

**Executive Conference Minister
Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota
Position Profile**

SUMMARY

The Executive Conference Minister (ECM) shall be the spiritual leader, pastor and teacher, and chief executive officer of the Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota Conferences of the United Church of Christ. This person will be a deeply rooted Christian leader, a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with a clear sense of purpose, and a non-anxious presence during a time of adaptive change. The ECM will be an excellent and honest communicator, savvy about the changing landscape of ministry for both congregations and judicatories, and called to creative and constructive relationships with evolving institutional structures.

After nearly two years of discernment, the South Dakota, Iowa and Nebraska Conferences have covenanted with one another to call a shared pastoral leader. Accountable to a new body originally known as the Tri-Conference Executive Committee, but incorporated as Tri-Conference UCC Ministries, Inc. (the “Corporation”) the ECM will work to unify and condense three separate offices and support staffs to provide a ministry of support to 333 congregations. The ECM will serve as Head of Staff for a middle judicatory ministry that includes a highly effective support staff for day-to-day management of finances and records and 3-4 Associate Conference Ministers (ACMs) located in separate geographies. The ECM will provide primary staff support to the independent boards of directors of the Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota conferences. The ECM serves as the Chief Ecumenical Officer of the three conferences and the principal representative to wider settings of the United Church of Christ. Additionally, the ECM will provide direct pastoral support to the Dakota Association.

STAFF TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Once called, the ECM will begin work with the Corporation to fill any ACM vacancies on the unified staff. It is likely that two or three ACMs will be recruited in the first year of the ECM’s tenure. Therefore, the ECM will have a significant opportunity to shape the program portfolios of the staff team. It is expected that the unified staff will provide ongoing support to the three committees on ministry that authorize ministers in Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota. It is also expected that the unified staff will actively recruit excellent pastors to the tristate region, provide support to congregations in transition, and offer some pastoral mediation services where conflict resolution is needed. Nevertheless, the ECM and her/his staff will have broad discretion to apportion personnel resources in a way that both provides adequate coverage to our congregations and advances the strategic goals of the judicatory.

LOCATION AND TRAVEL

The ECM will establish, with the advice and consent of the Corporation, a new location for the

unified conference offices. Omaha, Sioux City, and Des Moines have been discussed as possible locations. The goal is to deploy Associate Conference Ministers geographically, with one ACM in South Dakota, one ACM in Nebraska, and two ACM's in Iowa. Therefore, it is expected that the ECM will make increasing use of internet technology to communicate with staff. Because the ECM will provide direct support to the three boards, the Dakota Association, and wider settings of the UCC, significant travel should be expected. Up to 75% of the ECM's working days may be on the road.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- Serves as the Head of Staff for the unified staff, supervising ACM's, support staff, adjunct staff, and any other staff as may be deemed appropriate for the realization of the three conferences combined and distinct ministries.
- Maintains a strong spiritual center for the three conference boards and the shared staff.
- Serves as staff to the boards of directors of the three conferences and to any ACM search committees
- Builds a sense of community among members of the unified staff so that the ACM's are adequately resourced and supported for their work with distant churches.
- Develops portfolios for the ACMs in accordance with the mission and ministry priorities of their assigned conference, but which also make optimal use of their training, gifts, and passions, which may include some cross-conference work.
- Establishes an office integrating the finances and records of three offices, hiring, condensing, and supervising adequate support staff to manage tri-conference resources.
- Serves as the principal representative of the three conferences to the wider settings of the United Church of Christ.
- Serves as the ecumenical representative for each of the three conferences.
- Provides direct pastoral support to the Dakota Association, including offering pastoral care as necessary, facilitating ministerial authorization, and providing transition resources.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- **Deep Purpose:** Articulates an integrated understanding of one's pastoral vocation; describes a compelling relationship with God's grace; greets the unfolding future with curiosity; privileges a spirit of discernment over the reassurance existing structures.
- **Convening Dialogue:** Invites others into the discernment of a collective vision of the future; surfaces unacknowledged problems and conflicts; welcomes others into responsibility for a ministry that is larger than any individual or small group.
- **Team-Building Orientation:** Demonstrates interest, skill, and success in team environments; places group goals ahead of personal agendas; offers self as a resource to other members of the team; shares credit for success with others.
- **Managing Change:** Demonstrates innovation and creativity to improve organizational effectiveness; maintains flexibility during periods of transition and transformation; helps

staff to develop a clear understanding of what they will need to do differently, as a result of changes in the organization; proposes new approaches, methods, or technologies; manages the orderly implementation of change.

- **Motivation Skills:** Creates a climate in which people want to do their best; can motivate individuals, team, or project members, even those who do not report directly to the ECM; invites shared input and decision making; makes each individual feel that her or his work is important.
- **Hiring and Staffing Skills:** Identifies new talent; hires the best people available from outside or inside the organization; is not afraid of selecting strong people; does not discriminate in hiring or recruitment; is proactive in drawing the interest of highly skilled ministers.
- **Supervisory Skills:** Good at establishing clear expectations and setting clear direction; sets stretching objectives; distributes the workload appropriately; provides regular and ongoing feedback about performance; proactively deals with substandard performance; engages disciplinary processes in a timely manner.
- **Conflict Management Skills:** Steps up to conflicts quickly and directly, seeing them as opportunities; reads situations quickly; finds common ground and gets cooperation with minimum anxiety; understands emotional dynamics of congregational, judicatory and other organizational systems.
- **Problem-Solving Skills:** Uses sound logic and analysis to approach difficult problems and apply effective solutions; distinguishes between symptoms, causes, and implied solutions; decides in a timely manner based upon a mixture of analysis, wisdom, experience, and judgment.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The ECM will be accountable directly to the Board of Directors of the Corporation and to the boards of directors of the South Dakota, Nebraska, and Iowa Conferences. The personnel policies of the Tri-Conference staff will be established and documented by the Board of Directors of the Corporation.

QUALIFICATIONS

The ECM shall be an authorized minister of the United Church of Christ or shall obtain such authorization within one year from the date of the commencement of his or her ministry and shall demonstrate experience in church leadership and management, including the ability to supervise, develop, and support a professional staff team. He or she must have appropriate and transferable pastoral and parish experience and must have an involvement in and awareness of the cultures of small and large, rural and urban churches. Patience, perseverance, and a well-developed sense of humor are valued attributes.