

Marriage Practice and Voluntary Associate Minister (VAM) Policy

POLICY NAME: Marriage Practice and Voluntary Associate Minister (VAM) Policy	Date Approved: November 9, 2019
	Review date:
Purpose: The purpose of this practice outlines the relationship and responsibilities of a ministry personnel and the Community of Faith. <i>The Manual I.2.5.3</i>	

As Christian marriage is a pastoral function, Christian marriages, performed by United Church Ministers, should be related to a Christian Community of Faith.

This pastoral function comes under the oversight and discipline of the East Central Ontario Regional Council. In terms of marriage itself, it would come under the oversight of a Session or its equivalent and members of the Order of Ministry would work through and with a Session or its equivalent as outlined in United Church Polity. Marriages shall be recorded in the records of a Community of Faith.

Ministers who are retired or not in a covenant relationship must be formally aligned with a Community of Faith if they are to be licensed to perform marriages. (see below re: Voluntary Associate Ministers*).

Each year the East Central Ontario Regional Council will prepare a list of those eligible to perform marriages. The Executive Minister of the East Central Ontario Regional Council will inform the Provincial authorities of additions and removals as required by Provincial statute.

These principles will also be followed in the case of Ministers requesting a temporary license to perform marriages within the bounds of the East Central Ontario Regional Council.

Policy for Voluntary Associate Ministers

- A. Communities of Faith acting through the Session, Official Board or Unified Board could approve an application for Voluntary Associate status for a retired or other minister not in a covenanted relationship and would apply to the East Central Ontario Regional Council to have this person appointed to this office.
- B. A retired minister or a minister not in a covenanted relationship could present a request for Voluntary Associate status to a Session, Official Board or Unified Board. There is a requirement of the ministry personnel to have a current Police Records Check and all United Church of Canada mandatory trainings completed. The Office of Vocation can confirm such information and provide a letter of Good Standing.
- C. The East Central Ontario Regional Council will receive each completed application if satisfied that the following conditions were being fulfilled, namely:

1. That all Christian marriages performed by United Church Minister be related to a Community of Faith;
 2. That this pastoral function come under the oversight and discipline of the East Central Ontario Regional Council;
 3. That all marriages be registered in record books that remain the property of an ongoing Community of Faith.
- D. Having met the requirements in C above, the Assembly of Elders will instruct the Executive Minister of the East Central Ontario Regional Council to include this person so appointed on the list of those eligible for certification to perform marriages.
- E. The East Central Ontario Regional Council will review these appointments annually. This is done to ensure that those who have moved from the Community of Faith or who have ceased to be willing or able to fulfill the pastoral responsibility be removed from the list. The VAM forms will normally be processed in the spring and voted upon at the same meeting as the Roll of the East Central Ontario Regional Council.