



The Committee on (the) Ministry

Sample Committee Charters

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These notes are a companion to the Webinar on this subject.

- I. **The Purpose of the Committee on (the) Ministry** is to tend to the whole ministry at every point: To be the congregation's "ombudsman," "process-observer" and "conscience." The primary "doing" of the CoM team is simply to "be" in the room, *noticing* and *telling* the congregation what it sees and hears as viewed from the "balcony." The CoM is a **BE**-ing team, not a **Do**-ing team, whose power lies in that it exerts moral authority, not legislative power. It is standard-based, not task-oriented.
 - II. **Staffing the Committee on Ministry:** 3 to 6 "Elder" members of the congregation plus the minister/s, appointed by the Board for 3 year terms [eligible for a second term]. CoM reports to the Board of Trustees, but is ultimately accountable to the congregation. To ensure a trusting and collegial team, current CoM members nominate replacements for vacancies.
 - III. **Qualifications.** Members of the congregation who: have been Unitarian Universalist for five years or more [of this congregation for at least two years], are committed to the congregation's mission above all other agenda; manifest a deep understanding of Unitarian Universalist faith and practices; understand emotional systems; are spiritually, morally, and emotionally mature; have personal integrity; are well-regarded and trusted by the membership, able to relate readily to all members of the congregation,
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IV. Sample Committee on the Ministry charters.

1. *All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, Washington D.C.*

One of the primary goals of the Committee on Ministry is to encourage direct and constructive communication among members of the congregation and between members of the congregation and the ministers and staff. Anyone with concerns about the health of our ministry and community is encouraged to contact any member of the Committee on Ministry.

2. *Horizon Unitarian Universalist Church, Carrollton, Texas.*

The Committee on Ministry (COM) serves the church by assisting the Board of Trustees to develop and renew the Church's strategic vision, by ensuring an ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of all Church ministries, and by facilitating resolution of Church relationship issues. The COM recognizes all the activities of the church as shared ministries. It seeks to empower each ministry to set goals and assess its progress towards them using a positive mission driven approach.

3. *1st Unitarian Society, Ithaca, New York.*

Committees on Ministry are designed to strengthen the quality of ministry within a congregation, by assessing how the members take care of each other, how the lay ministry works and how the minister serves the congregation.

Committee members have an opportunity to develop and establish communication channels that will be needed for the success of the congregation with our future settled minister. We believe that each and every member of our congregation has the potential to improve the ministry within our community, and that together we can help our congregation achieve its vision.

4. *1st Unitarian Church, Oakland, California*

The Committee on Ministry is appointed by the Board of Trustees to nurture the mission and ministry of this congregation. It embodies shared ministry, in concert with our settled ministers, and represents the congregation in matters of ministry and congregational polity. It is a primary structure within the church for demonstrating the power of mutual trust and for modeling redemption, reconciliation and healing. ... Beyond this charter, the COM covenants to:

- To place the mission and ends of this church and the well-being of our congregation ahead of personal interests and biases.
- To strive for redemption and reconciliation in matters where there is conflict or dispute.
- To work to facilitate resolution without feeling responsible for what happens.
- To respect the confidentiality of matters brought before the committee and of people involved
- To speak with passion and compassion within the committee, and with one voice outside of the committee.
- To acknowledge that the committee's only authority is that which is granted it by the members of the congregation, and to work to build and nurture that sacred trust.

5. *1st Unitarian Church, San Jose, California.*

Committee on the Ministries: The church Board has established the Committee on Ministry as an overseeing body for the many facets of ministry of the First Unitarian Church of San Jose. One of the ways we do this is to use the congregation's Mission Statement as a standard by which to gauge the effectiveness of our ministries and to make recommendations to enhance the quality of our ministry.

We on the committee embrace the value and vitality of ministry that is shared and mutual, and are working to articulate and empower the ministries of our "beloved community." To this end, we are dedicated to "magnifying" the various ministries of our congregation, how they help fulfill our congregation's mission, and how they might provide opportunities for you to contribute your own special gifts and talents to our congregation's spiritual life.

6. *Unitarian Universalist Church, St. Petersburg, Florida.*

Committee on Ministry Responsibilities

- Look at all aspects of the ministry, and in conjunction with the Board of Trustees and the Minister, administer the Annual Planning and Assessment Process.
- Recommend to the Board of Trustees actions to help the Congregation adjust to changes in leadership, style and growth as well as steps to assist in the attainment of the year's priorities as identified by Leadership and the Minister. Facilitate the implementation of those actions.
- Be aware of the pulse of the various communities within the Congregation, and be ready to respond by fostering relationships that support our mission.
- Communicate openly and frequently with the congregation using existing communication vehicles.
- Meet monthly and at such other times as requested by the Board of Trustees, the Chair of the Committee or the Minister.

7. *Unitarian Universalist Church, Tallahassee, Florida.*

Committee on Ministry Responsibilities

- Promote healthy relationships between the congregation and the Minister by attending church activities, talking with members, friends, and visitors about their thoughts and wishes for the ministry in the church and community, and sharing these discussions with the Minister.
- In partnership with the Minister, through studying, learning, and reflecting on the ministry, educate themselves and share with the congregation the components and actions of effective lay and professional ministry.
- Model in word and deed healthy and deepening relationships between clergy and laity.
- Together with the Minister, explore with and educate the Congregation about ministry in general, the specific ministry of the Congregation, and the partnerships and trust necessary to bring that specific ministry to its fullest potential. Together with the Minister, set standards of excellence and provide opportunities for all to be held accountable to those standards of excellence.

- In collaboration with the Minister, implement the process approved by the Board pursuant to Article VI, Section B.1(h) of the Bylaws for annually assessing the progress of the church leadership in achieving the leadership goals and objectives established pursuant to Article V, Section E of the Bylaws, and report the results to the Board and the Congregation.
- In collaboration with the Minister, implement the process approved by the Board pursuant to Article VI, Section B.1(i) of the Bylaws for conducting an overall assessment of each aspect of the ministerial-congregational relationship every three years and report the results to the Board and the Congregation. The assessment shall encompass the performance of the Congregation and the Minister based upon the Congregation's vision of shared ministry and the responsibilities and privileges of the Minister as set forth in Article IX, Section D of the Bylaws and the Congregation's Covenant and Working Agreement with the Minister.

V. Resources:

- Moving on from Church Folly Lane* by The Reverend Robert T. Latham; self-published at <http://www.mythinglink.com/> . See Addenda VI; pp. 244ff.
 - Committee on Ministry Not Just for the Minister*, Unitarian Universalist Association *Interconnections* Winter, 2004; [contact Kenn Hurto directly for a copy].
 - Assessing Our Leadership*; Unitarian Universalist Association; June 2001; http://www.uua.org/documents/mpl/assessing_leadership.pdf.
 - Congregational Self-Assessment*; Unitarian Universalist Association; June 2001; <http://www.uua.org/documents/ftp/congselfassessment.pdf>
 - When Better Isn't Enough: Evaluation Tools for the 21st-Century Church* by Jill Hudson; 2004, Alban Institute; www.alban.org
 - Creating Effective Committees on Ministry* by Qiyamah Rahman; 2001; <http://archive.uua.org/ga/ga01/2011.html>. A Q&A session on the topic.
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