

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY Policies

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I. Policy for Addressing Concerns and Conflict

Preamble:

The congregation's ministry is to implement its religious mission in the world with full commitment. Unresolved member concerns and conflicts diminish the potential power of this ministry. In order to maintain the spirit of shared ministry, the following policy has been devised to guide congregants, the Committee on Ministry (CoM) and the Board of Trustees in seeking appropriate resolutions.

Policy and Procedure:

Step 1: In keeping with the principle of personal responsibility among congregants, parties involved in a disagreement should first address their issue directly to the person(s) concerned.

Step 2: If the result of Step 1 feel unsatisfactory to one, both or all parties, OR if the parties involved are unwilling to take Step 1, the issue should be brought to the CoM for consideration and support.

Step 3: It is the CoM's primary role to listen in a neutral, non-judgmental manner, to help the aggrieved person(s) understand and articulate their concern(s) and to encourage direct communication where possible. The CoM may carry out their functions in whatever manner it deems most appropriate. Usually it will designate one or more committee members to listen and to speak with the person(s) raising the issue.

Step 4: If the CoM representatives have not succeeded in encouraging direct communication between the parties involved, it may offer to send a representative or team of representatives to facilitate such a meeting.

Step 5: If satisfaction is still not gained from taking their steps, the issue should be brought to the Executive Team. The Board and Executive Team have their own procedures and policies for handling conflict and the grievance may be referred to that process if appropriate.

Responsibility:

The responsibility for the resolution of member conflicts remains with the individuals involved, although the CoM will, in many cases, offer its services as facilitators.

It is the responsibility of the CoM to seek all possible resolution prior to taking of any steps beyond step 4.

II. Sponsorship of Candidates for Ministry

Preamble:

In order to be considered a Candidate for fellowship in the Unitarian Universalist Association. A ministerial candidate must obtain sponsorship by a Unitarian Universalist congregation. The role of the Committee on Ministry is to review requests confidentially and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees. Sponsorship requires an affirmative vote of the Board.

Procedure:

1. The First Unitarian Church of Oakland will consider requests for sponsorship from members of this congregation only who have been active in the life of the Church for at least two years.
2. Members who seek the congregation's sponsorship of their candidacy for ministry in accordance with the Unitarian Universalist Association's requirements should present a written request to the Committee on Ministry. The request should include:
 - A cover letter with an account of the candidate's involvement with the Church
 - A one-page or less spiritual autobiography
 - A one-page or less statement of why the candidate wants to be a UU minister
 - Four letters of recommendation (two must be from members of the church)
 - The congregational sponsorship forms the UUA to be completed.

3. The candidate will usually be expected to meet with the committee.
4. A decision to sponsor a member of this Church as a candidate for ministry indicates this Church's confidence in the member's potential and suitability for UU ministry and in the member's active commitment to the purposes and principles of Unitarian Universalism and the institutions which uphold them. A decision to sponsor does not imply an obligation to support the member's candidacy financially.

III: Policy on Ministerial Interns

Preamble:

The First Unitarian Church of Oakland is a teaching congregation, in recognition of our commitment and responsibility to grow Unitarian Universalism. Having seminary students in our midst can be good for them and good for us. The role of the Committee on Ministry is to represent the congregation in the internship by establishing the Intern Subcommittee.

Procedure:

1. A review subcommittee will be established by the Committee on Ministry to consider the applications of potential interns. Following interviews with applicants, if feasible, and if the minister agrees, the subcommittee will recommend an applicant for an internship.
2. The Intern Subcommittee operates to support the intern, to monitor the intern's work and give constructive criticism, to organize social events for the intern and to prepare documentation and evaluations.
3. The subcommittee is comprised of at least five members
 - One member from the Committee on Ministry, selected by the Committee
 - Two members from the congregation, chosen by the intern
 - Two members from the congregation, appointed by the CoM and chosen in consultation with the settled minister(s).
4. The subcommittee follows guidelines set forth by the UUA in Ministerial Internships: Information Manual for Students, Supervisors, Intern Committees, Congregations and Institutions.
5. Subcommittee Operations and Responsibilities.

- Become familiar with the intern's qualities and experience. Review and clarify the committee's expectations in relation to the intern's background and strengths as well as his/her stated objectives.
- Orient the intern to the church, its mission and organizational structure, the congregation and the community.
- Provide or assist the intern in finding housing.
- Provide a space with telephone access where the intern can work, study and meet with people.
- Arrange to have the intern's name in staff listings, the newsletter, orders of service and other appropriate places.
- Plan for introducing and welcoming the intern to the congregation, including social events where the intern can become acquainted with church members.
- Meet with the intern early in the internship to clarify expectations and arrive as a mutual understanding of the relationship.
- Review the intern's learning/service agreement.
- Gather information on the intern's performance.
- Provide candid evaluation feedback to the intern in a supportive manner.
- Complete evaluations as required by the UUA Ministerial Education office; a midpoint and final evaluation from the supervisor, intern committee and the intern.
- Have a social event at the end of the internship to acknowledge the intern's accomplishments and service to the congregation.

IV. Policy on Affiliated Community Ministry

Policy:

1. An Affiliated Community Minister of the First Unitarian Church of Oakland (Church) must meet all of the following criteria:
 - A person in ministerial fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association.
 - A member in good standing of the Church.

- Endorsed by the congregation of the Church at the annual congregational meeting (unless a special congregational meeting for this purpose is convened by the Board):
 - a. Upon prior recommendation of the settled minister(s) and the Committee on Ministry, and
 - b. Concurrence by the Board of Trustees at a Board meeting.
2. The duties of the Affiliated Community Minister will be determined in consultation with lay leaders of existing programs related to the affiliated community ministry. The duties of the Affiliated Community Minister are to be agreed upon by the Committee on Ministry, the settled minister(s), and the Affiliated Community Minister, approved by the Board of Trustees and set-out in an Affiliation Covenant. The Affiliation Covenant may specify existing programs with which the Affiliated Community Minister is expected to interact
 3. The Affiliation Covenant is approved by:
 - a. The Committee on Ministry.
 - b. The settled minister(s),
 - c. The Board of Trustees,
 - d. The Executive Team and
 - e. The Affiliated Community Minister
 4. The Affiliated Community Minister is not to be employed by the Church.
 5. Regarding rites of passage within the geographical areas served by the Church, the settled ministers shall be the first point of contact for Church members and non-members. The settled minister(s) may make referrals to the Affiliated Community Minister as appropriate. When the Affiliated Community Minister Officiates for Church members there will be no compensation. However for non-members, he/she may be compensated in accordance with the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA) guidelines.

When the Affiliated Community Minister provides pastoral services to Church members, at the request of or with the consent of the settled ministers, there will be no

compensation. When the Affiliated Community Minister provides services to non-members, upon referral by or with the consent of the settled ministers, she/he may be compensated in accordance with UUMA guidelines.

6. The Affiliated Community Minister shall have access to Church property and facilities as specified in the Affiliation Covenant. The Affiliation Covenant may provide for reimbursement of professional development fees and expenses.

7. The Affiliated Community Minister shall be identified on all staff lists and annual reports to the UUA and other denominational bodies. The Affiliated Community Minister shall be identified in the Church newsletter and orders of service.

8. The Affiliated Community Minister may serve as a Ministerial Delegate from the Church to General Assembly, as specified in the Affiliation Covenant. The Affiliated Community Minister's participation shall not reduce the number of lay or ministerial delegates apportioned to the Church.

9. The Affiliated Community Minister shall be supported by a Community Ministry Support Committee which performs the following functions:

- a. Supports the Affiliated Community Minister's activities by finding ways to involve members of the congregation with the community ministry.
- b. Supports the Affiliated Community Minister's professional development.
- c. Oversees the interaction between the Affiliated Community Minister and existing, related Church programs.
- d. Assists the Committee on Ministry and the settled ministers in evaluating the Affiliated Community Minister.

10. The Affiliated Community Minister shall meet at least twice yearly with the settled ministers, and once yearly with the Committee on Ministry, to review the ministerial

working relationship and how the affiliated community ministry is impacting the life of the Church.

11. The Affiliated Community Minister shall prepare an annual report describing and assessing the affiliated community ministry, to be included in the Church annual report.

12. Upon recommendation of the Committee on Ministry and the settled ministers, with concurrence of the Board of Trustees, the Affiliated Community Minister's relationship with the Church may be terminated with 30 days notice.

13. Changes in this policy shall be approved by the Board of Trustees.

Application Process:

Step 1: The applicant approaches the Church through the Committee on Ministry with a cover letter briefly describing the proposed community ministry, and a resume. The Committee on Ministry makes an initial determination of whether this is a potential match.

Step 2: If the Committee on Ministry elects to proceed, it meets with the applicant to discuss the Church's vision and to hear a detailed outline of the applicant's proposed ministry and terms of affiliation.

Step 3: If the Committee on Ministry elects to proceed, it requests that the applicant submit a Letter Requesting Affiliation, which includes a written, detailed outline of the proposed ministry and terms of affiliation, the applicant's employment agreement with the proposed outside agency and any other pertinent documents related to the outside agency, any appropriate MFC documents, and letters of recommendation supporting the applicant or the proposed community ministry,

Step 4: With the Letter Requesting Affiliation, the Committee on Ministry and the settled minister(s) enlist the relevant Church councils and lay leaders to form an Affiliated Community Ministry Subcommittee that will work with the applicant to develop the community ministry and to draft a proposed Affiliation Covenant.

Step 5: Circulate and gain approval of Affiliation Covenant from applicant, Committee on Ministry and settled minister(s)

Step 6 Present and obtain Board of Trustees approval and congregational endorsement. If approval is not forthcoming within 90 days of Step #5, the process is terminated.

The original Affiliated Community Ministry program was approved by the congregation at its annual meeting on March 25, 2000

V. Endorsed Ministry at First Unitarian Church of Oakland

An endorsed ministry at the First Unitarian Church of Oakland means that the church recognizes the work of a community minister as a ministry for the purposes of meeting the requirements of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC). Clergy serving in community settings may receive an endorsement for their ministry only by recommendation of the Committee on Ministry and a vote of the Board of Trustees.

In keeping with the MFC fellowship rules, an endorsed Community Minister (CM) may set up a support and review committee whose membership must be approved by the Committee on Ministry.

All endorsed ministries must be reviewed and renewed every three years by a vote of the Committee on Ministry and the Board of Trustees. The endorsed CM is required to meet with the Committee on Ministry at least annually to review the ministry. The Committee on Ministry, the Board of Trustees and the endorsed Community Minister have the authority to reconsider the status of the endorsement at anytime.

An endorsed CM may be a member of the congregation and can serve on committees and enjoy all the benefits of membership. However, the CM may not represent the church as a minister of the church in the wider community unless expressly requested by the settled clergy. The CM is not considered a member of the staff and does not receive financial support from the church for their ministry. The CM is expected to follow the professional guidelines of the Unitarian Universalist Minister's Association regarding the role and function of a clergy member in a settled colleague's congregation.

An endorsed ministry at First Unitarian is considered distinct from an Affiliate Ministry. For more information and guidelines for Affiliate status see the policy documents on "Affiliate Ministry" adopted by the Committee on Ministry.

Steps for becoming an endorsed Community Minister:

- Demonstrated meaningful involvement with the congregation.
- Meeting with settled clergy to discuss their support of the endorsement.
- Inform Committee of Ministry (COM) in writing of request.
- Supply COM with detailed description of the ministry.
- Letters of reference and an interview may be requested by the COM.
- If approved by COM, and the settled clergy, the candidate's name will be submitted to the board for a vote.

Adopted 11/8/2005

VI. Ministers' Discretionary Fund

Preamble:

The Ministers' Discretionary Fund at the First Unitarian Church of Oakland, established by Board Resolution in 1996, is restricted in use solely for good works and charitable purposes on behalf on the congregation and the church and is not available for the ministers' personal benefit.

Policy:

1. Funds are collected annually during Christmas Eve services.
2. The ministers of the Church (or in their absence a member of the Committee on Ministry whom the ministers delegate) alone determine how to disburse this fund consistent with its purpose, in accordance with the traditions of ministerial discretion and pastoral confidentiality long held sacred in Unitarian Universalist churches.
3. In accordance with the fund's restricted purpose, the Chair of the Committee on Ministry will review the disbursements from this fund at least once a year with the settled minister(s), respecting always the need for pastoral confidentiality where appropriate. Each expenditure should be documented completely with date, payee and purpose so that it can be determined that each expenditure is in keeping with the spirit of the Discretionary Fund.

VI. Policy on Evaluation

In progress

Revised January, 2007