

Northern Spirit Regional Council
Disengagement Policy
(Or Disengaging at the End of a Pastoral Relationship)

In The Manual (2019) of The United Church of Canada, related policy is located in:

**Sections C.1: Regional Council Membership; Section I.2: Supporting Pastoral Relations; and
Section I.3: Disengaging**

SECTION C: REGIONAL COUNCIL

Section C.1: MEMBERSHIPS

The regional council consists of members of the order of ministry, other ministry personnel, lay members of the United Church, and leaders of associate member ministries, all as set out in sections C.1.1 to C.1.3.

“Ministry personnel” is a general term that refers to members of the order of ministry, designated lay ministers, candidates serving under appointment, diaconal supply, and ordained supply. For more information on these categories of ministry personnel, see Entering Ministry, sections H.1.1 and H.1.2

C.1.1: Members of the Order of Ministry and Other Ministry Personnel

The following ministry personnel are members of the regional council:

- a) Members of the order of ministry within the bounds served by the regional council, and
- b) Other ministry personnel in a covenantal relationship with a community of faith within the bounds of the regional council

SECTION I: PASTORAL RELATIONS

Section I.2: Supporting

Section I.2.5.3: Functions of Ministry - Outside Pastoral Relationship

At any time that ministry personnel are not called or appointed to a community of faith, they may carry out the functions of ministry in the United Church only if

- a) They have a formal association with a community of faith, and are acting on behalf of that community of faith, and have the approval of the community of faith’s governing body; or

An example of “formal association” with a pastoral charge would be where the minister has been designated as a “voluntary associate minister” or “honourary associate minister” by the community of faith or its governing body.

- b) They have been appointed to a community of faith to exercise the functions of ministry associated with it.

Section I.2.5.4: Request - Previous Pastoral Charge

If a ministry personnel is asked by a member or adherent (or their families) of a community of faith where they had previously served to preside at a baptism, communion service, wedding, or funeral, the ministry personnel

- a) Must refer the request to a member of the order of ministry who is currently serving under call or appointment to that community of faith; and
- b) May preside only with the approval of the community of faith’s governing body.

SECTION I.3 Disengaging

Section I.3.2: Retirement

Section I.3.2.1: Oversight and Discipline

The regional council is responsible for caring pastorally for retired members of the order of ministry who are members of the regional council. Retired members of the order of ministry remain under the discipline of the Office of Vocation

Section I.3.2.2: Appointment or Call

Retired members of the order of ministry are eligible for appointment to a community of faith

They are not eligible to accept a call unless they first are returned to active standing.

PROCEDURES

In the Northern Spirit Regional Council, the role of the Pastoral Relations Commission and its Committees is to effect healthy pastoral relations, including the endings thereof, as well as to provide support to ministry personnel and communities of faith in knowing and following the requirements of The Manual.

It is acknowledged that ministry personnel who have been serving in a rural community may not plan to, or have the option to, move out of the community in which they have served. Attendance at worship elsewhere may not be an option.

In the Northern Spirit Regional Council, the following procedures have been developed in order to support ministry personnel and communities of faith in knowing and following the requirements of The Manual (**Sections C.1 I.2.5.3, I.2.5.3, I.3.2.1, and I.3.2.2**).

1. The Pastoral Relations Commission will arrange for an exit interview to be scheduled with any ministry personnel at the end of a pastoral relationship. This will include ministry personnel who are moving to a new community of faith or towards retention on the roll, and those retiring from active ministry.

The purpose of the exit interview is to support the ministry personnel in understanding best practices for disengagement from their pastoral charge. It will establish a base of support from which response can be made to any future issues that arise.

The exit interview may involve representatives from the Committee on Ministry Personnel Support, the Committee on Communities of Faith Support, and the Pastoral Relations Commission. Any issues raised in the interview would be conveyed to the ministry and personnel committee by the Committee on Communities of Faith Support.

2. Ministry and personnel committees in all pastoral charges will be expected to help to support the community of faith in its transition to a new pastoral relationship. This would include assisting the members of the community of faith to disengage from the departing ministry personnel, and to begin to establish their connections to the incoming ministry personnel when applicable.

The Committee on Communities of Faith Support may also be involved to offer support in the form of Fresh Start training or similar resources. The Committee on Ministry Personnel Support may be involved by offering consultation with the incoming ministry personnel.