

Affiliated Community Ministry  
at  
First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco

Drafted by Rev. David A. Pettee

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

Very few models exist for structured relationships between UU community ministers and local churches. The First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco, the University Unitarian Church in Seattle, WA and the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee are among the few pioneering such relationships. The following proposal, which has close parallels with the agreement at University Unitarian Church in Seattle, and the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee<sup>1</sup> seeks to provide one way of more closely linking UU Community Ministers to the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco, for the mutual benefit of both the church and the Community Ministers. In the process, we might also provide needed leadership for the denomination in the growing alliance of UU community ministry and congregational life.

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

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks are given to Rev. Barbara Jo Sorenson for her work on this covenantal agreement.

## **I. Basics of Affiliation**

1. An Affiliated Community Minister at the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco would be all of the following:
  - A. Endorsed by the congregation at a congregational meeting;
    1. Upon prior recommendation by the Ministers of the Society, and
    2. Upon prior concurrence in that recommendation by the Board of Trustees of the Society, at a Board meeting;
2. The following Terms of Understanding are to be approved by:
  - A. The Parish Ministers.
  - B. The Affiliated Community Minister.
  - C. The Board of Trustees of the church.

## **II. Terms of Understanding**

1. The duties of the Affiliated Community Minister (see III.) shall be agreed upon by the Parish Ministers and the Community Minister. The Parish Ministers clearly have 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 Affiliated 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 Affiliated Community Minister, taking care to work collaboratively in a spirit of mutual cooperation and consultation.
2. Referrals to the Affiliated Community Minister shall be in such a manner as the Parish Minister and Affiliated Community Minister shall agree.
3. Affiliated Community Ministers are neither employed by, nor paid by, the church on any continuing basis. When First Unitarian Universalist Society members receive pastoral services from the Affiliated Community Minister, there shall be no charge. When the Affiliated Community Minister preaches or teaches, officiates at a wedding, funeral or memorial service, or provides other ministerial services at the church, for church members, there shall be no charge. However, when Affiliated Community Ministers perform services for people who are not members of the church, then appropriate fees may be charged.
4. The Affiliated Community Minister shall have access to the church facilities, photocopier, telephone, etc. for services rendered to the

congregation, and the wider UU community. Secretarial services will not be provided, however.

5. The Affiliated 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. Given the recent rule change by the UUA Board of Trustees regarding Community Ministers in affiliation with a congregation being eligible to vote at General Assembly, the Affiliated Community Minister may serve as a Ministerial Delegate from our Society at the annual UUA General Assembly. This, however, would not reduce the number of lay or Ministerial Delegates apportioned to our Society.
6. The Affiliated Community Minister shall meet with the Parish Ministers 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 Affiliated Community Minister.
7. The Affiliated Community Minister shall write an annual report of his/her activities, which shall be included in the Society's Annual Report.
8. The Affiliated Community Minister will have access to a Ministerial Relations Committee to assist the Affiliated 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 Affiliated Community Minister. If difficulties arise, various resources may be called upon, including the Good Offices program of the UUMA. The Affiliated 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 Affiliated Community Minister's relationship with the society may be terminated upon 30 days notice. Since the Parish Minister's relationship with the congregation is primary, should the Parish Ministers resign, the Affiliated Community Minister shall be prepared to resign, if necessary as well, pending establishment of a harmonious working relationship with the new Minister(s).
10. 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.

### **III. Duties of the Rev. David Pettee as an Affiliated Community Minister with the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco**

1. The primary arena of Rev. Pettee's ministry will be in the hospice setting, specifically as Hospice Social Worker for the Home Hospice Program of the Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice of Northern California (VNAHNC), and any other related pastoral care ministry. As an Affiliated

Community Minister of our church, we understand Rev. Pettee's hospice ministry to be an extension of our own ministry, that is, as a Unitarian Universalist Hospice ministry that the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco is extending to the larger community under the auspices of Rev. Pettee's employer, the VNAHNC.

2. Should Rev. Pettee's relationship with the VNAHNC be severed, he would continue to serve as Affiliated Community Minister provided he is actively involved in a search for a related pastoral ministry in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. It is expressly understood that the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco would bear no financial responsibility to him during this interim period. It is also expressly understood that Rev. Pettee would resign his affiliation with the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco should he find employment that would either (1) take him 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).
3. Within the church arena, Rev. Pettee 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.
4. In consultation with the Parish Ministers, Rev. Pettee 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.
5. Referrals from the Parish Ministers to Rev. Pettee and vice versa shall be carefully worked out so that each person's ministry is affirmed. Consistent with the UUMA Code of Professional Conduct, Rev. Pettee shall defer accepting from members and friends of the church any invitation for his services traditionally associated with the Parish Ministry, in the absence of a clear prior understanding to the contrary.