

PROCEDURE 4: THE CALLING, SETTLEMENT AND RESIGNATION OF A MINISTER

4.1 VACANT PASTORATE

- 4.1.1 When a local church falls vacant in any way, the Church Secretary reports the vacancy immediately to the Regional Council through the Secretary.
- 4.1.2 The Moderator of the Regional Council is the interim acting minister for the vacant church until the Regional Council makes a final appointment for an acting minister.

4.2 RESIGNATION OF A MINISTER

- 4.2.1 On resigning from the pastorate of a local church, a minister shall cease to be a member of that church at the time the resignation becomes effective. Should the local church, for exceptional reasons, desire the minister=s membership to continue, the Regional Council may at its discretion accede to the request.

4.3 ACTING-MINISTER

- 4.3.1 The Regional Council thereupon makes arrangements for the appointment of an Acting Minister whose duties include the following:

- 4.3.1.1 Pending the departure of the minister from the pastorate, to preside at all Deacons= and Church Meetings when the future of the pastorate is being discussed.

- 4.3.1.2 When the minister concerned has left, to be responsible for the general oversight of the local church. This includes the following:-

- 4.3.1.2.1 Presiding at all Deacons= and Church Meetings either in person or by deputy.

- 4.3.1.2.2 Making arrangements for the administration of the Sacraments.

- 4.3.2 An acting-minister is appointed for not more than a year at a time. The Regional Council approves the continuation in office at its annual meeting. An acting minister shall be remunerated in terms of a guideline of fees accepted by the Regional Council.

- 4.3.3 The Regional Council appoints a minister to preside at all Deacon=s and Church Meetings when the calling of a minister is being discussed. This applies also when a local church, having at least one minister in pastoral charge, desires to call an additional minister.

- 4.3.4 Should any church wish to consider issuing a call to its acting minister, it first reports this to the Regional Council/Synod, which appoints another minister to preside.

4.4 THE CALLING OF A MINISTER

- 4.4.1 When a vacancy occurs, an acting-minister is appointed by the Regional Ministerial Committee, and a Search Committee, representing the various groups in the local church, is elected by the Church Meeting.

- 4.4.2 The Search Committee presided over by the acting-minister undertakes a full review, the pastoral needs of the local church, its financial resources, and its vision for the future and the perceived needs of the community.
- 4.4.3 Out of this review, a profile of the kind of ministry required by the local church is defined.
- 4.4.4 When this process is completed it should be reported to the Regional Ministerial Committee as soon as possible but at least within a year of the vacancy occurring.
- 4.4.5 The church seeking a minister may approach accredited ministers or eligible interns of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa for placement or call.
- 4.4.6 The report referred to in 4.4.4 above, including the local church profile and the profile of the ministry require must be sent to UCCSA General Secretary.
- 4.4.7 Procedure for Advertising and Applications
 - 4.4.7.1 A local church seeking a minister may advertise the vacancy in the official publication of the Church and receive applications from interested ministers. The advertisement must indicate the closing date for applications.
 - 4.4.7.2 Interested ministers apply to the office of the General Secretary for the profile of the local church and the ministry required.
 - 4.4.7.3 All applications are submitted to the local church and by the closing date.
 - 4.4.7.4 On the basis of the application received the Search Committee may draw up a short list of suitable candidates. The suitable candidates may normally be invited in turn for an interview and discussion of matters of mutual importance including details of employment, stipend and benefits. Candidates may also be invited to conduct public worship in the local church.
 - 4.4.7.5 Benefits must include compulsory membership of the UCCSA Pension Fund as administered for those ministers employed within the Republic of South Africa, and such Pension Funds as administered for other synods.
 - 4.4.7.6 Once the Search Committee has decided on the name of the minister it deems suitable, that name is recommended to the diaconate and to a Special Church meeting and thereafter to the Regional Ministerial Committee in terms of the relevant procedures. Only one name may be recommended at a time.
 - 4.4.7.7 No call may be sent until the approval of the Regional Council or its Administrative Committee had been obtained. It may be accepted or rejected by the minister concerned, but it may no longer be subject to further negotiation.
 - 4.4.7.8 When considering the call, the Regional Council shall satisfy itself that the local church is up to date with regard to the payment of tithes, and that no other arrear monies are owing to the UCCSA. If any amount is outstanding, the Region may not approve the call.

4.4.7.9 The Regional shall ascertain from the Principal Officers of the Pension Funds referred to in 4.4.7.5 as to whether any local church, intending to call a minister, has fulfilled all its obligations to the Pension Fund. No church that has not fulfilled its obligation to the Pension Fund will be permitted to call a minister.

4.4.7.10 A Call automatically falls away if it is not accepted within two months from the date it was dispatched.

4.4.7.11 When a minister has accepted a Call to the Ministry of a church he/she shall not thereafter undertake secular employment, or otherwise change the basis of his/her appointment unless the terms of the Call have been reviewed in his/her absence by a duly constituted Deacons= and Church meeting under the Chairmanship of a minister appointed by the Regional Council.

4.4.7.12 A written agreement shall be entered into between the church and minister after he/she has accepted the call.

4.5 ORDINATION AND INDUCTION

4.5.1 When a minister has accepted a call, the local church informs the Regional Council immediately after receiving the letter of acceptance.

4.5.2 The Regional Council then makes arrangements for the Ordination and/or Induction of the minister who has accepted a call or placement.

4.5.3 The Moderator of the Region or his/her appointed deputy presides at the Ordination and/or Induction of a minister in that Region.

4.5.4 Ordination requires authorization of the Assembly or the Executive Committee in terms of Procedure 3.

4.6 MOVEMENT OF MINISTERS

4.6.1 Regional Secretaries inform the Synod Secretary of all vacancies as and when they occur.

4.6.2 Ministers who are seeking a change of pastorate may write confidentially to the UCCSA Secretary who forward names to the Synod where vacancies exist.

4.6.3 The UCCSA Secretary keeps Synod Secretaries informed regarding ministers who are ready to move.

4.7 CHURCHES WITH MORE THAN ONE MINISTER

When a church has more than one minister, none of the ministers on the staff of the church concerned presides at the Deacons= or Church Meeting at which the pastorate is discussed. A minister appointed by the Regional Council presides over such meetings.

4.8 CALL TO MINISTERS OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS OF THE UCCSA

Local churches desiring to call ministers from outside the bounds of the UCCSA should contact the Synod Secretary who shall indicate the correct procedure to be followed.

4.9 DEATH OF A MINISTER

Upon being informed of the death of a minister, the Regional Secretary informs the Synod Secretary who informs the General Secretary as soon as possible, in order to consult regarding the Denomination=s role in the funeral arrangements and proceedings.