

**Policy on Cooperative Ministry Arrangement including Congregational Designated Ministers within
Prairie to Pine Regional Council**

Background:

For several years now, within what is currently known as the Prairie to Pine Regional Council, there have been congregations/pastoral charges/communities of faith that cannot financially afford fulltime ministry personnel and do not consider themselves close enough to other pastoral charges/communities of faith that actually have Called or Appointment Ministry Personnel to want to pursue a realignment or amalgamation to form a multiple point pastoral charge.

In recent years, laity on these pastoral charges or near by have pursued the required education and designation from the wider church to become known as Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWL). Many of the above mentioned pastoral charges have access to services from Licensed Lay Worship Leaders. However, LLWL are supposed to be used only “occasionally” in a given location (“occasionally” is not clearly defined by the church at this time, but Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has a sense of when a person is working regularly enough to be considered an employee). Many of these places prefer some consistency in their worship leaders rather than using many different LLWLs.

It is our understanding, that if lay people are doing any specific function of ministry on an ongoing basis (i.e. LLWLs are to be used more frequently) they should become a lay employees, known as “Congregational Designated Ministers” (CDMs).

However, *The Manual* of the United Church of Canada has for many years contained the restriction that CDMs can be employed only in pastoral charges/congregations/communities of faith where there is already a Called or Appointed Minister in place. The Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario did attempt to have the restriction changed /amended through proposals to more than one General Council, but it remains.

CDMs, by definition, are to be in team/association. This causes a problem, because for many of the locations needing worship leadership, the reason is that they do not have a Called or Appointed Order of Ministry or recognized Designated Lay Minister (DLM).

Within the former Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, especially in some presbyteries, there had also been a long history of sharing paid accountable ministry personnel, not through realignment and becoming a traditional multi-point pastoral charge, but through what was/is known locally as “**Service Agreements**”. These agreements were between pastoral charges and approved by the Pastoral Relations system in the wider church (Pastoral Relations Committees/Commissions or Settlement Committees/Commissions). These arrangements lasted longer than any one pastoral relationship. In these arrangements, a Ministry Personnel was Called or Appointed by one Pastoral Charge, and then another neighbouring pastoral charge (usually one that was significantly smaller) had specific ministry needs (usually for worship and pastoral care) met by the minister called/appointed to the one charge, in exchange for a specified amount of money given to that charge by the smaller charge. The details of these arrangements were/are noted in writing, and approved by the governing boards of the Charges involved. If there was/is a minister in place that person was/is consulted, and if there was /is not a minister in place, these arrangements were/are noted in any kind of needs assessment

documents when a new pastoral relations search begins. The Called/Appointed Minister is also the Pastoral Charge Supervisor of the charge/community of faith entering into the service agreement.

During the arrangement, concerns about ministry on the charge that is purchasing “services” are expressed to the Ministry and Personnel Committee of the charge where the Minister is Called/Appointed. In many of our longstanding situations there is a person from the smaller congregation who is a corresponding member of the Ministry and Personnel Committee of the other charge, and is able to voice comments and concerns if needed.

In the United Church Yearbook these arrangements are noted as a Pastoral Charges being “ served from another pastoral charge”. These arrangements are distinctly different than other arrangements where Ministry Personnel are Called or Appointed to two different Pastoral Charges/Communities of Faith and arrangements are put in writing through what has been called a “**Memorandum of Understanding**” to ensure that there is some coordination between the charges, so that the minister’s obligations/responsibilities to each pastoral charge can be met without conflict (worship times especially during special seasons of the year, scheduling of board meetings, etc.)

Prairie to Pine Regional Council Pastoral Relations Commission continues to recognize and approve Service Agreements and Memorandum of Understanding.

In the past several years, the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario has sent proposals to several General Council meetings, requesting various changes to allow formal recognition of arrangements that could serve these small pastoral charges, acknowledging that appropriate supervision and accountability are certainly important. There has been no clear response to these proposals that allow for ongoing use of Trained Lay Leadership (CDMs or LLWLs) in context without paid accountable ordered ministers.

It appears at present, that the wider church is open to various cooperative ministry arrangements that suit the ministry needs of local contexts.

Acknowledging the need for worship leadership in some of these very small communities and the presence of trained LLWLs willing to provide for these needs on a consistent basis; acknowledging the church’s desire to have appropriate accountability and supervision both for pastoral charges/communities of faith and those lay employees exercising any ministry functions in those locations:

The Pastoral Relations Commission requests permission to create/recognize a cooperative ministry arrangement in these charges with the following:

- The appointment of Pastoral Charge Supervisors who are Order of Ministry or Designated Lay Ministers Recognized.
- A request from a pastoral charge/community of faith without paid accountable ministry personnel to a pastoral charge/community of faith where the Order of Ministry or Recognized Designated Lay Minister is called, appointed or in formal association (in the case of retained or retired ministry personnel) to have them hire a specific lay person to fulfill a specific position that has been approved as a CDM position by the Regional Council (Pastoral Relations Commission) as a Congregational Designated Minister and then deploy that CDM to the

requesting charge. The details of the arrangement would be put in writing in a “service agreement” similar to those already in use in the area for ministry personnel.

- The Pastoral Charge/Community of Faith that is requesting the hiring and receiving the services of the CDM would appoint one of their members to be a corresponding member of the Ministry and Personnel Committee of the hiring charge. These corresponding members would need to be present only at Ministry and Personnel Committee meetings when the work of the CDM is discussed and/or at least once annually.
- Otherwise it would be the Order of Ministry or recognized DLM that would be in team with the CDM, thus having a sense of the CDM’s ministry, as well as having oversight of the pastoral charge/community of faith context where the CDM is working.
- The Pastoral Charge/Community of Faith hiring and deploying the CDM would be the employer of record of the CDM and therefore would be fulfilling requirements for any other employees, such as Screening checks, Pastoral Charge Payroll Service (ADP) reporting, Record of Employment (ROE) etc. An administration fee can be negotiated from the requesting charge and the amount recorded in the service agreement.

The arrangements in these service agreements involving CDMs would be reviewed at any change in Pastoral Charge Supervisor, any change in CDM, any change in financial circumstances of the requesting charge, or upon request of any of the parties involved.

Related Resources:

Congregational Designated Ministers:

https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/pastoral-relations_congregational-designated-ministers.pdf

Licensed Lay Worship leaders:

https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/handbook_licensed-lay-worship-leaders.pdf

The Manual (2019) sections E.2.9 page 99 (definition) I. 1.11.2; I.1.11.3; I 1.11.4 page 144

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