



The Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ

122 West Franklin Avenue, Suite 323  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
612-871-0359  
[www.uccmn.org](http://www.uccmn.org)

**Personnel Policies Manual**

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## Introduction

### Welcome

Welcome to the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ, hereinafter referred to as the "Conference". The Conference is in covenant with United Church of Christ churches throughout the State of Minnesota and is a Minnesota nonprofit corporation and a tax-exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code. We are pleased you have chosen to join us.

### Purpose and Scope of this Handbook

The purpose of this Personnel Policies Manual ("Manual") is to outline some of the directions, expectations, guidelines, policies, and procedures that pertain to Conference employees. You are to read this Manual and keep it in your work station and available for reference whenever you have questions concerning employee expectations, relations, policies, procedures, or benefits eligibility in the Conference.

This Manual is the confidential, proprietary property of the Conference and is not to be disclosed to anyone outside the Conference's office. You are responsible for this Manual from the time you receive it and throughout the time you are employed by the Conference. You must return this Manual to your supervisor or the Conference Minister immediately upon the end of your employment, no matter the reason(s) your employment ends and regardless of whether you or the Conference initiate the end of your employment. If you receive this Manual before being employed by the Conference, you must return this Manual to the Conference office immediately upon either you or the Conference deciding you will not become a Conference employee.

This Handbook describes the general administrative policies and procedures related to the following:

**Section One:** Terms of employment, equal opportunity employment, and policies regarding the following: harassment, the use of drugs and/or alcohol, weapons, and Conference resources.

**Section Two:** Position categories, job classifications, and job descriptions and hours worked.

**Section Three:** Hiring, reporting and evaluation, disciplinary actions and complaint procedures, voluntary and involuntary termination and personnel records.

**Section Four:** Compensation

**Section Five:** Holidays, vacations, and other leaves of absence.

**Section Six:** Sabbaticals and other leaves of absence

**Section Seven:** Health, retirement, and other employee benefits

This Manual contains a summary of certain procedures, policies and expectations in effect at the Conference as of November 5, 2011. All previous employee handbooks and their policies and procedures are hereby revoked and are no longer in effect. Notwithstanding the preceding two sentences, the terms of any written employment contract between the Conference and a specific employee will supersede any procedures, policies or expectations stated in this Manual to the extent such employment contract terms

are inconsistent with any of the same as stated in this Manual.

The contents of the Manual are intended for informational purposes only. The Manual is not an offer of employment, a contract of employment, or a guarantee of continued employment for any time period on the part of either the Conference or the employee. The Conference may change any of the policies and procedures stated in this Manual at any time and in its sole discretion with or without prior notification to the employee.

If a representative of the Conference gives you any handbook amendment pages, you are to promptly place them in your copy of this Manual. The Conference also reserves the right to apply, apply part of, or not apply a specific policy or procedure in a particular situation as it deems appropriate in its sole discretion. Any changes to this Manual and any exception made to any of the provisions of this Manual must be made in writing and be signed by an officer of the Conference to be effective. This Manual and its contents supersede and replace any and all prior practices, oral or written statements, policies, procedures, and the like.

You should feel free to discuss this Manual and any questions you may have about its contents with your supervisor or the Conference Minister, and you are encouraged to suggest other provisions you think should be made a part of this Manual.

Again, I am pleased to have you with the Conference and wish you success in your job. Please do not hesitate to see me if you have questions or if I can help you with your work for the Conference.

Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ

By: The Rev. Sharon Prestemon, Conference Minister

Personnel Committee as Advisors to the Conference

In general, responsibility for this Manual rests with the Conference Minister of the Conference and the Conference's Personnel Committee of the Board of Directors, which administer personnel issues of the Conference. Committee positions are filled by election at the Annual Meeting for staggered two-year terms. The Personnel Committee is charged with maintaining current position descriptions for all employees and maintaining personnel policies and procedures. The role of the Personnel Committee with respect to personnel administration is generally one of oversight. The committee delegates to paid employees the responsibility for daily operations and supervision that is consistent with these policies

## Section One

- **1.1 Terms of Employment**
- **1.2 Equal Opportunity Employment**
- **1.3 No Harassment Policy**
- **1.4 Reporting Illegal, Dishonest or Fraudulent Activity**
- **1.5 Drug and Alcohol Free Environment**
- **1.6 Weapons Free Environment**
- **1.7 Conference Resources and Use of Conference Computers**
- **1.8 Grievance Procedure**

### **1.1 Terms of Employment**

#### *Policy*

The Conference and its employees, with the exception of ordained ministers engaged pursuant to a written call agreement containing differing terms of employment, have an employment relationship that is known as "employment at will." This means that an employee has the right to resign at any time, with or without advance notice and with or without any objective reason, and the Conference has the right to terminate positions or an employee's employment at any time, with or without advance notice and with or without any objective reason. No provision in this Manual is intended to create a contract between the Conference and any employee, or to create any expressed or implied contract rights. Nothing in this Manual is to be construed as a promise of permanent employment or a guarantee that any employee's employment will continue for any specified period or time. This policy is intended to comply with the provisions of Minnesota Statutes Section 624.714. No employee or other representative of the Conference, other than the Conference Minister has any authority to enter into any agreement regarding employment or to make any agreement contrary to the foregoing "at will" relationship.

#### *Service Time*

Service time is the length of time an employee has been employed by the Conference. It is used to determine the commencement of or level of certain benefits as described in this Manual. The date from which service time is computed will be the date on which the individual begins employment with the Conference. Time absent from work for sick leave, vacation, military, jury duty, and study leave, if any, will be included in the computation of total service time. Employees will not accrue service time during an unpaid leave of absence. A former employee who worked at least two years and is rehired within six months may have prior service time reinstated for purposes of benefit calculations.

No rights shall accrue to an employee by virtue of service time, except as specifically stated in these policies.

### **1.2 Equal Opportunity Employment**

#### *Policy*

In accordance with action of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ and the Conference, the Conference is committed to the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity. The Conference's policy is to provide Equal Opportunity to all employees and applicants for employment in

accordance with all equal employment opportunity laws and regulations of federal, state, and local governing bodies or agencies that apply to the Conference and a position.

As such, and except as noted below, the Conference will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, familial status or any other status protected by law. This policy prevails throughout every aspect of the relationship, including recruitment, hiring, placement, training, compensation; promotions, testing, lay-offs, recalls, fringe benefits, and training apprenticeship programs. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a person's religion may be considered to the extent it is a bona fide requirement for any position (such as, for an illustrative example but without limitation, Christian faith and ministerial standing with the Conference and the United Church of Christ for certain positions), and the Conference reserves the right to determine religious affiliation and /or belief and a particular cultural sensitivity as being bona fide occupational qualifications for specific positions.

The complaint procedure found in Section 1.3 of this guide describes the process employees should follow if an employee feels that they have been subjected to discrimination.

### **1.3 No Harassment Policy**

#### *Policy*

It is the policy of the Conference to maintain a work environment free from harassment. This policy prohibits verbal, visual, or physical conduct that discriminates or unreasonably interferes with work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Such behavior includes, without limitation, inappropriate remarks (e.g., without limitation, epithets, insults, slurs, and stereotyping) about, or conduct directed at or related to an employee's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender (including pregnancy), marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, gender orientation, age, or other status protected by law.

Harassment is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. It is the policy of the Conference that there shall be no harassment of any employee, adjunct employee, intern, volunteer or recipient of services. Any employee, volunteer, or intern who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal even in the case of a first offense.

#### *Sexual Harassment*

One form of harassment prohibited under this policy is sexual harassment. Sexual harassment refers to behavior, conduct or remarks of a sexual nature that is unwelcome and offensive to its recipients. It is a form of misconduct that is demeaning to another person and undermines the integrity of the employment relationship. Unwelcome sexual advances, sexually motivated requests for physical contact, or communication of a sexual nature constitute "sexual harassment" when, among other considerations:

- Submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a condition of employment;
- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is used as a basis for an employment or other personnel decision affecting the recipient of the behavior; or
- The purpose or effect is unreasonable interference with the recipient's work performance or

creation of an environment that is intimidating, hostile, or offensive to the recipient.

Examples of sexually harassing behavior prohibited under this policy are: unwanted physical contact, sexually-oriented propositions, obscene gestures, or the display of sexually explicit pictures.

### *Procedures*

1. If an employee, volunteer or intern feels that they have been subject to illegal harassment by an employee of the Conference, or by any other person they encounter at the workplace, it is not only appropriate but required by this policy that they report their complaint as soon as possible.
2. Reporting complaints:
  - a. If the complaint involves someone other than the Conference Minister or the immediate supervisor, the complaint should be reported to the immediate supervisor.
  - b. If the complaint involves the immediate supervisor, or if the complainant is uncomfortable discussing the complaint with the immediate supervisor for any reason, the complaint should be reported to the Conference Minister.
  - c. If the complaint involves the Conference Minister, the complaint should be reported to the chairperson of the Conference's Personnel Committee or to the Conference's Moderator.
3. All complaints of harassment will be investigated promptly and discreetly to the extent reasonably possible. The Conference will protect the confidentiality of a harassment complaint if and to the extent reasonably possible but does not guarantee that such a complaint or the identity of the complainant will be kept confidential, since certain information may need to be disclosed for the complaint to be properly investigated or may be discernable through the investigation.
4. No retaliation or intimidation directed toward anyone who makes a complaint in good faith under this policy or who in good faith provides information on a harassment investigation under this policy will be tolerated. If the offensive conduct continues or recurs, or any retaliatory or intimidating conduct occurs, it should be reported immediately.
5. If the investigation concludes that harassment has occurred, resolution of complaints can include, but are not necessarily limited to, an apology, direction to stop the offensive behavior, counseling or training, verbal or written warning, suspension with or without pay, or termination. Authorized ministers may be subject to a Fitness Review by the Committee on Ministry. If an employee is unhappy with the Conference's response to a complaint, the employee is encouraged to contact the Personnel Committee about their concerns.
6. An employee against whom a complaint has been filed may be suspended prior to and during an investigation in the Conference's sole discretion. Suspensions may be with or without pay at the discretion of the Conference.

#### **1.4 Reporting Illegal, Dishonest or Fraudulent Activity**

Employees with knowledge of or a concern about illegal, dishonest or fraudulent activity are encouraged to contact their immediate supervisor or the Conference Minister. If the employee is uncomfortable making such contact with their immediate supervisor or the Conference Minister, such employee should contact the Conference's Moderator or the chairperson of the Conference's



Personnel Committee. Examples of illegal, dishonest or fraudulent activities are violations of federal, state or local laws; billing for services not performed or goods not delivered; and other fraudulent financial reporting.

The Conference will not retaliate against anyone reporting such matters, provided and to the extent that the report is made in good faith and with the exercise of sound judgment. An employee who intentionally files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

All reports of illegal dishonest and fraudulent activities will be promptly submitted to the Conference Moderator who is responsible for coordinating the Conference's responsive actions, which should include consultation with the Conference attorney or General Counsel of the UCC.

Employees with questions regarding this Section 1.4 should contact their immediate supervisor, the Conference Minister, or the Chair of the Personnel Committee.

## **1.5 Drug and Alcohol Free Environment**

### *Policy*

The Conference supports a drug and alcohol free work environment and prohibits the consumption or other use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the Conference's office and outside the office while, and in the course of, performing Conference duties. The Conference's goal is to establish and maintain a safe, healthy and efficient work environment free from the effects of drug and alcohol abuse and impairment.

All employees are prohibited from being under the influence of alcohol and illicit drugs while on the Conference's premises or while performing their duties as Conference employees even if outside regular or business hours. The use, abuse, possession, giving, or sale of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, and/or mood altering nonprescription chemicals, and prescription drugs (other than personal use in accord with the prescribing physician's directions) on the Conference's premises or while performing duties as a Conference employee are prohibited.

Notwithstanding the foregoing policy, Conference employees may, but in no manner are obligated to, consume limited and socially responsible quantities of alcohol during social dinners, receptions, and other events where such beverages are served that they attend in the course of their employment with the Conference as long as such consumption does not impair them in any way and complies with all applicable laws, including, without limitation, laws against under-age drinking and prohibiting driving vehicles while under the influence of alcohol or other substances. No expense reimbursement will be made for any purchases of alcoholic beverages at such events. Individuals may be reimbursed for purchase of alcoholic beverages for Conference-sponsored events upon approval of the Board of Directors or the Conference Minister.

Employees who appear to have a chemical dependency problem that interferes with the performance of their assigned duties may be encouraged to pursue appropriate treatment. If treatment is refused or is not successful and performance is not acceptable, termination or other disciplinary action may result. Seeking treatment, in and of itself, will not preclude disciplinary

action for policy violations or performance issues which may have occurred or continue to occur.

## **1.6 Weapons Free Environment**

### *Policy*

The Conference prohibits the possession or use of weapons, whether or not possession is allowed by permit, by an employee while on the Conference premises, while on Conference business, while on Conference-sponsored functions, or while conducting Conference business off the Conference property.

For the purposes of this policy, "weapons" include, without limitation, firearms, knives, explosives, and other items with the potential to inflict harm. Nail clippers, small pen knives no longer than 1 ½ inches long, and letter openers are generally not considered weapons. Appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination even for a first violation, will be taken against any employee who violates this policy.

## **1.7 Conference Resources and Use of Conference Computers**

### *Policy*

The Conference requires that all Conference resources (which include, without limitation, employees, computers and other equipment, electronic resources, etc.) be dedicated to Conference business. This means that non-Conference uses of any Conference resources may not occur, unless approved by the Conference Minister in advance or unless the use is considered minimal personal use under the below stated limited exception.

Examples of resources that are subject to this policy are, without limitation, Conference telephones, photocopy machines, fax machines, e-mail, internet connection, data, Conference computer systems (hardware, data, files, and software), office supplies, buildings/facilities and employee time.

The following uses are never permitted:

- Accessing or distributing pornographic, obscene, scandalous, offensive materials,
- Using any resources for criminal, or other inappropriate purposes,
- Asking or requiring a subordinate to do personal work for the employee, and/or
- Using Conference resources for the employee's own personal business.

Minimal use of Conference resources for incidental, personal purposes is permitted subject to the use (i) being reasonable in purpose and quantity, (ii) being on the user's own time, (iii) not interfere with the user's job responsibilities in any manner, (iv) not disrupt the operation of the resources for the Conference. This limited exception does not apply to use of a Conference employee's skills or time, personal or other non-Conference use of which is not allowed. The Conference reserves the right to terminate this exception at any time in its sole discretion.

Conference employees have no right to privacy in connection with their use of Conference resources, including, without limitation, any expectation of privacy in their communications while on Conference property or made using Conference resources. The Conference reserves the right to monitor the use of Conference resources at any time without prior notice.

### *Business Form*

E-mail and voice-mail messages reflect the Conference's image. Accordingly, such communications and messages should be composed in a professional manner that is of quality and substance similar to messages sent on Conference letterhead. Employees should keep in mind that electronic files are subject to discovery and may subsequently be used in litigation involving the Conference or the employee. Therefore, it is expected that employee statements in electronic messages and files will reflect favorably on the Conference and on the employee.

#### *Use of Computers, E-mail, Internet, and Social Media*

Additional information regarding personal use of the Conference's computers, computer system, e-mail, electronic files, internet access, use of social media, and the like follows,

1. The use of non-authorized software on Conference computers is prohibited without the prior permission of the Conference Minister.
2. In addition to the Conference's computers and computer system, all hardware, software, electronic files, and electronic messages are the property of the Conference, whether composed, received or sent by the employee. E-mail messages and other electronic files constitute business records belonging to the Conference.
3. Because the foregoing are the Conference's property, employees should not expect that messages are private. In addition, employees should be aware that deleted files may be retrieved and read by the Conference. The Conference reserves the right to retrieve, monitor, or review any messages in the Conference e-mail and electronic communication system, and may disclose such messages for any purpose without notice to the employee and without seeking permission of the employee. Passwords must be disclosed to the appropriate Conference officer upon request.
4. Employees may not use E-mail or voicemail systems to solicit for charitable or commercial ventures, other than for Conference purposes pursuant to Conference policy, or in any way that violates the Conference's solicitation policy. Employees may not use the systems to further their own religious, political or other non-Conference related causes.
5. Receiving or downloading, or sending or uploading of proprietary information is prohibited without prior authorization. Such information includes copyrighted materials, trade secrets, proprietary financial information, or similar materials.
6. Conference policies prohibiting sexual or other harassment are applicable to all communications. Messages that contain foul, inappropriate, or offensive language, or those containing racial or ethnic slurs, or sexual innuendo, are prohibited.
7. Employees are expected to respect the confidentiality of messages sent to others. Employees may not access or review E-mail or voice-mail messages that are not distributed to them.
8. Employees must receive permission from their supervisor before posting messages to electronic bulletin boards, list-servers or similar public posting forums on the Internet. When posted, such messages must contain a disclaimer at the end of the message that: "The opinions expressed in this message are mine only, and do not reflect the opinion or position of my employer."
9. The Conference recognizes that online communication tolls such as blogs, message boards, social networks, and other such channels, including, without limitation, Facebook, Linked-in, and Twitter, are widely used and have changed the way we

communicate. However, care must be taken in using such online communication tools to avoid embarrassment or injury to persons disclosing information or making statements through them, and careless or inappropriate information and statements can have embarrassing or injurious consequence, both to the poster and third parties.

Accordinging:

- Only work related use of such online communication tools or sites is allowed during work hours or using Conference computers or internet connection. Employees are responsible for the content they post on or through any form of online communication tool and are accountable for adverse consequences therefrom.
  - Employees should be considerate of and thoughtful about their association with the Conference when representing themselves or posting content online. If you identify yourself as an employee of the Conference, be sure the impression you make and the content you post are consistent with how you wish to represent yourself, your employer, and the Conference's member churches and is appropriate in the context of your relationship with the Conference and its member churches.
10. Employees who observe violations of these electronic communication policies shall notify their immediate supervisor or shall report the violation to the Conference Minister. Employees who violate this policy are subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.
11. The Conference reserves the right to modify or change the policies set forth above (or anywhere else in this Handbook) to comply with applicable law, to meet changing circumstances or for any reason.

## **1.8 Grievance Procedure**

The Conference strives to create a positive working environment, one that ensures appropriate lines of respectful communication between all employees, their supervisors, and persons serving on or working with Conference committees and ministries. A grievance is defined as a complaint filed concerning alleged illegal discrimination, harassment or other forms of offensive behavior in the work environment. The Grievance Procedure is a process to be used by any employee, volunteer or intern who feels that they have been subjected to illegal discrimination, harassment or other form of offensive behavior by an employee of the Conference, or by any other person they encounter at the workplace or at any place associated with work. It is not only appropriate but required by this policy that they report their grievance as soon as possible.

### **1. Reporting Grievances:**

- a. If the grievance involves someone other than the Conference Minister or the immediate supervisor, the grievance should be reported to the immediate supervisor.
- b. If the grievance involves the immediate supervisor, or if the individual is uncomfortable discussing the grievance with the immediate supervisor for any reason, the grievance should be reported to the Conference Minister.
- c. If the grievance involves the Conference Minister, the grievance should be reported to the Conference Moderator or to the chairperson of the Conference's Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee will review the grievance and provide a recommendation for action to the Conference Board of Directors.

2. The party, to whom the grievance was reported, as appropriate, investigates the matter promptly and discreetly to the extent reasonably possible. The Conference will protect the confidentiality of a grievance if and to the extent reasonably possible but does not guarantee that such a grievance or the identity of the individual will be kept confidential, since certain information may need to be disclosed for the grievance to be properly investigated or may be discernable through the investigation.
3. No retaliation or intimidation directed toward anyone who makes a grievance in good faith under this policy or who in good faith provides information on a grievance investigation under this policy will be tolerated. If the offensive conduct continues or recurs, or any retaliatory or intimidating conduct occurs, it should be reported immediately.
4. If the investigation concludes that a violation has occurred, resolution of the grievances can include, but are not necessarily limited to, an apology, direction to stop the offensive behavior, counseling or training, verbal or written warning, suspension with or without pay, or termination. Authorized ministers may be subject to a Fitness Review by the Committee on Ministry.
5. If the investigation concludes that the matter does not rise to the level of a grievance as defined above, but involves a personality clash, a working style preference, or other working relationship issue, the supervisor involved and/or the Personnel Committee Chair or designee will assess the issue and make a recommendation to the involved parties on a course of action to improve working relationships.
6. An employee against whom a grievance has been filed may be suspended prior to and during an investigation in the Conference's sole discretion. Suspensions may be with or without pay at the discretion of the Conference.

## Section Two

- **2.1 Position Categories**
- **2.2 Job Classifications**
- **2.3 Job Descriptions**
- **2.4 Work Hours, Overtime, and Paychecks**

### 2.1 Position Categories

Personnel who work at the Conference fall into one of five position categories:

- Conference Minister
- Associate Conference Minister
- Program Staff
- Support Staff
- Seasonal Staff

### 2.2 Job Classifications

All paid positions at the Conference are classified as described below for payroll, benefit, and other purposes.

#### *Exempt vs. Non-exempt*

Exempt employees are salaried employees who meet the requirements of exempt status under the Fair Labor Standards Act and are not entitled to overtime. The Conference Minister in consultation with the Personnel Committee will determine whether a position is exempt or non-exempt.

Non-exempt employees are paid hourly and must be paid at least the Federal minimum wage for all hours worked, and are entitled to overtime pay for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours per a one work week period.

#### *Salary vs. Hourly*

A salaried position is one in which an annual or monthly compensation rate is fixed and payment of that amount is made regardless of the number of hours worked. An hourly position is one in which an hourly compensation rate is set and payment varies, depending on the number of hours worked during a given time period.

#### *Full-time vs. Part-time*

Full-time employees are normally scheduled to work an average of thirty hours or more per week, fifty-two weeks per year. Part-time employees are normally scheduled to work less than an average of thirty hours per week, fifty-two or fewer weeks per year.

#### *Regular vs. Temporary*

A regular employee is one who has been hired to fill a position that is considered ongoing or continuous. A temporary employee is one who has been hired to work for a limited and prescribed period of time. For example, a temporary employee may be hired to perform a specific time-limited position or function or to fill a vacancy in a position typically held by a "regular" employee, such as while a search process is underway or another employee is on sabbatical or leave.

Some policies related to hiring, supervision, evaluation, and benefit coverage vary based on

position category and/or job classification. In the event an employee is unsure of a position category or job classification, please review the job description or speak with a supervisor.

### *Implications of Position Categories and Job Classifications*

In general,

- Non-exempt employees receive overtime compensation; exempt employees do not.
- Full-time, regular employees are eligible to receive full benefits as described in the Conference's benefits program.
- Part-time employees who work more than twenty and less than thirty hours per week are eligible for holidays, vacation, sick and personal days, prorated according to the regularly-scheduled hours per week, with forty hours per week being the standard. Medical, dental, disability and term life insurance will be offered to these part-time employees. The Conference will pay a prorated premium, and the employee will be required to contribute the balance (see section 7: Important note and 7.1).
- Temporary employees are paid only for hours worked and receive no benefits unless otherwise stated in a written agreement regarding such employment.

## **2.3 Job Descriptions**

### *Updating Job Descriptions*

Supervisors are responsible for reviewing employees' job descriptions at least once each calendar year and at such other times as the Conference Minister or supervisor may decide is appropriate. Should job descriptions require revision, supervisors should forward the desired changes to the Personnel Committee for its review. If a new position is created or a revision represents significant structural change and/or creates increased financial implications, supervisors will forward changes to the Personnel Committee for its review and endorsement. When considering endorsing, the Committee considers alignment with Conference strategies, priorities, objectives, and other staff roles. Endorsement considers the changes and alignment with the Conference strategies, priorities, objectives and other staff roles. Typical, but not exclusive, times for updating job descriptions include points of transition (e.g., a new person is hired to fill a vacancy), annual performance evaluations, and at such times as circumstances may indicate revisions should be considered.

## **2.4 Work Hours, Overtime, and Paychecks**

### *Work Hours*

A workweek is defined as the seven-day period within which eligibility for overtime compensation for non-exempt employees is calculated, beginning on Sunday and ending on Saturday. Depending on their job description or the needs of the Conference, employees may be expected to work evenings or weekends.

Specific working hours will be arranged for each non-exempt position. Job descriptions have been developed and priorities may from time to time be established to guide employees in the allocation of their time. These are subject to annual review but may be reviewed more frequently as needed. Employees having difficulty accomplishing their assigned tasks within the hours and priorities specified should notify their supervisor.



### *Procedures Related to Time Records*

Time keeping and time records are the responsibility of all employees. Full-time nonexempt employees shall be provided an unpaid thirty minute lunch break and two paid breaks of fifteen minutes each a day. Non-exempt employees must report actual beginning and ending time for each lunch period and for each day worked. All time records must reflect vacation time, sick time and time spent at continuing education. An employee may not write on another employee's time record. All time record reporting shall be done using forms and procedures authorized by the employee's supervisor or the Conference Minister.

### *Overtime Policy*

Overtime work by non-exempt employees occasionally may be required and must be authorized in advance by the supervisor or the Conference Minister. Non-exempt employees will be paid for overtime at the rate of one and one half times their regular rate of pay only for time worked over 40 hours in a specific seven-day work period. Paid time off hours for a vacation, holiday, etc. are not included in the calculation of time worked for the purpose of determining entitlement to overtime pay.

### *Absences / Tardiness*

Should it be necessary for an employee to be absent or late for work, the employee must notify a supervisor prior to start-time. Unreported absences or excessive tardiness or absence may, at the Conference's discretion, affect an employee's pay, or result in discipline (see Section 3.5).

### *Procedures Related to Paychecks*

Employees are paid bi-weekly. If the scheduled payday is on a Conference holiday, paychecks are distributed on the working day previous to the holiday.

Employee's personal income is private information. It does not have to be shared with any other employee. However, under the Minnesota Wage Disclosure Protection law, employees have the right to tell any person the amount of the employee's own wages and the Conference cannot retaliate against an employee for disclosing their own wages. An employee's remedies under the Minnesota Wage Disclosure Protection law if the Conference violates this law is to bring a civil action against the Conference and/or file a complaint with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. An employee, however, is prohibited from sharing wage information of other employee's with anyone without their consent.



## Section Three

- **3.1 Hiring**
- **3.2 Reporting and Evaluation**
- **3.3 Disciplinary Action and Complaint Procedures**
- **3.4 Voluntary Termination**
- **3.5 Involuntary Termination**
- **3.6 Personnel Records**

### 3.1 Hiring

The Conference hires its employees pursuant to Letters of Offer or another form of written employment contract (or, in the case of the Conference Minister, a Call Agreement). Supervisors are responsible for providing a Letter of Offer, which must be reviewed and approved by the Conference Minister and will state the core terms and conditions for the employee's work, including, among others, the position title, initial compensation rate, start date, at-will terms, any applicable restrictive covenants such as, without limitation, a confidentiality and nonuse requirement for confidential information, and any terms of employment that might differ from the policies, expectations, and directions provided through this Manual. No one is employed by the Conference except pursuant to such a Letter of Offer so signed by the employee and Conference Minister or Associate Conference Minister. A copy of the relevant job description and this Manual are provided with the Letter of Offer.

#### *Procedures Relating to Searches, Hiring, and Letters of Offer for Non-Called Positions General Search Procedures*

A written job description must be reviewed by the Personnel Committee if a new position is created or a revision to an existing job description represents significant structural change and/or creates increased financial implications before a search can begin. It is the search committee's or position supervisor's responsibility to advertise the position, recruit prospective candidates, screen applications and interview applicants.

#### *Pre-employment Screening*

As part of the screening and selection process of new employees and volunteers, background investigations will be conducted. These investigations may include inquiries to gather legal information regarding an applicant's history with regard to criminal activity, education, publications, other credentials, sexual misconduct, credit, character, personal characteristics, and general reputation. These investigations outside of checking references or general conversation with mutual acquaintances, will take place only with the prior authorization of the applicant. Refusal to authorize such investigations or to cooperate with the process may result in not being offered employment or volunteer service, withdrawal of an offer of employment or volunteer service, or termination of employment or volunteer service.

### 3.2 Performance Management

Performance management is an important function for the Conference and is made up of several components, some of which are on-going work direction, monitoring, and job performance appraisals. Formal job performance reviews provide an opportunity to ensure that the employee's job description is accurate and up to date, as well as to clarify job expectations with the

employee's supervisor.

In most instances, during your first 12 months of employment, at least two job performance reviews will be provided. Thereafter, job performance will ordinarily be reviewed annually. Nonetheless, your supervisor or the Conference Minister may conduct additional job performance appraisals and/or review meetings as they determine desirable or necessary in their sole discretion.

The primary objectives of job performance reviews are to:

1. Assess and evaluate the employee's work and job performance;
2. Ensure congruence between an employee's job description and job performance with the mission and purposes of the Conference and its programs; and
3. Encourage goal-setting with employees.

#### *Procedures for Annual Performance Evaluations*

The Conference seeks open and ongoing communication between supervisors and employees. Annual reviews will be based on existing job descriptions, job performance and position goals and objectives for the current and coming year, and such other matters as the employee, supervisor, and/or Conference Minister bring to it. Annual reviews should be conducted in a manner that fosters meaningful communication between the supervisor, the employee, and Conference Minister (if the Conference Minister becomes involved with the review). When appropriate, peers and subordinates may be asked to provide input about job performance. Job descriptions will ordinarily be reviewed and updated during annual reviews. If updates to an existing job description represent significant structural change and/or creates increased financial implications, these changes need to be reviewed and endorsed by the Personnel Committee (see Section 2.3).

The Conference Minister's annual appraisal will be conducted by the Personnel Committee Chair and the Chair of the Board of Directors/ Moderator of the Conference. The Conference Minister or a direct supervisor, as applicable, will be responsible for conducting the remaining employees' annual appraisals.

More frequent work performance feedback is encouraged and may be initiated by the employee or supervisor at any time. Such feedback may come from the employee's immediate supervisor and/or others, as appropriate (e.g., the Conference Minister, chair(s) or designated members from the teams or committees with whom the employee works, or the Personnel Committee).

### **3.3 Disciplinary Action**

The purpose of this policy is to state the Conference's position on administering equitable and consistent discipline for unsatisfactory conduct in the workplace. The best disciplinary measure is the one that does not have to be enforced and comes from good leadership and fair supervision at all employment levels. The Conference's own best interest lies in ensuring fair treatment of all employees and in making certain that disciplinary actions are prompt, uniform, and impartial. The major purpose of any disciplinary action is to correct the problem, prevent recurrence, and prepare the employee for satisfactory service in the future. Although employment with the Conference is based on mutual consent and both the employee and the Conference have the right to terminate

employment at will, with or without cause or advance notice, the Conference may use progressive discipline at its discretion. Disciplinary action may call for any one or more of four steps -- verbal warning, written warning, suspension with or without pay, or termination of employment -- depending on the severity of the problem and the number of occurrences. There may be circumstances when one or more steps are bypassed. While it is impossible to list every type of behavior that may be deemed a serious offense, this Manual includes some examples of problems that may result in immediate suspension or termination of employment. However, the problems listed are not all necessarily serious offenses, but may be examples of unsatisfactory conduct that will trigger discipline. By using discipline, we hope that most employee problems can be corrected at an early stage, benefiting both the employee and the Conference.

### **3.4 Voluntary Termination**

#### *Definition*

Voluntary terminations are those that are initiated by the employee. The employee can explicitly state in writing the intention to resign or quit. In the event the resigning employee indicates an effective future date, the Conference may, in its sole discretion, direct the employee to work, or not work, any part or all of the time between the resignation and said last day of work. The employee shall not be entitled to accrue any vacation time between the last day worked and the termination date.

Additionally, if the employee fails to report for work for two or more consecutive days without notice, the supervisor will consider this a voluntary termination. If the employee provides a different, acceptable reason for being away from work the employee may remain employed.

Employees who resign from their position will receive no severance pay. At the time of separation, any vacation time the resigning employee may have accrued but has not used will be handled as stated in their employment agreement or if this matter is not addressed in said employment agreement, will be paid to the employee. A resigning employee will not be paid for any accrued but not used sick leave upon termination of employment. A resigning employee's other benefits will terminate as of the date of separation or as otherwise may be provided for in the plan(s) under such benefit(s) are provided.

#### *Procedures*

The Conference requests, but does not require, resignations be given with the following advance notice. Resigning employees will be paid for up to the applicable notice period stated below if, and only if, such notice is given and the resigning employee is available and willing to work throughout said period.

- Associate Conference Ministers and the Conference Minister are requested to give at least two months' notice of resignation, or as otherwise provided in the call agreement.
- Full-time exempt employees are requested to give a one month notice of resignation.
- Part-time exempt and non-exempt employees are requested to give two weeks' notice. All notices of voluntary termination, including termination due to illness, accident, or disability are to be reported to the Personnel Committee as soon as possible.

#### *Other Aspects of Voluntary Termination*

On the last day of work, the employee must return all Conference property (keys, credit cards,

computers, etc.)

When an employee resigns, the Conference will ordinarily conduct an exit interview prior to the employee leaving.

### **3.5 Involuntary Termination**

#### *Definition*

Involuntary terminations are those initiated by the Conference. Terminations of this type include work force reductions and involuntary discharge.

Procedures involved with work force reductions for employees other than called ministers Reduction in the workforce may occur because of a discontinuation of a position or program, change in the budget, or other circumstances. Decisions concerning reductions in the work force are at the discretion of the Conference, in consultation with supervisory employees (if appropriate) and the Personnel Committee. All reductions require the approval of the Conference Board of Directors. Procedures involved with work force reduction for employees other than called ministers are as follows:

- The official termination date will be established as the date the employee last worked.
- Employees will be notified of such dismissal in writing, and the document will make clear that termination is due to a reduction in the work force.
- Any accrued but unused vacation time as of the employee's termination date will be handled as stated in their employment agreement or, if this matter is not addressed in said employment agreement, will be paid to the employee.
- Employees will not be reimbursed for any unused sick time upon termination of employment.

- When full-time, regular employees who have served at least one year are terminated due to work force reductions, severance pay shall be provided in an amount decided at the discretion of the Conference but in no event greater than one week's pay for each full year of full-time employment up to a maximum of eight weeks. Maximum severance for regular part-time employees who have served at least one year and work more than twenty and less than thirty hours per week shall be a pro-rated amount on the same basis.

*Procedures involved with involuntary discharge of employees other than called ministers*

An involuntary discharge occurs when the Conference terminates an employee's employment.

Procedures typically associated with involuntary discharge are as follows:

- The official termination date will be established as the date last worked.
- Employees will be notified of such dismissal in writing.
- Any accrued but unused vacation time as of the employee's termination date will be handled as stated in their employment agreement or, if this matter is not addressed in said employment agreement, will be paid to the employee.
- Employees will not be reimbursed for any unused sick time upon termination of employment.
- No severance pay will be given.

*Other aspects of involuntary termination*

On the last day of work, the employee must return all Conference property (keys, credit cards, computers, etc.)

When an employee is involuntarily discharged, the Conference may conduct an exit interview prior to the employee leaving.

Under Minnesota law, the Conference has opted out of contributing to Minnesota unemployment insurance. This does not eliminate or prevent employees from getting unemployment benefits after termination of employment from the Conference, if the employee qualifies.

### **3.6 Personnel Records**

*Policy*

The Conference office will maintain a personnel file on each employee. This personnel file will include items such as, but not limited to, job application, performance reviews, compensation and benefit documents, discipline records, job descriptions, and other materials.

Under Minnesota law, employees may review certain documents that the statute calls "personnel records" upon written request, made in good faith, once every six months or once each year upon separation from employment. Such written request should be directed to the employee's supervisor. The Conference will make the employee's personnel record, or an accurate copy, available for review during normal business hours within seven working days after receipt of that request. The employee's review shall occur at the Conference's office or another reasonable nearby location. The Conference may require the review be made in the presence of a Conference representative. After the review is completed, and/or upon the employee's written request, the Conference will provide the employee with a copy of the personnel record at no charge. If the employee disputes specific information contained in their personnel record and an agreement is

not reached to remove or revise the disputed information, the employee may submit a written statement (not exceeding five (5) pages) to be placed in the personnel record that identifies the disputed information and explains the employee's position. The Conference will not retaliate against the employee for asserting their rights under this policy. The employee has certain remedies available if the Conference fails to follow the terms of this policy.

## Section Four

- **4.1 Compensation**

### 4.1 Compensation

#### *Compensation Philosophy*

While the Conference reserves the right to set employee compensation in its sole discretion, the Conference intends to pay reasonable compensation as is necessary to attract, retain and motivate employees taking into consideration the Conference's financial circumstances. The Conference's total compensation program, including benefits, is intended to:

- Support its vision to provide resources to all churches within the Conference.
- Strive to be competitive with similar non-profit organizations in Minnesota and with other church conferences.
- Encourages a workplace where work-life balance is important.

#### *Honoraria*

Honoraria and other payments earned by exempt employees while engaged in or expressing the ministry of the Conference shall be turned in to the Conference. Examples of such payments include, without limitation, payment for preaching, presentations, or travel expenses. In determining if an activity is engaged in or expressing the ministry of the Conference, the Conference, in its sole discretion, may consider various criteria, including but not limited to, whether or not the invitation came as a result of the employee's position in the Conference.

Work for remuneration that is separate from the Conference and unrelated to the ministry to which the employee is hired shall be done on the employee's own time and shall not interfere with their performance for the Conference.

Outside work that requires major time commitment should be accepted only after consultation with the Conference Minister and such arrangements will be reviewed annually. Outside work by the Conference Minister will be approved by the Board of Directors.

## Section Five

- 5.1 Holidays
- 5.2 Vacation Days
- 5.3 Personal Leave Days
- 5.4 Scheduling Procedures

### 5.1 Holidays

#### *Policy*

The Conference recognizes twelve holidays when the Conference office will be closed.\* All employees working more than twenty hours per week who would normally be scheduled to work on a designated holiday will receive pay for scheduled hours as if they had worked. Holiday pay for regular part-time employees will be based on the employee's normally scheduled hours that would have been worked on the day of the holiday. Any employee who observes holidays not listed may use personal days, vacation or may take the day off without pay.

#### *Holidays*

New Year's Day	Memorial Day	day after Thanksgiving
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Independence Day	Christmas Eve Day
President's Day	Labor Day	Christmas Day
Good Friday	Thanksgiving Day	New Year's Eve Day

Holidays falling on a Saturday will typically be observed on the preceding Friday. Holidays falling on a Sunday will typically be observed on the following Monday. When Christmas Day falls on a Thursday, the Conference office will also typically be closed the following Friday.

### 5.2 Vacation Days

#### *Vacation Policy*

The Conference Minister and Associate Conference Ministers receive four weeks of vacation annually. All other full-time employees receive up to four weeks of vacation annually according to the following schedule:

<u>Years of Service Accrued from Date of Hire</u>	<u>Annual Vacation Days (Hours)</u>
0 through 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	10 (80 hours)
4 <sup>th</sup> through 12 <sup>th</sup> year	15 (120 hours)
13 <sup>th</sup> year or greater	20 (160 hours)

Part-time employees working more than twenty hours per week are granted paid vacation at a rate proportionate to their average work week. For an illustrative example, a part-time employee regularly working 24 hours a week will be entitled to receive 48 hours of vacation a year during the first three years of their service (i.e 60% of the above 80 hours of annual vacation earned by a full-time employee during the first three years of their service).

Vacation benefits will be administered under the following guidelines:

1. Vacation benefits for full-time employees will be earned monthly according to the following schedule. The part-time schedule will be prorated per the regularly scheduled hours.

<u>Annual Benefit</u>	<u>Monthly Benefit</u>	<u>Maximum Accrual</u>
10 days	6.67 hours	80 hours



15 days	10.00 hours	120 hours
20 days	13.33 hours	160 hours

- The Conference will not make payment of additional salary to an employee in lieu of unused vacation, except upon termination as provided for in Section 3. Salary or wages for any accrued, unused vacation will be paid upon termination only as outlined in Sections 3.4 and 3.5.
- With supervisor's prior written approval, an employee can exceed vacation accrual by up to forty hours. An employee permitted to exceed vacation accrual will be in a negative balance that will be made up as the employee earns more vacation.

### 5.3 Personal Leave Days

- Full-time and part-time employees have four (4) personal leave days per calendar year. Part-time employees working more than 20 hours per week earn days prorated per regularly-scheduled hours.
- Personal leave days for new employees are prorated based on hire date according to the following schedule:

<u>Hire Date</u>	<u>Personal Leave Days</u>
January – March	4
April – June	3
July – September	2
October – December	1

- Personal leave days do not carry over from year to year. Employees will not receive pay for unused personal leave days at separation of employment.

### 5.4 Scheduling Procedures

Written vacation and personal leave day requests should be submitted in writing to an employee's supervisor as far in advance as possible. Every effort will be made to honor requests, but the Conference reserves the right to limit the number of employees on vacation or personal leave at any one time in order to insure the efficient operation of the Conference.

## **Section Six**

- 6.1 Sabbaticals for Conference Minister and Associate Conference Minister
- 6.2 Other Leaves of Absence

### **6.1 Sabbatical Leaves for the Conference Minister and Associate Conference Ministers**

#### *Policy*

The Conference encourages its Conference Minister and Associate Conference Ministers to take periodic sabbatical leaves of absence for the purpose of providing renewal, spiritual and/or professional growth and to model the need for such growth among the clergy of the Conference. These leaves are in addition to vacation times. To support these leaves, the Conference strives to set aside funds each year in order to hire a sabbatical supply during the leave period. Full salary and benefits will continue during a leave, however, vacation days are not accrued. Any accumulated, but "unused" sabbatical time is forfeited when these persons leave the employment of the Conference, whether the departure is voluntary or not voluntary (see Sections 3.4 and 3.5). It is understood that participants in this program shall remain in service at the Conference for at least one full year following a sabbatical leave. In cases where this does not occur, the employee will repay to the Conference salary, benefits, and continuing education funds used during sabbatical leave. No part of a sabbatical leave may fall within the year prior to the date of retirement. Any call or employment agreement terms regarding sabbatical shall supersede the policies stated in this Manual section.

#### *Accrual and Scheduling*

A Conference Minister or Associate Conference Ministers with at least four years of service in the Conference from the date of hire or from their last sabbatical leave are eligible for a sabbatical leave of three months with full pay and benefits.

In general, the Conference will only grant one sabbatical in the same calendar year. In the event that more than one minister wishes to take a sabbatical in the same year, or tenure and/or existing policy makes this necessary, first preference will go to the minister with the longest time since the last sabbatical, or the longest tenure at the Conference if no sabbaticals have been taken. In the event this does not distinguish which employee has the first preference, the Conference Minister has the authority to determine the order of preference.

#### *Procedures*

A written plan for the sabbatical leave is to be submitted to the Conference Minister and the Personnel Committee for approval. In the case of the Conference Minister's sabbatical leave, such plan is to be submitted to the Personnel Committee and the Board of Directors. The written plan must be submitted at least six months before the start of the leave and should include the time period requested and the manner in which the sabbatical will support the stated purpose.

At the end of the sabbatical leave a full report is to be submitted to the above-mentioned bodies, offering an explanation of the experience and how new skills/insights might be integrated into the life of the Conference.

## 6.2 Other Leaves of Absence

### *Policy*

Leaves of absence may be granted to employees, providing that any guidelines established for each type of leave are met. Approval of the Conference Minister or the employee's supervisor is required. In general, requests for paid leaves of absence are granted only to employees who have been employed for at least one year. Employees are expected to notify their supervisor in writing of all leaves of absences, both planned and unexpected, as soon as possible. Supervisors are responsible for authorizing leaves, securing appropriate documentation. Leaves exceeding 30 days, approved by a supervisor, shall be reported to the Personnel Committee. Employees do not accumulate vacation, sick pay, or holiday pay during a leave of absence of longer than five days. The continuation of benefits during longer periods of leave is subject to the policies below.

### *Sick Leave*

Sick leave can be used for personal illness or to care for a person in an employee's immediate family, which is defined as spouse or significant other, child, or parent. Sick leave may also be used for non-acute medical or dental appointments, provided the supervisor has granted prior approval.

Beginning with the first day of employment, sick leave is accrued at the full-time equivalent rate of one day per month. Part-time employees working more than twenty hours per week per year will earn pro-rated sick leave based on the number of regularly scheduled hours. Sick leave may be accumulated from year to a year up to a maximum of forty-five working days, or prorated by eligibility standard above. Current employees who have accrued more than this maximum will be allowed to keep the sick leave accrued as of the date of this policy without further increase.

In the event of a termination (voluntary or involuntary), all accrued sick leave will terminate at the date of separation, and no reimbursement will be made for unused sick leave (see also Sections 3.4 and 3.5).

You may be required by the Conference Minister or supervisor to present a doctor's certificate when you are sick for more than five consecutive working days in order to continue to receive sick leave pay.

No sick leave pay will be given while you are receiving paid time-off benefits from other sources such as short-term or long-term disability (except as noted in the following paragraph), worker's compensation, or Social Security

### *Disability Leave*

Leaves of more than thirty days up to ninety days due to illness or injury are classified as a short term disability leave. When an employee's physician determines that the disability will exceed thirty days, the employee will need to contact the Conference's insurance carrier to apply for Short-Term Disability benefits if such benefits are provided. Employees may use any accumulated sick leave and/or vacation to supplement their short term disability pay (which ordinarily is 60% of regular compensation) up to a maximum of the equivalent of their normal pay.

If a disability leave extends beyond ninety calendar days, it is considered a Long-Term Disability.

When an employee's physician determines that the disability will exceed ninety days, the employee will need to contact the Conference's insurance carrier to apply for Long-Term Disability benefits if such benefits are provided.

### *Parental Leave*

The Conference may provide Conference employees who meet the below-stated eligibility requirements up to sixty (60) days of paid leave in conjunction with the birth or adoption of a child. To be eligible for this paid leave, the employee must (i) be a parent of the birth or adopted child, (ii) have been employed by the conference for at least 365 consecutive days prior to the birth or adoption, and (iii) have worked at least 20 hours per week throughout said 365 day period. Unless otherwise agreed to by the Conference in writing, the following conditions and requirements apply to this potential paid leave:

A Conference employee eligible for paid leave under this Section must give the Conference reasonable advance notice of a desire to take such leave, the date desired to start taking the leave, and how long the leave (up to sixty days) is desired. Notwithstanding the foregoing, this leave must begin within 42 days from the date of the birth or adoption of the employee's child or the date when the child is released from the hospital whichever is later.

The Conference will continue to make available to a Conference employee taking any of the parental leave provided for in this Section coverage under any Conference provided group insurance policy covering the employee and any of the employee's dependents during the time the employee is on parental leave under this Section if and to the extent such continued coverage is permitted under the involved policy.

A Conference employee may use any vacation or personal leave time the employee is eligible to use under Section 5 of this Handbook as part of or to extend the period of parental leave available to the employee under this Section. Employees taking any parental leave under this Section will be paid for any holidays during the parental leave that are observed by the Conference.

Upon the end of a Conference employee's parental leave under this Section the Conference will make every reasonable effort to return the employee to the same position held prior to the start of the said parental leave or one that is similar in responsibilities, pay, benefits, and terms and conditions of employment. If the employee is on leave for more than 30 days, the employee must provide at least fourteen days advanced notice of the date the employee intends to return to work from said leave. Employees who do not return to work (i.e., do not show up for) upon the expiration of their parental leave shall be considered to have voluntarily resigned.

### *Funeral Leave*

When death occurs in the immediate family, an employee may request up to three days off with pay to attend the funeral. Employees are expected to notify their supervisor in the event of a familial death as to their plans for taking funeral leave.

### *Military Duty Leave*

Regular full-time and part-time employees who are members of a U. S. Military Reserve or National

Guard unit will be excused from work when called for military duty and training. The Conference will adhere to all federal and state laws affecting military leave issues.

Military Family Leave Employees are entitled to ten days of unpaid leave if a member of the employee's immediate family is injured or killed while engaged in active duty in the armed forces of the U.S. Employees are also entitled to one day of unpaid leave per year to attend send-off or homecoming ceremonies for immediate family members who are engaged in active duty in the armed forces of the U.S.

#### *Jury Duty*

All employees will be granted leave for jury duty. You will be required to present proof of jury duty. Regular full-time and part-time employees will be reimbursed the difference of jury duty pay and the regular rate of pay that would have been received for regularly scheduled hours. Employees are expected to return to work during normal working hours if released from jury duty for the day.

#### *School Conference and Activities Leave*

Parents of school-aged children will also be provided an unpaid leave of up to a total of 16 hours during any school year to attend school conferences or school activities related to the employee's child, provided that the conferences or school activities cannot be scheduled during non-work hours. An employee may 1) substitute paid vacation days or personal leave days, or 2) take the time without pay. An employee wishing to take a school conference leave must provide at least one week advance notice to their supervisor prior to the leave and must make a reasonable effort to schedule the leave so as not to unduly disrupt the Conference's operation.

#### *Voting*

The Conference encourages employees to exercise their right to vote in primary and general local, state, and federal elections. Employees are usually able to find time to vote either before or after their work hours on an election day. However, if an employee is unable to vote during non-work hours the Conference will grant the employee unpaid time off to vote on a qualified election day. Employees must provide notice of the need for such time off to their supervisor, and the employee's supervisor shall determine the least disruptive time available for the employee to take leave to vote.

#### *Crime Victim Leave*

An employee may take reasonable time off if needed to obtain domestic restraining orders, harassment restraining orders, or attend criminal court proceedings in which the employee, spouse, significant other, or immediate family member was a victim of a violent crime such as murder, rape, or similar crimes of physical violence (as defined by law). Unless impracticable to do so, an employee must give 48 hours advance notice of the need for the absence to the employee's supervisor and may be asked to provide verification of the need for leave. The Conference will not disclose information related to an employee's leave under this provision or take adverse action against an employee for taking leave under this policy.

#### *Continuing Education*

The Conference Minister and Associate Conference Ministers receive up to two weeks per year for continuing education. However, continuing education time shall not be granted in the same year

as a sabbatical leave. All other employees may attend conferences, conventions, and seminars with the approval of their supervisor. The Conference will demonstrate its financial encouragement of employee development in an amount to be determined on an annual basis. The supervisor must give prior approval for all continuing education expenditures.

*Benefits*

While on an approved leave, excluding long term disability, the Conference will maintain, at its cost (not to exceed its before-leave payment), the same level of benefit coverage the employee had prior to leave to the extent permitted under applicable law or the terms governing such benefits.

## **Section Seven**

- **7.1 Health Insurance**
- **7.2 Retirement Benefits**
- **7.3 Other Benefits**

### **Important Note**

Pursuant to Section 2.2, while the Conference presently provides its eligible and qualified employees, and in some instances such employees' spouses or same gender domestic partners and families with certain benefits, employment with the Conference does not guarantee the provision of any particular benefit. To receive any Conference-provided benefit, an employee must both be classified as the type of employee as is eligible to receive a benefit and qualify and be eligible according to the specific terms of each benefit plan. Some benefits may now or hereafter require the employee to pay part or all of the cost of the benefit.

The Conference reserves the rights to terminate or alter any benefit and to change the level or portion of Conference payment of any employee benefit cost for any benefit at any time and in its sole discretion.

### **7.1 Health Insurance**

The Conference presently offers medical, dental, disability, and term life insurance coverage through such insurance plan provided by The Pension Boards of the UCC to all eligible employees and their families/same gender domestic partners. If an eligible employee declines such coverage and provides certification of equivalent medical and dental coverage, he or she will be reimbursed in an amount equal to the cost of the alternative coverage not to exceed the cost to the Conference of providing said employee single coverage through with the UCC Pension Boards medical and dental insurance. Such reimbursement will likely constitute taxable income and as such be subject to withholding.

### **7.2 Retirement Benefits**

The Conference will contribute an amount equal to 14% of salary (and housing allowance, where such benefit is provided to a Conference employee) to the UCC Pension Plan (which is a "403b" plan under the Internal Revenue Code) or other plan as requested by the employee to the extent such contribution is permissible under applicable law on a pre-tax basis. The Conference reserves the right to change the level of the Conference's contribution to said Plan at any time and in its sole discretion.

### **7.3 Other Benefits**

Social Security, Medicare and Worker's Compensation The Conference makes contributions on its employees' behalf for certain benefits required by law, including Social Security and Medicare (FICA) and Worker's Compensation insurance.

Worker's Compensation insurance provides certain coverage for medical care and some kinds of expenses related to an employee's work related injury or illness. Work-related injuries are to be reported to the employee's supervisor as quickly as possible. Accrual of sick leave and accrual of

vacation is suspended while an employee is on worker's compensation leave. Medical insurance coverage and pension benefits as described in Section 6 will continue to be provided on the same basis as provided while in an active status.

*Dependent and Health Care Reimbursement Plan*

The Conference shall provide all regular full-time employees a medical reimbursement plan that allows employees to pay certain health care costs with "pre-tax" dollars to the extent permitted under Sections 125 and 129 of the Internal Revenue Service Code.

*Automobile Expense Reimbursement*

Employees shall be reimbursed for expenses when using a personal vehicle in the course of performing Conference duties. The amount of reimbursement will equal the current mileage rates as determined by the Internal Revenue Service for business purposes. Employees must submit expense reimbursement requests showing actual mileage and otherwise complying with Conference directions for expense reimbursement requests to receive such reimbursement.



## Receipt of Manual

**I have received and read the Personnel Policies Manual of the Conference of the United Church of Christ on [appropriate date] and I understand and accept the directions, expectations, guidelines, policies, and procedures set forth herein.**

As an employee of the Conference, I agree to comply with the directions, expectations, guidelines, policies, and procedures the Conference establishes. I also recognize and agree the Conference has the right to change, add to, or delete items in this Manual at any time, in its sole and absolute discretion, and with or without my prior knowledge or consent.

I also understand and agree this Manual is not, and does not create or constitute, an employment agreement or a contract of employment. Only the Conference Minister has the authority to enter into employment contracts or agreements on behalf of the Conference. I further acknowledge that my employment with the Conference is "employment at will" and may be terminated either by me or the Conference of the United Church of Christ, at any time with or without cause, except only if and to the extent otherwise provided for in individual written employment agreements signed by the Conference Minister on behalf of the Conference.

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Print or Type Name

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Date

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Signature of Employee