

## **STATEMENT ON LEADERSHIP IN MINISTRY**

**Using this page, and one additional page if needed, write a statement that will help a candidate better understand the relationship of clergy and lay leadership in the life of your congregation. Candidates will be interested to know whether your lay leaders have a history of strong, cooperative relationships with the church’s pastoral leadership. If your church organizational structure is based on intentional lay-led ministries, describe how that structure functions in relationship to the pastor; if your organizational structure is dependent on clergy leadership, describe what will be expected of the pastor.**

**If you wish, this statement can provide an opportunity for you to elaborate on the list of committees/boards/groups that you identified in Question 24. (For example, in some churches the expectation is for mutual involvement of pastor and finance committee in the financial matters of the church; other congregations have a clear expectation that the pastor will be focused on “spiritual matters” and will be excluded from settings where financial decisions are made.)**

**Include in the statement reflections on leadership styles that work well for your church. What do you hope/expect that your new pastor will understand and value in your particular style of lay leadership? What would a new pastor need to know in order to work smoothly with your established leaders? If yours is a multiple-staff church, it would be helpful to comment on your expectations of how the staff team members relate to each other. You are encouraged to include anything else you want to say about your church and its expectations of the leader it now seeks:**

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At the United Churches of Olympia we are seeking a leader who can help guide us along the new path God is calling us to travel. Transitioning from our former pastor, who served our congregation for 23 years, we have worked in the interim on exploring our identity as a congregation and discovering the kind of leader our church will call next. Our goal is to find a pastor whose strengths can assist us in continuing the social justice work we are passionate about and inspire us as we worship together and serve one another and our community.

This statement on leadership focuses on the expectations of the new pastor in working with our lay leaders, ministries, volunteers, the congregation and in the wider community.

### **Background**

The United Churches of Olympia is a federated congregation of the United Church of Christ and Presbyterian USA. We strive to use the strengths of each denomination, combining the guiding principles of the two, while acting as one congregation. We welcome a pastor who is passionate and enthusiastic, with a warm, nurturing heart and an ability to inspire a congregation of diverse beings. We seek someone with fresh ideas and an ability to break down into steps the path we need to take to achieve our goals as a church community. Our ideal pastor would model a faith that is mature, winsome and contagious and have the ability to quickly establish relationships

with current members while reaching out to new members. We seek to balance the desires and visions of diverse individuals and smaller groups within the church to work together as one body.

### **Lead the Church**

We expect our new leader to have the skills to provide full leadership, including the ability to enable change, model active listening and make hard decisions for the good of the whole congregation. The pastor needs to be able to work with the congregation to discern a focus and vision for the church – within the context of our progressive Reformed theology and focus on community action – and grow the church from there. While collaborating with an active church council, multiple ministries and small groups is paramount, the church needs a leader to strengthen and refine our common identity and unify our congregation. The pastor is expected to participate in congregational activities, such as those at Christmas, Annual General Meetings, Easter, and Summer Retreat. But in addition to fulfilling the pastoral role in these and other yearly events, we are seeking someone to envision, along with lay leaders and congregants, the kinds of unifying activities that will foster internal congregational relationships.

### **Delegate Leadership and Cultivate Lay Leaders and Volunteers**

Our church has a history of lay leaders managing a collection of diverse activities within the church. By "lay leaders" we mean those commissioned by the pastor and congregation to provide leadership in the church, including Council members, ministry committee members, Sunday school teachers and Stephen ministers. Volunteers are members of the congregation who support or participate in activities of the ministries and operations of the church such as providing weekly office support, assisting with a building clean-up day or walking in the Crop Walk for our church.

Our pastoral leader needs to encourage, support and strengthen our lay leadership and volunteers directly and through staff. Lay leaders and volunteers need clear direction from the pastor and staff in how to bring their ideas forward and support for implementing ideas that fit within the mission and vision for the church. We expect the pastor to support Council-approved programs that are carried out by lay leaders and volunteers. At the same time, we desire a strong leader who is able to synthesize the needs and desires of the congregation and establish a path for growth within the church.

With an aging congregation, there is a great need to visit the sick and provide pastoral care. We have a "Caring Friends" group and "Meals from Heaven" ministry who help lighten this load. We would like our pastor to participate as a member of the Stephen Ministry leadership team by offering guidance to Stephen Ministers and the program (which provides care for those experiencing a crisis such as death of a spouse or diagnoses of a terminal illness), referring individuals for care and promoting the program to the congregation.

### **Encourage Congregational Unity and Spiritual Growth**

We'd like a style of ministry that draws people into a place of spiritual growth and transformation. We need leadership to help us strengthen our common identity by developing a vital, church-wide small group program and encourage existing groups, enabling people to

support each other emotionally and spiritually outside of Sunday morning. The pastoral role would be to help create excitement and direction for small groups and assist in guiding the effort, especially as a way to provide younger families and singles with activities that appeal to their needs and experiences. We also seek a leader who will help us shape weekly worship services so they act as a unifying experience for the congregation while respecting our diversity.

### **Strengthen Process for Welcoming Newcomers**

As a church family, we want to strengthen our ability to embrace the needs of newcomers and retain more of the new people who flow in and out of our doors. As noted above, we are an aging congregation and our hope is to attract and retain younger families and young people in order to ensure the church is vibrant in the future. We need a pastor to help implement new ideas and systemic changes to assist us in creating a church home for people new to our congregation.

### **Outreach to Wider Community**

We desire a pastor who is capable of maintaining our presence in the community as a visible, faith-centered advocate for the local social justice issues that reflect our congregants' passions. We seek a pastor who makes deep, community-based connections with those working to alleviate hunger and homelessness as well as other issues that affect vulnerable populations. We also expect the pastor to represent our church in the interfaith community in Olympia.

### **Closing**

Our congregation is enthusiastic about beginning this journey with a new pastoral leader. We hope to continue to grow, change and evolve together as pastor and congregation. God is calling us, together, to continue in our mission to our community and the world, worshipping and supporting one another as followers in the way of Jesus.