

2022-2023 Annual Report of the Committee on Ministry (May 1, 2022 – April 30, 2023)

Our Responsibilities and Structure

The Committee on Ministry (COM) strives diligently to nurture, support, and hold accountable the authorized ministers of the Minnesota Conference UCC and those preparing for authorized ministry. The COM is also charged with supporting the member congregations of the Conference and making recommendations to the Conference Board on congregations seeking to join the Conference. COM's work occurs mostly through its three subcommittees: Covenant, Discernment and Preparation for Authorized Ministry (DPAM), and Subcommittee on Authorized Ministry (SAM). The full COM met quarterly last year, twice virtually and twice in person with a virtual option. The COM Executive Committee met virtually most months last year to discuss the ongoing business of the COM and to plan for the full COM meetings.

Our Accomplishments This Year: COM

Last September (2022), the COM met in person for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic (March 2020), which was a moment to celebrate! While our subcommittees continued their assigned tasks, the full COM continued its work of developing a set of best practices for clergy and congregations partnering in Four Way Covenants, received training from the UCC National Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization (MESA) Team on conducting Fitness Reviews, and had the privilege of working with multiple non-UCC congregations who are exploring becoming UCC congregations in the Minnesota Conference. The COM is also in the process of completing a Fitness Review that began in February (2023).

Our Accomplishments this year: Covenant

The Covenant subcommittee continues to facilitate Vocational Support Consultations for authorized ministers in the MN Conference and is thinking creatively about ways to invite others to join us in accomplishing this important ministry that is growing in need each year. Covenant is also charged with providing oversight of the Response Team that provides interviewers and support persons for Situational Support Consultations and Fitness Reviews. This year, Covenant provided support and resources for two congregations seeking affiliation with the UCC and MN Conference.

Our Accomplishments this year: DPAM

DPAM's charge is to assess and support candidates seeking ordination in the UCC as they clarify their calls to ministry; support their professional development during a discernment period. DPAM also works with clergy from other denominations who are seeking Privilege of Call in the UCC. To meet this responsibility, DPAM holds monthly meetings via Zoom to have one-on-one conversation with candidates. During the past year, DPAM met with 14 people for Member In Discernment annual reviews, two people for coming under care as a Member In Discernment, three people for privilege of call,

and one person to review ordination paper and prepare for an ordination panel. In addition, DPAM discussed the UTS MID curriculum, entered into conversation with Leaderwise about ways in which to strengthen their work to be more culturally supportive, and organized meetings with Members In Discernment and their advisors for a Q & A about the Member In Discernment process.

Our Accomplishments this year: SAM

SAM continued its ministry of authorizing and supporting our fifteen licensed ministers, welcoming clergy transferring into the Conference, examining chaplain candidates for Ecclesiastical Endorsement, meeting with candidates for Dual Standing, and processing requests for Exempt Standing from clergy no longer engaged in public ministry. Significant progress was made this year in following the Manual on Ministry's process for oversight and review of the Annual Information Review forms and the two continuing education requirements for all authorized ministers: Power and Boundary training (due every three years) and Anti-Racism and Diversity training (due every two years.)

Gratitude

Finally, the COM recognizes, with much gratitude and thanksgiving, the service of its members who are terming off the committee this year: Jocelyn Bakkemo, Hannah Keuther, Jean Ostrom, and Jeff Palmer.