

Church and Ministry Commission Report

This past year has been an active year for the Church and Ministry Commission. In addition to our normal support conferences, check ins, and requests from local churches for licensure of lay clergy members we have had the privilege of participating in the following activities:

Proposal for New Manual on Ministry

The Habakkuk group has been working on revising and updating the Manual on Ministry. Last fall Ken Crouch and I attended training in Denver that provided us with more information on what is being proposed in the new manual and distinct changes from the old manual. We brought this information back and presented it to our Conference body. We were given the opportunity to have additional comments on the contents of the new manual and these were compiled and forwarded to the Habakkuk work group.

Ordination

We were pleased to participate in the ordination service for Tim Seery. Last year we reported on his Ecclesiastical Council. After his graduation he did receive a call and is now serving a church in California.

Members in Discernment

We continue to have three members in discernment that we are following. Two of these members are from the Billings area, Laura Keating and Lisa Harmon. We are pleased to report at this time Laura has been accepted to attend seminary in Boston. Lisa has completed the activities that were requested of her and is being granted licensure for her activities with First Church in Billings. Lisa's ministry is designed to bring many new and innovated activities to the downtown area of Billings. Larry Meidinger is from the Butte church and continues on his spiritual journey. He is providing a ministry for youth in a treatment facility where he is employed.

There are rumors/reports that there are others in the Conference who are interested in this process. This is exciting as these are the future leaders of our Conference.

Compensation Guidelines

With much support from our Conference Minister a draft of Suggested Guidelines for Ministerial Compensation for our Conference have been proposed and will be presented the general body at this annual meeting.

3 and 4 Way Covenants

These documents are being worked on in conjunction with the new Manual on Ministry. These are agreements between clergy, local churches and the conference. Also if a Ministry setting is outside the local church such as the document we ratified for our Hospital Chaplain a 4th party is involved in the agreement.

Support Conferences

At each of our scheduled meeting we are attempting to have at least two support activities for local clergy. A list has been developed in the conference office so we will attempt to have a dialog with the clergy person at least once every three years.

New Proposals

As a Commission we have been approached for two different areas of new activities that will benefit our whole Conference. First is the design of a Curriculum that Rev Bill Hawk has been working on for boundary training for local churches and their leadership. The second area is a request from the "Second Life Church" to present the model they have developed to reach members who are not able to attend a local church worship service. With the closure of several of our churches in rural areas this is an opportunity for those individuals who live in those areas to attend a UCC worship service on a regular schedule.

As I stated this has been a year of much activity for the Commission. We ask for you guidance and prayers as we continue our journey in service to your local congregations.

Submitted by:

Rick Thompson, Chair