

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
SHINING WATERS REGIONAL COUNCIL**

**Minutes of a meeting of the
Pastoral Relations Commission
Wednesday, October 15, 2025**

The Pastoral Relations Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on Wednesday, October 15, 2025, beginning at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom video conference.

Present:

Lawrence Nyarko (ordered); Eun-Joo Park (staff); Robin Pilkey (lay); Barbara Hendren (lay); William Haughton (ordered); Lorraine Diaz (ordered); Richard Gardner (ordered); Rob Smith (staff)

Regrets: Deirdre Lawrence, Sung-Ran Kim, Beth Moore

Welcome, constituting the meeting and prayer

Lawrence Nyarko, chair, declared there was a quorum and called the meeting to order. Lawrence welcomed everyone, acknowledged the indigenous territory that they found themselves on and led with an opening prayer.

Minutes

MOTION by Lori Diaz / Barbara Hendren SW PRC 2025-10-15-01
that the minutes of the September 23, 2025, joint meeting of the Pastoral Relations and Communities of Faith commissions be approved.

MOTION **CARRIED**

MOTION by Lorraine Diaz / Robin Pilkey SW PRC 2025-10-15-02
that the minutes of the September 23, 2025, meeting of the Pastoral Relations Commission be approved.

MOTION **CARRIED**

Ordinand/Admittands Requirements Motion

MOTION by Robin Pilkey / Richard Gardner SW PRC 2025-10-15-03
that the Pastoral Relations Commission approve the following ordinands and admittands as having met the appointment / call / employment requirements for ordination/admission at the October 26, 2025 Shining Waters Celebration of Ministry service:

James (Jason) Byassee - to be admitted into his current appointment (January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2026) as minister at Timothy Eaton Memorial Pastoral Charge.

Adele Halliday – to be ordained into her current employment position as Anti-Racism and Equity Lead, General Council of The United Church of Canada

Ariel Siagan – to be admitted into his current appointment (July 1, 2025 – April 30, 2026) as minister at Asbury and West Pastoral Charge.

Susan Wood – to be ordained into her current appointment (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2026) as minister at Heart of Muskoka Pastoral Charge.

Huanyun (Julia) Ye – to be ordained into her current appointment (September 1, 2024 – February 28, 2026) as minister at Sackville Pastoral Charge (New Brunswick).

Zixian (Cathy) Zou – to be ordained into a call (November 1, 2025) as minister at Toronto Chinese Pastoral Charge.

MOTION

CARRIED

Provisional Call Exception

MOTION by Robin Pilkey / Lori Diaz

SW PRC 2025-10-15-04

That the Pastoral Relations Commission:
approve the provisional call for Zixian Cathy Zou, effective pending congregational approval on October 20, 2025, and that this provisional call be valid until the 2026 Regional Meeting in the event she is not able to attend the Celebration of Ministry Service on Oct. 26, 2025. This is an exception to the usual six-month period in light of her circumstances; and concurs with the request of **Toronto Chinese Pastoral Charge (Toronto)**, and approves the provisional call to **Zixian (Cathy) Zou**, ordained minister, beginning November 1, 2025, full time at 40 hours per week, with the following terms for Category C and Cost of Living Group Assignment 5; Salary \$77,050 per annum, salary in addition to the minimum 15% per annum for a total salary of \$88,607.50, basic telephone \$800 per annum, Continuing Education and Learning Amount \$1689 per annum and all other terms according to The Manual I.2. and that in accordance with The Manual I.1.2.6 this call does require an act of covenant.

MOTION

CARRIED

Discussion Arising from Omnibus Motion

It was noted that the telephone allowance is not prorated. Concerns were noted that

ministry personnel with multiple appointments receive the full \$800 from each charge, which may appear unreasonable to the CRA. The commission members discussed possible policy changes, such as prorating the allowance based on hours or percentage of work. It was agreed to consider clearer guidance for multi-appointment situations in a future policy review.

Omnibus Motion

MOTION by Richard Gardner / Barbara Hendren SW PRC 2025-10-15-05
that the Pastoral Relations Commission take the following actions:

a) **Change in Relationships**

... in accordance with *The Manual* I.3.1.4(b) accepts the request for a change in pastoral relations of **Stephen Fetter**, ordained minister at **Forest Hill Pastoral Charge (Toronto)** effective December 31, 2025, and give thanks for his ministry.

... in accordance with *The Manual* I.3.1.4(b) accepts the request for a change in pastoral relations of **Patricia Rodgers**, ordained minister at **Bond Head Pastoral Charge (Bond Head)** effective June 30, 2026, and give thanks for her ministry.

... in accordance with *The Manual* I.3.1.4(b) accepts the request for a change in pastoral relations of **Jonathan Vickers**, ordained minister at **Woodbridge Pastoral Charge (Toronto)** effective December 31, 2025, and give thanks for his ministry.

b) **Appointments**

... concurs with the request of **Knox, Agincourt Pastoral Charge (Toronto)**, and re-appoints **Maryanne Thomson**, ordained minister, from July 17, 2025 to June 30, 2026, part-time based on 10 hours per week, with the following terms for category F and Cost of Living Group Assignment 5: Salary \$82,978 (prorated \$20,744.50) per annum, salary in addition to the minimum of \$2355.50 for a total prorated salary of \$23,100, basic telephone \$870 per annum, Continuing Education and Learning Amount \$1689 (prorated \$426) per annum, and all other terms according to *The Manual* I.2, and that in accordance with *The Manual* I.1.3.9 this re-appointment does not require an act of covenant.

c) **Voluntary Associate Minister Relationship**

... concurs with the request of **Toronto Chinese Pastoral Charge (Toronto)** and **Christopher Chin Hung Cheung** to enter a Voluntary Associate Minister relationship, beginning October 15, 2025.

MOTION

CARRIED

Other Motion

Lori Diaz recognized a potential conflict of interest as former staff of Timothy Eaton Memorial Pastoral Charge, however was invited to remain for the discussion.

Rob Smith provided background on the development of Timothy Eaton Memorial Church as a Supervised Ministry Education (SME) site. Concerns previously raised by the PRC regarding the use of the title “minister” and the initially high salary were addressed: the church agreed to use “student pastor” and to reduce the salary to a more appropriate level. It was reaffirmed that the concern was not about the suitability of the site or the student but about ensuring transparency and fairness.

MOTION by Robin Pilkey / William Haughton SW PRC 2025-10-15-06

That the Pastoral Relations Commission:

concur with the request of **Timothy Eaton Memorial Pastoral Charge (Toronto)**, and appoints **Dayle Barrett**, candidate for ministry, from July 3, 2025 to June 30, 2026, full time based on 40 hours per week, with the following terms for Candidate Step 1 and Cost of Living Group Assignment 5: Salary \$70,745 per annum, salary in addition to the minimum of 13.1% or \$9,267.60 for a total salary of \$80,012.60, basic telephone \$800 per annum, Continuing Education and Learning Amount \$1689 per annum, and all other terms according to *The Manual* I.2, and that in accordance with *The Manual* I.1.3.9 this appointment requires an act of covenant; and

concur with the request of **Timothy Eaton Memorial Pastoral Charge (Toronto)** and grants sacramental privileges in accordance with of *The Manual* I.2.4.1(a) and I.2.4.2, to **Dayle Barrett** (candidate), during his time of appointment at Timothy Eaton Memorial Pastoral Charge (Toronto).

One abstention

MOTION

CARRIED

Rob Smith left the meeting at 9:35 a.m.

Report from Staff

a) Liaisons

The following pastoral charge liaisons were appointed by staff:

Kim Uyede-Kai is appointed to Toronto Chinese Pastoral Charge (Toronto) to prepare to become an SME site.

b) Pastoral Charge Supervisors

There were no pastoral charge supervisors appointed by staff.

Some members expressed strong concerns about transparency, noting that salary disclosure is common in other sectors and arguing that limiting access contributes to a culture of secrecy. Others highlighted the need to respect ministry personnel privacy and acknowledged that many regional councils already follow restricted-access practices. No consensus emerged to create a new policy at this time. The Commission agreed to continue current practices unless or until General Council issues a formal directive.

Sabbatical Grant Policy Discussion

The Commission members discussed the need for a clear policy on sabbatical grants, noting that while grants of up to \$3,500 have been historically given, there is currently no formal policy and the 2026 budget allocates only \$10,000. Concerns were raised about equity, fairness, and ensuring congregations can support ministers' sabbaticals without arbitrary limits. The Commission agreed to request a pause on any cap or restriction until proper consultation with the Finance Committee can occur.

MOTION by Robin Pilkey / Lori Diaz

SW PRC 2025-10-15-09

that the Pastoral Relations Commission request the Regional Council Executive to pause the decision to restrict sabbatical grants until further consultation and policy development.

MOTION

CARRIED

Eun-Joo was asked to draft a letter to the Executive requesting the pause. Lori and Richard will consult with the Finance Committee regarding policy options. Commission members attending the upcoming annual meeting are encouraged to raise concerns to ensure the issue receives proper discussion before budget approval.

Discussion: Pastoral Charge Supervisors Policy

Eun-Joo noted that there is currently no formal policy regarding Pastoral Charge Supervisors. She emphasized the importance of clearly outlining responsibilities and expectations, including questions around reimbursement or honoraria. It was agreed that drafting a policy for Pastoral Charge Supervisors would be beneficial. Eun-Joo to follow up with a draft for Commission review at a future meeting.

Discussion: Covenanting Services

Regarding covenanting services, concerns were raised about scheduling these services during Sunday worship, which often prevents regional representatives from attending. Suggestions included exploring alternative service times, providing pulpit supply for clergy liaisons when needed, and encouraging local clergy to attend nearby services. It was also noted that without presbytery structures, regional connections have weakened, making

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMISSION: SHORT TERM APPOINTMENTS AND APPOINTMENTS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to guide decision-making by the Pastoral Relations Commission when considering a request for an appointment.

Date approved: January 29, 2019 Revision approved: October 15, 2025	Review date by Pastoral Relations Commission: 2028
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In the guide for pastoral relations, *Pastoral Relations: Policy for a Community of Faith (April 2020)*, a short-term appointment is described as a “supply minister appointed to offer leadership until your community of faith’s profile is written and the associated position is filled. (Page 13). Appointments (as opposed to a short-term appointment), on the other hand, are longer-term pastoral relationships as a result of a search. This policy will help the Pastoral Relations Commission differentiate between the two types of appointments and respond appropriately.

- I. The Pastoral Relations Commission will consider a request for the following appointments as a result of a search through Church Hub by an appointed Search Team or Transition Team:
 - i. Designated Lay Minister: up to three year appointment.
 - ii. Admittand: up to three year appointment (needed for immigration)
 - iii. Retired Supply: up to three years if a result of a search
 - iv. Designated Lay Ministers-Applicant: DLM-A are students who are required to be in an appointment (at least half time) in order to complete their educational program. The educational program is for at least three years. A multi-year appointment could be requested for a DLM-A, who has been in an appointment for at least a year (up to two years).
 - v. The Candidacy Pathway program requires a candidate to fulfill a supervised ministry education (SME) for two years. An appointment may be requested for up to two years.
- II. The Pastoral Relations Commission will consider a request for a short term appointment as a result of a search through Church Hub for a minister to offer leadership until a community of faith’s profile and associated position is filled, for up to 12 months.
- III. All other appointments covering a time limited leave such as parental leave, sabbatical, or medical leave, or a true “appointment” where the regional council is taking sole responsibility for appointing a minister under particular circumstances will be considered short-term appointments, be approved for up to 12 months and does not require a search through Church Hub.

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMISSION: CONGREGATIONAL DESIGNATED MINISTRY POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process whereby Congregational Designated Minister position descriptions are reviewed and categorized.

Date Approved by Pastoral Relations Commission: February 26, 2019 Revision approved: Oct. 15, 2025	Review date by the Pastoral Relations Commission: 2028
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Why is this policy important?

The UCC has a handbook that outlines policies allowing communities of faith to hire lay people for program ministry. A Congregational Designated Minister (CDM) is a baptized layperson who is hired to work in a community-based ministry that addresses a specific area of need within a congregation. A community of faith develops a job description that meets its identified needs. The job description needs to be created in accordance with the categorization guidelines for the UCC Congregational Designated Minister.

Procedure

1. The Regional Council makes its communities of faith aware of the need to have all community-based ministry positions reviewed by the Pastoral Relations Ministers.
2. Position descriptions are reviewed by a Pastoral Relations Minister using the categorization guidelines in the CDM Handbook. The Pastoral Relations Ministers may consult with other Regional Council staff.
3. The Pastoral Relations Ministers report to the Pastoral Relations Commission for information purposes as part of the staff report in the omnibus motion.

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMISSION: LICENSED LAY WORSHIP LEADERS COMMITTEE POLICY

This policy outlines the purpose, accountability, authority, membership and responsibilities of the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders Committee and the relationship with the Pastoral Relations Commission

Date Approved: February 26, 2019	Review by PR Commission date: 2028
Revision Approved: October 15, 2023	

PURPOSE:

The Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWL) Committee will implement the License Lay Worship Policy of Shining Waters Regional Council. The Pastoral Relations Commission is responsible for licensing Licensed Lay Worship Leaders for Shining waters Regional Council.

The Committee will provide support and oversight to Licensed Lay Worship Leaders within Shining Waters Region and be a recommending and reporting body to the Pastoral Relations Commission.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Licensed Lay Worship Leaders Committee is accountable to the Pastoral Relations Commission

AUTHORITY

The Licensed Lay Worship Leaders Committee interviews and recommends to the Pastoral Relations Commission a layperson who is a full member of a Community of Faith for licensing and re-licensing.

MEMBERSHIP

A chair and four to six people to allow for a balance of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders members and non-Licensed Lay Worship Leaders members.

QUORUM:

The quorum will be 50% plus one, or at least three persons with at least one ministry personnel and one lay member.

TERMS OF OFFICE

The members will be elected by the Regional Council with staggered terms

The term will be for three years with a renewal for one term. After a one year hiatus, an individual may be elected again.

MEETINGS

The Committee will meet in person or by electronic or other means at least quarterly.

RESPONSIBILITIES DELEGATED TO THE LICENSED LAY WORSHIP LEADERS COMMITTEE

The Licensed Lay Worship Leaders Committee will be responsible for:

1. Interviewing a layperson and recommending licensing to the Pastoral Relations Commission.
2. Interviewing and recommending re-licensing for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders every three years.
3. Granting exemption from the approved Licensed Lay Worship Leaders preparatory course.
4. Ensuring a Licensed Lay Worship Leader has completed all mandatory workshops and is current with their police records check according to the policies set by The United Church of Canada.

5. Ensuring a Licensed Lay Worship Leader is recognized their initial licensing at the annual Regional Meeting's Celebration of Ministry Service.
6. Providing ongoing support and guidance to a Licensed Lay Worship Leader.

STAFF SUPPORT

The Pastoral Relations Ministers will provide support to the Committee.

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMISSION: LICENSED LAY WORSHIP LEADERS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide oversight to the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders within Shining Waters Regional Council. This authority is given to the Pastoral Relations Commission.

Date Approved: February 26, 2019	Review date by the Pastoral Relations Commission: 2028
Revision Approved: Oct. 15, 2025	

Why is this policy important?

Many lay people are called to courageously step forward to give leadership in worship. Those who participate in a Licensed Lay Worship Leader (LLWL) program are choosing to develop their leadership gifts further.

In the Licensed Lay Worship Leader program, the United Church has recognized a need for people to be supported through a training and licensing program. This gives both the lay leader and the congregation confidence that their leadership is built upon a strong theological and biblical foundation that is consistent with the ethos of the United Church.

A licensed lay worship leader is a full member who has been determined to have gifts and a sense of call to the ministry of worship leadership and preaching, and who has developed these gifts through participation in a course of study and is licensed by a region.

This policy guides the formation and participation of the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders within Shining Waters Region.

Membership

The regional council may license a person as a licensed lay worship leader. (The Manual I 1.11.5)

The following requirements apply:

- a) the person must be a member of a congregation in that regional council; 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 Pastoral Relations Commission through the LLWL Committee. If a licensed lay worship leader becomes a member of a community of faith in another regional council, the person must be recognized by that other regional council in order to continue serving as a licensed lay worship leader.

Preparation and Licensing:

1. The governing body of a local community of faith identifies, or a layperson who is a full member self-identifies to the governing body, a call to licensed lay worship leadership.
2. The lay member completes a preparatory course that extends over at least two years and includes the study of theology, church history, Hebrew and Christian scriptures, preaching, worship, and pastoral skills. The course of study must be approved by the LLWL Committee.
3. An individual may be exempt from a preparatory course at the discretion of the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders Committee. An individual's education would be evaluated using the handbook, Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (October 2016) or future editions.
4. The lay member must also complete all mandatory workshops and police records checks, according to policy set by the United Church of Canada.

The United Church of Canada
Shining Waters Regional Council

5. The Pastoral Relations Commission, through the LLWL Committee tests the lay member's suitability and readiness for licensed lay worship leadership by examining their personal character, doctrinal beliefs, and educational competency.
6. The Pastoral Relations Commission issues a licence to the lay member to function as a licensed lay worship leader within the jurisdiction of the region, under the direction of the region. The licence is normally valid for 3 years and may be renewed.
7. Newly licensed lay worship leaders will be recognized at the annual Regional Meeting's Celebration of Ministry Service.

Ongoing Support and Guidance

1. The Pastoral Relations Commission, through the LLWL Committee interviews a licensed lay worship leader triennially, at the time of their license renewal. The region may request reporting (such as reports from congregations served, examples of sermons, either written or recorded, and orders of worship produced) as part of the interview process.
2. The licensed lay worship leader may cover three consecutive Sundays a month, to a maximum of 15 services per year, in one community of faith. Alternatively, the licensed lay worship leader may lead services for one complete month in a six-month period in one Pastoral Charge. If asked to lead worship for more Sundays, the licensed lay worship leader is to seek the approval of a Pastoral Relations Minister before agreeing to do so. The Pastoral Relations Ministers will report these exceptions to the Pastoral Relations Commission.
3. The community of faith is encouraged to remunerate licensed lay worship leaders in accordance with the Minimum Salaries & Reimbursements rate for Visiting Ministry Personnel, including travel, issued by General Council each year. It is to be noted that this rate is a minimum. When leading worship on a multi-point community of faith, it is intended that the licensed lay worship leader would receive above the minimum rate for one Sunday, but not necessarily the full rate for each worship service.
4. A licensed lay worship leader may not provide pastoral care in a pastoral charge that is not their own. It is expected that the licensed lay worship leader will refer any requests or requirements for pastoral care (counseling, home visitation, hospital visitation) to the called or appointed ministry personnel, or the community of faith's supervisor for follow-up.
5. A licensed lay worship leader may conduct a funeral. However, the conduct of funerals within a community of faith (including a funeral home), is to be arranged in consultation with the called or appointed ministry personnel or the supervisor of the community of faith. If the licensed lay worship leader conducts a funeral, they must ensure that the information is entered in the Burial Register of the community of faith.
6. A licensed lay worship leader may not wear a stole or a clergy shirt. A stole and a clergy collar are reserved for those who are ministry personnel, called or appointed to a community of faith.

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMISSION: MINISTRY PERSONNEL MARRIAGE POLICY

This policy outlines the regulations regarding marriage licences for ministry personnel in Shining Waters Regional Council.

Date Approved: December 12, 2018	Revision Approved: October 15, 2025	Next review date by Pastoral Relations Commission: June 2025
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ELIGIBILITY

a) Permanent licences

Those eligible to hold a permanent licence to conduct a wedding within the Province of Ontario are:

1. Ministry personnel in a covenanted relationship with a ministry recognized by a regional council of The United Church of Canada within the Province of Ontario. This includes ministry candidates who are serving in appointments.

b) Temporary licences

Those eligible to hold a temporary licence to conduct a wedding within the Province of Ontario are:

1. Ministry personnel on the accredited list of ministry personnel maintained by the Office of Vocation who are not in an on-going covenanted relationship with a ministry recognized by a regional council of The United Church of Canada.
2. Ministry personnel from other regional councils within The United Church of Canada who are on the accredited list of ministry personnel and reside outside Ontario.
3. Ministry personnel from other communions, which are recognized by the Canadian Council of Churches or the World Council of Churches.

Notes

i) Retired Designated Lay Ministers are not eligible to be licensed because they are not in an appointment and are therefore considered to be lay persons, and are not eligible to become Voluntary Associate Ministers.

ii) A marriage licence will be valid for one year after the end of an appointment or call. If a minister has not entered into another appointment or call, or into a Voluntary Associate Minister covenanted relationship within this one year period, then their licence will be cancelled.

PROCEDURES

a) Permanent licences

1. All ministry personnel in a covenanted relationship with a community of faith or a ministry recognized by the regional council will be authorized by the regional council to apply for a marriage licence. The Regional Council supports the application with required documentation; however, the Regional Council cannot procure a licence for ministry personnel and it is the responsibility of ministry personnel to ensure that they have an active marriage licence before conducting marriages. The Ontario government marriage office maintains a public online list of all active licences (<https://data.ontario.ca/dataset/registered-marriage-officiants>). If your name is not on the list, contact your Pastoral Relations Minister.

2. A covenanted relationship for those not called or appointed to a community of faith, or a ministry recognized by the regional council, will consist of a joint statement from the ministry personnel and a community of faith indicating a mutual agreement that conducting weddings is part of the duties of the ministry personnel as specified in the Shining Waters Regional Council VAM Application Form.

Ministry personnel will be on the list of accredited ministry personnel. In Shining Waters Regional Council, this joint statement is included in the Voluntary Associate Minister form, which must be approved by the appointed or called ministry personnel and the community of faith, and approved by the Pastoral Relations Commission. Shining Waters Regional Council will depend on The United Church of Canada's Church Hub to verify that a minister is on the list of accredited ministry personnel. This means anyone applying for Voluntary Associate Minister status must be registered on www.ChurchHub.ca.

3. The regional council will periodically determine whether a covenanted relationship continues to exist between a ministry personnel and a community of faith.
4. All marriages shall be registered in a marriage register kept by a United Church of Canada community of faith or regional council recognized ministry.

b) Temporary licences for United Church of Canada Ministry Personnel

1. Ministry personnel without a permanent licence for conducting weddings will contact the marriage registration governing official requesting a temporary licence.
2. The governing official will confirm that the ministry personnel is on the list of accredited ministry personnel by checking with the regional council's Office of Vocation Minister.
3. Ministry personnel requesting a temporary licence shall supply a letter of support from the ministry personnel serving the United Church of Canada community of faith in which the wedding is taking place.
4. For "off-site," non-church weddings, ministry personnel shall provide a letter from a United Church of Canada community of faith whose marriage register is being used to register the marriage.
5. All marriages shall be registered in a marriage register kept by a United Church of Canada community of faith or regional council recognized ministry.
6. Temporary licences for weddings to be conducted on the premises of other denominations shall be requested through the governing official of the other denomination.
7. The maximum number of temporary registrations to be authorized for any individual in any calendar year is three. Those wishing to conduct more than three weddings per calendar year will be required to enter into a covenanted relationship with a community of faith or regional council recognized ministry.
8. Ministry personnel applying for a temporary licence must be on the list of accredited ministry personnel
9. Whatever personal record the officiant makes of the event, it must be entered into the marriage register of a congregation according to #4 or #5 above.

c) Temporary Licences for Ministry Personnel who are not recognized by The United Church of Canada

Ministry personnel of a denomination that is a member church of the Canadian Council of Churches or the World Council of Churches will provide a letter of standing from their denomination of accountability. The ministry personnel would be subject to #1 and #3-7, and #9 above.

Ministry personnel from another denomination applying for a temporary licence must have a police records check valid within the last six months.

Pulpit Supply Policy and Best Practices

The purpose of the policy and best practice statement is to guide communities of faith in considering options for pulpit supply.

Date Approved: January 25, 2022	Review: 2028
Revision Approved: October 15, 2025	

Accountability and support: who is on the pulpit supply list?

The list of individuals for pulpit supply is maintained on ChurchHub. This includes: active ministry personnel; retired Ordained, Commissioned, and Designated Lay Ministers who are in good standing and in compliance with United Church requirements for mandatory trainings and police record checks and are endorsed as available for pulpit supply; and those who have been licensed as Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWL). It also includes candidates for ministry in Shining Waters Regional Council who have been approved by our Candidacy Board to enter the candidacy pathway to ministry. These candidates for ministry are also in compliance with United Church requirements for mandatory trainings and police record checks.

Exploring Issues of Liability

When the Regional Council provides names of those appropriate for pulpit supply, it is ensuring the community of faith that appropriate “Duty of Care” has been exercised in the oversight of these persons. In the United Church, the community of faith reserves authority over its worship life and can invite whoever they choose to lead in worship or preach, but when people are invited outside of those for whom the Regional Council has exercised its “Duty of Care”, the accountability for that “Duty of Care” rests with the community of faith.

Principles and policies around Pulpit Supply

- Pulpit supply is not intended to be an ongoing approach to sustaining ministry. Lay-led congregations should not rely upon a single LLWL, retired order of ministry or DLM or clergy from other denominations for continuous long-term leadership;
- A person providing pulpit supply may cover three consecutive Sundays a month, to a maximum of 15 services per year, in one community of faith. Alternatively, a person may lead services for one complete month in a six-month period in one Pastoral Charge. If asked to lead worship for more Sundays, the pulpit supply provider is to seek the approval of a Pastoral Relations Minister before agreeing to do so.
- It is acknowledged that there may be circumstances where availability of LLWLs and other pulpit supply options are limited and it may be not possible to have a wider variety of persons providing leadership. In these circumstances the community of faith is directed to be in communication with a Pastoral Relations Minister and to request direction and support;
- Worship resources (printed, video, technology links) and other support to communities of faith are available through General Council Office website: <https://united-church.ca/worship-resources>

CRA Requirements for a T4A

Communities of Faith paying more than \$500 in a year to anyone whose services they engage for worship leadership are required by law to file a T4A with CRA and to provide it by February 28 of the following year. Please note that it should not be necessary for your pulpit supply providers to ask you for their T4A. It must be supplied as an expression of CRA compliance.

Remuneration for Pulpit Supply

Pulpit supply minimum rates for ministry personnel are provided annually by the General Council Office. This covers a full working day, or any portion thereof, and is not linked to any specific number of hours served. The parties may negotiate a higher daily amount but cannot negotiate a lower amount. In addition, the community of faith must reimburse the visiting ministry personnel for travel and incidental expenses (i.e., meal allowance and accommodations, as necessary). The minimum daily rate is applicable to ministry personnel only.

However, the community of faith is encouraged to remunerate LLWLs in accordance with the Minimum Salaries & Reimbursements rate for Visiting Ministry Personnel, including travel, issued by General Council each year. It is to be noted that this rate is a minimum. When leading worship on a multi-point community of faith, it is intended that the anyone leading worship would receive above the minimum rate for one Sunday, but not necessarily the full rate for each worship service.

Oversight of the Regional Council

Oversight is exercised through the pastoral charge supervisors who are named by the Regional Council to ensure that communities of faith live their mission within the ethos of The United Church of Canada. Communities of faith which disregard the direction of the pastoral charge supervisor in regards to compliance with this policy, may be subject to review and discipline by the Regional Council.

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMISSION: MINIMUM TELEPHONE ALLOWANCE FOR MINISTRY PERSONNEL POLICY

This policy outlines the minimum telephone allowance for Shining Waters Ministry Personnel

Date approved: January 26, 2021	Revision approved: October 15, 2025	Review: 2028
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Background:

The United Church of Canada denominational policy simply states that the pastoral charge must provide ministry personnel with a phone when they are hired on appointment or in a call. The ChurchHub appointment/call form can also not be approved unless an amount is inserted in the “Phone Allowance” box.

Because no minimum is stated in national policy, there has been significant inconsistency in the amounts that come to the commission for approval as part of the appointment or call form, including amounts that appear below what would be required to purchase a basic cell phone plan.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all appointments and calls coming to the commission for approval include a minimum amount for telephone allowance, in accordance with market rates for cell phone plans in our region.

Policy:

- That the telephone allowance for ministry personnel appointed or called in Shining Waters Region be set at a minimum of \$800, reviewed annually, regardless of full or part time appointments, and;
- That this amount be the total when a minister is in more than one appointment or call, and;
- That this amount be reviewed annually by the Commission.

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMISSION: VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATE MINISTER (VAM)

This policy outlines the regulations regarding Voluntary Associate Ministers (VAMs) in Shining Waters Regional Council.

Date Approved: December 12, 2018 Revision Approved: October 15, 2025	Review date by Pastoral Relations Commission: 2028
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DEFINITION

A Voluntary Associate Minister (VAM) is a recognized ordered minister in The United Church of Canada who is retired or between calls or appointment. A community of faith and the called or appointed minister must request approval by the Pastoral Relations Commission for the appointment of a VAM.

MEMBERSHIP

Voluntary Associate Ministers are members of the Regional Council and not of the community of faith with which they are associated. Volunteer Associate status shall be seen as equivalent to any appointment in terms of membership and discipline.

THE PROCESS

An ordered minister may enter into an agreement with a community of faith to serve as a Volunteer Associate Minister.

The VAM form will be found on the Shining Waters Regional Council website. It must be filled in completely, including the signatures of the Pastoral Charge Secretary of the Board/Session (or equivalent), the called or appointed Ministry Personnel, and the Voluntary Associate Minister.

The completed form will be sent to the Shining Waters Regional Council office and forwarded to the Pastoral Relations Commission for consideration and approval.

Once the request has been approved, Shining Waters Regional Council will retain a copy and provide one to the community of faith Secretary or Board/Session (or equivalent), the called or appointed Ministry Personnel, and the Voluntary Associate Minister.

If the request is not approved, Shining Waters Regional Council will contact all parties.

By signing the Voluntary Associate Minister form, the Voluntary Associate Minister and other parties are agreeing to the following:

1. Pastoral functions performed come under the oversight and discipline of the Office of Vocation.
2. The Voluntary Associate Minister named in the agreement may receive honoraria for weddings or funerals and for presiding and/or preaching in regular worship; however, there is no expectation of honoraria, stipend, or travel allowance from the community of faith to which they are accountable.
3. When there is a change in a pastoral relationship within a Community of Faith, the Voluntary Associate Minister should automatically end when the incumbent minister leaves.
4. The Voluntary Associate Minister must reapply for their status with the incoming minister. The new called or appointed minister has the option to approve or not approve the re-appointment of a Voluntary Associate Minister at the pastoral charge level.

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5. If a Voluntary Associate Minister enters into a call at another community of faith, their VAM status shall end. If a VAM enters into an appointment longer than six months, their VAM status will also end.

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMISSION & COMMUNITIES OF FAITH COMMISSION: BEST PRACTICES IN WELCOMING ADMISSION MINISTERS

This policy outlines the guidelines for best practices when congregations are engaged in an admission appointment.

Date Approved: October 15, 2025	Date reviewed:	Next review date by Pastoral Relations Commission: 2028
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Prepping the community of faith:

- Once the community of faith and regional council approval is complete, a workshop with the Shining Waters Regional Council Pastoral Relations Minister will be planned to help prepare for the minister's arrival. This can be done anytime between approval and arrival, and will involve practical and theological considerations.
- Inform the congregation about the financial responsibilities of bringing in admission ministers. (E.g. First and last month's rent for a deposit for housing.)
- Timelines for visa acquisition and the minister's actual arrival vary depending on the country of origin and the individual candidate—for some, it takes 6 months, and for others, it takes 18 months. It's important to have a contingency plan between the approval of the appointment and the minister's arrival.
- Intercultural and racial justice and diversity training for the congregation before the arrival of the minister
- An online connection between the congregation and the admission minister is strongly encouraged before arrival.
- Preparation to support accompanying family members is considered. In some cases, the minister's spouse comes with a work permit. Assistance in finding employment may be necessary. An organization in the community, such as the YMCA, might help with this.
- Set up an office with adequate equipment.
- Prepare a list of community resources available.
- Ensure the pastoral liaisons who work with the search committees are well-trained on admission minister requirements and communicate this policy to the search committees.

Housing:

- If there is a manse, ensure it is set up for whatever configuration the family needs—upon arrival in Canada, it is not the time to search for a highchair, crib, etc.
- If there is no manse, the congregation is required to find adequate housing. Finding a place to rent can be challenging in a small rural town, as owners often prefer to sell rather than rent. Ideally, look for a landlord willing to agree to a 3-year rental (the duration of the appointment).

Since immigration timing is challenging to determine, it may be necessary to rent a house before arrival, paying rent and power for an empty house.

- The congregation is expected to have enough resources to pay the housing deposit (first and last months). In addition, one more month's housing payment (the second month) is recommended.
- Create a list of home furnishings, including beds, sofas, small kitchen appliances, dishes, cookware, towels, linens, etc.
- Arrange for Internet and TV Services.
- Arrange for the cleaning crew and the moving crew

Hospitality:

- Gather basic pantry items for arrival. Items from their cultural background would be helpful. (Ask if the family has any requests.)
- Car for family use—While a loan/ grant from the General Council Office is available to purchase a vehicle, there is often a delay between the minister's arrival and acquiring a car. Arranging for a temporary solution is useful.
- Assist the minister in obtaining a driver's license within the first year. A non-Canadian driver's license is good for 60 days to drive in Ontario. Use it to get familiar with Canadian driving practices before applying for a permanent license.
- Rent a car before obtaining the Canadian License, as auto insurance is included in the rental car.
- **Sunday before arrival:** Announce in church that casseroles, baked goods, and other food items are welcome. This would provide the family with at least a few meals already prepared.
- **Arrival day:** The welcome committee will meet the family at the airport with flags, Canadian lapel pins, a welcome sign, and helium balloons for the children. Depending on the distance from the airport to the home community, an overnight stay in a hotel might be welcome. Multiple vehicles are often needed to transport the family and luggage.
- **Cell phone assistance:** Sometimes, a "Newcomers to Canada" plan provides unlimited coverage for two months at no charge to one family member. (Tip. Doing it at the airport is less expensive than visiting a local store.)
- **Days following:** Arrange for a tour of the community and school (if applicable) and complete necessary paperwork (e.g., OHIP healthcare).
- **First day of work** – account for travel exhaustion, jet lag and culture shock – ensure at least a week of transition time
- Ongoing support – while the formal tasks are complete once the family arrives and the minister begins working, there continue to be tasks related to supporting the family. Establishing a support team or, at the very least, designating someone to continue to check in with the family

is helpful. There may also be admissions ministers nearby (either within the Regional Council or in another Regional Council) who could offer support – be sure to check with the Pastoral Relations Minister for additional contact information.

- Orienting the minister and family with the local expressions and culture of the community.
- If the minister is racialized, ongoing Intercultural and racial justice and diversity training for the congregation should be provided after the arrival of the minister, while the minister is in appointment
- A mentor will be assigned to the minister as a part of the admission process.
- A mentor/liaison from the region should also be assigned to the congregation while the minister is in the Admission Process. (List of responsibilities needs to be developed)
- The congregation is encouraged to support the minister's education financially to complete their admission process. This can be included in the terms of the appointment
- Assist the minister and family in finding a family physician, a dentist, and any other medical support for the first year, including Health insurance while waiting for OHIP.