

Ottawa



Presbytery

Congregational Resource

Guidelines for Congregations considering Part Time Ministry *(revised Fall 2013)*



Part Time Ministry Positions

There is a growing number of pastoral charges who are considering the option of part time ministry personnel. Many factors can lead to such a decision, but often the reality is that it is resource driven. “We simply can’t afford a full time minister.” The financial considerations are indeed real limiting factors on what kind of ministry position the pastoral charge can sustain.

These guidelines are meant to help pastoral charges think about the fair and ethical hiring of part time ministry personnel. Sometimes pastoral charges have not truly contemplated the implications of engaging a ministry personnel on a part time basis and bring full time expectations to what is now part time ministry. These guidelines borrow heavily from Cambrian Presbytery and Huron-Perth Presbytery who have engaged in this work previously.

A Relationship of Trust

When a Pastoral Charge invites a minister to walk with them in covenant relationship, each party enters into the relationship with a high level of trust. The ministry personnel trusts that the Pastoral Charge has deliberately and honestly completed the process of looking at the theological foundations, visions of mission and ministry, styles of working together, and personalities within the Pastoral Charge; that their financial situation past, present and future has been assessed; and that the potential for lay leadership determined. The Pastoral Charge trusts that the ministry person is in agreement with the goals and objectives of the Pastoral Charge, possesses the knowledge, skills, experience and enthusiasm to work with the pastoral charge on those goals, and has a clear sense of call to the position being offered.

The Presbytery also has a covenant of trust with both the pastoral charge and the ministry personnel who serves. The pastoral charge trusts that during the JNAC and JSC process, the pastoral relationship representatives will help them with due process; will bring the insights and experience of the wider church; will ask questions that are best asked by a third part and will hold them accountable in their decisions. The ministry personnel trusts that the presbytery has ensured that the job description is grounded in reality; that financial viability has been assessed; that the decision of part time ministry has been duly considered and understood.

The Challenges of Part time Ministry

1. False Expectations about Growth

There may be an ungrounded expectation that part-time will lead to full time ministry. This may be held either by the pastoral charge or the ministry personnel. The pastoral charge may think that if they get the right minister, he/she will grow the congregation into full time ministry. It may happen but rarely does. Church growth material consistently indicates that if growth is a priority, congregations need to staff for growth. A part time ministry model limited to maintaining basic ministry does not have the time to grow new ministry.

It may also be the expectation of the ministry personnel that if they do a good job the pastoral charge will expand the ministry to full time. Again, this may happen but seldom does. Pastoral charges who believe part time ministry meets their ministry needs are not likely to undertake full time financial commitments to engage in ministry that they do not view as needed.

2. The part time clergy is often expected to be available full time.

In effect the church, sometimes unwittingly, wants the best of both worlds: a full time minister at a bargain basement price. This unlimited access often springs from the minister and the church not having come to an understanding as to the days given to the church and the days earmarked for the minister. In a pastoral emergency most ministers will ignore fixed arrangements and meet the situation. This can be hard for the minister who has the demands of an employer to consider when working a second job. A church which makes constant demands on its part time clergy will probably generate enormous frustration and stress. Clear communication between pastor and congregation is mandatory.

3. A church with a part time ministry can have a part time mentality too.

While it is true that some churches will only ever be part time because of their location in sparsely populated areas, the simple fact remains that many part time churches should not be part time at all. The problem is that the ministries being exercised are no longer relevant to the community. But the church has been part time for so long that members have stopped thinking about ever working towards a full time ministry. A mentality of chaplaincy and maintenance become comfortable ways of being.

4. Part time ministers are less likely to live in the community.

If a pastoral charge has always experienced its ministry personnel as living on the pastoral charge, it will need to think about the implications of part time ministry on the location of its clergy. It is not as likely that a part time position will attract someone who is able/interested in living in the community. This will shape how they participate in wider community events and functions and to what degree they will be known in the wider community. Pastoral Charges should think about and be aware of this impact on how ministry will occur. There should be conversation about the expectations of where the clergy will do preparation work. This might well be done from their home however there may be an expectation of physical presence in the church office during those preparation hours. This should be clarified.

Models of Part-time Ministry

When pastoral charge contemplate part time ministry, most often the base assumption is that of course it will include all Sundays. However, there are other ways that part-time can be shaped and understood. These should be explored at the time of the appointment or call and an understanding of the model of part-time ministry should be included in the terms.

Every Sunday Part-time

In this model the main focus is Sunday morning worship. The ministry personnel is expected to be available to the pastoral charge for Sunday service, excluding holiday and continuing education time which include those Sundays off. The pastoral charge needs to be conscious that an every Sunday commitment also includes a weekly commitment of time to preparation for Sunday worship. So that there are fewer hours available to undertake other ministry initiatives.

Part-time as a percentage of the Month

In this model there is an agreement of how the ministry hours will be allocated during a month. It may include a Sunday when the minister is not responsible for leading worship and thus also freed from one week of preparation time. Often there are lay worship leaders within the congregation who will lead worship a Sunday a month or the pastoral charge may choose to partner with another congregation, or as in one pastoral charge in the presbytery have a “sleep in Sunday”.

Part-time as blocks of time during the year

In this model there is an understanding that time worked will happen more intensely during certain blocks of time in the church year and that there will times in the church year when the minister is not available for an extended period of time. Examples might be: working more hours than the part time ratio during mid-September to Christmas, with a month of paid time off during the winter, followed by working more hours than the part time ration during Lent-Easter-Pentecost and an additional month plus holiday month off during the summer.

Always keep in mind that regardless of how part time is worked out, the decision around actual time worked, needs to be seen as a covenant to be honoured by both parties.

Assessment of Ministry Needs

Ministry Expectation and Need versus Financial Sustainability

The challenge of many pastoral charges deciding to embark on part time ministry is that it is not honestly a decision about ministry need or expectation but rather about financial resources. Clearly pastoral charges that do not have the financial means to support full time ministry see part time ministry as the answer, without consideration of how their ministry expectations need to be reshaped by that decision.

Here are some things to consider:

Part time ministry can not expect full time availability.

It is not ethical to assume that a ministry personnel in a part time position should be available on a full time on call basis. It may be that they have other employment obligations, or family commitments that need to be honoured. The implication is that the ministry personnel may not be available to respond immediately to a crisis situation or to the request for a funeral at a specific time.

Full time ministry within a pastoral charge in the United Church is understood be 40 hours per week. When pro-rating the hours of a part time position this is the standard to be used. Eg. 20 hours per week is prorated as being ½ time.

There needs to be a clear understanding of what will NOT be done by the ministry personnel.

This is particularly crucial if a pastoral charge is moving from full time ministry to a less than full time position. What tasks will now be done by other leaders? What additional lay leadership will be given? What are the priorities for the part time position? And then there needs to be education of the congregation(s) about those decisions and the establishment of a M&P committee who will monitor congregational expectation and support the ministry personnel is prioritizing his/her time.

Clear Goals and Expectations need to be articulated.

In part time ministry it is imperative that there is shared understanding of priorities, goals and expectation. These should be articulated in the JNAC, explored with candidates during the search process and agreed upon by the new ministry personnel and Ministry and Personnel committee. Mutually agreed duties vary from congregation to congregation. But it is important to realize that the minister has a proscribed number of hours to spend with the congregation. Both Minister and members will need to pick and choose how the Minister will spend time with the congregation, and support one another in honoring the agreed upon time

commitment.

Guidelines in calculating hours of ministry leadership.

It is difficult for pastoral charges in the JNAC process to assess how many hours are necessary to accomplish the ministry tasks that have been identified. Indeed different ministry personnel require varying amounts of time to accomplish the task. The following are intended as general guidelines which illustrate that upfront time is only a small piece of the ministry.

Worship

Sunday worship is generally considered to require 8 - 12 hours of preparation time. This would include, bulletin or powerpoint material, study on the scripture in preparation for preaching, writing of prayers, gathering of material to be used in worship, writing of sermon. This is the same time guidance allowed for in the UCC salary and allowance schedule when it talks of Sunday supply. In addition to this presiding at Sunday morning worship (one service) would be 2 hours. Given this, a part time person working 10 - 14 hours per week, if they are expected to preside each Sunday at work has virtually no time left for other aspects of ministry.

Worship preparation does NOT include doing the bulletin. This is a task that should be addressed under adequate secretarial support.

Provisions for Funeral and Weddings

This is often a big question in part time ministry. Are wedding and funerals viewed as part of the covenant with the pastoral charge, or as fee for service offerings by the clergy. The understanding of this may have implications for appropriate fee related to these services and to whom the fee is paid.

Time for funerals needs to include an initial visit to the family, preparation of the service, the service itself (including time with the family & friends afterwards) and the possibility of a follow up visit. Time allowed for funeral should be seen as minimum of 10 - 12 hours.

If the pastoral charge has 20 funerals a year, and this is understood as part of the ministry of the pastoral charge, the implication is that 10% of ministry time is needed to do the funeral ministry.

If the funeral ministry is seen by the pastoral charge as something which is conducted by the minister on a fee for service basis, then the pastoral charge must be accepting of the possibility the minister will not be available to perform some or any funerals.

Time allocated for weddings is shaped by the same initial determinations as those for funerals. On average conduct of a wedding will include time with the couple prior to the day, the conduct of the rehearsal and the service, and the preparation of the service. It is likely that the ministry personnel will expend 6 - 8 hour on each wedding, more if marriage preparation is viewed as part of this ministry.

Administration

The appointed or called part time ministry personnel will have the same responsibility for the pastoral charge as the officer of the church. He/She will still be required to be at all Board/Council meeting in order to provide quorum for decision making. He/She will be a member of the Trustees. She/he will still be a member of the presbytery. Adequate time needs to be allotted for these administrative roles.

There are often questions about how a person in part time ministry is consider their wider church involvements. A working guideline widely accepted within the United Church is that ministry personnel actively serving the church should be directly 10-20% of their work time to the support of the wider church.

Community Involvement

Should the Pastoral Charge have expectations that their part-time ministry person will be involved in the wider community surrounding the pastoral charge, this will need to be taken into consideration in setting up the time commitment to the pastoral charge. Are there any expectations about community ministerial participation, nursing home weekly services, the senior's club, the foodbank?

Pastoral Care

What are the pastoral care priorities for the part time position? What is clear is that there will be less time to meet the needs of congregants, so are there particularly needs that the ministry personnel is expected to meet? What is a reasonable time expectation?

Spiritual Nurture

Part of being in ministry is to model discipleship. This means taking time to nurture one's faith relationship with God and Christ. There should be some recognition of this important component of ministry in the time allocation.

Christian Formation & Education

What is the expectation of study groups, Bible study, involvement in Sunday School and Youth programming? Be realistic is allowing some time for planning. If the expectation is a weekly 1 ½ hour Bible study led by the ministry personnel, add to that 3 hours of planning and preparation time.

Defining part time ministry will be about naming priorities, utilizing lay leadership where appropriate, and building a support network so that ministry personnel have a way of identifying realistic expectations and possibilities.

Compensation for Part Time Ministry

1. Salary

The salary is subject to the same categorization and minimums as full time ministry laid out in the annual Minimum Salary and Allowance Schedule of the United Church of Canada, on a pro-rated basis.

Eg. (Fictional amounts) Category B full time minimum is \$ 35,000
a ministry personnel working 15 hours or 67% time minimum would be \$23,450

2. Housing

Manse

If a manse is provided, it will be provided at NO ADDITIONAL cost to the ministry personnel. The provisions of part time ministry do not mean that the ministry personnel is to pay a percentage of the appraised rental value back to the pastoral charge. Full and free use manse is provided as the housing component.

Housing Allowance

The housing allowance shall be determined in the same manner as for a full time positions and then prorated according to the number of hours of the part time position. All ministry personnel compensation on the same pastoral charge must be based on the same housing allowance.

Eg. Housing allowance is approved by presbytery as being \$20,000 for full time for a ½ time (20 hours) position the housing allowance would be \$10,000

Note however that part time hours may have an implication on the non-taxable part of the allowance when the ministry personnel completes the Clergy Housing Allowance Deduction Form T1223.

3. Pension and Benefits

The United Church of Canada Pensions will assess pension contributions and group insurance contributions to the employer. All other Ontario Employment standards also apply - CP, EI etc. It should also be noted that pastoral charges employing a retired supply ministry personnel who are not making pension contributions for any other staff, are required to make an employer pension contribution.

4. Vacation

Part time positions are to receive a minimum of 1 month holiday including 5 Sundays.

5. Continuing Education

Part time position are to receive 3 weeks continuing education. The Continuing Education minimum allowance mandated by the UCC shall be prorated according to the hours worked.

6. Secretarial Assistance

The pastoral charge shall provide some provision for secretarial assistance, which at minimum includes the preparation of the weekly worship bulletin and basic office maintenance tasks. Not less than 4 hours per week. This may be a volunteer position.

7. Sabbatical Provision

Years of service accruing toward the provision of a sabbatical following the 5th apply to part time position. Service is NOT to be prorated in calculating eligibility.

8. Travel

As logged and submitted as a travel claim at not less than the per kilometer rate named in each annual salary schedule.

Travel from the home to the church for regular ministry duties CAN NOT be claimed. If the person lives off the pastoral charge there should be conversations about when it is appropriate for mileage to be charged from the ministry personnel's home office to the pastoral charge for activities beyond the regular ministry duties.

9. Compensating for more hours worked

Some agreement should be reached between the pastoral charge and the ministry personnel regarding time when more hours are given due to real and emergent demands. This might be handled by paid time off in lieu. It could also be addressed through an additional financial compensation.

However, it the responsibility of the ministry personnel and the M&P committee to monitor time worked and to keep the hours within the covenant.

Perhaps the most helpful thing we all can do for one another is to care. Mutual care and respect goes along way to enabling us to live and work together justly as we remember whose we are.

