**Affiliated Community Ministry**

**At**

**Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation**

Approved January 10, 2019 by Mission Peak UU board

**Community Ministry**

Community ministry has been around for centuries, whether it has been called community-based ministry, specialized ministry, public ministry, social ministry, ministers-at-large, the larger ministry or another name. From the first days of Unitarian and Universalist history in America there have been forms of ministry taking place outside congregations. Over the years, community ministry has taken a myriad of forms from directing homeless shelters, teaching at Universities, serving as spiritual directors, or working in prisons, hospitals, or religious service agencies such as the UU Urban Ministry. Military chaplains and those ministers employed by the UUA and our Districts serve as community ministers as well.

Community ministers are trained to participate in all the traditional forms of ministry such as worship, preaching, pastoral counseling, religious education, social witness and advocacy, and institutional leadership. Unlike their parish or religious education colleagues, community ministers experience a call to use these skills in different settings, often less visible to the congregation. Many community ministers also require specialized skills, depending on their particular ministerial setting. They often study and achieve professional credentialing in their particular area of ministry.

Since 1991 the Unitarian Universalist Association has formally recognized community ministers as eligible for fellowship with the Association and has required those ministers to be in relationship with a local congregation. Over the years congregations and community ministers have greatly benefited from these relationships, enriching both the broader ministry and social commitment of the local congregation, helping ministerial colleagues connect and collaborate, and satisfying the UUA’s requirements for maintaining fellowship and right relationship with the Association.

Recognizing that many people first become aware of Unitarian Universalism through contact with a community minister, supporting one of these special ministers provides an excellent opportunity for a congregation to help share our faith perspective with the wider world in a focused and inspirational way. In addition, congregations often experience a deepened sense of commitment and connection to social justice work and a broader sense of what ministry can be within and outside the church community through their relationship with a community minister.

This document specifies the form that Affiliated Community Ministry will take within the Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation.

**Establishing a New Affiliation**



1. An affiliated Community Minister at the Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation would be both of the following:

* 1. A. Recommended by the Parish Minister\* of the Congregation.
  2. B. Approved by the Board of Trustees for the Congregation, with the Board’s approval being affirmed by a vote of the congregation at the next congregational meeting.

2. Formalize an Affiliation Agreement approved by the Community Minister and the Board of Trustees of the congregation. The section below clarifies what should be in an agreement.

3. The Community Minister, the Parish Minister\* and the Board of the Congregation will establish a 3-way covenant which is consistent with the Affiliation Agreement.

**Affiliation Agreement for Community Ministers**

The Affiliation Agreement between a community minister and the Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation will include sections on the following topics:

1. **The role of the community minister within the congregation** – The community minister has their primary employment outside of the church and is not on the staff of the congregation. If sought out for ministerial services like pastoral care for congregants, the community minister will refer individuals to the parish minister.\* Ministerial services will only be provided with the parish minister’s\* knowledge and agreement.

2. **Gratis services provided by the community minister** – In exchange for affiliation, some services will be provided by the community minister without remuneration. The congregation must remember, however, that the minister’s primary employment is elsewhere and sometimes under-compensated and/or consisting of several part-time positions. Uncompensated services should be kept at a minimum and expectations clearly articulated in the agreement. It is not unreasonable to expect the community minister to preach once annually with no honorarium, provide at least one newsletter article annually, report to the board at least once annually (or more frequently based on each community minister’s circumstances), and/or teach one adult religious education workshop. Gratis services should be related to our congregation’s needs and the skills of the community minister with the goal of connecting the congregation with the community minister and their work outside the congregation.

3. **Fee schedule for other services provided** - Services beyond what was has been agreed upon should be compensated. For example, if the minister preaches more than once a year, then the standard honorarium for a guest preacher is in order. If the community minister provides summer or sabbatical coverage for the parish minister, there should be compensation. If the community minister leads a special training for pastoral associates, the community minister should be paid. If possible, the Affiliation Agreement should include a list of services for which the community minister will be compensated and the rate of compensation. A sentence stating that compensation for services not anticipated when the agreement is written will be negotiated prior to those services being provided.

4. **Relationships with parish minister\* and staff** – The agreement will describe the community minister’s relationship with the other minister(s) and staff of the congregation. For example, the agreement may include a statement that the community minister is not in a supervisory relationship with any of the staff at the church and is or is not eligible for office support. The community minister and the parish minister(s) should maintain a collegial relationship following the guidelines of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA). In case of conflict with any church staff, issues should be taken to the Committee on Ministry and parish minister\*. In case of conflict between the community minister and parish minister(s), assistance should be sought from a UUMA Good Offices person or the UUA’s regional staff. If the community minister is not a member of the UUMA, they should agree to abide by the UUMA guidelines for collegial relationships.

5. **Support provided by the congregation** – The agreement should list the non-monetary benefits the church will provide the community minister. These may include use of an office in the church, receiving mail at the church, identification on church letterhead, having the opportunity to officiate at rights-of-passage ceremonies for persons who are not members of the congregation, having a presence on the congregational website, having a congregational email address, etc.

6. **Expectation of church members with the community minister’s agency** – One of the goals of having an affiliated community ministry is the opportunity for church members to engage in a ministry beyond the walls of their own congregation. This is more or less feasible, depending upon the specific community ministry. Where there is the opportunity and expectation of engagement by the congregation in the community ministry, this should be articulated in the agreement.

7. **Recognition of the community minister’s work as ministry** – For ministers in preliminary fellowship, the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) expects congregations who are affiliating with a community minister to recognize the work the minister is engaged in as a ministry. In most cases it will be easy to determine that the community minister is performing ministry. When uncertain, the congregation can look to the MFC rules and policies or contact the Ministerial Development Director at the UUA for guidance. It is the MFC’s responsibility to make the final determination as to whether or not a minister’s work is eligible for renewal of fellowship.

8. **Regular review and renewal of the affiliation agreement** – Affiliation agreements should be revisited in times of transition where a parish minister has changed, or where a community minister’s job has changed to make sure the terms are still beneficial for all involved.

9. **Participation Congregational Activities.** The community minister is encouraged to develop authentic relationships with members and friends of MPUUC and to participate in the life of MPUUC as they are able and feel called, and that are not in conflict with the 3-way covenant. The community minister may join the congregation as a member, although they need not do so. If a member, they can participate in any congregational activity or committee like any other member of the congregation, while maintaining their identity as minister at all times.

**Providing a Committee on Ministry**

# When requested by a community minister in preliminary fellowship, the congregation will provide a Committee on Ministry (COM) as a means of accountability to the MFC before they will receive Final Fellowship. The duties of the COM for the purposes of preliminary fellowship of a community minister are spelled out in *A Guide to Affiliation for UU Congregations and Parish Ministers*, published by the Society for Community Ministry and available on line at: <https://uuscm.org/GuideToAffiliationForCongregations>

**Ministerial Transitions and Community Ministers**

The congregation should help potential candidates for the parish ministry know of the community minister(s) and the ministry served in the community through the search process, beginning with the search packet. Include a section on the community ministry and its role within the congregation, and have the community minister(s) write a personal introduction. When a candidate is selected and candidating week is underway, the community minister(s) and the candidate need time together to discuss their future relationship. Once a new parish minister is in place (whether developmental, interim or settled), a new covenant needs to be created.

In case of conflict between a community minister and the new parish minister, assistance should be sought from a UUMA Good Offices person or the UUA’s regional staff. If it is impossible to maintain the affiliation agreement, the decision to end a community ministry will be made jointly between the parish minister and the board of trustees. If the community ministry needs to end, ample notice should be given to the community minister.

At the approval of this policy, this congregation has one parish minister. Throughout this document where parish minister is mentioned with an asterisk ( \* ), it is assumed that there is one paid minister with executive functions. If a time comes that there is no paid minister with executive functions (such as a contract preacher), and where no such person is anticipated for at least 6 months, the Board may fulfill the role(s) reserved for the parish minister. If two or more parish ministers are on staff then the working agreement(s) between them will determine who fulfills the parish minister requirement in this policy, or if it requires updating.

If the community minister’s employment is terminated or the minister relocates, it may be appropriate for the congregation and community minister to terminate their affiliation agreement. The congregation and parish minister(s) can be helpful by offering letters of recommendation and assistance in securing future professional work and affiliation with another congregation.

**Three-Way Covenant and Collegial Relationships**

The community minister, senior minister and the congregation will create a three-way covenant establishing the appropriate collegial and organizational relationships among them. This covenant will be a written document outlining expectations, roles, responsibilities and the proper process for dealing with conflict. The covenant will be a separate document from the Affiliation Agreement, but will be consistent with its terms.

Covenants will vary depending upon the relationship between the community minister and parish minister(s), the community minister’s previous relationship with the congregation, and the parameters of the community ministry. For example, a community minister who lives and works far from the congregation will have a very different relationship with the parish minister(s) than one who has an office in the church and offers paid services (i.e. counseling or spiritual direction) to members of the congregation. A covenant clarifies each minister’s role within the congregation, describes the ministers’ collegial expectations, holds the community minister accountable to the parish minister’s vision for the congregation, and specifies the congregation’s expectations and responsibilities as they pertain to these roles.

\_\_\_Paul K. Davis\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_January 10 2019\_\_\_\_

President of the MPUUC Board of Trustees Date Adopted