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Great Lakes Unity Region September/October 2011 Newsletter

This fall's newsletter only has 3 articles, but they are important ones.

- Rev. Judy Grimes, Regional Rep, provides a description of a 21st century senior minister.
- Rev. Marty Newman, Judicatory Rep, has an important article on Ethics Review System (ERS) a revamped version of the old CLMR system.
- And finally, the Ministry Services Team provides us with some guidelines for having a Comm-Unity building meeting in our spiritual communities.



I hope you are having a lovely fall and enjoying the cooler weather. And to those attending the conference in Louisville - see you soon!

Love and Light,
Angel Smith
GLURC Admin Assistant

Senior Minister Position Description for the 21st Century by Rev. Judy Grimes, Regional Representative

During the years I've served as Chair Of Ministry Studies, PeaceMaker/Transition Consultant and now Regional Representative for Great Lakes, I've been aware that the way many of us were taught to lead a congregation and do our job does not jive with the trends and attitudes of leadership prevalent today. The Standards Team began addressing this conflict in January. Through editing the description, discussion by Standards, and approval by the Board of Trustees a revised description suitable for educating ourselves and our boards has been prepared. Some of the changes are minor. However the new introductory paragraph below and two sentences I'll include here summarize the intent and spirit of shared ministry leadership. See what you think and share it with your board. The full job description will be available in Louisville at GLURC or I can send it to you if you like. (judygrimes@aol.com)

Introductory Statement:

We are living in a time of shifting paradigms that call us to explore ministry leadership differently. In today's world leadership is shared, rather than being the sole province of the senior minister. A "community centric" approach draws forth the skills and talents of individuals throughout the ministry and brings them together collaboratively to manifest the vision that Spirit has for each ministry. Thriving Unity ministries are created as dedicated ministers and congregation representatives serve together to design a quality Spirit-filled environment for all people. This job description serves as a guideline to ensure that all areas of the ministry are well managed. Boards and ministers are encouraged to work with this document in a co-creative manner utilizing the skills and talents available in the way that best serves the ministry as a whole.

From the **General Description of Position**, "He/she (minister) delegates programs and activities to staff and volunteer personnel to fulfill, but along with the elected board retains responsibility for the sound financial and program management of the ministry." An 8th point has been added to Relationship with Board. "In collaboration with the board,(minister) ensures that all decisions are aligned with the mission/vision and are in the best interest of the ministry."

"I never knew that!"

By Rev. Marty Newman, GLUR Judicatory Representative

The most common lament I have heard since becoming the Judicatory Representative for The Great Lakes Region, is the frustrated cry "I never knew that!" You may be aware that our CLMR System has recently been revamped into our Ethics Review System (ERS). Already, those of us involved in the fact finding teams see a very favorable improvement and see the new process working better for everyone's highest and best.

RE-ENTRY: What is it?

Below, I have provided additional information and some links so that you can easily go to the UWM web-site and download each of the revised Code of Ethics For Ministers, Spiritual Leaders, Licensed Teachers and Ministries. One little known requirement that affects ordained ministers is one that I want to highlight. It is referred to as "**Re-entry**". The purpose of the Re-entry process is to support the minister in being as prepared as possible for re-entering congregational ministry successfully. It is now the policy for you to go through the Re-entry process before you are allowed to submit applications to open ministries if:

- you have been out of **congregational** ministry for over one year, even if you were in an alternative ministry, or
- you have been in your current ministry less than two

- years, or
- you have been in two ministries in less than five years

If you contact the UWM placement office, they will ask you the three questions above. If you answer "Yes" to any one of them, you will be referred to the 'Re-entry Form' and your Regional Judicatory Representative. The length of the process is determined by how long it takes the JR to assemble a team of two other JR's, conduct interviews with your references, schedule conference calls, etc. Remember that JR's are volunteers, most of whom are also serving churches. Sometimes a re-entry can be accomplished in less than a month. Sometimes they take many months if there are other complicating issues.

How might the Ethics Review System (ERS) affect me/us?

This is a question every minister, licensed teacher, spiritual leader and board should ask. All ministers, spiritual leaders and boards are responsible to the [Codes of Ethics](#) (PDF) and [Codes of Conduct](#) (PDF) regardless of whether we have read them or signed them. Regularly reading and reviewing the ethics, codes, and by-laws and reflecting on our compliance, patterns and behaviors in regard to them is a professional requirement for everyone, and will assist you in remaining in good standing and a blessing to your ministry, the Unity movement and the world.

Having said that, most problems in churches are not caused by actual violations of ethics or codes. They are caused by lack of skill and personal development. Both individuals and congregations will greatly benefit by utilizing the resources available for building competence and skill in executing the functions required by our roles. Judy Grimes, your Regional Representative, Martha Creek your Ministry Consultant and myself as your Judicatory Representative are all available to assist you in many ways. We are trained and experienced in several types of trainings that support ministries, Ministers, Spiritual Leaders and Licensed Teachers in developing competence and skill. Whether you desire prayer and/or consultation, have any questions about handling a touchy situation or just want to hear several options to try, give one of us a call. If you need one of us to come, expenses can usually be worked out in very satisfactory ways through love offerings for the church, the consultant and the region.

All of us know there are times when we simply don't measure up to our own standard, let alone the ideal. When this happens, and formal allegations or charges are made against a minister, spiritual leader or ministry, an investigation may be conducted. By remaining compassionate, open and vulnerable in the midst of criticism and upset, even mistakes of violating by-laws or failures to live up to a code can sometimes be cleared and a more desirable result achieved. Problems in churches that are avoided and not addressed will often, if not usually, escalate to

the point of having many members leave, losing valuable staff or voting to dismiss a minister. When those things happen, churches may take many years, often as long as ten, to recover into a truly thriving ministry. We can learn from the challenges of others, rather than making the same mistakes ourselves!

We each hold you in the light and love of your most excellent heart of service. We love your willingness to step into service that can be challenging, but also very rewarding and can produce great joy, satisfaction and the rewards of spiritual growth.

Watch for more articles on the revisions of the Ethics Review System.

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Comm-Unity Meeting

by the Ministry Services Team

The purpose of a Comm-Unity meeting is to build community through the exchange of ideas and information, and to allow voicing of concerns and questions. All members and friends are urged to attend and participate. It is believed that as we truly hear each other and value our diversity of opinions, we will grow in strength and succeed in our collective common goals and endeavors.

1. After starting with prayer, we will collectively create Comm-unity practices to guide communications and behaviors during the meeting. Agreement to all guidelines will be sealed by each person affirming their agreement to participate with a "yes." The following are non-negotiable basic guidelines:

- a. I will use only use "I" statements to state my beliefs, opinions, and/or feelings
- b. I acknowledge that what a person is saying is true to them, even if it not true for me
- c. I will not share third hand information or feelings, no

hear-say

- d. I will not speak while another is speaking
- e. I will not participate in cross-talk, while another is speaking
- f. I understand that the facilitator may reframe or ask for a reframe of a statement
- g. I understand the facilitator my call for a time of silence at any time
- h. My "yes" is affirmation of agreement and becomes a benchmark of my integrity

2. If held in the Sanctuary, each person who wishes to speak must use the microphone.

3. The person who is speaking has the floor. He or she may ask questions of any individual present. Respondents must use a microphone. The person who has the floor may address the Comm-Unity meeting in the form of personal sharing, dialog or debate.

4. No one may talk about an individual who is not present (unless, prior to the meeting, that person has given their permission to be included in the discussion to the facilitator). No one may present third-party information or opinion. No speaker may represent another individual or group. It is inappropriate to use information from confidential sources or to indicate that such information exists.

5. There is no formal time limit imposed on anyone who has the floor. However, in the spirit of fairness to all who wish to speak, everyone is requested to respect the right of others to share, thus a three minute signal will be given.

6. Everyone is urged to keep the focus of the sharing or discussion on substantive issues, relationships, or descriptions of feelings. There shall be no name-calling, mind-reading (attributing evil motives), guilt-making ("look how you've made me feel"), rejecting or discrediting of another person.

7. It is important to share your feelings and know you have been heard. You may ask to have your feelings or position paraphrased by the respondent to ensure you have been heard.

8. A Comm-Unity meeting is not a membership meeting. No business of the organization may be voted upon.

9. The duration of the Comm-Unity meeting shall be 90 minutes. A second meeting may be called by those present providing there is a 15 minute recess before the next meeting begins.

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