

Help Wanted: Associate Conference Ministers aka Passionate Adventurers!

We are assembling a dream team of Associate Conference Ministers to join Executive Conference Minister, the Rev. Brigit Stevens, and current/continuing Associate Conference Minister, the Rev. Jonna Jensen, to serve in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ in the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota UCC Conferences. It is an exciting time, at the very beginning of a new partnership, among these three conferences! The conferences have not merged. Our one staff serves all three conferences collectively as the Tri-Conference UCC Ministries staff. We are learning and living into new ways of being the Church!

We know that being the Church today requires flexibility and creativity. We know that our past is rich with experiences of faith that surprised us at the time and became ordinary over generations. We know that sacred rituals and faithful practices often remind us of what we've done before but also take on new forms and grow in depth and meaning as new generations hold and mold them for themselves. We are called to this particular time and place in the United Church of Christ to experiment, to stretch, to honor, and even to fail, as we faithfully and boldly follow Jesus Christ together.

We are in search of 2-3 Associate Conference Ministers to join our team! We will create portfolios of work based upon the needs of the conferences and the skills, gifts, experiences, and passions that our team members possess. Each ACM will have some regionally defined tasks, supporting faith communities and ministers in their assigned region, and each ACM will have particular areas of focus and expertise on the team in order to leverage our collective gifts and skills.

Under the leadership of the Executive Conference Minister and as a team, we will discern together how to offer our best support for the 1 camp, 12 versions of Committees on Ministry, 14 associations (including our Native American churches of the Dakota Association), 319 UCC congregations (an average of 55 of which are in a pastoral search at any given time), 550ish authorized ministers (approximately 360 actively serving and 190 retired ministers), 211,747 square miles, and 5.936 million people of the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota UCC Conferences.

If you are an authorized minister with standing in the United Church of Christ (or can acquire UCC ministerial standing within a year of appointment), who loves the Church and feels invited into the creative and demanding call of the Holy Spirit during a time of big changes, this team may be the place for you. If you are a minister who cherishes local congregations as they exist today, may grieve not serving as a settled pastor within one, and yet also yearns to encourage the new ways God may be organizing our neighbors into communities of faith into the future, this team may need you! If you are energized by pursuing excellence, offering grace, loving others even when it is hard, and value tears and laughter in equal measure, the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota UCC Conferences may be served very well by your ministry as an ACM on the team!

To apply for an Associate Conference Minister position, please review the position description and application writing prompts. Make sure your UCC Ministerial Profile is available to the Iowa, South Dakota, and Nebraska Conferences. Send a letter of application and your answers to the application writing prompts to Diane Leggett, Tri-Conference UCC Ministries, 5609 Douglas Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50310, or diane@ucctcm.org. The deadline for applications is July 31, 2018.

Position Description

Associate Conference Minister ~ Tri-Conference UCC Ministries Iowa-Nebraska-South Dakota Conferences of the UCC

As the world around us changes, the fundamental message of Christ's church stays the same. Our methods of sharing the "Good News," however, must always be thoughtful, flexible, and accessible to those God calls us to serve. In the same way, this position description will shift and change as our congregations and conferences live into new ways of being the Church.

We are doing something that hasn't been done before in quite this way! There is a lot we don't know and can't know about how the whole adventure will unfold and about how these positions will evolve, even in the relatively short term. You will read many times below, "...in negotiation with the Executive Conference Minister." Because so many things are unknown in this new organization, staff portfolios will be designed and adjusted to best meet the needs of the conferences and the needs, resources, and skills of the staff. The Executive Conference Minister is the head of staff and will make final decisions, however a spirit of collaboration will inform the process.

Excellent Associate Conference Ministers of the Tri-Conference UCC Ministries are the sort of folk who would leave their nets (and their parents in the boat) to follow Jesus! They are the sort of folk who line up first for the scariest rides on the midway! They are the sort of folk who get in trouble now and then for crossing the sorts of lines that need to move anyway!

Title: Associate Conference Minister (ACM)
AKA: Passionate Adventurer following Jesus' call into the wilderness of faith!

Expressions of Faith: We are looking for leaders who are people of deep and evident faith. The ACMs we call will:

- Possess the necessary **courage** to face challenges directly and with clarity;
- Evidence **integrity** (essential oneness) in relationship with those with whom they work and live;
- Possess acquired **wisdom** and **approachability** to the extent that clergy and lay leaders will seek the ACMs' counsel;
- Hold all persons in genuine **respect and positive regard**, both those with whom they agree and those with whom they disagree.

Given that these expectations are ambitious and never perfectly attainable, the ACMs will also understand and accept their own limitations, be able to laugh at themselves and laugh with others and model a healthy ability to seek, as well as offer forgiveness as situations warrant.

Responsibilities: The specific responsibilities of each ACM will be determined in ongoing negotiation with the Executive Conference Minister, assessing the needs of the conferences and the resources available, but will initially include the following:

- Support one particular area of conference ministry such as Search & Call, Committees on Ministry, Equipping Congregations, or other as determined in negotiation with the Executive Conference Minister;
- Resource and support congregations and Associations in a geographic region of the three Conferences as determined by the Executive Conference Minister;
- Witness and inspire witness locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally toward a just world for all.

- Engage creative and efficient stewardship of time, technology, and travel in meeting the needs of congregations and pastors.
- Interpret the ministries of the conference and other settings of the wider church and advocate for their generous financial support by local churches and individuals throughout our conferences; and
- Participate collegially in meetings of the Tri-Conference Board of Directors, individual Conference Boards of Directors, periodic staff meetings and retreats, and other organizational responsibilities as may be assigned by and/or negotiated with the Executive Conference Minister.

**Knowledge
And Skills:**

At minimum, the ACMs will have, or be able to reasonably obtain, knowledge and skill in these areas:

- Dynamics and processes of groups and congregations, specifically as understood from a Family Systems perspective.
- Developing and implementing resources for congregations and authorized ministers.
- Interpreting the United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry with particular attention to the differences between the 2017 revision and previous editions.
- Navigating the United Church of Christ ministerial profile, local church profile, and search and call systems.

Each staff person will need to have a basic familiarity with all the portfolio areas, even those that are not the staff person's current "specialty." The Executive Conference Minister, Associate Conference Ministers, and all Support Staff members complement each other's work and need understanding of all areas of specialty in order to function well. Additionally, it is expected that portfolios may shift among existing staff over time.

Staff Values:

The staff of the Tri-Conference UCC Ministries aspires to conduct our relationships with each other and those with whom we work in ways characterized by:

- Respect
- Kindness
- Excellence
- Creativity
- Joy and Laughter
- Resilience
- Transparency and Integrity
- Positive regard for all

Accountability:

The ACMs will be called by the Tri-Conference UCC Ministries Board of Directors and will be accountable to the Executive Conference Minister in the day-to-day exercise of their ministry.

Other

Qualifications:

The ACMs will be authorized ministers of the United Church of Christ or will be able to obtain authorized ministerial standing within one year of appointment to the positions.

Work Location:

This Associate Conference Ministers will live and work from a location determined in negotiation with the Executive Conference Minister.

Compensation:

The ACMs will be compensated according to the Tri-Conference UCC Ministries Personnel Policy.

Tri-Conference Associate Conference Minister Application – 2018

Writing Prompts

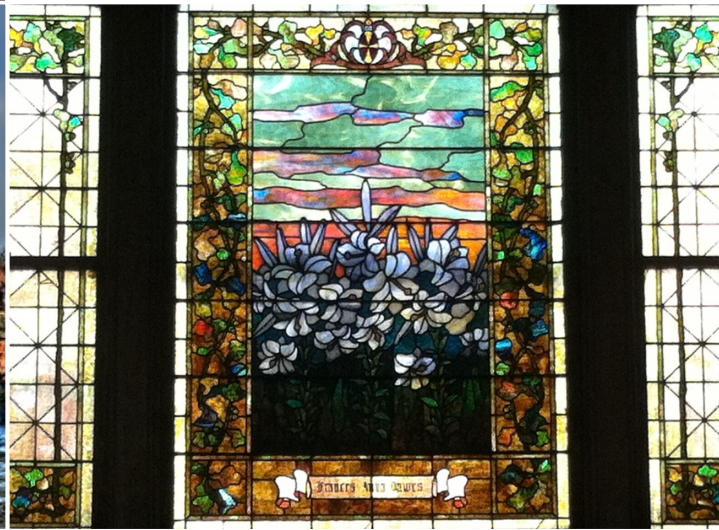
Please respond briefly, no more than 2-3 paragraphs for each, to the below prompts.

1. Describe your understanding of the evolving role of a UCC conference and the staff of such a conference.
2. Please reflect on some of the ways your life evidences the personal qualities listed in the position description.
3. Describe the ways your work style reflects the values of the Tri-Conference UCC Ministries staff as listed in the position description.
4. Describe the most significant personal and/or professional experience that prepares you for the responsibilities of this position.

Falls Park in Sioux Falls, SD



Stained Glass Window of First Congregational UCC, Crete, NE



Iowa State Capital, Des Moines, IA



Tri-Conference Ministries of the United Church of Christ

Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota Conferences

Edwards Congregational UCC, Davenport, IA



Chimney Rock National Historic Site in western Nebraska

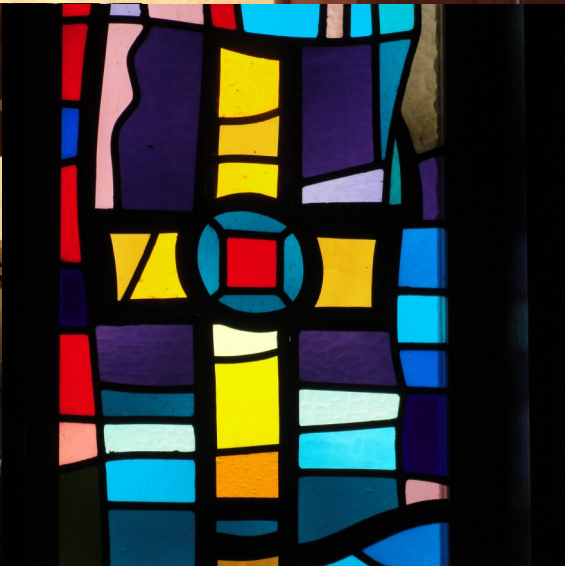


Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in South Dakota

First Congregational Church, Sioux Falls, SD



First Central Congregational UCC, Omaha, NE



Presbyterian UCC, Le Mars, IA

Ministry Description

After much discernment, the South Dakota, Nebraska, and Iowa Conferences of the United Church of Christ agreed to create one staff to serve all three conferences. The newly-formed Tri-Conference Ministries, Inc., is seeking Associate Conference Ministers with robust faith and bold presence to help our Executive Conference Minister, Rev. Brigit Stevens, to lead this first of its kind covenant in the UCC.

Comprising 14 associations with 319 congregations, the peoples of the Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota Conferences are connected to the land with economies based in agriculture and ranching and embracing industries of the future like advanced manufacturing. From the Black Hills of South Dakota, the Great Plains stretching into Nebraska and the rolling plains of Iowa, the landscape has Native American reservations, small rural towns, and a handful of urban pockets and offers endless outdoor recreation, public spaces and native lands with important archaeological sites and world-class arts, cultural, entertainment and education centers.

The ideal Associate Conference Ministers will connect these places, provide faithful leadership, and create community within the congregations and communities of three conferences. Interested candidates should submit their profiles no later than [July 31, 2018.](#)

The Tri-Conference: Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota Conferences

For some time, there had been discussions between leaders in the Iowa and Nebraska Conferences about the possibilities for closer cooperation. With the retirements of both of their conference ministers, and the inclusion of the South Dakota Conference in those conversations, an agreement and covenant for cooperation was approved by each Conference, coming into effect in October 2016.

The Tri-Conference covenant was pitched to the three conferences primarily on the basis of two benefits: that cooperation among ministerial staff is efficient and makes work more enjoyable, and there will be work efficiency in reducing the burden of national setting work from three conference ministers to one Executive Conference Minister (ECM). With the new arrangement in effect, Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota were able to share one ECM rather than searching separately for new conference ministers for each conference.

According to the covenant approved by the annual meetings, the three conferences are to be staffed by one Executive Conference Minister (ECM) overseeing four Associate Conference Ministers (ACMs), two assigned to Iowa, one to Nebraska, and one to South Dakota. All ministerial staff will be paid by Tri-Conference Ministries of the United Church of Christ, Inc. (TCM). Their duties may vary as the ECM makes use of staff's particular skills and interests in addition to their geographic assignments.

The Executive Conference Minister is overseen by the board of directors of Tri-Conference Ministries UCC, Inc. (TCM Board). This nine-person board is composed of three people each from the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota conferences. TCM Board members are elected to three-year, staggered terms by their respective conference's boards of directors, and at least two of them must also be members of their respective conference's board. The TCM Board members control finances, negotiate with conference boards of directors for funding, evaluate the ECM, and appoint ACM search committees.

Currently, TCM has offices in Sioux Falls, South Dakota and Des Moines, Iowa, and is staffed by our ECM, Rev. Brigit Stevens, two ACMs, three full-time administrative staff.

The future of conference office locations and the future for conference administrative staff have not yet been finally determined. The TCM Board and the Executive Conference Minister will together determine the location(s) of the Tri-Conference office(s) (or decide to not have a physical office), and will decide appropriate staffing for administration.

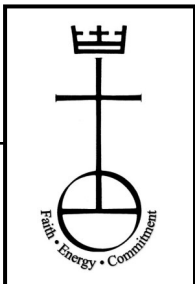
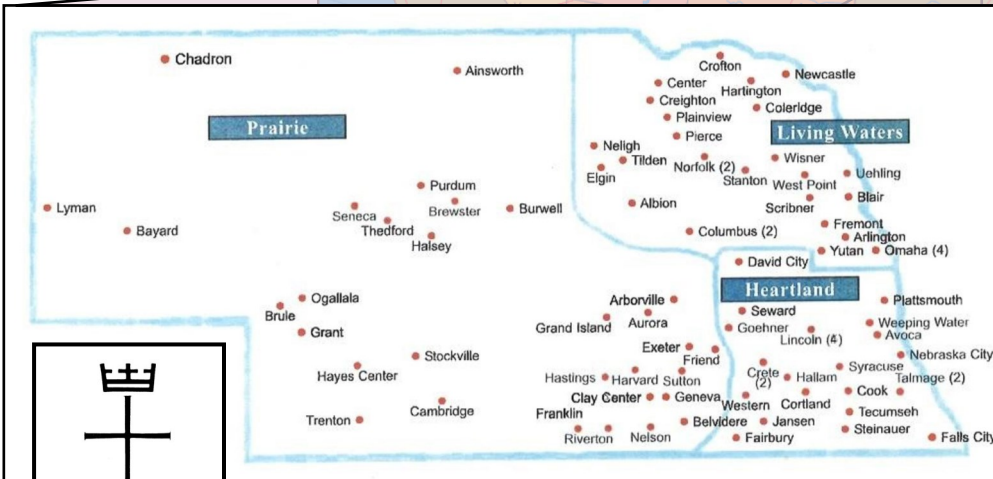
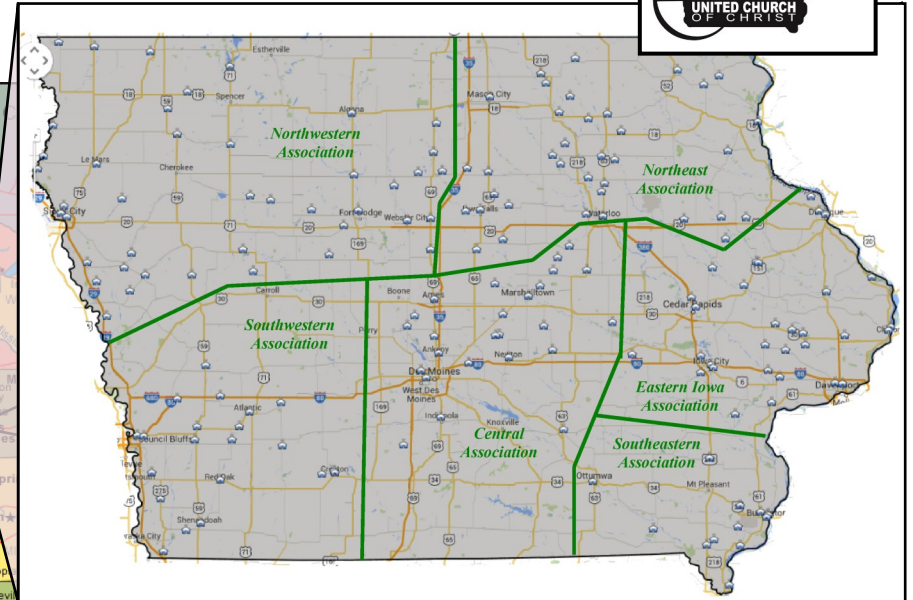
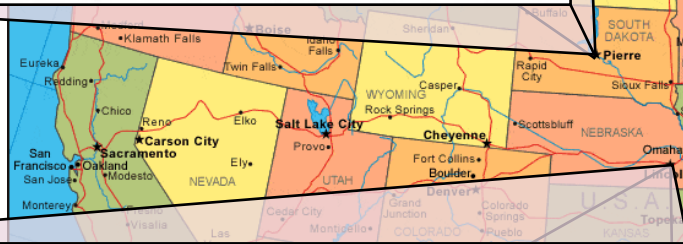
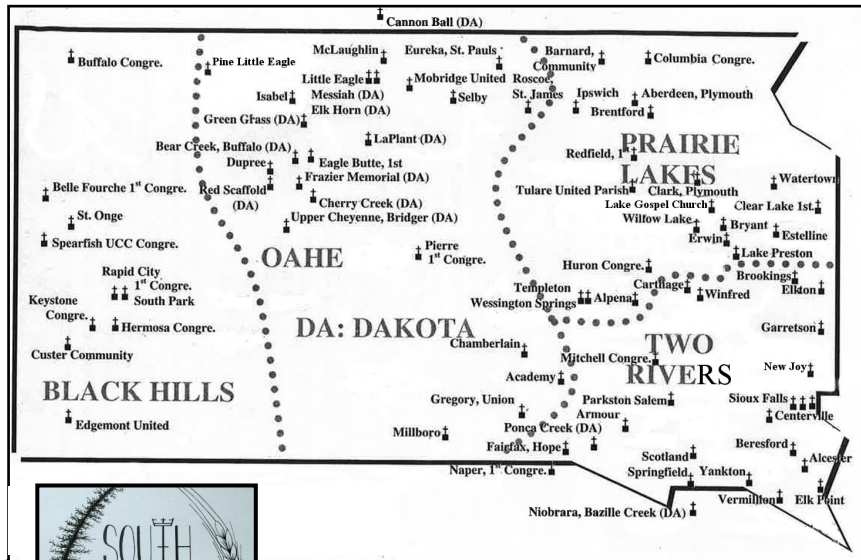
The three conferences retain separate legal identities, separate committees and separate organizational structure, and they continue to hold separate status within the United Church of Christ. Common staffing

means that most of their budgets will now be directed by the TCM Board and no longer by their Conference Boards of Directors and Annual Meetings. The ECM was called by decisions of the three Conference Annual Meetings. However, ACMs will be chosen by the TCM Board with the ECM.

This structure, like all human structures, will be imperfect, and will be led by imperfect people. But with God's grace, it will hopefully improve our conferences as we serve the church and God's people in our region. We entered into this arrangement joyfully, celebrating closer bonds with each other! We venture forward boldly, trusting that God ventures with us, as Christ promised:

*“Where two
or three are
gathered in
my name,
there I am
among them.”*

The Tri-Conference: Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota Conferences



Iowa Conference



MISSION

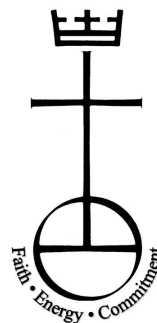
We believe that God calls us to bear witness to the hope of the Gospel. Inherent in this call is the fundamental primacy of the local church – entities we understand to be:

- Communities of worship and service
- Communities of transformation!

Our four mission priorities are to:

1. Provide a voice for Iowa in the wider church, both in our denomination and in ecumenical collaborations.
2. Support the growth and development of clergy.
3. Help churches seek new pastors.
4. Foster a climate of vocation for pastoral ministry and lay leadership.

Nebraska Conference



MISSION

The mission of the Nebraska Conference of the United Church of Christ is to strengthen, inspire and nurture local churches so they can challenge and empower persons for a mission of mercy, love and justice in their communities and in the world.

To this end, the Conference pursues its role as coordinator, enabler, leader, responder and initiator. Through these roles, the Conference serves as a hub linking the churches with their wider denomination and the ecumenical fellowship.

In every aspect, the work of the Conference is informed and judged by our Christian faith.

South Dakota Conference



MISSION

The South Dakota Conference of the United Church of Christ is a fellowship of congregations from a diverse heritage, united and uniting. It is our mission to glorify God and to proclaim "The Good News" by being God's servants now.

Our mission, empowered by the Holy Spirit, is:

- "to be faithful stewards of all God's resources";
- "to work toward peace and justice for all God's people";
- "to enlist persons and support their education for rural and urban ministry";
- "to equip all of our Associations, church pastors and laity for more effective mission in our changing rural context";
- "to cooperate with our faith communities in common concerns and efforts"

—so that our legacy of the Christian faith will continue.

Iowa Conference

166
Congregations

29,228
Members

174
Average Members Per Church

6
Associations

MINISTERS

193
Active

121
Retired

2018 BUDGET

\$834,000
Our Churches Wider Mission Support

\$200,000
OCWM Special Support

\$38,000
Total Mission for Others

\$1,250,000
Total Income

Nebraska Conference

80
Congregations

14,389
Members

179
Average Members Per Church

3
Associations

MINISTERS

86
Active

41
Retired

2018 BUDGET

\$250,000
Our Churches Wider Mission Support

\$37,500
OCWM Special Support

\$21,000
Total Mission for Others

\$500,000
Total Income

South Dakota Conference

73
Congregations

9,141
Members

120
Average Members Per Church

5
Associations

MINISTERS

63
Active

30
Retired

2018 BUDGET

\$235,000
Our Churches Wider Mission Support

\$33,000
OCWM Special Support

\$8,000
Total Mission for Others

\$300,000
Total Income

Iowa Conference

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

20
Members

2
Committees

Quarterly
Schedule of
Board Meetings

UPCOMING ANNUAL GATHERING

October 12-13, 2018
Date

West Des Moines Christian Church
West Des Moines, IA
Location

Nebraska Conference

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

12
Members

6
Committees

March, June and October
Schedule of
Board Meetings

UPCOMING ANNUAL GATHERING

June 2018
Date

TBD
Location

South Dakota Conference

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

21
Members

0
Committees

3-4 Times Per Year
Schedule of
Board Meetings

UPCOMING ANNUAL GATHERING

June 2018
Date

TBD
Location



Ames United Church of Christ, Ames, Iowa



Kamp Kaleo, Burwell, NE



2016 UCC National Youth Event, Orlando, FL

Iowa Conference

SPECIAL MINISTRIES & RELATIONSHIPS

Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center

Founded in 1972, the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center brings understanding, hope, and healing to people of all ages through mental health counseling and education. The Center serves more than 4,000 individuals (including up to 900 children) annually through 26 licensed clinicians. Populations served include children, adolescents, adults, couples, families, clergy, teachers, police officers, LGBTQ people, veterans, survivors of trauma, families of addicted loved ones, and anyone who needs quality counseling.

DeWitt Academy for Theological Education

This education-based mission sponsored by DeWitt's United Church of Christ provides engaging study of the Bible, the Christian faith, and the church through professional level instruction offered by professors of religion, recognized authors and individuals gifted in a particular specialty. These seminars are open to lay people as well as to clergy, who can receive continuing education credit for participation.

Interfaith Alliance of Iowa

Interfaith Alliance of Iowa is a statewide, non-partisan, progressive voice for people of faith and no faith, protecting religious freedom, ensuring religion is not misused to discriminate, championing individual rights, and uniting diverse voices to challenge extremism.

Nebraska Conference

SPECIAL MINISTRIES & RELATIONSHIPS

Christian Church in Nebraska Region

Our relationship with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Nebraska Region is a dynamic and vital relationship. In addition to outdoor ministry and lay ministry education, which we plan and carry out together, we have monthly joint staff meetings and joint board meetings once a year; we have held a joint Annual and Regional Assembly meeting; and representation on one another's Board of Directors and Regional and Conference Staff Search Committees, and clergy serving the other's congregations.

Doane College

Located in Crete, Doane College the oldest four-year, private liberal arts institution in Nebraska. Founded in 1872 by Thomas Doane, of the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad, and the Congregationalists, the College has enjoyed a long and beneficial relationship with the United Church of Christ. Campus facilities are available for meetings and classes and often used to host the Annual Meetings.

Education for Lay Ministry

ELM is a program of the Nebraska Conference and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Nebraska for people who are seeking a deeper ministry within their own church, or who are called to pastoral ministry, but, for various reasons, are unable to go to seminary. The ELM program may lead to licensure to serve in pastoral or specialized ministries in congregations in the Conference and Region.

South Dakota Conference

SPECIAL MINISTRIES & RELATIONSHIPS

Dakota Association

The Dakota Association is an autonomous association affiliated with the South Dakota Conference. It is a non-geographic association comprised of Lakota-majority UCC congregations in South Dakota, Nebraska, and North Dakota. The Association operates on a unique model where ministers are formally employees of the association, and church properties are formally owned by the association. Dakota Association ministers work in close cooperation with each other as they serve their churches and their communities.

A broken and unequal relationship between the South Dakota Conference and the Dakota Association has begun to improve as Sacred Conversations on Race meetings have continue, and as the conference returned church deeds that were held "in trust" by the conference until the mid 2010s. More bonds and relationships have developed between ministers and church leaders in the conference, but the Dakota Association continues to struggle against the problems plaguing the Lakota: cultural devastation, suicide, historical trauma and poverty.



Green Grass UCC, Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota

Iowa Conference

SPECIAL MINISTRIES & RELATIONSHIPS CONTINUED.

Iowa Religious Media Services

Based in Urbandale (a suburb of Des Moines), Iowa Religious Media Services is an ecumenical lending library with over 10,000 DVD, VHS, audio, book and other resources available for use by subscribers and renters.

Our Sacred Space/Pilgrim Heights

For over 50 years, Pilgrim Height Retreat Center in Montour, Iowa was owned and operated by the Iowa Conference of the United Church of Christ. In October 2007, operations were transitioned to Our Sacred Space, Inc. Our Sacred Space maintains strong covenantal affiliation with the Iowa Conference and with UCC congregations throughout the state.



Chicago, United and Eden (CUE) Seminaries of the United Church of Christ

The CUE Regional Seminary Support Program brings together over 2,000 United Church of Christ churches in mid-America, Local Church Ministries, and Chicago, United, and Eden Theological Seminaries — our three United Church of Christ seminaries in this region. CUE seeks to strengthen the relationships between our churches and seminaries, furthering their mission and work and providing them with financial support.

The Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota Conferences are committed to providing an educational presence in the Christian faith through their support of CUE Seminaries. Support for the CUE seminaries is motivated in part to a theology school that started in Crete, NE and eventually moved to Yankton, SD, and when the UCC was formed, it joined with Mission House Seminary to form United Seminary near the Twin Cities.

Nebraska Conference

SPECIAL MINISTRIES & RELATIONSHIPS CONTINUED.

Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ghana

Our relationship with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ghana began in 1993. Groups of laity and clergy have made trips to Ghana and have given physical and financial support, including constructing a new library at the Peki Seminary, helping to build a chapel and supporting a health clinic. Ghanaian EP Church leaders have visited us in Nebraska, even serving on a local church staff for several months.

Kamp Kaleo

Kaleo is the setting for work of Outdoor Ministry and Ministry with Youth for the Nebraska Conference. The Outdoor Ministry and Youth Ministry are done in union with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Nebraska. These two programs share one staff person who is jointly employed by the Conference and the Region. Kamp Kaleo is the summer campsite, located 3 hours from Lincoln near Burwell, Nebraska.

South Dakota Conference

SPECIAL MINISTRIES & RELATIONSHIPS CONTINUED.

Placerville Camp

Placerville Camp is a United Church of Christ facility nestled on 12 acres of the Black Hills. Placerville has 8 modern cabins with electricity, heat and ceiling fans. Each cabin holds up to 16 people. It operates within the South Dakota Conference and is contained within its budget, though it brings in as much or slightly more revenue than it spends (allowing for fluctuations).



Placerville is a training and teaching site for the Conference, as well as an outreach ministry that builds connections to the UCC for many. Placerville hosts several well attended summer camps: Women's Camp, camps for kids in age groups 2nd-3rd grade, 4th-5th grade, 6th-8th grade, and 9th-12th grade, Family Camp, Grand Camp (for grandparents and grandkids), and Black Hills Playhouse Jr. Performing Arts Camp. Placerville hosts conference activities throughout the year, like the annual Fall Youth Event and Sacred Conversations on Race meetings.

Compensation Package

Compensation is determined by considering the responsibilities of the position, levels of education, years of experience, and the needs of the person. Compensation will include:

FINANCIAL COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

- Base Salary of \$70,000 — \$75,000
- A portion of the salary set aside as a housing allowance, per the ACM's request and as approved by the Tri-Conference Ministries board of directors on an annual-basis.
- UCC Pension Boards Retirement Annuity (14% of salary and housing)
- UCC Pension Boards Life and Disability Insurance Benefits
- UCC Pension Boards Health, Dental, and Vision Benefits
- Social Security/Medicare offset (7.65% of salary and housing)

TIME & OTHER COMPENSATION

- 4 weeks of vacation annually
- Parental Leave
- 2 weeks of Continuing Education annually and funds
- Plan for Sabbatical Leave
- Moving Expenses

TRAVEL

<https://www.thebalance.com/buying-an-airplane-can-you-afford-it-282909>



Members of First Congregational UCC in Red Oak, IA join the Women's March on Iowa in Des Moines, IA.



Doane College, Crete, NE



United Church of Christ, Vermillion, SD

Our Process

In March 2018 representatives from the Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota conferences came together to begin the search and call process for our Associate Conference Ministers. With guidance from the National UCC and in coordination with the Tri-Conference Ministries Board of Directors, the Tri-Conference ACM Search Committee set a timeline for the process, discerned qualifications for a candidate, and shared their hopes not only for this new endeavor but for the wider United Church of Christ as well.

If you are moved by the Spirit to be considered as a candidate for one of the Tri-Conference Ministries Associate Conference Minister positions, please:

1. Submit a letter of application and answers to the application writing prompts to Diane Leggett by July 31, 2018.
2. Your profile will be shared with the ACM Search Committee.
3. A member of the ACM Search Committee will notify you whether or not you are invited to move forward in the process.

Search and Call Timeline

June 2018	Associate Conference Minister (ACM) profile posted to UCC site.
July 31, 2018	Deadline for ACM candidate submissions.
Aug/Sept 2018	First round of interviews conducted via video conference.
Sept/Oct 2018	In-person interviews conducted.
ASAP!	Final recommendation for ACMs made to Tri-Conference Ministries (TCM) boards of directors and the Executive Conference Minister (ECM) for approval. TCM board and ECM act on recommendation.
ASAP!	New ACMs start.



Iowa Delegation to General Synod 2015, Cleveland, OH



Nebraska Conference Visit to Ghana in 2015



2016 High School Camp, Placerville Camp, SD