Ministry Steward

James Bay United Church • Role Description
DRAFT 10

A Ministry Steward holds a cluster of related ministries with relational care. This isn't a management role — a Steward doesn't run programs, supervise volunteers, or make decisions on the Board's behalf. The work is relational: knowing the ministry leads in your cluster, staying connected to what they're carrying, and making sure their voice reaches the Board when it needs to.

What Ministry Stewards Do

- Check in with each ministry lead in your cluster — a brief, relational conversation, not a formal meeting. Monthly is the default, but the frequency can flex with how active a ministry is and what it needs at the time. Ask what's energizing them, what's getting in the way, and whether there's anything the Board needs to know.
- Take notes. Not for surveillance — for memory and follow-through.
- When a ministry runs into a challenge, listen and help the lead think through possible solutions. Bring it to the Board Chair only when it needs the Board's assistance or authorization — most matters can be worked out within the ministry.
- Carry Board decisions and direction back to your ministry leads — including closing the loop on anything you flagged. If a lead raises a concern and the Board acts on it (allocating some resource, say), that decision needs to reach the lead who raised it.
- If something needs attention sooner, flag it to the Chair ahead of the next Board meeting.
- Submit a brief written update to the Board each quarter — concise, covering what's going well, any challenges, and whether Board assistance is needed. Roughly half a page per ministry in your cluster; a sample report format will be provided.
- Meet bi-monthly with the Board Chair, so Ministry Stewards stay connected and supported. It's the same kind of conversation your ministry leads have with you.

What Ministry Stewards Do Not Do

- Make promises or commitments on the Board's behalf.
- Approve spending or commit resources.
- Supervise, evaluate, or direct ministry leads.
- Manage day-to-day program decisions.
- Solve problems for ministry leads. That's still theirs to work out — with Board support when needed.

How These Meetings Happen

There's no single required format. A Steward chooses whatever fits the people in their cluster, and can combine approaches — one-on-one in one month, a group conversation the next:

- Coffee, one-on-one, with each lead individually.

- A phone call or a quick conversation after church during coffee time.
- A Zoom call or in-person meeting that brings the Steward together with all the cluster's leads at once.

A Steward doesn't have to settle on one approach. The first check-in might be individual coffee chats; the next, a single Zoom call with all the cluster's leads together. What matters isn't the format — it's that check-ins happen regularly, at whatever pace fits each ministry, and that every lead has a real chance to be heard.

The Conversations

Three questions carry most of the work: What's energizing you right now? What's getting in the way? Is there anything you need the Board to know or do? When a ministry lead asks whether the Board will approve something, the honest answer is: "I'll make sure the Board hears it clearly — I can't speak for what they'll decide."

Confidentiality and Urgent Matters

What a ministry lead shares with you stays confidential. Share it only with who needs to know — usually the Chair, sometimes the Board — and only what's needed to move it forward. Leads need to trust a Steward before they'll raise what's actually on their mind, and that trust is the job.

Some matters can't wait for the quarterly report. If something involves safety, personnel, finances, property damage, abuse, or a significant conflict, report it to the Chair immediately — don't hold it for the next update.

Time Commitment

Roughly 4–6 hours per month: check-ins with the ministry and program leads in your cluster, your bi-monthly meeting with the Chair, and a quarterly written summary for each ministry in your cluster. No additional meetings unless a concern needs the Board's attention.

Who This Role Is For

Someone who listens well, keeps confidences, stays organized enough to follow through on commitments, and cares about the health of the whole congregation — not just the ministries they know best. No governance experience required. What's needed is relational attentiveness and a willingness to show up consistently.

Ministry Stewards are approved by the Board and serve a one-year, renewable term.

Ministry Stewards are not Board members. Their work is the connective tissue between the congregation's ministries and programs and the Board's discernment.