

Metro Association, New York Conference, UCC Guidelines for Four-Way Covenants

The UCC ordains (and otherwise recognizes) ministers to positions in which the calling body is not a UCC congregation through use of a four-way covenant between the ministerial candidate, the calling body, the local UCC Association and the candidate's local congregation. (By "calling body" we mean an organization which is not a local congregation of the United Church of Christ.) Essential to this four-way covenant is the understanding on the part of the local congregation that the ministry being recognized through the ordination of its candidate, is indeed a ministry **of** that local congregation.

Consequently, before entering into a four-way covenant, the local congregation should first determine that the specific work to be done by the candidate with the calling body specifically connects to the mission and outreach of the local congregation, and is something the local congregation understands as an extension of its own ministry.

The local congregation shall establish a partnership with the candidate -- effective after ordination or installation -- that facilitates its ownership and participation in this ministry. The local congregation shall create its own covenant to commit itself to the ministry represented by the candidate's calling body.

While the parameters of the partnership may vary, it is expected that the candidate will also participate in the traditional ordained ministerial functions of preaching, teaching and serving the sacraments, in his or her local congregation, at least annually. The local congregation shall appoint a body to be responsible for insuring that the connection to, communication with, and support of the individual after entry into the covenant is active and beneficial for all parties in the covenant.

Specifically, in creating the four-way covenant, the local congregation must clearly present:

- 1) the job description of the individual to be ordained
- 2) a description of the ministry and a statement as to why the local congregation believes the candidate ought to be ordained to serve in this position, and why this work warrants ordination
- 3) a statement as to how it will support the ministry of the person to be ordained, and how the candidate will continue to be involved in the life of the local congregation
- 4) a statement of the process for the newly ordained minister to report to the local congregation progress in the ministry, to share news with the local congregation, and to recruit participation in this ministry by members of the local congregation

5) a written designation of which body within the local congregation will be responsible for supervision and support of the ordained minister in the four-way covenant

6) a formal job description from the calling body, and also a letter supporting the four-way covenant process.

These questions must be specifically addressed in writing, in such a way that, upon review, it will be clear whether the terms of the covenant are being kept.