

MINISTERIAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE CHARTER

(Effective Date, November 25, 1997)

(Modifications approved November 26, 2002)

I. NAME OF COMMITTEE: Ministerial Relations Committee (MRC)

II. GUIDING RATIONALE:

The church seeks to provide opportunities for personal and spiritual growth on the part of its members and its minister. To this end it is important to maintain the high quality of relationship between the congregation and its professional minister. The Ministerial Relations Committee acts to mediate this relationship and to encourage open dialogue on issues, concerns, grievances, and positive appreciation on all sides. We also act as an interpretive body to reflect positive and negative trends in church concern and activity. The committee, once selected, acts independently of the minister and of the Board of Trustees.

III. PURPOSES OF THE COMMITTEE:

The purpose of the Ministerial Relations Committee is to maintain the high quality of relationship between the minister and the congregation and to encourage open and honest dialogue on issues concerning ministry. Important functions include:

A. Interpreting to the congregation the nature and scope of the work of the minister and informing the minister of the expectations of the congregation;

B. Being available for counsel which the minister should seek in the case of any problem within the congregation, or concerns relating to the congregation or any of its members;

C. Soliciting input from the congregation regarding any concerns or suggestions relating to the minister or the role of the minister in the congregation;

D. Working with the minister on setting annual professional priorities and reconciling professional needs with the needs of the church;

E. Working with the minister periodically to develop appropriate instruments for evaluation by the congregation;

F. Working with the minister on sabbatical and professional development plans;

G. Moderating disagreements between the minister and members of the congregation in an open and caring manner, and referring conflicts which are not immediately resolvable to the Board, which will initiate agreed congregational conflict management policies and procedures;

H. Referring to the Board any other issues bearing on the relationship of the minister to the congregation or staff which, in the judgment of the MRC, appear beyond the charter of the committee.

#### IV. MEMBERSHIP, APPOINTMENTS, AND TERMS OF SERVICE:

##### A. MRC FOR INTERIM MINISTERS AND PROVISIONAL MRC FOR A NEWLY SETTLED MINISTER

1. Membership: For interim ministers and during the first year of a newly settled ministry, the Board shall appoint four (4) committee members from a list provided by the Nominating Committee. It is desirable that the committee include one member with long-term experience in the congregation (e.g., 15 years), one with lesser experience (e.g., less than 5 years), one member from that minister's search committee, and one member thoroughly familiar with current church and Board of Trustees procedures, policies, and operations. No staff member or Board member shall serve on these committees.

2. Terms of Appointment: Members of an interim committee will serve for the duration of the interim minister's service. For newly settled ministers, terms of appointment will begin when the minister begins professional ministry within the congregation, and will terminate after one year.

3. Committee Chair: Chairs of interim and provisional MRCs will be elected by the committee members.

##### B. MRC FOR SETTLED MINISTERS:

1. Membership: After the first year of a settled ministry, the MRC shall be four members: two selected by the board from a list prepared by the minister and two selected by the minister from a list prepared by the board.

2. Terms of Appointment: Committee members shall ordinarily serve for two years with two members rotating off the MRC with replacement each year. After the Provisional MRC Committee

concludes, two members of the MRC will be appointed for one year, and two for two years, one of each pair to be chosen by the minister from a list of two chosen by the board, the other to be chosen by the board and from a list of two chosen by the minister. In each succeeding year, one incoming member will be chosen by the board from a list of two prepared by the minister and one incoming member will be chosen by the minister from a list of two prepared by the board. In each case, the period of appointment shall have any necessary additional months added to the time of service so that subsequent appointments shall begin in January of each year. Members appointed to fill out a vacated position will serve till the end of that term. The list of nominees for replacement of members who find it necessary to resign shall be made by the minister or board, which ever prepared the list for the person who has resigned. A committee member serving out a term as a replacement, may be nominated for a succeeding term without any other candidates on the list. Otherwise, members should not succeed themselves. When the minister resigns, the terms of all MRC members end when the minister departs the congregation. No member of the MRC may serve repeated terms with the same minister without at least a two-year break in service on the committee.

3. Committee Chair: The committee will elect its own chair from those two members with one year remaining in their term of office. If a chair resigns, the remaining member with less than one year left will assume the position of chair.

V. FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS: The MRC shall meet at least ten times per year.

#### VI. SPECIFIC TASKS AND REPORTING SCHEDULE:

A. Publicize the names of committee members and the purpose of the committee in the church newsletter every three months and solicit ideas and concerns from the congregation.

B. Establish priorities, both pastoral and professional, for the minister's time, and present those priorities to the Board in January. Priorities should be drawn from the following areas of ministerial concern:

- Community worship and religious education
- Outreach and social action
- Pastoral counseling and visitation
- Denominational affairs
- Administrative functions

C. Two members of the committee shall work together with three persons appointed by the president of the Board, with the approval of the Board (collectively, the "Minister's Evaluation Committee"), to develop an instrument for the evaluation of the minister in the third year of his ministry and in each subsequent period of three years, or more frequently if further evaluation is deemed necessary by the committee or the Board. The Minister's Evaluation Committee shall administer the evaluation and provide the minister, the Board, and the congregation with feedback drawn from the evaluation results.

D. Submit grassroots budget requests for conduct of committee work to the Finance Chair in May.

E. Perform such farewell and transition functions as may be required and appropriate when a minister departs the congregation.

F. Recommend changes in this committee charter.

#### VII. OPERATING PROCEDURES

A. A climate of trust and openness among committee members and between the MRC and the minister is essential to the committee's effectiveness. Therefore, the committee should maintain confidentiality in its discussions of concern and problems relating to ministry.

B. When concerns are brought to a committee member from a member of the congregation, the committee member will follow these steps in responding to the concern:

1. Encourage the member to speak directly to the minister.
2. Offer to accompany the member as a support in talking directly to the minister.
3. At times when a member is not comfortable bringing his/her concern directly to the minister, ask for permission to raise the concern with the minister and to identify the member in the conversation.
4. Offer to bring up the issue as a general but anonymous matter
5. Assure the member that confidentiality is maintained within the committee.
6. After the issue is discussed, inform the member in writing of the understanding worked out between the committee and the minister.

C. Throughout the year the committee will identify and discuss significant issues concerning the ministerial/congregational relationship.

VIII. SUGGESTED COMMITTEE READINGS AND RESOURCES

- A. The Congregational Handbook, UUA, Available in the church office.
- B. "Code of Professional Conduct," UUMA, Boston.
- C. Oswald, Roy M., Running through the Thistles: Terminating a Ministerial Relationship with a Parish. Alban Institute Publications.
- D. Oswald, Roy M., The Pastor as Newcomer. Alban Institute Publications.
- E. Mead, Loren B., Evaluation of. by. for. and to the Clergy. Alban Institute Publications.
- F. Judson, Jill, Evaluating Ministry. Alban Institute Publications, 1992. Also ask for "Annual Church Review Procedures," an on-demand publication prepared by UU member Catherine Holmes Clark.
- G. Kirk, Richard J. , On the Calling and Care of Pastors. II Alban Institute Publications.
- ~ H. " The Alban Journal. " Monthly resource bulletin of the Alban Institute, available by subscription. The Alban Institute catalog of publications has other materials that may be valuable to the MRC.