

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR FITNESS REVIEW ADJUDICATION MEETING

This meeting takes place after the Committee on Ministry (COM) has had the opportunity to review all the materials submitted to it by the Interview Team, and after the COM has had the chance to talk with the Interview Team. All COM members, along with the Conference Minister or Associate Conference Minister, should be in attendance unless conflicts prevent it. Also invited are: the person raising a question (PRQ) about a minister's fitness for ministry in and on behalf of the UCC, and the minister in question (MIQ). One or both may bring a person of their choosing, approved by the COM, as a support, but that person is not to participate in the meeting in any way.

Prayer requesting God's presence and guidance as the COM discerns the matter before them. Seek God's Spirit to offer care and concern for all participants.

Statement of the Role of the COM, clarifying that a Fitness Review is an ecclesial matter, and that the Committee on Ministry (or other adjudicating body) has been empowered by the Church to address issues of fitness for ministry for persons with standing in the United Church of Christ. The Committee on Ministry acts on behalf of the entire United Church of Christ and has been granted this authority constitutionally.

Introductions of all persons participating and their roles in this meeting

Statement reviewing the agenda and how the meeting will be conducted.

Reading of the questions that have been raised about the minister's fitness for ministry.

Presentation by the person raising the question of the minister's fitness or another affected person, summarizing information related to this concern. This presentation is optional at the discretion of the person raising the question or another affected person. This is not an opportunity to interview this individual again, but rather for them to share their perspective with the Committee on Ministry.

The Committee on Ministry may have a few additional questions to ask this person that were not addressed in the interviews. The time frame for this is about 30-60 minutes.

Prayer

Break

Presentation by the minister in question, responding to information surfaced in the Fitness Review to date. This is not an opportunity to interview the Minister in Question again, but rather for the minister to share their perspective with the Committee on Ministry. This presentation is optional at the discretion of the minister in question, but the minister is strongly encouraged to be present. The Committee on Ministry may have a few additional questions to ask the minister in question that were not addressed in the interviews. The time frame for this is about 30-60 minutes, or approximately the same amount of time given to the individual who spoke previously.

It is not expected that in every case, the person raising the concern and the minister in question will meet with the COM all together. In many cases, it is appropriate for the person raising the concern to meet first with the COM with the minister in question absent, followed by the minister meeting with the COM with the person raising the concern being absent. The COM is concerned with the spiritual care of all persons involved, and will determine how best to involve who is in the room.

Prayer

Dismissal of all except the Association Committee on Ministry and Association or Conference staff.

Deliberation and Discernment, where the Committee on Ministry then will spend some time in prayer and discernment answering the following questions:

- Were the specific concerns found to have merit, and/or did other concerns arise that were found to have merit? What is the rationale for this decision?

- Is this minister presently fit for ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ?
- Based on the COM's faithful discernment and deliberation, what outcome is appropriate? This decision should be made by whatever means the COM has established in its policies.

Following a decision about the outcome, the COM will need to take other matters into consideration:

- If a program of growth is indicated, please consider: what elements of the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers and the UCC Ministerial Code need to be addressed? How shall they be addressed? What changes need to be demonstrated by the person to the Committee on Ministry before they can be reaffirmed for ministry in and on behalf of the UCC? Are there specific actions that need to be taken to right wrongs (written or verbal apologies, repayment of financial debt, etc.)? What tools, resources, or contacts will enable the minister to achieve the growth necessary to faithfully and effectively minister in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ?
- What benchmarks or goals will be used to assess whether the minister in question is able to have their fitness for ministry reaffirmed? What timeline is anticipated for assessing and completing this program of growth?
- Who on the COM will communicate this decision to the Minister in Question? The person who raised the concern? The ministry setting? Other relevant parties?
- The COM should refer to the Fitness Review Process Checklist to guide them in additional matters.