

# London Conference – Pastoral Charge Supervisor

## 1. 2.5.2 Pastoral Charge Supervisor

**a. Appointment:** *If a pastoral charge has no settled or appointed member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister who has been recognized by the appropriate court, the presbytery is responsible for appointing a member of presbytery to the pastoral charge as a “pastoral charge supervisor.”*

*The presbytery may also appoint a pastoral charge supervisor in any other situation where the presbytery decides it is appropriate.*

**b. Responsibilities:** *The pastoral charge supervisor is responsible for*

*(i) supporting any ministry personnel serving the pastoral charge;*

*(ii) general supervision of the work of the pastoral charge;*

*(iii) ensuring that a chair is elected for the pastoral charge governing body, the trustees, and meetings of the congregation and pastoral charge;*

*(iv) ensuring that the sacraments are administered and new members are received following the requirements of these bylaws;*

*(v) if there are ministry personnel serving the pastoral charge, delegating responsibility for the functions of ministry in the pastoral charge to the ministry personnel as appropriate; and*

*(vi) reporting to the presbytery on the state of the pastoral charge.*

The Manual 2013

## General Background

Presbyteries, on the recommendation of Pastoral Relations Committees, appoint individuals, both order of ministry and lay, to serve as pastoral charge supervisors through a motion adopted by the Presbytery at its regular meeting or by the Executive.

When ministry personnel are serving as Sunday or weekend supply on a longer basis (up to 3 months), a Presbytery may appoint them as the pastoral charge supervisor.

## Situations Requiring Pastoral Charge Supervisors

The Manual states that a pastoral charge supervisor is appointed “if the pastoral charge has no settled or appointed member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister...”. In practical terms, there are a number of situations where this might occur:

**(a) Change in Pastoral Relations:** Most frequently, this occurs when a pastoral charge is experiencing a change in pastoral relations and is without appointed supply ministry personnel.

**(b) Student/Candidate or United Supply:** When a student or minister in process of admission is serving as supply in a pastoral charge, there must be a pastoral charge supervisor to oversee what is happening with the congregation, including attendance at meetings of the governing body (Board or Council). This person is separate and distinct from an educational supervisor or mentor who reflects on this work/ministry experience.

**(c) Ethnic Ministry:** Pastoral charges that fall under the category of ethnic ministries are able to have ministry personnel who are ordained in another denomination and these persons are not required to transfer into The United Church of Canada. However, a pastoral charge supervisor is required to be in attendance at all Council/Board meetings.

**(d) Shared Ministries:** Pastoral charges that are shared ministries with another denomination also require the presence of a pastoral charge supervisor at Council/Board meetings.

# London Conference – Pastoral Charge Supervisor

## Responsibilities / Tasks

While The Manual outlines six different responsibilities, a number of these are broad in nature, such as “general supervision of the work of the pastoral charge”. In practical terms, the most frequent tasks for a pastoral charge supervisor are:

- (a) Calling Meetings:** A pastoral charge supervisor has the authority to call congregational meetings (B.5.3.1 d), trustee meetings (G.3.6.1. c) and meetings of the governing body (B.7.7.2 d). They must do so when required by to under Manual provisions, and may do so at their own initiative at any time.
- (b) Attendance at Council/Board meetings:** this is probably the most common task. Pastoral charge supervisors are to provide oversight regarding the general functioning of the pastoral charge by being present at governance meetings that require a presbytery appointee for the purpose of quorum (I 2.5.2 ii & iii)
- (c) Trustee Membership:** Pastoral Charge Supervisors are automatically trustees (G.3.3.3 c), and may choose to be the chair of the trustees (G.3.5 c). Trustee records must be made available to the pastoral charge supervisor upon request (G.3.4.3 c iv).
- (d) Helping the pastoral charge arrange for the sacramental life of the charge (I 2.5.2 iv)** The pastoral charge supervisors are not necessarily be the one presiding, but they provide names of those who are available.
- (e) Report to Presbytery (I 2.5.2 vi):** In pastoral charges where there is an on-going relationship with a pastoral charge supervisor, the supervisor submits an annual report (see form [PR 441 PS](#)).
- (f) Raising concerns:** If a pastoral charge supervisor has concerns about the state of a pastoral charge, they may be brought to the presbytery (J.8 c). If they have concerns about a ministry personnel, they may be brought to the Conference Personnel Minister (J.9.2 b – role of presbytery moved to Conference as per terms of Effective Leadership test).

From time to time there are pastoral charge supervisors where there are serving ministry personnel, for example, with an ethnic ministry or student supply. In these instances there may be specific assignments regarding sections I 2.5.2 i and I 2.5.2 v.

# London Conference – Pastoral Charge Supervisor

## **Questions Relating to the Role of Pastoral Charges Supervisors**

### **Other Responsibilities - Should the role of a pastoral charge supervisor be enlarged to include assisting a pastoral charge with pastoral care needs?**

When a pastoral charge is experiencing a change in pastoral relations and has decided not to have appointed ministry personnel during the assessment and search process, there is often a question about how to handle funerals, weddings and/or pastoral care visiting. It has not been the practice in that the pastoral charge supervisor has responsibility for these tasks. The supervisor may assist the pastoral charge in helping to find those who can provide these services and may choose to respond to a specific request but undertaking these services is not part of the task of being a supervisor.

More recently, there have been requests from pastoral charges for assistance in finding someone to provide pastoral care, especially visiting. Before asking someone to serve as a pastoral charge supervisor, it is wise to discuss with the members of the congregation their expectations. Funerals or weddings might be handled on a fee for service basis, but it is more difficult to determine other types of pastoral care such as a hospital visiting or palliative care visiting.

### **Financial Considerations (time) - Should pastoral charge supervisors continue to serve in this capacity on a voluntary basis and without remuneration for their time?**

The inherited practice is that ministry personnel serve as pastoral charge supervisors on a volunteer basis. In cases where ministry personnel lead worship, they would be reimbursed by the pastoral charge as weekend or Sunday supply (fee plus travel). Similarly, if the pastoral charge supervisors conduct a wedding or funeral, they would also be reimbursed (fee plus travel).

### **Financial Considerations (travel) - Should pastoral charges reimburse the travel costs of pastoral charge supervisors?**

In many presbyteries, the mileage for pastoral charge supervision (including mileage to the charge from the supervisor's residence or place of work) is paid out of the presbytery budget (pastoral relations). In some presbyteries, this financial obligation has been moved to the pastoral charge who is receiving the supervision. Travel is paid at the General Council travel rate, currently, \$0.41/kl.

### **Stewardship of Volunteer Time and Church Resources**

In some instances, when a governance body is meeting with no major decisions before it, a pastoral charge supervisor, having received the agenda ahead of time and provided any needed advice, may choose to be available by phone or skype to a meeting, rather than travelling to attend a meeting in person. Such a decision is at the discretion of the supervisor, and includes the commitment of the governing body to defer new business to a subsequent meeting.