



## **Guide to Unitarian Ministerial Candidates**

What are they? What should we call them? What can they do? What should they not do?

### **Some Acronyms:**

CUC	Canadian Unitarian Council
LCC	Lay Chaplains Committee (of the CUC)
MFC	Ministerial Fellowship Committee (of the UUA)
RSCC	Regional Sub-Committee on Candidacy (of the MFC) (1 for Canada, plus 4 others.)
UUA	Unitarian Universalist Association
UUMA	Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association
UUMOC	Unitarian Universalist Ministers of Canada

### **How Unitarian Universalist Ministers are trained in North America**

Canada and the United States share a single system of training and certifying professional Unitarian Universalist Ministers. This system is under the direction of the UUA's Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) and its regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy. Practicing Unitarian ministers are expected to become members of the continental professional association for Unitarian ministers, the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA) or the Canadian chapter (UUMOC). However, individual congregations are free to recruit any person at all to serve as their minister. Individual congregations recruit, call, install and ordain their own ministers.

### **Professional Ministers and Lay Chaplains**

Most Unitarian Ministers in both Canada and the United States meet the training and screening requirements established by the MFC. In addition, Canada has a program sponsored by the CUC to train lay people recommended by congregations and fellowships to perform rites of passage functions such as marriages, memorial services and infant namings for their congregation and the larger community. Lay Chaplains are trained and skilled, but they are *not* normally trained professionally to be ministers nor are they recognized by the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee. The United States does not make use of a Lay Chaplain program, but instead uses only ministers and ministerial candidates to perform rites of passage services.

### **Authorized Unitarian Universalist Schools of Theology**

Two schools specifically developed to prepare Unitarian Universalist ministers are recognized by the UUA. These are:

- Meadville/Lombard Theological School in Chicago, Illinois, and
- Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, California.

Graduates from many other theological schools may also be admitted as Candidates for Fellowship by the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee. These ministers in training will be required to undertake additional specialized training to help them become knowledgeable about Unitarian Universalist traditions before they are granted Full Fellowship. Examples of these schools include:

- Harvard Divinity School, Concord, Massachusetts, and
- Vancouver School of Theology, Vancouver, British Columbia.

**Some Definitions:**

Following *in alphabetical order* are definitions of some common terms regarding ministers in training as they are used in the North American Unitarian Universalist movement.

<b>Assistant Minister</b>	A minister who has been called and installed to assist a senior minister in a congregation, fellowship or community.
<b>Associate Minister</b>	A minister of any faith associated with a settled minister.
<b>Call</b>	The formal “invitation” from a congregation to a person to serve that congregation as a minister.
<b>Chaplain</b>	A term with various meanings in other theological traditions, but in the Unitarian tradition, usually an ordained minister serving in a hospital or military setting as a community minister. In Canada sometimes used (but discouraged) as a shortened form of “Lay Chaplain”
<b>Clinical Pastoral Education</b>	A field learning experience late in the training of a Ministerial Candidates in which they gain experience providing pastoral care to a community or congregation under the supervision of a Full Fellow.
<b>Community Ministry</b>	One of three specialized areas of training approved by the UUA MFC for Ministerial Candidates. Community Ministers typically work in a community setting acting to implement Unitarian Universalist values.
<b>Divinity School (theological school, seminary)</b>	A post-secondary institution that specializes in studies in divinity, theology or religious studies. In the North American Unitarian Universalist tradition, the UUA MFC determines which schools are acceptable for the preparation of a UU minister.
<b>Full Fellow</b>	A ministerial candidate who has completed all of the necessary steps and met all of the required standards to become a Unitarian Universalist minister.
<b>Installation</b>	The formal ceremony in which a minister is “appointed” to serve a congregation, fellowship or community as a professional minister.
<b>Interim Minister</b>	A minister appointed by a board of a congregation or fellowship to fill a need for a minister during a sabbatical for a settled minister, or during a time when a church is searching for a settled minister.
<b>Intern Minister</b>	A ministerial candidate who is completing a required field placement under the direction of a minister in full fellowship. In the internship the minister learns some of the more practical skills of parish ministry, ministry of religious education or community ministry.
<b>Lay Chaplain</b>	In the Canadian Unitarian movement, a lay person trained by the Canadian Unitarian Council to perform marriages, memorial services, namings, infant dedications and similar rites of passage, recommended by a congregation to serve in this role for the congregation, and recommended to a provincial government by the CUC for a license to perform marriages.

<b>Minister</b>	A person called and installed by a church or religious fellowship to provide spiritual, ethical and pastoral leadership. In the Unitarian tradition, a congregation may install any person as a minister, but the CUC and UUA encourage the installation of ministers professionally trained and screened by the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee.
<b>Minister Emeritus</b>	A designated role within a congregation granted to a respected retired minister.
<b>Minister in Training</b>	A student minister.
<b>Ministerial Candidate</b>	<p>A person who has been accepted by the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) as a Candidate for becoming a Unitarian minister.</p> <p>Acceptance as a Ministerial Candidate requires that the student be sponsored by a congregation, have completed or be in the process of completing a Masters program in theology in an institution recognized by the UUA, and have been recommended by a Regional Sub-Committee on Candidacy (RCC) of the UUA's Ministerial Fellowship Committee.</p> <p>Regional Committees on Candidacy exist for each of the UUA's regions. Canadian ministerial pre-candidates must be approved by the RSCC for Canada.</p>
<b>Ministerial Pre-Candidate</b>	A person who has been accepted by a UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee Regional Sub-Committee on Candidacy as a Pre-Candidate for becoming a Unitarian Universalist minister.
<b>Ministry</b>	The enactment of religious faith by members of a community.
<b>Ministry of Religious Education</b>	One of three specialized areas of training approved by the UUA MFC for Ministerial Candidates. Ministers of Religious Education are typically called by a congregation or fellowship as a second minister to direct religious education and may also provide parish ministry services.
<b>Ordained Minister</b>	A minister formally granted the privilege by a congregation to use the honorific "The Reverend".
<b>Ordination</b>	The formal ceremony in which a minister is granted the privilege to use the honorific "The Reverend". In the UUA/CUC tradition, ordination occurs only after a candidate is accepted into preliminary fellowship by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.
<b>Parish Ministry</b>	One of three specialized areas of training approved by the UUA MFC for ministers. Parish Ministers are typically called by a congregation or fellowship to provide a full range of services to members.

<b>Preliminary Fellow</b>	A ministerial candidate who has completed all of the training and met all of the required standards to become a Unitarian Universalist minister except for a period of three years working successfully as a settled minister. Preliminary fellows are evaluated by the boards and committees on ministry in the congregations, fellowships or communities they serve and by the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee.
<b>Professional Consulting Minister</b>	A minister with a contract, usually 1 or 2 years in duration, under which the minister agrees to spend concentrated time with the congregation during a specified number of visits over the course of the church year. The visits usually occur over a weekend, from Friday evening through Sunday afternoon. During the visit the minister focuses on one or more areas of congregational life and may work with committees or teams, providing support for congregational development.
<b>Professional Full-time Minister</b>	A minister professionally trained and screened by the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee and called by a congregation to serve full-time in a ministry role (parish, religious education, associated, etc.)
<b>Professional Part-time Minister</b>	A minister with a regular ministerial settlement, agreed to by minister and congregation. The length of the ministry anticipated by both parties is at least two years. The amount of time, relative to a full-time position is expressed as a fraction or percentage of full-time. Professional part-time ministries of less than 80% are supported through the CUC by the Director of Regional Services. Professional part-time ministries of 80% and over are supported through the UUA Department of Ministry & Professional Services.
<b>Reverend</b>	A designation of spiritual authority and respect granted to a minister by a congregation.
<b>Seminarian</b>	A student minister.
<b>Senior Minister</b>	A minister who has been called and installed as the lead minister in a congregation, fellowship or community.
<b>Settled Minister</b>	A minister who has been called and installed as a minister for a congregation, fellowship or community.
<b>Settlement</b>	The calling and installing of a minister in a community either full-time for an unspecified period of time (professional full-time) or part-time for a specified or unspecified period of time (professional part-time).
<b>Shared Ministry</b>	The principle affirming the responsibility, right and gift of each member of a congregation to fulfill the tenets of their faith in service to each other and the larger community.

<b>Student Minister</b>	A student who is both enrolled in a divinity school and accepted by the MFC as a Ministerial Candidate or by a RSCC as a Pre-Candidate for Ministry. Also sometimes used more broadly to include a theology student not yet approved as a Ministerial Pre-Candidate but who has applied or has an intention to apply.
<b>Theology Student</b>	Any person enrolled in a program of studies in theology, divinity or religious studies. Also <i>divinity student</i> or <i>religious studies student</i> .

**Some Links:**

- CUC Canadian Unitarian Council <http://www.cuc.ca/ministry/index.htm>  
LCC Lay Chaplains Committee (of the CUC) [http://www.cuc.ca/lay\\_chaplaincy/index.htm](http://www.cuc.ca/lay_chaplaincy/index.htm)  
MFC Ministerial Fellowship Committee (of the UUA)  
<http://www.uua.org/programs/ministry/mfc/index.html>  
RSCC Regional Sub-Committee on Candidacy (for Canada.)  
[http://www.uumoc.ca/rsc\\_index.html](http://www.uumoc.ca/rsc_index.html)  
UUA Unitarian Universalist Association <http://www.uua.org/>  
UUMA Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association <http://www.uuma.org/>  
UUMOC Unitarian Universalist Ministers of Canada [http://www.uumoc.ca/about\\_us.html](http://www.uumoc.ca/about_us.html)