

<b>Worship Teams</b>			
<b>Source:</b> Standing Committee on Worship	<b>Authority:</b> Standing Committee on Worship	<b>Original Approval Date:</b> Mar. 2002  <b>Last Review Date:</b> Nov. 2005	<b>Next Review Date:</b> Oct. 2012
<b>Purpose of Policy:</b>  To enhance the congregation's ministry to residents of local nursing homes and retirement residences by recruiting, training and authorizing groups of lay volunteers to lead services of worship in those facilities in accordance with schedules negotiated with the staff of the facilities and these guidelines.			
<b>Theological Rationale:</b>  In its Mission Statement the people of Eastminster United Church affirm their commitment to the worship of God. There are some in the community who are not able to experience worship by attending services in the church building. For many who live in nursing homes and retirement residences, the experience of worship in community is only possible if services are held where they live.  The congregation further affirms that ministry belongs to the whole people of God and that many lay members of the church family are well able to lead worship. Through its Worship Team ministry the congregation empowers lay volunteers to lead services of worship in nursing homes and retirement residences.			

**1.0 Accountability**

- 1.1 This is a ministry of the Church Council of Eastminster United Church in partnership with the management and staff of hosting facilities. Team members are appointed by, and accountable to, the congregation's Standing Committee for Worship. In the performance of these duties, team members are guests of the facilities and required to act within the limits of any regulations or stipulations named by our 'hosts', including admission restrictions and any requirements related to infection control.
- 1.2 The contact person for the facilities is normally the Activity Director.

**2.0 Organization**

- 2.1 The primary responsibility for scheduling, staffing and overseeing the Worship Team ministry belongs to the Worship Team Coordinator who is appointed by the Standing Committee for Worship and accountable to it. The Worship Team Coordinator, in consultation with the Pastor (Worship and Pastoral Care), recruits and trains volunteers for the Worship Teams. He/she receives requests for services from the nursing homes and retirement residences, prepares a year-long schedule of services and distributes it to all stakeholders. The Worship Team Coordinator is the liaison between the Worship Teams and the Standing Committee for Worship and prepares an annual summary of their ministry.
- 2.2 Each Team consists of a Team Leader, one or more pianists and at least three additional volunteers. Musicians are recruited and supported by Eastminster Church's Minister of Music. It is the duty of the Team Leader to make sure sufficient volunteers are available for each scheduled service and that the roles of volunteers are assigned (message, prayer, song-leader, helpers).

- 2.3 Worship Teams are assigned to specific facilities and are responsible for all services in that schedule. If a Team is not able to provide a scheduled service, its Team Leader may arrange a switch with one of the other Teams.
- 2.4 Volunteers are recruited on an annual basis. In November each year, this ministry will be reviewed by the Standing Committee for Worship which will decide whether to continue the program and how it should be modified. Agreements with the facilities for services in the subsequent year will be made on the basis of that review.
- 2.5 Staff support for this ministry is provided by the Pastor (Worship & Pastoral Care) in consultation with the Worship Team Coordinator and Team Leaders.
- 2.6 Training of volunteers for this ministry is provided by the Pastor (Education and Outreach).

### 3.0 Guidelines

#### 3.1 Worship:

- i) Worship Team Leaders will confirm in advance the scheduling of services.
- ii) Services will normally be 20 - 30 minutes in length.
- iii) The Worship Team Leader will identify the Team as members of Eastminster and introduce Team Members by name.
- iv) Emphasis will be on music, using song books provided by the facilities.
- v) Hymns chosen should be those with which seniors are familiar.
- vi) Special music by volunteer performers should be included whenever possible.
- vii) Messages should be brief and clearly stated, but avoid 'talking down' to residents.
- viii) Messages may be written by Team Members or taken from other sources.
- ix) If a sound system is provided, volunteers should use it and make sure it is operating effectively. Speakers should endeavour to be heard. Watch especially for speaking too quickly and allowing voice to drop at end of sentences.
- x) If a voice amplification system would be helpful and is not provided by the facility, Team Leaders may arrange to use the portable system owned by the congregation. Arrangements should be made in advance through the Church Secretary.
- xi) Volunteers should help residents who require assistance to find pages in hymn books. Help should be offered graciously and not forced on residents who prefer to be independent.
- xii) Be prepared for 'speaking out' and other interruptions.

#### 3.2 Demeanour:

- i) Team Members are visiting the 'homes' of residents and should always act accordingly.
- ii) Team Members should relate with residents with an openness to the experience, wisdom, spirituality and other gifts which the residents may have to offer.
- iii) Dress should be appropriate to what would be the expectations of the residents.
- iv) Team Members will wear name tags on which their names are written in large print.
- v) If a resident requests Communion, the Team Leader should advise the Pastor (Worship & Pastoral Care) who will arrange for the sacrament.
- vi) Spend time with all residents; avoid limiting visits to known or Eastminster residents.

- vii) Avoid inappropriate contact (hugging, kissing) that may be initiated by residents.
- viii) Do not try to move a resident without authorization by a staff person.
- ix) Confidentiality is essential: information received from or about residents in the course of this ministry must be treated as a sacred trust.
- x) Many residents experience some degree of dementia: meet them where they are and relate with them on their terms; do not try to correct their misperceptions or overreact to what may be troubling comments.
- xi) If a Team Member is advised of a serious allegation (against staff, fellow residents or family), he/she will advise the Team Leader who will report it to staff. It is not the role of Team Members to determine the validity of such allegations. If the allegations continue and the Team Leader believes that it is not being taken seriously by staff, he/she will report it to the Pastor (Worship & Pastoral Care) who will communicate the concern to the facility's administrative staff.
- xii) If a resident is in distress (toilet, medical, emotional), always refer to staff.
- xiii) If a resident offers a donation to Eastminster Church, Team Members may receive it so long as it is in an envelope, clearly labelled and sealed by the resident.
- xiv) If a resident offers a personal gift to a Team Member, he/she should gently but firmly refuse to accept it. If it is not possible to decline the gift without upsetting or offending the resident, he/she should accept it and immediately hand it to the Team Leader who will give it to a representative of the facility's administrative staff in return for a receipt. The receipt, with written details of the incident, will be given to the Pastor (Worship & Pastoral Care).

### 3.3 Training:

- i) All participants in the Worship Team ministry will participate in the basic training program which will include:
  - the role of Worship Teams, including accountability;
  - the meaning of worship, especially as a function of pastoral care;
  - review of guidelines for Worship Teams, including boundaries, appropriate behaviour;
  - problem-solving for the variety of situations which may arise;
- ii) Training will be provided on an on-going basis and will address concerns and needs identified by team members.

### 3.4 Requirements:

- i) Team members will normally be members or adherents of Eastminster United Church who are known to one or both of the pastors who is able to vouch for him/her. The pastors and/or the Standing Committee for Worship may require candidates to undergo a screening process which may include a police check.
- ii) Team members are authorized for this ministry by the Church Council on the recommendation of the Standing Committee for Worship.
- iii) Team members will be formally recognized and empowered for this ministry by an Act of Covenanting is a public service of worship.