

Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ Position Description

Job Title: Minister for Outdoor Ministry, Designated 3-Year Term

FLSA Status: This is a full-time position with benefits. The Minister for Outdoor Ministries is an exempt position not subject to the hours of work and overtime payment provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Prepared By:

Approved By:

Revision Date: July 7, 2025

POSITION OVERVIEW:

The Outdoor Ministry of the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ is grounded in our calling “to equip a courageous Church alive with Christ’s transforming love.” Outdoor Ministry seeks to enliven the ministry of the Church by providing transformative experiences through which individuals, families, and communities may fall in love with God’s creation and encounter the gift of radical hospitality. Through a variety of programs and collaborative ministries, the Conference’s Outdoor Ministry fosters a deeper understanding of our interconnectedness with all creation and equips individuals and communities for action toward more just and sustainable ways of being and living.

The Minister for Outdoor Ministry provides primary leadership for the Conference’s Outdoor Ministry. Working collaboratively with other Conference staff, local congregational leaders, wider Church partners, and external partners, the Minister for Outdoor Ministry develops and implements a comprehensive ministry plan for Outdoor Ministry that is aligned with the Conference’s core values and strategic priorities.

This position *can be* an Authorized Ministry.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES:

Key Accountability	Desired Key Actions to Successfully Achieve Key Role Accountabilities	% Overall Job Responsibility
Oversee the Conference’s direct outdoor ministry programs and retreats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand opportunities for adult-focused and intergenerational outdoor ministry experiences • Provide consistent and relevant retreat and wilderness opportunities for local congregations and individuals to explore the deep interconnectedness with the natural world through earth-based spiritual practices. • Coordinate onsite leadership for all Conference-sponsored outdoor ministry programs • Ensure all programs reflect the values, mission, and strategic priorities of the Conference • Grant writing where needed and possible 	20%
Educate and equip individuals for the work of creation justice/creation care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop program opportunities that allow Conference members to encounter the natural world and deepen their sense of interconnectedness with the whole of creation. • Collaborate with partner organizations to establish retreats and trainings to build the capacity of individuals and congregations for engaging in the work of creation justice/creation care. 	15%

Develop, strengthen, and sustain connections with local congregations and regional ministry collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with local congregations and leaders, including frequent in-person visits, to build relationships and trust • Develop regional, multi-congregational, collaborative ministries to strengthen local congregations' efforts to engage in outdoor ministry, environment justice, and earth-based spiritual practices; this may include shared worship experiences, retreats, training, and environmental advocacy • Coordinate grant program for local congregations to experiment with creative and innovative outdoor ministry opportunities within their community. 	25%
Foster ministry partnerships across the UCC and beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as the primary link between the Minnesota Conference and the Outdoor Ministry Association-UCC and other outdoor ministry partners across the denomination and ecumenically • Form and maintain partnerships with other Conferences and organizations supporting the work of creation care, eco-justice, and eco-spirituality (e.g., Great Lakes collaborative, Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light, etc.) • Develop and maintain relationships with values-aligned host sites, program facilitators, artists, and musicians • Recruit and support the Conference's Outdoor Ministry Team as a hub for the Conference's outdoor ministry initiatives and programs. 	15%
Coordinate communication for Outdoor Ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In coordination with Conference communications staff, develop and implement a marketing strategy that includes communication through the website, social media, and print • Manage the registration process for outdoor ministry programs 	5%
Sustain accessible and relevant outdoor ministry with youth and young adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with the Conference's faith formation ministry to plan and facilitate youth immersion trips, retreats, and other in-person youth ministry events • Partner with the Conference faith formation ministry to create ongoing leadership development opportunities for youth and young adults to explore their spirituality and gift, including retreats and Wild Church experiences specifically designed for youth and young adults. • Develop resources and methods for local congregations to support environmental education and spiritual exploration for children, youth, and families. • Explore options for creating environmental education hubs in places within the Minnesota Conference to provide service-learning and environment immersion experiences. 	20%
		100%

ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS

The Minister for Outdoor Ministries is expected to participate collegially in staff meetings and as requested, meetings of the Conference Board of Directors. Assignments will change over time, and specific responsibilities shall be determined in consultation with and under the oversight of the Conference Minister who is accountable to the Board of Directors.

ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS/REQUIREMENTS:

Education/Experience (Include any required licensure/certifications)

- Theological training. Preferred master's degree or equivalent education and experience.

- Previous outdoor ministry or related ministry experience, required
- Previous experience planning and leading intergenerational worship, required
- Previous experience developing formational opportunities for children, youth, and families, strongly desired
- Previous experience training and managing volunteers, strongly desired

Competencies:

- Capacity to express and foster others' expression of the distinctive witness of the United Church of Christ
- Ability to nurture Christian faith and a sense of Christian community
- Willing and able to lead worship and prayer
- Ability to establish effective working relationships with:
 - other Conference staff
 - church members
 - those who minister to young people and their families
- Capacity to work with people of diverse ages, cultures, and theologies
- Capacity for independent judgment and to work with limited supervision
- Demonstrated vision, creativity, and imagination
- Shows self-awareness, integrity, and respect in relationships
- Exhibits the courage to face challenge and change
- Is approachable and accessible
- Maintains appropriate personal and professional boundaries

Skills/Abilities:

- Effective communicator
- Enthusiastic and able to build excitement and commitment
- Critical thinking skills
- Attentive to detail
- Grant writing or willingness to learn
- Able to administer effectively and efficiently and to collaborate effectively with committees and teams
- Technologically (computer) literate

Additional Requirements:

- Willingness to become a member of the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ
- Must successfully pass background check
- Willingness and ability to travel extensively throughout the conference
 - must use own car or (when fiscally prudent) rental car
- Willingness to work a flexible schedule that includes weekend work

CALL STATUS AND ACCOUNTABILITY (REPORTS TO):

Reports to the Conference Minister

DIRECT/INDIRECT REPORTS (if any):

NA

BUDGETARY/FISCAL RESPONSIBILITIES (if any):

Responsible for managing own cost center and Outdoor Ministry budget.

POSITION LOCATION:

The Minister for Outdoor Ministry will live in Minnesota to facilitate faithful ministry presence to the entire Conference. Conference staff are currently working in a hybrid arrangement, blending work from home with work in the Conference office. Office space will be available at the Minnesota Church Center (122 W. Franklin Ave, Suite 200; Minneapolis).

