

Affiliation with Community Ministers

1. Purpose

This guidance supports the creation of clear, accountable, and mutually beneficial relationships between Foothills Unitarian Church and Unitarian Universalist ministers serving in community-based settings outside of congregational roles.

It clarifies the nature of "affiliation," including expectations, boundaries, and structures, ensuring these relationships uphold:

- Our commitment to shared ministry
- Clarity in ministerial roles and accountability
- Integrity with the UUA's Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) standards
- Our congregational values of inclusion, justice, collaboration, and transparency

This guidance honors the sacred work of community ministers and protects the wellbeing of our congregation and staff.

2. Organizational Guidance

What is a Community Minister?

A community minister is a UU minister in Final or Preliminary Fellowship whose primary ministry takes place outside the congregational context (e.g., chaplaincy, nonprofit leadership, advocacy, spiritual direction, therapy).

Affiliation is a formal, covenantal relationship between the minister and the congregation, affirming this work as legitimate ministry and establishing expectations of mutual support.

Affiliation does *not* imply staff status or employment by the congregation.

Steps for Establishing an Affiliation

1. Initial Discernment

- Community minister reaches out to the Senior Minister to express interest in affiliation.

- Senior Minister engages in initial discernment to assess alignment with our values, community needs, and capacity.
- 2. Collaborative Discernment**
 - If initial alignment is clear, Senior Minister may convene a discussion with with key leaders (e.g., Executive Team, Board Chair).
 - Education and transparency are prioritized, especially if the congregation has not previously affiliated with a community minister.
 - 3. Development of an Affiliation Agreement**
 - All parties (parish ministers, community minister, and Board representatives) co-develop a written agreement that includes:
 - Roles and boundaries
 - Mutual commitments and benefits
 - Scope of participation
 - Fee schedules for additional services
 - Support for fellowship renewal
 - Plan for annual review
 - 4. Board Approval**
 - The final draft of the Affiliation Agreement is presented to the Board of Trustees for formal approval and minuting.
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Required Elements of an Affiliation Agreement

- 1. Role & Boundaries**
 - Community minister is not staff.
 - No supervisory or pastoral care authority over congregants.
 - All ministerial activities in the congregation occur in coordination with parish ministers.
- 2. Gratis Services**
 - May include preaching once/year, newsletter contribution, or adult education.
 - Should reflect the community minister's gifts and schedule, and remain limited.
- 3. Compensated Services**
 - Additional preaching, pastoral care, or education work beyond agreed gratis services should be compensated.
 - Agreement includes a basic fee schedule and notes that other services must be negotiated in advance.
- 4. Relationship to Staff**
 - Community minister is not a supervisor.
 - May or may not receive office support or access—this must be specified.
 - Collegial relationship with parish ministers per UUMA guidelines.
 - Conflict handled through appropriate channels (e.g., Committee on Ministry or UUMA Good Offices).
- 5. Congregational Support**
 - May include access to office space, mail delivery, listing in directories, opportunity to officiate rites for non-members.

- Congregation commits to forming or participating in the minister's Committee on Ministry.

6. **Congregational Engagement**

- When possible, identify ways congregants can engage in the minister's community-based work.
- May include volunteer opportunities, shared plate offerings, or joint advocacy work.

7. **Recognition of Ministry**

- Agreement explicitly affirms the work as a form of valid, recognized Unitarian Universalist ministry.
- If ambiguous, consult MFC rules or contact UUA Ministerial Credentialing Office.

8. **Review & Renewal**

- Agreement reviewed annually by the Committee on Ministry or designated body.
- Adjustments made based on congregational needs, minister's role, or fellowship requirements.

3. Related Content

Bylaws and Policies

- Board Policy: [3.1.5 Honoring and Recognizing Religious Professionals](#)

Current Community Ministers

Rev. Christopher Watkins Lamb

Rev. Roger Butts

Previous Version: None (new guidance)

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