

The Community Minister Covenants
between
The Rev. Barbara Meyers*¹
&
Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation
February 2005

- (1) Mission Peak UU Congregation Policy on Endorsed Community Ministry
- (2) Covenant between Mission Peak UU Congregation and The Rev. Barbara Meyers
- (3) Covenant between Mission Peak UU Congregation's Parish Minister, The Rev. Dr. Chris Schriner, and its Community Minister, The Rev. Barbara Meyers

(1) Endorsed Community Ministry
at
Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Introduction

Currently, within the Unitarian Universalist Association, there are three different ministerial tracks: Parish Ministry, Ministry of Religious Education and Community Ministry. While the first two tracks are well known, the third may not be. "Community Ministers" are persons qualified to perform ministries of counseling, chaplaincy, social justice, education in religious studies, or other such ministries as the UUA's Ministerial Fellowship Committee may recognize.

Although Parish Ministers and Ministers of Religious Education are clearly tied in structured institutional ways to congregational life, community ministers commonly are not. To address this concern, the UUA Department of Ministry and the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, together with the UU Ministers Association and other interested groups and councils, are currently examining ways of strengthening the institutional ties and accountability between Community Ministers and various Unitarian Universalist institutions—especially UU churches. Rule 18 of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee requires that a community minister "maintain ties and receive endorsement by one or more of the following: A UUA member congregation, authorized District body, UUA Associate Member organization, or the UUA. Endorsement includes a pledge of

¹ * Ordained by Mission Peak UU Congregation on March 13, 2005

continuing relationship and support and affirmation that the work is recognized by the endorsing body as ministry.”

The following proposal, which has close parallels with the agreement at University Unitarian Church in Seattle, the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco, and the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee seeks to provide one way of more closely linking UU Community Ministers to the Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation, for the mutual benefit of both the church and the Community Ministers.

In putting forth this proposal, as a matter of policy, it is necessary to first describe how a UU Community Minister might formally become endorsed by our congregation, i.e., without reference to any specific Community Minister.

I. Basics of Endorsement

1. An Endorsed Community Minister at the Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation would be all of the following:
 - A. Recommended by the Minister of the Congregation
 - B. Recommended by the Board of Trustees for the Congregation
 - C. Endorsed by a vote of the congregation at a congregational meeting;
2. The following Terms of Understanding are to be approved by:
 - A. The Parish Minister.
 - B. The Endorsed Community Minister.
 - C. The Board of Trustees of the church.

II. Terms of Understanding

1. The duties of the Endorsed Community Minister shall be agreed upon by the Parish Minister and the Community Minister. The Parish Minister clearly has overall responsibility for ministerial leadership within the church and, thus, appropriately shall take the lead in seeking clearer delineation of responsibility, accountability, and channels of communication as responsibilities, roles, and relations are negotiated and, as needed, renegotiated. As stated in the UUMA’s Code of Professional Practice, the Endorsed Community Minister “...will in all ways honor the priority of the [Parish Minister(s)] call to the ministry of that congregation, and...will carefully shun inappropriate influence which other members may tend to yield.” At the same time the Parish Ministers shall earnestly seek to respect the calling, strengths, and sensibilities of the Endorsed Community Minister, taking care to work collaboratively in a spirit of mutual cooperation and consultation.
2. Referrals to the Endorsed Community Minister shall be in such a manner as the Parish Minister and Endorsed Community Minister shall agree.

3. Endorsed Community Ministers are neither employed by, nor paid by, the church on any continuing basis. When Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation members receive pastoral services from the Endorsed Community Minister, there shall be no charge. When the Endorsed Community Minister officiates at a wedding, funeral or memorial service, or provides other ministerial services at the church, he or she will be paid by the individuals involved at UUMA recommended rates. This is true for services rendered to members as well as non-members of the Congregation. And, when the Endorsed Community Minister preaches at the Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation, standard UUMA preaching fees will be charged, unless specifically waived by the Endorsed Community Minister. If the Endorsed Community Minister is asked to take the ministers place in a prolonged absence or sabbatical, the Endorsed Community Minister shall be paid at a mutually agreed to rate.
4. The Endorsed Community Minister shall have access to the congregational facilities, consistent with already agreed-to terms with the landlord, photocopier, telephone, etc. conduct activities connected with my ministry to the congregation, and the wider UU community. There should not be any significant financial impact for the use of the church office or equipment beyond what is currently budgeted. If there is, the cost will be covered by special contributions or grants, and will be made explicit as part of the annual budget plan
5. The Endorsed Community Minister shall be identified as such on all staff lists and annual reports to the UUA and other regional institutions, on the Order of Service covers, etc., as space permits. The Endorsed Community Minister may serve as a Ministerial Delegate from our Society at the annual UUA General Assembly. This does not reduce the number of lay or Ministerial Delegates apportioned to our Congregation.
6. The Endorsed Community Minister shall meet with the Parish Minister at least four times a year in order to review their relationship with one another, and within the life of the congregation. Responsibility for initiating these meetings shall rest with the Endorsed Community Minister.
7. The Endorsed Community Minister shall write an annual report of his/her activities, which shall be included in the Congregation's Annual Report.
8. The Endorsed Community Minister will have access to a Ministerial Relations Committee to assist the Endorsed Community Minister toward completing requirements of Final Fellowship, and to further professional development.
9. The UUMA Code of Professional Practice shall be carefully observed by both the Parish Ministers(s) and the Endorsed Community Minister. If difficulties arise, various resources may be called upon, including the Good Offices program of the UUMA. The Endorsed Community Minister may resign upon 30 days notice. Upon recommendation of the Parish Ministers and/or with the concurrence of the Board of Trustees, the Endorsed Community Minister's relationship with the Congregation may be terminated upon 30 days notice. Should the Parish Minister resign, the

Endorsed Community Minister shall seek to establish a harmonious working relationship and a covenant with the new Minister(s).

10. Reimbursement for expenses for congregation-related business will be negotiated on a case by case basis.
11. Changes in this document may be made by agreement between the ministers concerned, and 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.

President of the Board of Trustees

Date Adopted:

(2) Covenant

between

Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation

and

Barbara Meyers, UU Community Minister

endorsed by Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation

1. The primary arena of Barbara Meyers' ministry will be in the area of mental health. As an Endorsed Community Minister of our church, we understand Barbara Meyers' ministry to be an extension of our own ministry, that is, as a Unitarian Universalist mental health ministry that the Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation is extending to the larger community under the auspices of Barbara Meyers. Her ministry consists of four pieces:
 - a. **Education** Barbara has written a curriculum *The Caring Congregation Handbook* which is a program for educating a congregation about how to be more intentionally supportive of people with mental disorders and their families. It is her intention that this be pilot tested in our congregation, field tested at several other congregations, and then become a UUA- wide curriculum.
 - b. **Healing** Barbara will help in Pastoral Care, especially for people with mental disorders and their families. For example, she currently works as an Assistant Director and Peer Counselor at the Life Reaching Across to Life mental health center in Fremont.
 - c. **Social Justice** Barbara will participate in community mental health activities by her presence and by doing advocacy work.
 - d. **Spirituality and the Arts** Barbara will give worship services at our church and other churches. In addition, she will perform Rites of Passage: Weddings, Memorial Services, and Child Dedications
2. Job-related oversight for Barbara's ministry will be accomplished by a ministry committee made up of a number of people knowledgeable in mental health and religion, including some congregation members. They would be chosen as people

from whom input and oversight would be particularly useful to her. Such a committee would include annual structured evaluations.

3. Should Barbara Meyers' plans in these activities change, she would continue to serve as Endorsed Community Minister provided she is actively involved in a search for a related pastoral ministry in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. It is expressly understood that the Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation would bear no financial responsibility to her during this interim period. It is also expressly understood that Barbara Meyers would resign her endorsement with the Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation should she find full-time employment that would either (1) take her out of the San Francisco Bay Area or (2) not be work that is clearly understood as ministry (as defined by the Department of Ministry and the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA).
4. Within the church arena, Barbara Meyers will seek to be available, as needed and mutually agreed upon, as back-up to the Parish Ministers e.g. performing rites of passage (especially non-member weddings and funerals), for on-call, pastoral care, teaching and preaching.
5. Barbara Meyers will keep the congregation informed about her activities in her ministry by a regular newsletter column and by any other meetings or reports specifically requested by the Parish Minister or the Board of Trustees. She will attend at least two Board meetings per year, and provide quarterly reports to the Board of her activities. Each year, for the purposes of UUA credentialing, she will work with her job-related oversight committee to create an annual structured evaluation of her ministry.
6. With the concurrence of the Parish Minister, the worship committee and the pastoral care committee Barbara Meyers may occasionally teach a class, lead a discussion or mini-orientation, preach, visit the sick or hospitalized, lead and develop and Pastoral Associates program and/or represent the church at denominational meetings, and other such ministerial tasks. Barbara will preach one sermon pro-bono (without fee) per year, and teach one class pro-bono per year. For preaching and teaching beyond this, she shall be reimbursed at UUMA suggested rates.
7. Referrals from the Parish Minister to Barbara Meyers and vice versa shall be carefully worked out so that each person's ministry is affirmed. A separate covenant between Barbara and the parish minister will be created to ensure this understanding. Consistent with the UUMA Code of Professional Conduct, Barbara Meyers shall defer accepting from members and friends of the church any invitation for her services traditionally associated with the Parish Ministry, in the absence of a clear prior understanding to the contrary.
8. Any activity of Barbara's ministry which requires significant funding beyond that in the congregation's approved budget will be funded by a fundraising process separate from that of the annual canvass. Possibilities are requests for special contributions, grants from the UUA, PCD, or other granting agencies.

- 9. Any projects MPUUC undertakes jointly with other congregations or agencies will be funded in a mutually agreed-to manner.

President of the Board of Trustees Date

Barbara Meyers Date

Covenant

between

The Rev. Dr. Chris Schriener, Parish Minister,
Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation

and

Barbara Meyers, UU Community Minister
endorsed by Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation

The relationship between a UU parish minister and a UU community minister endorsed by the same parish is guided by the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association *Code of Professional Practice and Guidelines*. The hallmarks of this relationship are respect, collegiality, mutual support, open communication, and professionalism. The following covenantal provisions are intended to deepen Chris and Barbara's relationship as colleagues by establishing clear ministerial boundaries in the Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation (MPUUC) context.

1. Barbara and Chris agree to honor and affirm each other's call to ministry.
2. Barbara is encouraged to develop authentic relationships with members and friends of MPUUC and to participate in the life of MPUUC as she feels called. However, she shall maintain her identity as minister at all times.
3. In situations requiring pastoral care in Chris's absence, Barbara is welcomed and encouraged to provide pastoral care to the person/people in the moment, and then refer them to Chris or the Pastoral Associates Committee if Chris is still not available.
4. If a member or friend of MPUUC comes to Barbara with an issue related to MPUUC and Barbara has not been given clear authority to speak on this issue, she will refer the person to Chris or to the appropriate party.
5. If Barbara is asked to do something that she feels Chris needs to know about first, she will speak to Chris before engaging in the activity.
6. Barbara is invited to lead workshops and other programmatic experiences at MPUUC as she sees fit. Chris supports Barbara's specific participation in MPUUC's Pastoral Associates and Mental Health committees. For the sake of self-care, Barbara is encouraged not to get too deeply involved in too many MPUUC activities.
7. Barbara has a standing invitation to preach at MPUUC at least once per congregational year. If possible, she would like to be asked to preach three times per year.
8. When Barbara officiates at a wedding, funeral or memorial service, or provides other ministerial services at the church, she will be paid by the individuals involved at UUMA recommended rates. This is true for services rendered to members as well as non-members of the Congregation. Barbara will give one pro-bono worship service per year. For more services, she shall be paid standard

- UUMA preaching fees. If Barbara is asked to take Chris' place in a prolonged absence or sabbatical, she shall be paid at a mutually agreed to rate.
9. Chris will maintain an interest in Barbara's community ministry and urge members and friends of MPUUC to cultivate a similar interest in and support for Barbara's ministry.
 10. Should Chris and Barbara have questions or concerns with each other, they will initially address them with each other, not others.
 11. Chris and Barbara will revise this covenant as necessary.

The Rev. Dr. Chris Schriener

Date

Barbara Meyers

Date