

Covenant Commission: Community of Faith Profile Preparation

Regional Councils



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Community of Faith Profile

The Community of Faith (CoF) Profile is not just about searching for a new minister. It is about faithful reflection and prayerful discernment about your ministry and community context.

The governing body is responsible for preparing the community of faith profile. The purpose of the community of faith profile is

- to articulate the community of faith's witness to the gospel;
- to articulate the ministry needs of the community of faith; and
- to summarize the community of faith's resources and community context.
- is required background for decisions involving regional council.

This work may be divided up in any way that suits the community of faith. The governing body may prepare the profile or appoint a team to prepare the profile, or the whole community of faith may participate in preparing the profile.

In each section of the community of faith profile, honesty is important. Together, the various pieces of the profile express: This is who we are, and these are the resources we have.

A community of faith profile includes:

- financial viability worksheet
- demographics worksheet
- real property worksheet
- living faith story

The people tasked with creating the profile will want to consult with several groups.

1. The community of faith: It is mandatory to consult with the community of faith. The profile should reflect the desires of the community of faith.
2. The incumbent ministry personnel: You may wish to consult with the current ministry personnel (including an intentional interim minister). They will often have insight into your community of faith and its current and future needs.
3. Ministry and Personnel (M&P) Committee: You may wish to consult with the M&P Committee. Its members will be familiar with your previous ministry personnel and their roles, responsibilities, and leadership.
4. The governing body and the Community of Faith approves community of faith profile.
5. For consultation with the community of faith, you can choose from a variety of approaches:
 - written requests for feedback (e.g., given out with the Sunday bulletin and collected during coffee hour)
 - phone interviews
 - face-to-face conversations: one large group, small group conversations, or focus groups

- identifying a group of people in your faith community as listeners and asking them to speak with as many people as possible about a specific set of questions or ideas and report back to the team.

Try to plan your consultation in such a way that it is easy for everyone to participate, not just people who are already leaders. It is important to hear from everyone: youth, young adults, children, adherents, seniors, people who only attend on Sunday, families who come to the church for all their life passages (weddings, baptisms, funerals) but don't attend regularly.

Financial Viability Review

The financial viability review continues to summarize the community of faith's resources. This worksheet will help the governing body and the search team consider the financial situation of the community of faith and of each point in a multi-point charge.

It is difficult to make financial decisions for a community of faith. Once you have collected the data, discuss the patterns you see and their implications, and meet at least once with the treasurer to discuss them. Use your observations to make recommendations. If you have completed a narrative budget that is distinct from your living faith story, you can attach it along with your financial viability review.

As you complete the financial viability review, the following guidance may be helpful:

- Total revenue to include PAR, envelopes, fundraising, other income. Do not include onetime bequests.
- Question 1: Your expenses, revenues, and balances can be found for past years in the financial statements of your annual meetings. If you had capital changes, please include them in the comments. The treasurer will appreciate assistance in gathering this information.
- Question 2: Also include funds from the sale of a manse or other church property.
- Question 4: Maintenance is the regular work for keeping your building(s) running. If your building is heated electrically, you probably can't separate utilities and fuel. Just put in the one number under Utilities.
- Question 5: If you have experienced a deficit, consider the following: How have you managed your finances? Did you borrow from yourselves? From others? If the deficits were in the last three years, what are your plans for turning this situation around? How long have you struggled with deficits?
- Question 6: If you have outstanding loans, how much is still owing? To whom? At what interest rate? Does the interest plus the principal exceed 20% of the community of faith's income? Did you have a plan for paying that money back before you borrowed it? If so, how is it working?

- Questions 7–10: It is sometimes difficult to remember how contributors donated in past years. Please do your best here. This information is valuable for projecting your future financial resources.

Review

Your treasurer or stewardship committee, and your governing body should be asked to help look at the data to make observations. Consider the following:

- Patterns seen in givings over the years
- Patterns in expenses
- Cost of the building(s)
- Patterns seen in the community of faith (givers)
- Efficiency of your buildings and upgrades that might be needed soon

Because this tool is part of your community of faith profile and pastoral relations process, it asks that you specifically speak to staffing costs and ongoing viability. Consider how this information might inform your Living Faith Story.

Other observations might include the need for a stewardship program or property upgrades or simply note that the community's call of ministry personnel is supported by these financial viability findings.

Recommendation

As you finish stating your observations on the financial viability worksheet you need to consider what recommendation you will make about the amount of ministry time (hrs per week) and in what category (A-F). **This information must be included for your profile to be complete if you are entering into a search process.**

Take into consideration that negotiations may lead to a percentage above the minimum salary. Ensure that the Search team is aware of the upper limit the congregation can support.

Please review the following before making your recommendation:

Having examined your current financial situation, you will want to examine the [minister's salary schedule and your Cost of Living Assignment](#) and work with your treasurer to determine the cost of ministry personnel at different increment categories. This will include salary, allowances, and employer contributions to government plans, pension, and benefits. Your treasurer will perhaps understand these tools more clearly than members of the search team:

- *The United Church of Canada provides [Budgeting Tools for Treasurers on the General Council website](#) for both ministry personnel and lay employees. Go to: www.united-church.ca/leadership/church-administration/budgeting-tools-treasurers.*
- *Please note that in addition to the employer costs noted in the tables in these United Church tools, there are employee and employer premiums for Employment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan. (Tables for these costs are available on the Canada Revenue Agency website: www.cra-arc.gc.ca)*

Demographics

The demographics worksheet summarizes the community of faith's resources and context of ministry. This information may help you identify potential partnerships in the community. It is also used to help you prepare for your living faith story which you will upload to ChurchHub.

Real Property Worksheet

Real property is described as any land or buildings you own. Include church, manse, cemetery, and any other property held. This does not include contents. Please list all Real Property.

Living Faith Story

Why are we being asked to create a Living Faith Story?

The creation of a Living Faith Story can be a spiritual practice for the community of faith as it reflects on its ministry, Call/Purpose, and faithful witness to the Gospel. It is an intentional way of engaging communities of faith in articulating their purpose and faith. In a time when the church is dealing with a changing cultural context it provides an opportunity ask questions about how communities of faith understand their particular ministry. Creating a Living Faith Story is an invitation to articulate, assess, and perhaps even reframe how we are being church.

What is a Living Faith Story?

The living faith story articulates the community of faith's ministry focus. The living faith story is your opportunity to share why you exist as a community of faith. All communities of faith are expected to develop a living faith story, review it regularly, and share it with the regional council so that support can be programmed. The living faith story is an opportunity to tell a story about where God is leading the community of faith.

The Financial, Demographic, and Real Property worksheets are part of the information gathering to understand the bigger picture of your community of faith and community context. These worksheets help inform the living faith story and assist the region in determining needed supports.

The creation of a Living Faith Story is an invitation for your community of faith to engage intentionally a conversation about your Call/Purpose, Vision, Goals, ministry, and context.

The living faith story can be supplemented with an audio or video recording of the community of faith telling their story or other visioning reports. Remember, if you are entering a search, this is what ministry personnel will look at to determine if you are a good fit.

Ask the "WHY" questions

Why do we gather as a community of faith?

Why am I a participant in the life and ministry of this community of faith?

Why does God's mission need our community of faith?

Submitting the Package

1. Once the governing body gathers all the information together, and agrees on its content, a congregational meeting is called to approve all community of faith profile information.
 - a. If for a search process the motion to be approved by the congregation should include approval of the Community of Faith Profile and the recommendation of the hours and category for the ministry position.

(e.g.) MOTION: ____ / ____ that _____ United Church, approves the Community of faith Profile dated _____ and agrees ____ united church is viable to call/appoint a minister up to Category (A-F) ____ for ____ hours per week.
2. The community of faith sends all the information to the Minister, Congregational Support and uploads the worksheets to the published folder in ChurchHub (This cannot be seen by other churches) ([Instruction Video for ChurchHub](#)).
 - a. If for a search process all documentation will be forwarded to the Covenant Commission to be reviewed and the recommendation approved.
 - b. If not entering a search process the documents will be received for information by the Covenant Commission.