

UUCWI Chaplain Role Description

Approved by Board of Trustees on March 14, 2005

Purpose of Position: The chaplain is a key lay-member of the Pastoral Care team for the Congregation. S/he represents the Congregation, normally at times when the minister is not available, in 1) providing personal, usually private, empathic contact with people who may be experiencing spiritual challenges and 2) helping create and perform rites of passage ceremonies as requested.

Nature of Position: This is a standing, unpaid position

Key Responsibility Areas:

1. Provide Spiritual Empathy to those in need

- The chaplain will visit and talk with people who have undergone or are undergoing situations in their lives that are causing stress, sadness, grief, doubt, perceived loss of meaning, etc. and, as a result, may be feeling spiritually insecure or adrift. Visits may take place by request of the individual, the individual's family, or as a result of an offer made by the chaplain. Visits to members in the hospital are examples.
- Visits are not for the purpose of providing mental-health counseling, but rather for the purpose of lending an empathic ear, providing emotional support, helping the individual to feel cared about by the UU community, and buoying their spirits.
- The chaplain will recommend or encourage counseling or use of other appropriate community resources when the person's emotional situation seems to warrant that.

2. Perform Rites of Passage Ceremonies

- Rights-of-Passage ceremonies include memorial services, weddings, child dedications, ceremonies of commitment or union, etc.
- The chaplain will first encourage the requesting parties to engage our minister or another nearby UU minister, especially for weddings and child dedications when lead time will allow one of them to be available.
- If no UU minister is available, the chaplain will work with the requesting parties to create a ceremony that meaningfully meets their needs and desires, and complies with any applicable requirements
- For a couple requesting to be married, the chaplain will encourage premarital counseling if that has not already taken place, but a decision by the couple to forgo such counseling will not prevent the chaplain from conducting the ceremony unless s/he feels it is essential based on the behavior of the particular couple.
- The chaplain will work with and seek advice from the UUCWI minister.

3. Coordinate closely with and seek the advice of the Minister in the performance of the specified duties

4. Act as an ex-officio member of the Caring Connections Committee

- Assist the committee in maintaining an up-to-date list of community support resources

Knowledge & Skills Required: The chaplain will have completed training appropriate for the duties described above. This could include a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education, Stephens Ministry training, or some other comparable training, as well as training from a UU minister in the preparation and performance of weddings, memorial services, infant dedications, etc.

Selected by: Board of Trustees upon recommendation by the Caring Connections Committee

Supervised by: Caring Connections Committee Chair (or Board President if the committee chair is not able to supervise)

Current Staffing: Sally Ann Elder