

Introduction to the Search and Call Process within the United Church of Christ

The mutual call by God of an ordained minister and local church is a foundational relationship on which ministry is built in the United Church of Christ. 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.** This commitment is lived out in the assurance that any person can have access to the materials within her or his own Ministerial Profile, that any appropriately authorized person can have her or his profile submitted to any United Church of Christ calling body, and that full disclosure of all relevant information by all parties is encouraged.
- **A commitment to equal access for, and parity among, all Authorized Ministers.** Toward this end, we circulate only the official profile form, neither advantaging nor disadvantaging persons due to disproportionate access to sophisticated videography, expensive print materials, etc. Authorized Ministers of Full Communion Partner denominations eligible for Ministerial Standing in the United Church of Christ may circulate the official profile form of their denomination or of the United Church of Christ, depending on their denomination and Standing.
- **A commitment to the Authorized Minister being proactive on his or her own behalf in the search process.** Unlike some other church bodies, the United Church of Christ does not appoint persons to positions. Rather, the person herself or himself is responsible for contacting the appropriate placement staff person(s) to pursue positions in which he or she is interested. Authorized Ministers control the availability of their profiles to specific Conference placement officers, follow up with each placement officer to express interest in particular openings, and to request that their Ministerial Profile be submitted to particular ministry locations.
- **A commitment to balance the respective interests and concerns of the various parties within a search and call process.** Usually this commitment involves balancing the concerns of those seeking positions with those calling bodies looking for candidates. An example may be the length of the Ministerial Profile. Clearly persons completing a Ministerial Profile may find the length somewhat daunting. On the other hand, search committee members wish to have as much information as possible before making decisions about interviews. The current practices seek to balance these and other contrasting interests.
- **A commitment to responsive service to Authorized Ministers, calling bodies, and Conference/Association placement personnel.** Considering a new setting for ministry is both an exciting and stressful time. The Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization (MESA) Team together with Conferences and Associations is committed to

doing whatever the Team reasonably can to facilitate your search process, within available resources.

Although particular aspects of the search and call process may vary among conferences, there are clear norms which are honored and practiced throughout the United Church of Christ. Some of these include:

- Persons seeking new opportunities learn of openings primarily through United Church Employment Opportunities.
- Persons interested in a particular position forward their profile to the appropriate Conference staff person(s) through the Profiles Portal.
- Only complete and validated Ministerial Profiles are circulated.
- Inaccurate or incomplete information is not knowingly circulated.
- Conferences and Associations circulate only validated profiles they receive through the Profiles Portal.

(This resource is adapted from the Search & Call webpage of the Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ. Updated July 2016.)