

The Communities of Practice in our Pastoral Excellence Program provide opportunities that meet the following expectations as stated in the Manual on Ministry: “to provide support for the authorized minister, to encourage ministers’ personal and vocational development, and to provide an occasion for reflection and feedback on the practice of ministry.”

There are three necessary dimensions of a community of practice:

- The Focus is ministry
- The community is essential
- Knowledge is practice based

Communities of Practice are about:

- Promoting peer learning to sustain pastors in every season of ministry
- Gathering and sharing the wisdom and the practices of The Marks for faithful and authorized Ministers in the UCC
- Facilitating connections between pastoral excellence efforts for mutual learning
- Convening leaders to engage the pressing challenges and emerging opportunities in the church and the world
- Developing relationships with colleagues
- Spiritual nurture and theological discourse

Issues that may be addressed in Communities of Practice include: The Growth and fulfilment of the Person, The Ministry Setting, The Sense of Call, Covenantal Relationships, Participation in the Wider Church; The Functions of the Ministry; The Ministerial Codes and the Church’s Expectations; and The Ethics of the Person.

Each Community of Practice group gathering includes the opportunity for sharing and reflection on one’s life and ministry setting as well as time for professional development and growth in ministerial skills and understanding.

Participants in Communities of Practice are required to adhere to the covenant agreement each group creates and accepts, and to make a commitment to attend regularly.