

## Installation Service for an Ordained Minister

The installation of a pastor is not simply a matter between a local congregation and their called pastor. It is a covenant that involves the church, the pastor, the Association, and the wider denomination. Covenant is central to our life together and should be the main focus for the pastor, the church and the Association. Consider the following:

“Installation is the liturgical celebration of the **covenantal relationship** among the ordained minister, the local church, the Association, and the calling body if different from the local church. Upon request from the local church and the ordained ministerial partner, **the Association participates in planning the installation service in cooperation with the other partners in the covenantal relationship.**” (From the Manual on Ministry “Perspectives and procedures for Ecclesiastical authorization of ministry” page 7)

“We are a church shaped by Covenant. Covenants differ from contracts. A Covenant does not dissolve automatically at the point that the parties disagree or experience discomfort, or when change occurs....that dynamic tension between autonomy and covenant are at the heart of what it means to be the United Church of Christ. Therefor **Covenant means that each setting of the Church agrees to be held accountable by the others**, and each agrees to allow its individual identity to be shaped in part, by its relationship to the other settings of the United Church of Christ....All member churches and individual members of the UCC denomination need to understand that local autonomy “in a covenantal polity is neither absolute or self-generated”, but carries with it accountability to others in the covenant.” (From the UCC Manual on Church Volume 1, Draft 2, October 2006)

With these thoughts in mind the installation of a pastor needs to focus primarily on the “covenant relationship” our Association has with its member churches and the pastors who serve them. Fortunately there is a very good suggested “order of worship” for an installation service contained in the Book of Worship (See the UCC web site: [WWW.UCC.ORG](http://WWW.UCC.ORG) then type in “order for installation of a pastor” It should bring you to pages 412-21)

The following is a suggested outline for the service. (Please note that the web site provides detailed wording for each of the elements in the service):

-A greeting is given by the Moderator or a representative of the Association.

-Greeting from the Conference

-A representative of the local church then presents a formal request to the Association for the installation of their new pastor.

-The Association representative then responds to this request by inviting the pastor forward as a sign of her/his acceptance of the call to this office.

-A “charge or exhortation” to the congregation and to the pastor is given through a reading from I Thessalonians 5:12-18 by the Association representative and the representative of the local church.

-The Association representative affirms the covenant between the Association and the congregation, then addresses the pastor calling upon her/him to declare her/his agreement to uphold the covenant.

-The Association representative addresses the congregation and asks them to affirm their agreement to abide by the Covenant.

-The congregation responds by voicing their covenant in the words provided in the Book of Worship or if the local church wants to write its own response this is also a possibility.

-The Association representative addresses the members of the Association who are present and asks them to affirm their covenant with the church and their pastor.

-The members of the Association respond with their affirmation of the covenant.

-A prayer of installation is given by the Association representative and then a declaration of installation is made.

-Offering taken (offering designation usually is given to the Association Financial Assistance for Members in Discernment Fund, but can be determined by the candidate in collaboration with the Association Moderator).

-At this point there are a number of options available:

The singing of a hymn,

A laying on of hands by the congregation for their new pastor,

Greetings from representatives from other Christian communions or communities of faith,

The gifting of a symbolic key to the church, a new stole, or a Bible may be presented to the pastor.

A response by the pastor to all present in the form of a word of thanks, blessing, or even a brief presentation of the pastor’s vision for what this Covenant will mean in practical terms for the church and the Association.

-To conclude the service it is suggested that the newly installed pastor serve communion and give the benediction.