

Position Description

Associate Conference Minister for Youth & Young Adult Ministry Iowa Conference, United Church of Christ

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 well considered, flexible and accessible to those God calls us to serve. In the same way, this position description is open to on-going negotiation and change as our churches and the conference live into new times and situations.

Title: Associate Conference Minister (ACM) for Youth and Young Adult Ministry

Personal Qualities: The ACM-YYAM will evidence the following qualities in her/his personal life and relationships:

- He/she will be a person of deep and evident **faith**;
- She/he will possess the necessary **courage** to face challenges directly and with clarity;
- He/she will evidence **integrity** (essential oneness) in relationship with those with whom he/she works and lives;
- She/he will possess acquired **wisdom** to the extent that clergy, lay leaders and youth/young adults will seek the ACM-YYAM's counsel;
- He/she will be **skilled** in the practice of youth and young adult ministry and **knowledgeable** about the ways of organizations;
- She/he will hold all persons in genuine **respect**, both those with whom she/he agrees and those with whom she/he disagrees.
- He/she will be an **organized** and **self-starting** worker with the capacity to work effectively with minimal detailed supervision.

Given that these expectations are ambitious and never perfectly attainable, the ACM-YYAM will also understand and accept his/her own limitations, be able to laugh at him/herself 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 ACM-YYAM will be determined in ongoing negotiation with Conference Minister. Initially the ACM-YYAM will:

- Be an agent for creativity and change in the ways our local churches, associations and conference approach ministry with and for youth and young adults.
- Plan and lead conference-wide programming for youth and young adults. These events might include (but not be limited to):
 - Youth and/or intergenerational camping/retreat events at Pilgrim Heights and other sites around Iowa.
 - Planning and support for UCC Regional and National Youth Events (RYE & NYE) and youth participation in General Synods.

- Creation of other youth and young adult events, including conference and/or association events, mission partnership/interpretation trips and work camps (and help coordinate fund raising for the same), as well as other events designed to cultivate faith and develop the leadership potential of UCC youth.
- Provide support, resources and training events to enhance local church youth and young adult ministry.
- Recruit, motivate and train volunteers to work as partners in the youth and young adult ministry program of the conference.
- Help the conference – its churches, authorized ministers and members – see Youth and Young Adult Ministry as an essential part of our common life and as a vehicle for evangelism (sharing the Good News of the Gospel).
- Work to encourage the participation of youth and young adults in various settings of the United Church of Christ.
- Work with UCC congregations in university and college towns to enhance their ministry with university and college students.
- Function as a member of the Iowa Conference Program staff and participate in staff meetings thereof.
- Consistently and engagingly interpret the ministries of the conference and other settings of the wider church and advocate for generous financial support of same by local churches and individuals throughout the conference;
- Participate collegially in meetings of the Conference Board of Directors and assume other organizational/programmatic responsibilities as may be assigned by and/or negotiated with the Conference Minister.

Accountability: The ACM-YYAM will be called by the Iowa Conference Board of Directors and will be accountable to the Conference Minister in the day to day exercise of her/his ministry.

Other

Qualifications: The ACM-YYAM will be an authorized minister of the United Church of Christ (ordained, licensed or commissioned) or will be able to obtain authorized ministerial standing within one year of appointment to the position.

The ACM-YYAM must be skilled at and comfortable with the use of technologies commonly used by youth and young adults.

Work Location: The ACM-YYAM will live at and work from a location negotiated with the Conference Minister.

Compensation: The ACM-YYAM will be compensated according to the Iowa Conference Personnel Policy.

Iowa Conference, UCC Current Ministry Focus

Early in 2006 the Board of Directors of the Iowa Conference adopted the following statement of mission priorities for the staff and board of the Iowa Conference:

- The Conference will emphasize in program and staff allocation the development, growth and support of effective and transforming pastoral leaders;
- The Conference will efficiently support the search and call process in our local churches;
- The Conference will offer support and resources to our associations as they attend to their responsibility to form and authorize ministers for pastoral leadership;
- The Conference will facilitate conference-wide ministry to youth and adults in settings beyond the local church;
- The Conference will be faithful in its covenant relationship with all settings of the United Church of Christ and the church ecumenical.

The specificity of these priorities goes beyond what is typically found in similar mainline church statements. We are clear that in a time of diminished resources, we have limited ability to do all (the usually good and important) work which has historically been attempted by regional church bodies. We affirm the value of those multi-faceted ministries, but in the Iowa Conference it is our intention to focus our resources more narrowly so we may maximize our potential to positively impact our local churches. To put it another way, we hope to do a few things very well, rather than to attempt a wider constellation of work and not succeed in doing any of them particularly well. One of these areas of focus and priority is youth and young adult ministry.

In 2005 the Iowa Conference called Rich Pleva as its new conference minister. Rich brought with him the conviction that the conference can most effectively leverage positive change in its churches by focusing its resources on the pastoral leaders of those congregations. His experience in the Prairie Association of the Illinois Conference was focused particularly on leadership development and he has brought that same experience and vision to the Iowa Conference.

The person we seek to call as our Associate Conference Minister for Youth and Young Adults will be a person who shares this vision. And by sharing that vision, we intend to call a person who has the gifts and experiences to empower young people to become leaders in our churches today and in the future.

Recent Highlights in the History of the Iowa Conference

In 2000, the Iowa Conference hosted the National Youth Event—again on the ISU campus in Ames following the theme, “Living in Christ, Creating our Future.” Approximately 2500 youth from around the nation attended and were served by hundreds of volunteers, again, from all over the Iowa Conference.

In 2007 the conference authorized the divestiture of ownership of Pilgrim Heights Camp and Retreat Center. This was a painful and controversial decision. The authorization to divest ownership included a stipulation that first priority in any sale/transfer be given to a newly organized corporation which would continue to operate the facility as a Christian camp in relationship (though not exclusive relationship) with the Iowa Conference. In January, 2008, operational authority for the camp was transferred to Our Sacred Space, Inc., and ownership will transfer to OSS at such time when the external debt on the property is retired.

Also in 2007, the Conference approved a budget which authorizes the creation of a new professional staff position for Youth and Young Adult Ministries. A search is in progress for this new staff person.

Church Statistics – 2007 Numbers

Rich, I took these out because they would not load on my computer and allow me to send. But none of this changes from what is already on the webpage.

Special Programs of the Iowa Conference

CENTER/LEARN/SEARCH. CENTER/LEARN/SEARCH is a lay ministry study program of the Iowa Conference of the United Church of Christ. Started in 1991, the program offers biblical, theological, and historical study opportunities, along with practical courses covering many aspects of local church life and ministry. CENTER/LEARN/SEARCH also welcomes participation by members of the Presbytery of Des Moines, PC (USA), and the Mid-American Baptist Churches, ABC/USA.

CENTER is a two-year track for those who wish to be better prepared as church educators. CENTER was developed for persons who desire to be involved in the education program of a local church, either as an employed lay educator or as an informed volunteer. Successful completion of the CENTER program also fulfills the educational requirement for those who choose to apply for certification as a church educator in the United Church of Christ, a denominational credential for those whose employment is in church education.

LEARN a three-year track for non-ordained person, was designed in response to laity who were interested in opportunities for spiritual growth and theological study. In addition, there was a recognition that some persons might become “license-able” upon completion of the LEARN program. The Associations in the Iowa Conference have determined that the LEARN program meets appropriate educational criteria for persons who might apply for licensing to serve in a setting where ordained leadership is not available and/or affordable.

SEARCH provides opportunity for individuals to enroll in one or more of the courses offered in CENTER/LEARN/SEARCH without committing to the entire program.

Pilgrimage. The Pilgrimage consists of a series of three retreats in which participants are provided an

opportunity to gain greater awareness and appreciation of God, of God's love, and of the many ways God is open to us.

Retreat #1: Helps individuals develop sensitivity to God, to study God's word, and to see how it applies in their daily lives. It offers tools to help participants open up their awareness to God's presence.

Retreat #2: Provides participants with additional tools. The emphasis is on the use of solitude, and the presence of vocation contributing to one's sense of Christian spirituality. The retreat includes eighteen hours of solitude (silent witness), a time to be alone or silently with others.

Retreat #3: Provides the participants with the opportunity to creatively interact with God amidst the ordinary and the extra-ordinary events of life.

Persons enrolled in the LEARN program are required to complete Pilgrimage as a part of their course of study.

Compensation Information and Terms of Employment for Prospective ACM's

If the ACM-YYAM currently has UCC Ministerial Authorization, he/she will be compensated as described below. If the ACM-YYAM does not yet have UCC Ministerial Authorization, compensation will be negotiated according to current skills and experience with the understanding that when she/he is granted authorization, compensation will be adjusted accordingly. In brief, the policies dictate these terms:

Cash Salary: ACM's will be compensated within a specified percentage range of up to 90% of the compensation of the conference minister based on skills and experience. For purposes of other benefit calculations, this amount is the "salary basis."

Housing allowance: The ACM may request a portion of his/her "cash salary" be designated housing allowance.

Social Security offset: 7.65% of "salary basis"

Pension: 14% of "salary basis"

Health Insurance: Fully funded for the ACM and his/her family (if needed)

Group Life & Disability: Fully funded

Professional Travel: The conference will provide an automobile for conference related travel and pay expenses related thereto.

Professional Expenses: Other professional expenses will be reimbursed on a vouchered basis up to the amount budgeted.

Vacation: 4 weeks annually

Continuing Ed: Up to 2 weeks annually with \$700 budgeted for expenses related thereto.

Moving expenses: Paid

Sabbatical: 3 months of sabbatical provided with full salary and benefits after each 5 years of service.

For more particulars, please consult the Conference personnel policies which will take precedence over any and all other representations.

July 2008

**Iowa Conference, UCC
ACM for Youth and Young Adult Ministries**

Application form

A complete application will include your ministerial profile (if authorized for ministry in the UCC – see below if you are not a UCC authorized minister) and your responses to these questions. Please send all these materials to Committee Chair Jane Willan: jwillan_6@yahoo.com.

Please verify/include your preferred contact information.

ALL MATERIALS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 1, 2008.

1. Technology continues to evolve and play an ever-increasing role in how we communicate and interact with one another. Describe for us your background and experience with technology (e.g. electronic communication, web pages, text messaging, Facebook, MySpace, etc.) and how you would envision yourself using the various technologies available to enhance the youth and young adult ministry of the Iowa Conference.
2. You have a group of 25 youth in a park. You were told there would be a guest speaker. But the guest doesn't show up. What could you do with these youth with a few trees, some string, and pine cones?
3. What do you see as the distinctive essence of the UCC? In terms of this "essence", what do you see as being most helpful in your ministry? What do you see as most challenging?
4. How has your personal faith and experience of the church helped to shape you as an individual and prepare you for this kind of position?
5. How do you define youth and how do you define young adult? How are they the same and how are they different? How will your ministry express itself to each one?

Please answer in no more than 10 pages, being as specific and objective as you can, using concrete examples from your own experience.

A criminal background check will be performed on the chosen candidate.

NOTE: If you are not an authorized minister in the UCC, in addition to the answers to the questions above, please send us an expanded resume with at least the following information:

- Signed “Statement of Consent” (available from search committee chair)
- Personal contact information
- Employment history
- Ecclesiastical authorization (if any)
- Statement of prior church leadership and experience – both at the local church and in wider church settings
- Educational history, starting with High School, including relevant continuing education
- Statement of Ministry. This should be a no more than one page description of what you want this committee to know about your philosophy of and practice of Christian Ministry. There is no set formula you must follow, but you might include information about your call to ministry or church vocation, your spiritual or vocational pilgrimage, your theological orientation, your understanding of the mission of the church, your style of leadership, or other information you want the committee to know about you.
- Self-Appraisal statement. In this section, name those qualities which you think especially commend you for this position.
- Signed “Background Disclosure” statement (available from Search Committee chair).
- References. Please include the names of at least three references with contact information.

Search Committee Bios

To come.