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CHAPTER 8: THE MINISTRY

¶800 PREAMBLE

It is biblical for the church to set apart particular persons for special tasks of leadership. Such persons bear witness to an inward call of the Holy Spirit and a confirmation of that call by the church. They are set apart by a public commissioning service, or by ordination, with the laying on of hands after the pattern of the early church.

It is the long-held conviction of the Free Methodist Church that both men and women are eligible to hold any office of the church, including membership on the Official Board of a local church, or to be ordained to any of the church's ministries, or to be elected to the office of Bishop.

Both gifts and graces characterize men and women the church commissions or ordains. Gifts are special endowments of ability. Graces are special qualities of character. Both have their source in the enabling Holy Spirit. Although the church must discern who have such endowments, commissioning or ordination is always first and foremost an act of God's calling and appointment.

Commissioned Ministers are called by God to provide specialized ministry leadership and do not feel called to provide pastoral leadership to an entire church.

Ordained Ministers are called by God to provide overall general pastoral leadership in the church and Kingdom. They may carry out their task under appointment to a particular congregation, or they may be given other assignments. In either case, their work will include preaching and teaching the Word of God, intercessory prayer, the administration of the sacraments, pastoral care, and other ministerial activities. Central to the task of the minister is the proclamation of the saving gospel and the winning of people of all ages to Christ. Because vital worship, Christian nurture, evangelistic outreach and social concern characterize a healthy church, ordained ministers commit themselves to equipping the whole body of believers to these ends.

The commissioned and ordained ministry are both a calling and a profession. It is a calling in that it is a response to a divine summons. It is a profession in that this service is worked out under the direction of the church that sets ministers apart as leaders and requires accountability.

Free Methodist ministers are called to be leaders of God's people. Leadership requires vision, a willingness to dare, an ability to move people to action and the readiness to live with the turbulence change brings. For the person called to leadership, all this is rooted in a deep love for Christ and his compassion for human need. God's resources are abundantly available for all that embrace this task courageously and in radical obedience.

There are three stages to becoming a minister in The Free Methodist Church in Canada. The person feeling the call of God to the ministry is first licensed as a lay minister. The call is tested by service in the local church where initial training begins. Step two involves acceptance by the conference as a ministerial candidate. During this period the candidate prepares for the third step, conference membership as a commissioned minister (honorary) or an ordained minister (full).

Before detailed requirements are given for each stage in becoming a commissioned or ordained minister, in a long Methodist tradition, the following advice is given to all ministers.

¶801 **ADVICE TO THE MINISTER**

1. PERSONAL LIFE

DIVINE RESOURCES

Trust God. His power gives you all things necessary for life and godliness (II Peter 1:3). He has not given you the spirit of timidity, but of love, power, and a sound mind (II Timothy 1:7). Apart from Him, you can do nothing (John 15:5). Spiritual power is mediated to you through Scripture, prayer, the sacraments, the people of God and life itself. Practice the presence of God.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Make private, family, and public prayers of adoration, confession, petition, intercession and thanksgiving a habit. Let prayer be a daily means of grace.

Fast as health permits.

Search the Scriptures systematically, using commentaries. Meditate upon what you read and put into practice what you learn.

Take every opportunity to partake of the Lord's Supper.

Form a covenant with an accountability partner to watch over your spiritual and emotional health and meet with him/her regularly.

ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER

An accountability partner is a mature, discreet Christian of the same gender, preferably outside your congregation. He/she is neither a counselor nor a spiritual director but is a trustworthy person to whom you can confidentially confess personal matters and to whom you may be accountable for progress with respect to those matters. While an accountability partner does not divulge any information to local church or conference leaders, he/she is to urge you to seek counsel (including MEGaP guidance) when circumstances warrant it.

FAMILY LIFE

Be faithful to your marriage vows (I Timothy 3:2). Show honour to your spouse and family in private and public. Parent your children with loving discipline (I Timothy 3:4,5). Build a healthy home life.

FELLOWSHIP

Be open to your peers. Seek their counsel. Meet with them periodically for prayer. Confess your faults. Share your concerns. Take courage from mutual support. Be a part of a pastoral team. Resolve to encourage them.

Develop mature friendships that are supportive of and compatible with your vocation and ministry.

USE OF TIME

Be disciplined. Live an orderly and balanced life. Manage your time well. Resist both laziness and workaholicism.

PERSONAL HEALTH

Master and apply the rules of healthy living, especially with regards to eating, rest and exercise. Set an example for those you lead. Avoid substance abuse.

CONVERSATION

***MEGaP**

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Listen patiently; it is more than half of good conversation. Communicate clearly, stating your opinion with tact and kindness. Cultivate a healthy sense of humour. Keep confidences.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Love your neighbour as yourself. Speak evil of no one. Manage your money wisely and do not borrow from parishioners. Live a simple lifestyle according to gospel values. Keep debts within bounds and model wise and disciplined spending.

Be cautious in receiving gifts, grants, or bursaries. Consider the source of the funding, asking if accepting the gift is consistent with our doctrine and watching for any expectations that may be attached.

Tithe as the starting point for the generous giving of your income.

Maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries in all relationships – especially with those of the opposite sex.

Lead your church in the ethical use of music, words and other media.

Respect your peers in ministry. Keep your ordination vows. Honour the work of your predecessors and successors by treating others as you want to be treated. Pastoral transitions require a fresh start. For the new pastor to establish his/her leadership, the departing pastor needs to leave. If that courtesy was not afforded to you when you arrived, all the more reason for you to break the pattern.

Principles to follow:

- Don't promise the congregation that you will be back.
- Explain to the congregation how your relationship with them will change. Teach on boundaries and closure.
- In situations where you are requested to return to participate in a pastoral role (e.g. baptism/dedication, wedding or funeral), do not accept without first checking directly with your successor and the leadership of the church.

Remind yourself that these significant life-events are opportunities for your successor to develop ongoing relationships. Be prepared with a statement such as: *"I'm honored that you've asked me but since I am no longer your pastor, I'll need to first consult with your new pastor."* No pastoral ministry should occur with former parishioners without the knowledge and consent of your successor.

- If you are remaining in the area, meet with your successor, clarify your relationship with him/her and the church and agree to worship elsewhere in your community for a determined amount of time.

ETIQUETTE AND PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES

Own an up-to-date book on etiquette and consult it regularly so that you are aware of how to conduct yourself appropriately as a public figure. Additionally, there are guidelines available from the credentialing coordinator that you need to follow with respect to requests to officiate at marriages.

2. PROFESSIONAL LIFE

CORE VALUES

Regularly review the eight core values of The Free Methodist Church in Canada and allow them to shape your ministry of leadership.

LEADING THROUGH PREACHING AND TEACHING

Discipline yourself to uninterrupted time for study and prayer so that you come before your people adequately prepared. Seek the Lord's help. Preaching is only effective when anointed by God's Spirit. Use suitable Scriptures for each occasion. Prepare your messages thoroughly. Stay with your subject. Preach to the needs of the people. Expound the scriptures systematically. Seek divine leadership in choice of subjects. Consult the Christian calendar to give balance to your preaching. Communicate profound truths with simple words and speak with conviction. Practice what you preach.

Teach with clarity. Present truth in an orderly way, using a variety of methods. Give opportunity for dialogue.

Seek by preaching and teaching to bring about change in understanding and behaviour.

Avoid plagiarizing. Competent pastors always give proper source credit to things written or published under their name, or spoken by them from the pulpit. In this digital and Internet era, you must not pretend that simply because you are encouraged by online ministry resource sites to use their materials, you can let others believe that all these ideas are yours.

LEADING IN WORSHIP

Plan services of worship with care. Incorporate prayers, Scripture readings, singing, preaching, and regular observance of the sacraments of the Lord's Supper and baptism. Seek a balance between ordered and spontaneous worship. Focus attention on God in all His attributes. Lead the people and teach them to worship. Be aware that you set an example by the way you worship yourself. Involve the congregation, using lay persons wisely and giving appropriate attention to the children.

Give careful thought to your pastoral prayers in advance. Deliver all prayers from your heart. Expect people to experience the presence of God. Whatever the theme of the service, always try to encourage the people before they leave.

LEADING THROUGH PASTORAL CARE AND EVANGELISM

See that attention is given to the care of your people. Balance strategic personal contact with care given through trained volunteers and/or staff. Find creative ways to ensure that a full range of pastoral care is given – e.g. visits, phone calls, cards and notes.

Give special priority to finding, befriending and introducing seeking people to Jesus. Model a personal commitment to the Great Commission yourself and see that others are trained and involved in outreach.

Ensure that attention is given to the sick, elderly, confined, and distressed. See that someone is with your people when they pass through crucial moments: the birth of a child, marriage, tragedy, the bestowment of honour, death.

Make provision for the pastoral counseling of people who seek guidance. Convey by your attitudes and words that you too are interested in their welfare. Ensure that counseling takes place in a professional manner in appropriate settings. Acknowledge the limits of your own counseling competencies/capacities and make responsible referrals when necessary, particularly with regard to legal, financial and medical matters, or other areas beyond your expertise. Interact with those under your care with honesty and love.

Be understanding. In controversy, arrange if possible, for another arbitrator/counsellor, so that you will be free to minister to both parties. This will also keep either party from accusing you of favouritism.

Maintain high professional standards. Conduct yourself always as in the presence of Christ. Do not be careless with confidentiality.

Ensure that new believers, newcomers, children and teens of the congregation are encouraged to join the church and care groups if they are available. See that membership instruction opportunities are provided regularly.

LEADING THROUGH LEADERS

The breadth and strength of any ministry is determined by the quality of its leadership. Resolve to develop Spirit-empowered, growing leaders and readily entrust responsibility to them according to their capacities of spiritual maturity, skill and availability.

Lead your leaders in planning and help them to set goals. Work to extend Christ's kingdom. Mobilize and train your laity for ministries beyond the boundaries of your present congregation. Regularly promote the vision of starting an additional service and and/or a new congregation/church.

Oversee the administration of the church. By good administration, promote the congregation's vision and mission, and work for harmony and growth. Do things in an orderly manner. Try, where appropriate, to make decisions in a consultative manner and to search for consensus so that different views are heard and people respected in the process.

Ensure that boards and committees meet regularly. See that your people have opportunity to discover and use their spiritual gifts and to develop ministry skills.

Share leadership and work cooperatively with both lay and ordained colleagues, respecting their different gifts, qualifications, ministries, and approach to spirituality.

Keep abreast of the activities of the major departments of your church. Have careful records kept of your ministries. Maintain and give summary reports regularly to your official board and conference leaders.

Build relationships with leaders of other churches in your community, promote good will, and seek appropriate ways to cooperate in ministry.

Cooperate with those in authority over you. Model loyalty to your denomination. See that requested reports are sent promptly. Use denominational resources. Participate in the support of CORE ministries and promote the Giving Streams and other general church ministries.

¶805 DISCERNING THE CALL OF GOD FOR CREDENTIALLED MINISTRY

Confirmation of the initial stages of God's call to credentialed ministry in The Free Methodist Church in Canada begins when the leaders of a local church discern and confirm that call by granting a lay minister's license to a member of the congregation. This is how the process of a person being set apart for credentialed ministry begins. In the paragraphs that follow, the requirements of each stage of this process are set out.

The director of leadership development and church health, working with the credentialing coordinator and the ministerial education, guidance and placement (MEGaP) committee, oversees the steps to credentialed ministry, once a lay minister is recommended for ministerial candidacy.

A document entitled "Steps to Credentialed Ministry" summarizes the credentialing process. It is available through the credentialing coordinator or on the FMCIC website.

¶810 LAY MINISTERS (TRACKING AND LOCAL)

A lay minister is a member of a Free Methodist Church who has been granted a license by the official board. For some lay ministers (tracking), this will be an entry point into the tracking system that ultimately leads to being credentialed either as a commissioned minister or an ordained minister. Other lay ministers (local) will opt to serve only at the local church level.

Local Lay Minister: a person who is gifted and called by God to provide a level of ministry leadership beyond what is expected of a member within the local church (i.e. gifted in teaching or visitation). This call is affirmed by the local church who responds to the person's ministry and leadership, and the board who recognize gifts and affirm this call and level of leadership responsibility. While there may be an element of pastoral leadership in this person's ministry leadership, they do not feel called to pastoral leadership. The person is granted the Lay Minister license (see Ch 3 par 381a) by the board, renewable annually (see par 381b), and is accountable to the board and lead pastor (or designate).

Tracking Lay Minister – a person who is called by God to provide pastoral leadership in the church. This call is affirmed by the local church and the board who see the gifts and graces evident for pastoral leadership and are encouraging the person towards preparing for pastoral leadership through the credentialing process. This is very much a preparation and formation stage where the person will work to gain experience and understanding in general pastoral ministry as well as begin to meet the requirements to fully enter the credentialing process. The person is granted the Lay Minister license (see Ch 3 par 381a) by the board, renewable annually (see par 381b), and is accountable to the board and lead pastor (or designate).

In either case, before a license is granted, the candidate shall be a member of the church long enough to give evidence of gifts and graces suited to Christian ministry. A hunger for God, a blameless life and a motive to serve are desirable attributes. A lay minister shall be amenable to instruction, supervision, and related discipline to assure growth in grace, knowledge, and usefulness.

The lay minister retains membership in the local church, but the MEGaP committee and the credentialing coordinator shall be notified immediately if a license has been issued to either a tracking or local lay minister. The license must be renewed annually by the official board.

To qualify as a lay minister, the person must meet the following requirements (alternate process available for church planters through the Church Planting department):

- be a member of the Free Methodist Church;
- be available for ministry under supervision of the lead pastor;
- be recommended by the pastor or pastor's cabinet to the official board;
- have completed Bases 1,2,3,4 (or their equivalent);
- The candidate shall be interviewed by the official board to determine the person's call to lay ministry, and quality of spiritual life, and shall be asked questions such as:
 - When and how did you come to know Christ as Lord and Saviour?
 - Do you experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit in your life? Are you open to the call of God to lay ministry
 - What preparations and plans are you making in order to follow God's will for your life?
 - To what type of ministry and witness do you believe you are called?
 - What is your understanding of the doctrine of justification by faith?
 - What is your understanding of the doctrine of sanctification?

For local lay ministers, the person must also meet these additional requirements:

- take and successfully complete the Heart of Canadian Free Methodism foundational course
- demonstrate life-long learning
- actively participate in a small group

- submit a police clearance certificate

The official board may issue a lay minister's license (see Ch 3 par 381a) and assign responsibility for counsel and guidance to the pastor and/or the pastor's cabinet. It shall be their responsibility to provide opportunities for lay ministers to develop their gifts in such ways as:

- preaching or teaching the Gospel;
- assisting the pastor in visitation;
- assisting in public worship services;
- participating in a program of witnessing to the unsaved, winning them to Christ, and nurturing them in Christian living.

Lay ministers shall be given regular duties with clear accountability structures.

Though lay ministers maintain their memberships in a local church, they are not eligible to continue to be voting members of an official board once they have been issued a lay minister's license. If they are board members when they become lay ministers, they may complete their terms on official boards, but they may not be re-elected as board members.

Lay ministers are honorary members of the official board. At the discretion of the lead pastor tracking lay ministers, as part of their training for credentialed ministry, may participate in official board meetings except when the board is dealing with delicate matters related to the life and ministry of the lead pastor or other pastoral staff.

When it is evident to the official board that a lay minister (who desires to enter the tracking system toward ministerial credentials) possesses gifts and graces and a call of God to credentialed ministry, the official board may recommend to the MEGaP committee that this person be interviewed with a view to becoming a ministerial candidate in the conference. Official Boards must exercise careful discernment before approving a tracking lay minister. The question to be kept in mind is whether this person would have the gifts and graces to eventually be accepted as a pastor in his/her home church. Prior to this MEGaP interview, the lay minister must have established an accountability partner relationship as per ¶801.1.

It is the responsibility of the lead pastor to annually submit to the credentialing coordinator the names of all tracking and local lay ministers in the local church. They shall be listed in the records of the credentialing coordinator.

The official board shall review each lay minister's license annually for renewal (see Ch 3 par 381b). For each annual renewal, tracking lay ministers are expected to have completed a 3-credit hour course or equivalent. Local lay ministers are expected to demonstrate evidence of their commitment to life-long learning. When not completed, renewal shall be postponed. The pastor shall keep the records and report the list annually to the credentialing coordinator.

The following 3-credit hour courses shall be taken by tracking lay ministers:

- Heart of Canadian Free Methodism (history and polity)
- Introduction to Bible
- Introduction to Christian Doctrine
- Wesleyan Theology

The Heart of Canadian Free Methodism course is the only course that must be taken through foundational courses provided by The Free Methodist Church in Canada. Equivalencies for the other three courses must be taken at an accredited Bible college or seminary, either in person or by distance education. (Wesleyan Theology may also be taken through a foundational course offered from time to time by The Free Methodist Church in Canada.)

Further annual renewals shall be on the basis of the official board's assessment of effective ministry. Approval for courses for subsequent renewals is available through the credentialing coordinator.

The pastor's cabinet, personnel committee or equivalent shall do the annual review and the official board shall grant the renewal, upon their recommendation. The official board may revoke a lay minister's license for violation of its conditions.

A lay minister's license is not normally transferable to another church. In exceptional cases, a lay minister may have charge of a society under the supervision of an assigned ordained minister. In that case, the lay minister will hold membership in the church served.

¶815 MINISTERIAL CANDIDATES

A ministerial candidate is a member of a Free Methodist Church who is seriously pursuing entrance into credentialed ministry, has been granted the status of an honorary member of the conference (with voice but not vote) and is under conference supervision in studies and service.

In order to become a ministerial candidate, a lay minister must:

Demonstrate a serious desire to pursue God's call to ministry within the FMCIC by submitting the following to the credentialing coordinator:

- a copy of the lay minister's licence (see ¶381a or ¶381a-CP);
- a resume (Candidates are encouraged to attach personality/ministry aptitude inventory results.);
- required educational transcripts;
- required personal references;
- a ministerial candidate's Statement of Affirmation (see ¶871);
- a police clearance certificate
- written confirmation that an accountability partner relationship has been established
- a reflection paper on his/her call to ministry
- completed Family of Origin assignment
- completed SHAPE profile
- completed Myers-Briggs Type Indicator© inventory

Receive the church's confirmations of suitability for ministry by being:

- a lay minister in good standing;
- able to demonstrate leadership ability by establishing a small group;
- endorsed by his/her pastor's personal letter of recommendation. The pastor will assist in the development of an educational and ministry experience plan that will be submitted to MEGaP;
- recommended to MEGaP for ministerial candidacy by the official board (see ¶383B); (board should only recommend a lay minister for ministerial candidacy if the board anticipates a recommendation for his/her appointment at its local church once s/he is approved by the conference as a ministerial candidate);
- (if married) spouse and lay minister together meeting with a MEGaP subcommittee for spousal support interview
- cleared by MEGaP if there is a history of divorce (see ¶816);
- interviewed and recommended by the MEGaP committee to the conference;
- approved by the conference and admitted as a non-voting member.

Demonstrate critical thinking and communication competencies by having:

- a high school diploma;

- successfully completed 30 semester credits in an accredited liberal arts or bible college or mature applicants may demonstrate these competencies through life-learning/experience evaluations.

Receive basic orientation for ministry in the FMCIC by:

- successfully completing the following courses:
 - Heart of Canadian Free Methodism (history and polity);
 - Introduction to the Bible; (or an equivalent)
 - Introduction to Christian Doctrine; (or an equivalent)
 - Wesleyan Theology; (or an equivalent)
- successfully completing Bases 1,2,3,4 (or their equivalent)

If a Lay Minister disagrees with a recommendation from MEGaP after his/her interview, s/he may appeal that decision by sending a letter in writing to the bishop and the director of leadership development and church health outlining the reasons for the appeal. The bishop will review the MEGaP notes, the recommendation and the appeal from the candidate and decide whether or not the recommendation should be reconsidered.

When the candidate is presented to the board of administration or conference, it will be reported that the candidate has affirmed the following in a signed ministerial candidate's Statement of Affirmation (see form in ¶871).

1. Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour and offer yourself in service to Him as a ministerial candidate in the Canadian General Conference of the Free Methodist Church?
2. a) Will you further equip yourself spiritually, morally, and intellectually for the Christian ministry?
b) For what type of ministry are you preparing yourself – ordained or commissioned? If commissioned minister, what will your specialty be?
3. Having studied *The Manual of The Free Methodist Church in Canada* carefully, do you believe the Articles of Religion and accept the moral vision as articulated in Chapter 6 and do you embrace the purpose, vision, mission, and core values of The Free Methodist Church in Canada? Will you abide by the *Manual's* instructions?
4. Will you submit to the guidance of the conference through the MEGaP committee?

Ministerial Candidates maintain their memberships in the local church, and as such they have both a voice and a vote. Ministerial Candidates should abstain from voting on budget/financial, employed personnel or other issues that would directly impact or involve the Ministerial Candidate and would be considered a conflict of interest.

Though ministerial candidates maintain their memberships in a local church, they are not eligible to serve as delegates to the conference once they have been received into the conference as ministerial candidates. If they are delegates when they become ministerial candidates, they must resign as delegates.

Ministerial candidates continue as honorary members of the official board and at the discretion of the lead pastor may participate in all official board meetings except when the board is dealing with delicate matters related to the life and ministry of the lead pastor or other pastoral staff.

A ministerial candidate or a person recommended to the conference to be received as a ministerial candidate may not serve on the MEGaP committee.

Ministerial candidates maintain their standing in the conference by an annual recommendation of the MEGaP committee.

Ministerial candidates must be appointed by the conference in order to track toward being ordained or commissioned minister. Once appointed, they may solemnize marriages and administer the sacraments. If a ministerial candidate's appointment is discontinued, the ministerial candidate credential is automatically withdrawn and the tracking process becomes 'inactive'. If another appointment request is sent to the director of leadership development and church health, MEGaP will vote on both the reinstatement of the ministerial candidate credential and the appointment request. If both are approved, the ministerial candidate can resume the tracking process.

A ministerial candidate may be appointed as a church planter upon recommendation to MEGaP from the director of church planting.

¶816 SEPARATION, DIVORCE AND THE MINISTRY

A person who has been divorced or is married to a spouse previously divorced, shall not be admitted to ministerial candidacy, nor to the conference, nor by transfer, nor allowed to be under any type of appointment unless cleared by the MEGaP committee. (See ¶430.2.2.8.). Divorce shall not in itself bar a person from consideration for conference membership, or for an appointment.

When there is marital stress and conflict in a ministerial marriage, ministers are urged to initiate early intervention and to take proactive steps to access, in consultation with conference leadership resources to receive professional help for healing the relationship. If the conflict escalates to the point where it is no longer advisable or healthy for the couple to continue to live together and separation becomes necessary, the minister must immediately apply to the official board for a paid leave of absence so that he/she can focus on regaining marital health.

If the leave of absence is granted and the ministerial couple has not reconciled as the end of the leave of absence approaches, the bishop or designate will meet separately with the pastor and the board to assess the advisability of the pastor returning to serve at the church while separated. If it is agreed that the pastor can continue, the pastor will need to agree to an ongoing month-to-month probationary relationship with the local church, the terms of which (e.g. performance/ accountability expectations), will be laid out in writing. If the separation eventually results in a divorce, the following guidance is to be followed.

A minister, who is divorced, must provide MEGaP with a statement of the circumstances of the divorce and be cleared by MEGaP before being considered for an appointment (See 430.2.8.).

He/she also may not remarry unless MEGaP has cleared them. If a minister's fiancé(e) has been divorced, his/her fiancé(e)'s divorce must be cleared by MEGaP prior to marrying. A minister who marries contrary to these guidelines shall be subject to discipline and shall not be re-appointed by the conference until cleared by MEGaP.

If the divorce of a minister (or his/her new spouse) is not cleared, he/she is not in good standing with the conference and shall withdraw from and return his/her credentials to the conference. He/she can be approved for lay membership in a local church.

¶820 COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

Commissioned Ministers are persons called by God to provide specialized ministry leadership (examples include but not limited to: Children and Family Pastor, Youth, Community Development Missionary, Social Media, etc.). They do not feel called to provide pastoral leadership to the entire church. They may, under special circumstances, be appointed under one of the categories under Special Appointment (see ¶852), but it is assumed that they will normally work as specialized associate pastors under an ordained minister's leadership.

Commissioned Ministers are eligible to be nominated as ministerial members in some of the larger administrative and leadership roles of the denomination (see Ch 4).

The training and experience candidates receive will include both formation in their area of specialization as well as ministry leadership. Commissioned Ministers are accountable to the local church and lead pastor (or equivalent) for the specific day to day living out of that call through their employment and/or job description. They are also accountable to the denomination who has credentialed them as being prepared to live out the ministry leadership aspect of that call, through their conference appointment.

In order to become a commissioned minister, a ministerial candidate must:

Demonstrate a serious desire to pursue God's call to commissioned ministry within The Free Methodist Church in Canada by:

- submitting a copy of required academic transcripts to the credentialing coordinator;
- completing 3 years of full-time ministry experience under (conference) supervision as a ministerial candidate. Ministry experience equivalency credits may be accumulated on a part-time basis under supervision and granted by the MEGaP committee. Once a lay minister has been approved as a ministerial candidate and has been appointed at a local church, retroactive ministry experience equivalency credits may be granted by the director of leadership development and church health on an individual case-by-case basis, upon written request.
- submitting a minister's statement of affirmation (See ¶ 872).

Receive the church's confirmation of suitability for commissioned ministry by being:

- a ministerial candidate in good standing;
- (if married after becoming a ministerial candidate) spouse and ministerial candidate together meeting with a MEGaP subcommittee for spousal support interview
- interviewed and recommended by the MEGaP committee for commissioned ministry;
- approved by the general conference or its board of administration for honorary membership in the conference and the commissioned ministry;
- commissioned by the bishop or the bishop's appointee.

Receive basic academic preparation for ministry in the FMCIC by:

- in addition to the courses required for ministerial candidacy, successfully completing, as a minimum, the following prescribed core courses within an accredited and approved (by MEGaP) seminary, college, or directed study program:
 - Systematic theology (3 credits)
 - Elective courses related to the specific commission specialty (e.g. administration, children, pastoral care, youth, worship, etc.) (9 credits)
 - Personal and Church Stewardship foundational course (3 credits)
 - Culture and the Missional Church foundational course (3 credits)
- being certified by the credentialing coordinator

If a Ministerial Candidate disagrees with a recommendation from MEGaP after his/her interview, s/he may appeal that decision by sending a letter in writing to the bishop and the director of leadership development and church health outlining the reasons for the appeal. The bishop will review the MEGaP notes, the recommendation and the appeal from the candidate and decide whether or not the recommendation should be reconsidered.

They remain ~~are~~ members of local churches and honorary members of the conference. When a commissioned minister transfers his/her local church membership to a different Free Methodist congregation, the commissioned minister is listed as in "transition" (as per ¶852) until the receiving church makes a recommendation for an appointment to ministry in that congregation. When a commissioned minister is in transition or retires, they retain honorary membership in the conference.

Since Commissioned ministers maintain membership in the local church, they have both a voice and a vote at the local church. Commissioned ministers also continue as honorary members of the official board and, at the discretion of the lead pastor, may participate in all official board meetings except when the board is dealing with delicate matters related to the life and ministry of the lead pastor or other pastoral staff. The Commissioned ministers also need to declare a conflict of interest with any board or society vote on budget/financial, employed personnel or other issues that would directly impact or involve them. Commissioned ministers cannot serve as a delegate at the local church, since they are honorary members of conference.

Walking in a manner worthy of their call is expected, along with attendance at denominational events such as General Conferences, Regional Gatherings, Minister's Conferences and Network meetings (except retirees).

Commissioned ministers [except retirees] must continue with ongoing development in both their area of specialization as well as in ministry leadership and must annually file a continuing education unit (CEU) report with the credentialing coordinator as a condition of maintaining good standing in the conference.

¶821 COMMISSIONED MINISTERS BECOMING ORDAINED MINISTERS

In order for commissioned ministers to become ordained ministers, they must:

- be a commissioned minister in good standing;
- have completed the following prescribed core courses within an accredited and approved (by MEGaP) seminary, college, or directed study program. These minimum credits shall include:
 - Biblical studies (9);
 - Church history (3);
 - Evangelism/church growth/planting (3);
 - Leadership/administration (3);
 - Pastoral theology and practical studies (6);
 - The balance shall be electives distributed among the following three areas: biblical studies, theology, practical studies (12 credits). (Elective courses taken to meet commissioned ministry requirements can be counted toward this requirement.);
- have completed four years of ministry experience under (conference) supervision. Once a lay minister has been approved as a ministerial candidate and has been appointed at a local church, retroactive ministry experience equivalency credits may be granted by the director of leadership development and church health on an individual case-by-case basis, upon written request.
- (if married after becoming a commissioned minister) spouse and ministerial candidate together meeting with a MEGaP subcommittee for spousal support interview
- be certified by the credentialing coordinator;
- be interviewed and recommended by the MEGaP committee to membership in the conference and ordination;
- by action of the general conference or its board of administration be a member of a conference;
- be ordained by the bishop or the bishop's appointee;
- commit to annually file a continuing education plan with the credentialing coordinator and fulfill it as a condition of maintaining good standing in the conference.

¶822 QUESTIONS FOR CONFERENCE MEMBERSHIP

Ministerial candidates may be received as commissioned or ordained ministers after completing the required service and educational requirements. They shall submit the minister's statement of affirmation. (See ¶872). (These statements shall become the property of the credentialing coordinator.) When candidates are presented to the board of administration or conference, it will be reported that they have affirmed the following:

1. Have you faith in Christ?
2. Have you present assurance that your sins are forgiven?
3. Do you experience purity of heart and life and empowerment for service, through the fullness of the Spirit, and will you through study, counsel, and prayer seek and maintain this experience and lead your people to experience the same?
4. Are you resolved to devote yourself to God and to the work to which He calls you?
5. Will you partake of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as often as you can?
6. Will you endeavour to communicate the Gospel effectively?
7. Will you see that the people of all ages under your care are properly instructed and cared for?
8. Will you visit, ministering to those within and without the church?
9. Will you recommend fasting and prayer, both by teaching and example?
10. Having studied our *Manual* carefully, do you believe the Articles of Religion and accept the moral vision as articulated in Chapter 6, and do you embrace the purpose, vision, mission, and core values of The Free Methodist Church in Canada? Will you abide by the *Manual's* instructions?
11. Without being sectarian, will you promote the Free Methodist Church and its ministries in carrying out your work?

¶825 ORDAINED MINISTERS

Ordained ministers (formerly known as deacons and elders) are persons called by God to lead (typically as a lead pastor), to provide overall general pastoral leadership in the church and Kingdom. Ordination remains an option for those who feel called to broader ministry or leadership. It is also encouraged for associates/assistants, and may be required by some institutions for some specialized ministries such as chaplaincy. Membership in the conference and ordination constitutes the acknowledgment of the conference that the person so elected and ordained has fulfilled the ecclesiastical requirements to participate in the larger administrative and leadership roles of the church.

In order to become an ordained minister, a ministerial candidate must:

Demonstrate a serious desire to pursue God's call to ordained ministry within The Free Methodist Church in Canada by:

- submitting a copy of required academic transcripts to the credentialing coordinator;
- completing 4 years of ministry experience (at least part time) under (conference) supervision as a ministerial candidate. Once a lay minister has been approved as a ministerial candidate and has been appointed at a local church, retroactive ministry experience equivalency credits may be granted by the director of leadership development and church health on an individual case-by-case basis, upon written request.
- submitting a minister's statement of affirmation (See ¶ 872)
- submitting a reflection paper on the meaning of ordination to the MEGaP interview team and the bishop for evaluation prior to the final interview.

Receive the church's confirmation of suitability for ordained ministry by being:

- a ministerial candidate in good standing;
- able to demonstrate leadership ability by establishing and multiplying a small group;
- (if married after becoming a ministerial candidate) spouse and ministerial candidate together meeting with a MEGaP subcommittee for spousal support interview
- interviewed and recommended by the MEGaP committee to membership in the conference and ordination;
- approved by the general conference or its board of administration for membership in the conference and ordination;
- ordained by the bishop

Receive basic academic preparation for ordained ministry in The Free Methodist Church in Canada by:

- in addition to the courses required for ministerial candidacy, successfully completing, as a minimum, the following prescribed core courses within an accredited and approved (by MEGaP) seminary, college, or directed study program:
 - Biblical studies (9 credits)
 - Church history (3 credits)
 - Evangelism/church growth (3 credits)
 - Leadership/administration (3 credits)
 - Pastoral theology and practical studies (6 credits)
 - Systematic theology (3 credits)
 - Personal and Church Stewardship foundational course (3 credits)
 - Culture and the Missional Church foundational course (3 credits)
 - Additional electives distributed among biblical, theological, practical studies (12 credits)
- being certified by the credentialing coordinator

If a Ministerial Candidate disagrees with a recommendation from MEGaP after his/her interview, s/he may appeal that decision by sending a letter in writing to the bishop and the director of leadership development and church health outlining the reasons for the appeal. The bishop will review the MEGaP notes, the recommendation and the appeal from the candidate and decide whether or not the recommendation should be reconsidered.

Ordained ministers are required to attend ministers' conferences, general conferences, network meetings and regional gatherings and to submit annual continuing education (CEU) reports as a condition of retaining their ordination credentials. Attendance at minister's conferences, regional gatherings and network meetings and reporting CEU is optional for retirees.

In the case of ethnic ministries or on mission fields, ministerial candidates may be ordained having earned fewer than the normally required academic credits or having completed fewer than the full service requirements under the following conditions: circumstances warrant, the MEGaP committee recommends, and the presiding bishop approves.

¶830 ORDINATION CREDENTIALS

Every minister whose ordination is recognized by the conference shall be entitled to credentials from the president of the conference, certifying the fact of the ordination. The president shall remit a duplicate copy of the credentials to the credentialing coordinator.

Ministers in good standing who unite with another denomination or are granted permission to withdraw from the Free Methodist Church shall deposit their credentials with the conference office and receive a receipt for them. If they do not deposit their credentials they shall be declared null and void by action of the conference.

Ministers under discipline (i.e., suspended, allowed to withdraw under charges or complaints, expelled) must surrender their credentials to the conference office. In the latter two cases, if a minister refuses or neglects to deposit them, the conference shall by official action declare them null and void.

¶835 RECEPTION FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS AND FROM OTHER FREE METHODIST CONFERENCES

Ministers ordained in the Wesleyan or Nazarene denominations, or in another Free Methodist conference may be received according to our procedures, provided that they:

- submit a resume (Candidates are encouraged to attach personality/ministry aptitude inventory results.)
- give evidence of appropriate gifts, graces, and usefulness;
- satisfy the conference of holding ministerial orders in good standing with the Wesleyan or Nazarene denomination, or another Free Methodist conference;
- give satisfactory answers to the questions that we ask of lay members for membership (see ¶161) and sign a statement of affirmation (see ¶872);
- complete a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator© inventory
- complete the Heart of Canadian Free Methodism foundational course;
- give evidence of having taken a Wesleyan Theology course;
- commit to take the Personal and Church Stewardship and the Culture and the Missional Church foundational courses as required continuing education units (CEUs) within three years of completing the transfer;
- be certified by the credentialing coordinator, and recommended by the MEGaP committee.

Ministers ordained in other denominations who desire to unite with The Free Methodist Church in Canada may be received according to our procedures, provided that they:

- submit a resume (Candidates are encouraged to attach personality/ministry aptitude inventory results.)
- give evidence of appropriate gifts, graces, and usefulness;
- satisfy the conference of holding ministerial orders with another denomination;
- give satisfactory answers to the questions that we ask of lay members for membership (see ¶161) and sign a statement of affirmation (see ¶872);
- complete the Family of Origin assignment
- complete the SHAPE profile
- completed Myers-Briggs Type Indicator© inventory
- submit full academic transcripts to the credentialing coordinator;
- complete two of the foundational courses: Heart of Canadian Free Methodism and the Wesleyan Theology (unless equivalency credit has been granted);
- commit to take the Personal and Church Stewardship and the Culture and the Missional Church foundational courses as required continuing education units (CEUs) within three years of completing the transfer;
- be certified by the credentialing coordinator, interviewed and recommended by the MEGaP committee.

In determining the granting of standing with the conference, equivalency is the criterion. No person may attain ordination status more easily by transfer from another denomination or conference than by following the requirements of *The Manual* for all Free Methodist ministers. The candidates must meet both educational and service requirements. If ministers transferring into the conference fall short of our ordination requirements, they shall have a schedule set by which they will need to meet those requirements.

In recognition of the larger body of Christ, candidates transferring in as ordained ministers shall be given an appropriate certificate acknowledging their ordination by another body in lieu of Free Methodist ordination credentials.

¶840 TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

To transfer to another Free Methodist conference a minister must be ordained and have a certificate of standing from the regional MEGaP committee.

Only a regional MEGaP committee may give a certificate of standing to a minister intending to join another denomination. Membership in the conference and the denomination terminates upon the giving of such a certificate.

A minister who intends to serve outside the conference shall notify the bishop or director of leadership development and church health no less than 60 days before the intended transfer. Failing to give such notice, special permission to leave must be obtained from the MEGaP committee whose decision shall be final.

¶845 TERMINATION OF CONFERENCE MEMBERSHIP

CREDENTIALS DEPOSITED

In circumstances where it is not possible for ministers in good standing to be located, the MEGaP committee may allow them to deposit their credentials with the conference and withdraw from the conference with the understanding that they can be restored to an itinerating ministry as provided above for located ministers.

DECEASED

Conference members who die during the period between conference sessions shall have their names noted and shall be honoured at the following conference.

DISCONTINUED FROM MINISTERIAL CANDIDACY

The names of any ministerial candidate not recommended to be continued shall be noted as discontinued in the MEGaP report to the conference.

GRANTED A CERTIFICATE OF STANDING WITH VIEW TO TRANSFER

The conference, or in the interim, the MEGaP committee, may grant a certificate of standing to ordained ministers who wish to transfer to another conference.

LOCATED

Located ministers are ordained persons who are not available to be appointed and so are located with their membership at a local church. Ministers who are located may either request the place of their membership or it may be determined by the conference upon the recommendation of the MEGaP committee. In the process, the minister to be located and the minister and official board of the church involved shall be consulted.

Located ministers shall be accountable to the local church for their service but, with respect to their doctrine, character and conduct, they shall be accountable to the MEGaP committee. Located ministers in good standing shall be listed in the records of the conference as local elders, local deacons or local ordained ministers, according to their ordinations.

Location is viewed as a termination of conference membership. Located ministers retain ordination credentials but do not have a voice or vote in the conference unless elected by a local church as a lay delegate. Because located ministers' memberships are fixed at a local Free Methodist Church, they are entitled to vote in the local church.

Located ministers against whom the local church lodges complaints shall appear before the MEGaP committee to answer the complaints. They shall not be disciplined by the local church nor shall they be deprived of ordination credentials without due process being followed by the MEGaP committee.

Located ministers may be restored to an itinerating ministry within the conference as follows:

- The MEGaP committee shall recommend;
- The board of administration shall approve by a majority vote;

- Those who move to reside within the bounds of another conference shall approach the MEGaP committee of that conference requesting that their membership be received. If received, the MEGaP committee of the receiving conference shall locate them;

Between each general conference, the director of leadership development and church health shall contact all located ministers to determine whether they are regularly attending the church where their membership has been located.

Located ministers shall conduct themselves as exemplary members of the society where they are located. Those who are not regularly attending (including those where the church has been closed) will be requested to submit written proposals to the MEGaP as to what should be done with their credentials (e.g., deposited with the conference, transferred to another denomination, surrendered, etc.). The credentials of those who fail to respond with proposals prior to the next general conference will be declared null and void by MEGaP.

MEMBERSHIP IN ANOTHER DENOMINATION

A minister who unites with another denomination (in either a ministerial or lay relationship) without having requested or received proper credentials of withdrawal will, upon satisfactory evidence of that fact, be declared withdrawn by MEGaP.

SUSPENSION LEADING TO EXPULSION

Ministers may receive discipline, be restored and have their credentials returned according to the provisions of ¶925.

Ministers under discipline shall surrender their credentials to be filed in the conference office. Those who refuse or neglect to do so shall have them declared null and void by the conference, or in the interim, by the MEGaP committee. (See ¶830).

Suspended ministers retain conference membership but are prohibited from exercising any ministerial functions or conference privileges while suspended.

The membership of expelled ministers is terminated on the date of their expulsion.

WITHDRAWN FROM THE CONFERENCE AND THE DENOMINATION

A minister who has withdrawn from the conference and the denomination shall be so listed. If a minister requests to withdraw while under discipline, the listing shall add the designation, “under complaint.”

WITHDRAWN UNDER COMPLAINT

Ministers who leave the church after complaints have been lodged against them, and who subsequently regain church membership, shall not be allowed to exercise the functions of the ministerial office until they have satisfied the conference to which they belonged regarding the complaints.

¶850 APPOINTMENTS

The MEGaP committee shall appoint ministers to their fields of service according to the policies and procedures outlined in the document: “*Transitions Handbook*.” (See ¶875)

A minister may be appointed to a church without having charge of it; in such cases the administration of it shall rest upon an ordained minister assigned by the bishop.

¶851 MULTIPLE STAFF APPOINTMENTS

When a local church determines that additional appointed pastoral staff is needed, the lead pastor shall consult the director of leadership development and church health before any local action is taken. The

director of leadership development and church health shall represent the conference in the selection and recommendation for appointment.

Appointed assistant/associate pastors who desire a change shall notify the director of leadership development and church health and the lead pastor. Official boards that desire a change of appointed staff members shall notify the director of leadership development and church health and the staff member. No change shall be made without due process.

If a new lead pastor is to be appointed, it is not mandated by the conference that other staff members must submit their resignations. Each individual church will need to create policy in this regard. (See ¶375.2)

¶852 SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS

In order to nourish a healthy connection with the denomination, all ordained ministers and commissioned ministers serving in special appointments are required to attend ministers' conferences, general conferences and regional gatherings and to submit annual continuing education reports as a condition of retaining their ordination credentials. Attendance at minister's conferences and regional gatherings, as well as reporting CEUs, is optional for retirees.

They are also encouraged to be part of network meetings and to attend a local FM church (if there is one within fifty kilometres.)

The director of leadership development and church health shall connect with all ministers serving under special appointment, except supply pastors and transition pastors, at least once between General Conferences.

ATTENDING SCHOOL

Ministers may be granted special appointments to further their studies. Such appointments shall name the institution of further education.

CHAPLAINS

Chaplains provide ministry to persons in special situations beyond the local church, such as in the armed forces, prisons, care-giving institutions, and law enforcement agencies. The national MEGaP committee establishes endorsement procedures for chaplaincy. The Free Methodist Church in Canada recognizes the Association of Chaplains, the Free Methodist Chaplains Association of North America, together with its constitution and duly elected officers. Canadian chaplains may hold membership in this association.

CHURCH PLANTERS

Ministers who are planting churches may be granted special appointments to the setting (neighbourhood, village, town) where they are working to establish a church plant.

DENOMINATIONAL MINISTRY

Ministers may be granted special appointments to ministries of the church at large; such as bishop, conference personnel, teachers or administrators in higher education, missionary service or supply relationship in another conference.

INTERIM PASTOR

Interim pastors provide basic pastoral functions during a transition time (preaching, visiting, etc.)

NETWORK MENTOR

A Network Mentor is an ordained minister who is trained and resourced by the bishop and national leadership team and is responsible to help the network leader create a "discipleship experience" for their

network of pastors. A Network Mentor is appointed by the Bishop after consultation with MEGaP. A detailed job description is found in ¶881 and a description of the Networks is found in ¶855.

RELEASED FOR SERVICE BEYOND THE DENOMINATION

Ministers may be granted special appointments to serve in ministries beyond the denomination. Their place of service shall be listed in their appointment.

RETIRED

Ministers may retire upon reaching age 65. In exceptional situations, ministers listed as retired may be appointed. The MEGaP committee shall review cases of those seeking early retirement.

SUPPLY PASTORS

Ministerial candidates who are not yet ordained, commissioned ministers and ministers who are ordained with other denominations may be appointed as pastors of our churches. Because they are not yet members of the conference, they shall be appointed as supply pastors.

TRANSITION PASTOR

Transition pastors have special training, skills and authority to help a church refocus during a transition.

¶853 SPECIAL RELATIONSHIPS

IN TRANSITION

A minister who has been released from an appointment shall be listed as “in transition.” After two years of being in transition, ministers without an appointment shall be located at a local church, be listed as retired, or shall deposit their credentials according to the provisions of ¶845. Ministers who do not indicate a preference at that time will have their credentials deposited.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM CONFERENCE MEMBERSHIP

A minister not available for appointment to active ministry may be granted a leave of absence by the conference upon the recommendation of the MEGaP committee. The reason for the leave of absence: for personal reasons, or for secular work shall be listed. After a maximum of twelve months on leave of absence, the minister shall be located at a local church or deposit their credentials according to the provisions of ¶845. Ministers who do not indicate a preference at that time, will have their credentials deposited.

LOCATED

Located ministers are ordained persons who are not available to be appointed and so are located with their membership at a local church. Once located, they are eligible to vote and to hold office at the local church, and no longer eligible to vote at conference. They shall be accountable for their service to the local church but, with respect to their doctrine, character and conduct, they shall be accountable to the MEGaP committee.

SUSPENDED

- A minister who has been suspended shall be so listed.
- If a suspended minister has entered into a Covenant of Restoration, he/she will be so listed.

¶855 NATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM, NETWORK MENTOR TEAM AND NETWORK LEADERS

1. NATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM

The directors of administration, church planting, and leadership development and church health are members of the national leadership team, led by the bishop. The bishop with the help of network leader mentors and network leaders, will oversee the development of healthy networks or “discipleship communities” for FMCiC pastors and leaders. Each of these responsibilities is assigned to a director. (A more detailed job description exists for each director position.)

Discipleship is a key component of the FMCiC, as it is Jesus’ method of “building” His church. Furthermore discipleship was how John Wesley grew the Methodist movement. Since discipleship is key to the health and vitality of the FMCiC, it is clear that our leaders and pastors need to be full participants in discipleship. Networks are therefore to be “discipleship communities”. Pastors and leaders will enter a covenant relationship which includes creating a mutual discipling experience for each member of the network. Networks will therefore necessarily be a safe “place” for pastors, chaplains and other ordained leaders to be supported and grow in their personal and ministry lives.

2. NETWORK MENTOR TEAM:

- Are ordained ministers appointed by the bishop after consultation with MEGaP
- Are trained and resourced by the bishop and national leadership team
- Are responsible to help the network leader create a “discipleship experience” for their network of pastors.
- A detailed job description is found in ¶881

3. NETWORK LEADERS

- Are trained and resourced by the bishop, national leadership team and network leader mentors. (See the Networks Chart ¶460 B.)
- Are assigned to a network leader mentor who will provide them with support and supervision
- Are responsible to cultivate a “discipleship community” for their network of pastors by:
 - building relationships with the pastors in the network
 - planning and facilitating network meetings
 - introducing their network to a covenant wherein the network pursues a discipleship community.
 - being involved in denominational activities
- A detailed job description is found in ¶881

¶860 OFFICE OF BISHOP

The bishop is elected to serve the church as an overseer. This ordained minister functions as a teacher and defender of the faith, a general shepherd, a pastor to the pastors, and an administrator who by good example and faithful application of *The Manual* assures the order of the church. The bishop is to inspire the church by preaching and being an example of one who carries out Christ’s great commission.

As the national pastoral leader and chief executive officer of The Free Methodist Church in Canada, the bishop’s ministry of leadership encompasses spiritual, governance, administrative and representative dimensions. Overseeing a broad range of persons, teams and activities, the primary responsibilities of the bishop include the development of the spiritual vitality, the administrative effectiveness and the strategic direction of the national church. As chair of the general conference and chief executive officer of The Free Methodist Church in Canada and national leadership team, the bishop guides in the creation of vision and mission for the church today and in the future, leading to the growth and development of the church in Canada. The board of administration is responsible to ensure that a more detailed job description is kept current.

Process for the Election of a Bishop

It is understood that a term is defined as the three-year period between general conferences. An incumbent bishop will normally indicate to the spring meeting of the board of administration the year prior to a general conference whether or not he/she is willing to serve as bishop for another term. The minimum amount of time for this notice would be at the fall meeting of the board of administration the year prior to a general conference.

If Incumbent Bishop is Willing to Serve Another Term:

If the incumbent bishop is willing to serve another term, the board of administration initiates an assessment process to determine his/her suitability for serving another term. This starts with commissioning the personnel team to conduct a full 360 performance appraisal of the incumbent bishop, to be completed by the fall board of administration meeting prior to general conference. At that fall board of administration meeting, the personnel team reports to the board of administration and makes a recommendation as to whether or not the incumbent bishop is suitable for another term. This is based upon the full 360 performance appraisal, previous annual performance appraisals, results of regular bishop-personnel team connection points, and the results of other personnel team connection points with national leadership team and The Free Methodist Church in Canada employees over the previous two years, as per the personnel team policy. The board of administration conducts a confidence vote on the incumbent bishop, based on the personnel team recommendation and other information/observations, and with a minimum 75% majority vote required, determines suitability for proceeding with a vote for the incumbent bishop at general conference.

At this decision point (the fall board of administration prior to the next general conference), communication is made to the general conference from the board of administration indicating the results of this process, that there will either be an upcoming general conference affirmation vote for the incumbent Bishop, or that a bishop leadership task force will be put in place to seek a new bishop.

A general conference vote of a minimum 75% approval is required for the incumbent bishop to serve another term. If the incumbent bishop does not receive a general conference vote of a minimum 75% approval, a bishop leadership task force is triggered as per the section above.

If incumbent Bishop is unwilling (or unsuitable) to serve another term:

When an incumbent bishop declines to stand for re-election or when it otherwise becomes necessary to elect a new bishop (whether he/she is found to be unsuitable to serve or other reasons), the board of administration appoints a bishop leadership task force to seek a new bishop. The bishop leadership task force will consist of five to seven people. The board of administration will appoint the chair of the bishop leadership task force and the bishop leadership task force itself will appoint a vice-chair and secretary. Other considerations in the formation of the bishop leadership task force membership will include:

- Representatives from the board of administration and personnel team
- Approximately 50% clergy and 50% lay representation
- Membership in the conference or a local Free Methodist congregation
- Not an employee of The Free Methodist Church in Canada
- Has significant involvement with the denomination (i.e. denominational committees) for at least one year
- Spiritually mature and committed to involvement in the bishop leadership task force that may last for several months
- A reputation for being able to keep information confidential

- Willing to work in cooperation with others and the board of administration
- As much as possible, represent the demographics of The Free Methodist Church in Canada (i.e. age, male/female, English/French speaking and ethnicity)
- At least one person with human resource experience would be a helpful resource

A proposed timeline for the bishop leadership task force follows (assuming notice at the spring board of administration meeting one year prior to General Conference):

- Month #1: The bishop leadership task force meets virtually for a month to pray. They will work with the national prayer team to mobilize The Free Methodist Church in Canada to pray about this process;
- Month #2:
 - The bishop leadership task force creates a strategic plan including timelines;
 - The bishop leadership task force works with the board of administration and personnel team to produce a current job description for the new bishop and a remuneration package;
 - The bishop leadership task force works with the director of communications to outline the bishop leadership task force process, communicate the qualities and competencies desired for a bishop, and invite The Free Methodist Church in Canada to pray;
- Month #3: the bishop leadership task force solicits names of potential candidates from the local church delegates and members of conference;
- Months #4-5: Potential candidates are contacted and shortlisted. References are requested;
- Month #6: Interviews and reference checks
- Month #7: Up to three potential candidates are chosen and their biography information is published for at least three weeks, for the prayerful consideration by the Conference members.
- Month #8: A conference online vote is held to elect a bishop from the name(s) put forward as potential candidate(s);
- Note that the successful candidate does not assume the Office of the Bishop until the consecration ceremony is held.

This above process will need to be abbreviated if the bishop leadership task force is triggered should the incumbent bishop not receive a minimum of 75% in a board of administration confidence vote or a general conference affirmation vote as noted above.

Other considerations:

- To be elected, a Free Methodist ordained minister must receive at least a majority vote of 50% plus one.
- The election shall be completed prior to the meeting of the general conference by a deadline set by the board of administration.
- The board of administration shall ensure that there is a method to confidentially receive and record votes from the lay and ministerial delegates of the general conference.
- The bishop-elect will be introduced to lay and ministerial delegates of the general conference.
- The incumbent bishop will provide orientation to the bishop-elect in the months prior to the meeting of the general conference.
- The bishop-elect will normally be consecrated when the general conference meets or, if necessary, at another time arranged by the board of administration. He/she will not be employed by the general conference until he/she has been consecrated.
- The bishop-elect assumes office at the conclusion of his/her consecration.
- If the bishop's office is vacated within six months of a general conference, it shall be left vacant for the ensuing general conference to fill.

Bishop Exit Process

Though it is assumed that the outgoing Bishop will be healthy and supportive of the transition process, the conference must assume a level of responsibility for a smooth passing of the baton. When an incumbent bishop indicates an unwillingness to serve an additional term, or when the board of administration has determined that the incumbent bishop is unsuitable to serve for an additional term, the exit process proceeds as follows:

- In the event that the transition is initiated by the board of administration, the board of administration meets alone with the outgoing bishop to discuss the rationale for their decision. The decision of the board of administration is final without opportunity for appeal. To allow the outgoing bishop some time to process the decision, the discussion relating to the bishop's remaining term and communication of the decision is deferred to a subsequent board of administration meeting.
- The board of administration meets alone with the outgoing bishop to discuss:
 - How the transition decision will be communicated (see following)
 - Transition of authority to the incoming bishop (see bishop onboarding)
 - Challenges, expectations and strategies for the remaining term
 - They pray together.
- The decision is then communicated by the board of administration to the personnel team, to the national leadership team, then to the remaining ministry centre staff, then to the conference.
- The outgoing bishop participates in an exit interview with the personnel team in which outstanding issues of concern are documented, ongoing issues pertaining to the office of the bishop are discussed and recorded, and an opportunity is given to the outgoing bishop to convey any suggestions or criticisms. The exit interview is summarized and presented by the personnel team chair to the board of administration.
- The personnel team is primarily responsible for helping the outgoing bishop process the transition. It is recommended that the personnel team check in with the outgoing bishop every other week to pray with him/her and ask these types of questions:
 - Do you feel supported by the board of administration, national leadership team and personnel team?
 - What concerns or challenges are you facing in this transition?
 - Are you meeting with your accountability partner throughout this time?
- Members of the personnel team are responsible to check in with members of the national leadership team regarding their experience with the outgoing bishop.

Bishop-Elect Onboarding

The bishop-elect must agree to the onboarding process as a condition of employment on the official letter of understanding for employment.

The bishop-elect assumes the office of bishop following his/her consecration ceremony. There are a variety of onboarding activities prior to consecration for the outgoing bishop to help orient the bishop-elect; however, the bishop-elect is not to assume any decision-making authority until consecration has occurred.

In the event that the outgoing bishop is unwilling or unable to assist with onboarding the new bishop, the onboarding process is overseen by the personnel team chair, board of administration chair, and the outgoing bishop's administrative assistant. The national leadership team is to be consulted regularly through the onboarding process.

Pre-Consecration

The time period after a new bishop is elected and before his/her consecration offers an opportunity for the bishop-elect to familiarize themselves with the ministry centre calendar, personnel, processes and committees. The Bishop-elect should take this opportunity to attend and observe various staff and committee meetings (e.g. board of administration, ministerial education guidance and placement, study commission on doctrine, ministry centre staff, team and network mentors/leaders and regional coaches). The intent is to provide a solid knowledge base from which the bishop-elect can evaluate and implement changes following his/her consecration.

The outgoing bishop retains decision-making authority during this time, in consultation with the board of administration, national leadership team and personnel team, and is not authorized to make any major structural or personnel changes. The bishop-elect does not have authority to make changes until his/her consecration.

With consideration that the lead-up to general conference is a busy time, the outgoing bishop and the bishop-elect should plan for a few days of overlap in the office together in the month prior to the consecration. This gives the outgoing bishop a time to transfer confidential information, processes and any other multi-perspective information. The outgoing bishop is to understand that this is a transfer of information as opposed to transfer of management style.

The outgoing bishop should vacate his/her office prior to consecration of the bishop-elect.

Post-Consecration

At this point, the outgoing bishop's term has finished, and the new bishop assumes decision-making authority. If the pre-consecration time has been used wisely, the new bishop will be familiar with the ministry centre calendar, personnel, processes and committees; however, the new bishop must understand that the transition of authority can be stressful for staff. As such, the new bishop should incorporate the following into the early days of his/her term:

- A meeting with the outgoing bishop's Administrative Assistant
- Receiving the new employee orientation given to all new ministry centre employees
- An orientation meeting with the board of administration
- Recommending changes to and/or continuing with members of the personnel team
- Selecting and/or continuing with members of the national leadership team. The national leadership team members are required to be prepared to submit their letters of resignation upon request by the board of administration or the new bishop.
- Meeting each ministry centre staff member individually to hear about their role and how they fit into the organization
- Addressing ministry centre staff as a group
- Addressing team leaders, network mentors/leaders and regional coaches

Bishops shall be amenable to the conference for their character and for the discharge of the duties. They shall report at least annually to the board of administration on the state of the work.

When bishops or former bishops retire, they shall be given the title of Bishop Emeritus provided they have served the church as bishop for a minimum of six years.

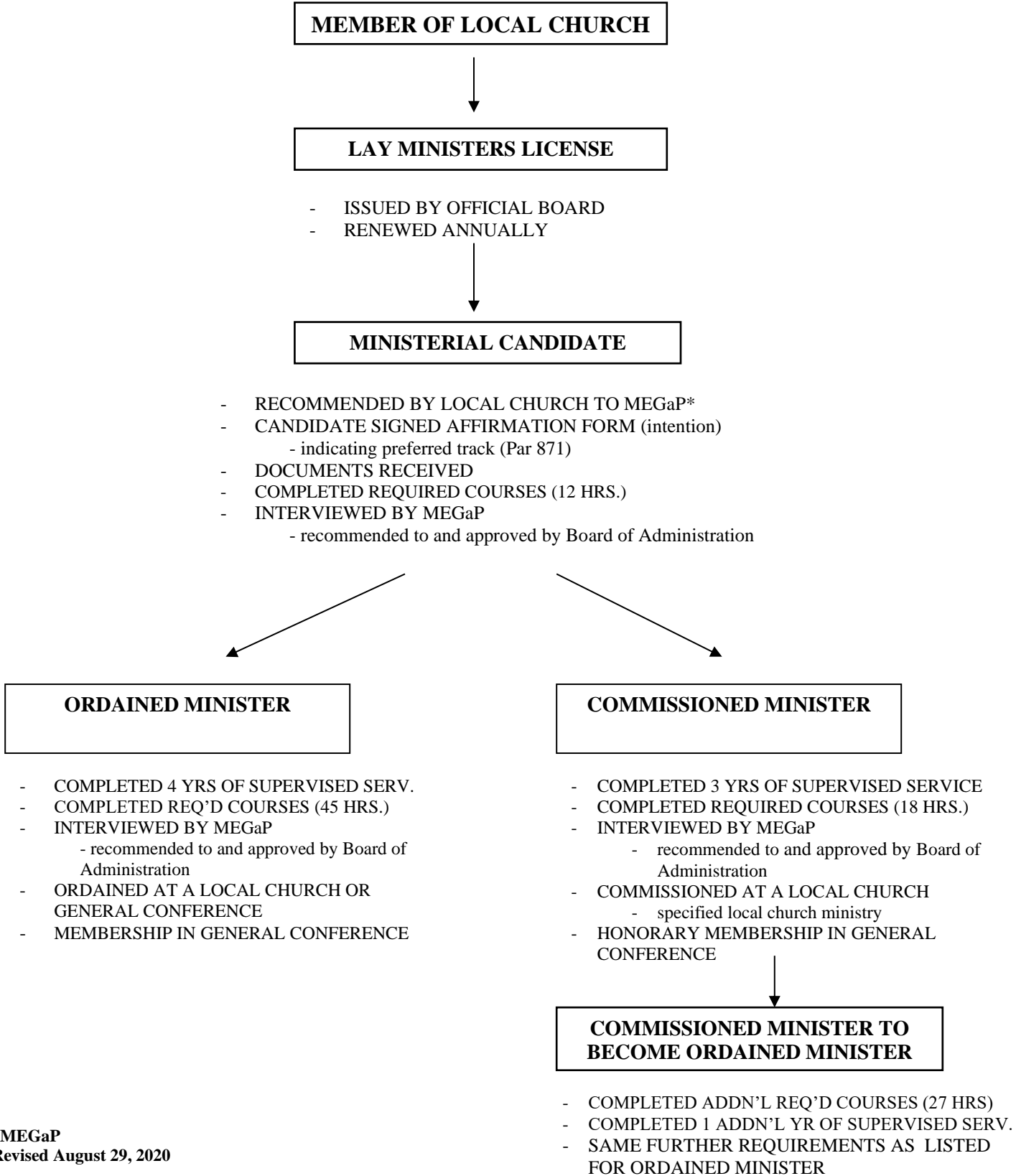
The title of Bishop Emeritus may, due to extenuating circumstances as verified by the conference Ministerial Education Guidance and Placement committee, be granted, reviewed and/or adjusted by the Board of Administration.

The salary of a bishop shall be raised in the CORE budget. The management committee (with input from the personnel team) has authority to establish the salary of the bishop. Upon retirement the bishop shall receive a pension in accordance with the Ministers Pension Plan of The Free Methodist Church in Canada.

¶ 870 CHARTS, FORMS, RITUALS, DOCUMENTS

¶ 870A DISCERNING THE CALL OF GOD

MEGAP MINISTERIAL TRACKING PROCESS
The Free Methodist Church in Canada™



*MEGaP
Revised August 29, 2020

*MEGaP: Ministerial Education, Guidance and Placement Committee

¶871 MINISTERIAL CANDIDATE’S STATEMENT OF AFFIRMATION

1. Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour and offer yourself in service to Him as a ministerial candidate in the Canadian General Conference of the Free Methodist Church?
2. a) Will you further equip yourself spiritually, morally, and intellectually for the Christian ministry?
b) For what type of ministry are you preparing yourself? Please check one:
_____ ordained
_____ commissioned
c) If commissioned ministry, what will your specialty be?
3. Having studied *The Manual of The Free Methodist Church in Canada* carefully, do you believe the Articles of Religion and accept the moral vision as articulated in Chapter 6, and do you embrace the purpose, vision, mission, and core values of The Free Methodist Church in Canada? Will you abide by the *Manual’s* instructions?
4. Will you submit to the guidance of the conference through the MEGaP committee?

All these I affirm before God with a clear conscience.

Name: (please print) _____

Signed: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

¶872 MINISTER'S STATEMENT OF AFFIRMATION

1. Have you faith in Christ?
2. Have you present assurance that your sins are forgiven?
3. Do you experience purity of heart and life and empowerment for service, through the fullness of the Spirit, and will you through study, counsel, and prayer seek and maintain this experience and lead your people to experience the same?
4. Are you resolved to devote yourself to God and to the work to which He calls you?
5. Will you partake of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as often as you can?
6. Will you endeavour to communicate the Gospel effectively?
7. Will you see that the people of all ages under your care are properly instructed and cared for?
8. Will you visit, ministering to those within and without the church?
9. Will you recommend fasting and prayer, both by teaching and example?
10. Having studied our *Manual* carefully, do you believe the Articles of Religion and accept the moral vision as articulated in Chapter 6, and do you embrace the purpose, vision, mission, and core values of The Free Methodist Church in Canada? Will you abide by the *Manual's* instructions?
11. Without being sectarian, will you promote the Free Methodist Church and its ministries in carrying out your work?

All these I affirm before God with a clear conscience.

Name: (please print) _____

Signed: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

¶873 SERVICE FOR THE COMMISSIONING OF MINISTERS

Presentation of Candidate

[The Board Chair shall present to the National Leadership Team member or designate (hereafter “NLT”), those who are to be commissioned, saying: “(name of NLT)_____, I present to you _____ (names of candidates) to be set apart as Commissioned Minister(s) in the Free Methodist Church.” Then the NLT shall say to the people:]

Dear Friends in Christ:

In the Free Methodist Church in Canada, Commissioned Ministers are persons called by God to become specialized Associate Pastors under an Ordained Minister’s leadership (in areas such as: Children and Family Pastor, Youth, Community Development Missionary, Social Media, etc.). They do not feel called to become Ordained Ministers and provide pastoral leadership to the entire church.

We intend, God willing, to set apart as Commissioned Ministers these who stand before you. We have examined them and we find them to be called by God to this ministry and suited for the same. If anyone knows any reason to the contrary, come forward now and make your objection known

The Collect

Almighty God, who appointed various orders of ministers in Your church, look with mercy upon these, Your servants, whom You have called. May they be replenished with your truth and adorned with holiness of life, so that both by word and good example, they may serve You faithfully. So may Your name be glorified and Your church built up, through the merits of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

The Old Testament - Jeremiah 1:4-10

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying,

*MEGaP
Revised August, 2022

Charts, Forms, Rituals, Documents - Chapter 8, page 30

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak for I am only a youth.” But the Lord said to me,

“Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’;
for to all to whom I send you, you shall go,
and whatever I command you, you shall speak.
Be not afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.”

Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me,

“Behold, I put my words in your mouth.
See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms,
to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow,
to build and to plant.”

The Epistle - I Peter 4:10-11

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

The Gospel - Luke 4:14-19

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues, and every one praised Him. He went to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day He went into the synagogue, as was His custom. And He stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. Unrolling it, He found the place where it is written:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me;
therefore He has anointed me to preach
good news to the poor.

He sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to release the oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

Questions for Commissioned Ministers

1. Do you believe you are inwardly moved by the Holy Spirit to be set apart as a commissioned minister in the church of Christ, to serve God, promoting His glory and edifying His people?

Answer: I so believe.

2. Do you sincerely believe all the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments?

Answer: I believe them all.

3. Will you diligently read, teach and expound the same, as opportunity is given?

Answer: I will.

4. It belongs to the office of a commissioned minister to serve the people of God in a specialized ministry under the leadership of an ordained minister. Will you do this gladly and willingly?

Answer: I will do so by the help of God.

5. Will you diligently regulate and pattern your life (and that of your family) according to the model and teaching of Christ and make (both) yourself (and them), as far as you are able, (a) wholesome example(s) to the flock of Christ?

Answer: I will do so, the Lord being my helper.

Charts, Forms, Rituals, Documents - Chapter 8, page 31

6. Will you respectfully obey those who are called to serve as leaders and overseers, following with glad mind and will their godly admonitions?

Answer: I will endeavour so to do, the Lord being my helper

[The candidates shall kneel, and the NLT, praying over them, shall say:]

Send Your Holy Spirit upon Your servant (name) for the office and work of a commissioned minister in Your church.

[The NLT shall deliver the Bible to each of the newly Commissioned Ministers in turn, saying:]

Let the Scriptures guide the authority given you this day to set forth God's Word to His people and to serve them in His name.

[Then the following collects shall be prayed:]

Almighty God, giver of all good things, who by Your divine providence has guided these, Your servants, to be set apart to serve Your church; make them, we pray, modest, humble, and constant in their serving and grant to them a ready will to observe all spiritual discipline; that they may always have the testimony of a good conscience and may continue ever stable and strong in Your Son, Christ Jesus. Grant them wisdom for work, patience in ministry and fill them with the holy joy that will give them strength. These petitions we offer in the name of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and honour, now and ever. Amen.

Assist us, O Lord, in all that we do with Your most gracious favour and continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in You, we may glorify Your holy name and finally, by Your mercy obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[They shall stand and face congregation, as it stands]

[The NLT shall say:]

Let the Church, represented by all those present here, support you as you participate in the opportunities it provides for you to continue to grow and develop as a minister of the gospel.

[Presentation of credentials and congratulations.]

Benediction

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

¶874 SERVICE FOR THE ORDINATION OF MINISTERS

[The secretary shall present the candidates to the bishop, saying: "Bishop _____, I present to you _____ (reading their names aloud) to be ordained as ministers in the Free Methodist Church." Then the bishop shall say to the people:]

Dear Friends in Christ: All persons who belong to Jesus Christ are called to minister His reconciling work through the Church. But to lead the Church, our Lord calls particular believers to shepherd the people, teach doctrine, administer the sacraments and keep order. Each person who stands before you testifies to such an inward call of the Holy Spirit to the work of an ordained minister.

God calls men and women, but the Church examines them so as to confirm the presence of maturity, good character and the necessary spiritual gifts and personal graces. These persons who stand before you have been so examined and affirmed by conference leaders for ordination.

When people are set apart for this leadership responsibility, they are ordained by the laying on of hands. Paul remembered this moment in his counsel to Timothy when he said: "I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands." [2 Timothy 1:6, RSV]

Whether ordained ministers serve as pastors, teachers, missionaries, chaplains or in unique combinations of these vocations, they need to provide Spirit-filled leadership. In fulfilling the Great Commandment to love the Lord our God, others and to love others, and ourselves; and in fulfilling the Great Commission to go into all the world to make disciples, ordained ministers are God's gift to the Church.

The leadership of ordained ministers focuses on developing healthy, biblical communities of holy people. These communities multiply disciples, mentor leaders, create new groups and plant new churches. Such Spirit-filled leadership requires vision and courage to move people to obey the Word of God, to walk in step with the Spirit of God and, with joy, to see His church increase.

Rooted in a deep love for Christ and sharing His compassion for people, ordained ministers help to create congregations that are fervent in prayer, enthusiastic in worship, holy in lifestyle, insistent for justice, caring for the poor, and reaching out locally and globally to invite all people into a life-long relationship with Jesus Christ.

The Collect

Almighty God, the giver of all good gifts, who by Your divine providence appointed various orders in Your church: Give Your grace, we humbly pray, to these who come now to their ordination. Replenish them with the truth of your doctrine and endue them with holiness of life as they keep watch over themselves and all the flock that they oversee.* Help them to faithfully serve before You to the glory of Your great name and to the benefit of Your holy church, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. Amen.

*Acts 20:28

The Old Testament - Isaiah 6:1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above Him stood the seraphim; each had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of His glory."

And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me. For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

Then flew one of the seraphim to me, having in his hand a burning coal which he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth, and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven." And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."

The Epistle – I Timothy 4:11-16

Command and teach these things. Don't let anyone look down on you ..., but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

The Gospel –John 15:5, 8-17

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing ... This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.

Dear Friends in Christ, [*Here the candidates may be called by name. And the bishop shall say to them as follows:*]

Each of you has heard in the lessons taken from the Scriptures what dignity and importance belong to this office to which you are called. We have confidence that you have **considered** these things long before this time and that you have clearly determined, by God's grace, to give yourself completely to the fulfilment of your call. It is our hope that with all your strength you will apply yourself wholly to this one thing and direct all your concerns and studies in this direction. May you continually pray to God the Father, by the mediation of our only

in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture,

Saviour, Jesus Christ, for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that by daily reading and weighing of the Scriptures, you may grow stronger and more mature in your ministry. May you endeavour through the sanctifying power of Christ to be a wholesome and godly example for others to follow.

And now, so that this assembled congregation of Christ may also understand your mind and will in these things, and that your promise may move you all the more to fulfil your calling, answer plainly these questions, which we ask in the Name of God and His Church.

Questions for Ordained Ministers

1. Do you believe in the Triune God, and confess Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord?

Answer: I do so believe and confess.

2. Do you wholeheartedly love the Lord your God and your neighbour as yourself ?

Answer: I do

3. Will you be careful to nourish your soul through the disciplined use of the means of grace and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, continually rekindle the gift of God that is in you?

Answer: I will

4. Do you confidently believe that the Lord has called you to serve His church as an ordained minister?

Answer: I so believe

5. Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain all doctrine necessary for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, and are the unique and authoritative standard for the church's faith and life?

Answer: I am.

6. Will you then, as you exercise your ministry of Word and sacrament and leadership, faithfully study, teach and apply the truth of these Scriptures publicly and privately? Will you teach nothing as necessary to salvation except what can be proved by the Scriptures and, when necessary, graciously correct error?

Answer: I will do so by the help of the Lord.

7. Will you commit to living a holy life according to the teachings and behaviour of Christ so as to be a wholesome example of godliness? (And will you do your best to influence your husband/wife/ family to join you in this commitment?)

Answer: I will do so by the help of the Lord.

8. Will you, in the exercise of your ministry, lead people to faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and as Lord, and disciple them to grow in grace as you lead them to participate together in God's mission to bring wholeness to the church, neighbourhood, community and world?

Answer: I will do so by the help of the Lord.

9. Will you be loyal to the Free Methodist Church, committing yourself, along with those serving with you, to be accountable to the authority of the Holy Scriptures, to *The Manual of the Free Methodist Church in Canada* and to those appointed to oversee your ministry?

Answer: I will

[The candidates shall kneel, the ordained ministers shall be called forward for the laying on of hands, and the bishop shall say:]

Let us pray.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, of Your infinite love and goodness You have given us Your only and dearly beloved son, Jesus Christ, our redeemer and the author of everlasting life. To You we offer our heartfelt thanks. We praise and worship You, and we humbly pray that we may continue always to be thankful for these and all other blessings that come from You. May we mature daily and go forward

*MEGaP Revised February 8, 2013

in the knowledge and faith of Him who died for us, who rose from death and even now lives to make intercession for us. May Your holy name be forever glorified and Your blessed kingdom enlarged, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

[The bishop and the ordained ministers present shall lay their hands upon the head of each of them, and the bishop, addressing each by name shall say:]

The Lord pour upon you the Holy Spirit for the office and work of an ordained minister in the Free Methodist Church now committed unto you by the laying on of our hands. Amen.

[They shall continue to kneel, and the bishop shall deliver the Bible to each one of them in succession and shall say:]

By the power of the Holy Spirit, take authority to serve as an ordained minister in Christ's church. Faithfully proclaim His Word, declare His forgiveness, celebrate the sacraments, care for and lead God's people.

Prayer of Blessing

Most merciful Father, we ask You to send Your heavenly blessings upon these Your servants, that they may be clothed with righteousness and that Your Word spoken by their mouths may have success. Grant us also that we may have grace to hear and receive what they shall deliver out of Your most Holy Word, or shall speak in agreement with the same, as the means of our salvation. May we, in all our words and deeds, seek Your glory and the increase of Your kingdom through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Assist us, O Lord, in all that we do with Your most gracious favour and further us with Your continued help, that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in You, we may glorify Your name and finally, by Your mercy, obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[They shall stand and face congregation, as it stands]

[The bishop shall say:]

Let the Church, represented by those present here as ordained ministers and the congregation, support you as you participate in the opportunities it provides for you to continue to grow and develop as a minister of the gospel.

[Presentation of credentials and congratulations]

Benediction

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessings of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. Amen.

¶875 POLICIES FOR PASTORAL TRANSITIONS AND APPOINTMENTS IN THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH IN CANADA

The Free Methodist Church in Canada, through the ministerial education, guidance and placement committee, appoints pastors to local churches. While the appointment of pastors by the conference is a historical distinctive of Methodism, the process of making appointments has been modified from time to time to meet the changing needs and expectations of pastors and local churches throughout the history of the denomination.

In keeping with the expressed core values of The Free Methodist Church in Canada and the commitment to empower the local church, the process of appointment has been further modified to involve the local church in a greater and more responsible manner.

1. The director of leadership development and church health declares a pastoral transition through a letter sent to the church and pastor when:
 - a. The director of leadership development and church health agrees in writing to a pastor's signed request to be released from the present appointment. The director of leadership development and church health will advise the bishop and the church. The church is to receive at least sixty days notice unless modified by an agreement signed by the director of leadership development and church health, the pastor and the delegate(s).
 - b. The director of leadership development and church health agrees in writing to a signed letter of request from the chair of the official board and delegate indicating that a strong majority (75%) of the official board has expressed in a recorded vote that they have lost confidence in the pastor's capacity to lead the congregation
 - c. If a performance appraisal of the pastoral leader (see ¶335), based on the current official board approved job description (built locally and reflecting the current vision and stated mission) results in an overall average score below 5.5, the results will be referred to the director of leadership development and church health and the ministerial education, guidance and placement committee (MEGaP) who may declare that the church is in transition. The pastor is to receive at least sixty days' notice unless modified by a salary continuance agreement as outlined in ¶880.
 - d. Disciplinary action of the bishop and MEGaP committee necessitates a transition in leadership.
 - e. After an appraisal, it is the opinion of the conference, through the MEGaP committee, that a transition is necessary for the health of the church, the pastor or both.
 - f. At the discretion of the MEGaP committee, the conference appoints a pastor to another charge. The vacancy created by such action places a church in transition.
2. Once a church has been declared in transition:
 - a. The local board will be instructed by the director of leadership development and church health to establish a pastoral leadership task force (PLTF) of at least four persons who:
 - are members and/or preparing for membership, who have had significant involvement in the local church for more than a year.
 - fairly represent the makeup of the congregation
 - are committed to involvement that may last several months.
 - are willing to work in co-operation with the director of leadership development and church health and the MEGaP committee.

***MEGaP**

Revised Aug 29, 2020

- are not local church employees, ministerial candidates or lay ministers who are tracking for ministry within the FMCIC, members of conference or located ministers.
 - The delegate(s) shall be a member of the pastoral leadership task force.
3. The director of leadership development and church health or a designee will be assigned to guide the pastoral leadership task force.
 4. The first task of the pastoral leadership task force (PLTF) is to develop a church profile to be given to prospective candidates which should include:
 - a. A clear job description based on the current vision and stated mission approved by the official board. The Job Description Performance Appraisal System (JDPAS), a resource available from the conference at the expense of the local church, is recommended for use in evaluating the present condition of the church's ministry and for communicating the role of the pastor to the MEGaP Committee for presentation to prospective pastors.
 - b. If the JDPAS process is not used, the profile must include the church's present vision, mission, core values and pastoral job description. The pastoral job description should be built on biblical, community and congregational research.
 - c. A profile of the local church will also include:
 - local church description (i.e., building, pastoral history, finances, staff)
 - community information describing the positive life of the village, town or city
 - the preparation of other proposals for pastoral leadership with supporting rationale
(For example, a church may need to face the reality that they can only recommend a bi-vocational pastor to give leadership at this time.)
 5. The director of leadership development and church health and/or MEGaP committee, in consultation with the PLTF, and using the summary of the profile, will develop a short list of MEGaP approved potential candidates. When a transition pastor has been appointed, he/she should not assume that he/she will be recommended as the new lead pastor. He/she may, however, be considered for short lists. The short list will contain no more than three names. Short-listed pastors will be informed by the PLTF that they are on a short list.
 6. The PLTF will limit its consideration of candidates to the short list. The PLTF will develop an appropriate interview process in consultation with the director of leadership development and church health. (See the "Transitions Handbook" available from the director of leadership development and church health's office.) All candidates on the short list will have a first interview by telephone or in person, depending on travel distance. Further interviews, after the initial interview, may be limited to only one candidate, and not necessarily extended to all short-listed candidates. An invitation to participate in a worship service at the local church may be offered to only the final candidate.
 7. During this process the chairperson of the PLTF needs to maintain clear and current communication with the candidates and the director of leadership development and church health or designate.
 8. The PLTF process will eventually result in the preparation of a recommendation to the director of leadership development and church health for action by the MEGaP committee. A Letter of Understanding (§879) will have been drafted and signed by the candidate prior to the recommendation being sent to the director of leadership development and church health. The PLTF will notify unsuccessful candidates in writing.

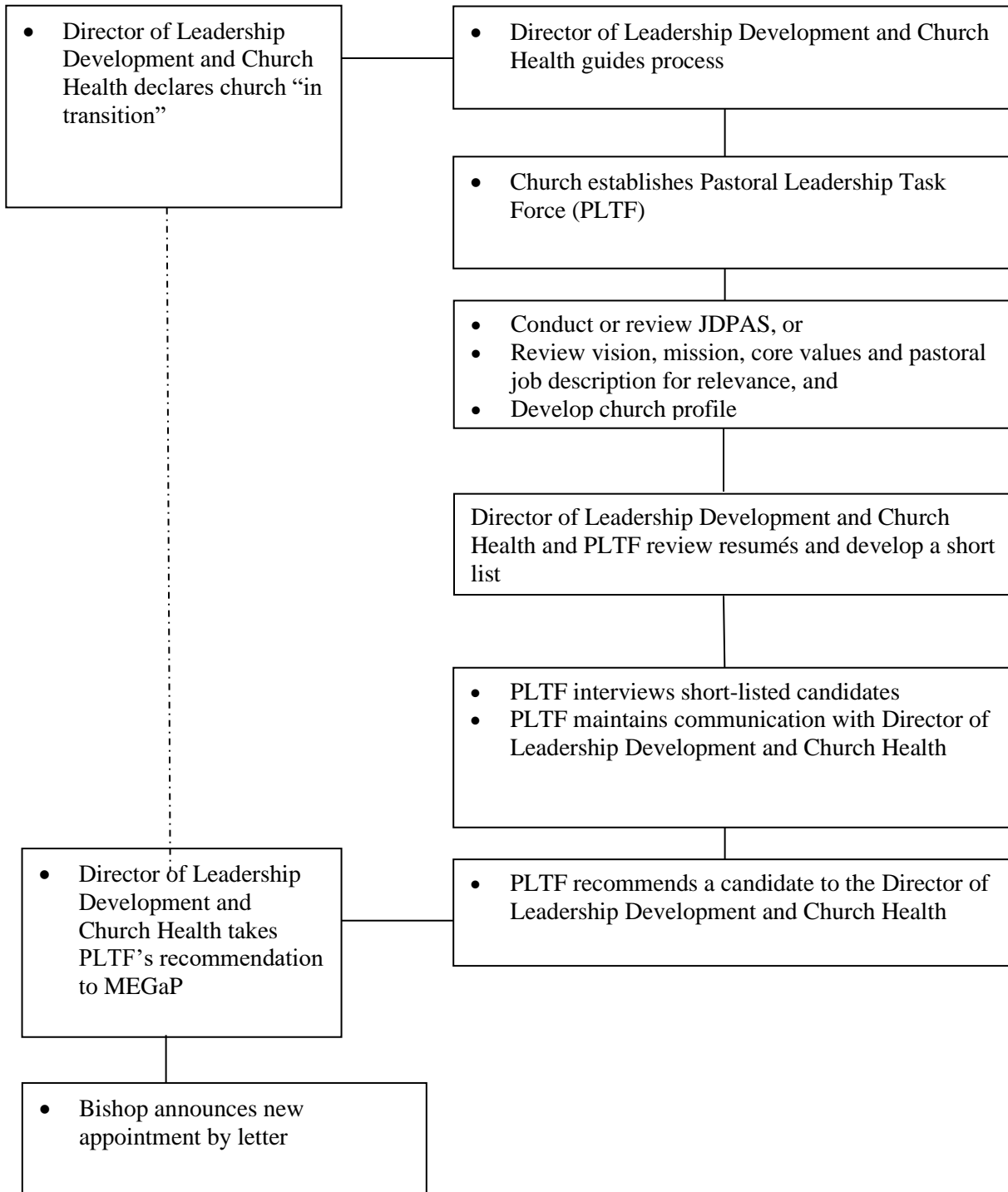
9. The recommendation should use the following wording: *The Pastor and Board of Name Free Methodist Church, City , Province recommends to the Ministerial Education Guidance and Placement Committee that Candidate's Name be appointed to Church name as Title of Position effective date that the appointment should start.*

Note: The assigning of a pastor's title is the responsibility of the local church. (See Par. 374.4.) If, in the future, an appointed pastor's title is changed because of a job description change, the local church will inform the credentialing coordinator of the FMCiC of the new title. The only exception to this is in the case of a staff pastor becoming a lead pastor (including assuming a transition lead pastor role). In this case, an appointment recommendation needs to be made to MEGaP.

10. When the MEGaP committee approves the recommendation from the PLTF, the bishop will announce the new appointment, thus completing the process. The PLTF will disband.
11. The receiving church will be responsible for the expenses incurred in the recruitment and moving of a new pastor.

Note: These are the first pages of a document that is used to coach local churches when they go into transition. These pages summarize the policies and process of pastoral transitions as practised in The Free Methodist Church in Canada. The complete *Transitions Handbook* is available from the FMCiC website or the director of leadership development and church health's office. The chart on the following page summarizes the whole process.

Church in transition



¶877 A SERVICE OF INDUCTION

THE EXCHANGE OF COMMITMENTS

Bishop (or designee):

Christian friends, we have come at the invitation of this church for the induction of (the Reverend) _____ as pastor of this congregation. Inasmuch as this solemn act involves mutual obligations, I call upon all of you to unite in a covenant of dedication. *(The pastor will stand.)*

My colleague in Christ, by the will of God and the appointment of The Free Methodist Church in Canada, you have been appointed as _____ pastor of this church. In order to fulfil this calling, do you now promise to seek the help of Almighty God and submit yourself unto Him who is the Head of the Church, even Jesus Christ our Lord? Do you promise to labour faithfully and diligently in proclaiming the Gospel, both in word and deed?

Answer: I do so promise, the Lord being my helper. Willingly and gladly, I do this day affirm my (ordination vows/call to Christian ministry), believing with all my heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and accepting the Holy Scriptures as inspired of God through the Holy Spirit. It is my sincere desire to devote my life to the ministry of the Word of God, so as to bring credit and not dishonour to the Gospel which I preach, and to fulfill to my utmost ability the office of a good minister of Jesus Christ.

I believe that you, the congregation of _____ Free Methodist Church, are the people among whom I am primarily intended by God to live, to serve as _____ pastor and to lead in ministry. It is in this belief that I now affirm my acceptance of the Conference's appointment.

Bishop (or designee):

Dear Friends, are you persuaded that _____ is the person whom God has brought into this time and place to be the

_____ pastor among you and the leader for your ministry? Will you please indicate your positive reply by standing?

Chair of the Official Board:

Members and worshippers, let us affirm our commitment to our new _____ pastor.

The Congregation:

We affirm our membership in the Church of Jesus Christ, renewing this day our vow of faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ and to His Church in our city and throughout the world. We believe that you are the person(s) intended by God to be our pastor, and the leader of our ministry. In this belief, we now affirm your appointment as our pastor.

We solemnly covenant to share Christ's ministry with you. We shall endeavour to be sensitive to you and your needs as our co-labourer in the work of Christ's Church. We want to assure you of our confidence, our encouragement, our patience, and our prayers. We promise our strong support to both you (and your family).

Pastor:

I promise to give myself, by the strength and grace of Jesus Christ our Lord, to be sensitive to your needs, singly, in families, or as a congregation. I shall endeavour to help you to grow toward Christian maturity, to stimulate you to love one another and serve one another, to share the fellowship and ministry of the wider Church of Christ in our city and throughout the world. I accept you, the people of this church, as my people.

The Congregation:

We accept you, Pastor _____, as our pastor and the leader of our ministry.

Bishop (or designee):

We who are here as fellow Christians and friends bear testimony that we have witnessed your responses and commitments to each other as pastor and congregation. As an expression of testimony, and to declare our joy and confidence in your coming together for the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to commit ourselves to supporting you in the mission we share, we stand with you.

(All others now stand for the Act of Induction)

Bishop (or designee):

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, on behalf of The Free Methodist Church in Canada, I declare you

(name of pastor)

duly inducted and appointed as _____ pastor of this church and congregation. May the blessing of Almighty God be upon you!

(All remain standing for the Induction Prayer. Pastor _____ will kneel. Members of the church board will stand behind Pastor _____.)

THE INDUCTION PRAYER

Name of person praying

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW PASTOR

Name of person presenting

A Service of Induction

Sunday, _____ (date/year)

_____ pm

At

Free Methodist Church

_____(city)

¶878 MINISTERS' AND EMPLOYEES COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS GUIDELINES
The Free Methodist Church in Canada

This booklet provides guidelines relating to salaries and benefits for ministers and employees of Free Methodist churches in Canada. They are reviewed by the FMCIC Board of Administration on an on-going basis and this booklet is updated periodically.

The guidelines are for use by churches, ministers, and other appointed staff, to encourage equitable, consistent remuneration practices and personnel policies. Following these guidelines will create an environment conducive to strong ministerial leadership.

The guidelines in this booklet apply to full-time appointed ministers and associates/assistants. Other employees, employed at least 20 hours per week, may participate in the LTD insurance, health care insurance and group life insurance package.

This booklet is a description only of the main features of various Plans. It does not create or confirm any contractual rights. It should be understood that all rights and interpretations will be governed by the various Plans referred to in the booklet, "Government legislation, Church Policy and Administrative procedures."

**MINISTERS' AND EMPLOYEES COMPENSATION
AND BENEFITS GUIDELINES**

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1. EMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Ministers have responsibility to provide for themselves and their families, and are expected to maintain a lifestyle similar to that of the congregation. However, they may be hesitant to bargain for financial compensation, as this may appear materialistic.

To determine compensation for your minister, investigate what salaries are provided by congregations of similar size, particularly in your area. It may also be helpful to investigate salaries for teachers and principals in your community. Another useful comparison is the average salary of the group your church is targeted to reach. For each comparison, it is important to note any special income tax provisions available to ministers. For most Free Methodist churches, the above information will assist in establishing fair ministerial compensation.

1.1 EMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION - MINISTERS

Total payments fall into a number of categories that recognize the professional necessities of the work. These might include:

- basic salary
- housing (supplied housing or a “Housing Allowance”)
- benefits (Employee and Employer shares)
- travel expenses, including entertainment
- books and professional supplies
- other benefits and allowances.

A finance committee, looking at the list, may think “These are all costs to have a minister on site.” A minister may think, “The first two or three items are part of my salary; the others are expenses connected with my work, and not part of salary.”

To bring consistency to Free Methodist churches in Canada and to ensure conformance to tax laws, the following guidelines should be used:

Ministerial compensation includes only basic salary and housing (or housing allowance).

Travel and entertainment expenses, the employer’s share of benefits, books and supplies, and other allowances are part of the church’s expenses and, although they may be treated in the society’s annual budget as part of the overall cost for having a minister, they are **not** considered as **ministerial compensation** for purposes of this booklet.

1.2 MULTIPLE-MINISTERIAL STAFFING

Multiple staff appointments are detailed in Paragraph 851 of *The Manual*.

1.3 HOUSING ALLOWANCE

The Income Tax Act stipulates that the annual rental value of housing provided by an employer without cost must be included in the employee’s income for tax purposes. Eligible individuals may claim a “clergy” housing allowance deduction on their personal tax returns. To support such a deduction, the employee must obtain a signed certificate from his/her employer confirming eligibility provisions were met in the year. The certificate forms part of the tax return.

To qualify for the clergy housing deduction, a person must satisfy both a status test and a function test. In The Free Methodist Church in Canada, a person must have been granted a Lay Minister's License by the local church policy/official board and must have signed a Ministerial Candidate's Statement of Affirmation (§871) to satisfy the status test. To meet the function test, an individual must be in charge of or be ministering to a congregation or be engaged in full-time administrative service by appointment of The Free Methodist Church in Canada.

Persons who qualify and do not live in a Manse are entitled to claim the lesser of:

- a. The greater of \$1000/month times the number of months the person qualifies for the housing allowance (maximum allowance \$10,000) or one third of gross remuneration for the year
OR
- b. the fair rental value of the residence plus the cost of utilities. Utilities do not include property taxes.

Persons who live in a Manse are asked to contact The Free Methodist Church in Canada for more specific assistance in regards to the housing allowance.

BENEFITS PROGRAM

The FMCiC Benefits Program is an important part of the total compensation employees receive. Together with various government plans these benefits help protect them and their eligible dependents against loss of income and unexpected financial burdens resulting from illness, disability or death, as well as providing a continuing income after retirement.

The benefits program is available to both ministers and church employees provided paid employment is a minimum of twenty hours per week.

A Word about Costs

The cost of the benefit program is shared by the employer and the employee. Long-term disability (LTD) premiums are paid fully by employees so that disability income will be tax-exempt.

2. RETIREMENT INCOME PROGRAM

The FMCiC Pension Plan is designed to integrate with benefits payable under the Canada/Quebec Pension Plan to provide employees with continuing monthly income in their retirement years. The four plans from which employees may receive regular income when they retire are:

- FMCiC Pension Plan
- Canada/Quebec Pension Plan
- Old Age Security
- Registered Retirement Savings Plan

2.1 FMCiC PENSION PLAN

Participation in the FMCiC Pension Plan is mandatory upon employment as an appointed minister.

Until March 31, 2009 two defined benefit options were available: **Plan A**, where the employee contributed 5.0% of basic salary, housing allowance, utilities. The employer (local church) paid 5.3% of the same total. **Plan B**, where the employee did not contribute anything and the employer paid 5.2% of basic salary, housing allowance and utilities.

The plan is registered with Canada Revenue Agency (037083). Annual information statements are sent to participants.

On April 1, 2009, Plans A and B were frozen and a defined contribution (DC) component was introduced to the Plan. Key highlights of this defined contribution component are:

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Revised April 30, 2019

- a) Members previously participating in Plan A or B of the defined benefit components will automatically participate in the defined contribution (DC) component.
- b) All Members will be required to contribute a minimum of 3% of earnings (and be allowed to contribute up to a maximum of 12% of earnings).
- c) Each employer will be required to match the Member contributions dollar for dollar on the first 6% of Member contributions as outlined in the table below.
- d) Retirement income will be based on employee and employer contributions plus investment returns.

| Member Contribution | Employer Contribution |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 3% | 3% |
| 4% | 4% |
| 5% | 5% |
| 6% | 6% |
| 7% | 6% |
| 8% | 6% |
| 9% | 6% |
| 10% | 6% |
| 11% | 6% |
| 12% | 6% |

Details of the FMCIC pension plan, and benefits paid to participants, are contained in a booklet entitled “The Ministers’ Pension Plan of the Free Methodist Church in Canada” which is available from the Ministry Centre or may be downloaded from the FMCIC website at <http://www.fmcic.ca/en/admin-index/ministers-pension>.

2.2 CANADA PENSION PLAN

The federal government administers this mandatory plan. The employee and the employer (local church) make matching contributions. These are payroll deductions at source and the funds are sent to Canada Revenue Agency. The deduction is based on basic salary, utilities, RRSP and the taxable portion of Group Life Insurance premiums. Housing allowance is excluded from this calculation. Information about the Canada Pension Plan maximum monthly benefit is available at www.sdc.gc.ca.

Employee contributions are exempt from income tax.

2.3 OLD AGE SECURITY

The Old Age Security is payable in addition to the Canada/Quebec Pension Plan benefit. It is paid at age 65 assuming that residence requirements are met. Information about the Old Age Security maximum monthly benefit is available from the Financial Benefits section of the Department of Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) website. Call 1-800-277-9914 or 1-800-255-4786 and request an application kit. The relevant information may also be downloaded from their website at www.hrsdc.gc.ca.

2.4 RETIREMENT

Retirement will normally occur during the calendar year in which the minister attains age 65. Contact should be made with the Ministry Centre to arrange for proper forms to be completed for the Minister’s Pension Plan.

Employees planning retirement should also contact the local office of Health and Welfare Canada at least 6 months prior to age 65 to complete forms for Old Age Security, Canada Pension, Seniors Drug Card, Employee Health Tax, Medical Card, and Employment Insurance.

3. INCOME PROTECTION PROGRAMS

The Income Protection Programs provides employees with a regular income while they are off work because of sickness or disability. In addition the Government of Canada administers an Employment Insurance program which may provide benefits for any periods of unemployment.

3.1 SHORT TERM DISABILITY/SICK LEAVE

Ministers are normally permitted paid sick leave of 1-1/2 days per month of continuous service in the Canadian Conference, to a maximum of 18 days per calendar year. This is not cumulative and, if not needed, is not carried forward to any succeeding year. If more than 18 days is needed in a year, a local church official board may act to extend the short term paid sick leave.

3.2 LONG-TERM DISABILITY (LTD) INSURANCE*

LTD insurance is to provide on-going income to employees who are unable to fulfill their responsibilities due to illness or injury. The LTD plan is administered by The Free Methodist Church in Canada. LTD benefits apply only after a waiting period of 119 days. Full details are available from the Ministry Centre or may be downloaded from the FMCIC website: <http://www.fmcic.ca/images/stories/administration/Accounting%20Forms/groupbenefits/SLFBookletCanadaEast.pdf> Benefits are calculated on basic monthly salary, housing allowance, utilities (if paid by the local church). The benefit is calculated as follows:

| | <u>Gross Monthly Earnings</u> | <u>Coverage</u> |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| 66.7% of the first | \$2250 | \$1500 |
| 50% of the next | \$3500 | \$1750 |
| 44% of the balance | <u>\$1703</u> | <u>\$ 750</u> |
| Maximum | \$7453 | \$4000 |

Monthly premiums are paid in total by employees by payroll deduction. The plan is reviewed annually and information is provided when premium changes are made.

Under certain circumstances, there may also be eligibility to receive disability income payments from the Canada/Quebec Pension Plan.

3.3 EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (EI)

Employment Insurance premiums are deducted by payroll deduction and remitted to Canada Revenue Agency. EI premiums are calculated on salary and housing allowance or, where housing is provided, the “fair rental value” of the supplied housing. The employer (local church) pays 1.4 times the amount contributed by the employee.

If information to apply for Employment Insurance is needed, go to the website: www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/ei/application/employmentinsurance.shtml or call 1-800-206-7218.

4. HEALTH CARE PROGRAM

Health Care Insurance Benefits are provided to employees on a cost-shared basis.

4.1 DENTAL INSURANCE*

Employees and their families are covered by a Dental Benefits Plan administered by The Free Methodist Church in Canada through its insurance carrier, Sun Life Financial. Full details of the plan are outlined in the “Employee Group Benefits” booklet produced for The Free Methodist Church in Canada by Sun Life Financial.

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Premiums are shared equally by the employee and the employer.

4.2 MAJOR MEDICAL INSURANCE*

Major Medical benefits provide supplementary health care benefits, which include semi-private/ward hospital accommodation, prescription drugs, and miscellaneous other health care benefits. Full details of the benefits are contained in a booklet produced by the company providing the coverage, Sunlife Financial.

The cost is shared equally by the employee and the employer.

4.3 VISION CARE*

A vision care benefit has been added to the current extended health care coverage. The coverage is for eyeglasses or contact lenses for every eligible person. The maximum benefit is \$150.00 per eligible person in any period of 24 consecutive months.

The same deductibles and coinsurance apply to this benefit on a combined basis with the present extended health care.

5. SURVIVOR PROTECTION PROGRAM

5.1 LIFE INSURANCE*

Employees and their families are covered by a group life insurance policy arranged by The Free Methodist Church in Canada. Full details are contained in the “Group Benefits” booklet produced for the FMCIC by the benefit provider.

Premiums are shared equally by the employee and the employer.

Life Insurance Coverages

| <u>Employee Age</u> | <u>Employee</u> | <u>Spouse</u> | <u>Child</u> |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
| To Age 64 | \$75,000 | 10,000 | 5,000 |
| Age 65 – 69 | 37,500 | 10,000 | |
| Retiree * | 20,000 | 5,000 | |

*for those retired prior to January 1, 2009 and are paying 100% of premiums

5.2 OPTIONAL LIFE INSURANCE

All active members and spouses, under age 65, are eligible to apply for Optional Life Insurance Coverage.

The Optional Life Insurance is available in units of \$10,000 up to a maximum benefit of \$250,000. Applications are available at the Ministry Centre and completed applications are to be mailed to the Ministry Centre. The group policyholder’s name is “The Free Methodist Church in Canada.”

**The LTD Insurance, the Health Care Insurance and the Group Life Insurance are offered as a total package.*

6. OTHER BENEFITS

Recognizing the need for refreshment and renewal, each church should have a written policy regarding vacation and days off for all employees. This should be in harmony with the labour laws of the province in which the church is located.

6.1 VACATION - MINISTERS

The following principles are given to local churches as guidance for setting up minimum paid vacation entitlements. An official board is, of course, free to grant more vacation time than is suggested below.

Vacation entitlement is based on the principle of years of conference service under appointment (including time as a supply pastor), not service at a particular church. For example, a minister with 10 years of service in the Canadian Conference is entitled to paid vacation minimums based on that service, even in the first year of appointment to a local church.

| Length of service (by Dec. 31 of current year) | Vacation Entitlement |
|---|---|
| Less than one year | Pro-rata share of 3 weeks (based on completed months of service) |
| One year but less than ten | Three weeks |
| Ten years but less than fifteen | Four weeks |
| Fifteen years or over | Five weeks |

A vacation week consists of seven consecutive days including one Sunday.

Vacation entitlement cannot be accumulated. It is to be taken in the calendar year except for special circumstances mutually agreeable to a minister and local church.

Attendance at general conference, family camp, and similar conference functions is part of the minister’s job-related responsibility and not part of vacation time.

All vacation should be scheduled in consultation with the pastor’s cabinet and official board. Vacation days taken must be recorded in suitable records.

Vacations (or the pro-rata share thereof) in a current year should be taken before transition to a new appointment.

6.2 STATUTORY HOLIDAYS

Statutory holidays are in addition to vacation time. Employees are entitled to statutory/provincial holidays annually as follows: The chart below, provided by the government of Canada, displays a list of national and provincial statutory (S) holidays observed in Canada. Holidays exist on the federal level and there are additional holidays for each province and territory. Each province has their own set of stat holidays which are paid days off.

| Holiday | Day Observed | BC | AB | SK | MB | ON | QC | NB | NS | PE | NL | YT | NT | NU |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| New Year's Day | January 1 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |
| Family Day | Third Monday in February | | S | S | | S | | | | | | | | |
| Louis Riel Day | Third Monday in February | | | | S | | | | | | | | | |
| St. Patrick's Day | March 17 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Good Friday | Friday before Easter Sunday | S | S | S | S | S | | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |

| Holiday | Day Observed | BC | AB | SK | MB | ON | QC | NB | NS | PE | NL | YT | NT | NU |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Easter Monday | Monday | | | | | | S | | | | | | | |
| St. George's Day | April 23 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Victoria Day | Monday preceding May 25th | S | S | S | S | S | S | | | S | | S | S | S |
| National Aboriginal Day | June 21 | | | | | | | | | | | | S | |
| Fête Nationale | June 24 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Discovery Day | June 24 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Canada Day | July 1 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |
| Nunavut Day | July 9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | S |
| Civic Holiday | First Monday in August | S | | | S | | | S | | | | | | S |
| Discovery Day | Third Monday in August | | | | | | | | | | | S | | |
| Labour Day | First Monday of September | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |
| Thanksgiving | Second Monday in October | S | S | S | S | S | S | | | | | S | S | S |
| Remembrance Day | November 11 | S | S | S | | | | S | | S | S | S | S | S |
| Christmas Day | December 25 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |
| Boxing Day | December 26 | | | | | S | | | | | | | | |

In cases where the above day(s) fall on Sunday, an alternative day may be taken.

Statutory holidays are non-cumulative.

Where provincial labour legislation permits additional statutory holidays not scheduled above, that legislation will apply.

6.3 SPECIAL LEAVES

Compassionate Leave

Employees may be granted leave of absence of up to three calendar days, with pay, in the case of bereavement of spouse, parents, brother, sister, children, grandparents, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, or brother-in-law. Further compassionate leave may be granted by the official board due to unusual circumstances (e.g. related special travel needs.)

Maternity, Parental, and Compassionate Family Care Leave

Maternity Leave, Parental Leave, and Compassionate Family Care Leave are granted according to labour law standards.

Special Ministries Leave

Ministers may be granted “special ministries” leave of absence for two weekends per year, exclusive of vacation, for special ministries as approved by the official board.

Continuing Education Leave

Continuing education for ministers is for the development, maintenance, updating, and upgrading of professional skills. These skills, developed in an individual involved in a continuing education program, will help bring the joy and satisfaction of a balanced and fulfilling ministry.

Continuing education refers to learning experiences chosen to enhance one’s ministry. These may be either for academic credit or non-credit. Ministers are required to develop a continuing education program in

consultation with the ministerial education guidance and placement committee. Where possible, spouses should be included in learning experiences.

Local churches are encouraged to provide financial assistance to ministers for continuing education.

Leave of Absence

Guidelines for a Leave of Absence administered by the local church can be found in *The Manual*, Chapter 3 Handbook, Par. 374.6.

Sabbatical Guidelines

Guidelines for the development of a local church sabbatical policy are available through the credentialing coordinator or on the FMCIC website.

6.4 PASTORAL CARE

The Free Methodist Church in Canada recognizes the need to make provision for a confidential clergy care referral system and for counseling resources. The Free Methodist Church in Canada, has some funds, confidentially administered by a member of the MEGaP committee in consultation with the credentialing coordinator, which are available to ministers and their families to assist with counselling costs. Additionally, Focus on the Family maintains a confidential Clergy Care Hotline service intended to help ministers, their spouses, and their families. It is available free of charge to any minister. The hotline telephone number is 1-888-5CLERGY (1-888-525-3749).

7. OTHER POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

The following list describes a number of matters relating to employment practices that are best understood through clearly-stated guidelines. Some are concerned with a minister's relationship to the local church; others to his/her relationship to the conference.

7.1 TRAVEL EXPENSE

Reasonable reimbursement should be made to an employee for use of a personal vehicle for church-related business. This is unrelated to employment compensation.

To be reimbursed, the employee must submit an account (or log of travel) to the local treasurer. Dates of travel, number of kilometres travelled, and the purpose of the trips should be shown. Trips from home-to-office or any travel of a purely personal nature may not be claimed.

Guidance on current Canada Revenue Agency per kilometre rates are available from the Administrative Services Department at the Ministry Centre.

7.2 TRANSITION/TRANSFER/RETIREMENT

It is expected when a minister makes contact with another conference or outside agency regarding a job situation or placement, the director of leadership development and church health will be notified. It is also expected that a minister will give 60 days notice if transition is the intent.

7.3 MINISTERIAL MOVES

The costs of moving the pastor's personal property shall be the responsibility of the receiving local church or new ministry/employer (if not the FMCIC). Where a minister living in a parsonage is leaving active ministry, (i.e. retirement or long term disability) and is not entering into another ministry or employment opportunity, and is in good standing, the conference will assist with moving expenses incurred up to a maximum of \$1000. This policy also applies to the moving costs of a surviving spouse living in a parsonage should a minister die while under normal appointment.

All part-time ministers and part-time assistant ministers are responsible for their own moving expenses subject to any provision made with their receiving church.

Ministers moving to another conference, denomination, or other employment must make their own arrangement with regard to moving expenses.

7.4 CENTRALIZED PAYROLL PLAN

Participation in the Ministry Centre's payroll service is mandatory for all local churches. It consists of automatic electronic funds transfers to employees' personal bank accounts on a semi-monthly basis, corresponding withdrawals from the local church's operating funds account, and includes preparation on behalf of the church of all payroll information slips and all Canada Revenue Agency forms required under Income Tax legislation. Details of the plan, and application forms are available from the Ministry Centre or may be downloaded from the FMCiC website.

7.5 MALPRACTICE INSURANCE

Each church should carry malpractice insurance on its paid and volunteer staff.

¶879 LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING TEMPLATE

A Letter of Understanding Template is available on the FMCiC website at:

<https://fmcic.ca/wp-content/uploads/879-LETTER-OF-UNDERSTANDING-TEMPLATE.pdf>

¶880 TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT

A Termination of Employment Template is available on the FMCiC website at: <http://fmcic.ca/chapter-8-forms/>

¶881 THE NETWORK SYSTEM OF THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH IN CANADA

The Vision of a Network: Discipleship is a key component of the FMCiC, as it is Jesus’ method of “building” His church. Furthermore discipleship was how John Wesley grew the Methodist movement. Since discipleship is key to the health and vitality of the FMCiC, it is clear that our leaders and pastors need to be full participants in discipleship. Networks are therefore to be “discipleship communities”. Pastors and leaders will enter a covenant relationship which includes creating a mutual discipling experience for each member of the network. Networks will therefore necessarily be a safe “place” for pastors, chaplains and other ordained leaders to be supported and grow in their personal and ministry lives.

The FMCiC defines “discipleship” as an intentional, organic and transformative relationship that Jesus modeled for each of us. Discipleship involves two or more people meeting regularly, where at least one (the leader, discipler, mentor, coach) is already a follower of Christ. The purposes of discipleship include: i) nurturing church family; ii) learning God’s Word; iii) prayer-worshipping; iv) participating in God’s mission in the world; and v) healing, deliverance, freedom in Christ.

The bishop, the national leadership team, the network mentor team and the network leaders work together to cultivate an environment to see the FMCiC’s common vision fulfilled.

NETWORK MENTOR TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **The Role of the Network Mentor:** The Network Mentor is responsible to help Network Leaders to create a discipleship experience (as defined above).

Responsibilities: Network Mentor (hereafter “NM”) will:

- A. Work together with the Bishop and the Network Mentor Team for the selection and placement of new Network Leaders;
- B. Meet regularly by phone or Zoom with each Network Leader for coaching and/or discipling. These meetings will include coaching / mentoring in the use of the discipleship materials. The hope is that the Mentor will become [another] spiritual mentor in the life of the NL;
- C. NM will work closely with the Bishop to find resources for networks, strategize and pray. Presently, “Radical Mentoring” and “Bearing Faithful Witness” are excellent resources. On occasion the network may choose to meet with another network for a special course or social;
- D. The NM will be responsible to help the Network Leader remember and honour the Network Covenant (see below) in the networks;
- E. The NM will ensure that the network check-ins with one another in between meetings (the Network Leader may choose to do this themselves or the network will discuss a strategy – for example each member is assigned another member to check in with);
- F. The NM will be available for the annual Mentor-Network Leader meeting, which is currently held in January. This is a two day event;
- G. The NM also has as support and resource: Regional Coach, Director of Leadership Development, Director of Church Planting and Bishop.

2. **General Policies**

- Mentors will be appointed ministers.
- Expenses (travel, meals) incurred to do “work” (outside of the Network meeting) requested by the Bishop.

- Network Mentors who attend one network for their church but lead another are to be paid for travel/meal expenses.
- The term of office for a NM is indefinite. Each year, adjustments will be made to the network leadership, based on performance evaluations and requests.

LEADING AS A NETWORK LEADER IN THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH IN CANADA

1. **The Role of the Network Leader:** The Network Leader is responsible to help a network of FMCiC pastors / leaders create a discipleship experience (as defined above).

Responsibilities: Network Leaders (hereafter “NL”) will:

- A. Meet regularly by phone or Zoom with Mentor for coaching, discipling. These meetings will include coaching / mentoring in the use of the discipleship materials. The hope is that the Mentor will become [another] spiritual mentor in the life of the NL;
- B. Facilitate network meetings (at least 6 days per year);
- C. Bring to the network resources that would help create a discipleship experience. The NL’s Mentor and Bishop will offer resources and training. Presently, “Radical Mentoring” and “Bearing Faithful Witness” are excellent resources. On occasion the network may choose to meet with another network for a special course or social;
- D. The NL will be responsible to introduce and help the Network mutually honour the Network Covenant (see below);
- E. The NL will ensure that the network check-ins with one another in between meetings (the NL may choose to do this themselves or the network will discuss a strategy – for example each member is assigned another member to check in with);
- F. The NL will be available for the annual Mentor-Network Leader meeting, which is currently held in January. This is a two day event;
- G. The NL also has as support and resource: Mentor, Regional Coach, Director of Leadership Development, Director of Church Planting and Bishop.

2. **Character Requirements for this Ministry of Leadership**

- “A leader is a person who under the Lordship of Jesus knows where he/she is going and is able to influence others to follow.”
- “A team player is a person who is able to give and receive loyalty to other team members as they work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect to achieve a common purpose.”
- “A team player is a person who is able to effectively manage communication flow so that all people within the team feel that they are valued--their input is valued and their questions/concerns are answered.”
- “A leader is a person who helps others develop by doing. He/she coaches and expects team members to make decisions and assume responsibility for outcomes. A leader celebrates with those who succeed and comes alongside those who are faltering to coach them more closely.”
- “A leader is a person who cares: By praying regularly for the pastors under his/her supervision, and by taking personal interest to know the names of spouses and children.”

3. **General Policies**

- Selection and placement of Network Leaders is the responsibility of the Network Mentor Team.

- Expenses (travel, meals) incurred to do “work” (outside of the Network meeting) requested by the Bishop or Mentor.
- Network Leaders who attend one network for their church but lead another are to be paid for travel/meal expenses.
- The term of office for a Network Leader is indefinite. Each year, adjustments will be made to the network leadership, based on performance evaluations and requests.
- Multi-day meetings of Networks are encouraged to take advantage of denominational facilities (e.g. camps) where practicable.

Pastor’s Network Covenant

The Free Methodist Church in Canada takes very seriously the spiritual and personal health of its pastors. With this in mind, networks have been established for peer support and accountability.

In the Methodist tradition we commit to this covenant:

1. It is my desire to become an all-in Jesus-follower, disciple-maker and Christian leader.
2. I understand that I will give and receive direct, honest feedback from the group. I will do everything in my power to receive it in love and to learn from it. I will avoid defensiveness, realizing that when I defend, I lose the opportunity to learn. I commit to being open in examining myself. I want to learn. I want to change, to be more like Jesus Christ in every fiber of my being.
3. I agree that network time is valuable, and that I may have to say “no” to important things in order to meet with the network and I am willing to do so.
4. I will strive to contribute my value to the network, and trust that the other members will also do so.
5. I understand that network is a safe place for pastors to grow as individuals and spiritual leaders. I will be totally vulnerable about my relationship with Christ, for the purpose of growing in my faith.
6. I commit to total confidentiality. What is said in the group stays in the group. The network leader reserves the right to the following exceptions:
 - a. If the pastor may be an immediate danger to himself or others
 - b. If the pastor is endangering a population that cannot protect itself, such as the case of child or elder abuse
 - c. As required by law
7. I discussed this commitment with my Church Board and they fully support my involvement. They willingly give the time and resources it will take to attend the meetings and retreats with the goal of my becoming a godlier person and a better pastor.

Pastor’s Name

Signature

Network Leader’s Name

Signature

Delegate’s Name (on behalf of the board)

Signature