

GS 128 MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE CHURCH IN THE 2020s

It is proposed that the Executive of the General Council take action on four areas:

- A. The Statement on Ministry (2012)
- B. Indigenous Ministries
- C. Better Supporting Rural and Smaller Communities of Faith
- D. Designated Lay Ministry.

It is proposed that the Executive of the General Council propose to the 44th General Council that it take action on two areas:

- A. Better Supporting Rural and Smaller Communities of Faith
- B. Designated Lay Ministry.

The General Secretary proposes that the Executive of the General Council:

1. Direct the General Secretary with regard to:

A. The Statement on Ministry (2012)

- i) review the Statement on Ministry (2012) in the context of the 2020s and to more fully develop the understandings of the priesthood of all believers as it relates, in particular, to the recovered roles of lay ministry in the church; and
- ii) recommend to the 45th General Council any proposed revisions.

B. Indigenous Ministries

- i) engage with the National Indigenous Council to establish designated lay ministry criteria relevant to its context/communities of faith;
- ii) engage dialogue with the National Indigenous Council, when invited, about broader vocational ministry needs and practice in Indigenous communities and the establishment of an Indigenous Testamur.

C. Better Supporting Rural and Smaller Communities of Faith

Bi-vocational Ministry

- i) identify ministry personnel currently in bi-vocational ministry roles;
- ii) drawing on recent research and current data, develop models of and promote opportunities to engage in bi-vocational ministry by both ministry personnel and communities of faith;
- iii) develop for the consideration of the 45th General Council proposals for the resolution of any polity provisions that complicate bi-vocational ministry practice.

Lay Leaders' Accountability

- i) convene a joint General Council and regional councils task group to develop recommendations for the 45th General Council on:
- ii) when/where lay leader accountability to the wider church is necessary, prudent, and duly diligent.

- iii) how that accountability can be exercised in ways that are sustainable for the community of faith and sustainable for the regional and General councils.
- iv) where there needs to be consistency of policy or credential and where there needs to be regional council flexibility.

Collaborative Ministry Models and Formation

Working with the regional councils,

- i) research existing collaborative, wider-parish models in the United Church and in partner churches and develop a collection of models, and polity to support them, for use in the United Church;
- ii) engage communities of faith, through regional councils, in reimagining vocational ministry service in the context of collaborative, wider-parish models;
- iii) with the wisdom and experience of the Centre for Christian Studies as a starting point, engage the theological colleges providing ordered ministry training in conversations about collaborative, wider-parish models being a new norm and the theologies and the skills that will better equip ministry personnel to minister in this context;
- iv) engage the Board of Vocation and candidacy boards in both understandings and appreciations of the skills and outlooks that are compatible with collaborative, wider-parish models of vocational ministry practice;
- v) develop policies and practices for the consideration of the 45th General Council to facilitate appointment or call to multiple communities of faith/pastoral charges and across regional council boundaries:
 - a) permitting personnel to be engaged through one of the existing pastoral charges who is a member of the collaborative ministry arrangement;
 - b) establishing standardized terms and templates (a “Service Agreement” or “Memorandum of Understanding”) for deployment in addition to or integrated with current Record of Call/Appointment forms;
 - c) facilitating oversight and supporting structures for teams dispersed across more than one pastoral charge (a single ministry and personnel committee);
 - d) encourage regional councils to consider the potential relationship among an offsite pastoral charge supervisors with licensed lay worship leaders and congregational designated ministers in collaborative ministry arrangements with clearer lines of accountability.
- d. with clearer lines of accountability.

D. Designated Lay Ministry:

For future designated lay ministers:

- i) develop for the consideration of the General Council proposals for policy changes necessary to bring consistency in designated lay ministry policy with the concept of being limited to a specific localized ministry in a particular time (eg. no sacraments license after retirement, etc.);

- ii) prepare a plan to retool the current designated lay ministry training program to focus specifically on localized response to ministry in an applicant's community of faith, which could include reducing the requirements of the current DLM program;
- iii) ~~develop a proposed transition plan for applicants currently in the designated lay ministry training program;~~
- iv) appoint a task group comprised of representatives from the theological schools, candidacy boards and Office of Vocation ministers, with staff support from the Program Coordinator, Ministry Vocation, to review the current requirement that a person seeking ordination needs to have an undergraduate degree or apply for a reduction in the undergraduate degree requirement prior to applying to a Master of Divinity program, and to bring a recommendation to the Executive of the General Council;
- v) encourage theological schools to create an accessible program towards ordering for those without an undergraduate degree, that adopts the pedagogical approach of the current designated lay ministry program. [Note: Centre for Christian Studies program for diaconal studies is already accessible and has a similar pedagogical approach.]
- vi) develop a standard prior learning assessment for current licensed lay worship leaders or congregational designated ministers to have their prior training and experience recognized, should they seek to enroll in the designated lay ministry program or pursue candidacy for ordered ministry;
- vii) ensure discernment throughout the Candidacy Pathway process to distinguish between local ministry and a broader call to ministry within the denomination;
- viii) extend the current memorandum of agreement with St. Andrew's College, or establish a new agreement with another school, to provide designated lay ministry preparation for applicants for local and limited lay ministry practice;

And for current students:

- i) develop a proposed transition plan towards ordination or commissioning for those candidate applicants currently in the designated lay ministry training program who desire to serve as lifelong vocational ministers

2. Propose to the General Council that with regard to:

A. Better Supporting Rural and Smaller Communities of Faith

Lay-led Communities of Faith

- i) affirm the importance and value of "lay-led congregations" (a descriptive term, not a formal "class", loosely describing a congregation without called or appointed ministry personnel for more than a year) continuing to be linked to the denomination and supported in governance by a regional council appointed pastoral charge supervisor;

- ii) affirm the role of the regional councils in assisting communities of faith in determining appropriate governance and decision-making practices and necessary oversight of any person paid for services (custodial, administrative, ministry, etc).

Licensed Lay Worship Leaders

- i) reaffirm that licensed lay worship leaders continue to be limited to worship leadership on an occasional basis, “occasional” determined by the regional council;
- ii) revise the policy with respect to Licensed Lay Leaders to require that where the community of faith requires a larger scope of service, or more than “occasional” leadership, than is within the scope of a licensed lay worship leader, the regional council work with the community of faith to develop either a collaborative ministry or a congregational designated ministry role with its attendant accountabilities and ensure adequate training and oversight of congregational designated ministry.

Congregational Designated Ministry

- i) revise the policy with respect to congregational designated ministers to require that
- ii) if a congregational designated ministry position includes worship leadership the congregational designated minister must successfully complete the licensed lay worship leadership program of that regional council, or an equivalency determined by the regional council, and be a full member of The United Church of Canada;
- iii) if the congregational designated minister is the primary individual leading worship, then they must be a full member of The United Church of Canada;
- iv) revise Section I.1.11.4 d) of The Manual to delete the requirement that there be a ministry personnel appointed or called to the community of faith and replace it with the requirement that the regional council ensure that there is adequate and appropriate support and oversight of the ministry.

Pastoral Charge Supervisors

- i) affirm the importance of the role of pastoral charge supervisors to nurture the connexion with and support of the United Church with churches that do not have appointed or called ministry personnel;
- ii) direct the General Secretary, with the regional councils, to consider how the role of paid pastoral charge supervisors may support the development and evolution of collaborative ministries.

Technology

- i) encourage regional councils to give priority to and encourage leveraging technology to support communities of faith in the provision of worship and pastoral care and for supporting oversight, supervision, and governance.

B. Designated Lay Ministry - in light of the rejection of the One Order of Ministry remit proposal in 2018:

For Future Designated Lay Ministers

- i) limit designated lay ministry to that which was conceived by the 37th General Council;
- ii) the church stop “using” designated lay ministers as if they are ordered ministers with privilege of call, lifetime service throughout the church and recognition in retirement while at the same time restricting them to appointment, providing no status between appointments or in retirement, and paying them less;
- iii) encourage the Board of Vocation and candidacy boards to direct people discerning a call to life-long church-wide ministry towards ordered ministry preparation and formation;
- iv) refocus the designated lay ministry program to reflect the specific original focus;
- v) articulate the distinction between those called to ministry in the community of faith or pastoral charge where their membership resides and those called to life-long denominational vocational ministry;
- vi) refocus designated lay ministry as a lay practice of ministry specifically on localized and time-specific appointment within their community of faith, or the current community of faith appointment;
- vii) in consideration of the localized character of the practice of designated lay ministry, request that regional councils not approve appointments of designated lay ministers to communities of faith that are not the home communities, or current site of appointment, of the designated lay minister.

For Current Designated Lay Ministers

- i) direct the General Secretary, in consultation with Designated Lay Ministers, to develop a proposal to enable current Designated Lay Ministers to meet the Testamur requirements for ordering (commissioning or ordination). Such a proposal will recognize the lifelong vocational call of many current designated lay ministers; honour and value their many years of service to the church; and credit their theological education and formation for ministry. These criteria should form the basis for any prior learning assessment that may form part of such a proposal. We also recognize that there may be current active Designated Lay Ministers who already meet the criteria for Testamur and qualify for immediate transition into ordered ministry, and consider recognition of status of Designated Lay Ministers who are retired.

Moved:

Seconded: