

PROCEDURES for COOPERATIVE VENTURES

Approved by

Forum of Cooperative Ventures

Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

Congregational Union of New Zealand

Christian Churches New Zealand (formerly Associated Churches of Christ)

Methodist Church of New Zealand – Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

for

Union or Uniting Parishes, Cooperating Parishes,

and other Cooperative Ventures

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Procedures for Cooperative Ventures

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1. General

1.1 INTRODUCTION

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The Cooperative Venture movement in New Zealand began in the 1940's when there was a strong desire for churches to unite. While the move to unite as one national church did not come about, many local churches have come together to share a faith journey and enjoy their various traditions and cultures. Cooperative Ventures have taken many forms of partnership from complete union and cooperation to the sharing of buildings, ministry and/or a mission project.

1.1.1 VISION STATEMENT (2008)

The Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand is a continuing journey of God's people seeking to reflect the essential unity of Christ's Church. This community of Partner Churches and Cooperative Ventures is discovering and living out what it means to be a missional church of Jesus Christ in today's world.

1.1.2 Cooperative Ventures are one ecumenical expression of the Partner Churches and reflect a model of partnership.

1.1.3 Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand continues to encourage the five Partner Churches to seek, wherever possible, to work together to do those things that do not need to be done apart.

1.2 PARTNER CHURCHES

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NATIONAL COURTS

Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia encompasses the area described by its title.

In Maori this is, Te Hahi Mihinare ki Aotearoa ki Niu Tireni, Ki Nga Moutere Nui a Kiwa.

The 1992 Constitution of this Church provides for three partners to order their affairs within their own cultural context: Tikanga Maori; Tikanga Pakeha; Tikanga Pasefika.

Within Aotearoa New Zealand, Tikanga Pakeha comprises seven Dioceses, Tikanga Maori comprises five Hui Amorangi, the boundaries of which differ from those of the dioceses. Tikanga Pasefika encompasses Fiji, Tonga, Samoa and the Cook Islands and, nominally, all the other nations of Polynesia, and is known as the Diocese of Polynesia.

Christian Churches New Zealand (formerly Associated Churches of Christ)

The Mission of our Movement is intentional and focuses on developing and planting churches which are both healthy and missional in value and practice.

We see Christian Churches New Zealand:

- Strongly emphasising the need for Church Planting
- Becoming a driving force in this country as together we become more proactive in local mission and evangelism throughout New Zealand.
- Touching every sphere of community through the local church.
- Growing churches as well as new churches.
- Recruiting a new generation of ministers and leaders who will minister to their generation in power.
- Providing an active voice in the Nation, influencing all arenas in society including government.
- Growing as a movement of people loving God and loving people.

Congregational Union of New Zealand

What we now know as Congregationalism has its roots in the Reformation in England. Many devout Christians were concerned that the reforms then taking place in the English church were far from thorough. In the 1560's several groups of individuals were meeting together. They saw that the Church did not consist of those living within the Parish bounds of a local building or any other geographic boundaries. The Church consisted of those true believers that met together for worship, prayer, praise, and instruction. Believing in the priesthood of all believers, and recognising that Christ alone was the Head of the Church, they rightly concluded that such groups were independent of any external authority.

Methodist Church of New Zealand – Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa

Mission Statement:

Our Church's mission in Aotearoa/New Zealand is to reflect and proclaim the transforming love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and declared in the Scriptures. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit to serve God in the world.

The Treaty of Waitangi is the covenant establishing our nation on the basis of a power-sharing partnership and will guide how we undertake mission.

In seeking to carry out our mission we will work according to these principles: Christian Community, Evangelism, Flexibility, Church Unity, Inclusiveness, Every Member a Minister, Cross-cultural Awareness, Justice, Peace, Healing, and Ecology.

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand believes it is called by God to work with others in making Jesus Christ known through –

- Teaching and nurturing people in Christian faith
- Loving service responding to human need
- Proclaiming the gospel
- Seeking to transform society
- Caring for God’s creation

REGIONAL COURTS

Anglican Diocese

There are seven dioceses in Tikanga Pakeha – Auckland, Waikato and Taranaki, Waiapu, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch, and Dunedin. Each diocese functions semi-autonomously and they have their own bishop, diocesan manager and procedures.

Christian Churches New Zealand

Regional issues are dealt with by the National Cooperative Ventures liaison person or the National Director.

Congregational Union

Regional issues are dealt with through Assembly/Standing Committee of the Congregational Union of New Zealand.

Methodist Synod

There are eight regional synods and four cultural groups in the Methodist Church – Northland, Auckland, Manukau, Waikato/Wairariki, Lower North Island, Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast, Central South Island, Otago-Southland, Te Taha Maori, Sinoti Samoa, Vahefonua Tonga and Wasewase ko Viti kei Rotuma (Fijian and Rotuman).

Presbytery

There are a number of Presbyteries and Te Aka Puaho in the Presbyterian Church – Northern, Kaimai, Central, Alpine and Southern. There is also a Pacific Island Synod and an Asian Advisory Committee.

1.3 WORDS WE USE

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1.3.1 Acronyms

UCANZ: Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand

ACANZP: Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

CUNZ: Congregational Union of New Zealand

CCNZ: Christian Churches New Zealand (formerly Associated Churches of Christ)

MCNZ: Methodist Church of New Zealand – Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa

PCANZ: Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

1.3.2 **Cooperative Venture**

This is an inclusive term that covers the many expressions of partnership existing in our churches. When a Cooperative Venture is acknowledged through UCANZ it falls under these Procedures for Cooperative Ventures.

1.3.2.1 **Union/Uniting Parish:** One form of a local church where two or more parishes (not Anglican) have united as a single entity.

1.3.2.2 **Cooperating Parish:** Another form of a local church where two or more parishes (including Anglican) have united as a single entity.

1.3.2.3 **Joint Use:** An agreement entered into to jointly fund, use and/or maintain a building for worship, community or congregational activities.

1.3.2.4 **Shared Ministry:** An agreement to share in the provision of paid ministry amongst two or more local churches.

1.3.2.5 **Local Ecumenical Project (LEP):** A shared project where churches have a covenant or agreement to work together. This may include parties other than the five Partner Churches of UCANZ.

1.3.3 **Documents**

1.3.3.1 **Covenant or Agreement**

The document that outlines the commitment of the local churches to work together in a particular manner.

1.3.3.2 **Schedules of Record**

The details of property and assets that local church partners bring into the formation of the Cooperative Venture. The Schedules of Record are used to establish the Capital Ratio. They should be regularly reviewed and updated.

1.3.4 **Partner Church**

The term Partner Church refers to each of the five churches that have formed a partnership in UCANZ; Anglican, Congregational Union, Christian Churches, Methodist and Presbyterian.

1.3.5 **Local Church**

The local church is a group of people committed to live and work in Christ through one or more congregations, fellowships or other groups. Terms such as circuit, parish, pastoral charge, congregation, or church are synonyms. The local church is managed by a church council, appointed by the members.

1.3.5.1 **Local Church Council**

A management body elected by members of the local church. Terms such as Parish Council, Leaders Meeting, Vestry, Session are synonyms. A local church may formulate a constitution to outline how the local church council functions, but that must be consistent with the Procedures for Cooperative Ventures and must be approved by the Local Church Partners.

1.3.6 **Local Church Partners**

This refers to the specific partners in a local church.

1.3.6.1 **Coordinating Partner**

Takes a leading role in coordinating the work of both the local church and the partnership. This normally rotating role is more clearly defined in 2.1 [\[below\]](#).

1.3.6.2 **Participating Partner**

Shares responsibility for the local church and participates in all aspects of the local church's life. See 2.2 [\[below\]](#)

1.3.6.3 **Regional Forum**

Regional Forums replace the former Joint Regional Committees or their equivalents. They are a gathering of Cooperative Ventures and regional partners in a particular area. The Partner Churches may delegate certain tasks to a Regional Forum, such as local church reviews and minister reviews. Where they formally exist Regional Forums are consultants to the Partner Churches.

1.3.7 **Reciprocal Membership**

The five Partner Churches have agreed to receive members in good standing and afford them all the privileges and responsibilities of membership when involved with a local church in a Cooperative Venture.

1.3.8 **Ministry**

Ministry is a task for all Christians, but the church also speaks of ministry as a profession or vocation. A minister is usually trained, ordained and called or appointed to a position of ministry, but there is opportunity for those who are not ordained to work in ministry. Ordained ministers are also called clergy, pastors, presbyters, vicars, deacons, priests and are granted the honorific title of "the Reverend."

1.3.8.1 **Ordination**

A minister is ordained by their own denomination through prayer and the laying on of hands. There is a mutual recognition by the churches for the ordinations of others, although there is not yet a total reconciliation of ministry.

1.3.8.2 **Induction**

A minister is inducted into a specific ministry position by a partner church court. The induction service should fully involve the participating partner(s).

1.3.8.3 **Ordination, Membership, Appointment**

A minister will have an original church of ordination, a current church of membership, and a church of appointment. For most ministers this will be the same church, but for some there may be differences and these need to be acknowledged. Church of membership changes when a minister is formally received into the membership of another church.

1.3.8.4 **Local Shared Ministry**

A form of ministry which allows a local team to operate within the regulations of the Partner Churches – although there are differing expressions and ways of functioning.

The Coordinating Partner of the local church ensures there is adequate support for such a ministry.

1.3.9 **Partner Support Fund (PSF)**

A combined fund for local church contributions to the national work of Christian Churches, Congregational Union, Methodist and Presbyterian churches, administered by the UCANZ office (see [Guideline 9.3.2](#)).

1.4 **FORMING A COOPERATIVE VENTURE**

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There are a number of reasons why a Cooperative Venture may come into being, but for all the concept of partnership must be central.

1.4.1 **Exploring the Idea**

When two or more congregations begin to explore the possibilities of formal cooperation they should be open-minded, prayerful and patient. As early as possible, representatives from the regional courts of any proposed partners (and any Regional Forum) should be brought together to evaluate the possibilities with the local church councils.

A new congregation may be established within the CV parish by any of the Partner Churches after prior consultation with the other partner(s) in the CV.

1.4.2 **Nature of Cooperation**

Details about how the local churches and congregations will cooperate should be carefully worked through. Consideration needs to be given to worship, property, finances, regional and national court responsibilities, ministry and reviews. A Cooperative Venture may share ministry, buildings, mission work or become a uniting church/cooperating parish.

Upon the establishment of any new congregation within the CV parish, it shall be determined between the new congregation and the CV parish and Partner Churches (and any Regional Forum) whether the new congregation is joining the CV parish or whether it wishes to stand aside from the CV parish and UCANZ Procedures and remain under the jurisdiction of one Partner Church only.

Any congregation joining the CV parish shall be under the same UCANZ Procedures as other participating congregations. The new congregation shall relate primarily to the regional courts of the Coordinating Partner and its relevant synod/presbytery/tikanga, but shall also remain in contact with the relevant structures of any other Participating Partner.

Where a new congregation opts to stand aside from the existing CV parish and remain under the jurisdiction of one Partner Church only, the congregation will negotiate with the CV parish a suitable rental agreement for use, maintenance and renewal of the property, but shall retain the integrity of its denominational structure to which it is accountable.

Members shall belong either to the CV parish or the stand-alone denominational parish, but not both.

Congregations seeking admittance into an existing CV parish shall confirm their acceptance of Procedures 9.1.2 Statement of Accord (1984) and 9.1.3 The Faith We Affirm Together (1994).

1.4.3 Approvals

When the proposal is finally prepared the executives of the regional courts (who may also refer the matter to the national offices) must give their approval in principle to the document. The proposal should also be referred to the UCANZ office for their consideration and any recommendations. The proposal will then be presented to the local churches or congregations that will form the Cooperative Venture and to the regional courts for final approval.

1.4.4 Schedules of Record

Where the new Cooperative Venture will bring together properties, Schedules of Record that outline the property and financial agreements entered into must be completed.

1.4.4.1 (a) At the time the Cooperative Venture is established the Schedules of Record are used to establish a Capital Ratio which must be accepted by the partners.

1.4.4.1 (b) When a new congregation is admitted to the CV parish the Schedules of Record shall be amended in those cases where the new congregation is bringing new premises or new capital to the CV parish.

1.4.4.2 The Capital Ratio is the agreed figure on which capital will be shared upon dissolution of the agreement.

1.4.5 Inauguration

A service of worship to celebrate the inauguration of the new Cooperative Venture should be planned – led by the initial Coordinating Partner but reflecting the partnership that is being entered into. A simple covenant document should be signed by representatives of all the local church partners and the local church council.

1.5 Legalities

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1.5.1 APPROVAL

The Procedures for Cooperative Ventures have been approved by the Forum of Cooperative Ventures (2011) and the Partner Churches to guide the partnerships in Cooperative Ventures. Irrespective of the date of inauguration, the current Procedures for Cooperative Ventures applies to all Cooperative Ventures acknowledged through UCANZ and replace the Guide to Procedures (2001). The accompanying Documents, Guidelines and Forms are provided to resource the local churches and partners in working out their shared journey. Exceptions for special cases are possible where the local church partners have agreed in writing that specific circumstances exist and are approved by the UCANZ Standing Committee.

1.5.2 AMENDMENTS

Any amendments to the Procedures (sections 2-7) must be approved by the appropriate decision making body of each Partner Church. Amendments to other sections of the Procedures are approved by Standing Committee of UCANZ.

1.5.3 STATUS OF COOPERATIVE VENTURES

It is important to note that Cooperative Ventures are not a legal entity in themselves and cannot enter into a formal lease or assume corporate status. Local churches are part of the wider churches to which they affiliate and cannot act independently or contrary to the laws of the Partner Churches.

1.5.4 **COVENANTS, CONSTITUTIONS and AGREEMENTS**

When an acknowledged Cooperative Venture is formed there is a covenant agreement that outlines how the partnership will function. The local church, as a Cooperative Venture, falls under these Procedures for Cooperative Ventures and the law books of the local church's Partner Churches. A local church may develop a constitution which outlines local processes, but these cannot conflict with the Procedures for Cooperative Ventures.

2. Procedures for Local Church Oversight

It should be clear that 'being in partnership' means that all parties of a Cooperative Venture are called to give oversight to the mission and ministry of the local church. Local church councils, ministers, regional and national courts, are charged with the duty to nurture the life of the congregations in their care. There is an understanding that Cooperative Ventures require one partner to take a primary role in giving oversight. To describe this primary role and the consequent relationship we identify a Coordinating Partner as taking a special part in the life of the Cooperative Venture, supported by the Participating Partner(s).

All partners have as their primary responsibility the task of supporting the local church in its commitment to working together in life and mission.

2.1 COORDINATING PARTNER

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- 2.1.1 A primary task of the Coordinating Partner is to take responsibility for the working out of the partnership. This requires that genuine consultation be continually held amongst all partners and the local church before any decisions are made. A meeting of a local church's partners should happen at least once a year in a suitable manner.
- 2.1.2 Where a Regional Forum is functioning they should be consulted and be involved in key discussions and decisions. A Regional Forum provides a means of facilitation amongst the local partner churches. Where a Regional Forum is not in existence the UCANZ office should be consulted where appropriate.
- 2.1.3 As a sign of partnership, it is generally accepted that the Coordinating Partner role may move amongst the local church partners. A review of Coordinating Partner should be made every five years, even if there is no change, and when a ministry changes. A review should be conducted by all the local church partners and the local church council.
- 2.1.4 In some areas the role of Coordinating Partner may be taken by a combined court of the Partner Churches.
- 2.1.5 The Coordinating Partner takes responsibility for overseeing the process of ministry appointments, including developing a local church profile, holding interviews, and undertaking character and good standing checks. The Coordinating Partner must ensure that all partners are involved in the process and that there is consultation with partner church leaders before an appointment is officially confirmed. The Coordinating Partner also ensures that an induction service involves all the partners of the Cooperative Venture, a Code of Ethics and Letter of Appointment are signed (see 4.2), and that the UCANZ office is notified.
- 2.1.6 In all appointments, care should be taken to identify ministers who are committed to the ecumenical nature of cooperative ventures and any orientation or mentoring should be provided where it is deemed necessary.

- 2.1.7 If the appointed minister is not from the same church as the Coordinating Partner there must be deliberate attention given to the issues that arise, including ministry reviews and discipline. Differences in processes should be considered at the time of making the appointment.
- 2.1.8 A ministry review must be carried out between 9 to 12 months before the current term of ministry is completed. This is a task for the Coordinating Partner to oversee, although this may be a task delegated to a Regional Forum to coordinate.
- 2.1.9 When a ministerial vacancy occurs the Coordinating Partner will meet with the Participating Partner(s) and the local church council to decide which partner will act as Coordinating Partner. The Coordinating Partner takes a lead in helping the local church to develop both local church and minister profiles.
- 2.1.10 Where there is local shared ministry the Coordinating Partner ensures the appointment of a suitable ministry enabler, organises appropriate calling processes and gives direction to the ministry team. Other models of ministry may also have specific needs.
- 2.1.11 The Coordinating Partner will generally handle complaints that arise from a Cooperative Venture and should ensure that other partners are made aware of possible liabilities arising and the outcomes.
- 2.1.12 The Coordinating Partner will ensure that the local church is reviewed regularly, and that such reviews involve the Participating Partner(s). The form of the review will be in the hands of the Coordinating Partner, but should include questions relating to compliance, record keeping, strategic planning, building utilisation and mission goals. This responsibility may be delegated to a Regional Forum where it exists.
- 2.1.13 The Coordinating Partner will ensure that appropriate employment practices are followed for any person employed in the local church, and should keep the Participating Partner(s) informed of changes in local church employees.
- 2.1.14 The Coordinating Partner will ensure that appropriate payments to the Partner Support Fund are made.

2.2 PARTICIPATING PARTNER

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- 2.2.1 Participating Partner(s) in a Cooperative Venture have responsibilities in maintaining contact with the local church, ministers, with the Coordinating Partner and the Regional Forum.
- 2.2.2 When moving from the Coordinating Partner role, there is a need to provide continuity for both the local church and the new Coordinating Partner. It is important that Participating Partners provide personnel to attend meetings called by the Coordinating Partner to advance the work of the local church. This is especially true when dealing with the overall mission and property matters.
- 2.2.3 There is also an ongoing responsibility to make local churches aware of the various resources that are available and to provide encouragement to ministers in exploring traditions different to their own. Ministers and laity should be encouraged to experience the wider church life of their local church partners.

- 2.2.4 Participating Partners continue to be involved in the local church, but it is a courtesy to inform other partners of activities that are undertaken on behalf of the Partner Church.

2.3 REGIONAL FORUM

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Historically the development of Joint Regional Committees has been very diverse. In the beginning the Joint Regional Committees were a meeting of the five negotiating partners in a particular area – planning for the uniting of the churches. Since 2000 some Joint Regional Committees have ceased to function, some have become a meeting of Cooperative Venture representatives (with limited regional court involvement) and others have merged into bigger groupings.

- 2.3.1 A Regional Forum comes into being to support the Cooperative Ventures in an area, assist in the work of the Partner Churches, and to uphold the ecumenical hopes of UCANZ.
- 2.3.2 A Regional Forum will reflect the unique situation that exists within a region – there are no specific ways it might function, but it is important that the Partner Churches accept its mode of being.
- 2.3.3 When a Regional Forum functions it is considered as a consultant and should share in the discussions related to the local churches.
- 2.3.4 When a Regional Forum does not function, the UCANZ office should be involved as much as possible in decisions relating to the local church.
- 2.3.5 A Regional Forum may be delegated authority to conduct local church reviews and other tasks by the Regional Courts and facilitate the work of Coordinating Partners.
- 2.3.6 A Regional Forum may be an appropriate means to initiate new ventures and explore other possibilities for ecumenical cooperation.
- 2.3.7 The membership of a Regional Forum should reflect a balance between clergy/laity, women/men, and local churches/regional courts. All of the Partner Churches should be invited to participate and be represented.

3. Procedures for the Local Church

The complexity of our modern church makes definitions rather more complex. What is defined in these Procedures as the local church may also be known as a congregation, parish, circuit, or charge. It also refers to one or more congregations that come under one administration.

3.1 MEMBERSHIP

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- 3.1.1 People are members of the Church Universal through baptism and the public confession of faith. As a local expression of this members of a Cooperative Venture are received by the local church council and their names placed on a single Roll of Members.
- 3.1.2 Members of a Cooperative Venture have reciprocal membership in the Partner Churches while they remain associated with the Cooperative Venture.
- 3.1.3 A Roll of Members is required to be kept by the local church and needs to be reviewed at least annually. This provides a legal basis for voting and decision-making. A Pastoral or Associate Roll may be kept of all those who are associated with the local church including those who are not considered full members or may be called inactive members.
- 3.1.4 All members have a right to vote at the Annual Meeting and at any special meeting of the local church called to discuss specific business.
- 3.1.5 Special meetings of the local church may be called by the local church council by giving reasonable notice (normally not less than two clear Sundays) and advertising their purpose. In exceptional circumstances the local church partners may require the local church council to call a special meeting.

3.2 LOCAL CHURCH COUNCIL

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The local church council may also be known as Parish Council, Session, Vestry or Church Board. Congregational councils may exist in local churches with multiple congregations.

- 3.2.1 The local church council manages the life and resources of the local church for local mission and the wider mission of the Partner Churches. There should be good systems of communication with the congregation(s) on all aspects of the local church life.
- 3.2.2 People elected to the local church council must be members of the local church.
- 3.2.3 The local church council reports to the congregation(s) through an Annual Meeting and that meeting elects the members of the local church council.
- 3.2.4 A local church may develop a constitution for itself, but this must be consistent with the practices of the partner churches, reflect the partnership model, and not be in conflict with the Procedures for Cooperative Ventures.

- 3.2.5 Ordained and Lay Ministers appointed to the local church are members of the local church council. They may chair the local church council, but they may not be treasurer for the local church.
- 3.2.6 The local church council is responsible to the local church and partner church courts for the financial affairs, historic records, roll of members, and generally the life and work of the local church. They are also required to meet all statutory requirements as necessary (for example, Health and Safety, Fire, and Building Code regulations).
- 3.2.7 It is appropriate for the local church council to develop processes that support those undertaking ministry in the local church. This may mean appointing, in consultation with those in ministry, an individual or small group (possibly called wardens, stewards, or senior elders) to give pastoral support to those who work in the local church.

3.3 RELATIONSHIPS

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- 3.3.1 A Cooperative Venture is regarded by the Partner Church courts as one of their own.
- 3.3.2 A Cooperative Venture should seek to be represented on all church courts as it is appropriate.
- 3.3.3 Cooperative Ventures also have a responsibility to ensure that Participating Partners are active and visible in the life of the local church. Deliberate attention should be paid to ensuring that all partners are honoured in the life of the local church and that events are fairly publicised. The worshipping life of the local church should reflect the traditions and current practices of all its partners, but also provide opportunities for new patterns of worship.

3.4 FINANCIAL MATTERS

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- 3.4.1 The financial accounts of the local church should be transparent, readily available and reflect the partnership entered into.
- 3.4.2 All financial accounts of the local church should be reviewed annually by a suitably qualified person.
- 3.4.3 Cooperative Ventures, as part of the wider church, support the work of the Partner Churches through the Partner Support Fund, Diocesan Levies (for Anglican Churches) or through Partner Churches at an approved rate.
- 3.4.4 Regional courts may charge reasonable levies upon Cooperative Ventures, but these should take into account the nature of partnership, the level of giving to the wider church budgets, and the ability of local churches to pay.
- 3.4.5 Removal Expenses: Availability of funds varies throughout the country - local churches should check on requirements before any moves are made. UCANZ does operate the Cooperative Ventures Removal Scheme (see 8.5.2 and 9.3) which supports those local churches that are members of the fund to defray removal expenses.
- 3.4.6 There is to be no pecuniary gain for members of the church, in accordance with the charitable aims of the local church.

- 3.4.7 Church members who have an interest in any financial or property decision should make their interest known to the deciding church court and will step aside for the discussion and decision.
- 3.4.8 At the closure of any local church, all funds and assets are returned to the Partner Church courts in accordance to the Schedules of Record.

3.5 PROPERTY

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- 3.5.1 All Cooperative Ventures must have Schedules of Record approved by their Partner Churches which outline the resources brought into the venture and the Capital Ratio. When there are changes in capital contributions the schedules and ratios must be re-evaluated. Loans, bequests and donations made to the Cooperative Venture do not affect the Capital Ratio.
- 3.5.2 The titles to property and buildings are vested with Trustees from one of the Partner Churches in accordance with the Agreement signed when the Cooperative Venture was formed. Such property is held in trust for all participants in the Cooperative Venture according to the Schedules of Record. Any property development should be considered in consultation with the relevant Partner Churches. Advice and guidance in these matters can be obtained by contacting the UCANZ office.
- 3.5.3 Any significant property development must have final approval from the trustees in whom the property is vested, and it must also be approved by the regional courts of the local church partners and be referred to the trustees of the relevant Partner Churches.
- 3.5.4 The local church council is required to insure buildings and contents, ensure all compliance matters are completed, and to provide a safe environment for all users of the buildings.
- 3.5.5 Significant expenditure based on an insurance claim is subject to the requirements of the relevant Partner Churches. Consultation and approval is needed before any remedial work is undertaken.

3.6 LOCAL CHURCH REVIEWS

[\[index\]](#)

Local church reviews have also been known as visitations or consultations.

- 3.6.1 Regular local church reviews are acknowledged as an important aspect of ongoing development.
- 3.6.2 Organising reviews is the task of the Coordinating Partner, working in association with the Participating Partner(s). This task may be delegated to a Regional Forum.
- 3.6.3 The form of the review will essentially be in the hands of the review team, but it would consider the following areas:
- Mission of the local church
 - Strategic planning
 - Property utilisation, upkeep and planning
 - Financial viability
 - Relationships with the local church's partners
- 3.6.4 The Coordinating Partner must undertake to ensure that any recommendations from a local church review are carried out.

- 3.6.5 Any local church partner may call for a special review and the Coordinating Partner will organise any required meetings. A special review may focus on specific issues facing the local church situation or may involve more than one local church.

3.7 CHARITY STATUS

[\[index\]](#)

- 3.7.1 Cooperative Ventures register with the Charities Commission as independent charities functioning under the Agreed Provisions for Cooperative Ventures. They will each have a Charities Commission number and an Inland Revenue number.
- 3.7.2 Responsibility for meeting the requirements of the Charities Commission and Inland Revenue rests with the local church council.

3.8 CHURCH RECORDS

[\[index\]](#)

The history of the church is contained in the records that are passed on to the next generation – they provide a glimpse at our past and tell the story of our faith journey.

- 3.8.1 The local church council has the responsibility to ensure that records are maintained, stored and appropriately archived.
- 3.8.2 The following records should be kept:
- a) Registers: baptism, marriage, funeral, worship service.
 - b) Minute books: all minute books of all church organisations.
 - c) Annual reports.
 - d) Correspondence, inwards and outwards: in whatever form this is kept eg files, letter books.
 - e) Rolls: membership, pastoral, confirmation, Sunday School, Youth Group or Bible Class etc.
 - f) Financial records: annual accounts, cash books, journals, ledgers.
 - g) Local church newsletters, magazines, church bulletins, orders of service (weekly and special), scrapbooks, newspaper clippings (including date and name of newspaper)
 - h) Property records: maps, plans, architectural drawings, building specifications, contracts.
 - i) Legal documents.
 - j) Jubilee and centennial celebration records: minutes, correspondence, registration forms, photographs, programmes, tickets, orders of service, publications, balance sheets and cash books, tape recordings, videos.

It is not necessary to collect national church publications, general circulars, or promotional material unless they are of specific significance to the local church.

- 3.8.3 Archive repositories exist for all the Partner Churches and Cooperative Venture records should be lodged in an approved archive and all local church partners notified of what was lodged and where.

3.8.4 Electronic files are not archive or history friendly. It is important to print at least one copy of relevant correspondence and reports, and store with printed minutes and agendas. Photos (loose or in albums) should be environmentally protected and people and items named.

4. Procedures for Ordained Ministry

Ordained ministry within Cooperative Ventures is governed by the Partner Church courts. It is important for local churches to respect and follow the processes of the appointing church. The appointing church oversees, according to their own processes, the appointment of ministers, their induction to the local church, ministry review, discipline and also the stipend package. However, Cooperative Ventures are a partnership and decisions about ordained ministry should be made with the local church partners all participating (including any Regional Forum).

4.1 APPOINTMENT

[\[index\]](#)

- 4.1.1 The Coordinating Partner, Participating Partner(s) and the local church need to meet together and decide which local church partner will be the Coordinating Partner. This decision should be notified to the UCANZ office.
- 4.1.2 The Coordinating Partner runs the appointment/call process according to their tradition, but with Participating Partner(s) involved (see 9.3.3 for Guidelines).
- 4.1.3 All local church partners should have input into the development of a local church profile, job descriptions, interviews (by whatever title or process) and final approval.
- 4.1.4 It is appropriate for local church partners to be notified of the pending appointment/call after local church confirmation and before regional/national court approval of the appointment/call by the Coordinating Partner.
- 4.1.5 The initial term of appointment will normally be for five years, with review.
- 4.1.6 When the appointment/call is formally made by the local church partners, the UCANZ office should be notified of the appointment/call, the date of induction, and the terms of ministry.
- 4.1.7 Where a minister is from a different church than the Coordinating Partner, care should be taken in consulting with the appropriate national administrators. A statement of good standing will always be sought by the Coordinating Partner from the church/es in which the minister has been ordained and previously employed. It is usual for the stipend package (leave entitlements, etc) to be consistent with the appointing church, but there may be exceptions to this.
- 4.1.8 Care should be taken in making a part-time appointment in ensuring that any other work is consistent with the role of ministry. If a minister is taking on two part-time positions there should be consultation with all local church partners about the nature of the work.
- 4.1.9 If there is a multiple ministry team, care should be taken to consult fully with others within the team – ordained or lay.
- 4.1.10 The appointee should be made aware of the nature of the Cooperative Venture and be made familiar with the local church partners. UCANZ has a brochure on ministry in a Cooperative Venture that might be helpful.

4.2 INDUCTION

[\[index\]](#)

- 4.2.1 The induction service is the responsibility of the Coordinating Partner, the minister being inducted as a minister of their national church. However, the service should reflect an ecumenical ethos and involve participants from Partner Churches.
- 4.2.2 The traditional rites and practices of the appointing church should be followed, including any affirmation or documentation required.
- 4.2.3 A Letter of Appointment should be signed by representatives of all the local church partners and the local church council. The Letter should clearly state the term of the initial appointment.
- 4.2.4 A Code of Pastoral Ethics should be signed – either the UCANZ Code of Ethics (see 9.2.5) or one approved by the Coordinating Partner.

4.3 MINISTRY SUPPLY

[\[index\]](#)

There are times when a local church will want to appoint a person to a short term (1-12 months) ministry appointment.

- 4.3.1 The Coordinating Partner oversees the processes leading to the appointment of any ministry supply, including checks on standing and status.
- 4.3.2 When a person is appointed the Coordinating Partner should inform the Participating Partner(s) about the appointee, the terms of supply, and any ongoing concerns for the local church or ministry.
- 4.3.3 The UCANZ office should be notified of the appointment and terms.

4.4 RELATIONSHIPS

[\[index\]](#)

- 4.4.1 The minister has a primary responsibility to their appointing church – normally the Coordinating Partner.
- 4.4.2 A minister in a Cooperative Venture is also encouraged to become involved in the life and work of the Participating Partner church courts as appropriate.

4.5 MINISTER REVIEW

[\[index\]](#)

- 4.5.1 A minister's performance and pastoral care is primarily the responsibility of the Coordinating Partner. If the local church or the Participating Partner(s) have any concerns with the performance or health of a minister they should firstly notify the Coordinating Partner.
- 4.5.2 A simple review of a new ministry should be conducted 6-9 months after the induction/appointment and should involve all the local church partners.
- 4.5.3 Regular reviews of ministry are carried out according to the practices of the Coordinating Partner – with the involvement of the local church and Participating Partner(s).

4.6 REVIEW OF APPOINTMENT

[\[index\]](#)

- 4.6.1 The review of a ministry appointment should occur about a year before it is to be completed – with a minimum period of 9 months.

- 4.6.2 The Coordinating Partner convenes a meeting of the partners and the local church to consider the ongoing options for the ministry. That meeting seeks to discern the call of the Holy Spirit upon the ministry and will reflect on a variety of issues.
- 4.6.3 Where any partner to the local church has an objection to re-appointment for another term **these objections should be discussed with all the partners before** alternative options are considered.
- 4.6.4 If an extension of appointment is agreed (usually for another 5 year term) the partner church courts and the UCANZ office should be notified.

4.7 RESIGNATION OR TERMINATION OF MINISTRY [\[index\]](#)

- 4.7.1 The resignation of a minister is handled by the Coordinating Partner.
- 4.7.2 When the resignation is received the partners and local church council meet to consider the reasons for the resignation and to decide if there needs to be a change of Coordinating Partner.
- 4.7.3 If a ministry needs to be terminated, a meeting of the partners should consider the reasons for the termination and ensure that ongoing pastoral care is offered to the minister and local church.

4.8 DISCIPLINE [\[index\]](#)

- 4.8.1 Discipline of ministers is the responsibility of the minister's church of membership.
- 4.8.2 Relevant Partner Churches should be consulted, where appropriate, with pastoral sensitivity for all parties involved.
- 4.8.3 Any complaints of illegal activities should be notified to the Coordinating Partner (and ordaining church, if different) authorities and to the police.
- 4.8.4 Complaints about sexual impropriety, financial irregularities, inappropriate behaviour, breaches of church discipline or ethical standards, or failures of ministry, should be notified to the appropriate Partner Church authorities. This is especially important if there are possible implications for liability insurance.

4.9 TERMS OF MINISTRY [\[index\]](#)

- 4.9.1 A stipendiary package includes the regular stipend, allowances, holiday entitlement, study leave and any other conditions associated with ministry.
- 4.9.2 Each partner church has its own stipend package. Generally a minister will receive the stipend package of the appointing church, but there may be exceptions. The local church partners need to confirm the stipend package at the time of appointment.
- 4.9.3 All aspects of a stipendiary package are paid at a percentage of the full time allowance when a position is less than 100%, unless there are specific exemptions agreed by the appropriate church courts.

4.10 DEACONS, RETIREES AND SELF-SUPPORTING APPOINTMENTS [\[index\]](#)

The Partner Churches have a diverse expression of ministry. The Methodist and Anglican Churches have specific paths for people ordained to serve as Deacons and others may also be locally ordained to serve in a ministry capacity.

- 4.10.1 The regulations above (4.1 – 4.9) should, wherever possible, apply to those people ordained as Deacons or to self-supporting ministries and retirees.
- 4.10.2 Where such appointments are made, they must be consistent with the processes of the appointing Partner and be acceptable to all local church partners.
- 4.10.3 The Coordinating Partner ensures that proper reviews are undertaken with all partners participating.

5. Procedures for Lay Workers

There are opportunities for people who have not been ordained to serve a local church through a paid or unpaid appointment. Such ministries belong to the people of God and are recognised by the wider church. There is now a wide diversity in how ministry is undertaken and these regulations can only provide a broad outline. Titles such as lay minister, lay worker, lay pastor may be used, but care should be taken to consult about the titles with all local church partners. The special circumstance of Local Shared Ministry is considered in section 6.

5.1 OVERSIGHT

[\[index\]](#)

- 5.1.1 The Coordinating Partner has responsibility for oversight of lay ministry within the local church.
- 5.1.2 A lay worker may be appointed by a Participating Partner or the local church.
- 5.1.3 The views of the Participating Partners must be taken into account when developing lay ministry. The local church cannot over-rule the regulations of the Partner Churches.
- 5.1.4 “Lay Ministry” includes all those with pastoral or leadership responsibilities; lay supply, youth ministry, family ministry and other lay ministry positions.

5.2 TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

[\[index\]](#)

- 5.2.1 There is no usual term for appointments to lay ministry, but it is generally accepted that such positions should be regularly reviewed, with the involvement of partners and the local church.
- 5.2.2 As an employee, all **paid** lay ministry positions should be agreed with a clearly worded employment agreement and job description. When employing anyone, the local church council must comply with all employment legislation as required. Lay Ministers are no different from other paid employees in this regard. Voluntary positions would benefit by having a clear job description.
- 5.2.3 Before confirming an appointment, checks should be made into the character of the appointee, including a police check. Police vetting checks are a mandatory requirement of all Church Partners, and can be obtained through the national church offices.
- 5.2.4 All lay ministers should sign a Code of Ethics – using either one from the partner churches or the UCANZ Code of Ethics.

5.3 PAYMENT

[\[index\]](#)

- 5.3.1 Each lay ministry position should be paid according to the individual employment agreement that has been signed. Partner church offices are able to assist local churches to set up employment agreements.
- 5.3.2 Where ministry is conducted only by voluntary service, consideration should be given for assistance with books, travel and/or accommodation, and reimbursement of reasonable costs.

5.4 DISCIPLINE

[\[index\]](#)

- 5.4.1 All lay people are under the discipline of the Church – in the first instance the local church council is responsible in consultation with and under the guidance of the Coordinating Partner.
- 5.4.2 Any complaints of illegal activities should be notified to the Coordinating Partner authorities and to the police.
- 5.4.3 Complaints about sexual impropriety, financial irregularities, inappropriate behaviour, breaches of church discipline or ethical standards, or failures of ministry, should be notified to the Coordinating Partner authorities. This is especially important if there are possible implications for liability insurance. Complaints can be laid by individuals or by groups (eg local church council).

5.5 CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION

[\[index\]](#)

There is not a common approach among the Partner Churches to the celebration of communion and this matter must be treated with respect and care.

- 5.5.1 The Congregational Union and Christian Churches allow for members of the local church to administer communion if they are so appointed by the local church.
- 5.5.2 The Presbyterian and Methodist Churches allow for the authorisation of appropriate lay people to celebrate communion – especially where there is difficulty in obtaining ordained ministers.
- 5.5.3 The Anglican Church has affirmed the tradition of Bishops and priests only presiding at communion and in a Cooperative Venture with Anglican participation this must be accounted for.

5.6 OTHER EMPLOYEES

[\[index\]](#)

- 5.6.1 When employing anyone, the local church council must comply with all employment legislation as required. Non-ministry employees may include church secretaries, cleaners, finance, or maintenance workers.
- 5.6.2 Care must be taken to identify any conflict of interests that may arise in terms of employment – such interest should be declared and those involved may step aside from decisions.
- 5.6.3 Any potential liabilities with respect to employees should be referred, as soon as possible, to the administration of the Coordinating Partner.

5.7 VOLUNTEERS

[\[index\]](#)

- 5.7.1 The Local Church Council must also take responsibility for the health and safety of any volunteers working or visiting any church owned property.
- 5.7.2 Care should be taken to ensure that the work load or obligations taken on by volunteers are not too onerous.
- 5.7.3 Volunteers working with children and young people should be of reputable character. Police vetting checks are required for anyone working directly with children and young people. Police vetting checks are a mandatory requirement of all Church Partners, and can be obtained

through the national church offices. This includes, but is not limited to, Sunday School teachers, Youth Groups leaders and assistants, etc.

6. Procedures for Local Shared Ministry

[\[index\]](#)

Local Shared Ministry is an inclusive term that allows for the roles of ministry to be fulfilled by members of the local church. Local Shared Ministry is distinct from Lay Ministry and Lay Ministry Teams, whose provisions are laid out in Section 5. There are a variety of models and this section provides a broad understanding of what may be understood as Local Shared Ministry.

- 6.1 A local church may seek to explore the options of Local Shared Ministry for theological, missional or economic reasons. Such exploration may be led by the Coordinating Partner, but should include the Participating Partner(s) (including any Regional Forum representatives).
- 6.2 When the form of Local Shared Ministry is clarified, it should be approved by the Local Church Partners and a copy sent to the UCANZ office.
- 6.3 An enabler can be Lay or Ordained. A covenant (for ordained ministry) or employment agreement (for lay ministry) will be required where an enabler is paid. Assistance with employment agreements and covenants is available from regional or national church offices.”
- 6.4 An Enabler (or other form of ministry oversight) is appointed by the Coordinating Partner for a defined term, with the approval of the Participating Partner(s). Any review of that position should also include all of the local church partners. The payment of an Enabler is the responsibility of the local church.
- 6.5 The Enabler oversees the approved process of selection, discernment, confirmation, training and authorisation of the Local Shared Ministry team.
- 6.6 It is essential that any ordination of Local Shared Ministry team members be approved by the Local Church Partners and the validity recognised.
- 6.7 Each member of a Local Shared Ministry team must sign a Code of Ethics.
- 6.8 Members of the Local Shared Ministry team are under the discipline of the partner churches – in the first instance the Coordinating Partner takes a lead.
- 6.9 Any complaints of illegal activities should be notified to the Coordinating Partner authorities and to the police.
- 6.10 Complaints about sexual impropriety, financial irregularities, inappropriate behaviour, breaches of church discipline or ethical standards, or failures of ministry, should be notified to the Coordinating Partner authorities. This is especially important if there are possible implications for liability insurance.
- 6.11 The model of Local Shared Ministry should be reviewed by the local church partners every three years – the Coordinating Partner to convene the meeting.

7. Procedures for Dissolution

[\[index\]](#)

It is acknowledged that some partnerships come to an end, and there are times when a Cooperative Venture should be dissolved. There are many reasons why such dissolution may be sought – this is a common process for whatever reason.

- 7.1 Consideration of the dissolution of a Cooperative Venture may come from one of the local church partners or from the local church itself.
- 7.2 Those considering dissolving a Cooperative Venture should make contact as early as possible with the UCANZ office for guidance on procedures.
- 7.3 No move to dissolve a Cooperative Venture can be taken without a confirmed Capital Ratio.
- 7.4 The Coordinating Partner is required to meet with the Participating Partner(s) and the local church council to consider the reasons for the request and to identify the consequences of dissolution as soon as possible.
- 7.5 Should agreement be reached to consider dissolution, a commission will be established to work through the process (see [9.3.4 Guidelines on Dissolution](#)) or identify alternative solutions.
- 7.6 The commission will comprise representatives from the local church partners' regional courts and from the local church. A mutually agreed convenor (preferably from outside the church courts involved) will oversee the process.
- 7.7 If agreement to dissolve the Cooperative Venture is reached the commission will undertake the process of:
 - i. gaining approval from the local church (congregational meeting)
 - ii. confirming the current property schedules
 - iii. defining the distribution of assets
 - iv. liaising with Trustees
 - v. ensuring documentation is signed to dissolve the agreement
 - vi. acknowledging the end of a shared journey
- 7.8 Historical records will be appropriately archived, with all partners notified of the repository. Minute books, pulpit bibles, photos, plaques, chalices, banners and other artifacts that came from one partner should be offered to their original partner for archiving.

8. Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand

8.1 PARTNERSHIP

[\[index\]](#)

- 8.1.1 Like Cooperative Ventures, UCANZ is also a visible sign of partnership. The Partner Churches are
- the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia,
 - Christian Churches New Zealand,
 - the Congregational Union of New Zealand,
 - the Methodist Church of New Zealand/Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa,
 - the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand
- 8.1.2 The work of UCANZ is funded by grants from the five partner churches.

8.2 FORUM

[\[index\]](#)

- 8.2.1 Meets bi-annually, with representation invited from all Cooperating Ventures and Partner Churches.
- 8.2.2 The business meeting of Forum will allow up to two voting representatives from each local church, and up to two voting representatives from each Partner Church. All other people may have observer status and the opportunity to speak.
- 8.2.3 Elects a chairperson(s).
- 8.2.4 Elects up to nine people to be members of Standing Committee.
- 8.2.5 Receives a report on the work of Standing Committee and may approve directions or papers presented by Standing Committee.

8.3 STANDING COMMITTEE

[\[index\]](#)

- 8.3.1 Role of the Standing Committee
- Promotes partnership, ecumenism, and church unity
 - Encourages opportunities for churches to work together
 - Reports annually to the Partner Churches
- 8.3.2 Standing Committee comprises;
- Chairperson(s) elected by the Forum
 - Up to nine members elected by the Forum
 - Up to two representatives from each Partner Church
 - The Executive Officer of UCANZ
- 8.3.3 An elected member may serve no more than six consecutive years. A chairperson may serve no more than four consecutive years.
- 8.3.4 Standing Committee may co-opt up to three members to provide necessary skills.

8.3.5 Standing Committee may appoint sub-committees to undertake specific tasks; including finance, personnel and forum preparation. People from outside the Standing Committee may serve on such sub-committees.

8.4 UCANZ OFFICE

[\[index\]](#)

8.4.1 The Executive Officer and Administration Assistant work to administer those things which can be shared as Cooperative Ventures.

8.4.2 The UCANZ office:

- administers the Partner Support Fund – on behalf of MCNZ, PCANZ, CCNZ and CUNZ
- administers the Cooperative Ventures Removal Scheme
- collects statistics
- keeps a database(s) that records details relevant to the life of Cooperative Ventures.
- Maintains a file of Schedules, Letters of Appointment, Changes of Coordinating Partner, Changes of Ministry,

8.4.3 Through the office, UCANZ provides support, advice, and encouragement to Partner Churches, regional courts, church leaders and Cooperative Ventures in the working out of their partnerships.

8.4.4 The UCANZ office asks Coordinating Partners to convene meetings to discuss a particular local church situation when necessary.

8.5 UCANZ TASKS

[\[index\]](#)

8.5.1 Partner Support Fund

- The Partner Support Fund provides a way for local churches to make a single contribution to the wider work of the Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church, Christian Churches, Congregational Union.
- Diocesan levies for Cooperative Ventures with Anglican partners are not allocated through the Partner Support Fund.
- Regional Court levies are not collected by UCANZ.
- The Partner Support Fund is administered by the UCANZ office, who report to the Partner Churches annually on the performance of the fund (see 9.3.2).

8.5.2 Cooperative Ventures Removal Scheme

- The Cooperative Ventures Removal Scheme allows a collective response to the cost of moving ministers throughout New Zealand.
- Any Cooperative Venture may join the scheme in accordance with the guidelines (see 9.3.1).

8.5.3 Statistics

- The UCANZ office collates statistics for the use of all the Partner Churches.

8.5.4 Records

The historical records of UCANZ and its predecessors (Joint National Committee on Church Extension, National Churches Unity Council, Forum of Cooperative Ventures) will be deposited, when appropriate, in the Archives, Knox College, Dunedin.