



DEPARTURE AND SEARCH AND CALL PROCESS FOR PASTORS

The search and call process within the United Church of Christ was designed with a number of commitments in mind. Some include:

A commitment to an open search process:

- All ordained ministers are asked to complete a Ministerial Profile, a 20-page document that functions as a resume, on the national UCC profile site.
- Once completed in draft form, the Ministerial Profile is approved by the Association General Minister. Following AGM's approval, the minister authorizes its circulation.
- Any appropriately authorized person can have their profile submitted to any United Church of Christ calling body.
- Full disclosure of all relevant information by all parties is expected.

A commitment to equal access for, and parity among, all ministers:

- The Association circulates only the official UCC Ministerial Profile, neither advantaging nor disadvantaging persons.

A commitment to the minister being proactive on their own behalf in the search process:

- In the United Church of Christ, we do not appoint or place authorized ministers in positions. It is the Local Church that calls the person of its choice. Authorized ministers themselves are responsible for contacting the search and call staff person in the Association to pursue positions in which they are interested. The positions are listed online and accessible to all. Once the request for submission of a ministerial profile for a particular position is made to the Association, staff are ethically obliged to honor the request.
- Ministers are encouraged to have their profiles sent to specific Conferences or Associations through the Geographic Availability section of their Snapshot, to follow up with each Conference to express interest in particular openings, and to request that their Ministerial Profile be submitted to particular ministry locations.
- Once the request for submission is made to the Association, the request is honored.
- Ministers seeking positions may NOT contact the searching church directly.

Although particular aspects of the Search and Call process may vary among Associations and Conferences, there are clear norms which are honored and practiced throughout the United Church of Christ, including the Living Water Association. Some of these include:

- Authorized Ministers seeking to complete a Ministerial Profile do so online [with this link](#).
- Authorized Ministers who will use the Ministerial Profile site for the first time need to have an account created. Contact the Search and Call Secretary in our Association Office: searchandcall@livingwaterone.org
- Persons seeking new opportunities for service learn of openings primarily through the [Ministerial Opportunities webpage](#).

- Persons interested in particular positions request of the Association's Search and Call staff to send their ministerial profile to a church of their choice: searchandcall@livingwaterone.org.
- The UCC National Profiles Office only circulates completed Ministerial Profiles.
- The Living Water Association circulates only the Ministerial Profiles we receive through the national UCC Profiles Office.

Search and Call practices particular to the Living Water Association include:

- Local churches seeking pastors are listed on the [UCC Ministerial Opportunities site](#).
- Local church profiles will be available on the same site, on the local church's page.
- When a Ministerial Profile is received, the Association's office acknowledges receipt, invites the candidate to explore the open searches in our Association and requests that candidates contact us when they find a position they'd like to pursue.
- Search and Call staff will not send a candidate profile to a search committee without the person's request or their consent to have their profile sent to a particular church.
- According to ethical guidelines, ministers seeking positions MAY NOT contact the search committees or churches directly. The search committee initiates contact.

The Search and Call process is one of spiritual discernment for the minister and the church. We trust that the Holy Spirit will guide the discernment and bless the call.

BEST PRACTICES FOR RESIGNATION

When you are ready to resign from your position in the Congregation you are serving, please:

1. Speak to the Association General Minister. Before you announce your departure to the Church Council or to the congregation you are serving, please let the Association General Minister know of your intent. The AGM will discuss the appropriate and best ways forward with you.
2. Do not resign orally, but in writing. Write a letter of resignation to the whole congregation, not just to the governing body. It is the congregation who called you by its vote, hence it is courteous to resign to them. This practice lessens confusion, hurt feelings, and gossip, since all people hear of your resignation on the same day.
3. Mail or email the letter of resignation to the congregation so that the whole congregation will hear of your resignation at the same time. As soon as you have mailed your letter, inform the moderator/president, who will in turn share the information with the governing body.
4. Encourage the Moderator/President to get in touch with the Association's General Minister, who will then meet with the governing body to talk about next steps. This meeting curtails anxiety as the body learns about the next steps.
5. Ethical guidelines for departure can be found on the Association website [with this link](#).

A CONCISE LIST OF IMPORTANT THINGS TO LEAVE BEHIND FOR THE NEXT PASTOR

- **Keys, passwords, and codes** – including office computers, websites and social media, voicemail, building alarm systems, and resource accounts, church membership software, etc.
- **Church Building:** Who has access to the building? Who has keys, or individuals designated to open and lock the building, etc.
- **Pastoral care list:** A list of those who are homebound
- **Employee Performance Evaluations:** Where are employee performance evaluation documents kept? Who has access to them? How does the process work?
- **Church Policies:** Is there a policy handbook, including policies for weddings and memorial services, safe church, financial, human resources, etc.
- **Church building use agreements, including fees:** Are there any, and what wider community groups use the building?
- **Financial accounts:** Who has access to financial accounts?
- **Resources for wider community needs:** What trusted community resources does the church use for referrals for people in crisis, e.g., psychiatric care, addiction/recovery, domestic violence, pregnancy counseling?
- **What local ecumenical or interfaith groups** does the church's pastor typically attend, and what is their expected involvement?
- **Does the church have anyone currently involved in discerning a call to ministry?** What commitments has the congregation made to the Members in Discernment?
- **Important documents** such as member directory, building floorplan, church calendar, recent newsletters, annual reports, recent bulletins, contact info of leadership persons, etc.

Parts of this document are adapted from the Southern New England Conference, UCC, 2020