

What does the Church & Ministry Committee do?

In addition to work requiring the attention of the full committee, three standing subcommittees do much of the work:

- The *Authorization* subcommittee works with persons seeking to have ministerial standing in the Western Association, either by transferring in or through ordination. This subcommittee also helps plan installation and ordination services as needed.
- The *Pastoral Care* subcommittee concerns itself with the well-being of our clergy, including care around times of bereavement and celebration, such as ordination anniversary milestones. It also conducts exit interviews with those leaving pulpits. This subcommittee also supports church pastoral relations committees and welcomes new clergy.
- The *Training* subcommittee is our liaison to the New York School of

Ministry, the Conference's training program for lay ministers, and to seminaries. This subcommittee also is responsible for educational efforts that include boundaries awareness training (required every five years for all Association clergy) and polity training, for mentoring and supervising seminary students and others preparing for ministry, and for publicizing opportunities for all in the Association to grow spiritually and to consider a call to ministry.

In all committee and subcommittee work, we covenant to hold in confidence any information that arises in our meetings.

Who serves on Church & Ministry?

The committee has a chairperson and vice chairperson (currently co-chairs), a secretary and a treasurer. The 12 members of the committee are evenly divided between clergy and lay persons, with all having an equal voice in our work. The Association registrar sits in on meetings but does not have a vote. Our regional conference minister supports us with voice but not vote.

The members of the committee are nominated by the Association Nominating Committee and approved by delegates to the Association Meeting.

If there's a problem

When a church faces a serious problem for which it seeks guidance or mediation, the committee can initiate a situational support consultation at the request of church or pastor. In this consultation, a small team of committee members meets with church members and pastor, with the goal of restoring health and wholeness to their shared ministry.

Although extremely rare, if a local-church pastor allegedly has committed a breach of ethics so serious as to call into question his or her fitness for continued ministry, a fitness review may be instituted by the Church & Ministry Committee.

How can we keep our congregation healthy?

Setting clear expectations and boundaries can create the healthiest possible environment for serving God. We recommend that your pastor and congregation obtain and study two parallel documents: *The Ordained Minister's Code* and *The Local Church in Relation to Its Pastor*, available at www.ucc.org.