

**Prairie to Pine Regional Council Committee on Community of Faith Support**  
**What if we decide to break up our Pastoral Charge?**  
**Things to be considered, decided, and approved**

Note that this is a document with reasonable guidelines and suggestions, based on past practices. There may be additional information or requirements.

1. Structural changes in a Congregation, or Pastoral Charge **require involvement and action by Regional Council**. Structural changes include formation, amalgamation, realignment, disbanding of a Pastoral Charge or Community of Faith (C of F). (C of F definition at end of document.).
2. If any of the above changes are anticipated or being discussed it is wise to **inform the Prairie to Pine Committee on Community of Faith Support as soon as possible** so that appropriate support, resources, information may be provided in a timely manner. In the early stages of informal discussion, the Regional Council may be informed by a written or verbal notice from one of the Chair, or Secretary of the Governing Body, the ministry personnel or pastoral charge supervisor to the Regional Pastoral Relations Minister or to the chair of the Regional Committee on Community of Faith Support.
3. If you have ministry personnel, or if ministry personnel positions may be affected by the change, the **Regional Council Pastoral Relations Commission** must be informed immediately. (Judy Hare, staff, [jhare@united-church.ca](mailto:jhare@united-church.ca) )
4. If there is real property involved the **Regional Property Commission** must be informed at an early stage. (Ken Thomas, chair, [ikt220@gmail.com](mailto:ikt220@gmail.com))
5. When the disbanding of an existing Pastoral Charge is anticipated, **the following steps** will likely need to be taken:
  - a) Likely the issue of disbanding will have been raised and discussed informally by one or all the parties in the relationship. There may or may not have been any involvement or support from the Regional Council at this point. When one or both parties decides to move more intentionally towards a change in the relationship, there must be **a motion by the governing body of the Community of Faith to proceed towards such a change**. Committee on Community of Faith Support should be informed of any meeting called for this purpose, and may appoint a Committee member or other person to attend for purposes of providing information and leading discussion.
  - b) **Immediately inform the other parties in the relationship** of the intention to begin the process of exploring or seeking an end to the pastoral charge relationship. This should be in writing – either hard copy or electronic communication are acceptable. The letter should be from the chair or secretary of one group to the chair or secretary of the other group(s) including the pastoral relations commission, Office of Vocation and Ministry Personnel, with copy to the Regional Council Committee on Community of Faith Support. (H. Lea chair, <mailto:hthrlea@gmail.com>)

- c) plan to hold **properly called and constituted congregational meetings** for the purpose of informing the congregations of proposed change; hearing questions, concerns, suggestions; and seeking approval for the proposed action. This may require congregational meetings early in the process and again when there are details to be approved.
6. Steps to be taken prior to asking the Regional Council to enact the change that is being requested.
- a) **List all property (real and personal, including financial resources) that is held jointly** or in which the parties might reasonably have a shared claim or interest.
  - b) **List all indebtedness or obligations** shared jointly or entered into together with the other party(ies). Annual denominational assessment and M&S Commitments are likely two such shared obligations.
  - c) Work together to **reach a mutually agreeable way to divide and disburse the property and assets, and to meet shared obligations.**
  - d) If the parties intend to continue as Communities of Faith, either alone or in new relationships with other Communities of Faith, they will need to **prepare and present to the Regional Council satisfactory proposals for how they will carry out their life and work** in the new configuration. These proposals will be useful in preparing the Community of Faith Covenant with the Regional Council. The Regional Council Pastoral Relations Commission will be involved in revisions to Community of Faith Profile that are deemed necessary depending on the degree to which it impacts the pastoral relationship.
  - e) If a community of faith does not want to continue as United Church Community of Faith in Covenant with the Prairie to Pine Region, they need to begin the process leading toward disbanding. Consult the Committee on Community of Faith Support for procedures and requirements.
  - f) If congregations in an existing Pastoral Charge have used a single **Charitable Tax Number** from CRA, or had a single **M&S identification number** from The United Church of Canada, or used a common **ADP number**, decisions will need to be made whether these numbers are to be continued by one of the congregations, and what other arrangements must be made. The issuing bodies will need to be informed of any anticipated structural changes and the appropriate processes followed for going forward. There may be additional work of this type required prior to disbanding a multi-point pastoral charge so that the congregations may continue alone or in new relationships.
7. Prior to being recognized as a congregation or other Community of Faith the group will likely be expected to provide such things as:
- a) **A mission or vision statement** or statement of purpose that describes such things as the significant purpose(s) of the C of F: the values, goals, activities, or the life and ministry and work to which the C of F believes it is called. Such a statement is intended “to articulate the community of faith’s witness to the gospel” (from handbook *on Pastoral Relations: Community of Faith*, draft Nov. 2018 effective Jan. 2019)

- b) **A Governance Document** that describes how the Community of Faith will conduct its work and carry out the mission, and vision identified in 7.a). Governance documents are required as part of a Community of Faith's Covenant with the Regional Council and must satisfy the requirements of The Manual.
- c) **A realistic and sustainable plan for carrying out the work** generated by 7.a) including recruitment and availability of paid and / or volunteer leadership and evidence of financial resources to support the ongoing life and work of the Community of Faith.
- d) **Consult the Regional Pastoral Relations Commission and / or the Regional Pastoral Relations Minister** for realistic information related to availability of ministry personnel and any **requirements for creating positions to be filled by ministry personnel or other ministry staff.**

Much of #7 above will likely be similar to parts of the Community of Faith's Ministry Profile.

Definition: **A Community of Faith** is understood in this document to be a pastoral charge or congregation accountable to Prairie to Pine Regional Council and recognized as a Community of Faith within the United Church by the Regional Council through a covenantal relationship between the Community of Faith and the Regional Council. This document does not pertain to Communities of Faith which are outreach ministries, chaplaincies, etc.