

Partially Funded Ministry Considerations

Fundy-St. Lawrence Dawning Waters- Pastoral Relations

“Part-time ministry is practiced within communities of faith and the success of such ministry is also dependent on the congregation. If a significant portion of the congregation is not committed to this expression of the church, it will be impossible for a vital spiritual life to emerge.” (I. Ross Bartlett, *It's Real Ministry*, 51.)

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

The number of partially funded (part-time) ministry positions in the United Church is increasing, and this increase seems to have been accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The old cliché of “part-time ministry is full-time work for half the pay” is damaging – if it were practiced, then it would lead to burnout and dissatisfaction among ministers – and yet it also can lead us to a deep truth: that in order to be successful, part-time ministry needs to be structured differently.

This document includes a number of things for communities of faith to consider if they are moving from full-time to partially-funded (or part-time) ministry, as well as communities of faith who are currently in a partially funded or part-time model to consider as you live out your pastoral relationship with your minister. These are not rules for what partially-funded or part-time ministry must look like – rather these are questions and options for you to consider as you determine the shape of your ministry in your local context.

1. **How often do you want your minister to be leading worship?** If you consider that preparing and leading worship generally takes 12-15 hours, a part-time minister who is expected to lead worship every week doesn't have many hours left to do other ministry tasks (e.g. pastoral care, attending meetings of the church's governing body). Some churches have adopted a model where the minister isn't responsible for worship every week, which opens up time for these other tasks (e.g. a minister working 30 hours a week where once a month a member of the congregation or Licensed Lay Worship Leader leads worship. That week, the minister has time to do ministry tasks that they aren't able to do in weeks when they are preparing a worship service.)
2. **Which ministry tasks do you want your minister to be doing, and which ministry tasks can be done by members of the congregation?** There are some things that the minister must be responsible for (e.g. attending meetings of the church's governing body; baptism and communion); there are some things that can be done by the minister or by members of the congregation if they are given appropriate training (e.g. leading worship, pastoral care visits, leading bible study); and there are some things where a member of the congregation might be better gifted than the minister (e.g. social media presence, administration). It is good to remember the teaching of the Apostle Paul that all members of the church have been given gifts by the Holy Spirit, and that the ministry of the church is the ministry of the whole body (and not just the paid, accountable minister). How can the members of your church and the minister share your ministry?

3. **Have you explored options for sharing your ministry with other congregations in your area?** There are several different models within the United Church of Canada. A “Cooperative Ministry” is where two or more communities of faith come together to share a minister across more than one part-time position. (Some cooperation is needed between them around shared resources – e.g. worship time, office space, administration, manse – but the two communities of faith remain independent.). A “Multi-Point Pastoral Charge” is where there has been a formal amalgamation of two or more congregations where they each retain their own church building. (More cooperation is required here, since the church governance becomes shared between the different churches, and ministry can happen more collaboratively.). A “Shared Ministry” is an amalgamation between two or more churches from different denominations. (For more information on Shared Ministries, there is an “Ecumenical Shared Ministries Handbook” that can be downloaded from united-church.ca.)
4. **Have you and your minister explored creative models for using their time?** Different churches have adopted different models depending on their context and their needs. e.g.
 - A minister who is paid for 30 hours a week works full-time for 3 weeks then is off the fourth week.
 - A minister who is paid for 30 hours a week works full-time for 9 months of the year then is off for 3 months (e.g. June-July-August in a community where the majority of the congregation goes away for the summer, or January-February-March in a tourist community with many visitors in the summer but where most of the congregation are winter snowbirds)
 - A minister who is paid for 20 hours a week works full-time for two weeks, but then is off for 2 weeks.
 - A minister who is paid for 20 hours a week works 27 hours a week for 3 weeks, then is off for the fourth week.
5. **Have you talked to your minister (or ministers you are interviewing) about what the other part-time of their life looks like?** Many ministers in part-time ministry positions have other paid or unpaid employment. This might look like work in another area of the church, non-ministry employment, an important volunteer commitment, or family or personal obligations. These conversations are important to have, since their non-ministry commitments may impact their ministry with you. (e.g. they may not be available for funerals on Mondays and Tuesdays if those are the days that they work at their non-ministry job; busy seasons in their church and non-church world may overlap or may be at different times of the year)
6. **Remember that in the United Church of Canada minimum terms of call, some things can be pro-rated while others can't:**
 - Salary (with or without a manse) is pro-rated by the number of hours named in the call
 - If there is a manse provided, it must be provided full-time
 - The minimum continuing education allowance can be pro-rated for part-time hours
 - Moving Costs are usually not pro-rated
 - Vacation time (minimum 1 month including 5 Sundays), Study Leave (minimum 3 weeks), and Sabbatical are not pro-rated. (In calls where a creative model for using time has been adopted, discussion with the Regional Minister may be required to make sure that this is done fairly.)

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