

Living Skies Regional Council – Pastoral Charge Supervisor

I. 2.5.2 Pastoral Charge Supervisor

a. Appointment: *If a community of faith that is a pastoral charge has no called or appointed member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister who has been recognized by the regional council, the regional council is responsible for appointing a member of the regional council to the pastoral charge as a pastoral charge supervisor.*

The regional council may also appoint a pastoral charge supervisor in any other situation where the regional council decides it is appropriate.

b. Responsibilities: *The pastoral charge supervisor is responsible for*

- (i) supporting any ministry personnel serving the pastoral charge;*
- (ii) general supervision of the work of the pastoral charge;*
- (iii) ensuring that a chair is elected for the pastoral charge governing body, the trustees, and meetings of the congregation and pastoral charge;*
- (iv) ensuring that the sacraments are administered and new members are received following the requirements of these bylaws;*
- (v) if there are ministry personnel serving the pastoral charge, delegating responsibility for the functions of ministry in the pastoral charge to the ministry personnel as appropriate; and*
- (vi) reporting to the regional council on the state of the pastoral charge.*

The Manual 2023

General Background

The Pastoral Relations Commission of Living Skies Regional Council, appoints individuals, both order of ministry and lay members, to serve as pastoral charge supervisors.

Situations Requiring Pastoral Charge Supervisors

The Manual states that a pastoral charge supervisor is appointed “if the pastoral charge has no called or appointed member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister...” or “in any other situation where the regional council decides it is appropriate”. In practical terms, there are a number of situations where this might occur:

(a) Change in Pastoral Relations: Most frequently, this occurs when a community of faith is experiencing a change in pastoral relations and is without appointed supply ministry personnel. Smaller communities of faith, especially those with part-time positions, often turn to pulpit supply during the transition period with the result that there is not a permanent ministry personnel presence in the community of faith. Sometimes the absence of called or appointed ministry personnel extends beyond a transition period into a more permanent reality.

(b) Candidate Supply: When a candidate for ministry is serving as candidate supply in a community of faith, there must be a pastoral charge supervisor to oversee what is happening

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with the community of faith, including attendance at meetings of the governing body (Board or Council). If the candidate is doing their supervised ministry education (SME), the pastoral charge supervisor is separate and distinct from the educational supervisor who meets with the student to discuss learnings from this work/ministry experience. The pastoral charge supervisor also ensures sacraments are performed unless the community of faith has submitted a request to the Regional Council for the candidate to be able to do so.

(c) Ethnic Ministry: Communities of faith that fall under the category of ethnic ministries are able to have ministry personnel who are ordained in another denomination and these persons are not required to transfer into The United Church of Canada. However, a pastoral charge supervisor is required to be in attendance at all governing body (Council/Board) meetings.

(d) Shared Ministries: Communities of faith that are shared ministries with another denomination *may* require the presence of a pastoral charge supervisor at governing body (Council/Board) or annual meetings if served by ministry personnel from the other denomination. This decision is made in consultation with the Regional Council.

(e) Temporary Absence of Ministry Personnel: From time to time, the called or appointed ministry personnel might be absent from a community of faith at the time of a regular governing body (Board/Council) meeting. Since such a meeting cannot be held without the presence of ministry personnel, the regional council is likely to appoint someone on a limited basis. This includes times when a minister is on sabbatical, medical, compassionate, or other type of leave that may be from one – four months.

(f) Admittand: For communities of faith that have an admittand (ministry personnel in the process of being admitted to the United Church of Canada from another denomination) in an appointment, there must be a pastoral charge supervisor to oversee what is happening with the community of faith, including attendance at meetings of the governing body (Board or Council).

(g) Other situations: There may be situations in the life of the community of faith where the support and oversight of a pastoral charge supervisor may be deemed necessary by the Regional Council. Some examples might be when there is a situation of conflict or when a review is taking place as per *The Manual* s.J.4 (review of community of faith) or s. J.6.3 (review of ministry personnel).

Responsibilities / Tasks

While *The Manual* outlines six different responsibilities, a number of these are broad in nature, such as “general supervision of the work of the pastoral charge”. In practical terms, the most frequent tasks for a pastoral charge supervisor are:

(a) Attendance at Council/Board meetings: this is probably the most common task. In communities of faith where Council/Board meetings happen quarterly or less frequently, the pastoral charge supervisor may need to ensure that regular meetings take place. This attendance may be in person or electronic (by phone or computer).

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(b) Attendance at Annual General Meeting: It is now a requirement that a pastoral charge supervisor attend congregational meetings including the annual meeting. (*The Manual B.5.5.iii*) The pastoral charge supervisor should receive a copy of the agenda and annual report prior to the meeting to determine all is in good order.

(c) Pastoral Care: When a community of faith is experiencing a change in pastoral relations and has decided not to have appointed ministry personnel during the profile and search process, there is often a concern about how to handle pastoral care situations, especially funerals. In asking someone to serve as a pastoral charge supervisor, it is wise to discuss with the members of the community of faith their expectations about pastoral care. Funerals or weddings might be handled on a fee for service basis, but it is more difficult to determine other types of pastoral care such as a hospital visiting or palliative care visiting. There is no automatic expectation that the pastoral charge supervisor perform any of these duties.

(d) Trustee meetings: When a community of faith is without called or appointed ministry personnel, the pastoral charge supervisor automatically becomes a member of the Trustees. While their presence is not required at meetings, they should receive notice of the meetings as well as the minutes from each meeting. *It is strongly recommended that the pastoral charge supervisor participate in a trustee meeting called for the purpose of dealing with property matters.*

(e) Report to Pastoral Relations Commission: In communities of faith where there is an on-going relationship with a pastoral charge supervisor, the pastoral charge supervisor will be asked for an annual status report. This report is referred to the Pastoral Relations Commission for discussion and action, if any. A form is available to guide the production of this report.

Financial Considerations

In cases where the pastoral charge supervisor leads worship, they would be reimbursed by the community of faith as a visiting minister (fee plus travel). Similarly, if the pastoral charge supervisor conducts a wedding or funeral, they would also be reimbursed (fee plus travel).

The community of faith also reimburses travel expenses for meetings of the governing body or Annual General Meeting where the Pastoral Charge Supervisor is present.