

- 1) Covenant of affiliation between the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Washington County and The Reverend Sue Ayer, UU Community Minister
- 2) Letter to the board to approve Policy and Covenant of Affiliation as Community Minister
- 3) Policy on Affiliation

## **Covenant of Affiliation**

**between**

**Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Washington County**

**and**

**The Reverend Sue Ayer, UU Community Minister**

1. The primary arena of the Rev. Sue Ayer's Community Ministry will be in conducting rites of passage for people who are not members of any church but who desire a pastoral presence to assist them in times of crisis and with their rites of passage. It is understood that Rev. Sue's ministry is an extension of our congregation's outreach to make known the principles and values of Unitarian Universalism in the larger community.
2. Rev. Sue will keep the congregation informed about the activities of her ministry via the Annual Report to the congregation, occasional newsletter articles, and other means as requested. Rev. Sue will represent her affiliation with the congregation in the course of her Community Ministry activities.
3. Within the congregation, Rev. Sue will seek to be available to assist the Parish Minister with rites of passage, especially for non-members, and for any pastoral care, teaching and preaching responsibilities delegated to her by the Parish Minister.
4. Referrals between the Parish Minister and Community Minister shall be carefully handled so that each person's ministry is affirmed. A separate covenant between the two ministers has been established to ensure this understanding. Consistent with the UUMA's *Code of Professional Practice and Guidelines for the Conduct of Ministry*, Rev. Sue Ayer shall defer accepting from members and friends of the church any invitation for her services properly associated with Rev. Christine's ministry in this congregation.

5. No compensation will be offered nor is it implied in this Covenant. Rev. Sue may use the church facilities without charge for meetings or consultations when space is available, and she may have reasonable use of church supplies and equipment for activities related to her Community Ministry.

6. Rev. Sue shall maintain active, pledging membership in the congregation. She may participate in a range of activities and volunteer in areas appropriate to her identity as a minister. She will not serve in any elected position in the congregation.

7. With the concurrence of the Parish Minister, Rev. Sue will assume these volunteer responsibilities in certain areas of congregational life, as follows:

- Serve as member of Pastoral Care Team: attend monthly meetings; assist in tracking and visiting homebound and hospitalized members, especially the elderly; attend 55 & Better monthly luncheons as pastoral liaison; participate in Pastoral Care Team events.
- Serve as member of Membership Team: welcome and greet newcomers; present UU history segment of new members class; assist in tracking and assimilation of members; participate in Membership Team events.
- Attend meetings of the Council of Committees.
- Preach one sermon per year without compensation. For further preaching dates and leading adult classes, Rev. Sue will be compensated at UUMA rates.
- Serve as chaplain at UU Family Camp sponsored by this congregation

8. Rev. Sue will maintain active membership and participation in the UU Ministers Association and UU Society for Community Ministry, and she may participate in UUA activities and groups at national, district and local levels. She may serve as Community Ministry delegate from this congregation at the UUA General Assembly by virtue of this Covenant of Affiliation, per the UUA Bylaws.

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UUCWC Board of Trustees President      The Reverend Sue Ayer

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Date

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Date

January 23, 2009

TO: UUCCWC Board of Trustees

FROM: The Rev. Sue Ayer

Action Requested: Approve Policy and Covenant of Affiliation as Community Minister

Dear Board Members,

Through a decade of growing connection with this church, my relationship with its members and leaders has evolved and developed into something very special and richly rewarding to many of us. I really treasure this warm relationship with you, and it's one of the reasons why I chose this church as the place to hold my membership and be a fully participating member.

However, as a semi-retired minister who still maintains an active community ministry beyond our church, I think it's appropriate and timely that we clarify and formalize our roles in this relationship.

Because I am a minister, bound by the UUMA Professional Code and Guidelines, my role here at UUCCWC must first of all be a collegial one with its parish minister. To that end, Rev. Christine and I have created a Covenant of Relationship.

Now I would like to propose adopting a similar Covenant of my relationship with the congregation as well. I am therefore asking you, the Board of Trustees, to formalize our relationship by officially approving a Covenant of Affiliation with me as your Community Minister.

This Covenant of Affiliation would be a formal acknowledgment of the mutual affection and warm relationship that has developed between us and which enriches all of us. It would also be a recognition of my continuing ministry of bringing UU principles and values to the larger community of our state and region.

UU community ministers are expected to be affiliated with a UU congregation. They are not usually compensated as staff members, but they have some mutual obligations and privileges that are spelled out in their covenant with the church leadership.

My community ministry consists primarily of conducting rites of passage for families with no church connection who seek a spiritual presence to lead their funerals, memorials, and burials, their weddings and commitment ceremonies, their child dedications and baby blessings. I conduct ceremonies throughout the Portland metro area and beyond it, in outdoor settings and sometimes, in our churches, on referrals from our parish ministers.

In addition to rites of passage, I am available to our area congregations for pulpit supply or temporary assistance with pastoral care or other responsibilities. I assist with advising and mentoring seminary students and new ministers, and I take part in interfaith activities whenever possible, serving as a spokesperson for our UU faith.

Attached are drafts of two documents relating to my request for affiliation. They are based on current best practices in UU congregations with affiliated community ministers, and they have been prepared in close consultation with our Parish Minister, the Reverend Christine Riley. The documents are:

- A. Policy on Affiliation of a Community Minister with the UUCCWC
- B. Covenant between the UUCCWC and the Reverend Sue Ayer, Community Minister

I hope the Board will be able to act on this request at your February 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, so that Rev. Christine and I can acknowledge it in the February 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday service, which is a celebration of Community Ministry.

Thank you for your consideration of my request for affiliation. I plan to be present for your discussion on Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> to answer any questions you may have.

In our UU faith,

Rev. Sue Ayer

Attachments: Affiliation Policy.doc  
Affiliation Covenant.doc

**POLICY ON AFFILIATION of COMMUNITY MINISTER with the  
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST COMMUNITY CHURCH OF WASHINGTON COUNTY  
Approved by Board of Trustees, February 4, 2009**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Specialized ministries that take place in the larger community beyond any one church have long been part of UU tradition. Only within the past two decades have these UU clergy been given official status and the title of Community Minister. Their work is done in a wide range of settings. Chaplains, for example, may serve in hospitals, prisons, rehab centers, colleges, law enforcement, or the military. Other community ministers serve as educators or camp directors, or in social service, interfaith and justice agencies. Some serve as pastoral counselors, therapists and spiritual directors; others serve as UUA or district staff, or in other community settings.

Through these varied ministries, hundreds of credentialed community ministers in our movement are uniquely suited to bring the message of Unitarian Universalism into the larger world. They bring compassion, the hope and work for justice, as well as the search for truth and peace from the walls of their home churches outward. They bring creativity to their work, grounded in our unique UU religious perspective, open to embracing the worth and dignity of all.

Most UU community ministers go through the same ministry training and rigorous fellowshiping process that is required for parish ministers. Certain ministries, such as chaplaincy, require further training as well. The Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA requires all new community ministers to have a formal affiliation agreement with a local congregation. (Although fully fellowshiped ministers are not bound by this specific rule, some type of affiliated status is considered an ethical responsibility of all UU ministers.)

The following process for Affiliation of a Community Minister has close parallels with current agreements that exist between UU Community Ministers and many other UU congregations. Such agreements, sometimes known as “endorsement,” include a pledge of continuing relationship, mutual benefit and support, and an affirmation that the community minister’s work is indeed recognized as a ministry.

## **2. BASIC ELEMENTS OF AFFILIATION**

- 2.1 An Affiliated Community Minister at the UUCCWC will be:
  - a. Approved by the Parish Minister of the Congregation
  - b. Approved by the Board of Trustees of the Congregation
  - c. Affirmed in a worship service with the Congregation
  
- 2.2 The following Terms of Understanding are to be approved by:
  - a. The Parish Minister

- b. The Affiliated Community Minister
- c. The Board of Trustees of the Congregation

### **3. TERMS OF UNDERSTANDING**

3.1. The Parish Minister and the Community Minister shall agree upon the duties of the Affiliated Community Minister. The Parish Minister clearly has overall responsibility for ministerial leadership within the church, and, thus, appropriately shall take the lead in seeking clear delineation of responsibility, accountability, and channels of communication in negotiating responsibilities, roles, and relationships. As stated in the *UUMA Code of Professional Practice*, the Community Minister “...will in all ways honor the priority of the [Parish Minister’s] call to the ministry of that congregation, and will avoid influence which other members may tend to yield...” At the same time the Parish Minister shall earnestly seek to respect the calling, strengths, and sensibilities of the Community Minister, taking care to work collaboratively in a spirit of mutual cooperation and consultation.

3.2. Referrals for rites of passage or pastoral care are to be handled in such a manner as the Parish Minister and Community Minister shall agree.

3.3. The Affiliated Community Minister is neither employed by, nor paid by, the church on any continuing basis. When church members receive pastoral services from the Community Minister, there shall be no charge. When the Community Minister officiates at a wedding, funeral or memorial service or provides other ministerial services at the church, he/she will be paid the UUMA-recommended honorarium by the individuals involved, whether they are members or non-members. If the Affiliated Community Minister is asked to take the Parish Minister’s place in a prolonged absence or sabbatical, the Community Minister shall be compensated at a mutually agreed-upon rate by UCCWC.

3.4. The Affiliated Community Minister shall have access to the congregational facilities, photocopier, telephone etc., consistent with standing policies for facilities use, in order to conduct activities connected with service to the congregation and ministry with the wider community. There should be no significant financial impact for such use of church facilities or equipment. Any additional expense must be negotiated and approved in advance.

3.5. Reimbursement for expenses for congregation-related business will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

3.6. The Affiliated Community Minister shall be identified as such on all staff lists, in annual reports to the UUA and PNW District, on the church website, member directory, Order of Service, etc. The Affiliated Community Minister may serve as a Ministerial Delegate from the congregation to the UUA General Assembly, without reducing the number of lay or Ministerial delegates apportioned to the congregation.

3.7. The Affiliated Community Minister may be authorized by the Board of Trustees, subject to approval by the Parish Minister, to sign checks for expenditures from the Ministerial Discretionary Fund account.

3.8. The Affiliated Community Minister shall meet with the Parish Minister at least twice yearly to review their relationship with one another and with the congregation. Responsibility for initiating these meetings shall rest with the Community Minister.

3.9. The Affiliated Community Minister shall write an annual report of his/her activities, which shall be included in the Congregation's Annual Report.

3.10. The UUMA *Code of Professional Practice* shall be carefully observed by both the Parish Minister and the Affiliated Community Minister. If difficulties arise, they may be resolved through meeting with the Good Offices of the UUMA. The Affiliation of the Community Minister may be terminated by her own resignation with 30 days notice, or by recommendation of the Parish Minister and with the concurrence of the Board of Trustees, upon 30 days notice. Should the Parish Minister resign, the Community Minister shall seek to establish a harmonious working relationship and a Covenant with the new Minister.

3.11 Changes in this policy may be made by agreement between the Community Minister and Parish Minister. Such changes shall be effective 60 days after written notice of the change is given to the Board of Trustees, unless the Board votes to delay or reject the change.

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UUCCWC Board of Trustees President

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The Reverend Sue Ayer

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Date

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Date