



Conferences Test Pastoral Relations Processes

Conferences across the country are testing new oversight, discipline, and pastoral relations processes as part of the Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships project. As a result of this work, Conferences are exploring processes that may impact the search and selection procedure for ministry personnel and pastoral charges. Some of these changes are identified below. For more specific information, contact your Conference Personnel Minister.

- **Maritime Conference** is maintaining the same pastoral relations processes related to search and selection but will be increasing staff support for pastoral relations work.
- In **Montreal and Ottawa** Conference, all pastoral charges will be creating a personal mission assessment that they will regularly update. This assessment will clearly articulate the needs of the pastoral charge. Conference staff will support the search and selection process.
- **Bay of Quinte Conference** is part of the Candidacy Pathway Pilot Project. As part of this work, placements for students completing their supervised ministry experience have been extended by up to 20 months. Longer internships may impact the number of vacancies within the Conference, as some students may remain in their internship site following ordination or commissioning.
- **Toronto Conference** is asking ministry personnel and pastoral charges to complete online profiles that identify their skills, strengths, and diverse gifts. These profiles facilitate the matching process between the pastoral charge and ministry personnel. The Conference will ensure that all personal information of ministry personnel is kept anonymous up to the point of shortlisting.
- **Hamilton Conference** is testing new processes in Bruce Presbytery. As part of this work, the presbytery has given authority for oversight and discipline to Conference through the Conference Leadership Commission. Conference will also be supporting search committees in the work of discerning leadership for pastoral charges. Throughout the Conference, the process for applying to vacancies has not changed.
- **London Conference** has adopted a new system that relies on a standardized profile for both local ministry units and ministry personnel to facilitate suitable matches. The profile for local ministry units is posted on the Conference website. The profiles of interested and eligible applicants are then forwarded through the Conference office to the interview team for the local ministry unit(s) requested by the ministry personnel. (The process is not anonymous; it relies on the match of information from the profiles of the two partners to the relationship.)

- **Manitou Conference** is piloting this project in Sudbury Presbytery. All pastoral relations processes will be done by Conference, enabling presbyteries to refocus on mission. Presbyteries will still handle the needs assessment of the pastoral charge. Manitou Conference is also participating in the Candidacy Pathway Pilot Project, which is revising the current candidacy path from inquirer to member of ordered ministry.
- In **Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario** the search and selection of all applicants will be overseen by the Conference Settlement Committee and will ensure the eligibility of ministry personnel. All applications should be sent to the Conference. Presbyteries will still oversee the needs assessment process.
- **Saskatchewan Conference** is maintaining its current pastoral relations processes and is gathering data on the system to evaluate its perceived effectiveness.
- **British Columbia Conference** is participating in the Candidacy Pathway Pilot Project. It has hired a project manager and is currently looking at how the Effective Leadership project can foster healthy and vital congregations and support ministry leadership.
- **All Native Circle Conference** is participating in conversations regarding this work, but for now, is maintaining the existing pastoral relations processes.
- The Conferences of **Newfoundland and Labrador** and **Alberta and Northwest** are not formally participating in the Healthy Pastoral Relationships project.

Through this testing, many Conferences are becoming more involved in the placement of ministry personnel and in oversight and discipline processes, while presbyteries are engaged in developing congregational vision and mission planning.

During this time of experimentation there will be some inconsistencies across Conferences. This diversity is important, as it allows for thorough and flexible testing that recognizes the unique contexts and realities throughout our church.

Contact Heather Brady at MinistryandEmployment@united-church.ca for more information.



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