

The Movement of Ministers

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1. Introduction and Outline Process

This document includes an overview of the process from the time a serving minister informs their pastorate of his/her intention to leave that post to the end of an induction period when a new minister has been called. This document does not deal with Church Related Community Workers, who are the subject of a parallel document 'The Movement of CRCWs'.

Preparing to declare a post vacant

- A serving minister informs their pastorate of the intention to leave
- Concurrence to move is given by the Synod, co-ordinated by the Synod Clerk
- Appointment of Interim Moderator(s)
- Visit by the Synod Moderator sometimes with representatives from the Pastoral Committee
- Identifying of the Pastorate Call Group
- Confirm the configuration of the pastorate
- Preparation of Pastorate Profile including Draft Terms of Settlement and housing arrangements and Summary Profile
- Declaration of a Vacant Post

Calling a Minister

- The Role of Synod Moderators' meetings
- The profiles
- First visit by a candidate
- Preaching with a View
- Deciding on a call
- Concurrence given by Synod
- Induction Service and Induction period

2. Preparing to declare a post vacant

The best current practice in the movement of ministers contains the following elements. The order and timing of events will vary according to circumstance. Practice varies between Synods.

(NB: 'Synod' here implies 'or the appropriately authorised committee or officers of Synod'. Synod procedures need to be clearly agreed and understood on such matters, including who can give concurrence to calls. Similarly 'Elders' stands for the equivalent group in an ecumenical or 'special category' ministry situation. A Pastorate can consist of one or several congregations arranged as a joint pastorate, group or cluster etc.)

- 2.1 The minister informs the Elders and Church meeting(s) of receipt of a call to another post, retirement or other reason for leaving; normally three months' notice of a move is given, though in Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) and in the case of retirement it may well be known earlier. At the same time any call is referred to Synod, whose concurrence needs to be given. Care should be taken as to the timing of the announcement and the way it is done, particularly in a group pastorate. A statement of the reasons for leaving the post should be prepared by the minister for sharing with the Synod moderator, Secretary for Ministries and the pastorate to enable reflection on learning and possible action to be taken.

- 2.2 Synod initiates discussion with the pastorate with a view to appointing an Interim Moderator (or sometimes more than one to churches in a joint pastorate or LEP). The role and duties of Interim Moderator(s) should be clearly defined. If more than one Interim Moderator is appointed it is advisable to choose one of them to play a 'coordinating' role.
- 2.3 Ahead of the departure of the minister the Interim Moderator will chair any meetings about the future and will be the point of contact with Synod and the Synod Moderator.
- 2.4 Synod and the Synod Moderator arrange one or more meetings with the Elders, or other appropriate pastorate group, to explain the process of the movement of ministers and to discuss the mission needs and the scoping of the vacant pastorate.
- 2.5 After consultation with all involved the Synod decides on the shape of the pastorate and its scoping. "Scoping" is the term used for determining the ministry allocated to each pastorate. Thus, a pastorate may be scoped for a full-time or part-time Minister of Word and Sacraments or other form of ministry.
- 2.6 A 'pastorate call group' (also known as a vacancy group) is identified by the pastorate to help them through the process. Often this group is composed only of elders (some or all of the serving elders). However, others may be invited to take part to enable appropriate representation including, if possible, a mix of ethnicity, gender, age etc. In a multi-church pastorate, it is advisable to have at least one pastorate call group representative of each of the congregations in the group. In order to be most effective, it is recommended that the call group has no more than twelve members (in addition to Interim Moderator(s)).
- 2.7 The pastorate prepares a Pastorate Profile and a summary profile which can be obtained from the Synod Office. A draft role description should be prepared as part of this (See Appendix 4). Draft Terms of Settlement and housing provision including details of the manse should be included.
- 2.8 Agreement should be reached on the procedures for decision-making in relation to a call. The decision is taken by those present and able to vote in church meeting. The size of majority that will be required in the voting must be agreed in advance. In the case of a joint or group pastorate, there are various options to consider. It is recommended that there be a joint church meeting so that the whole pastorate shares in prayer and discussion. The vote may then be taken as a single vote of the pastorate, or separate ballot papers may be used for the different congregations. If separate church meetings are held, it is good for them to take place concurrently. If that is not possible, the decision of each meeting should be held in confidence until all have met and made their decision. In addition to agreeing an overall majority required for the issuing of a call, it is possible to set a lower threshold for the vote of each individual congregation within the pastorate. (See Appendix 11 for the procedure agreed by General Assembly for voting as one joint church meeting in a group pastorate.)
- 2.9 The pastorate prepares, and Synod agrees, draft 'Terms of Settlement', to be finally negotiated with a prospective minister. Synod needs to confirm the suitability of the manse. Changes to the manse (or housing allowance) to accommodate a particular minister should be made before the induction.

- 2.10 The summary profile (one for the whole pastorate) is prepared and agreed.
- 2.11 A copy of the full profile and summary profile should be sent to the Synod Office electronically for the Synod Moderator.
- 2.12 When a pastorate profile and summary profile are completed, scoping agreed and Terms of Settlement approved in draft form, then Synod will declare the pastorate free to seek a minister and the Synod Moderator will seek a candidate through the Synod Moderators' meeting.

3. Seeking and issuing a call

The best current practice for the movement of ministers follows the process given here. The basic framework will be adapted for particular circumstances, e.g. group pastorates, team ministries, ecumenical or 'special' situations. The process should be regarded as confidential to those involved.

- 3.1 The Synod Moderators meet 11 times per year to consider the movement of ministers. When the vacant post has been declared and the Pastorate Profile and summary have been prepared, the Synod Moderator gives information about the vacant post to the Synod Moderators' meeting using the Summary Pastorate Profile. The vacant post is advertised through the monthly emailing to all serving ministers before any consideration of an introduction. Ministers can view all Summary Pastorate Profiles via the website www.urc-profiles.org.uk . If candidates can be identified, or if any ministers have asked for it, they are shown the full Pastorate Profile and asked about letting their name go forward. Ministers seeking a move may be shown more than one profile, from which they may choose one to pursue.
- 3.2 If a candidate agrees, his/her Personal Profile is given to the pastorate. Sometimes the minister attaches a covering letter for the pastorate call group to indicate why they feel they would like an introduction. If several ministers wish to be introduced, their Personal Profiles are given to the pastorate which has to choose one with whom to proceed. (See Appendix 7 for a description of the process as printed in Assembly Reports 2004 page 120.) It is important for the pastorate to understand that this is a call process and not competitive interview.
- 3.3 An invitation may then be given to the candidate to meet the Interim Moderator and pastorate call group. These meetings/interviews should be confidential and carefully handled; some guidance is offered in Appendix 7. Members of any ministry team and ecumenical representatives may be met at this point and the manse may be seen.
- 3.4 If the candidate and pastorate call group both agree, the candidate should be invited for a weekend, to include meeting with appropriate groups, leading of services, social gatherings, etc. Consideration should be given as to whether joint services in a group pastorate might be more appropriate than leading worship several times in different locations.
- 3.5 Church Meeting(s) (with the Interim Moderator(s) chairing) will take place as soon after the weekend visit as possible normally within a week. The pastorate call group are free

but not obliged to make a recommendation to the Church Meeting(s). If the candidate is willing to accept the call, the acceptance is provisional until Synod concurrence is given in writing. Email correspondence is sufficient. A provisional acceptance should therefore be communicated to the Synod Clerk as soon as possible, with a request for concurrence again in writing.

- 3.6 The minister will normally have a current Disclosure and Barring Service/Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme disclosure as these are issued every 5 years. The Ministries Office at Church House will be able to advise.
- 3.7 The Interim Moderator(s) works with the pastorate, Synod Officers, newly called minister and Synod Moderator to co-ordinate the preparation of the (Ordination and) Induction service, which is under the auspices of the Synod. The Interim Moderator may also work with the incoming minister on an induction process.

4. The Appointment, Responsibilities and Role of Interim Moderators

4.1 Introduction

The ministry of Interim Moderators has been recognised from the foundation of the United Reformed Church. Their purpose is to provide a continuing mutual link between the wider church and local pastorate during a time of ministerial transition. A function of a Synod is “to appoint, in consultation with the local church and the Moderator of the Synod, from among its members an Interim Moderator during a pastoral vacancy”. It is important that the Interim Moderator be able to act and to be seen as a neutral person – someone outside the local situation. The Interim Moderator needs to be objective and sensitive to the church’s tradition, theological stance and ways of operating. The agreement of the local church in the appointment is essential. The Synod is responsible for the training and support of Interim Moderators. The Interim Moderator is the point of contact for the Synod Moderator and may be invited to report on the state of the pastorate during the time of ministerial transition to the Synod Pastoral Committee (or equivalent).

4.2 Appointment

When a minister receives a call to another pastorate or post, or is within six months of retirement, or for any other reason is leaving the pastorate, then the Synod initiates discussion with the local church and the Synod Moderator and appoints an Interim Moderator(s). The role and duties of the Interim Moderator should be agreed and clearly defined. Care should be taken in choosing a person with experience, knowledge of the area, insight into the needs and aspirations of the local church, time and a readiness to exercise the role. In a multi-church pastorate, each may have its own Interim Moderator and, if so, one of the interim Moderators should act as a co-ordinating Interim Moderator.

Best practice is for clearly defined terms of service to be agreed by all parties at the beginning. An appointment for a year at a time is helpful. All will then understand the time available to be used, the cost of the operation (Interim Moderators’ expenses are paid by the receiving local church) and the tasks which can be undertaken by the Interim Moderator. One of the first needs will then be to determine who will be

responsible for what the Interim Moderator is unable to do. Note that the oversight by Elders and Church Meeting continues and, in many instances, flourishes during the time of transition.

4.3 **Responsibilities**

The role of the Interim Moderator will vary. Some will simply be responsible for the process of introducing a candidate, others may be willing to lead worship, chair all church meetings, make emergency pastoral visits, preside at the ordination and induction of elders and attend social functions. All of these depend on the availability of the Interim Moderator. So, the responsibilities of Interim Moderators shall normally include:

- a. Chairing Elders' Meetings, Church Meetings or special groups where the calling of a minister is discussed
- b. Chairing all meetings with prospective ministers
- c. Providing a mutual link between the Synod and the local church
- d. Providing a mutual link between the Synod Moderator and the local church
- e. Providing a mutual link between the prospective minister and the local church
- f. Aiding the drafting and negotiating of Terms of Settlement, including housing provision
- g. Encouraging consideration of any relevant issues as a new minister is sought, in particular the denomination's Equal Opportunities Policy (Appendix 8), noting that there is a helpful and important document 'Equalities Training for Churches in Vacancy' in the equalities section of the URC website.
- h. Informing both prospective ministers and/or the Church Meeting/Pastorate Call Group and the Synod Moderator of any decisions.
- i. Overseeing and co-ordinating the planning of the Induction Service in consultation with the Synod, Synod Moderator and future minister
- j. Advising on what is appropriate at each stage.

4.4 **The Role**

The question of how much leadership to give and of what nature is difficult to prescribe because it has to be assessed in the light of varied circumstances. In this period, it can be helpful to reflect on such matters as the sense of 'bereavement' that the loss of a minister might bring, the anxiety about a time without a minister and any underlying conflicts that might have emerged during the previous period of ministry. This time can also be an opportunity for hidden gifts within the elders and members to be released in leadership, worship and pastoral care etc.

The transition time is not just a waiting time; the church can develop. The Interim Moderator can help the church grow in awareness and confidence in the process and be prepared to address difficult issues. If this growth and development does not occur the church will be restricted in its vision for the future.

It follows that good relations with the Interim Moderator are not enough if they inhibit the kind of in-depth appraisal and discernment for ministry, which may be essential for the future. It is better to take time in order to reach a fruitful outcome.

The Interim Moderator also has a role in helping a candidate through the process and in reflecting on it, whether or not a call is issued.

5 Special cases

5.1 Ordinands

See Appendix 6 for guidelines for Interim Moderators in introducing an ordinand to a pastorate although the process is not dissimilar to normal introductions. Ordinands prepare their Personal Profiles in time for meeting with the Synod Moderators normally in September of their final year of training. The October Synod Moderators' meeting then seeks to offer each ordinand a suitable pastorate to consider. The ordinand should be available to serve anywhere within the United Reformed Church. Most ordinands receive a call within their final year of training. Before proceeding to ordination and induction the Synod and the Assessment Board should be satisfied that training has been satisfactorily completed.

5.2 Married Couples

The settlement of couples is complicated and therefore requires sensitive and careful handling. It is likely that two call processes will be interlinked, and the Interim Moderators will need to liaise closely. Particular care will need to be taken over confidentiality, whilst issues such as housing, etc will be different from normal.

5.3 'Different' posts

The Synod Moderators' meeting produces each month a list of pastorates seeking a minister, which is circulated to all serving ministers. In addition, the summary pastorate profile is placed on the website so that they are available to be viewed. This is the way that posts are made known within the church. When a pastorate first appears on the list normally no names are considered by the Synod Moderators, normally for one month, so that all ministers have the opportunity to express an interest. A small number of posts (LEPs, SCMs, Chaplaincies) may be able to seek a minister through other means. If another route is permissible and chosen, that post will not be considered by the Synod Moderators' meeting.

5.4 Fixed term appointments

Most calls to ministers to serve pastorates are open ended. But some posts are for a fixed period, for example the special category ministry posts, which are five years in the first instance but can be extended after review. Ecumenical posts are also often fixed term and this will be clear from the job description and stated on the summary profile. Ministers on fixed term appointments should be encouraged to enter into the process 12 months before the end of their post.

Appendix 1 Notes for a visit at a time of ministerial transition

Visits to a pastorate by the Synod Moderator and representatives of the pastoral committee (or equivalent) enable everyone involved in the process of the movement of ministers to have a clearer understanding of what is involved. These visits can explain the process, clarify the role of the Synod, Interim Moderators and Synod Moderators, review the ministry needs of the pastorate, review the draft pastorate profile and prepare the way for the introduction of possible candidates. What follows are headings, which should be covered in one or more of these visits.

- a) Explanation of the Synod's responsibilities through the pastoral committee (or equivalent) for determining the pastorate and its scoping, and declaring a vacant post
- b) Appointment and role of Interim Moderator(s)
- c) Synod Moderators' role with Pastoral Committee and Synod
- d) Movement of Ministers
 - i. at each meeting Synod Moderators give consideration to ministers seeking a call;
 - ii. ordinands and married couples are given priority;
 - iii. Moderators Meetings are normally the first Wednesday and Thursday of the months in which they meet;
 - iv. the process deals with ministers seeking a call and with pastorates seeking a minister. A summary personal profile for each minister and a summary pastorate profile for each pastorate are circulated to each Synod Moderator. (see Appendices 3 and 10);
 - v. sometimes there are specific requests from ministers to see a profile.
 - vi. ministers requesting specific profiles are usually challenged to consider others;
 - vii. occasionally, settled ministers are challenged to consider a call to a particular pastorate;
 - viii. a full pastorate profile, or more than one, is offered to a minister. In some cases, the same profile is offered to more than one minister. If so, a deadline is set by which ministers have to express their wish to proceed usually by 12 noon on the last Thursday in the month;
 - ix. a minister's full personal profile is sent to the Interim Moderator for consideration by the pastorate call group. More than one minister's profile may be offered. However, the pastorate can only choose one to pursue;
 - x. The minister meets with the pastorate call group and the Interim Moderator;
 - xi. The minister meets with congregation and preaches with a view;
 - xii. The church meeting(s) decides on whether to offer a call;
 - xiii. The minister indicates verbally, and then in writing, that they accept the call;
 - xiv. Concurrence is sought from both the sending and receiving Synods;
 - xv. The Induction Service is planned, co-ordinated by the Interim Moderator;
- e) General:
 - The timetable is unpredictable and may be lengthy;
 - In cases when the process is halted by either party, support and reflection are important;
 - The whole process is confidential;
 - Everything should be under-girded with prayer.
- f) Review of ministry needs of pastorate, including -
 - i. The state of congregation:- mission opportunities; special needs or features; ecumenical context; scoping comments; openness to change
 - ii. Minister (person specification): - equal opportunities church; age and gender; length of future ministry; appropriateness for an ordinand; special skills, e.g. pastoral, preaching,

administration, youth and children, leadership, evangelism, social involvement, music, reconciliation, theological range, ecumenical commitment

iii. Terms of settlement, manse, any other relevant comments

iv. Positive aspects of vacancies

v. The need to keep congregation informed of process and steps being taken whilst keeping confidentiality.

Appendix 2 Making good use of a time of transition

Reaction to change

The movement of a minister brings with it many different reactions and a wide range of emotions. Sometimes symptoms of bereavement will predominate, at other times perhaps the excitement of a possible new beginning. The Interim Moderator will need the gifts necessary to help a pastorate through a period of change.

Supporting

It is not easy in a transition period to support the life of the church. This is particularly true where the leadership expectations of the members have rested almost entirely on the minister. The elders and the entire congregation will need help from the Interim Moderator in encouraging their self-confidence and recognising their gifts. But the life of the church is their responsibility – its worship, pastoral care and outreach – and the Interim Moderator can help them to accept this responsibility, try to guide their thinking and encourage best practice. Positive thinking about the present, together with the constructive view of the past will provide the best foundations for a healthy future.

Reflecting

The transition period is not a time for simply maintaining things as they are. For the health of the church (and in order to be more attractive to an incoming minister) it should be seen as a time of reflection on where the church is and where its future lies. There is time to re-assess resources and discover ones previously unrecognised. The Interim Moderator as an independent observer is well placed to serve as a catalyst to this process. Square pegs and round holes can sometimes be better seen from a distance and lateral solutions to problems suggested. Adequate reflection takes time but is an important prerequisite for the writing of a clear and visionary profile.

Planning

A well-used transition period can be used to plan for the future. The church's participation in God's mission continues and, while there are some things which are better developed with the new minister, it is a mistake to put aside all new ideas, especially those which are likely to raise the spirits of members. The Interim Moderator's experience and objectivity again will help the church to analyse when to do and when to defer. It seems safe to assume that a new minister will look more favourably at a church which is moving forward rather than one which is bogged down in struggles to stay where it is.

Appendix 3 PASTORATE PROFILE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PASTORATES SEEKING A MINISTER

A well-produced Pastorate Profile can help in the introduction of a minister. It is useful to those who are seeking to make an introduction and to any minister who is trying to understand the characteristics of the vacant pastorate. It should be written with care after Elders have discussed each section and have consulted other leaders and representatives of local churches concerned.

Before indicating their expectations for a new ministry, the Elders should examine the life, work and theological outlook of their church(es) and the leadership they need from a minister. This paper should be taken as a guide to the questions they should ask and to the content of the resulting Profile. It is not a form to be filled in, although specific statistics are asked for in certain places.

Pastorate Profiles are normally produced electronically and can be sent to the Synod Moderator in that form. A few pictures and perhaps a map may help you to present your church and its setting. The profile, and any supporting documents, should not be over-extensive. If it is not available electronically, please make suitable arrangements with your Synod Office.

The name of the pastorate and, where appropriate, the names of the local churches concerned should be at the front of the Profile or at the head of the first page.

At the end of the Pastorate Profile indicate who were involved in its preparation and add the date.

Most Synods are now working to Local Mission and Ministry Reviews (LMMR) that need relatively minor adaptation when needed as a pastorate profile.

Once a Pastorate Profile has been prepared, a summary version is also needed. There is a pro forma for this, which should be obtained from your Synod Office. For examples, please see the summary profiles website – www.urch-profiles.org.uk

Please note that you must complete the pro forma, with the whole pastorate on one side of A4, within the constraints set by the form.

The component parts of the full Pastorate Profile (however it originates) are:

- (i) What are we here for?
- (ii) Where are we going?
- (iii) How will we get there?

These are unpacked into the following sections:

- (i) Where are we? Who are we? What do we do? What are we here for?
- (ii) What are our resources? What are the opportunities? Where are we going?
- (iii) How will we get there? What do we need?

(The numbers in brackets marked with an * refer to the notes provided at the end to give additional guidance for those who require it).

1. Where are we? Mission Context

- 1a. Name of the pastorate and the churches involved.
- 1b. Describe the context (e.g. rural, country town, suburban, inner city, urban priority area, city centre etc.) and adding other relevant detail (e.g. local employment, culture, deprivation)
- 1c. Describe the population of the communities being served:
 - (a) numerically - with other relevant detail (e.g. growing / static / declining)
 - (b) by social composition (e.g. age, ethnicity etc.)
- 1d. Describe the ecumenical scene
 - (a) What other churches are in the area?
 - (b) What are relationships like?
 - (c) Are there any local formal arrangements (e.g. local covenants)? (*1)

2. Who are we?

2a. Give a brief pen portrait of the pastorate, including key points in its history; what is distinctive about the pastorate, its theological outlook and worship style.

- 2b. Number on roll- total
- number up to 11.....
- 12-18
- 19-30
- 31-50
- 51-70
- 71+
- Number of adherents (*2)
- Average attendance at main act of worship on Sunday
- Average attendance at worship over a week

- 2c. Changes in the roll over the last five years-
 - (a) Additions: on profession of faith
 - by transfer
 - (b) Losses: by death
 - by transfer
 - by removal from the roll

- 2d. Number residing-
 - (a) within one mile of church building
 - (b) over three miles from church building

- 2e. Number of serving Elders
- Number of non-serving Elders

3. What do we do?

Pattern of worship (Sunday, midweek, styles, venues etc.) (*3)

Pattern of care and nurture (teaching the faith, discipling etc.)

Pattern of leadership & decision making (elders, church meetings, ministry team) (*4)

Pattern of work with different groups (children, young people, elderly, community etc.) (*5)

Pattern of partnership with others (ecumenical and secular) (*6)

Other activities

4. What are we here for?

What is your mission statement (value statement, vision statement etc)? (*7)

What is the biblical basis for your mission purpose?

5. What are our resources?

What skills, gifts, experiences are there in the personnel of the church?

What property resources are available? What are their strengths and weaknesses?

What financial resources are available? (include your latest set of accounts)

6. What are the opportunities?

What are the trends in the life of the church and in the community context?

What challenges does the church face locally?

7. Where are we going?

What are the priorities, the targets, goals, objectives for the next few years?

8. How will we get there?

What plans are there for making progress on the priorities agreed by the church?

9. What do we need?

Where help is required either of personnel, property or finance?
(include the role description for the minister(s))

Additional Notes:

The following are not intended to be prescriptive but are offered as a guide for those who are seeking further help when filling in the Pastorate Profile.

1. If the church is a united church or Local Ecumenical Partnership a more detailed description of the partnership can be given here.
2. If it helps to give a better understanding of the fellowship of the church the number of households represented by the combination of members and adherents can be given here.
3. The worship/devotional life of the church could be described in the following areas:
 - What services are held each Sunday?
 - What is the average attendance?
 - How often is Holy Communion celebrated?
 - What special services were held last year?
 - What lay involvement is there in the leading of worship?
 - What hymnbooks (or other sources of songs) are in regular use?
 - What mid-week services are there?
 - What bible study or study groups meet?
 - How many baptisms, believers and infant have there been in the last five years?
 - How many services of thanksgiving for the birth of a child have there been in the last five years?
 - Is there regular all-age worship?
4. If other ministers are involved give more details regarding the relationships, responsibilities, roles and planned system of review.
 - If other ministers are involved, give their names and indicate whether they are stipendiary or non-stipendiary.
 - What are the ministry team relationships?
 - What agreements cover leadership, meetings, pastoral responsibilities, specialist roles etc.?
 - Is there a suggested overall portion of ministry for each congregation and its community, or is this to be agreed with the new minister?
 - How is this expected to work out in regard to services, meetings, pastoral work and other responsibilities?
 - What system of review is proposed for these arrangements?
 - Outline how the pastorate sees the role of the prospective minister in this, and what particular skills and experience will be preferred in her or him.
5. If the church has a particularly strong ministry in the area of weddings or funerals, this could be described here, as well as any including the baptismal policy of the church.
 - How many weddings are conducted in the church each year?
 - What proportions of these are for neither church members nor adherents?
 - How many funerals are conducted each year?
 - What proportions of these are for neither church members nor adherents?
 - What is the baptismal policy of the church?
6. Formal ecumenical relationships will have been described earlier but other ecumenical and secular partnerships should not be ignored and can be described here.
7. If the church has not engaged in another strategy for reflecting on its mission and purpose it would do well to bear in mind at this point the ten Vision2020 Statements of Mission and

Purpose (remembering that these offer a framework and are not a programme – different congregations will focus on different ones and the same congregation different ones at different times):

Statement 1: Spirituality and prayer

We will grow in our practice of prayer and spirituality, nurturing strength for our witness to Jesus Christ, and developing our discernment of where God is and what God is calling us to do by reading and studying the Bible and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Statement 2: Identity

The URC will be a Church where every local congregation will be able to say who they are, what they do and why they do it.

Statement 3: Christian Ecumenical Partnerships

We will be more confident in our identity, valuing the treasures of our tradition, discerning when to seek ecumenical partnerships, and when and how to seek the further unity of the Church.

Statement 4: Community partnerships

We will be a Church that is more active in the life of local neighbourhoods.

Statement 5: Hospitality and diversity

We will be a Church committed to becoming even more welcoming and hospitable, and embracing all people equally.

Statement 6: Evangelism

We will be more confident to engage in evangelism, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God with friends, families and strangers, through story and action.

Statement 7: Church growth

We will be a growing Church with an increasing membership.

Statement 8: Global partnerships

We will be a Church that is an active partner in God's global mission with other Churches around the world.

Statement 9: Justice and peace

We will be a Church committed to peace-making and reconciliation that keeps faith with the poor and challenges injustice.

Statement 10: The integrity of creation

We will be a Church that has taken significant steps to safeguard the integrity of creation, to sustain and renew the life of the earth.

8. What different opportunities are there in the various sections of the pastorate?

Pastorate Profile Summary

Ref. Number:

Pastorate Details:

Name of pastorate:

Churches in pastorate:

Date of declaration of vacancy:

Scoping (%) & Term:

Mission Context: (e.g. inner city/urban/suburban/market town/rural; population size and composition; ecumenical scene etc.)

Mission Opportunities and Priorities:

Theology and Worship Style:

Minister's Role Priorities and Ministry Arrangements:

Person Specification for Prospective Minister:

Other Factors that Moderators need to be aware of:

Appendix 4 Role Description for a Minister of Word and Sacraments

A sample generic role description is as follows (although it is understood that pastorates may wish to include specific role descriptors according to their particular context).

Their role includes:

- the celebration of the sacraments, which are the Lord's Supper (or Holy Communion) and baptism
- preaching
- providing pastoral care and support to people in need or who are affected by tragedy or crisis
- chairing both Elder and Church Meeting which have responsibility for the spiritual issues within a congregation, and guiding those meetings in their discussions
- conducting funerals and offering pastoral support to those who are dying and those who have been bereaved
- conducting weddings and helping people prepare for marriage
- enabling and developing the congregation(s) through their leadership and vision.

Some of these functions are also performed by elders and lay preachers.

The Marks of Ministry (Agreed at Mission Council 2019) may be helpful in drawing up a role description:

A Minister of Word and Sacraments in the United Reformed Church (URC) should be:

- **A faithful disciple of Jesus Christ:** caught up in the joy and wonder of God's will and work; seeking always to live a holy life in public and in private; sustained by their own rhythm of prayer, Bible reading and worship so that they might model and encourage such life-long patterns in others with integrity; open to learning discipleship from others.
- **A person of integrity and resilience:** self-aware and committed to their own lifelong learning (especially through the URC's provision for ministers); aware of their own limitations and thus willing to seek support; ready to deal with situations of conflict; balancing ministry's joys and pains with the fostering of right relationships with family and friends.
- **A contextual theologian:** delighting in Scripture, rooted in the Reformed tradition, able to communicate their own faith and its implications within and beyond congregations; encouraging others to discover how these rich resources inspire and sustain faithfulness.
- **A worship leader and preacher:** able to craft and lead worship that shows appreciation for the Sacraments and the resources of many traditions and styles yet unafraid to create and advocate new forms as appropriate; passionate and effective in breaking open God's Word

in preaching; ready and able to foster skills, techniques and experience in others so that they might lead worship and preach well.

- **A pastor:** sharing with others, especially Elders, in sustaining care; making time to walk in love alongside people; rejoicing and grieving with others through listening deeply and offering prayerful support; wise in knowing their limits and boundaries when more specialised help is needed; reliably dealing with issues of safeguarding and confidentiality.
- **A leader and collaborator:** identifying, developing, and enabling leadership in others, particularly Elders; capable of working in, and leading, teams through collaborative and shared leadership; aware of their own leadership style and open to learning with and from others, when necessary acknowledging their own mistakes and seeking restoration; committed and equipped to building up others in faith and witness so that the gifts and callings of all might flourish; demonstrating love for God's people.
- **A missionary and evangelist:** passionate about and active in sharing the love of God for the world; alive to the significance of contexts and cultures in shaping mission and creative in discovering missional opportunities; empowering and equipping God's people in mission to share the Gospel and live God's Kingdom of justice and peace to the full.
- **A public figure:** reliable and effective in representing the Church in ecumenical, community and wider settings; committed to and equipped in speaking truth to power and challenging injustice and marginalisation wherever they may be found.
- **A communicator:** who uses written, spoken and other modes with clarity and grace to share faith and build up relationships and communities; helping others to find their voice.
- **A committed participant in the councils of the Church:** responsive to God's call as gift and blessing to be lived out within the discipline and accountability of the denomination which trains, ordains and inducts them and the pastorates and ministries within which they serve.
- **A reformer:** wise in the dynamics and challenges of change; bold yet humble in helping individuals and congregations to discern and respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit as new chapters open in the life of the Church and others close.

Appendix 5 Terms of Settlement

Draft Terms of Settlement should be considered by the Synod prior to declaring a vacant post, and then later discussed with any prospective minister. Agreed Terms of Settlement can also assist the process of monitoring during a ministry and form the basis of any agreed changes. Terms of Settlement are a local expression of the Plan for Partnership, which is the basis on which ministers act as office holders within the Church. The latest edition of the Plan for Partnership for Ministerial Remuneration can be found on the URC website www.urc.org.uk. <http://www.urc.org.uk/ministry/ministries/resource-documents.html>



Settlement Agreement - Stipendiary Ministers of Word & Sacraments

This Settlement Agreement is made between

[.....]
("the Synod")

AND

[.....]
("the Pastorate")

AND

[.....]
("the Minister")

1. General

The Synod, Pastorate and Minister will be bound by the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration ("Plan for Partnership") and the provisions of the Basis of Union. The Minister and the Elders of the Pastorate will exercise their respective ministries in accordance with the relevant Guidelines for Conduct and Behaviour.

2. Scope

The pastorate has been declared to be a [**full-time/part-time**] scope by the [.....] Synod. [***It is not a time-limited appointment/It is a post limited by time to years/ and is subject to review after years***].

The Synod and the Pastorate will honour General Assembly's 2010 Resolution that the ministerial working week for a full-time scope (and reduced pro-rata for part-time scopes),

translated into hours over a four-week period, should be not less than 160 hours and not more than 192 hours.

The appointment will commence on [.....]

3. Stipend

The Minister will receive the stipend appropriate for a position of this scope from the Maintenance of the Ministry payroll office. The stipend will be paid without supplement. Other payments (such as Children's Allowances and Housing Allowances) will be paid in accordance with the Plan for Partnership.

4. Housing

The Minister will live from the week commencing [.....] in the manse provided at [.....].

The property is provided for the exclusive occupation by the Minister and [*his/her*] immediate family for the duration of the period of ministry, for the better execution of their duties as a Minister. The Minister is expected to exercise reasonable stewardship of the property. The Minister is responsible for repairing any uninsured damage to the property, other than normal wear and tear, and for returning the property in the condition it was received when the property is vacated, viz. clean, tidy, in good order and empty of personal possessions. The Minister is also expected to keep all gardens belonging to the Manse in a good and tidy order.

The Minister will co-operate with the Pastorate and Synod in allowing reasonable access to the Manse for maintenance and annual inspection. The Minister will report to the [**Elders' Meeting/Synod**] and matter that could lead to the deterioration or damage to the property and any defect that may present a Health and Safety risk to occupiers or visitors to the Manse.

No person may operate a business from the Manse unless specifically agreed in writing by the Synod Trust Company.

The [**Pastorate/Synod**] will pay the Council Tax, Water Rates and any other tax(es) on the manse. The [**Pastorate/Synod**] will insure the building and accepts responsibility for the maintenance and decoration of the manse. The [**Pastorate/Synod**] will obtain an annual Gas Safety Certificate.

The provision of heating, lighting, carpets and curtains are the Minister's responsibility.

[AND Specific terms relating to a Synod's Manse Policy may be added here, with appropriate and necessary amendment to the standard terms above.]

[OR The Minister will live in a house within the pastorate area, towards which the [Pastorate/Synod] will pay a Housing Allowance in accordance with the Plan for Partnership.]

5. Travel

The Pastorate will reimburse the Minister for using [*his/her*] own vehicle for business purposes and will be reimbursed at the rates advised from time to time by the URC Finance Committee. At the time of entering this agreement, the rate payable is 45p per mile of business use up to 10,000 miles per year, and 25p per mile thereafter. The Minister will keep a log of all mileage

incurred for business purposes. The Pastorate will also pay a Fixed Car Allowance in accordance with the Plan for Partnership for Ministerial Remuneration. At the time of entering this agreement the allowance is £1200 p.a., subject to a deduction for tax and National Insurance paid to the Minister in twelve equal monthly instalments through the Maintenance of the Ministry Payroll Office.

[OR The Pastorate will provide a car for the Minister and will be responsible for all maintenance, servicing, repairs, tax and insurance. The Minister will reimburse the Pastorate for all private mileage at the rate advised from time to time by the URC Finance Committee.]

Other travelling expenses will be reimbursed on the basis of costs actually incurred, upon submission of a written claim, and subject to annual review in the light of recommendations from the Synod and/or the URC Finance Committee.

6. Administration, telephones and computer

The Pastorate will reimburse the Minister for all administrative expenses, including stationery and postage, upon submission of a written claim. Telephone(s) and access to the internet via broadband will be provided by the Pastorate. Details of telephone services including broadband will be agreed prior to the Induction. The Minister will reimburse the Pastorate for private telephone calls.

A computer will be provided by the Pastorate and should be upgraded or replaced to an appropriate modern standard at intervals throughout the period of ministry. Specification for the computer will be negotiated and agreed initially prior to induction.

7. Reimbursement of Expenses

[For the purposes of expenses, shared costs relating to the Manse, car, and administration, etc. shall be split in the proportion of X% (X URC): Y% (Y URC): Z% (Z URC). Shared costs should be claimed by the Minister from the Treasurer at X URC. Expenses relating solely to one identifiable congregation within the pastorate should be claimed from the Treasurer at that church.]

The Minister shall submit a written claim for the reimbursement of expenses wholly, necessarily and exclusively incurred in the performance of the Minister's duties on an agreed regular basis and not less than quarterly. Except for minor expenditure, all claims should be accompanied by a receipt. The Pastorate will reimburse properly claimed expenses without undue delay.

8. Education for Ministry

All United Reformed Church Ministers of Word and Sacraments are expected to undertake annual study as part of their Education for Ministry and will support the Minister in taking leave for this purpose.

When a Minister moves from one placement/appointment to another they may take, by agreement with the relevant Synod Officers, up to four weeks Education for Ministry time in that year (rather than the normal two weeks' allocation) to allow them to undertake specific learning that will assist their induction into the new post/appointment.

During the rest of their ministry, Ministers are strongly urged to devote two weeks per year to Education for Ministry (Report to General Assembly 1998, pages 124 and 126).

The Pastorate will encourage the Minister to attend an annual Synod School, for which the [**Pastorate/Synod**] will pay.

The Pastorate will encourage the Minister to take Sabbatical Leave as recommended in the Plan for Partnership.

For any Sundays involved in the provision above, the Pastorate is responsible for arranging and paying for pulpit supply.

The Pastorate will offer an annual allowance of £250, payable against actual expenditure on books, resources and computer software.

9. Mandatory training

All active United Reformed Church Ministers of Word and Sacraments are expected to undertake mandatory training as part of their Education for Ministry. This will include Safer Sacred Space Boundary training (Mission Council November 2013) and Safeguarding Training (GA 2018).

Pastoral Supervision (Mission Council July 2020) is also a mandatory requirement and the minister is expected to arrange pastoral supervision in line with guidance from URC Ministries Department. The minister and supervisor are expected to share their agreement with the Synod Moderator [*or nominated person*] who will report annually to the Secretary for Ministries. The pastorate agrees to pay X% of the cost of supervision in the proportions agreed in paragraph 7, and will reimburse the full cost to the minister on production of an invoice and claim back the other 100-X% annually from central funds.

10. Holidays and regular days off

The Pastorate will honour recommendations for regular weekly days off and will follow recommendations regarding holidays in the Plan for Partnership (*note iii*) – viz. five full weeks' holiday per year (including five Sundays) plus one additional holiday Sunday.

The Minister will be encouraged to nominate a day as a regular day off.

11. Sick and Compassionate Leave

Ministers are reminded that they should notify their Synod Office and the MoM Office if they are unable to work for more than three days due to sickness. This enables the proper records to be maintained.

The first seven days of sickness may be self-certified (by letter, email or telephone) but after that all continuing sickness must be covered by a doctor's statement of fitness for work ('Fit note'). Copies of these notifications should be sent to the Synod Moderator and MoM Office.

Both MoM and Synod offices should also be informed when the minister returns to work after a period of certificated absence.

In cases where the Minister is not off sick but there may be a genuine need for compassionate leave, the Minister should contact their Synod Moderator who may, in appropriate circumstances, grant up to fourteen days' leave. Again, this allows for good record

keeping as well as pastoral care of both the Minister and the Pastorate. It is not sufficient to simply ask the local church for permission or indeed to go absent without permission.

12. Renegotiation and Review

The Pastorate and minister are willing to re-negotiate these terms of settlement during the course of a ministry at the request of the Synod through the Synod Pastoral Committee.

In particular, it is recognised that, following appropriate consultation, an alteration to the scoping of the pastorate may be necessary during the course of the ministry. Any suggested changes from the pastorate or the minister will be subject to the agreement of the Synod through the local Synod Pastoral Committee.

13. The wider United Reformed Church

The pastorate acknowledges that ministers are ministers of the whole United Reformed Church and have a responsibility to serve the wider church as well as their own local pastorate. Requests for specific pieces of wider service will be discussed between the Elders' Meetings and the minister.

Signed _____

Minister

For the Pastorate

...For the Synod

Date _____

Appendix 6 Guidelines for the Introduction of Stipendiary Ministers

Report to General Assembly 2004

'Mission Council welcomes the following procedure and encourages the Synod Moderators to implement them and make them known to the wider church.'

1. A personal profile on one sheet of A4 to standard format shall be prepared by a minister seeking a move. This will be circulated in advance of the Synod Moderators' meeting. It shall include details of particular geographical or other constraints.
2. A synopsis of its profile on one sheet of A4 to a standard format shall be prepared by a vacant pastorate and tabled at the Synod Moderators' meeting.
3. If more than one minister has expressed an interest in a particular pastorate then the personal profiles of all those interested shall be made available to the pastorate, but they may then choose only one candidate with whom they wish to meet.
4. Ministers seeking a move may be shown more than one profile.
5. On request, ministers may be shown the synopsis of any vacant pastorate not already the subject of a formal introduction.
6. The present system of notifying all ministers monthly of all vacancies shall continue.
7. The Synod Moderators' meeting shall be free to approach ministers to consider urgent needs in particular vacancies.

Appendix 7 Interim Moderator's Notes for introducing a Minister or an Ordinand

These notes are to assist the Synod Moderator in ensuring that an Interim Moderator is aware of all the special factors that might obtain when a minister is being introduced to a vacant pastorate. Most of the following would be expected in the normal pattern of introducing a minister to a pastorate. Some elements are particularly sensitive where the introduction of an ordinand is concerned.

1 The Synod Moderators will take care to identify the pastorates that are genuinely suitable for an ordinand according to agreed criteria:

- a reasonable role description
- openness on the part of the pastorate to receiving a student and responding supportively to his/her ministry
- availability of a neighbouring minister with the gifts to offer meaningful support

2 A first consideration of the minister's personal profile and an invitation to an initial exploratory meeting with the pastorate call group should normally take place within 3 weeks of introduction. This will ensure that, if either or both parties conclude that there is no basis for proceeding further, the minister is available for introduction at the next Synod Moderators' meeting. An ordinand's profile will look different from that of a Minister of Word and Sacraments and may not include all heading as outlined in Appendix 10.

3 The Interim Moderator should try to be available in a supportive role for the minister and the pastorate through each stage of their exploration together. This is particularly important when there may be need for clarification of how the Church's settlement process operates. Specifically, the Interim Moderator should make space for:

3.1 Briefing the minister about the context and any special factors in the pastorate, unpacking the pastorate profile as appropriate. This may involve responding to questions of:

- theology and worship style;
- pastoral practice, especially baptismal policy;
- relationships between the congregations in the pastorate; ecumenical relationships;
- the manse and Terms of Settlement.

3.2 Being present to ensure a creative and reflective engagement with meetings of the pastorate call group, special interest groups, and informal gatherings of church members. These should include penetrating discussion about:

- priorities for mission and patterns of delivery;
- serious pastoral and local church life issues;
- leadership patterns.

3.3 Making arrangements for a daylight visit to the community/ies served by the congregation/s in the pastorate. Where possible this might include an opportunity to meet with non-church community leaders and representatives of ecumenical partners.

3.4 Ensuring the suitability of overnight hospitality arrangements, especially if the minister is visiting alone, and that there is sufficient and appropriate relaxation and reflection time built into the timetable.

3.5 Learning from the minister if there are any special dietary or disability needs to be borne in mind when arranging hospitality or the provision of meals; or any particular personal or family information needs that would facilitate reflection and decision about a possible invitation. This might include:

- local schools' choices
- retirement or sheltered housing provision
- availability of specific specialist medical services

4 Candidates should be given clear and precise travelling directions, especially if coming by road. These should include contact telephone numbers in the event of last minute hitches or getting lost. Travelling expenses should be identified and paid swiftly by the pastorate. The pastorate can claim back for two visits to the pastorate (the first being the initial visit and the second being the preach with a view) from the Maintenance of Ministry Office at Church House.

5 Candidates should be clearly informed of:

- the decision-making process including the timetable of response,
- the method of reflection and voting, especially if more than one congregation is involved
- the agreed majority required for a call to be sustained

6 The Interim Moderator should make clear arrangements with the minister how s/he will make known the outcome of an initial exploratory meeting or a church meeting. If this is agreed to be done by telephone it should always be confirmed by a letter attached to an email. In the case of an offer of a call the minister should also reply in writing.

7 The Interim Moderator should ensure that, in the event of a decision not to proceed at any stage of the introduction, a detailed de-brief of the process, discussions and reactions should be sent to the receiving Synod Moderator within one week. This is designed to enable a supportive de-brief of the candidate and to assist the Synod Moderators in the next stage of exploring appropriate introductions.

8 After a call to the pastorate is given and accepted, the Interim Moderator is a key person in a number of practical matters:

- to ensure concurrence has been given and received by the Synod;
- to arrange a date for the service of ordination and induction, which is suitable for the Synod Moderator, minister, pastorate and Synod;
- putting together the order of service in consultation with the minister and the local pastorate, and with the agreement of the Synod Moderator; all parties should agree the content and order before printing deadlines are identified. For the ordination of an ordinand, a representative of the training college should be invited;
- to ensure that the manse is in good order and ready for occupation, cleaned and with all systems checked to be working; this is especially important if the manse has been let to tenants after a minister has left or is subject to building works;
- There may be times when an Interim Moderator has a role in the handing over of records and contact lists relating to the pastorate; this is especially important in respect of confidential information regarding sensitive pastoral issues.

Appendix 8 A meeting of the Pastorate Call Group and the Minister

In the context of discovering God's will regarding the filling of a vacant pastorate, the care taken over a meeting of the pastorate call group and the minister is vital. When a candidate visits a pastorate, there should be more than one opportunity for informal contact with a wide range of members (including children and young people) and, if possible, adherents.

1. The preparation

Ensure that all relevant papers are available. This will comprise correspondence; minister's personal profile (not for general publication); pastorate profile including draft Terms of Settlement. The pastorate call group should include a good mix of ethnicity, age and gender if possible. A comfortable venue, with freedom from distraction and a friendly atmosphere should be chosen. Well before the meeting the Interim Moderator(s) should consult with the pastorate call group and the minister to decide what form the meeting will take. It is important that this is not determined solely by the pastorate call group and that the minister has significant input into the arrangements for the meeting and is happy with them before the meeting takes place. Prior to the meeting the pastorate call group with the Interim Moderator(s) should agree topics they wish to cover in the meeting with the minister and the Interim Moderator(s) should consult the minister about topics s/he wishes to raise in the discussion. It might be helpful if the Interim Moderator arranged an exchange of this information prior to the meeting.

2. The meeting

An Interim Moderator should chair the meeting. Every interview, however formal or informal, has a recognisable sequence, which should be followed:

- a) Opening. It is important to set the scene, to spend time in prayer together, to confirm introductions. Make clear the agenda to be followed; agree on what notes will be taken, by whom and for whom.
- b) Exchange of information. The questions and discussion should cover all topics and at each stage the candidate should be able to ask as well as answer. Only by frank exchange of views can God's will for pastorate and minister be discovered.
- c) Closing. Even when the time is pre-arranged, the conclusion of such a meeting must be handled with care. No major matter should be overlooked.
- d) It is important to make clear what the next stages will be, and the probable timing.

3. The assessment

It is vital to stop, think and pray when the candidate has withdrawn, before any conversation, discussion or assessment is begun. Those present should gauge their impressions against the list of factors previously agreed, such as training, qualifications, experience, presentation, motivation etc. Additional factors will now be apparent following the meeting and will probably affect the assessment. It may be useful to score a candidate under each heading as good, acceptable or problematic but not everyone will follow this method. A consensus should be sought in order that a clear recommendation can be made. The pastorate call group should have confidence in the candidate as a prospective minister before issuing an invitation to preach with a view.

Appendix 9 Equal Opportunities Policy

The United Reformed Church believes that all people are created in God's image and are loved by God. In his ministry Jesus showed God's love by his openness to all people, including those who were marginalised in his day.

For the United Reformed Church's Equal Opportunities Policy please see

<https://urc.org.uk/equal-opportunities>

Appendix 10 Personal Profile for a Minister

NB This document is to be completed and controlled by the writer. This should not be seen as a pro forma to be completed and the writer is free to vary the order in which information is presented. It may be useful to a Synod Moderator and/or the Interim Moderator, Church Officers and Elders of a pastorate under consideration. It is NOT for general circulation and should be destroyed at the end of a candidature, whether, or not, an accepted call results.

1. About you

Surname Christian names

Address (please include postcode and telephone number)

Date of Birth Date of Ordination

Spouse: Name Occupation

Child(ren) Name(s) Date(s) of birth

Any other relevant family information.

Medical: If there are any medical factors that might affect your work, ensure that your present Synod Moderator knows.

Education: Please give dates and qualifications.

Secondary Education

General Higher Education (pre- or post- ordination)

Please list other training courses, other professional qualifications, language or similar skills etc.

Pre-ordination/commissioning Theological Training

Education for Ministry 3 (in-service training undertaken)

2. Please give details of your life and faith journey, in a chronological form, including ministries and other posts, (paid or unpaid) academic achievements, in-service experiences.

For each post give:

- its location
- details of the main duties, responsibilities etc.
- a description of the particular skills, techniques or experience relevant to this post.

3. Description of Ministry:

Please give a description of the following

- Your priorities in ministry
- Your view of community development
- Your preferred way of leading worship
- Your working style, including the approach you take to leadership
- Your theological approach
- Your views on baptism
- What areas of ministry do you most enjoy?
- How would you describe your strengths and weaknesses?

4. Expectations:

Please describe any experience or special skills not already mentioned which you feel may be relevant to your future ministry.

In which areas of ministerial work are you particularly interested and/or experienced (e.g. pastoral care, youth work, evangelism, community development, administration, leading worship, preaching, training, etc.) Please give your reasons for your choice.

Please outline your immediate objectives in ministry.

5. Please outline your vision for the church.

6. If you are considering a move, please complete the following:

Do you presently own a car? yes/no

Do you prefer to run your own car? yes/no

Would you prefer a housing allowance to the provision of a manse? yes/no/no preference

When would you be free to leave your present post?

Are there any factors which would affect your ability to move or determine where you would consider going (e.g. Educational, family, occupation)?

Signed

Date

As well as a full Personal Profile, ministers seeking a move will be asked to prepare a summary version, which is parallel to the summary Pastorate Profile. There is a pro forma for this, which should be obtained from your Synod Office. Ministers' summary Personal Profiles are confidential to the Synod Moderators' meeting and not shared anywhere else.

Appendix 11 Orientation for Incoming Ministers to Methodist and United Reformed LEPs

Introduction

LEPs can be among the most exciting churches in which to serve as a minister. At their best, they are growing and developing situations that enable congregations and community to see the church fulfilling Christ's prayer "that they might be one." However, each LEP has a different constitution that sits alongside "normal" denominational practice and allows for creative development. It is therefore necessary for incoming ministers of either denomination to understand the practice of the specific LEP to which they have been called, or in which they have been stationed. This means that it is necessary to understand:

- the differences between the LEP, and the Methodist and United Reformed Churches;
- the expectations of the wider church structures on the LEP;
- how and why the original Constitution and Sharing Agreement are implemented now.

The orientation process

- a) As part of the orientation process a URC minister will be expected to attend the orientation course on understanding the Methodist Church course in the same way that a Methodist minister will be encouraged to attend the History and Ethos of the URC.

The course will include:

- The different processes used for "calling" (United Reformed Church) and "stationing" (Methodist Church) ministers.
- The different roles and understandings of leaders and ministers in the two churches at congregational, Circuit and District levels.
- The different understandings of local church governance and authority in relation to decision-making, pastoral care and worship.
- Different accounting and church years have implications for local decision-making and the relationship of the local church to the Circuit and District. The United Reformed Church works on a calendar year (January to December), while the Methodist Church uses the "Connexional" Year (September to August)
- Different rules, practices and laws concerning property.
- Differences around communion practices (for example: how, and by whom, the elements are served to the people and lay presidency), baptism, and transfer of membership.

- b) Reading essential documents will be helpful. They include:

- The Constitution or Declaration of Intent.
- The Sharing Agreement. (NB: Please be aware that Sharing Agreements are drafted according to the Sharing of Buildings Act 1969. They are legal documents and might not appear to reflect the dreams and hopes in local situations for equality and goodwill.)
- Practice Documents. Where these exist, they might include terms of reference for committees, processes for electing Elders / Stewards etc.
- Annual Reports
- Minutes of meetings with powers of governance such as Elders and Church Meeting, Church Council, and Joint Councils.

APPENDIX 12 Group voting procedures

1. General Assembly 2018 passed the following resolution (resolution 28): General Assembly encourages a flexible approach to how ministerial calls are issued and concurred, noting the variety of existing practice and the provisions of sections 1(1)(b), 1(1)(c), 2(1)(vii), 2(4)(A)(iii) and 2(4)(A)(vii) of the Structure of the URC.

2. The Manual (Section B Structure) states:

1.(1)(b) Where two or more Local Churches together, and in consultation with the synod, decide that their mission will be more effective if they share resources and ordained ministry, they may, with the approval of the synod, form an association known as a group of churches with a structured relationship and a constitution governing the way in which they relate to one another as to the sharing of both resources and the ordained ministry. Each church within the group shall retain its own identity, and its Church Meeting and elders' meeting shall continue to exercise all their functions in relation to that church, save that, so long as the constitution shall so declare, decisions relating to the calling of a minister (see paragraph 2(1)(vii)) may be taken by a single group Church Meeting at which all the members of each of the constituent churches in the group shall be eligible to attend and vote.

and

1.(1)(c) Where two or more local churches together, and in consultation with the synod, decide that their mission will be more effective if they share ordained ministry (but not other resources), they may, with the approval of the synod, form an association known as a joint pastorate, with a structured relationship with respect to the provision of ordained ministry only and a statement of intent governing the way in which they relate to one another in relation to the sharing of ordained ministry. Each church within the joint pastorate shall retain its own identity, and its church meeting and elders' meeting shall continue to exercise all their functions in relation to that church, save that, so long as the statement of intent shall so declare, decisions relating to the calling of a minister (see paragraph 2(1)(vii)) may be taken by a single joint pastorate church meeting at which all the members of each of the constituent churches in the joint pastorate shall be eligible to attend and vote.

7. The URC does not have one clear policy on this but largely leaves it to the pastorate call group to decide on the mechanism which will best suit their needs. The percentage for a call to be issued shall be determined by the vacancy group as is normal practice within the URC.
8. It is important that the church meeting(s) agrees with the interim Moderator and the vacancy call group on the process for issuing a call at the start of the process of looking at possible candidates. This should include the percentage which the church(es) feel is an appropriate percentage to suggest the minister has the confidence of the meeting eg. 85%. Voting should be by secret ballot. Tellers will need to be identified prior to the meeting.
9. In a single pastorate the voting process is more straightforward: only those church members who are present at the meeting should be allowed to vote. Voting should be by secret ballot. The Interim Moderator will inform the church meeting of the outcome of

the vote which should be kept confidential until the Interim Moderator has had an opportunity to convey the outcome of the vote to the minister.

10. In multi church pastorates the following are examples of possible processes to use:
 - a) There should be 1 joint church meeting of all churches involved in the pastorate. Only church members may vote. An agreed percentage eg. 85% of those present and voting is required to issue a call. One church meeting enables members across the group to prayerfully hear the reflections from different congregations;
 - b) There should be 1 joint church meeting with a higher percentage required from the church where the minister will have primary pastoral charge than for the rest of the group eg. 80% and 50% or 85% and 45%.
11. A further factor to take into consideration is an increasing use of synod-directed elements as part of a post to which a minister is called. The usage of such scoping varies widely but it is likely to be direct service in a significant synod role, such as an ecumenical officer, or additional service in a pastorate, which may either be not fully determined at the point of call or deliberately undefined so that it may be moved from one congregation to another in transitional ministry. In some circumstances the synod may be willing to remit the determination of the call to the pastorate. However, it is more likely that a prospective candidate will be interviewed by representatives of the appropriate synod committee. Good practice would be that any such appointment process is completed in advance of the preach with a view.
12. As well as members-only voting, those voting need to be aware that if they abstain, they are not voting, and their abstention will be recorded but will not be included in the % calculation of 'those present and voting'.