

Developmental Ministry

Developmental ministry is an opportunity for congregations, once they have completed interim ministry, to delve deeper into areas of congregational life that require specific attention, or cultural shifts, prior to the calling of a settled minister. Developmental congregations recognize that they have specific areas that they need to improve, and that they want a specialist to help them do that. Congregations will need to apply to be accepted into the program, and will be required to pay a fee to help offset the costs of additional staff work with their congregation. It is not an alternative to search or interim, but something to follow after that work.

Congregations that will be ideal for developmental ministry include those that demonstrate:

- 1 A pattern of “stuckness” that can’t be explained by external factors, that the congregation’s leadership recognizes, and are willing to work to address
- 2 That the congregation has specific developmental goals rather than traditional interim goals
- 3 A collaborative team approach between developmental minister, congregational leadership and Congregational Life Staff; as part of this, the congregation will recognize the authority of the minister, and work to establish a good working understanding of the role of the minister within the congregation
- 4 Substantial work on the interim tasks prior to entering into the developmental ministry
- 5 A willingness to examine and change their internal culture in response to evaluation and analysis of where they might be stuck

(Exceptions to these can be made as agreed to with the UUA Transitions and Regional staff.)

Developmental ministry will be a contracted ministry, without the ability to call the developmental minister; the tenure can range from 3-7 years, with a minimum of 5 seen as the usual practice. (Exception to the inability to call the Developmental Minister can be made as agreed to with the UUA Transitions and Regional staff — this will be seen as a very rare exception.)

Characteristics of Successful Developmental

Ministries:

Not all are necessary but more is better.

Congregational leadership explicitly recognizes and names unhealthy patterns that need to change.

Congregation is willing to accept their responsibility for the situation (stop blaming others).

MidAmerica (MA) staff senses willingness and commitment to congregational redevelopment.

MA staff provides support, guidance, training, etc. to prepare the congregation for change

MA staff, developmental minister and congregational leadership work together as a team.

Leadership is able to identify strategic priorities for congregational development

MA staff recognizes the capacity for adaptive change within the strategic priorities

Congregation is willing to explore ministerial authority and develops appropriate trust for professional religious leaders.

Congregation is able to transfer their new culture, habits and patterns to the next minister and does not seek to call the Developmental Minister.

Developmental minister with:

- emotional intelligence and spiritual maturity;

- systems thinking;

- capacity to manage polarities in congregational change;

- skills and strategies to champion culture changes;

- skills and strategies for reshaping the congregational

narrative;

- capacity to fulfill an integrated plan for strategic change: preaching, teaching, leadership, care, etc. all address the identified culture change.

- time management that favors the congregational objectives over personal ministerial preferences;

- and other skills for congregational success such as:

stewardship, staff management, etc.

Favorable demographics to attract and engage new members quickly.

Potential to develop a cohesive and collaborative professional staff team.

Minister and leadership are able to capture early victories: e.g. building repair, improved community profile, etc.

Annual assessment of strategic priorities facilitated by outside person (CL, consultant, etc.) to maintain shared accountability and celebrate successes.

MidAmerica will offer the following to the Developmental Congregations:

- Initial start-up workshop with minister and governing board

- Quarterly check-ins (virtual, conference call, etc.)

- Once a year in-person weekend with workshop, meeting with minister and board, possibly preaching, and including the annual review

- Available for consultation throughout the year by phone, email, etc.

- As the number of Developmental Ministries in the Region grows, the possibility of:

 - Additional conference calls/webinars with leaders and professional staff in concert with other developmental congregations in the Region;

 - Workshop time at Regional Assembly

Financial Commitment:

Congregations will be expected to make the following financial commitments:

- 1 Annual contribution for participation in the program (over and above expectations of congregational contributions to UUA and Region):

- a For Fair Share congregations: \$750 for the first year; \$500 for the second year

- b For non-Fair Share congregations: \$1000 for the first year; \$750 for the second year

- 2 Creation of a plan to move to Fair Share giving to the UUA and MA over the duration of the developmental ministry

For more information, please contact MidAmerica Region Congregational Life Consultant Rev. Lisa Presley, lpresley@uua.org.

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