

2019-02-26_42 MOTION (E. Beattie/B. Paterson) That the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council Executive approves the Ministry Personnel involvement in a former Community of Faith Practice and Policy **Carried**

Ministry Personnel Involvement in a Former Community Of Faith Policy
Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council

POLICY NAME and PRACTICE: Ministry Personnel involvement in a former Community of Faith Policy	<i>Date Approved: February 26, 2019</i>
	<i>Review date:</i>
Purpose: The purpose of this policy and practice outlines the relationship and responsibilities of ministry personnel who have left a Community of Faith. The Manual I.2.5.3, I.2.5.4	

Preamble

This document outlines the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council’s policy and best practices regarding ministry personnel * transitioning out of pastoral relationships (appointment or call). The goal is to create a smooth transition from the departing minister to the incoming minister. Ending pastoral relationships can be anxious times for both the minister and the community of faith. Denominational policy (provided at the end in Appendix A) and the policies and best practices that follow are meant to create healthy endings and new beginnings.

Ministers who are leaving a pastoral relationship will hopefully have an awareness of important boundaries that honour and respect the new pastoral relationship, thereby strengthening the Body of Christ (the church) to carry out its mandate in the world.

1. Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council - Contact with Former Community of Faith

The Manual (2019) provides policies around a minister returning to a former community of faith to carry out ministerial duties (see Appendix A) but does not speak to the issue of ministry personnel attending worship at a previous community of faith, visiting occasionally, conducting weddings and funerals, or attending special events/occasions. This policy is meant to cover these situations.

The following practices help to promote the best possible conditions for the establishment of a new pastoral relationship:

- a) That the minister ensures that a proper “goodbye” is made to the community of faith. A “returning of the symbols” or an “end-of-covenant ceremony” can be helpful.
- b) That the minister not return to their former community of faith in any non-professional capacity (to visit, attend worship or other services) for a period of three years with the exception of the following situations:
 - i) The minister is invited to a wedding as a guest.
 - ii) The minister attends a funeral.
 - iii) The minister is invited by the governing body (session, council, board)
 - iv) to attend a special event.
 - v) In situations where a minister has served in an isolated rural community of faith, remains living in the area, and where there are no other United Church communities of faith easily accessible, the minister shall contact the Regional Council Pastoral Relations Minister to facilitate a dialogue with

the incumbent minister to determine if the past minister may worship there, and establish terms of the relationship.

vi) If the need arises, there may be a case-by-case decision - in consultation with the Regional Council Pastoral Relations Minister, incumbent minister and local Church Council/Board – as to how the needs of the community of faith are best met.

c) After at least three years has passed, the former minister may return to their former community of faith *after consulting* with the incumbent minister and the Church Council/Board concerning expectations and the level of involvement with which both parties would be comfortable. A covenant between former minister, the incumbent minister and the community of faith is one strategy that could be used. It is recommended that the ministers and the community of faith review arrangements and understandings periodically as circumstances often change.

d) Below is a check list of things to remember for departing ministers:

- Minimize your influence and presence with members of the congregation and other staff during the period after you leave. Don't say "*I'm not allowed*" but rather indicate that you are declining in the interests of the community of faith and in support of the establishment of a new healthy pastoral relationship.
- After three years, no ministerial contact with community of faith members or other staff until a covenant is made between you, the incumbent minister and the community of faith. Remember to define the nature and limits of your participation.
- Prepare the community of faith while you are still with them to understand the need for disengagement and how that might affect them. Often, the minister leaving a pastoral relationship is asked back by community of faith members. If you think your leaving may be particularly difficult for your community of faith, request the assistance of the Regional Council to explain the importance of disengagement before you leave.
- Ending a pastoral relationship might also mean an end to ties that your family members have with the community of faith.

Interim Ministry: In circumstances where the community of faith enters into a period of Interim Ministry or Transitional Ministry, the length of time that the former minister should be absent from the community of faith includes both the interim/transitional ministry period and a subsequent two years of the new call or appointment.

2. Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council – Current VAM Policy (February 2019)

“Whereas some ministry personnel who leave a ministry site due to retirement or change in pastoral relations continue to live within the area, and whereas in-coming ministry personnel need time and opportunity to develop relationships with the community of faith, therefore the East Central Ontario Regional Council Executive has determined that in order to be eligible, the ministry personnel in the categories of non-settled ordained or diaconal minister, retired ordained or retired diaconal minister may apply to be a volunteer associate minister after a lapse of at least three years before they can serve as a Voluntary Associate Minister for their former community of faith.

“It is recommended that ministry personnel allow for a period of three years from the end date of their pastoral relationship before they become a VAM in a former community of faith where they served in call or appointment. Becoming a VAM is at the discretion of the incumbent minister.” Carried

3. Minister Emeritus/Emerita

In the United Church of Canada, there is no formal practice of naming a minister emeritas/emerita. Some communities of faith will chose to honour retired clergy in this way. There are some mixed messages being sent to both parishioners and minister when a community of faith names someone as “emeritas/emerita” but the Regional Council restricts a retired minister from pastoral functions in that specific congregation. Therefore a community of faith is expected to let the requisite three year period pass before naming a retired minister to this role. It is expected that the retired minister will actively discourage former parishioners if they request his or her services. The church in which the retired minister has worked long and hard to nurture and sustain now needs the retired minister’s help in establishing a healthy relationship with its new leader.

4. Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel

All ministry personnel, both active and retired, shall follow The United Church of Canada’s *“Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel”*.

<http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/ethical-standards-practice-ministry-personnel.pdf>

5. Police Records Check

All retired ministry personnel, whether in paid or voluntary positions, shall adhere to the United Church of Canada’s policies regarding Police Records Checks.

http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/handbook_police-records-checks.pdf

6. The Family of Ministry Personnel

In the event of the retirement of ministry personnel, a particular concern arises for the needs of other family members, especially the minister’s spouse. Quite often family members have joined the community of faith at which their spouse/parent was serving and have become involved in the community of faith’s life and programs, as well as establishing personal friendships with other church members. The Regional Council has no direct jurisdiction over the lay members of ministers’ families, but it strongly urged that the spouse, in the context of those relationships, not do anything that would undermine the transition necessary for the community of faith or the development of a relationship with Interim, Supply or newly called or appointed ministry personnel. It would be wise to consider not worshipping with the former community of faith at all during the period of pastoral vacancy or while an Interim Minister is present.

Appendix A

THE MANUAL (2019) - RETURNING TO A FORMER PASTORAL CHARGE

Section I.2.5.3 (Functions of Ministry -- Outside Pastoral Relationship)

Section I.2.5.4: (Request of Previous Pastoral Charge)

I.2.5.3 FUNCTIONS OF MINISTRY—OUTSIDE PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP

At any time that ministry personnel are not settled in or appointed to a community of faith, they may carry out the functions of ministry in the United Church only if

(a) they have a formal association with a community of faith, are acting on behalf of that community of faith, and have the approval of the community of faith's governing body; or

An example of a "formal association" with a pastoral charge would be where the minister has been designated as a "voluntary associate minister" or "honorary associate minister" by the pastoral charge or its governing body.

(b) they have been appointed to a community of faith to exercise the functions of ministry associated with it.

2.5.4 REQUEST—PREVIOUS PASTORAL CHARGE

If a ministry personnel is asked by a member or adherent (or their families) of a community of faith where they had previously been settled or appointed to preside at a baptism, communion service, wedding, or funeral, the ministry personnel

(a) must refer the request to a member of the order of ministry who is settled in or appointed to that community of faith; **and**

(b) may preside only with the approval of the community of faith's governing body.
