

## **GUIDELINES FOR PASTORAL CHARGES CONSIDERING PART-TIME MINISTRIES**

The ministry of The United Church of Canada is wonderfully diverse in its breadth, depth and variety of forms and tasks. All of God's people are called to this ministry, but some among us are designated by our church as Ministry Personnel and are called, appointed or settled to work in ministry in our pastoral charges. These covenantal *pastoral* relationships between ministry personnel, presbyteries and pastoral charges are also *employment* relationships, and as the church we seek to be fair, just and equitable employers.

Some pastoral charges, because of limited resources, limited needs or for many other reasons, are served by part-time ministers. In order to define working conditions for part-time ministers, we must first define full-time ministry.

**FULL-TIME MINISTRY** in The United Church of Canada is defined as 40 hours per week. In the ebb and flow of life in a pastoral charge, there will be weeks when a full-time minister works many more than those 40 hours. It is incumbent on the charge, then, to ensure that there are other compensating weeks when the minister can work far fewer than those 40 hours.

**PART-TIME MINISTRY** in The United Church of Canada is defined as a percentage of a 40 hour work week. "Half-time" would be 20 hours per week, "one third time" would be about 13 hours per week, and so on.

**WORKING STYLES** There are many ways in which ministry personnel may work part-time. Let us use "half-time" as an example. A minister may work "half-time" by:

- Working half-time (20 hours) every week, either working half days, or working for several full days.
- Working full-time for half of each month: that is, taking every other week off, or working for two weeks and taking two off.
- Working full-time for half the year, and taking the remaining months off.

In all of these cases, the minister would continue to receive a half-time salary every month of the year. There is no "right" or "wrong" part-time working style. It is important for ministry personnel and pastoral charges to work out what will be best in their own particular situation.

### **WIDER CHURCH WORK**

Ministry personnel generally spend about ten per cent of their working hours on the work of the wider church, that is, the work of the Presbytery, the Conference and the General Council. For full-time ministers, that would be about four hours each week. Ministers serving in part-time ministries would prorate that time according to the number of hours worked. For example, a half-time minister would spend about two hours each week on wider church work. As with all ministry

work, there will be some weeks when your minister does not work at all for the wider church, and other weeks when the need for such work is more intense.

**SALARY AND ALLOWANCES** Minimum salaries for ministry personnel in The United Church of Canada are determined by the annual Salary and Allowances Schedule published by the General Council. Minimum salaries for ministers serving in part-time positions are also determined by that Schedule, but are prorated according to the percentage of time worked. For example, a minister working half-time will receive half the annual salary for his or her category. Other allowances (book and study, and housing) are also prorated based on the percentage of time worked. For example, if the normal book and study allowance for full-time ministry personnel in your presbytery is \$1200 per year, a half-time minister will receive \$600 per year. Manses cannot, of course be prorated. Ministry personnel who occupy manses are entitled to occupy them on a full-time basis, regardless of the percentage of time they work. It is wise to talk to your minister about how fees and/or time off in lieu will be handled for weddings and funerals.

**INCREMENT CREDIT** Your minister will receive a year of increment credit (allowing him or her to move through the steps of the salary scale) for every calendar year in which he or she works at least 750 hours.

**TRAVEL COSTS** All ministry personnel in The United Church are entitled to be compensated for the cost of travel on behalf of the pastoral charge, at the per kilometer rate established annually in the Salary and Allowances Schedule and as they have recorded it in their travel log. The same rate per kilometer applies to both full and part-time ministry personnel.

**VACATION** All ministry personnel in The United Church of Canada receive at least one month of paid vacation, regardless of their status as “full-time” or “part-time”. Full-time ministers receive a full salary during their time of vacation. Ministers serving in part-time positions receive their part-time salary (for example, half-time ministers receive their normal half salary) during the month of vacation. Ministry personnel are entitled to receive their month of vacation at the beginning of each pastoral year (July 1). Vacation dates are determined in consultation with the Ministry and Personnel Committee.

**STUDY LEAVE** All ministry personnel in The United Church of Canada receive three weeks (including Sundays) of paid study leave, regardless of their status as “full-time” or “part-time”. Full-time ministers receive a full salary during their time of study leave. Ministers serving in part-time positions receive their part-time salary (for example, half-time ministers receive their normal half salary) during the time of study leave.

**MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR PART-TIME MINISTRY HOURS** It will be important for your pastoral charge to have clear priorities for your part-time

minister. Do you want your minister to provide a service every Sunday? If so, that person will have fewer hours to give to pastoral care, funerals, weddings, study programs, meetings and so on. Do you want your part-time minister to be more available for pastoral care and crisis times? If so, you may want to consider having pulpit supply once or twice a month, to allow your part-time minister more hours for these activities. Clear job descriptions and written priorities will help you and your part-time minister avoid disappointment and conflict.

**TIME OFF** It is often difficult for pastoral charges to resist calling upon part-time ministry personnel in the off hours, especially if the minister lives in the community. It is important for your charge to remember that part-time ministry does not mean full-time work for part-time salary. It will be the responsibility of the M and P Committee to help the congregation to understand this, and to monitor the minister's working hours.

**CALCULATING PART-TIME WORKING HOURS:** Let us again use "half-time" as an example. However, you can use this same pattern and simply substitute the appropriate fraction of working hours for other configurations of "part-time".

- a. Begin by deducting one month of annual vacation time.
- b. Determine (in consultation with your minister) how you will use your minister's time during the remaining eleven months. Some possibilities:
  - *Our minister will work full-time for five and one half months.* This tends to work best if your minister has another home that is outside your community and will therefore not be accessible during the "off" months. *During the remaining five and one half months, we will provide Sunday worship and emergency pastoral care by other means.*
  - *Our minister will work full-time for two weeks each month.* Your minister may work two consecutive weeks each month, or alternate "on" and "off" weeks. *During the remaining two weeks, we will provide Sunday worship and emergency pastoral care by other means.*
  - *Our minister will work half-time every week.* Your minister may do this by working five half days each week (including Sundays), or by working two full days in addition to Sunday morning. *When there is a funeral or other pastoral crisis on our charge, we will ensure that our minister is given equivalent time off the following week. This may include providing Sunday worship and emergency pastoral care by other means.*
- c. Plan your minister's study leave with her or him. Remember that study leave is part of your minister's "on" time, not your minister's "off" time.
- d. Inform the pastoral charge of the decisions made. If the people of your charge are accustomed to full-time ministry, they may have difficulty

adjusting to the reduced availability your minister. It will be your job as members of the official board and/or M and P Committee to help with this.

**THE BLESSINGS** Often, pastoral charges find the move from full to part-time ministry a difficult and painful one. But there can be many blessings in such a situation. It may allow you to host an intern or other ministry student to meet your ministry needs. It always provides an opportunity for the members of your charge to exercise and develop their own gifts for ministry. Please talk to your presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee about support and educational opportunities for members of your charge as they seek new ways to enter into the ministry of the whole people of God.