

Policy and Procedures of the Connecticut Conference United Church of Christ, For the Placement of Senior and Solo Transition Ministers¹

Purpose: The purpose of this document is to provide policy, procedures and understandings regarding the placement of persons seeking to be providers of Senior and Solo Transition Ministry within congregations of the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ; and to describe:

- 1) The roles of Regional Ministers, Associate Conference Minister for Clergy Concerns, and Transition Ministers;
- 2) The procedures to be followed by all parties; and
- 3) The applicable criteria for clergy seeking to be part of the group qualified to provide such specialized ministry within congregations of the Connecticut Conference.

It is hoped that the clarification of these procedures will encourage and nurture trusting and mutually respectful relationships among all parties named.

Roles and Procedures:

- 1) **Regional Ministers:**
The Regional Minister has a central and important role in assisting congregations during the period of transition that takes place while a congregation is in the midst of the Search and Call process. As consultants to congregations in transition, the Regional Ministers:
 - a) Meet with and provide to key leaders of the local church an overview of the Search and Call process when a resignation, termination, retirement, or death of the Settled Pastor has occurred;
 - b) Facilitate discussion among those key leaders to determine the pastoral needs of the congregation and to identify the gifts and skills needed in the person they will select to lead them during their period of transition;
 - c) Provide recommendations regarding the establishment of a Transition Search Committee (in many congregations the

¹ The Parish Life and Leadership Ministry of the United Church of Christ, in recent “Draft Interim Ministry Guidelines for Committees on Ministry,” utilizes the term “Transition Minister” to describe persons previously identified as “Intentional Interim Ministers.” “Transition Minister” is seen as more descriptive of the actual work carried out by “Intentional Interim Pastors” as they guide churches through the unique complexities, challenges and opportunities inherent in a transition time. Transition Ministers see this form of specialized ministry as their vocation and have specialized training and experience to enable them to carry out this work. The word “Transition” is also now in widespread use in church publications and education programs. The Connecticut Conference is using this new terminology to be consistent with the denomination publications. Whenever the term “Transition Minister” is used in this Policy and Procedures Document, it is to be understood as referring to an “Intentional Interim Minister.”

- Board of Deacons serves as the Transition Search Committee);
- d) Provide information regarding the Transition Minister interview process and the terms of call for a Transition Minister;
 - e) Provide the Associate Conference Minister for Clergy Concerns with the pertinent information necessary to list the available position on the web page identifying congregations seeking the services of a Transition Minister;
 - f) Review the list of available Transition Ministers provided by the ACM/Clergy Concerns, carry on exploratory conversations with listed ministers whose skills and abilities are in keeping with the congregation's perceived needs, and respond to any inquiries from Transition Ministers who take the initiative to contact the Regional Minister about a specific situation;
 - g) Facilitate submission of Profiles of all candidates who meet the criteria described in this policy and who express a desire to have their Profile submitted to that particular church;
 - h) Encourage the Transition Search Committee to interview several candidates;
 - i) Serve as a continuing resource to the local church Search Committee throughout their selection process; and participate, as each ministry draws to its conclusion, with congregational leaders, the Transition Minister, and representatives of the appropriate Association's Committee on Ministry in an Exit Interview/Assessment.
- 2) **Associate Conference Minister for Clergy Concerns:** Among the multiple tasks of the office, the Associate Conference Minister for Clergy Concerns serves a coordinating role for Transition Ministry in the Connecticut Conference, including responsibility to:
- a) Maintain complete files on each Transition Minister including all appropriate and necessary forms;
 - b) Verify credentials of Ministers from other UCC Conferences or other denominations seeking to serve in the Connecticut Conference;
 - c) Maintain a list of ministers currently available to provide Transition ministry in a Connecticut Conference congregation; and distribute said list to Regional Ministers as the list changes;
 - d) Receive notice from Regional Ministers when a church is ready to begin the process of finding a person who will fill the church's need for Transition Ministry and who will meet the criteria described in this policy;

- e) **Maintain a web page, accessible only to Transition Ministers, listing (by region) all churches that are seeking a person to provide leadership for their congregation during their time of transition; and**
- f) **Develop--in cooperation with the Conference Committee on Interim Ministry (COIM) and the Regional Ministers--an evaluation process as well as a document to be used as an Exit Interview/ Assessment at the conclusion of each Ministry.**

3) Transition Ministers:

Transition Ministers provide a significant ministry of worship leadership and general pastoral service plus specialized assistance with conflict resolution, healing from painful experiences (including clergy misconduct,) planning and visioning and otherwise preparing a congregation for new pastoral leadership during the period of transition (defined as the interlude between the departure of one settled minister and arrival of the next).

As an authorized minister in covenant with the Connecticut Conference and his/her specific Association, the Transition Minister shall:

- a) **Provide all necessary, signed documents, including a current/up-to-date Transition Profile, to the Associate Conference Minister for Clergy Concerns;**
- b) **Inform the ACM/Clergy Concerns of the date when s/he will become available for a future ministry appointment;**
- c) **Check the web page list of churches seeking leadership for an upcoming period of transition;**
- d) **Initiate contact with the appropriate Regional Minister regarding listings seen on the web page; explore with the RM the characteristics and needs of any situation(s) of interest; and express how her/his skills, abilities, and training may be appropriate to the situation;**
- e) **Follow through by informing the RM of the Minister's decision regarding submission of a Transition Profile to a particular church setting;**
- f) **When offered a position, sign a covenant that the Transition Minister will not be a candidate for the settled position;**
- g) **Maintain regular contact with the Regional Minister while serving in that Ministry setting;**
- h) **Participate, as each Transition Ministry draws to its conclusion, with congregational leaders, the pertinent Regional Minister, and representatives of the appropriate Association's Committee on Ministry in an Exit Interview/Assessment.**

Applicable Criteria: The following criteria apply to clergy desiring to serve as Transition Senior Pastors or Transition Solo Pastors:

- 1) Ordained ministerial standing in an Association or Conference of the United Church of Christ.
- 2) A current Transition Profile on file in the Conference office, United Church Center, Hartford (including recent references).
- 3) Basic Transition Ministry Training through the Interim Ministry Network (office: Baltimore, MD) or its equivalent--or--prior recent full-time Senior or Solo Transition Ministry experience (preferably in at least two different settings).
- 4) Evidence of effort to continue to hone skills and abilities needed in Transition Ministry through formal programs (IMN, Alban Institute, Lombard Mennonite Training Center, Seminary Continuing Education events, or Conference-sponsored programs designed for Transition Pastors.)

NOTE: When there is a shortage of UCC Transition Ministers who meet the criteria described in this policy, or when a church is located in a somewhat isolated geographic area, the Regional Minister and the ACM for Clergy Concerns will have the flexibility to expand the criteria to include candidates with Transition Minister experience in partner denominations and/or experienced UCC local church pastors who are available to serve in that particular setting because of geographic proximity.

These procedures do not apply to Interim Associate Pastor positions where specialized Transition Ministry Training may not be required.

Adopted by Board of Directors 2/8/03