



MINISTRY OPTIONS

Congregations who wish to work with professional Ministers have a variety of options. These, along with some information about the search and selection process, are outlined here.

Settled Minister

A Settled Minister is an ordained minister who will serve the congregation for an indefinite period. These ministers are chosen for skills and attributes which match the needs and culture of the congregation. A settled minister performs typical functions of ministry – preaching, pastoral care, rites of passage – and works with the leadership of the congregation on mutually agreed upon goals. May serve as a sole, senior, or associate minister.

- Sole Minister – the only minister within a congregation
- Senior Minister – the leading minister of a congregation who may supervise associate or assistant ministers
- Associate Minister – a *called* second or third minister who may have served as an assistant minister for a period of time, prior to being called. Supervised by a Senior Minister.

Settled Ministers are chosen by congregational vote after a Search Committee reviews a short-list of ‘pre-candidates’, recommending one to the congregation as the candidate. Most settlements are full-time, however not all. If the ministerial position is for 75% or more of a full-time equivalency, then the Search and Settlement system of the Unitarian Universalist Association may be used. If it is for less than that, then the Congregational Development staff of the Canadian Unitarian Council will support the search. The UUA has several resources¹ which are available to help a congregation in search for a settled minister. This material is still of use to the congregation seeking less than ¾ time ministry, but the CUC staff person is the main resource.

Assistant Minister

An Assistant Minister is a *hired* second (or third minister) of a congregation who works under the supervision of the senior (usually called) minister. May be full-time or part-time.

Time-Limited Ministries

Interim Minister²

Interim Ministers are invaluable in the period after a settled ministry. The inevitable questions and transition can be difficult; there are almost always ‘let’s just get another minister now’ voices,

¹ <http://www.uua.org/careers/ministers/transitions/20679.shtml>

² <http://www.uua.org/careers/ministers/interim/>

yet intentional Interims can help eliminate the sad reality of unintentional interims. Too often congregations who do not do adequate and deliberate interim work settle a minister, sometimes one who resigns from another position and moves in order to take the position, only to find that they have not done the work that makes a positive relationship with a new minister possible. These ministries often end early, at great personal cost to the minister and financial cost to both the minister and the congregation. The interim period can provide the breathing space during which a congregation can review its goals, assess its programs, consider the quality of its life in common, and “tune up” for a new era. The one- to two-year period it usually takes for a congregation to grow into and own its identity, independent of both positive and negative feelings about the ministry that has come to an end, can be exciting, even transformative, when devoted to self-examination and institutional renewal.³ Like settled ministry, 75% and higher full-time equivalencies are supported through the UUA. An Interim Minister may not subsequently become the congregation’s Settled Minister

Developmental Ministry

These ministry positions are intended to be longer than Interim Ministries and often have developmental goals which exceed those of the Interim Ministry. “These longer periods of ministry are useful in cases where a congregation has had an overriding issue that has dominated the congregation, and it is now ready to work on it. With this much time a congregation can really take ownership for what it needs to work on, with a minister who has particular skill around that issue.”⁴ They give the congregation time and expertise it needs so that it can make good decisions about the future. Again, 75% of full-time, or more are supported through the UUA.

Occasional or Contract or Consulting Minister

These are opportunities for a congregation without a settled minister to engage a minister on a part-time or occasional basis, meeting the needs of the congregation and based on their budget. These opportunities can include service leading and sermons, and might also include workshops or consulting on matters of congregational interest and need. Some congregations have an ongoing relationship with a minister to work with them on an ongoing basis throughout the year (once or twice per month is relatively common). In these cases there is a clear understanding of the scope and limits of the work a minister will do during the visits. The contract is usually renewable on a yearly basis. In some cases congregations will contract with a variety of ministers and also with ministerial students throughout the year.

³ http://www.uua.org/documents/mpl/transitions/transitional_ministry.pdf (Information about Consulting and Interim Ministries)

⁴ <http://www.uua.org/interconnections/interconnections/198411.shtml>

Cost of Ministry

Congregations should be aware that there are guidelines for the payment of ministers and ministerial candidates. Information can be found at:

Settled Ministry, Consulting and Interim Ministry: Guidelines to help congregations determine appropriate compensation for ministers (and other professional staff), based on congregation size and geography are found at: <http://cuc.ca/congregational-life/church-staff-compensation/>

Contract Ministry: <https://uuma.site-ym.com/?professionalfees>. These guidelines will help a congregation understand costs associated with 'pulpit supply' and workshops. If the minister or ministerial candidate is working for an extended period of time (a weekend or week), then there should be an agreement, in advance, about all financial arrangements.

Resources for Congregations

If you are a congregational leader looking to better understand the types of ministry or the processes for searching for a minister, please contact the Congregational Development staff. They will know if you need to be in contact with the UUA. List of names of ministerial students/candidates and ministers who are available for contract work are also available from the CUC staff.