

**Celebration of a New Ministry:
An Act of Covenanting for a New Pastoral Relationship
within a Community of Faith**

The people will join in those responses that appear in bold face print. The service is to be used for ministry personnel entering into a new pastoral relationship with a community of faith, or an other ministry such as hospital chaplaincies, social service ministries, etc. The term “community of faith” has been used throughout, but where appropriate, the name of the ministry term should be substituted, e.g., “N Pastoral Charge.”

This service takes place in the community of faith to which the new minister has been called or appointed.

Gathering Music and Prelude

Acknowledgement of Territory

Words of Welcome

We joyfully gather to mark a new ministry relationship in N regional council between N and NN. We welcome [*name guests*] who are a part of our wider community. Today we commit to and celebrate how we are the church together.

Call to Worship

Hymn of Praise

Opening Prayer

Use an appropriate prayer for the season.

Scripture Readings

Hymn, Canticle, or Anthem

Gospel Lesson

Sermon

Hymn, Sung Response

Covenanting Action

Statement of Living Faith Story

Share or re-articulate the living faith story of the community of faith and why the called minister is a good fit. Share what gifts and skills the called minister brings to the new pastoral relationship. Ideally this would be done by members of the community of faith and/or search team.

Statement of This New Ministry

The new minister comes forward at the invitation of the presider.

Regional council liaison:

We are here to join into a covenantal relationship with God and between *NN*, *N* community of faith, and the wider United Church as represented by *N* regional council. Although God's covenant with us never changes, our covenants with one another evolve as we seek ways to faithfully deepen our commitment to Jesus and live into our call to embody God's love in the world.

Member of Search Team:

After prayerful discernment, and the approval of *N* community of faith, we present *NN*, who has been called to a ministry of word, sacrament, and pastoral care [or] education, service, and pastoral care in *N* community of faith. We believe that their skills and talents complement our faithful witness, ministry needs, and community context.

Regional council liaison:

NN, you are here in response to the call of *N* community of faith and *N* regional council. We come together to mark this new relationship within our regional council for the sake of our shared ministry.

NN, you are about to undertake the ministry of word, sacrament, and pastoral care [or] education, service, and pastoral care in this place.

You, the members of this community of faith, are called to join *NN* in worship, study, prayer, and action.

We, *N* regional council, will be responsible for supporting this ministry.

Let us pray for God's grace as we covenant together:

Prayer of Faith

Uniting God,

you call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship:

**to celebrate your presence,
to live with respect in creation,
to be your servants in the service of others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table,
to proclaim Jesus crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.**

Send your Holy Spirit to bind us in full communion

**so that we may be a uniting church
embodying your love for the world.**

As one, we proclaim:

In life, in death, in life beyond death,

**you are with us,
we are not alone,**

all glory and power be unto you.

Amen.

A prayer for the church inspired by John 17:21 and based on The United Church of Canada's "A New Creed" and The United Church of Christ's "Statement of Faith (in the Form of a Doxology)." Written for the full communion service of these two denominations.

Hymn or Sung Response

Promises of the New Minister

NN, do you, in the presence of this community of faith, take on the new trust and responsibility of ministering with *N*?

New minister: I do.

Regional council liaison:

Will you accept the guidance of *N* regional council and, together with its other members, be responsible for the health of *N* community of faith?

New minister: I will.

Regional council liaison:

Will you share in the ministry goals and faith story of this community of faith?

New minister: I will.

Regional council liaison:

Will you accept the support and encouragement of this community of faith and this regional council?

New minister: I will.

Regional council liaison:

Will you work cooperatively with the wider church and wider community to embody God's love in the world?

New minister: I will.

Promises of the Community of Faith

Regional council liaison:

Will you join with NN in a ministry of worship, study, prayer, and action within N Community of Faith, N regional Council and within the wider church?

Members of the community of faith: We will.

Presider:

Will you support them as they serve among you in this ministry?

Members of the community of faith: We will.

If there are other members of the order of ministry and/or lay people working together with NN in a team ministry, they come forward. The presider introduces them by name and office and addresses them, together with the new minister.

Regional council liaison:

NN and NN, you have been called by God to work together in this community of faith. Will you promise in faith and obedience to Christ to share this ministry, supporting one another in love and, through your unity of spirit, inspiring all God's people here in their common ministry for Christ?

Team ministers: We will.

Promises of Regional Council, Wider Church and Community

Members of the wider church and community come forward [this could include community partners, members of other faith traditions, United Church of Canada members, affiliated partners, as well as members of any other United Church body].

Regional council liaison:

Will you, as members of *N* regional council and members of the wider community, join with *NN* and this community of faith in the ministry that is both theirs and ours?

Wider community members: We will.

Regional council liaison:

Will you support and encourage them in this ministry?

Wider community members: We will.

Hymn of Celebration

Presentation of Symbols

Symbols of ministerial function will vary, depending on the people involved in the covenant, but they may include the following:

A BIBLE

A member of the community carries a Bible to the new minister.

Presenter:

Take this Bible. Be with us as one who teaches and proclaims the Word.

People: **Amen.**

The new minister places the Bible on the pulpit or lectern.

WATER

A member of the community carries a pitcher of water to the new minister.

Presenter:

Be with us as one who baptizes in the name of Christ.

People: **Amen.**

The new minister takes the pitcher and pours the water into the font.

WATER, TOWEL, AND BASIN

Members of the community carry these symbols to the new minister.

Presenter:

Be with us as one who seeks justice.

People: **Amen.**

The new minister pours the water into the basin. Basin, towel, and pitcher are set in a visible place before the congregation.

BREAD AND WINE

Members of the community carry a loaf of bread and a cup of wine to the new minister.

Presenter:

Be with us as one who cares for those who hunger and thirst.

People: **Amen.**

The new minister places the bread and wine upon the table.

[add other signs and symbols as is appropriate to your ministry context]

Regional council liaison:

NN and N community of faith, let all these be signs of the ministry that is and that will be in this community.

People: **Amen.**

New Minister's Prayer

The new minister prays in thanksgiving and supplication for all who have entered this covenant for the ministry of the community of faith.

Response to Covenant

Regional council liaison:

Let us rejoice in the covenant we have made.

The people may express their joy with applause and/or the singing of a doxology, the pealing of bells, or a fanfare.

Prayers of the People

If possible share the prayers of the people in the languages of the people in your community, asking different people to share each petition in their first language.

Let us pray in different languages, concluding each petition in English with
call: Uniting God, receive our prayers; and response: **And in your love, answer.**

For the ministries of *N* community of faith, *N* regional council, and The United Church of Canada, and our ministry partners around the world who work toward our common vision of a united and uniting church ...

Uniting God, receive our prayers: **And in your love, answer.**

For faithful disciples in our communities of faith who work towards our common purpose of extravagant welcome, proclaiming the gospel, and mending God's world...

Uniting God, receive our prayers: **And in your love, answer.**

For the dreamers, teachers, and prophets who share our common longing to be one in Christ, with creation and with each other...

Uniting God, receive our prayers: **And in your love, answer.**

For those around the world who work towards our sacred message of justice and peace in harmony ...

Uniting God, receive our prayers: **And in your love, answer.**

For the prayers we name to you now in the silence of our hearts [*moment of silence*]

Uniting God, receive our prayers: **And in your love, answer.**

We join these prayers together in the prayer that Jesus taught us ...

Sharing the Peace of Christ

Beloved Church, we are one in Christ!

The peace of Christ, who unites us in love and discipleship, be with you all.

And also with you.

Let us greet each other with signs of this peace.

The Service of the Table may complete the liturgy.