

Transitions Handbook for Pastors

The Free Methodist Church in Canada™

developed for the pastor in transition

There have always been pastors and churches in transition, regardless of which appointment system was in operation at the time. In 1993 The Free Methodist Church in Canada moved from the Bishop/Ministerial Appointment Committee (MAC) appointments system to the current process whereby the local church in transition develops a church profile and pastor's job description and works through a board-appointed Pastoral Leadership Task Force (PLTF) in consultation with the Director of Personnel to hire a pastor who is a good fit for the local church. The PLTF chairperson then sends a request to the Bishop for that pastor to be appointed by the conference, and in turn the Bishop presents the recommendation to MEGaP for approval, after which the selected pastor is appointed.

As pastors, we will find ourselves in transition at some point in our ministry career, whether it is between pastoral appointments at local churches, going into transition without a new pastoral position or transitioning to retirement. This Handbook is designed to be a helpful resource during the process ahead of you.

SECTION A

LOOKING TO TRANSITION TO ANOTHER CHURCH

THIS SECTION APPLIES IF YOU ARE:

- **hearing from God that you've accomplished what He had set before you in your current assignment and sensing that you've been released**
- **thinking about a transition**
- **feeling it is time for a new challenge/ministry opportunity**
- **not planning on transitioning from the current assignment unless and until you've secured a new pastoral position**

1. Have a telephone/email/in-person conversation with Bishop or Director of Personnel (DOP).
2. Check the weekly Bishop's notes for the list of current churches in transition. Most of churches in transition prepare a profile that includes pertinent information about the church and congregation as well as the pastor's job description. Churches in transition are listed in Bishop's notes in various stages, i.e. preparing profile; profile available-DOP receiving resumes; interviewing, etc. Those churches in the "preparing profile" or "profile available" categories are churches for which positions are currently open.
 - a. Contact the DOP office to let them know which churches interest you.
 - b. Your name will go on the list to receive the profile when it is ready.
 - c. Once you receive the profile, prayerfully review it and let the DOP office know by the deadline date whether or not you are interested in applying. Simply requesting the profile *does not* give the DOP permission to submit your resume to the PLTF of any church.
 - d. After reviewing the profile and job description, if you would like to apply to any particular church, email the DOP office a current copy of your resume along with a cover letter for that particular church. Having your resume on file with the DOP office *does not* mean it will be forwarded to every church in transition. The DOP office needs your written permission to forward your resume to each individual church. The best way to provide that permission is for you to email the DOP office a specific cover letter for each church to which you would like your resume submitted. In this way, you are an active participant in the application process for any church in transition.

Writing a Resume and Cover Letter

The ideal is for your resume to say a lot about your track record using short phrases, and not sentences, thus using a maximum of four pages for your whole resume (two pages is the absolute ideal). It is important to present yourself well and accurately on paper because this may be the first presentation of you to the PLTF. (see Section D-Resources for a sample 2-page resume)

Some suggestions:

- list accomplishments at each church by stating... *“when I started, there were this many and when I left there were that many”* (i.e. before and after numbers such as, when I started this group I equipped 5 leaders, who are still leading; I supervised four staff members, etc., giving specific numbers)
- use 6-10 bullets of accomplishments under each church/employer name
- list at least three references with current and correct contact information in the body of your resume
- let your references know that you are listing them on your resume so they will be prepared to receive a call from a member of a PLTF
- address your cover letter to the PLTF chairperson listed in the church profile
- include a goal/objective statement and perhaps a philosophy of ministry
- check for spelling and grammar
- do not use any personal extraneous data such as date of birth, social insurance number, photo, marital status, family information, etc. This is in keeping with good human resources policy and prevents any prejudices.

Other helpful websites for creating a resume and cover letter:

www.canadavisa.com/canadian-employment-resume.html

www.canadiancareers.com/coverletter.html

www.canadiancareers.com/resume.html

3. Should you submit your resume to a church in transition and be short-listed for a position:
 - inform your leadership – at least the board chair and delegate. Up until this point, simply applying for a position does not require a need to share that information, which avoids unnecessary anxiety. However, once you have been short-listed, then your leadership can be prayerfully supportive while also planning for possibilities for the future. This eliminates leadership being blind-sided if you are the successful candidate.
 - you and your leadership should keep this information confidential at this point and not share with the congregation because it is still premature – you may not get the position and no departure date is known.

4. Preparing for a face-to-face interview:
 - contact the PLTF chairperson for any questions you may have about the church or the position
 - learn as much as you can about the congregation, local church and community
 - prepare your own questions to ask at the interview – remember this is a two-way interview – the PLTF are interviewing you, but you are also interviewing them

5. If you are the successful candidate:
 - At the receiving church:**
 - the PLTF chairperson or Board chair will work with you to negotiate and sign a Letter of Understanding (LOU) (see par 879 attached) for the new position
 - Contact Roseline Isaac at the Ministry Centre in Mississauga by email at roseline.isaac@fmcic.ca or by telephone at 905-848-2600 ext 210 to ensure that appropriate payroll forms are completed for the new position.
 - Once the LOU is signed, the PLTF chairperson or delegate will send a recommendation to the Bishop requesting an appointment for you at the church with an effective start date. This recommendation is then sent by the Bishop to the Regional MEGaP for an email vote. Therefore, for a letter of appointment to be read on the following Sunday, the appointment request must be sent to the Bishop by Wednesday of that week.
 - Letters announcing the transition and the appointment will be read at the end of the worship services *in both churches on the same Sunday*.

 - At the church you are leaving:**
 - You send an email to the Bishop requesting a release from your current appointment with an effective end date.
 - You inform the whole Board, if you haven't already done so. A Termination of Employment (TOE) (see par 880 attached) document needs to be completed and signed.
 - Depending on the timing, a letter of appointment from the Bishop will come to the delegate to be read to the congregation on the Sunday following the appointment request which announces that you and the church are in transition (see par 340.3 in The Manual). *The Bishop announces all church transitions*, so neither you nor the Board can announce the transition at either church until the letter from the Bishop is read by the delegate.

- Please read the Fact Sheet for Pastors in Transition which will be attached to the Bishop's letter (see also Section E resources).
- Often there are deep friendships formed with select members of the congregation. To honor those friendships, you may want to share with those trusted few friends in advance of the announcement. You need to use good judgment and be sensitive to the timing (i.e. speak to them on the Friday or Saturday before the announcement). Ask those friends to keep the information confidential until it is announced.
- Letters announcing the transition and the appointment will be read at the end of worship services *in both churches on the same Sunday*.
- On the Sunday when the transition is announced in your church, you need to be prepared to give a brief comment (i.e. your sense of God's leading in this, encouragement for the congregation about the future, etc.) following the reading of the Bishop's letter and to pray with the people as the service closes. This should be prepared and written out in advance. The delegate should be prepared to pray for you and your family.

Leaving well:

- From The Manual, par 801.1 – **Advice to Minister – Personal and Professional Ethics:** *“Honour the work of your predecessors and successors. Pastoral transitions require a fresh start. It is not wise to return to your previous church to conduct weddings, baptisms, funerals, or to provide other pastoral ministry. Certainly none should occur without the knowledge and consent of your successor.”*
- Departing pastors need to take this very seriously and understand that they need to say a gracious ‘no’ to these requests when they come. This will allow their successor the opportunity that these ministries provide to build relationships and get involved in peoples’ lives in the church and in the community. To do otherwise, could undermine your successor’s ministry.
- see Section E for a list of resources for ‘leaving well’

SECTION B

IN TRANSITION WITHOUT A NEW PASTORAL POSITION

THIS ADDITIONAL SECTION APPLIES IF YOU ARE:

- **hearing from God that you've accomplished what He had set before you in your current assignment and sensing that you've been released**
 - **already in transition OR planning for other employment with a defined departure date (i.e. chaplaincy, para-church ministry, teaching, secular work, etc.) or a set retirement date AND**
 - **do not have a new pastoral position**
1. Have a telephone/email/in-person conversation with Bishop or DOP to discuss options for the timing and the sharing of information
 2. Have a conversation with your delegate to determine what timing would work best for the church for:
 - your departure date
 - informing the board of your plans
 - informing the congregation
 3. Once a date of departure has been determined:
 - email the Bishop a request to be released from your current appointment effective that departure date
 - inform the whole Board, if you haven't already done so. A Termination of Employment (TOE) (see par 880 attached) document needs to be negotiated, completed and signed. Please pay particular attention to Section #7 – Dates and Understandings:
 - If you plan to actively seek another FMCiC appointment, you need to complete section 7b so that your benefits coverage will continue for 3 months after your last day of salary or salary continuance from the local church. This option is recommended. At this point, you will be responsible for paying your employee portion of the group benefits. The three month time period does not guarantee that you will have another pastoral appointment by the end of that three month period.
 - If you do not plan to actively seek another FMCiC appointment, your benefits will end on the last day of your employment. This includes transitioning to any other type of employment such as chaplaincy, other para-church ministries, teaching positions, secular work, etc.

- Depending on the timing, the letter from the Bishop announcing the transition will come to the delegate to be read to the congregation on the Sunday following the request. The Bishop's letter will announce that you and the church are in transition. (see par 340.3 in The Manual). *The Bishop announces all church transitions*, so neither you nor the Board can announce the transition at the local church until the letter from the Bishop is read by the delegate.
- Please read the Fact Sheet for Pastors in Transition which will be attached to the Bishop's letter (see also Section E resources).
- Often there are deep friendships formed with select members of the congregation. To honor those friendships, you may want to share with those trusted few friends in advance of the announcement. You need to use good judgment and be sensitive to the timing (i.e. speak to them on the Friday or Saturday before the announcement). Ask those friends to keep the information confidential until it is announced.
- The Bishop's letter announcing the transition will be read at the end of worship service.
- On the Sunday when the transition is announced in your church, you need to be prepared to give a brief comment (i.e. your sense of God's leading in this, encouragement for the congregation about the future, etc.) following the reading of the Bishop's letter and to pray with the people as the service closes. This should be prepared and written out in advance. The delegate should be prepared to pray for you and your family.

Leaving well:

- From The Manual, par 801.1 – **Advice to Minister – Personal and Professional Ethics:** *“Honour the work of your predecessors and successors. Pastoral transitions require a fresh start. It is not wise to return to your previous church to conduct weddings, baptisms, funerals, or to provide other pastoral ministry. Certainly none should occur without the knowledge and consent of your successor.”*
 - Departing pastors need to take this very seriously and understand that they need to say a gracious ‘no’ to these requests when they come. This will allow their successor the opportunity that these ministries provide to build relationships and get involved in peoples’ lives in the church and in the community. To do otherwise, could undermine your successor’s ministry.
 - see Section E for a list of resources for ‘leaving well’
4. Be sure to read the “*Facts Sheet for Pastors in Transition*” provided in a letter to you from the Bishop acknowledging that you are in transition.
- If your transition is to retirement, contact Ah Sun Kim in Administrative Services at the Ministry Centre in Mississauga by email at ahsun.kim@fmcic.ca or by phone at 905-848-2600 ext 212 to discuss documentation regarding your pension.

5. For information about applying for Employment Insurance (EI) benefits, check the Government of Canada website:
www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/ei/application/applying_for_benefits.shtml
- Check your Record of Employment Box 16 to be sure it reflects the correct reason for leaving your position. Anything other than these three selections will result in either a delay in any EI application being processed, or your application being denied.
 - Code “A” – for “*contract completed*”
 - Code “C” – for “*return to school*”
 - Code “G” – for “*retirement*”
 - Be sure to apply for EI as soon as possible
 - The first two weeks are considered a deductible so no funds are paid
 - The first payment cheque usually arrives within twenty-eight days of filing your claim
6. Do some sort of self-awareness skills assessment or seek career counselling to perhaps explore other options for a season such as employment outside of pastoral ministry or returning to school for further education, etc. Here are some resources:
- www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/subjects/education/index.shtml
 - http://www1.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/sid/cia/grants/self-emp/desc_self-emp.shtml
 - www.careerjoy.com (Alan Kearns is known by the FMCiC in this area of career development)
 - career transition coaching
 - “*Moving On Moving Forward – A guide for pastors in transition*” by Michael J. Anthony and Mick Boersma
 - “*Strengths Finder 2.0*” by Tom Rath, 2007 The Gallup Organization or online, go to www.StrengthsFinder.com and www.marcusbuckingham.com.
 - “*What Color is Your Parachute?*” By Richard N. Bolles

SECTION C

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why do we have to wait to tell the congregation?

- The Bishop announces all church transitions in the denomination
- Unnecessary congregational anxiety is created when more people than the leadership are informed about a pastor who is applying to other positions, since s/he may not be the successful candidate and will end up staying in his/her current position
- If the local church is informed too soon about a transition, and the announcement is not yet made through the FMCiC transition process, word leaks out to other pastors and congregations and creates complications in the wider church (i.e. FMCiC)

Can a person be hired at a local church as an Associate Pastor with the expectation that s/he will become the Lead Pastor (i.e. current lead pastor is retiring)?

- Yes, but this is not as easy as it may seem. The hiring process would need to begin probably two years in advance in order to be successful. The recruitment and hiring process takes time, a job description needs to be created (or refined) and adequate time is needed for the training. Also, if the successful candidate is serving elsewhere, their availability may not be as soon as desired.
- The church will need to have the financial capacity to employ both the Associate and Lead pastors during the training/overlap period.

SECTION D

RESOURCES

SAMPLE RESUME

NAME, B.Ed., M.Div.
Address, phone #, email address

Personal Objective:

To partner with God in empowering and equipping others, with the purpose of maximizing kingdom impact.

PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Lead Pastor - _____ Church – 2003 to present

- helped turnaround from an overall average NCD assessment score of 46 (2003) to an overall average score of 73 (2008); empowering leadership went from 12 to 83.
- helped overcome two consecutive leadership splits to become a healthy core of believers who reflect a culture of unity and vitality.
- facilitated relational conflicts to healthy resolve

Retreat Speaker Echo Lake Camp (2005)

Internship Practicum - Family Counselling & Support Services, Guelph, ON (2003)

Teacher: Taught High School Mathematics

Participated and Led, speaking and leadership conferences/seminars

Associate Pastor - _____ Church 2002-2003

- planning and participating in worship services
- organize and give leadership to small groups
- preaching and preaching
- administration, visitation and outreach

EDUCATION

ARROW Leadership Program, 2006-2007

Master of Divinity – Tyndale Seminary, Toronto - 2004

Bachelor of Education- University of _____ - 1985

Personal interest and miscellaneous other:

6 Psychology classes '94-'95,'99-'2000

Changing Gears to Handle Issues Facing the Church in Canada Today, EFC - 2008

Celebrate Recovery Conference – 2008; Equip Conference – 2005

Building a Contagious Church Conference – 2004

Prevailing Church Conference – 2004

Alpha Conference – 2004

Leading Turnaround Churches Conference - 2003

Prepare & Enrich Seminar (Pre-marital and marital counselling) - 2002

Leadership Summit Conferences (1997, 1998, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008)

EMPLOYMENT

_____ **Free Methodist Church**, Lead Pastor, Aug 2003 – present
_____ **Free Methodist Church**, Associate Pastor, 2002-2003
_____ **Free Methodist Church** – Pulpit supply and pastoral duties, 2000-2002
_____ **Board of Education**, Teacher, 1985-2000
_____ **Autistic Society**, Youth Worker, 1984
University of _____, Instructor, 1983

AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Ordained Minister: The Free Methodist Church
Academic awards: Mary Bass (FM highest academic G.P.A.), 2004
Doris Meredith Scholarship Award, 2002
Competent Toastmaster Award, 2000
Christopher Leadership Pin, 1995

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

MEGaP (Ministerial Education Guidance & Placement) Committee FMCiC, 2008-present
Lay Minister, _____ Church, 1998-2000: Coordinator/Teacher of Membership; Small Group Leader
President, Old North West Toastmasters Club
Instructor, Christopher Leadership Course, 1996-98
Coach, Football and Track & Field, _____, 1985-91

OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST

Perceptive of people's gifts with sensitivity to their unique journey and call, and their fit into the community of believers
A good listener with strong interpersonal skills
Effective communicator; spiritually gifted in the areas of teaching, leadership, and apostleship
Enjoys creativity and seeks to employ new and visionary ideas
Missional-minded; Team-oriented; enthusiastic
Enjoys outdoor sports

REFERENCES

Name & Title
Address
Phone # and email address

Name & Title
Address
Phone # and email address

Name & Title
Address
Phone # and email address

¶879 LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING TEMPLATE (revised Feb 10, 2013)

[This template is provided to give guidance to the drafting of Letters of Understanding. It is to be adapted to accurately express the employment relationship between a congregation and its pastor.]

Date _____, 20__

Name _____

Address _____

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear (name): _____

We are pleased to confirm our offer of employment and your acceptance of your appointment as XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX with the XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX Free Methodist Church. A copy of the current job description for this position is attached. Please be sure that you fully understand the key elements of the job and the performance requirements of the position before you sign this employment agreement.

In order to guide our relationship today and into the future, we have agreed to operate under the terms of the following employment agreement.

Starting Date and Status

As the XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, you will report to the Official Board and your Network Leader. You will commence work formally on XXXXXXXX, 20__.

Compensation

Salary (choose paragraph a. or b.)

a. **[use this section only if XXXXXX Free Methodist Church is offering salary and a Housing Allowance– otherwise delete this paragraph]**

We have agreed that your salary will be XXXXXXXXXXX per annum paid semi-monthly. Of this amount, a portion may be designated as a tax-free housing allowance because you are a member of the clergy as per the Canada Revenue Agency formula (Par. 878.1.3). Beyond normal government programs (CPP, E.I.), the XXXXXXXX Free Methodist Church will contribute to The Free Methodist Church in Canada Defined Contribution component of the Minister’s Pension Plan. You will be required to contribute a minimum of 3% of salary and XXXXXXXX Free Methodist Church will match 100% of your contributions to a maximum of 6% of your salary. You may voluntarily contribute up to an additional 6% of your salary to the Minister’s Pension Plan. XXXXXXXX Free Methodist Church will not match any voluntary pension contributions above 6%. This is a mandatory plan for all churches that have pastors in full time employment (35 hours or more per week). (Par .878.2.1)

b. **[use this section only if XXXXXX Free Methodist Church is offering salary and a Manse, and the pastor agrees to live in the Manse – otherwise delete this paragraph]**

We have agreed that your salary will be XXXXXXXX per annum paid semi-monthly (inclusive of the fair market rental value of providing a Manse and related utilities to you). The value of the Manse, per Canada Revenue Agency, is considered a taxable benefit and is determined by

XXXXXX Free Methodist Church. Beyond normal government programs (CPP, E.I.), the XXXXXXX Free Methodist Church will contribute to The Free Methodist Church in Canada Defined Contribution component of the Minister's Pension Plan. You will be required to contribute a minimum of 3% of salary and XXXXXXX Free Methodist Church will match 100% of your contributions to a maximum of 6% of your salary. You may voluntarily contribute up to an additional 6% of your salary to the Ministers' Pension Plan. XXXXXXX Free Methodist Church will not match any voluntary pension contributions above 6%. This is a mandatory plan for all churches that have pastors in full time employment (35 hours or more per week). (Par. 878.2.1).

Benefits

As a pastor with 20 or more paid hours per week, you are required to participate in those benefits made available by The Free Methodist Church in Canada, which includes Group Life Insurance, Long Term Disability, Extended Health and Dental coverage. You may opt out of Extended Health and Dental if you document that you have spousal coverage with another provider. You may not opt out of Group Life and Long Term Disability coverage. Group benefits apply one month after your official start date once your application has been received by the Ministry Centre. If no application is received before the one-month wait period expires, a late entrant form will also be necessary for completion. A booklet describing the current benefit plan is found in *The Manual of The Free Methodist Church in Canada* (Chapter 8, Par 878). Holiday pay and sick time guidelines will be in accordance with organizational policy. The current policy is set out in *The Manual*. In addition to those benefits outlined in *The Manual*, we agree that XXXXXXXXXXX funds are available for professional development and the purchase of books and periodical subscriptions.

Vacation

As agreed, you will be eligible for XXXX weeks of paid vacation in 20__ and XXXXX weeks of vacation every year thereafter. Vacation days are accrued as outlined in *The Manual*. (See ¶878.6.1.) Beyond the terms outlined in this employment agreement, all decisions will be guided by the vacation policy in force at the time of the review.

Expenses

All normal expenses associated with the fulfillment of your duties will be covered by the XXXXXXXXXXX Free Methodist Church. Expenses associated with travel to and from your home to the office are not considered eligible expenses. They are expenses you must cover personally.

Reasonable expenses with regard to the office, internet access and a cell phone will be covered. Travel, lodging and entertainment expenses associated with your work will also be paid. The policies governing these expenses will be reviewed with you during your orientation period.

Performance

The effective performance of the duties of this position requires the highest level of integrity and our complete confidence in your relationship with other staff, employees and members/adherents of the XXXXXXXXXXX Free Methodist Church and with all persons dealt with by you in the course of employment. You are required to ensure that you at all times conduct yourself in a professional manner, appropriate to a positive Christian testimony and to the core values of The Free Methodist Church in Canada.

Your performance will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and a formal evaluation will be discussed with you on an annual basis.

Employee Conduct Policy

Employees of XXXXXXXXX Free Methodist Church are expected to adhere to general standards of behaviour consistent with the teaching of Jesus Christ and his followers as recorded in the New Testament and as outlined in *The Manual of The Free Methodist Church in Canada*. XXXXXXXXX Free Methodist Church does not accept conduct such as: extra marital sexual relationships (adultery); pre-marital sexual relationships (fornication); homosexual sexual relationships; substance abuse; use of pornographic material; theft, fraud; breach of trust or confidence; abusive behaviour; sexual assault/harassment; lying, deceit and dishonesty; criminal activity.

Such conduct may be grounds for just cause termination.

Confidentiality Agreement

You acknowledge that in the course of your employment you may work with and/or acquire confidential and personal information pertaining to staff, members and adherents of the XXXXXXXXXXXXX Free Methodist Church. You agree to hold this confidential information in trust and you shall not (except as required in the performance of your duties), at any time, during your employment or following your employment, use or disclose or make available to anyone for use outside of the organization any of this personal or confidential information, without prior written consent of your superior. Violation of this confidentiality agreement may be cause for culpable termination.

Termination of Employment

It is always difficult to consider termination issues during the employment agreement sign-off process. However, we have agreed on the following:

- In the event your employment is terminated by the XXXXXXXXX Free Methodist Church for just cause, you will receive no notice or pay in lieu of notice.
- In the event of a termination not for just cause (request for transition by the church), you will be entitled to the greater of:
 - a. 8 weeks notice or pay in lieu of notice, and for each year of completed service beyond 8 years an additional 2 weeks notice or pay in lieu thereof; OR
 - b. the minimum required by applicable provincial employment standards/labour legislation.

Should you decide at any time to request to transition from this position, you agree to comply with the guidelines of The Free Methodist Church in Canada as outlined in chapter three (Par. 340) of *The Manual of the Free Methodist Church in Canada*.

Terms of Agreement

The terms contained in this employment agreement will continue on a year to year basis, without accrual, unless modified by the employer in writing.

As part of this employment agreement you will be required to give your signature of agreement to the terms of this letter.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has guided the process that has brought about this employment relationship. We look forward to having you join us at XXXXXXXXXXXXX Free Methodist Church.

Sincerely,

(Official Board Chair)

Please sign below indicating your agreement with the above terms.

I have read, understood and agree with the foregoing. I accept employment on the above terms and conditions.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

_____ **FREE METHODIST CHURCH**
[An agreement this _____ day of _____, _____ between the Official Board of the
_____ Free Methodist Church and Pastor _____ with respect
to the conclusion of Pastor _____'s appointment to the
_____ Free Methodist Church]

THE PARTIES HAVE AGREED TO THE FOLLOWING:

1. Request for Transition:

In a written request to Bishop _____, on _____ 20____.

*Options (Choose **one** to complete the sentence.)*

- a) Lead Pastor _____ and the Official Board mutually agreed that his/her appointment obligations will have been fulfilled _____, 20____ and asked that _____ Free Methodist Church be placed in transition effective _____, 20____.
- b) Lead Pastor _____ requested to be released from his/her appointment effective _____, 20____ thus placing the church in transition.
- c) Assistant/Associate Pastor _____ requested to be released from his/her appointment effective _____, 20____.
- d) The chair of the official board and delegate indicated that a strong majority of the official board has expressed in a recorded vote that they have lost confidence in the pastor's capacity to lead the congregation.
- e) The Official Board completed a performance appraisal (see ¶335) and the overall average score was below 5.5. These results were referred to the bishop and the ministerial education, guidance and placement committee (MEGaP) and, after consultation, resulted in a decision by MEGaP that Lead Pastor _____ be released from his/her appointment effective _____, 20____ and that the _____ church be placed in transition.

2. Notice or Salary Continuance:

*Options (Choose **one**)*

- a) The Official Board and Pastor _____ agree that the standard 60 day notice period is sufficient notice and agree that the employment relationship will end on _____, 20____.
- b) The period of time from _____, 20____ to _____, 20____ is considered to be a _____ week notification period, based on Pastor _____'s _____ years of service at the church.
- c) The Official Board, Pastor _____, and the Director of Personnel mutually agree in writing to waive a portion of the standard 60 day notice and to allow Pastor _____ to conclude his/her schedule of activities at the church effective _____, 20____.

d) In lieu of notice, the church has agreed to pay salary continuance to Pastor _____ at the rate of his/her regular salary through to (date) _____, 20____, (a total of ____ weeks) inclusive of vacation accrual during the period of salary continuance. His/her regular monthly Housing Allowance and current group benefit coverage will also continue to be paid for the same period. If there is a parsonage and it is vacated before the end of the salary continuance, the _____ FMC church will increase the monthly amount of the salary continuance by the monthly amount of the fair rental value of the residence plus the cost of utilities as stated in the previous year's Clergy Housing Allowance certificate provided by the church. See Par. 878.1.3

NOTE: If the effective date is beyond the 15th of the month, the full amount for benefit coverage will still be paid as per the insurance company policy.

3. Vacation Entitlements:

Based on _____ months of service within the current year, Pastor _____ would be entitled to _____ days of vacation. _____ days of vacation time have already been taken and there are _____ days owing.

Based on _____ months of service within the previous year, Pastor _____ would be entitled to _____ days of vacation. _____ days of vacation time have already been taken and there are _____ days owing.

*Options (Choose **one** to complete this paragraph if there is time owed.)*

- a) This owed vacation time will be taken prior to the last day of employment at a time chosen by Pastor _____ and agreed to by the Chair of the Official Board.
- b) This owed vacation time will be compensated based upon _____ days owing, as per above.

4. Travel Allowance:

Regarding car/mileage allowance and expenses, all activity will cease effective _____, 20____.

5. Personal and Church Property:

All personal property is to be removed from the church building and all church property (including but not limited to books, credit card, files, videos, electronic equipment and keys to the building) will be returned to the church office by _____, 20____.

If there is a parsonage, it will be vacated by _____, 20____.

6. Record of Employment documents:

Record of Employment (ROE) documents will be prepared for delivery to Pastor _____ within 5 days of the last pay day. **Please provide information as soon as possible to the Central Payroll Department at the Ministry Centre indicating what reason (according to the following CRA categories) should be put on the ROE:**

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| A. <input type="checkbox"/> Shortage of Work | C. <input type="checkbox"/> Return to School | D. <input type="checkbox"/> Illness or Injury |
| E. <input type="checkbox"/> Resignation | F. <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy | G. <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement |
| H. <input type="checkbox"/> Work Sharing | M. <input type="checkbox"/> Dismissal | N. <input type="checkbox"/> Leave of Absence |
| P. <input type="checkbox"/> Parental leave | Z. <input type="checkbox"/> Compassionate Care | K. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

7. PENSION AND GROUP BENEFITS:

It is understood that pension contributions cease on termination of employment. If the pastor is leaving the denomination, an option form can be requested from The Free Methodist Church in Canada at termination if the pastor wishes to transfer out of the Free Methodist Pension Plan to another registered pension plan or RRSP locked-in investment. Otherwise, pension payments will commence at the normal retirement date.

Pension: Please contact Isabel Garcia (isabel.garcia@fmcic.ca) to discuss your pension options.

Group benefits cease once a pastor terminates employment with a Free Methodist Church. Under the guidelines of the contract with the insurance company, pastors going into transition can continue to participate in the group benefits plan for a period of no longer than three (3) months provided they are seeking employment within the Free Methodist denomination in Canada. The employee premiums will be billed to the pastor. In instances where the pastor is transferring to another ministry or other employment, group benefits cease on the last day of employment with a Free Methodist Church.

The pastor may have the option to convert life insurance coverage to an individual policy without evidence of insurability provided necessary forms are completed within 30 days of termination, or within such other period as outlined by the insurance carrier.

Salary Continuance Agreements note: As noted above, Group Benefits payments by the local church normally end when the pastor’s appointment ends. However, in the case of salary continuance agreements, the last day of employment (end of salary continuance) is later than the last day of the pastor’s appointment (transition effective date). Salary continuance agreements include group benefits and pension payments during the period of salary continuance.

Dates and Understandings:

- a. _____ [name of church] will cease benefit payments to Pastor _____’s group benefits on _____, 20__ (the last day of employment).
- b. Pastor _____ is actively seeking employment within the FMCiC and requests that group benefits continue for 3 months: Yes _____ No _____.
- If “Yes,” the monthly employee portion is \$ _____. Pastor _____ agrees to immediately provide 3 post-dated cheques to The Free Methodist Church in Canada for the employee portion of group benefits for the first 3 months of the transition period:

- dated the 1st day of the month for 3 months (if the last date of employment is on or before the 15th)

OR

- dated the 16th day of the month for 3 months (if the last date of employment is on or after the 16th)

The corresponding employer portion of premiums will be paid by The Free Methodist Church in Canada.

Group benefits will cease on [date] _____, 20__ (3 months from the last day of employment) if no appointment is secured in the FMCiC.

- If “No,” group benefits will cease on _____, 20__ (the last date of employment noted in section a. above).

c. Pastor _____ agrees to notify Administrative Services immediately upon securing permanent employment outside The Free Methodist Church in Canada.

8. Complete Record:

This document is to be considered a complete record of all the termination of employment arrangements agreed upon by the parties. When signed by both parties, it shall serve as a release of the local church by the pastor from any further responsibility beyond what is agreed upon in this document.

Signed,

_____, Pastor

Date _____

_____, Delegate

Date _____

Delegate - Print Name & Telephone Number

_____, Board Chair or Secretary

Date _____

Bd. Chair or Secretary - Print Name & Telephone Number

If the 8 week notice period is waived:

_____, Director of Personnel

Date _____

Please send a signed copy of this agreement to the Director of Administrative Services, The Free Methodist Church in Canada, 4315 Village Centre Court, Mississauga, ON L4Z 1S2

SECTION E

ADDITIONAL READING / RESOURCES

Below is a list of several articles and resources for ‘leaving well.’ These articles are all recommended reading; however if you are short on time and need to be selective in your reading, they are ranked based on feedback from pastors in order of relevance and usefulness. These articles are all available on the website at this link:

<http://fmcic.ca/index.php/en/ministry-areas/leadership-development/transition-index>

1. Fact Sheet for Pastors in Transition – FMCiC
2. When It’s Time to Leave, by Gordon MacDonald
3. The Right Start: Beginning Ministry In A New Setting, Saint Paul School of Theology/Wesley Theological Seminary (especially the page called "*Best Practices for Beginning Ministry in a New Setting*")
4. Ten Commandments For Pastors, (Leaving a Congregation / New to a Congregation), by Lawrence Farris
5. How To Leave A Pastorate, by Fred McGehee.
6. Leaving Well (If You're Going To Go, Go!), by Israel Galindo
7. Letting Go: Setting Boundaries In Retirement And Former Parishes, by L. Ronald Brushwhyler.
8. Managing Transitions, by Rev. Cam Taylor (a Free Methodist Ordained Minister who is the director of the Outreach Canada-Transitional Leadership Ministry and also gives leadership to their Transitional Leadership Network.
<http://en.outreach.ca/Equip/LeadershipNetworks/tabid/1069/language/en-US/Default.aspx>