

A Time To Replenish



I will satisfy the weary, and all who are faint I will replenish. Jeremiah 31:25

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY REPORT ILLINOIS SOUTH CONFERENCE ANNUAL MEETING 2021

The Committee on Ministry acts on behalf of the congregations and members of the Conference. Actions of the ISC COM are also on behalf of the entire United Church of Christ. We are incorporating the new version of the *Manual on Ministry* of the UCC and our COM follows these common guidelines for preparation and oversight of “Authorized Ministry.” Authorized Ministry includes ordained, licensed, and commissioned leaders acting in public ministry on behalf of the United Church of Christ. We aim to strengthen and uphold the covenantal relationships between the local church, authorized ministers, Conferences (and their Associations), and the national United Church of Christ.

The Conference Minister, The Rev. Shana Johnson, works closely with the Committee on Ministry. The Committee has consisted of 13 elected persons. Since March 2020, the Committee has met virtually using Zoom meetings.

Preparation

To assist and equip those “Members in Discernment” in their Preparation for faithful leadership as Authorized Ministers, the COM has established procedures that include:

- the support and guidance of the candidate’s home congregation;
- coordination of educational experiences (whether the traditional Master of Divinity seminary program or alternative paths of preparation, such as the LIFE program);
- the fuller use of the “Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers” provided by the national United Church of Christ;
- mentoring and assessing readiness for Authorized Ministry.

Ordinarily, this process takes at least 2 but not more than 7 years.

Ordination requires theological and pastoral education, an Ordination paper, Clinical Pastoral Education or an equivalent, and ratification through an Ecclesiastical Council with delegates from Illinois South Conference congregations and a call to a congregation or comparable calling body. Ordination provides opportunity to be called to any UCC congregation and often (through varied processes) to partner churches (Disciples of Christ, Reformed Church in America, Presbyterian Church in the USA, United Church of Canada, and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).

After an Ecclesiastical Council, Tarrah Vaupel was ordained at her home church on May 23, 2021, and is serving as Associate Pastor of Friedens UCC, Irvington. Jason Eisele was ordained at Church of the Good Shepherd UCC in Carbondale on September 5th, 2021, and has been called to St. Paul, Pinckneyville.

At present, the Committee has endorsed John Pawloski for Ecclesiastical Council (he is serving as Pastor of St. Peter UCC, Centralia) and is continuing work with fellow Members in Discernment Amy Brooks, Greg Seaman, Bruce Jovaag, Brett Palmer, Josiah Arcola, Monty Jackson, Tim Reed, and Kevin Hirsch. They are at various stages of their discernment and formation. The COM asks for reflection papers for those in the LIFE program considering licensure.

There is ongoing and in-depth discussion about the content of theological and pastoral education both at Eden and other seminaries as well as alternative paths, including the LIFE program.

- The Committee is scheduled to meet with representatives of Eden, including Dr. Jill Baker, who has been providing a comprehensive History and Polity of the UCC course. Other courses are available, including online courses.

- Another significant concern is the usual requirement of a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education for those seeking ordination. Finding affordable programs has led the Committee on Ministry to endorse a program that has been provided by Rev. Dr. Martha Brunell called *Holding Space (Awareness and Compassion with Self and Others in Pastoral Ministry: a CPE Alternative)*.

Balancing the need for pastoral leadership especially in small congregations and maintaining standards is a significant challenge for your ISC Committee on Ministry. Other areas of the UCC and other denominations also struggle with this concern. The COM will be using retreats for MID's in order to assist them in their preparation for Authorized Ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ. Unfortunately, an August 2021 retreat was postponed.

Authorization

In its role of oversight, the Committee on Ministry seeks to support excellence in Authorized Ministry. The Committee on Ministry seeks to strengthen those serving in pastoral or commissioned leadership.

To that end the COM asks for Authorized Ministers to:

- participate in Boundary Training at least every 3 years as provided by the Conference;
- complete an annual Review form from which the Conference Minister and COM do follow up as requested.

COM also encourages them to do Continuing Education. The COM has discussed sponsoring clergy retreats and quarterly educational courses. Self-care of pastors is an ongoing concern for those serving in Authorized Ministry.

The COM provides updated annual Salary Guidelines for congregations and encourages churches to provide for their spiritual leaders in equitable and honorable ways.

Licensed Ministry is a call to serve as Pastor in a specific ministry and licenses are renewed annually at the request of the calling congregation or organization. Current licensed ministers in the Illinois South are Karen Pepmeier (Bethel, Cahokia), Tom Ellison (St. Mark, DuBois), Matt Friz (St. Paul, Floraville), Cory Hartz (St. Peter, Red Bud), Tim Reed (Trinity, Belleville), John Mindrup (Salem, Alhambra), Norma Patterson (Good Shepherd of Faith, East St. Louis), Ken Schafer (Immanuel, Carlyle), Brett Palmer (Friedens, Marissa), John Pawloski (St. Peter, Centralia), Jason Eisele (St. Paul, Pinckneyville, ordained September 5th at Good Shepherd, Carbondale); Julie Kies (St Paul, Okawville; Trinity, Biddleborn; and Holy Ghost, Darmstadt).

The COM addresses the Authorization of individuals from other denominations seeking Privilege of Call and dual membership with a partner denomination while serving a Conference congregation. Dialog with Rev. Bob Morwell, serving St. John, DuQuoin, and Rev. Tim Harrison, serving Friedens, Troy is underway. Both are United Methodist Church ordained pastors.

The COM periodically reviews the Conference pulpit supply list.

When significant concerns are raised about an Authorized Minister and especially their fitness for continued ministry, the COM addresses those concerns with specific procedures. These can include:

- a Situational Support Consultation – to assist in addressing concerns in the relationship of pastor and congregation. At times, such a consultation calls for mediation or other outside assistance;
- a periodic Support Consultation—to assist in a “tune up” of nurture and care for the clergyperson;
- a Fitness Review – to determine whether concerns are serious enough to warrant a program of personal growth, a temporary leave from ministry; or a removal from Authorized Ministry. This is a complex process.

The Committee has accepted the resignation of standing by Rev. Phil Chapman and Rev. Andrew Kramer. Drew Kramer, retired from St. Paul, Belleville, maintains his standing in the Presbyterian Church in the

USA. The Committee terminated the standing of retired pastor Jim Nelson whose whereabouts are unknown. The standing of Rev. Chris Hill now is Retired.

The Committee endorsed Rev. Andy Wilson, St. John, Smithton for Coast Guard Auxiliary chaplaincy.

The Committee has granted the new UCC “Exempt” status (no longer functioning in any pastoral services, and thus not required to do boundary training or provide the annual Information form) to the following retired pastors: William Causer, Loren Windhorst, Russell Miller, Linda Coulson, Robert Utke, Michael Marx.

The COM and Conference Minister have found it helpful to meet with Authorized Ministers transferring their standing into the Illinois South Conference and with Intentional Interim Pastors. COM has met with:

- Rev. Richard McCleary, Godfrey Congregational (NCCC)
- Rev. Todd Bean, Interim, Evangelical UCC, Highland
- Rev. Steven Boorsma, serving St. John, Valmeyer
- Rev. Paula Comper, serving First Christian (DOC) in Centralia
- Rev. Jennifer Sowell-Glover, St John UCC, Collinsville
- Rev. Jeff McCarn, serving St. Paul, Waterloo
- Rev. Philip Barbier, serving St. Jacob and St. John, Summerfield

There have been virtual Boundary Training sessions held. These are required for Authorized Ministers every three years.

The Committee on Ministry represented the United Church of Christ at the following Installations

- Rev. Stephen Stark, Zion, New Baden, January 31, 2021 (virtual)
- Rev. Dana Schindler, Immanuel, Hamel, June 13th, 2021
- Rev. Jeremy Wood, Salem, Alhambra, July 18th, 2021
- Rev. Steven Boorsma, St. John, Valmeyer, August 15th, 2021
- Rev. Tim Harrison (Covenant Service), Friedens, Troy, September 12th, 2021
- Rev. Jennifer Sowell-Glover, St. John, Collinsville, September 19th, 2021
- Rev. Tarrah Vaupel, Friedens, Irvington, scheduled for October 10th, 2021
- Rev. Joan Mier, Concordia, Belleville, scheduled for October 24, 2021.

When Authorized Ministers leave their present call, it has been helpful to have an Exit Interview with the Pastor and some representatives of the congregation. COM representatives often participate in the farewell rites during the final services, which have included

- Rev. Earl Crecelius, St. Paul’s, Freeburg
- Rev. Robert Lee, First Congregational, Dupo
- Rev. Michael Southcombe, Interim, St. Paul, Waterloo
- Rev. Carol Shanks, Bethel, Cahokia
- Rev. Laurie Crelly, St. John’s, Brighton
- Rev. Diane Grohmann, St. Paul, Edwardsville

In keeping with Illinois South Conference Council policy that joining a denomination with which the United Church does not have a formal relationship can lead to termination, Eden Church, Edwardsville no longer has standing in the United Church of Christ. Eden Church joined the Evangelical Association of Reformed and Congregational Christian Churches (the “EA”). The COM also continues to be concerned about non-authorized pastors serving Illinois South Conference congregations.

The Committee on Ministry values your ongoing prayers as we seek to be faithful to God and helpful to the Church in our work together. May the message of Christ be lifted up among us in proclamation and service,

Submitted by Rev. Hugh Fitz, Chair of COM