

**Are YOU  
called to  
join us?**



**IOWA, NEBRASKA  
& SOUTH DAKOTA**  
• C O N F E R E N C E S •  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**WHY** are we called to be the United Church of Christ in this time and place?

**To live into God's extravagant welcome and advocate for justice. So that all know love, safety, belonging and dignity.**

# Position Description for the Associate Conference Minister of the Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota Conferences of the UCC

As the world around us shifts in unprecedented ways, the fundamental message of Christ 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 working on the formation of a conference staffing structure that has never been implemented before! There is a lot of unknowns in how the whole adventure will unfold and in how the position you are applying for will evolve, even in the relatively short term. Because there are so many things unknown in this new way of dreaming up the structural formation of judicatory life, staff portfolios will be designed and adjusted to best meet the needs of how it is that each conference envisions their embodiment of their mission and vision. The Executive Conference Minister is the head of staff and will make final decisions, however a spirit of collaboration will inform the process.

An epic Associate Conference Minister of the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conferences is someone 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)

**Expressions of Faith:** We are looking for a leader who embodies deep and evident faith. The ACM 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 ACM’s 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 ACM 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 the epic ACM will be determined in ongoing negotiation with the Executive Conference Minister and the team that is currently serving the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conferences, 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 Equipping Congregations, Programmatic Development and Implementation, Congregational Vitality or other as determined in negotiation;

- Resource and support congregations and Associations in a geographic region of the three Conferences as determined by the Executive Conference Minister;
- Witness and inspire others to 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 ACM 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.

We ask each staff person 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 Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota Conferences aspire 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 ACM 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.

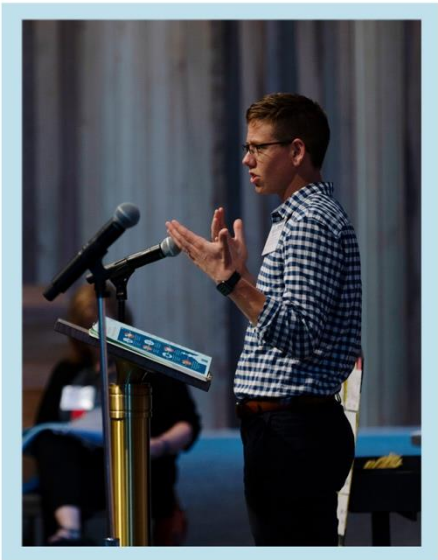
**Other**

**Qualifications:** The ACM will be an authorized minister of the United Church of Christ or will be able to obtain authorized ministerial standing within one year of appointment to the position.

**Work Location:** This Associate Conference Minister will live and work from a location determined in negotiation with the Executive Conference Minister.

**Compensation:** The ACM will be compensated according to the Tri-Conference UCC Ministries Personnel Policy.

# Our Ministerial Staff



To learn more about the Conference staff, visit:  
[www.ucctcm.org/staff/](http://www.ucctcm.org/staff/) and [www.ucctcm.org/category/staff-blog/](http://www.ucctcm.org/category/staff-blog/)

# WHY are we called to be the United Church of Christ in this time and place? To live into God's extravagant welcome and advocate for justice. So that all know love, safety, belonging and dignity.



## How the Iowa Conference UCC will live into our "why" statement:

**Putting faith into action:** Embody justice, mercy and loving kindness

**Celebrating:** Lavish love toward God, all people, and creation

**Fostering transformation and embracing change:** Listen to and following our still-speaking God • Strive to faithfully live up to who God has created and called us to be

**Listening and sharing:** Honor others' stories and experiences

**Giving honor to God:** Honor all people and creation, so that we honor the masterpiece of God's handiwork

**Creating safe space:** Ensure the emotional, physical, spiritual well-being of all



## How the Nebraska Conference UCC will live into our "why" statement:

**Connecting:** Cherishing and loving our churches for who they are and who they are becoming • Listen, respond, and be a physical presence

**Giving Voice:** Amplifying the voices of the unheard • Educate, lobby, and stand in solidarity with all God's creation

**Reaching Out to All:** Going to others, without waiting for them to come to us • Help churches to imagine the possibilities of unimagined connections

**Ensuring Safety:** Live out safe church policies with safe behaviors, inclusive language, unconditional acceptance

**Equipping:** Resourcing and looking for creative solutions • Help the local church find what it needs to thrive



## How the South Dakota Conference UCC will live into our "why" statement:

**Inspiring:** Motivating others to be their authentic best selves so they are invited to do likewise • Courageously allow our full light to shine and become a beacon

**Loving:** Selflessly giving for the greater good • Love through action and joyfully love God, love others, and love oneself

**Striving for Justice:** Striving for impartial equity and human dignity • Identify injustice and seek to correct it • Create robust and diverse communication around topics of justice • Acknowledge our roles in systems of inequity and injustice

**Belonging:** Recognizing the value of inclusion and relationship • Acknowledge others as subjects rather than objects • Nurture dialogue between equals • Celebrate the uniqueness of each individual

**Reconciling:** Intentionally restoring broken relationships and connections • Provide opportunities to express hurts, make confessions, and seek forgiveness

**Supporting:** Communicating love and offering resources • Provide lines of communication for personal and congregational need requests • Offer encouragement and support for the needs of ministry • Make available policies and procedures in the day to day operation of the church

## Our Boards of Directors

The Boards of Directors (BOD) of the Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota Conferences of the United Church of Christ (UCC) are independent governing bodies that function on behalf of the members of its conference between annual meetings. Per the Tri-Conference Covenant Agreement, the Tri-Conference (TCM) Board creates employment policy, determines the annual staffing budget and provides supervision for the Executive Conference Minister. The TCM Board is made up of three members representing each Conference. Current TCM BOD: IA - Chad Savage, Kate West, Jim Judkins; NE - Barry Hemmerling, Scott Jones, Lisa Hadler; SD - Dustin Bartlett, Mary Edelen, Linda Sue Weidenbach.

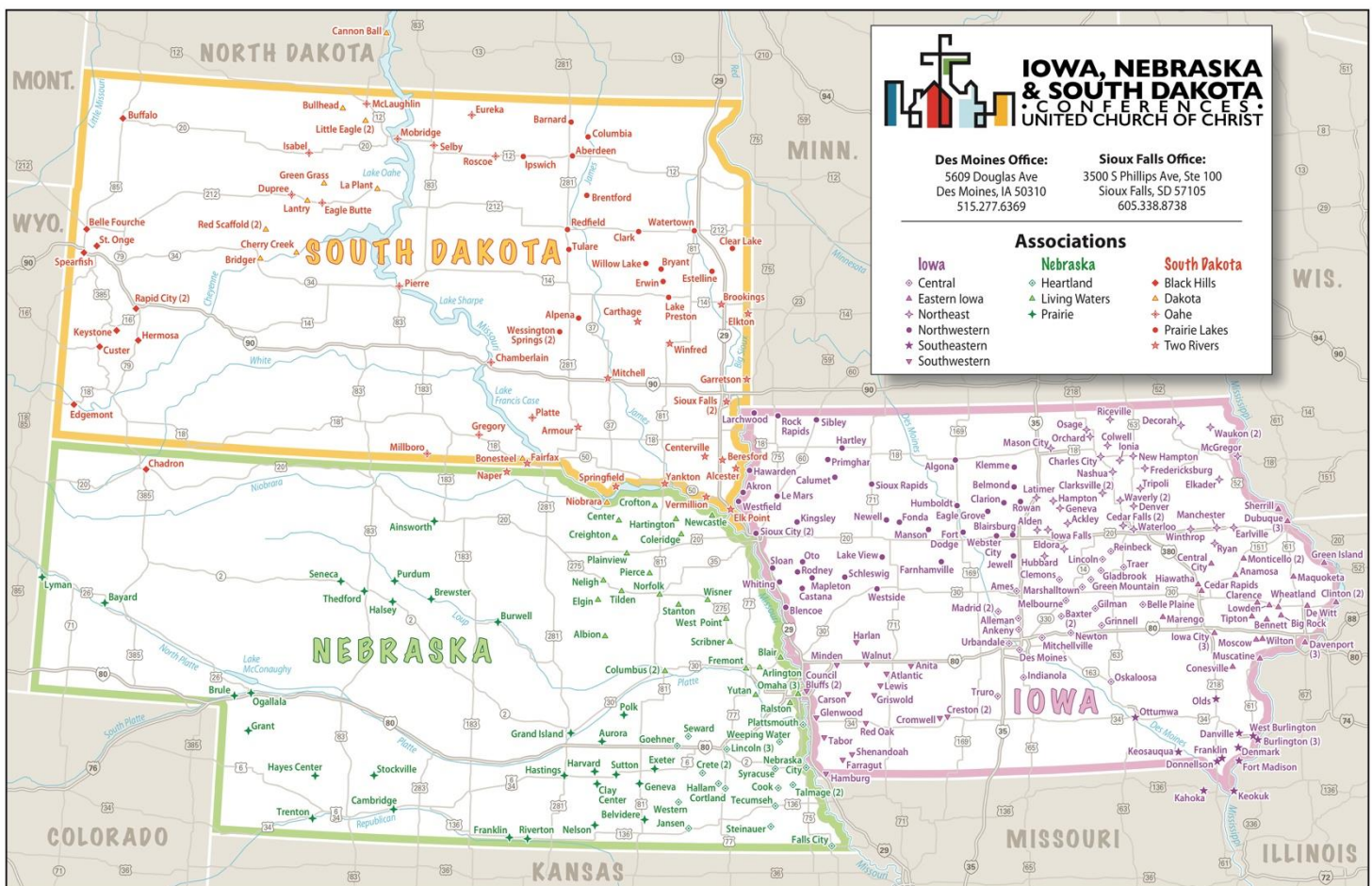
For a list of the current members of each Board of Directors, visit [www.ucctcm.org/bod](http://www.ucctcm.org/bod).

# 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. has been a morphing construct of what the next iteration of church might be at the conference level and we are seeking an Associate Conference Minister with robust faith and bold presence to help shape what that means in this next season.

Comprising 14 associations with 313 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 Minister 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 February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021.



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# Engaging Conversations to Inform Change

The Conferences offer a wide variety of resources and tools for church leaders to assist them in their ministry. Our dreamed of vision helps direct our steps to become the bold followers of Christ we claim to be.



## Minister's Moments

An offering of connection with Ministerial Staff and fellow clergy as a way to check in and hold each other in a peaceful space, ask questions, and pray together.



## Brave Conversations

As a commitment to anti-racism work Conference staff have created space particularly for white people in our conference to process, ask questions, and openly dialogue about the events that have been unfolding in our country and why. Partnered with this dialogue the Conferences have been training facilitators and engaging clergy groups with the Denominational curriculum 'White Privilege: Let's Talk.'



## Search and Call Webinars

A way for pastors across the denomination and churches within our conferences that find themselves in transition to engage more fully with the process.



## Virtual Worship Collaboration

Space to sit with ideas as well as offer the struggles that have become a part of weekly worship in this season of pandemic.



## Clergy Communities of Practice

Structured, facilitated small groups of clergy gatherings on a regular basis to offer mutual support, accountability and learning.

To see more resources available to our congregations and ministers, visit:

[www.ucctcm.org/congregationresources/](http://www.ucctcm.org/congregationresources/) and [www.ucctcm.org/ministerresources/](http://www.ucctcm.org/ministerresources/). You can find COVID-19 related resources from the Conferences at [www.ucctcm.org/covid-19/](http://www.ucctcm.org/covid-19/)

# Forming Covenant Partnership

## 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 began, 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: colonialism, cultural devastation, suicide, historical trauma and poverty.

## 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.

## 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.



## 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.



## 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 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade, 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade, and 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade, Family Camp, Grand Camp (for grandparents and grandkids), and Black Hills Playhouse Jr. Performing Arts Camp.

## 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.

## 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.





## **Compensation as a value that our faith affirms**

When we layout the compensation package we understand that it should honor experience, education, and responsibilities. It should meet genuine needs and be reviewed annually to respond to changing personal or economic conditions. It should be generous, just, and equitable regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, or social status. We also recognize that it is important to proclaim in this capitalistic society that our compensation is not determinate of our worth.

Compensation will include:

- Base salary that meets Conference and ACM Alliance guidelines
- 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 and Other Compensation:**

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

### **Our Process:**

If you are moved by the Spirit to be considered as a candidate for this EPIC position, please:

1. Submit a letter of application and answers to the application writing prompts to Blaine Wilson by February 19, 2021.
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.