviews;
 - b. dealing with issues specific to their community of faith;
 - c. meeting with ministry personnel to identify specific goals for their work to support the goals of that congregation;
 - d. all other M&P Committee requirements.

Resources for Collaboration Teams and Ministry and Personnel Committees

Conflict Resolution

It is the responsibility of the elected Collaboration Team to have conflict resolution guidelines and/or processes in place so that it is ready if needed (Shining Waters Policy Collaboration Agreements).

The goal will be to respond to conflict or changing circumstances in a healthy and timely way to ensure ongoing life-giving relationships.

The conflict resolution process involves some of the following: recognition by the parties involved that a problem exists, mutual agreement to address the issue, and then find some resolution.

(Excerpts from *Ministry and Personnel Committees: Policy, Procedures, Practices*
https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/ministry-personnel-committees_policy-procedures-practices.pdf)

Team Ministry

“As described in the *Ministry and Personnel Committee: Policies, Procedures, Practices*, multiple staff ministries are those in which two or more individuals are called or appointed to a community of faith. But even in situations where there is only one ministry personnel employed by the community of faith, there could be other lay employees who work with ministry personnel to form a staff team.”

For more on developing and maintaining healthy teams, please see *Ministry and Personnel Committees: Resources for Ministry and Personnel Committees (January 2019)*, pages 18 – 25.
(<https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources-for-mandp-committees.pdf>)

Termination of Collaboration Agreement and Exit Interview

The Collaboration Team will take responsibility for evaluation of the agreement. If for some reason a community of faith decides to leave the agreement, there needs to be a mutually satisfactory process to terminate the collaboration.

A healthy, exit interview strategy should be conducted with the departing community of faith. The interview will provide the opportunity to assess the overall experience. When done

carefully, asking appropriate questions and listening, exit interviews provide useful information for the future.

Helpful information can be found in *Resources for Ministry and Personnel Committees, January 2019*, (<https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources-for-mandp-committees.pdf>) and adapted for the exit interview at the termination of a Collaboration Agreement.

Preparing your Community of Faith Profile (Living Faith Story)

The elements of the Community of Faith Profile are outlined in detail in *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for Community of Faith Profile, April 2020*, www.united-church.ca/handbooks.

Each community of faith will prepare its own Community of Faith Profile. It is necessary to consult with the community of faith. (*Page 9, Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for Community of Faith Profile*)

Living Faith Story

A required element of a Community of Faith Profile is your Living Faith Story. The Living Faith Story articulates the community of faith's ministry needs.

The Living Faith Story can be written, or it can be an audio or video recording of the community telling their story.

It is also the basis for developing the position description(s).

Position Description Guidelines

“The position description articulates the Community of Faith’s ministry needs. An accurate position description provides an organized summary of the duties, tasks, responsibilities, and accountability of the position, as well as the knowledge, skill, and abilities required to competently fulfill them...

An effective position description shows that the Community of Faith has carefully assessed the need for the position and the expectations for the person in that position. Take time to get it right. That will leave fewer chances for miscommunication and unrealistic expectations after the ministry personnel is called or appointed”. (page 14, *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for a Community of Faith Profile*, April 2020, www.united-church.ca/handbooks)

Guidelines to Develop a Position Description for two or more Communities of Faith sharing Ministry Personnel

- The Collaboration Team that has worked to develop the Collaboration Agreement will develop the joint position description for the communities of faith entering into a Collaboration Agreement.
- The resources used will be each community’s Living Faith Story and the Collaboration Agreement.
- The Collaboration Team will want to collaborate with the M&P Committees to ensure consistency with other position descriptions.
- A position description template is provided herein to assist in planning.
- The position description template provides additional instructions and, in some cases, specific wording that can be used to describe the expectation.
- See *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for a Community of Faith Profile*, April 2020, www.united-church.ca/handbooks for additional assistance.

Position Description Template

Community of Faith Name:

Position Title:

Position Profile:

Full-time

Part-time

If part-time, hours per week _____

Solo

Team Ministry

If team, describe full ministry complement

Include the number of hours for each community of faith

Position Summary

In this section, briefly describe the collaboration partners and what you are seeking, overall, in your minister. This is also where you make note of the Collaboration Agreement for shared ministry personnel.

Autonomy in Decision-Making

What decisions will the ministry personnel make independently (without consulting others), and what types of decisions will require consultation, and with whom?

Refer to the Collaboration Agreement for specific information in this area.

Refer to the Collaboration Agreement to include areas of accountability.

Principal Areas of Responsibility and Associated Duties

General instructions:

- 1. As the Collaboration Team writes the position description, refer to each community of faith's individual position description to describe specific needs for your community.*
- 2. Refer to the Collaboration Agreement for details to be included in specific categories of this position description.*
- 3. Use the categories below, which can be ordered by priorities and the amount of time to fulfill them.*
- 4. For each area, define the duties that are associated with each category. The duties you define may be collaborative or specific to your community of faith. In this case, name the community of faith.*
- 5. Be specific and include everything that is a priority.*
- 6. Involvement in the denomination (i.e., regional council or General Council is not optional but rather a key component of each ministry personnel's vocation. A community of faith cannot choose to eliminate this expectation).*

You may use the following categories, based on the *Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel* (available on www.united-church.ca/handbooks), which provides clarity on the definition and focus of each category.

Administration

If you have specific duties associated with administration for which you do not have administrative support, list them here. Describe administration assistance for ministry personnel at each church.

Community Outreach and Social Justice

If you have specific activities related to this area, include them here. What are the expectations of the minister?

Continuing Education

You could use the following wording:

- Pursues personal, vocational, and professional goals for continuing education in consultation with the Collaboration Team through the joint M&P committee

Denomination and Communities

You could use the following wording:

- Is actively involved in the life of their Regional Council and/or General Council

How important is it that your minister is well-connected with other ministers, with other community leaders outside the church?

Faith Formation and Christian Education

Describe any activities you currently have or would like to have in this category. Be clear about the age groups involved and expectations about specific activities. How do you want these activities supported by ministry personnel?

Leadership

List specific duties associated with leadership. For example, specify whether the ministry personnel will provide “supervision” to any other staff, “coordinate” the work of multiple staff members, speak publicly on behalf of the community of faith, or train/mentor a Lay Pastoral Care Team. You can also comment on the style of leadership your community of faith needs. Remember that no one leader can be all things. Think carefully and honestly about the type of leader that best suits the personality and needs of your communities of faith.

Pastoral Care

Use this category to describe your expectations for visiting and supporting people spiritually. Describe who this care is provided to – just members and adherents, or other members of the community who seek it? Are there specific skills that the person in this ministry position requires?

Self-Care

What do you hope your minister does to support their own health, wellness, and spiritual growth?

Worship

Describe your expectations for worship. Refer to your Collaboration Agreement for specific details. In your community of faith, worship may take several forms; be clear on the expectations for each community of faith. Clarify the expected worship sites, times, special services etc.

Required knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

This section identifies the absolute requirements of the position (not the “nice to haves”). Include expected level of education; certifications required; driver’s licence and access to car (if required); any areas of specialization; computer and technological expertise (if needed); and so on.

Other Preferred Assets

If you wish, you can indicate skills, credentials, or abilities that aren’t required but are “preferred”. These may be areas that you help the ministry personnel to develop over time; e.g., if this ministry position includes maintenance of a website, then website maintenance may be a preferred skill, or if it involves working in a shelter or other type of outreach ministry, perhaps a preferred skill is “experience in scheduling volunteers.” Or you may have no preferred assets or skills for the ministry personnel.

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Documents

Sample: Letter of Invitation to Communities of Faith to be part of a Conversation to Explore Collaborative Ministry

Dear Friends,

Recently, several leaders from United Churches in our area met to talk about a new approach to ministry. The reason for the discussion is the common struggle in our churches with finances and the sense we could do more effective ministry by sharing resources.

What if we were to take a bold step and talk to each other about sharing ministry personnel, lay leadership, programs, and so on?

What could we do together that we struggle to do on our own?

What if, by working together, we could make better use of the gifts of lay leaders, ministers, and lighten the financial load?

Other churches have asked these same questions and are exploring working together – sharing staff and resources – in a new approach called “Collaborative Ministry”.

We are inviting your community of faith to explore the idea in our area.

A small planning team has met to develop the focus and strategy to engage in this conversation. The description of the topic that has been planned is: Exploring Collaborative Ministry – A Conversation about Emerging Ministry Possibilities.

Our hope is that a wide variety of people will be interested in being part of the next conversation. We encourage each community of faith to be part of a Zoom gathering, including the minister, the chair of the governing body, regional reps and two or three others. There is no limit to the number you could have at the meeting!

This meeting date and time is

The invitation is being extended to the following churches

You may want to assure people we are not looking at closing or amalgamating churches – just doing things more effectively, being the church in new and exciting ways.

On behalf of the planning team,

Sample:

Exploring Collaborative Ministry – A Conversation about Emerging Ministry Possibilities - First Meeting

Agenda

Welcome

Opening

- Acknowledge the land
- Lighting of Christ Candle
- A New Creed

Share Celebrations of Your Ministry

- Identify your community of faith and what you celebrate in your ministry

Emerging Models of Collaborative Ministry in The United Church of Canada

- Video Examples
- Benefits of being part of a staff team

Introduction to Reflecting on Possibilities

- Life is changing; we are not continuing the way we have been; we are birthing a new way of being
- We are not talking about the old ways of amalgamating and closing churches.
- We are seeking new ways of maintaining and sustaining ministry in our communities

Journal questions; jot down your thoughts:

- What do you see as possibilities around collaborating?
- Do you have any concern or anxiousness that you would want to resolve or see addressed?
- What could we try in a collaborative way – with permission for it to fail?

Break out into small groups with a facilitator

- Sharing of ideas that have emerged during the writing:
- Listen to everyone's ideas
- Accept all ideas without expanding on them or asking questions

Large Group

- Are you warm or cool to the idea of collaborating?

Nest Steps

- Who needs to be at the table?
 - Need to look at who needs to develop the Collaboration Agreement
 - Suggestion to start by gathering the group of ministers and a group of chairs of governing bodies, with regional reps, to develop some ideas then bring those two groups together to see what ideas emerged; then each group reports back to a larger group

Sample:

Exploring Collaborative Ministry – A Conversation about Emerging Ministry Possibilities - Second Meeting

Overarching Question:

What can we do together that we can't do alone?

Goal for this Gathering:

Begin to identify ways a collaboration might work to share staff and/or programming = an early emerging model

Questions/Considerations:

- Imagine what we can do together – talk about it and begin to weave ideas together.
- What concerns/hopes would need to be addressed and or included for you to feel this would be viable?
- Are there ways we can start collaborating right now?
- Which churches make sense to particularly work together to consider pairing staff (times of worship, distance, focus)?
- Where do we see possibilities for revitalization?

Details to Consider/Gather:

1. How much staff does each community of faith currently have? How much can they sustain?
2. Are there overlapping programs where collaboration could happen?
3. What are the times of worship currently?

Sample: Letter to Update Communities of Faith

To Members and Friends of Fourth United Church and Fifth United Church,

This letter is to update you on the work of a joint committee composed of members of Fourth United Church and Fifth United Church. We were appointed in the spring of 2019 to consider how each community of faith could collaborate more fully with each other. We have had several conversations as to what this may look like, and we would like to share this proposal with you.

The key component of this collaboration is to share ministry personnel. As you know, Fourth United Church currently has a part time supply minister and Fifth United Church has a part time student minister – both in appointments. As both congregations look to the future to call a full-time minister by the summer of 2020, it has become apparent that one full time position shared between two communities of faith would be more appealing to a wider group of potential new ministers. The majority of ministers prefer a full-time position.

We have had a long-standing cooperative relationship between the two communities of faith as we share church services in the summer and attend each other's services and events from time to time. As a result, we began discussions between the communities of faith to explore calling one full time minister between the two congregations. This will allow us to attract ministers with the gifts, skills, and talents to meet the need of our communities of faith. The vision is that the minister will continue to lead the service at both churches each Sunday and be available for office hours, visiting, and pastoral care during the week for each community of faith. Each community of faith will continue to maintain their unique mission, programs, and fundraising activities. We feel that this is an exciting time that will re-energize our ministries in our communities.

The process we have been following has been recommended and supported by Shining Waters Regional Council. In order to clarify how we at Fourth United and Fifth United will manage sharing ministry personnel, a Collaboration Agreement will be developed. The Collaboration Agreement will be presented to the governing body of each community of faith, the respective communities of faith, and then Shining Waters Regional Council for approval.

We are grateful to have this conversation and look forward to seeing how the Spirit will lead us as we continue to serve God at both Fourth and Fifth United Churches.

Sincerely,
Your team members of the Joint Committee,

Sample:

COLLABORATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN FOURTH UNITED CHURCH AND FIFTH UNITED CHURCH

Preface

This Collaboration Agreement has been prepared by a Joint Committee with representatives from Fourth United Church and Fifth United Church. The committee was asked to explore the possibility of sharing ministry personnel and to identify other potential ways of sharing resources to strengthen and enhance both communities of faith. This agreement outlines and provides preliminary detail for collaboration.

While a number of factors have led to this proposed collaboration, conversations have been filled with a sense of renewal, excitement and anticipation. There is a desire to work together to be who we are called to be as the church. This possibility of collaboration is entered into thoughtfully and with a sense of anticipation. The communities of faith are embracing the challenge of working together through cooperative sharing of resources and talents. This is a proactive approach to the future, to ensure growth for the spirit and life of The United Church of Canada within the area.

Each community of faith is unique with its own ideas, needs, and people. However, the two communities of faith share enough in common to enter into a Collaboration Agreement. It is the intention that through this process the communities of faith will not become a multi-point charge nor amalgamate, but remain two separate communities of faith, while sharing a full-time minister and a half-time minister, as well as programming and resources.

Each community of faith has revised and updated its **Community of Faith Profile. Position descriptions** for the ministerial positions to be shared between the two communities of faith have been developed.

It is with a sense of hope that we present this proposal to both communities of faith as we seek to grow in faith by expanding our capacity together to be a vibrant expression of God's love within the communities.

Recommendation and Approval of this Agreement

This agreement has been reviewed and revised by the **Collaboration Team**. This version of the agreement is recommended to the governing body of each community of faith for their approval. After its approval, the governing body will recommend it to each community of faith.

When approved, the agreement goes to Shining Waters Regional Council for approval by the Communities of Faith Commission.

Members of the Collaboration Team are:

Fourth United Church	Fifth United Church

The Collaboration Team has also received support throughout this process from the Pastoral Relations Liaison and Communities of Faith Support Minister of Shining Waters Regional Council.

Introduction

The two communities of faith of Fourth United Church and Fifth United Church have come together to share ministry through a collaborative structure. The development of a Collaboration Agreement is required, when sharing ministry personnel, to formalize the process in an intentional, ongoing, officially recognized way.

The Collaboration Agreement follows the policy and steps outlined in the *Shining Waters Regional Council Policy Collaboration Agreements (pages 8--9 of The Collaborative Ministry Handbook)*.

This agreement outlines the manner in which Fourth United Church and Fifth United Church will share services of ministry personnel (*Coordinating Minister*) called to serve at 50% time with each church based on a 40-hour work week. The agreement also outlines a second, half-time ministerial position (*Minister*) called to serve each church based on a 20-hour work week.

The goal is to enable each community of faith to continue their individual identities and better serve the faith community through working and sharing together.

This agreement has no set expiration or term and is intended to be indefinite. It will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis - with a commitment to do a mini evaluation at every meeting during the first year.

While it is the intent for this arrangement to be without time limit, there may arise circumstances where it is deemed necessary and/or appropriate to terminate the Collaboration Agreement. This may be done after proper consultation amongst the Collaboration Team, Governing Bodies, Ministry and Personnel Committees, and Shining Waters Regional Council.

Worship and Preaching

The ministers should meet frequently to set up a schedule of upcoming worship with the scripture readings and hymn suggestions. Consideration needs to be given to provide Music Directors due notice so that they can choose appropriate anthems and other music for the services.

Worship Service Times:

The communities of faith are committed to working with each other on a schedule of service times and locations that meet the needs of both communities.

1. The current schedule of service will be maintained for each church, with the full-time minister and part-time minister alternating each week between locations:
 - Fourth United Church - 10:30 am to 11:30 am
 - Fifth United Church - 10:00 am to 11:00 am

Worship Service Location:

1. When the opportunity arises for combined services between the two communities of faith, the location and times for those services will be decided upon by the Collaboration Team in cooperation with each of the worship planning committees.
2. July and August service at each location will maintain their service times. The current pattern of worshipping at Fourth United Church in July and at Fifth United Church in August will be maintained. The month may alternate year-to-year depending on desired vacation schedules.

Special Worship Services:

1. Other services (not the traditional times – e.g. Good Friday, Christmas Eve) to be scheduled by the Collaboration Team and the ministers so each community of faith can maintain services.
2. The Collaboration Team will outline these services and develop a schedule.

Pulpit Supply:

1. Coverage for Sundays when one or both of the ministers are away will be coordinated by the Collaboration Team. Each community of faith has the option to arrange their own service by members of the congregation or to have a special speaker (pulpit supply) that is specific for their church. In this case, costs will be absorbed by each community of faith.
2. Weather or sickness emergency plan (i.e. cancel or supply worship leadership) to be decided on together by the minister and chairs of governing bodies.

Service Bulletins, Announcements and Preparation:

1. Each community of faith will maintain its own church Office Administrator and their respective responsibilities.
2. The staff involved in preparing bulletins and announcements will develop a strategy to eliminate duplication of work of the church office administrator and the minister.
3. Each church office administrator will be responsible for communicating joint events (e-mail, e-Newsletter).

Pastoral Care

1. Pastoral Care is understood to be the responsibility of ministry personnel and supported by the individual community of faith.
2. Ministry personnel will take the lead on training for pastoral care for the communities of faith.
3. The allocation of hours to each minister, with regard to pastoral care, will depend on the number of hours worked per week by each minister.

Programming: Christian Development and Outreach

1. It is the goal and hope that the two communities of faith will collaborate on a number of programming opportunities including joint gatherings for families, faith development, and outreach. There is the hope that our collaboration efforts expand.

Administration and Finance

Administration:

1. Each community of faith will be responsible for having administrative services.
2. The ministers will keep a log of their working hours between the two communities of faith and report on it to the Collaboration Team.

Travel and Other Expenses

1. Reimbursement for travel, continuing education and other expenses will be handled by the treasurer.
2. Canada Revenue Agency requires one place designated as the work place (for eligible travel expenses); the Collaboration Team will work with each of the ministers to ensure travel expenses are reimbursed pursuant to the applicable legislation.
3. Both time and mileage will be shared by both communities at 50/50 for where ever the travel happens (travel costs begin at the designated workplace with some exceptions – see handbook noted below for exceptions).
4. See Financial Handbook, 2017 for a travel log sample to be submitted monthly or quarterly and other details (<https://www.united->

church.ca/sites/default/files/financial_handbook_for_congregations_2017.pdf page 47
"Travel" section 4.22.3).

5. The travel time between each church will be included in the 40 hours per week for the full-time minister and 20 hours per week for the part-time minister.
6. Requirements for communications (phone, internet, etc.) are arranged and split 50/50.

Vacation and Leave

1. Coverage for Sundays when either minister is away will be coordinated by the Collaboration Team. Coverage will be needed for nine Sundays per year (schedule to be developed).
2. The timing for vacation, sabbatical, and study leave will be coordinated by the Collaboration Team.

Salary and Housing

1. Neither community of faith has a manse.
2. Salary that includes cost of living component and benefits will be divided 50/50 between the two communities of faith.
3. One ADP process will be used to pay salaries, benefits, and expenses of the ministers. One community of faith will take the lead on this and will then be reimbursed by the other community of faith.

Web Site

Each community of faith will maintain its own web site and social media presence.

Fundraising

1. Each community of faith will continue with its own specific fundraising events and will be open to a collaborative approach on joint efforts.
2. A shared calendar will be used to track events within the communities of faith to be updated by the Ministry Personnel, and shared and added to during Collaboration Team meetings and shared with the governing bodies.

Revitalization

As we imagine working together more, we see many benefits that will add vitality to our ministry. One is that we will each have half the amount of time allocated to worship preparation than we do now since the same service will be used at both locations. This frees up more time for our minister(s) to connect with the wider community through offering programming and attending opportunities to get to know people. We also see this as an opportunity to enliven our gatherings because more people will be participating at the events we will share. When we share things like youth group, summer day camp, UCW/CWC, cantatas, Messy Church, meditation circle, men's breakfast, fundraisers, speaker's series, responding together to needs within our area – we hope the vitality of these gatherings will be attractive to

and supportive of others. We understand we may not increase numbers in worship but we are interested in increasing our impact on our communities in positive ways to grow the circle of people who feel the support and love of our communities of faith.

This agreement was entered into in a spirit of collaboration on this _____ day of _____ (month) _____ (year) and is approved by motion of the governing body of _____ (name of Community of Faith)

(insert motion here)

Action by the Communities of Faith Commission:

Sample:

Ministry Position Description

Community of Faith Name: Fourth United Church and Fifth United Church

Position Title: Minister of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care

Position Profile:

Full-time Shared Ministry, 50% Fourth United Church, 50% Fifth United Church

Solo Team Ministry
If team, describe full ministry complement

Position Summary

Fourth United Church and Fifth United Church have entered into a Collaboration Agreement to share ministry personnel. The two communities of faith, while sharing ministry personnel, will continue to be unique with their own ideas, needs, and people. The minister will lead worship services at the two churches each Sunday.

Our communities of faith are looking for a minister who will provide leadership and guidance as we move towards something new within our communities of faith. Our minister will provide spiritual inspiration to the members of the congregation, engaging enthusiastically and compassionately. The minister should have an interest in building community between the congregations of Fourth United and Fifth United.

Autonomy in Decision-Making

Worship planning will be in collaboration with the worship committee and Music Director at each church.

The minister will work collaboratively with the committees within the church and have valued input in decisions pertaining to budget items.

The minister is accountable to the Collaboration Team. Any concerns will be addressed to the joint M&P Committee or the respective M&P Committee of each community of faith. This joint M&P Committee will provide support for ministry personnel, prepare budget recommendations on salary, and any other required information about shared staffing cost. Each community of faith's individual M&P Committee will deal with issues specific to their church.

The minister is an integral part of vision development and implementation and will meet separately with each community of faith to identify goals.

Principal Areas of Responsibility and Associated Duties

Administration (6 hours/week)

Administrative support is available through two Office Administrators who work 10 hours per week (Fourth U. C.) and 12 hours per week (Fifth U. C.). This includes basic reception of visitors and answering phone, formatting and printing of the weekly bulletin, mail sorting and delivery, office maintenance and financial transaction preparation.

The minister will:

- Attend to administrative needs such as communications by email, letters, and phone calls
- Attend all governing body meetings
- Attend other meetings as time allows in order to facilitate church life
- Participate as ex officio member of the Collaboration Team
- Ensure that the shared calendar used to track events within the communities of faith is updated

Community Outreach and Social Justice (5 hours/week)

The minister will:

- Support the social justice and outreach work of each congregations where requested
- Encourage and support new ways to reach out to the wider community, to build relationships
- Assist the congregations to be aware of and to understand United Church policies and actions in the area of social justice

Continuing Education (3 weeks /year)

The minister will:

- Pursue personal, vocational, and professional goals for continuing education in consultation with the Collaboration Team through the joint M&P committee

Denomination and Communities (2 hours/week)

The minister will:

- Be actively involved in the life of the Shining Waters Regional Council and/or General Council
- Support developing wider relationships and partnerships with community organizations and the wider community through community events

Faith Formation and Christian Education (3 hours/week)

The minister will:

- Encourage involvement in church activities and support activities of fellowship groups and small group ministries (Bible study)
- Work with the communities of faith to develop programs for families, children, youth and seniors

- Organize and provide instruction for confirmation, pre-marital and baptism classes when needed

Leadership (4 hours/week)

The minister will:

- Motivate and empower lay leaders
- Be open to new ideas and input from the communities of faith
- Work with the leaders of the communities of faith to develop clear goals and plans of action
- Apply leadership skills to enable the communities of faith to move toward identified goals

Pastoral Care (6 hours/week)

The minister will:

- Provide and nurture leadership to the Pastoral Care Committees
- Provide pastoral care to the communities of faith, especially to those with acute needs, by visiting those unable to attend church, those who are sick and/or hospitalized and others who request pastoral care
- Provide pastoral counseling and support to members during important life transitions and in time of celebrations
- Plan funerals and offer grief care to those who have experienced loss

Self-Care

The minister will:

- Maintain a healthy balance in their personal life
- Attend to their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being
- Manage time for work, family, friends, personal development and renewal

Worship (14 hours/week)

The minister will:

- Provide worship services that nurture the spiritual needs of the community of faith
- Plan, facilitate, and lead worship with input from the Worship Teams, Music Directors, and others as required
- Lead joint services among the communities of faith throughout the year
- Encourage, mentor, and provide support for lay leadership in worship services
- Lead Sunday morning worship at both churches
- Ensure that the significant seasons of the church year are celebrated
- Administer the sacraments of baptism and communion
- Prepare and officiate at wedding and funeral services when available
- Provide information for the Sunday bulletin to the Office Administrator, responsible for preparing the bulletin, on an agreed upon time

Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

As Fourth United Church and Fifth United Church enter into a Collaboration Agreement to share ministry personnel, we are seeking a minister who will:

- Have a leadership style inspired by deep faith and personal commitment
- Possess excellent interpersonal skills
- Be capable of building and maintaining healthy relationships with the communities of faith and communities at large
- Manage time and workload effectively and efficiently
- Be an active listener
- Appreciate diversities and be inclusive
- Be knowledgeable about budgetary management
- Strive to be current with issues of theology, ministerial practice, and community and world events
- Project energy, enthusiasm, and excitement
- Skilled at planning and managing time effectively

Other Preferred Assets

The minister will:

- Have the ability to be flexible in this role, serving two communities of faith
- Possess a valid driver's licence and have access to a working car
- Possess basic computer skills
- Be able to encourage action and enable change in an inclusive way

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers about a Collaboration Agreement

1. Q. What is the financial effect of a collaborative ministry?
A. The ministry will be financially neutral. Each community of faith will contribute half of the minister's salary, travel expenses, phone and internet if it is a shared 50/50 ministry.
2. Q. Will this be a two-point charge?
A. No, each congregation will continue with its own governing body, staff, and programs.
3. Q. How much time will the minister devote to our congregation?
A. If the ministry is shared 50/50 and the minister's hours are full time, each community will receive support 20 hours per week. From time to time, pastoral emergencies may arise in a particular community of faith which would mean that the time given to each church in a particular week would not always be equal.
4. Q. How often will the minister be physically present at our community of faith during the week?
A. Office hours will likely be similar to what they are currently.
5. Q. Will there be a change in Sunday service times as a result of the agreement?
A. Yes, one congregation will have an earlier service and the other a later one.
6. Q. Will our community of faith have a say in what the final Collaboration Agreement says?
A. Yes. Community of faith wishes will be incorporated into the draft agreement and the community of faith will vote on the final agreement.
7. Q. How will we be sure our community of faith requirements are met?
A. Our requirements will be spelled out in the agreement and in the position description of the ministry position.
8. Q. Who will administer the agreement?
A. A Collaboration Team of six or eight people, consisting of governing body members and M&P committee members from each community of faith, will administer the agreement on an ongoing basis and report to both governing bodies regarding any issues which arise.
9. Q. What if it doesn't work?
A. The Collaboration Agreement will be reviewed periodically during the first year, then annually every year thereafter to make any adjustments needed.

10. Q. How will the minister be chosen?
- A. The procedure outlined in *Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for Search and Selection* by The United Church of Canada will be followed with a search committee made up of members of both communities of faith.
11. Q. Will the conversation involve the possibility of the closure or sale of one of our church buildings?
- A. No, there is no mandate to consider the sale or closure of either church building.
12. Q. Will current staff be negatively impacted by this discussion?
- A. There will be no negative impact on current members of staff. Each community of faith will maintain their Office Administrators, Custodians and Music Directors.
13. Q. What support is there from Shining Waters Regional Council?
- A. The Minister for Support to communities of faith will provide guidance as we continue to participate in conversations and develop the Collaboration Agreement if the community of faith approves moving forward. A Pastoral Relations Liaison will be appointed by the Pastoral Relations Commission to provide oversight of the process to seek a new call.
14. Q. Why are we proposing this?
- A. We can do more together than we can independently. We currently share so much: geographical proximity, a deep commitment to our members, and a desire to further our mission in this community and beyond.