

Part Time Ministry in Huron-Perth Presbytery United Church of Canada.

February 2007

When a Pastoral Charge invites a minister to walk with them in covenant relationship, the Pastoral Charge, minister and the Presbytery enter into the relationship with a high level of trust.

The ministry person trusts that the Pastoral Charge and the Presbytery (via JNAC) have 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 situations past, present, and future have been assessed; and the potential for lay leadership determined. It is the current policy of Huron Perth Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee to require a three year financial history and a three year financial projection for support of ministry, as part of each JNAC.

The Pastoral Charge and Presbytery trust 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.

Relationship with Neighbouring United Churches:

It is not only prudent, but entirely necessary, for each Pastoral Charge to fully examine their needs for ministry personnel in relationship with the needs of neighbouring United Church pastoral charges, and that the possibility of closer, more formal relationships between one or more pastoral charges be explored.

The definition of a "closer, formal relationship" may well involve the sharing of ministry personnel resources, time management expectations, and needs in terms of each pastoral charge's financial situation.

Work Done, Work left undone:

Given that part-time ministry personnel positions are becoming increasingly common, care must be taken to identify what part of the work of the Pastoral Charge is going to be done by paid accountable ministry staff, what will be done by other leaders, **and what will not be done** – when compared to describing a full-time ministry position.

Attention must be given to limiting hours, proportionate remuneration, availability of a manse (or appropriate housing allowance), vacation and study leave, working conditions, and time off. Part time Ministry means negotiating Part-Time Sundays. For clarity, ½ time could negotiate into ½ of the Sundays per year. As is for full time, the negotiated Sundays would include one month paid

vacation, 3 weeks paid continuing education (including Sundays) and Conference Sunday.

Considerations with Team Ministry and Part Time

In instances of team ministry the same considerations for “part time” are expected (e.g. negotiation of Sunday presence for person in part-time ministry). In Team Ministry settings, Pastoral Charges are encouraged to base the housing allowance for the part-time ministry on the housing allowance provided to the full time ministry position.

Monitoring the Part-Time Covenant:

Some differences in part-time work are not quantitative, but may well change the character and/or expectations of the service. It will be important for both the pastoral charge, and the paid accountable ministry person, to jointly monitor the part-time ministry position on an ongoing basis, in order that the position remains faithful to the initial covenant.

The following criteria shall be part of the monitoring process:

- 1. Goals and Objectives:**

There must be an agreed upon understanding of the goals and objectives of the pastoral charge. There must be a deliberate review of the goals and objectives with the help of the M&P Committee of the Pastoral Charge

- 2. Resources:**

There needs to be honest recognition of resources – strengths, and abilities of both the ministry person, and the pastoral charge. Annual Reviews facilitated by the M&P committee are an important part of this process. This is also an ongoing responsibility of every Pastoral Charge Board.

- 3. Work Expectations:**

In that United Church of Canada policy states that 40 hours per week is considered "full-time", therefore all part-time positions must be pro-rated accordingly. Minimum standards for remuneration must be met according to the Salary and Allowances Schedules Applicable to Ministry Personnel of The United Church of Canada. Pastoral Charges are encouraged to exceed the minimum standards.

- 4. Housing:**

It needs to be recognized by the Pastoral Charge and the Presbytery that it is as costly for a minister to live in a community while working in a part-time position, as when working full-time. In cases where Pastoral Charges do not have a Manse, provision of a full time housing allowance is encouraged. Where a Manse is available, housing shall include full time access to and occupancy of the Manse.

5. **Pension and Benefits:**

United Church of Canada policy is that all ministry personnel will be entitled to a minimum of one month per year vacation time, and three weeks per year study leave.

6. **Models:**

When setting up the expectations for a part-time ministry position, it cannot be taken for granted that 'part-time' means the minister will lead ALL Sunday Services within the month. Indeed Presbytery will double check with all parties to a part-time covenant that details availability for all Sundays to ensure that all parties are indeed agreeable, since full time Sunday availability may disadvantage ministry personnel from coventanting into other part-time church work requiring Sunday involvement.

Model 1:

Creative congregations must work with the ministry person to arrive at a schedule that is workable for both. A sample model could take such forms as Sunday Service and Preparation only, which might mean being responsible for all four Sunday Services – but no time expectations for pastoral care, funerals, weddings, etc.

When looking at the number of Worship Services a minister will be responsible for during the month, sufficient time must be allowed for preparing the Service – generally seen to be – at *least* 8-12 hours for someone with 15 or more years' worship leadership experience, and considerably more for persons with less experience. The actual time of presiding at Sunday Worship itself would involve, at minimum 2 hours for each service, regardless of experience level.

In the following X= the covenanted number of part-time hours.

Model 2:

working X number of hours every week of the month;

Model 3:

Example for a ½ time covenant: working 2X hours per week, but only for ½ the weeks in a given month or working ¾ time for 9 months and not working at all for three months. Remember working time includes holidays, 3 weeks continuing education and Conference Sunday;

Model 4:

working X number of hours for Y number of months in a year (e.g ½ time covenant as full time work hours for about 4.2 months)

Model 5:

working specific 'blocks' of time (e.g. Advent, Christmas, Lent Easter, etc..) **always keeping in mind, that regardless of how it is worked out, the decision around actual time worked, needs to be seen as a covenant to be honoured by both parties.**

7. Time for funeral and wedding preparation needs to be realistic.

Funerals:

Time for Funerals needs to include an initial visit to the family, preparation of the Service, the Service itself [including time with family and friends afterwards]; and the possibility for a follow up visit. Time allowed for funerals could be seen as **a minimum of 10 to 12 hours**

Weddings:

Time allowed for weddings would include two hours for contact. Preparation of the Service and the Ceremony itself needs to allow for a **minimum of 6 to 8 hours**.

Part-time ministry personnel should be paid the same honorariums for funerals and weddings as a full-time person.

8. **Administration:**

Adequate time would need to be allocated for Board meetings, meeting with the Ministry and Personnel Committee, and other relevant committees of the Pastoral Charge.

Because there is a great need for every paid accountable minister, and, every Pastoral Charge to support the work of the wider church, it must be recognized that each minister must spend part of their covenanted time taking part in the work of Presbytery and Conference.

Pastoral Charges can make significant contributions to the wider work of 'the church as a whole', by expecting that their ministry staff will spend 15-20% of their time in the very important work of Presbytery, Conference or General Council.

9. **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 itself (e.g., Ministerial, Community events, outreach ministries, nursing home services, etc.).

10. **Crisis Response:**

There will need to be recognition that at times the ministry person may need to respond to someone in crisis, extra pastoral care needs, more than one wedding or funeral in any given week, etc. **Do not assume** that part-time Ministry Personnel will be immediately available for crises.

It will be important for the Pastoral Charge to set either a financial remuneration, or time off in lieu of time worked over-and-above the covenanted number of hours per week. **The Pastoral Charge M & P Committee will need to meet regularly** with the minister to monitor the

time situation, and arrange for compensation as set out by the Pastoral Charge, and agreed to by the minister.

11. Secretarial Assistance:

Don't forget the necessity for secretarial assistance. If you don't plan for this, your minister may be spending time doing tasks that a volunteer could easily do instead.

12. Part-Time = Time not on the job

As a last note, it will be more obvious when a person working part-time is not "on the job", meaning some people will think that this person is not fulfilling the requirements of the Pastoral Charge because they are home a lot, or seen in other situations. The Pastoral Charge must be prepared to support the Minister when comments are made about the amount of time they spend away from the work of the church. The Pastoral charge needs to recognize and support the ministry persons need and right to "full time" employment (income) and/or other time considerations and requirements. (e.g. student)

Through the Pastoral Relations Committee and the Pastoral Care and Oversight Committee the Presbytery has a responsibility to monitor the part-time model, and support both the Pastoral Charge, and the paid accountable minister in maintaining a strong, healthy relationship.

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