

Ottawa Presbytery – Pastoral Charge Supervisor

I. 2.5.2 Pastoral Charge Supervisor

a. Appointment: *If a pastoral charge has no settled or appointed member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister who has been recognized by the appropriate court, the presbytery is responsible for appointing a member of presbytery to the pastoral charge as a “pastoral charge supervisor.”*

The presbytery may also appoint a pastoral charge supervisor in any other situation where the presbytery 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 presbytery on the state of the pastoral charge.

The Manual 2013

General Background

Ottawa Presbytery, on the recommendation of the Pastoral Relations Committee, appoints individuals, both order of ministry and lay, to serve as pastoral charge supervisors. Ministry personnel must be “members in good standing”, meaning they must have a current police records check, and have taken the mandatory racial justice training as well as the compulsory training on the UCC sexual abuse policy. Recently, Montreal & Ottawa Conference took over the responsibility for maintaining the register of members in good standing. Lay persons who are appointed as pastoral charge supervisors should also have a current police records check and mandatory training, although it is less clear who maintains the files and ensures compliance.

Usually pastoral charge supervisors are appointed through a motion adopted by the Presbytery at its regular meeting or by the Executive. However, a number of years ago Ottawa Presbytery adopted a motion delegating authority to the Presbytery Minister and the Chair of the Pastoral Relations Ministry Team. By custom, this provision is used when there is a short term need on an urgent basis such as attending one meeting of a Board or Council.

In recent years when ministry personnel are serving as Sunday or weekend supply on a longer term basis, Ottawa Presbytery has also appointed the ministry personnel as the pastoral charge supervisor.

Situations Requiring Pastoral Charge Supervisors

The Manual states that a pastoral charge supervisor is appointed “if the pastoral charge has no settled or appointed member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister...”. In practical terms, there are a number of situations where this might occur:

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(a) Change in Pastoral Relations: Most frequently, this occurs when a pastoral charge is experiencing a change in pastoral relations and is without appointed supply ministry personnel. Smaller pastoral charges, 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 pastoral charge.

(b) Student Supply: When a student is serving as student supply in a pastoral charge, there must be a pastoral charge supervisor to oversee what is happening with the congregation, including attendance at meetings of the governing body (Board or Council). This person 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 might also officiate at the sacraments unless the pastoral charge has submitted a request to the Conference for the student to be able to do so.

(c) Ethnic Ministry: Pastoral charges 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 Council/Board meetings.

(d) Shared Ministries: Pastoral charges that are shared ministries with another denomination also require the presence of a pastoral charge supervisor at Council/Board meetings.

(e) Temporary Absence of Ministry Personnel: From time to time, the called or appointed ministry personnel might be absent from a pastoral charge at the time of a regular Board/Council meeting. Since such a meeting cannot be held without the presence of ministry personnel, the Ottawa Presbytery is likely to appoint someone on a limited basis.

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 Ottawa Presbytery, pastoral charge supervisors are to provide oversight regarding the general functioning of the pastoral charge by being present at governance meetings that require a presbytery appointee for the purpose of quorum (I 2.5.2 ii & iii)

(b) Helping the pastoral charge arrange for the sacramental life of the charge (I 2.5.2 iv) The pastoral charge supervisors are not necessarily be the one presiding, but they provide names of those who are available.

(c) Report to Presbytery (I 2.5.2 vi): In pastoral charges where there is an on-going relationship with a pastoral charge supervisor, the Ottawa Presbytery asks the supervisor annually for a

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status report. This report is referred to the Pastoral Relations Ministry Team for discussion and action, if any.

From time to time there are pastoral charge supervisors where there are serving ministry personnel, for example, with an ethnic ministry or student supply. In these instances there may be specific assignments regarding sections I 2.5.2 i and I 2.5.2 v.

Questions Relating to the Role of Pastoral Charges Supervisors

Other Responsibilities - Should the role of a pastoral charge supervisor be enlarged to include assisting a pastoral charge with pastoral care needs?

When a pastoral charge is experiencing a change in pastoral relations and has decided not to have appointed ministry personnel during the assessment and search process, there is often a question about how to handle funerals, weddings and/or pastoral care visiting. It has not been the practice in the Ottawa Presbytery that the pastoral charge supervisor has responsibility for these tasks. The supervisor may assist the pastoral charge in helping to find those who can provide these services and may choose to respond to a specific request but undertaking these services is not part of the task of being a supervisor.

More recently, there have been requests from pastoral charges for assistance in finding someone to provide pastoral care, especially visiting. Before asking someone to serve as a pastoral charge supervisor, it is wise to discuss with the members of the congregation their expectations. 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.

Financial Considerations (time) - Should pastoral charge supervisors continue to serve in this capacity on a voluntary basis and without remuneration for their time?

Ottawa Presbytery has followed a practice whereby ministry personnel serve as pastoral charge supervisors on a volunteer basis. In cases where ministry personnel lead worship, they would be reimbursed by the pastoral charge as weekend or Sunday supply (fee plus travel). Similarly, if the pastoral charge supervisors conduct a wedding or funeral, they would also be reimbursed (fee plus travel).

Financial Considerations (travel) - Should pastoral charges reimburse the travel costs of pastoral charge supervisors?

In November 2013, the Pastoral Relations Ministry Team agreed that it would be fair and reasonable to expect the pastoral charge to cover travel costs for attendance at meetings at the General Council travel rate, currently, \$0.41/kl. Accordingly, a letter has been sent to all pastoral charges with pastoral charge supervisors about this matter.