



SEARCH FOR THE GENERAL MINISTER & PRESIDENT

United Church of Christ
Cleveland, OH

OVERVIEW OF SEARCH & ROLE

The United Church of Christ (UCC) invites applications and nominations for the position of General Minister and President (GMP). The GMP is both the spiritual leader of the Church and its Chief Executive Officer. Elected to a four-year term by the General Synod, the GMP must have, or be eligible to receive, ordained ministerial standing or ordained ministerial partner standing in the UCC. The GMP the standard bearer for the core vision, mission, and identity of the United Church of Christ. The GMP is the spiritual leader and pastor of the Church, charged with the care and nurture of the spiritual life of the Church. The GMP is responsible for the unity and well-being of the Church, its covenantal life, and ecumenical and interfaith relationships. The GMP is the public voice and principal spokesperson for the denomination. The GMP is the Chief Executive Officer of the General Synod and is responsible for the work of the Church. The GMP will oversee critical and varied aspects of UCC leadership, including staffing and operations at the National Setting, financial oversight, public theological communication, issue advocacy, and long-term visioning and strategic planning for the Church. In each of these roles, the GMP serves with excellence to prepare the Church for the future, leading the visioning, planning, coordination, and implementation of the mission of the United Church of Christ.

The United Church of Christ strives to be a vibrant, diverse community of Christians who come together as one church united in faith, action, and justice. Nationwide, the UCC includes over 4500 local churches and nearly 800,000 members. Since 1957, the UCC has been the church of firsts: it was the first historically white denomination to ordain an African American, the first to ordain a woman, the first to ordain an openly gay man, and the first Christian church to affirm the right of same-gender couples to marry. Throughout its history, the UCC was at the forefront of the anti-slavery movement and the civil rights movement. Today, the UCC continues its commitment to living out faith in ways that effect change in communities at all levels, locally, nationally, and globally.

This is an exciting opportunity for a dedicated and experienced faith leader to shepherd the UCC into its important next chapter. As communities and the Church emerge into a post-pandemic world that continues to be shaped by persistent dehumanization, inequality, and oppression along lines of difference; widespread violence in myriad forms, and a worsening climate crisis, the healing balm and prophetic voice of the Church is needed now more than ever. In light of these challenges, as well as the many blessings and opportunities for even greater ministry impact, the new GMP will provide bold vision and faithful leadership for the Church's future. The incoming GMP will inspire shared leadership with the various settings of the Church to resource and revitalize local churches and regional conferences, raise the national and international profile of the UCC, and

redouble the shared commitment to equity and justice. The GMP will collaborate with church leaders and members on how best to position the Church to address the needs and challenges of the present and future. The GMP will lead important conversations on growing the Church's membership, resources, and national reputation in an ethical and sustainable manner. The GMP will provide a transparent, collaborative model of leadership with Associate General Ministers, key senior officers at the National Setting, and Conference Ministers, to advance the Church's mission and values.

The successful candidate will possess an exemplary track record in organizational leadership and a firm grasp of the emerging challenges and opportunities facing communities of faith in general and the UCC in particular. The GMP must be an experienced and collaborative leader, spiritual advisor, and communicator who embodies and furthers the UCC's commitments to justice, faith, and ministry. The ideal candidate will have a sound theological grounding and deep knowledge of the history, values, and mission of the Church. The next GMP will be a passionate, transparent, ethical leader who can maintain steadfast faith in turbulent times and provide solace to others as the UCC navigates these changing times. Of critical importance, the GMP, and the National Setting, must be wholly committed to championing and advancing the core values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism with a keen awareness of the experiences of under-represented and marginalized individuals and groups within the United Church of Christ. These commitments should be reflected in their theological framework and philosophy of ministry as well as their demonstrated work and accomplishments. As the UCC's Chief Executive, the GMP must also bring strong management skills, financial acumen, thorough administrative oversight, and accountability to the National Setting. The GMP must have an ethos that incorporates advocacy, compassion, and engagement, establishing credibility and confidence among all constituencies in the Church.

The United Church of Christ has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Purpose (from the Gospel of Matthew)

To love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves.

Vision

United in Christ's love, a just world for all.

Mission

United in Spirit and inspired by God's grace, we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all.

The current purpose, vision, and mission statements were affirmed by the UCC Board (UCCB) in October 2016. In March 2017, the Strategic Visioning Task Force (2015-2016) and the Vision Implementation Task Force (2016-2017) of the UCCB published a report titled "[A Vision: The Transformative United Church of Christ in Ten Years](#)". This report calls for the UCC to be a

“United and Uniting Church for the sake of the gospel.” The report further proposed a 10-year vision for the UCC based on extensive surveys, interviews, and research conducted by the task forces over a two-year period. That vision is rooted in three overarching themes:

Christ-Driven Connection

Striving to imitate the life of Christ, the transformative United Church of Christ will encourage authentic connection and compassion between individuals, local communities, and the world using creative, agile technologies and partnerships.

God-Centered Action

In ten years, the United Church of Christ will be committed to building deep partnerships in community that produce collective social action. We will boldly and actively endeavor to bring justice for all. We will be invitational as well as self-reflective, engaging the internal work of welcoming radical difference and truth-telling against systems of oppression that have held God’s beloved people captive.

Spirit-Led Leadership

In ten years, the transformative United Church of Christ will be an innovative, nimble, and credible source of institutional support, moving with Spirit and intention, able to vision courageously and respond swiftly to/for the communities and world in which we live for the sake of the gospel.

The United Church of Christ is a distinct and diverse community of Christians that come together as one church to join faith and action. With over 4500 local churches and nearly 800,000 members across the U.S., the UCC serves God in the co-creation of a just and sustainable world. The UCC is a church of firsts, a church of extravagant welcome, and a church where “...they may all be one” (John 17:21).

The Church of Firsts

Since 1957, the United Church of Christ has been the church of firsts, weaving God’s message of hope and extravagant welcome with action for justice and peace. Together, we live out our faith in ways that effect change in our communities. The UCC’s many “firsts” mean that we have inherited a tradition of acting upon the demands of our faith. We were the first historically white denomination to ordain an African American, the first to ordain a woman, the first to ordain an openly gay man, and the first Christian church to affirm the right of same-gender couples to marry. We were in the forefront of the anti-slavery movement and the Civil Rights movement. Our response to the demands of our faith is woven into the history of our country.

A Church of Extravagant Welcome

Today, we continue to change lives throughout the world. We work alongside more than 200 mission partners. We labor ceaselessly to fight injustice, in the United States and abroad. We instill our vision into our youth and young adults, forging leaders who will imagine new dreams. And we sustain and develop church leaders, pastors, and our local churches to live their faith in exciting new ways. We believe in a God that is still speaking, a God that is all-loving and inclusive. We are a church that welcomes and accepts everyone as they are, where your mind is nourished as much as your soul.

We are a church where Jesus the healer meets Jesus the revolutionary, and where together, we grow a just and peaceful world.

For a detailed history of the United Church of Christ, please visit: <https://www.ucc.org/who-we-are/about/history/>

Leadership & Governance

The Office of the General Minister & President is responsible for administration and common services for the National Setting. The Office of the General Minister & President oversees Financial Services, Human Resources, Office of General Counsel, and the Chief Strategy Office, in addition to philanthropy, research, marketing, and communications.

In October 2021, [Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer](#) informed the UCCB that he will not seek a third term as GMP. Rev. Dorhauer's official notice to the UCCB that he would retire in 2023 followed his public remarks at General Synod 32, indicating that he would not seek a third term in office.

Elected Officers

In addition to the General Minister and President, two Associate General Ministers serve as National Officers of the UCC elected by the General Synod and report to the GMP. Currently, [Rev. Traci D. Blackmon](#) serves as Associate General Minister of Justice & Local Church Ministries and [Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson](#) serves as Associate General Minister for Wider Church Ministries and Operations and Co-Executive for Global Ministries with the UCC and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Staff

The National Setting of the UCC is supported by a [staff of over 100 persons](#) working across 21 departments. While some members of the National Setting staff are primarily based in the headquarters offices of the UCC in Cleveland, Ohio, an increasing number of staff work remotely or in offices around the country.

ROLE OF THE GENERAL MINISTER & PRESIDENT

The GMP is the Chief Executive Officer of the National Setting and the chief spokesperson of the United Church of Christ. The GMP leads and directs the work of the Vice Presidents/Associate General Ministers. The GMP is the executive ultimately responsible for all human resources decisions in the National Setting of the United Church of Christ. The GMP may from time-to-time delegate administrative responsibilities as the needs of the Church and good judgment dictate.

The GMP is responsible for the direction and mission of the United Church of Christ. The GMP is accountable to the United Church of Christ through the General Synod and the United Church of Christ Board.

Direct reports to the GMP include: Vice President and Associate General Minister, Justice and Local Church Ministry; Vice President and Associate General Minister, Wider Church Ministries

and Operations, Co-Executive of Global Ministries; General Counsel and Secretary to the UCCB; Director of Human Resources; Chief Financial Officer; Chief Strategy Officer; Director of Philanthropy; Director of Marketing and Communications; and the Executive Director of the Church Building and Loan Fund.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MINISTER AND PRESIDENT

This extensive list, informed by the bylaws, comes from the Position Description formally accepted by the United Church of Christ Board.

- Provides adaptive leadership to enable the Church to meet its mission in the midst of changing realities.
- Leads the ongoing envisioning of God's mission and the planning for its effective implementation within the United Church of Christ.
- Provides pastoral and prophetic leadership that embodies the values and vision of the United Church of Christ.
- Bears responsibility for honoring the various histories and traditions of the United Church of Christ, and their place in the ongoing life of this Church.
- Works individually and with others to secure the financial and other resources in support of the mission of the United Church of Christ.
- Ensures the financial stability of the National Setting of the United Church of Christ.
- Is responsible for oversight of all financial operations in the National Setting of the United Church of Christ and appoints a Chief Financial Officer to assist in discharging this responsibility.
- Develops and nurtures covenantal relationships among all settings of the United Church of Christ.
- Leads and actively participates in the involvement, development and theological education of children, youth, and young adults in all settings of the Church.
- Is the Chief Executive Officer and principal minister of each of the Covenanted Ministries.
- Leads the work of the Covenanted Ministries.
- Oversees the programmatic work of each Covenanted Ministry as guided by General Synod.
- Is responsible, directly, for leadership to and supervision of the Associate General Ministers of the Covenanted Ministries.
- Is responsible, directly or through a designee(s), for leadership to and supervision of other senior staff positions.
- Is responsible for the development of goals and objectives, the assignment of duties and responsibilities, the conduct of all performance reviews and the determination of all compensation and benefits for the above-named employees. Is responsible for the approval of all budgets and expenditures, and the hiring (except those elected), compensation, or termination (including those elected) of all direct reports or other employees serving the ministries or functions led by the above-named employees.
- Provides leadership to the Office of General Counsel through the Office of General Counsel Oversight Committee.

- Is responsible for notifying other implementing bodies of actions authorized by the General Synod and the need for appropriate reporting of steps taken in response.
- Works collaboratively with the Conference Ministers to assess needs, identify trends, and provide for transparent communications and responses within the wider United Church of Christ.
- Ensures that the National Setting works with the six UCC seminaries to meet the needs of theological education for all members of the United Church of Christ.
- Leads the Church in practicing unified governance.
- Is the corporate President of the United Church of Christ Board.
- Is the President of the Board of Directors of the Common Services Corporation.
- Is a member of the Board of Directors of the Affiliated and Associated Ministries of the United Church of Christ.
- Is accountable for all decisions and performance in satisfaction of the requirements of the position.
- Will submit to an annual performance evaluation as prescribed by the procedures set forth in the UCCB Standing Rules and the Human Resources Office.
- Serves as chair of the board and president of Local Church Ministries Church Building and Loan Fund

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

This is an exciting time of transformation and promise at the UCC. Given the challenges faced by the UCC as an institution, our local churches, our leaders, and members—amplified by the COVID pandemic over the last 2.5 years—as well as the persistent issues of injustice and inequality that frame our societal and communal reality, the next GMP will provide bold leadership during spiritually turbulent times, demonstrating the Church’s ability to adapt to changing social and cultural realities locally and globally, while maintaining its core values and commitments. To accomplish this, the GMP must be prepared to address a wide variety of opportunities and challenges presently facing the UCC, and those that will emerge during their term. We have outlined several key current opportunities and challenges that the next GMP should be equipped to engage below:

Develop a bold vision for pastoral leadership that is responsive to the changing landscape of the Church and the practice of ministry in a wide variety of contexts

UCC is a diverse faith community powered by its passionate and present members. Local churches are at the center of this community and provide crucial pastoral leadership for the Church’s nearly 800,000 members. The GMP will build on a successful foundation of local pastoral leadership and enhance the resources available to pastors to provide ongoing spiritual care, support, and healing to all members. The GMP will advance an ideal vision for how pastoral leadership is in communication with and supportive of individual members and within the National Setting. The GMP oversees and directs the work of Associate General Ministers and will work in partnership with them, as well as Conference Ministers, on the execution of this important vision.

Lead a mission-driven community united by a commitment to excellence, accountability, and continuous improvement; be an effective manager of people and processes; and a collaborative, transparent decision-maker able to motivate a diverse community of stakeholders

The GMP will be an experienced and effective leader with the skills and desire to support the internal operations of the UCC with particular attention to building, developing, and retaining a dedicated administrative team that collaborates, communicates, and efficiently manages the UCC's National Setting. The GMP must be an experienced manager of both people and processes with an eye toward continuous improvement to best position the UCC for continued growth and strength, both in terms of membership and spiritual mission. The GMP is ultimately responsible for all personnel decisions made in the National Setting of the UCC. The GMP will ensure a shared sense of purpose and foster a culture of collaboration and collegiality among the broader UCC community and especially between local churches, conferences, regions, and the National Setting. As a diverse denomination with thousands of local churches across the country, the UCC requires a GMP who is a skilled and tactful communicator and consensus-builder.

Secure the financial strength of the UCC through sustainable, wise, and responsible fiscal management

As the Chief Executive Officer, the GMP is charged with maintaining and growing a sound financial foundation for the UCC National Setting. The GMP is expected to ensure that the Church's finances are managed in a transparent and sustainable manner, with regular reporting to the UCCB. As a strategic leader, the GMP will make difficult decisions to prioritize and allocate resources within and among the Church that maximize the UCC's effectiveness and advance its long-term mission. As multiple settings of the UCC continue to move to a more shared model of financial giving, it is necessary that the sound financial foundation for the UCC is relevant to the ministries of multiple settings — including local churches. To ensure the vitality of local congregations, which are the heart of the UCC, the GMP's office will explore creative, collaborative funding opportunities and partner with local church and conference leaders to identify areas of need and obstacles to future growth.

Nurture, enhance, and expand vital relationships with local churches to ensure their sustainability into the future; facilitate bridge-building and healing across a “big tent” denomination in an era of national polarization

The next GMP will continue cultivating relationships with local churches and their leadership and make this a consistent priority throughout their tenure. The GMP will recognize local churches as the spiritual center of the Church and make their viability a key strategic priority moving forward. This may include a plan for equipping local churches with tools and resources to grow, identifying opportunities for both lay leadership and clergy to collaborate, and supporting local churches in their efforts to expand and diversify outreach in their communities. The GMP will leverage these relationships to build connections across the many lines of difference within the UCC. The GMP will proclaim God's persistent power to transform people and communities, simultaneously journeying alongside the more traditional/moderate and most liberal/progressive communities of the Church.

Cultivate key strategic partnerships with local, regional, and national faith-based, interfaith, social justice, and civil society organizations to raise the profile of the UCC

The GMP is the public steward and embodiment of the UCC's missional identity, reputation, and core values as well as the lead ambassador to external partners and denominations. The next GMP will be a skilled and visionary relationship-builder who can identify opportunities to connect and collaborate with UCC related entities as well as strategic partners among other organizations, denominations, and religious groups. These external partnerships will allow UCC to grow in strength and prominence as well as leverage shared resources across organizations with aligned missions. This work must be done in partnership with the various settings, as each has a different corner to lift up so that the whole Church rises together.

Maintain and strengthen commitment to anti-racism, and dismantling bias and oppression, within the Church and public square

The UCC solemnly acknowledges the historic and ongoing role of systemic racism and oppression in the Church and society. The Church must actively center the experiences, voices, and leadership of marginalized people and communities across intersectional identities, and people with privileged identities bear critical responsibility for the work of anti-racism and dismantling oppression as well. The GMP will affirm the commitments to anti-racism already made through the UCCB's racial equity work and commit to the ongoing transformation needed to the policies and practices of the National Setting. The GMP will encourage the other settings of the Church to join in this work, and celebrate their hard work and transformation. Alongside national staff and other settings, the GMP will persistently proclaim the need for anti-racist policies throughout the country and world.

Champion the UCC's mission and values both within the Church and externally; embody an adaptive, resilient leader who can guide the UCC through rapidly changing times; provide a foundation for the Church's future stability and growth

As the leader of the whole denomination, the GMP will build relationships of trust across the denomination with people involved in the diverse congregations, affinity groups, clergy and lay leaders, conferences, and other related ministries/affiliated institutions. The GMP will be a patient, present servant-leader who can guide the UCC with bold vision and actionable strategy, particularly as it relates to membership growth, financial vitality, and the strength of the Church's public voice and witness. In doing so, the GMP will ensure that all the diverse voices that make up the UCC are at the table for this important conversation regarding the Church's future. The UCC, like many faith communities, is undergoing a period of rapid change and the next GMP, while steadfast in faith, will be an adaptable, resilient head of communion who can provide vision, guidance, and stability during these times. The GMP will facilitate a conversation about how the UCC can and should remain relevant, sustainable, and committed to justice.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The next General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ will be a compelling, compassionate, and prophetic leader with a demonstrated track-record of organizational success, transformation, and impact. The GMP will have passion for the core values of the UCC and will possess a spiritual steadiness that both reassures and guides the Church into its next chapter.

Candidates for GMP must have or be eligible to receive ordained ministerial standing or ordained ministerial partner standing as defined by the UCC bylaws; additionally, the successful candidate will embody most, if not all, of the following personal and professional qualifications and characteristics:

Experience

- Has significant experience serving settings of the United Church of Christ.
- Has broad experience in leadership in the United Church of Christ.
- Has demonstrated experience and ability in leading others in complex settings and/or multiple agendas.
- Has demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of administrative operations.
- Has demonstrated experience in transformational organizational renewal/revision.

Characteristics

Commitments and Perspectives:

- Is grounded in faith in the triune God and recognizes Jesus Christ as head of the Church.
- Has mastery of the history, polity, practices, and scriptural/theological traditions of the United Church of Christ.
- Demonstrates a knowledge of and openness to the multiple faith traditions and experiences within all settings of the United Church of Christ.
- Demonstrates a knowledge of and commitment to the United Church of Christ's distinct presence as a multicultural/multiracial, peace with justice oriented, open and affirming, accessible to all, united and uniting Church.
- Recognizes the local church as the basic unit of life and organization of the United Church of Christ.
- Demonstrates competence in ecumenical and global faith matters.
- Demonstrates excellence in theological integrity, critical thinking, and depth of analysis.

Skills and Abilities

Administrative:

- Demonstrated ability to oversee and manage a diverse workplace and complex subject matter.
- Demonstrated ability to lead in conceiving, articulating, and executing a strategic plan.
- Demonstrated ability to make timely and effective decisions, to render thoughtful judgments, to take deliberate action and to acknowledge responsibility.
- Demonstrated competence in handling of complex financial matters, including understanding of financial reporting, investment performance reporting and audit compliance.

- Demonstrated knowledge of and commitment to the principles of effective human resource management, including affirmative action and equal employment opportunity.
- Ability to engage in extensive travel.

Leadership:

- Demonstrated ability to lead individuals and groups in carrying out God's mission.
- Demonstrated ability to lead individuals and groups in articulating and actualizing the vision of the United Church of Christ.
- Demonstrated ability to provide leadership to and supervision of individuals and diverse groups toward goal achievement.
- Demonstrated knowledge of the principles of fundraising; demonstrated ability to build a donor base and acquire major gifts.
- Demonstrated excellence in oral and written communication skills, including public speaking and media skills. Demonstrated ability to express oneself effectively in individual and group settings. Demonstrated ability to communicate timely and responsively.
- Demonstrated ability to encourage and support unique and creative ideas, innovation, and positive change.
- Demonstrated ability to provide negotiation and dispute resolution where needed.
- Well-versed in, abides by, and demands compliance with all laws, protocols, procedures, and guidelines governing a safe and respectful work environment in which personal boundaries are honored.

Personal Qualities

Is Pastoral:

Maintains faith perspectives in all settings. Provides consolation, deliberation, and prayer.

Is a Person of Faith:

Practices a disciplined rhythm of worship, prayer, and spiritual growth.

Demonstrates Integrity:

Models the UCC Ministerial Code at all times.

Embodies Intrinsic Strength:

Demonstrates self-assuredness without arrogance and takes time for continuing self-reflection and personal growth. Understands and accepts the need for vision, decisiveness and accountability in the direction and management of others.

Demonstrates Humility:

Demonstrates humility; respects and is sensitive to others who are different in experience or opinion.

Is Open-Minded:

Controls premature decisions and judgment; is receptive to input from others for new information and different ideas or viewpoints.

Values Diversity:

Values and advocates for the many forms and experiences of diversity that are present in the life of the United Church of Christ.

Maintains a Healthy Balance:

Is intentional in maintaining a healthy lifestyle and in balancing personal and work dimensions of life.

TO APPLY

Confidential inquiries, nominations, referrals, and resumes with cover letters should be sent in confidence to:

Ernest A. Brooks III, Partner
Keight Tucker Kennedy, Partner
Shalini Uppu, Senior Associate
Isaacson, Miller

Electronic submission of materials is encouraged via:

<https://www.imsearch.com/8506>

Detailed information on the GMP search and call process may also be found at:

<https://www.ucc.org/search-and-call-gmp/>

The United Church of Christ endeavors to recruit employees from backgrounds that vary by race, color, national origin, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, genetic information, past, present or future service in the uniformed services, religion, or any other legally protected characteristic under applicable federal, state or local law. The United Church of Christ is proud to be a multicultural, multiracial, open and affirming, accessible to all, equal opportunity employer, except as required by United Church of Christ Bylaws.