

DOES YOUR PASTORAL CHARGE HAVE A CURRENT VACANCY? (INFORMATION ABOUT THE 2008 SETTLEMENT PROCESS)

Pastoral charges who have a current vacancy might consider filling that vacancy through the settlement placement process. This information will attempt to answer for you some of the frequently asked questions about the settlement process.

If you need more information about the process, you are urged to contact Jim Keenan, the current chair of the Settlement Committee; Lillian Perigoe, Conference Minister for Personnel Policy and Support; or Patti James, administrative assistant to the Personnel Minister. Jim can be reached at 905-738-6646 or by e-mail at newhopeunited@bellnet.ca ; Lillian and Patti can be reached at the Conference Office at 416-241-2677 (1-800-446-4729), extensions 224 and 225, respectively, or by e-mail at lperigoe@torontoconference.ca and pjames@torontoconference.ca .

WHAT IS "SETTLEMENT"?

Settlement is one of the two ways through which a pastoral charge and a minister find one another for what will, hopefully, be a long-term pastoral relationship. The other is the "call process" in which a pastoral charge's Joint Search Committee, after directly interviewing ministers interested in the position, presents the name of the chosen candidate to the membership of the pastoral charge and the presbytery for their approval. With the necessary agreement of the three parties, the call is then issued and accepted.

Sometimes, however, a pastoral charge asks the wider church to help it find a suitable candidate to be its minister, or it decides that the settlement process is more appropriate to its needs than the call process. Asking the Conference Settlement Committee to settle a minister among you can become an exciting possibility.

There is no question that requesting settlement does require a stout faith in God and a fair amount of trust in the wisdom of the church! You won't have the usual benefits of being able to interview candidates yourselves but will instead be asking the Settlement Committee to find a minister on your behalf. In preparation for making this important match, the Committee will meet with you to hear about your needs and the kind of person you are seeking. It will also meet with all the available people seeking to be settled into pastoral charges in an effort to get to know them personally, and to hear about the sort of pastoral ministry situations in which they feel they can offer their best leadership.

WHO SITS ON THE CONFERENCE SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE?

As outlined in *The United Church Manual*, the Settlement Committee consists of a chairperson and secretary elected by the Conference, plus one member of the Order of Ministry and one lay person appointed by each of our nine presbyteries. Normally this is the Chair of Pastoral Relations in your presbytery and one other person. The Conference Personnel Minister, Lillian Perigoe, attends the meetings as non-voting staff support person.

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE SEEKING SETTLEMENT?

The great majority of those before the Committee are men and women seeking their first pastoral charge following ordination into the Ministry of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care, or commissioning into the diaconal Ministry of Education, Service and Pastoral Care. Before these candidates can be ordained or commissioned, they must indicate a willingness to serve in whatever part of Canada the church most needs their gifts and skills. This requirement is consistent with a biblical vision of what is required of those who would lead and serve Christ's people. Ministry Personnel who have been previously ordained or commissioned or those seeking admission to the United Church from another denomination may also choose to make themselves available for settlement.

Following New Testament precedents, the emphasis in our United Church's understanding of ordered ministry has fallen on the theme of the servanthood of those "set-apart" (Rom. 1:1; Col. 1:24; 2 Peter. 1:1). These servants are called by grace according to God's purposes (Gal. 1:15; Rom. 8:28) and they are encouraged to live a life of holiness and sacrifice for the sake of the Christian community using Jesus as their model (I Peter 1:15, 2:21; Acts 4: 27&30).

HOW IS IT DECIDED WHO WILL BE SETTLED INTO OUR PASTORAL CHARGE?

A group of representatives from every Conference, called the *National Transfer Committee*, meets each April to assign all personnel seeking settlement to a Conference. When making these important assignments, the Committee has in hand each candidate's profile, which includes their statement of needs and preferences. It also has a profile of each Conference's ministry needs. The representative from each Conference will likely have met with leaders in the congregations requesting settlement in order to hear about their ministry needs directly. Jim Keenan, the chair of the Toronto Conference Settlement Committee, is our representative to the National Transfer Committee.

Jim returns from this meeting with a list of those who have been transferred into Toronto Conference for settlement. Then, in a one-day meeting, the Toronto Conference Settlement Committee meets to "match" candidates and Pastoral Charges, which have requested settlement. This discernment process is done with extreme care and abundant prayer. The Committee is very aware that its decisions will affect the lives of congregations and the lives of candidates and their families. Immediately upon a match being made, the candidate and a representative of the Pastoral Charge are telephoned with the Committee's decision.

Within one week, the presbytery representative facilitates a "matching meeting" where representatives of the Charge and the candidate meet face-to-face to determine if indeed there is a good "fit". **This is not an interview.** It is intended as a meeting to confirm the decision of the Settlement Committee.

CAN WE SAY "NO" TO A PROPOSED MATCH?

Yes. Following the matching meeting, if a Pastoral Charge does not wish to accept the discernment of the Settlement Committee, they may decline to accept settlement. However, they must be willing to state the reasons for their refusal. If the Settlement Committee thinks there is merit to the reasons it *may* agree to try again to make a Settlement. There is no

guarantee, however, that another candidate will be available or offered to the Pastoral Charge.

In accordance with our church's theological convictions and provincial labour statutes, a candidate's gender, age, marital status, racial heritage, or sexual orientation will not be considered valid reasons for refusing to accept a person for settlement.

In Toronto Conference, one of the underlying principles behind our work in the Settlement Committee is the very strong belief that all pastoral charges seeking settlement must be open to the entire slate of candidates.

CAN A CANDIDATE SAY "NO" TO A MATCH?

Yes. Following the matching meeting, a candidate who does not wish to accept the discernment of the Settlement Committee, may refuse to accept Settlement. The candidate must be willing to state the reasons for the refusal. If the Settlement Committee thinks there is merit to the reasons for refusal, it *may* agree to try again. If a candidate refuses the first match, the candidate runs the risk of not being settled in the current year and of having to wait until the next year to be ordained or commissioned. There is no guarantee, however, that another Pastoral Charge will be available or appropriate or will be offered to the candidate.

The Committee takes tremendous care in making the initial match. If the Committee decides to attempt a second match for one Pastoral Charge or individual, it could disrupt other matches. Both parties in a match need to understand, as taught by the apostle Paul, that the church is interconnected as one body and the actions of one part affect the other parts.

CAN WE ENTER THE PROCESS REQUESTING THE NAME OF A SPECIFIC CANDIDATE?

Yes, it is possible for a Charge to request a specific candidate. However, it is crucial that the pastoral charge understand there is *absolutely no guarantee* that the person they are requesting will be the one the Committee discerns to be appropriate for Settlement. The Committee has before it the ministry needs of many pastoral charges, and the gifts and talents of many candidates. It may well determine that an individual's gifts and skills are required somewhere else.

In the past some pastoral charges have entered the process requesting a specific person. When this person was transferred to a different Conference or when the pastoral charge was not matched with this individual by the Settlement Committee, the pastoral charge withdrew altogether. This practice causes harm to people who, in faith, are offering themselves for ministry. Remember that each year the number of candidates we ask to be transferred into our Conference is based on the specific number of pastoral charges which have requested settlement. When a pastoral charge backs out of the process because it hasn't received a preferred candidate, the "surplus" candidate's life is turned upside down.

The settlement process is not a casual way to find an individual who, because of being a candidate for ordination or commissioning, is not eligible to be interviewed and "called" by a Pastoral Charge. If a pastoral charge has no intention of accepting anyone other than the person requested, it should not enter the process in the first place.

DOES GOING TO SETTLEMENT COST US ANYTHING FINANCIALLY?

Yes. Your charge is required to contribute \$1,500 into a national moving-cost pool toward the overall cost of moving all candidates across the United Church to their settlement charges. Pastoral Charges are requested to include a cheque for \$1,500, dated July 1, 2008 and made payable to the United Church of Canada with their application for Settlement. If a settlement is not effected by June 15, 2008, the cheque will be returned. If a Settlement is effected the cheque will be forwarded to the United Church's national office.

If the person settled is an already ordained or commissioned minister, the pastoral charge is required to pay **all** moving costs (instead of the \$1,500 - just as you would if a call had been issued to that person.

HOW DO WE MAKE OUR REQUEST FOR SETTLEMENT?

At a properly called meeting of the pastoral charge, and usually upon the recommendation of its Joint Needs Assessment Committee or Joint Search Committee, a pastoral charge makes a request for settlement in writing to its Presbytery. When the request is granted, presbytery and an authorized person from the pastoral charge complete and sign the "Record of Pastoral Charge Request for Settlement" form [MEPS 427 PQ] available from the national United Church of Canada web site at <http://www.united-church.ca> and forward it to the Settlement Committee of Toronto Conference. There is other information, which is also required to be submitted, depending upon your circumstances. Your Pastoral Relations Committee of your presbytery can best advise you.

WHAT IS THE DEADLINE FOR REQUESTS FOR SETTLEMENT?

All applications for Settlement MUST be COMPLETED, APPROVED and RECEIVED by ALL Church Courts (Congregation, Presbytery and Conference) by April 1, 2008. This date is an ABSOLUTE DEADLINE. It can not be extended.

WHO DO WE PHONE IF WE HAVE FURTHER QUESTIONS?

Jim Keenan (chair of the Settlement Committee)	905-738-6446
Lillian Perigoe (Conference Personnel Minister)	416-241-2677 x 224 1-800-446-4729 x 224
Patti James (Administrative Assistant to the Personnel Minister)	(416) 241-2677 x 225 1-800-446-4729 x 225

It is always exciting to anticipate the selection and arrival of a new minister and the possibilities that come with a fresh beginning and new leadership. We wish you God's blessing and wisdom as you consider the possibility of entering the settlement process in 2008.

The Settlement and Pastoral Relations Committee of Toronto Conference