



Conferences Minister of the Tri-Conference Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota Conferences





Ministry Description

In 2016, after much discernment, the Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota Conferences of the United Church of Christ agreed to create one staff to serve all three conferences. The Tri-Conference is seeking a Conferences Minister with robust faith and bold presence who is a strong administrator and has the prophetic vision to lead this first of its kind covenant in the UCC.

Comprising 14 associations with 242 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 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 Conference(s) Minister will connect these places, provide leadership and create community with the wider United Church of Christ.

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

For some time before 2016, there were discussions between leaders in the Iowa and Nebraska Conferences about the possibilities for closer cooperation. With the retirements of both of their conference ministers, those conversations came closer to being realized. When the South Dakota Conference became part of the arrangement, an agreement and covenant for cooperation was approved by each Conference, coming into effect after a vote of the Iowa Conference's annual meeting in October 2016.

The Tri-Conference Covenant was pitched to the three conferences primarily on the basis of two benefits: cooperation among ministerial staff is efficient and makes work more enjoyable, and there is efficiency in reducing the burden of national setting work from three conference ministers to one conferences minister. With the new arrangement in effect, Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota, are able to share one conferences minister.

According to the covenant approved by the annual meetings, the three conferences are staffed by one Conferences Minister overseeing four Associate Conference Ministers (ACMs): two assigned to Iowa, one to Nebraska, and one to South Dakota. All ministerial staff are be paid by the Tri-Conference. Their duties may vary as the CM makes use of staff's particular skills and interests in addition to their geographic assignments. However, we are not currently staffed at that level.

The Conferences Minister also oversees Conferences Deacons who build connections with the local churches.

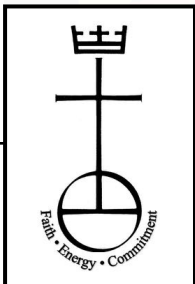
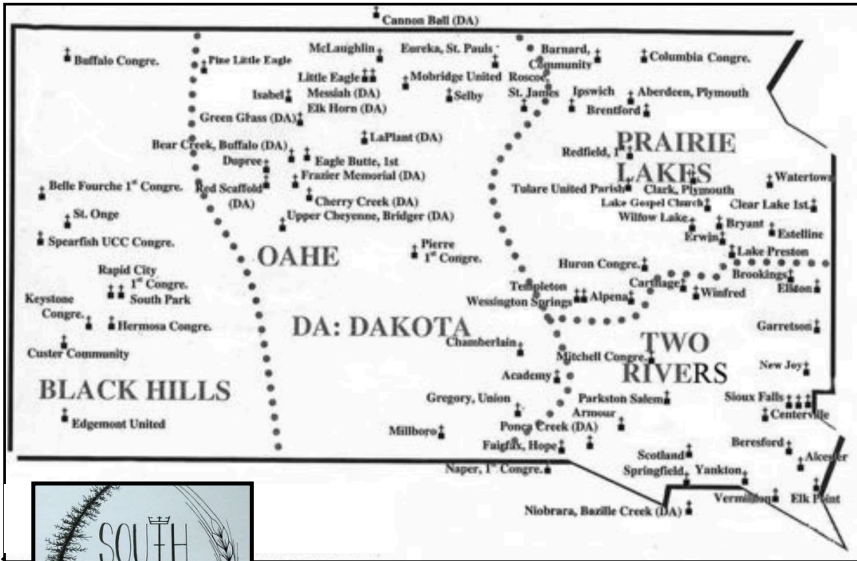
The Conferences Minister is overseen by the Tri-Conference Executive Committee (TCEC). This 9-person committee, whose members are elected by the three Boards of Directors (elected on staggered 3 year terms: each Board elects three people, of whom at least two are board members). The TCEC is the highest governing body of the Tri-Conference. The TCEC controls finances, negotiates with conference boards of directors for funding, evaluates the CM, and appoints ACM search committees.

The three conferences retain separate legal identities, separate committees and separate organizational structures, and they continue to hold separate status within the United Church of Christ. Common staffing means that most of their budgets are now be directed by the TCEC and no longer by their Board of Directors and Annual Meeting. The ACMs are chosen by the TCEC with the CM, but the CM is still hired by decision of the three Annual Meetings.

This structure, like all human structures, is imperfect, and is led by imperfect women and men. But with God's grace, it will hopefully improve our conferences as they serve the church and God's people in our three states. We entered into this arrangement joyfully, celebrating closer bonds with each other. We venture forward boldly, trusting that God will venture 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

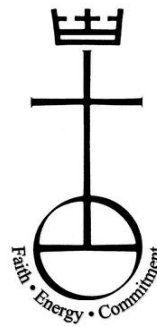
We believe that God calls us to bear witness to the hope of the Gospel. Inherent in this call is the fundamental primacy of the local church – entities we understand to be:

- 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

129
Congregations

22,843
Members

177
Average Members Per Church

6
Associations

MINISTERS

148
Active

250
Retired or Exempt

Nebraska Conference

60
Congregations

11,630
Members

194
Average Members Per Church

3
Associations

MINISTERS

68
Active

58
Retired or Exempt

South Dakota Conference

53
Congregations

6,380
Members

120
Average Members Per Church

5
Associations

MINISTERS

45
Active

29
Retired or Exempt

Iowa Conference

SPECIAL MINISTRIES & RELATIONSHIPS

Mind & Spirit Counseling Center

Founded in 1972, the Mind & Spirit 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

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.

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.

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.



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.



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.



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.

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 cabins 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 \$98,000 to \$105,000
- A portion of the salary set aside as a housing allowance, per the CM's request and as approved by the Tri-Conference Executive Council on an annual basis.
- UCC Retirement Annuity (14% of salary and housing)
- UCC Life and Disability Insurance Benefits
- UCC Health, Dental, and Vision Benefits
- Social Security/Medicare offset (7.65% of salary and housing)

The Conferences are open to making swaps between different areas of the compensation package (*e.g.* if the candidate would like a lower retirement annuity but a higher housing allowances).

TIME & OTHER COMPENSATION

- 4 weeks of vacation annually
- Maternity/Paternity Leave (as negotiated)
- Funds for Continuing Education
- Plan for Sabbatical Leave
- Moving Expenses

