



# **Music Ministries Compensation Booklet**

**Second Edition**



**Commission for Leadership Development  
Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ**

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One printed copy of this booklet is available free to each Massachusetts Conference church; other parties please include \$5 for printing and postage with your order. This document is also available on the Conference Web site at [www.macucc.org](http://www.macucc.org).

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# INTRODUCTION



Music ministry seeks to glorify God through celebration in the worship of the church, education through the medium of choir rehearsals and musical leadership, and proclamation in its outreach to the community and to the world. It is an evangelizing force for bringing individuals and families to the church.

This booklet, prepared by the Commission for Leadership Development of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ, focuses on the compensation for musicians who serve in the music ministry of our local congregations. We hope that this resource will strengthen music and worship by creating an atmosphere of understanding and mutual support.

There is another publication, *A Handbook for Church Treasurers and Trustees*, that should be referenced for general staff information such as working conditions.

## BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

**Covenant relationship.** One of the faith foundations for compensation is that we are a church based in covenant. When a church calls a pastor, or hires other church workers, it covenants to compensate fairly and the worker covenants to serve faithfully.

**Working conditions.** Smaller churches have different needs than larger churches, and in general will pay less and expect less of their musician(s). There will also be regional variations in compensation levels.

**Training and experience.** A fair level of compensation will take into account the training and prior experience of the musician.

**Minimum position.** There is a minimum amount of time required for any music position. Elements involved in establishing this minimum include:

- preparation time
- rehearsal time
- worship service time
- continuing education
- study of new music

## POSITIONS

Ministers of music provide the primary musical leadership in the church. They may be organists or choir directors or some combination of the two (Organist/Director, Director of Music, Minister of Music, or even Cantor). A church may have two ministers of music, with the organist and choir director sharing the musical leadership, even though one of them may be charged with direction of the program.

Musicians may also offer leadership in an associate capacity. They may be vocal or instrumental soloists, junior and handbell choir directors, rehearsal accompanists, and substitutes for any of the above. For a list of typical responsibilities see appendix B.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

You may use this booklet to determine appropriate minimum levels of compensation, develop or revise job descriptions, and search for new musicians. The three main sections of this booklet address each of these functions, supported by a set of three appendices.

Section 1, *Compensation*, explains the concept of the *unit*, and, through a series of scenarios, shows how to put the unit to work. If you have a job description and want to know how much you should be paying, or, on the other hand, want to adjust the job description to fit what you are paying (or are being paid, if you are the musician), this section is the starting point.

Section 2, *Working Conditions*, focuses on job-related activities and situations, including the job description. If you want to know what goes into a church music position beyond basic job function (play the organ; direct the choir) and monetary compensation, and want some help developing a job description, this section is the starting point.

Section 3, *Finding a Musician*, new to the second edition, discusses the search process for a new musician. If you're trying to fill a position on your music staff and would like to know what should be done when, this section is the starting point.

Appendix A, *Music Ministry Compensation Worksheet*, supports section 1; Appendix B, *Responsibilities of Church Musicians*, supports section 2; Appendix C. *Resources*, supports section 3.



# COMPENSATION



Discussions of compensation are often filled with a tension between equity and reality. On the one hand, there is the compensation that a congregation *should* provide, based largely on the demands of the position and the abilities of the musician; on the other hand, there is the compensation that a congregation *does* provide, based largely on past practice and budgetary concerns.

In arriving at a compensation package that is fair, there needs to be frank discussion, self-examination, prayer, and thoughtful consideration on the part of both congregation and musician. If the compensation is too low for the work that needs to be done, the congregation needs to begin the process of moving toward the minimums suggested in this booklet or to reconsider its needs.

## GUIDELINES

In working out compensation guidelines, most organizations relate the work of ministers of music to the work of comparable professionals. Several chapters of the American Guild of Organists, for example, have developed excellent guidelines brochures which are worth consulting (see the list of resources in appendix C).

We have taken a similar approach, but in addition to looking outside the church, we have considered in our recommendations the guidelines developed for clergy in the Massachusetts Conference of the UCC. In those guidelines the salary package includes a cash base plus compensation for a range of additional expenses. Since part-time musicians rarely get health care, pension, or other similar benefits, the approach here factors in some recognition of that fact.

### The Unit

The determination of salary is based on the value of a *unit*, which is defined as a measure of time, representing a morning, afternoon, or evening. This approach focuses on tasks, rather than on time. In clock time, a unit's length may vary. It includes contact time as well as preparation and clean-up activities. This avoids penalizing skilled musicians for learning music quickly and doesn't reward less skilled musicians for learning more slowly. It also acknowledges that a certain level of practice and preparation is expected of any musician.

Two short examples may help clarify the unit:

- A Sunday service is worth a unit. This recognizes that there is preparation, pre-service setup and rehearsal, and post-service cleanup.
- A choir rehearsal is worth a unit, even if the rehearsal itself only lasts an hour and a half or two hours (again, there is generally pre- and post-rehearsal activity involved).

Although not stated explicitly, the unit does acknowledge the level of responsibility expected of the musician, as preparation and meeting time are recognized. Consider two more complex examples:

- Two Sunday services, where one is in the morning, and one is in the evening, are worth two units, since they occur at different times of day and involve different preparation. Two identical or almost identical Sunday services are worth a unit and a half, acknowledging a more intense and demanding program than the single service.

- Two choir rehearsals meeting during the same portion of the day are worth two units, since they require different preparation.

The recommended minimum monetary value of a unit will be found in appendix A, or on an enclosed insert, if salary levels have been updated since the booklet was printed.

## **Experience and Education**

A musician's background is not easy to specify. It may consist of private study on an instrument or voice, some academic music training which may be incorporated in a music-related Bachelor's degree or higher, and experience as a church musician. The A.G.O. offers certification, which can assist in identifying an organist's level of preparation. Exceptional training or talent is worthy of appropriate recognition and compensation. Advancement through the various salary levels presented in appendix A depends on both experience and on evidence of involvement in continuing education through participation in professional groups, attendance at workshops and organized courses, and so on.

## **MINISTERS OF MUSIC**

The workload for a minister of music varies through the year. Most positions involve a yearly cycle of weekly Sunday services with additional services at Christmas, Easter, and other special occasions. During the summer the load generally lightens. Twelve-month positions usually include a month's paid vacation.

In terms of units, a full-time load is considered to be 12 units per week for the main portion of the year. Most part-time positions involve from one to five units. Compensation for additional service responsibilities beyond the yearly cycle, or for services requiring more extensive preparation than normal, should be allowed for in the agreement between musician and congregation.

The scenarios that follow are offered as models for determining monetary compensation. Keep in mind that the value of the unit will vary, depending on church size and the musician's experience. A compensation worksheet for 1998-1999 is given in appendix A. Additional, up-to-date copies are available from the Conference office and from the Associate Conference Ministers (see appendix C4).

### **Scenario #1. Organist or Pianist with no choir (1-1/2 units)**

An organist or pianist position at a church with one Sunday service and no choir rehearsal is worth one unit for Sunday morning and a half unit for preparation of service music. If there are weekly staff meetings, a monthly music committee meeting, music to provide for the advent workshop, the stewardship dinner, and other occasional events, an additional unit or portion of a unit is appropriate.

### **Scenario #2. Organist/Director with solo quartet or Sunday choir (2 units)**

An organist/director position at a church with one Sunday service and a professional quartet or amateur choir that rehearses only on Sunday before the service is worth one unit for Sunday morning and one unit for preparation of service music and choral music. If there are weekly staff meetings and occasional other events, an additional unit or portion of a unit is appropriate.

### **Scenario #3. Organist for one choir (2-1/2 units)**

An organist position at a church with one Sunday service and one weekly choir rehearsal directed by someone else is worth one unit for Sunday morning, and one unit for rehearsal. While the unit for each event includes some basic preparation, the preparation and practice of service music is worth at least an additional half unit. Weekly staff meetings and additional responsibilities, or the expectation of substantial organ music or choral accompaniments, merit additional compensation.

### **Scenario #4. Organist/Director with one choir (3 units)**

An organist/choir director position at a church with one Sunday service and one choir that rehearses weekly is worth one unit for Sunday morning, and one unit for rehearsal. While the unit for each event includes some basic preparation, the preparation and practice of service music and choral music is worth at least one additional unit. If there are weekly staff meetings and occasional other events, an additional unit or portion of a unit is appropriate.

### **Scenario #5. Choir Director with two choirs (3 units)**

A choir director position at a church with one Sunday service and two choirs that rehearse weekly (typically an adult and a junior choir) is worth one unit for Sunday morning and one unit for each rehearsal. Since the unit for each event includes basic preparation, additional compensation is not merited unless weekly staff meetings and additional responsibilities are required, or both choirs sing regularly in worship.

## **ASSOCIATE MUSICIANS**

Musicians other than the organist and choir director function in an associate capacity. Since their level of responsibility is lower, the unit value for their work should be based on 50% to 80% of the unit representing the church size and years of experience of the musician. In the case of a class of musicians, such as section leaders, a single salary standard is often developed.

### **Scenario #6. Rehearsal Accompanist (1 unit)**

An accompanist position for a weekly choir rehearsal is worth one unit for the rehearsal. Additional compensation depends on negotiation between the accompanist and the church. Consistently challenging music requires additional preparation time and can be factored into the salary by appropriately increasing the unit percentage.

### **Scenario #7. Vocal Soloist or Choir Section Leader (1 to 2 units)**

A soloist position is worth one unit for the Sunday service with a rehearsal just prior to the service. Special preparation merits an additional half unit. If the soloist also functions as a lead singer or choir section leader, there will be a weekly choir rehearsal (one unit). Additional services and non-Sunday services merit additional compensation, either on a one-time basis or by adjustment of the unit percentage. Vacation time is usually not allotted, since these are generally nine- or ten-month positions. Budgetary allowance for sick leave may be made. Provision for personal leave may help make up for compensation below the minimums suggested here.

## **Scenario #8. Junior Choir or Handbell Choir Director (1-1/4 to 2 units)**

A junior choir or handbell choir director position is worth one unit for the weekly rehearsal. Additional compensation depends on how often the choir sings or plays. Directors deserve an additional unit if the choir participates in worship each week. Every other week merits a half unit; once a month merits a quarter unit. Additional compensation for festival services requiring extra rehearsal preparation, pageants and other special services may either be done on a one-time basis or may be factored into the salary by appropriately increasing the unit percentage.

## **ONE-TIME EVENTS**

Fees for one-time events should strive to follow the principles used above:

- a unit for the service
- a unit for separate rehearsal(s)
- a unit for preparation where appropriate

To convert one-time or short-term unit values into salary, use the weekly unit values given in appendix A.

## **Scenario #9. Instrumental Soloist (1 to 2 units)**

Instrumental soloists are generally free-lance musicians with their own salary minimums. Soloists typically receive one unit for a service and for rehearsal or preparation. Additional rehearsals usually require additional compensation.

## **Scenario #10. Substitute Musicians (2 to 5 units)**

Substitute fees may be set in two ways. A church may state what it will pay (take it or leave it!) or the substitute may state what she or he wishes to be paid. In setting a fee, the church should consider community standards, regularly updating its fees.

For purposes of this illustration, assume that a substitute director or organist has been engaged for a Sunday service. The usual fee will range from two to three units, recognizing service and preparation time. If both choral and service music must be prepared, an organist can easily expect three units. If the weekly choir rehearsal is included, compensation will increase by at least one additional unit (plus an extra unit if the musician is expected to be prepared to lead the rehearsal as well).

Vocal or instrumental soloists also have their standard rates. In general, the same fee that would be paid the resident soloist is appropriate.

## **Scenario #11. Soloist at a wedding (1 to 2 units)**

Churches usually do not set fees in this area, since the couple to be married generally engages vocal and instrumental soloists directly. As a guideline, compensation often reflects one unit for the ceremony, and perhaps one unit for rehearsal and preparation. Soloists are generally not needed at the wedding rehearsal, although this is a good opportunity for meeting with the organist. If the organist needs additional rehearsal time with the soloist, the soloist merits additional compensation.

### **Scenario #12. Organist at a funeral (1 to 2 units)**

Compensation varies widely, and in many cases is lower than the fee for a wedding. The church and the organist should consult in the development of fees. An appropriate guideline includes one unit for the service and one unit for extra preparation and consultation if needed. In churches with a policy of not charging members, the organist may still be offered a fee, since time and preparation beyond that required for the on-going position is expected.

### **Scenario #13. Organist at a wedding (1 to 3 units)**

Wedding rates are subject to great variation. Since the organist functions in a ministerial role as a representative of the church, and also in a free-lance role as a performing musician, the church and the organist should consult in the development of fees, with strong consideration of local standards.

Compensation usually covers the ceremony, the rehearsal, preparation, and consultation with the couple. If vocal or instrumental solo rehearsals must be held, extra compensation is merited if they are not held at a time that fits the organist's normal schedule or if the soloist needs additional rehearsal time with the organist to learn the music.

There is much debate on whether the organist plays at all weddings done in the church building or is compensated for those played by an outside musician. If outside musicians are allowed, the organist typically has both the privilege and responsibility to determine if they are suitable. The organist may have the option of being compensated as a consultant, meeting with the couple, talking with the musicians, and being present at the rehearsal. Compensation may be at the musician's standard rate or at a consultant's rate that reflects the work required.

## **OTHER COMPENSATION**

The focus of this booklet is on the development of minimum compensation guidelines for the musicians who serve in our churches. Most of these musicians function in a part-time capacity, with many having at least one other position. We often rely on this other position to provide health coverage and other benefits for our musicians. In all but the most occasional of positions salary packages should include recognition of the following items.

### **Benefits**

The monetary value of the unit includes indirect compensation for benefits such as an **annuity**, or **health insurance**, or **life insurance**, since the value is based to some extent on clergy salaries, which include these items. As a music position approaches or exceeds half time, the salary package should be divided to explicitly include these benefits.

All positions should include time off for **sick leave** with pay. This requires that compensation for possible substitutes be included in the budget. The actual amount of leave should be proportional to that allowed other staff members.

When the congregation holds services through the entire year, paid **vacation** should be allowed for. A month currently seems to be the standard. As with sick leave, allowance for substitutes should be made in the budget.

As positions reach or exceed half time, or have extremely busy periods, the option of occasional **personal leave** may be merited. This may just allow the musician to relax, or to spend

time with the family, or to participate in a professional meeting or continuing education opportunity.

Provision should also be made for **sabbatical leave** proportional to that offered the clergy. There is a perception that, since a position is part time, the musician has plenty of time off and doesn't need the time for refocusing and professional development offered by a sabbatical. In fact, since most musicians have a full-time job in addition to their church position, they have little time off. A sabbatical, with an appropriate project and report-back mechanism, represents both wise stewardship and the appropriate pastoral stance on the part of the congregation.

## **Professional Expenses**

Ministers of music, regardless of the time commitment of their position, have professional expenses. Where possible, reimbursement accounts or entitlements should be included as part of the salary package to cover such expenses. These include:

- continuing education
- dues for professional organizations
- specialized equipment (music, robes, organ shoes, etc.)

## **Non-Monetary Compensation**

Although there is a danger of misuse, non-monetary compensation merits consideration in developing a salary package. One important aspect of compensation that is not necessarily monetary is the improvement of working conditions, including those discussed in the following section.

In some instances, providing extra vacation time, personal leave, or occasional Sundays off during the year (discussed above under *Benefits*) may make up for a weakness in monetary compensation. Families could host an out-of-town musician the night before an early Easter service or at times when travel is hazardous. An occasional invitation to dinner or a sincere interest in the welfare of the musician is also helpful.



# WORKING CONDITIONS



Most music positions place a wide range of demands on musicians. Appendix B lists typical duties. As part of the covenant relationship, the congregation should consider the working conditions it offers its staff. These conditions will vary from church to church, just as the needs of each congregation are in some measure unique. What follows are a few areas that are critical to an effective music ministry. Because each church will find its own solutions to these requirements it is important to clearly state in writing a specific church's policies and procedures. Those not involved in the decision-making need to understand the program.

## SUPPORT STRUCTURE

The congregation sees its music ministers primarily on Sundays in a fairly prescribed role. The music ministry needs support in several ways to better prepare for worship leadership and any other tasks.

### Office Space

At a minimum there should be a desk in the corner of the choir room. In addition, a bookcase and some means of storing organ music are needed. Positions which require the musician to be on site for more than a few hours at a time should consider accessibility to a telephone (this can be a safety issue as well as a programmatic necessity).

### Rehearsal Space

One of the administrative responsibilities of a choir director is to develop and maintain an adequate choir rehearsal space. The assistance and support of the congregation in doing so is essential. As a program grows or musical needs change, it may be necessary to reconsider rehearsal facilities. It should also be possible for the organist to practice on the organ during the week, and it is a standard practice for the organist to be able to use the organ or other instruments for teaching purposes without charge. This privilege should be specified in the contract. Besides supplementing the musician's income, these students are the next generation's musicians. With the elimination of music education from many school systems the church could be a child's only resource for basic music training.

### Music Budget

An itemized music budget is essential. There should be the opportunity, either with the music committee or some other body, to discuss the needs of the music program. If the music library needs expanding, perhaps a multi-year plan can be adopted. If the music budget is constantly gobbled up by equipment maintenance, either allocations should be revised, or some consideration of a major overhaul or replacement of ailing equipment is in order.

The budget should explicitly address the needs of musical equipment. It is important that pianos and organs be tuned and maintained on a regular basis. Out-of-tune pianos hinder choir rehearsals and presentation of anthems; an out-of-tune or poorly maintained organ can put quite a damper on the worship service.

## Music Committee

A strong working relationship with the music committee can be almost as crucial to the success of the music program as the relationship between minister of music and pastor. *The Leader's Box* (see appendix C) offers suggestions and resources for developing a good relationship. The committee can work with the minister(s) of music to develop goals for the program. It can share the congregation's concerns and celebrations with the music minister(s); it can assist in resolving personnel issues; it can pray and dream with the musician(s); it can act as an advocate for the music program.

## JOB DESCRIPTION

The letter calling or inviting a minister of music to a position usually mentions the primary duties of the position (direct choirs, play organ, provide music for so many services a year). The actual details of the job are often left up to the experience and ingenuity of the musician. While there is some credence to the argument that providing too strict a list of duties can lead to a loss of creativity as one side or the other insists on the letter of the law, more detail than a letter of invitation or call is needed.

Job descriptions may vary from a simple descriptive paragraph or two, or a list of responsibilities, up to a document that functions as a contract by including the responsibilities and actions the congregation covenants to undertake with the musician. We recommend that the letter of call and the job description/contract be kept separate, since a contract includes compensation and benefits, which normally should be reviewed and revised annually, while the position itself is assumed to be ongoing. The job description should focus on the position itself, and be reviewed from time to time as conditions warrant. The supervision and accountability of the position need to be specified as they are often different. Some statement such as, *the music director is organizationally accountable to the music committee and administratively accountable to the senior pastor*, will help explain the church relationships.

## Position Description

A job description should include a general description of the position, perhaps developed from the previously mentioned letter. In addition, a list of major expectations in the church, such as those listed in the various categories in appendix B, should be given. As these are detailed, a better understanding of the scope of the position, the level of experience and training necessary to fulfill the position, and the appropriate level of compensation, will emerge.

A description of the position, summarizing primary responsibilities, can be as basic as one of the following three examples:

- The Organist serves as a resource to support and coordinate the worship activities of the congregation through instrumental music in conjunction with the Music Committee and the Pastor.
- The Director of Music serves as a resource to support, foster and coordinate the worship activities of the congregation through congregational, choral, and instrumental music. As a member of the ministerial staff, the Director meets with the clergy to plan and coordinate worship services and related activities. The Director supervises additional music personnel and meets regularly with the Music Committee.

- The Soprano section leader provides leadership and musical support to the soprano section of the adult choir in conjunction with Choir Director/Organist and the other section leaders. She provides appropriate solos, and seeks to develop and enhance the music and worship experience of the soprano section.

## **Administrative Duties**

These will vary from position to position, depending on the level of responsibility of the position. Typical administrative responsibilities are listed in appendix B1.

Those charged with oversight of a music program perform a variety of administrative tasks. A number of these tasks fall within the scope of other musicians as well: Junior Choir or Handbell Choir Directors have as much need to communicate with their choir members as does the Director of Music, for example.

## **Music-Related Duties**

Keyboard musicians (usually organists or pianists) have responsibilities centering on using their keyboard skills (appendix B2). Musicians with both organ and choral responsibilities will also have similar duties. Music ministers with choral responsibilities will fulfill duties such as those listed in appendix B3. They may also have tasks that go beyond the technical demands of the position to include pastoral duties, particularly in relation to their choir members. Soloists, accompanists, and substitutes have more specialized roles, including the duties listed in appendix B4. Musicians functioning as section leaders may also have choral or keyboard responsibilities.

Because the directors are usually responsible for the maintenance and condition of the church's instruments their contract often states that they will be the musician for all extra services and programs that use that equipment. Any requested outside musician, such as a bride wanting her brother to play the music for her wedding, needs to be assessed and approved by the director. Any policy along these lines should be part of written guidelines.

## **Other Duties**

Any of these positions may be called upon from time to time for extra responsibilities in the preparation of special programs, ecumenical services, and other extensions of the church's music ministry (appendix B5). Positions may also have other pastoral or musical duties specific to the needs of a congregation or situation.

If the congregation asks more than it can compensate for, perhaps a re-examination of the position is needed: Can volunteers do some tasks? Is that new choir practical? Do we really need someone with a Master's degree and 10 years experience? If the job description is being developed with a musician who is already employed by the congregation, the questions may be a little different, but the goal of supporting the music ministry can lead to a stronger and more effective ministry as well as a revitalized minister of music.

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

While proper support structures and a well-defined, yet flexible, job description are important elements in developing proper working conditions, other considerations, including an annual review, mutual respect and trust, and volunteer assistance, are also important. Like many aspects of any ministry, they depend on the willingness of all parties concerned for their success.

## Annual Review

This actually involves two reviews: compensation and performance. It is easy for a congregation to fail to maintain salary levels once a musician is hired. Before considering compensation each musician's performance should be evaluated. Were the goals from the previous year met or exceeded? What went particularly well—or didn't work? What goals should be set for the coming year?

The process of this review must be clearly stated: who will be doing the review - perhaps it will be the music committee, the chair of the music committee, the personnel committee, or the board of trustees - and when is it conducted. Also specify how the musician can respond to the review. There should be a specified time and space for the musician's verbal and/or written response. These comments need to be considered and incorporated into the review before it is forwarded to the personnel committee.

Once performance has been evaluated, an examination of current Conference compensation guidelines as well as compensation in similar positions at other institutions should be done. The financial situation of the congregation may not allow the compensation suggested by the quality of performance and the Conference guidelines. The recognition that there is a need to remedy the situation, and a decision to work towards equity, are the first steps toward providing proper support and improving working conditions.

A total review process should regularly be made of the entire music program - the groups, the soloists, the programs, the committee. This can be part of a total church review. See *Our Church's Annual Review* guidelines published by MACUCC.

## Respect and Trust

An atmosphere of mutual respect and trust is important for clergy and musicians. Both parties need to recognize that there is a strong collegial interest as they work together in ministry to the congregation and each other. At the same time, the recognition by the other staff and the congregation that a church position is usually not the primary source of employment is also important. The musician's level of commitment or involvement may vary from time to time. This is a source of frustration for both parties—with care and understanding, this situation may be minimized or used creatively.

## Volunteers

A choir librarian, or a volunteer accompanist, or volunteers in some other aspect of the music program both helps the minister of music and enriches the music ministry. Music may be assigned, collected, and stored more promptly. This may even result in a neater rehearsal space resulting in an improvement of morale for both choir and director. An accompanist can be a boon for the organist/director, strengthening both rehearsal and worship service. This allows more attention to be paid to the choir than to the keyboard. Volunteers may handle assignment and maintenance of robes, or help line up the choir, or assist the music minister(s) in contacting sick or absent choir members.

Special attention needs to be given to the children and youth who participate in the music program. Each church needs to consider this issue's relevance to its individual congregation. The director and the music committee need to consider the relationship of adults to the children in the congregation. They should consult with the board for Christian education and implement complementary policies.

# FINDING A MUSICIAN



The search for a musician should engender the same level of detail and preparation as the search for new clergy or, we hope, a new Director of Christian Education. The congregation should first develop or update a job description and develop a profile of the congregation before advertising an opening and holding interviews/auditions.

## GETTING STARTED

Times of change should be seen as opportunities to grow. Most church musicians work with out-of-date or nonexistent job descriptions. This causes no problem as long as everyone agrees on what needs to be done. When a musician leaves, we find that there is often little understanding of what was and needs to be done.

### In the Meantime

Too often we think that all that's involved in a music position is summed up in the functional title: organist, choir director, singer. When one leaves, therefore, all we need to do is plug another one in its place, like changing a battery. If this has been the case, consider yourself fortunate to have the opportunity to change things for the better.

In most cases, the musician has built up friendships, both in the music organizations and in other parts of the congregation. People have grown accustomed to a particular approach to music in worship—whether good or bad—and they need time to get used to things changing.

Hiring an interim musician, particularly in the case of the primary musician who has made an impact on and contribution to the worship life of the congregation, is a well-advised first step. This allows you to celebrate the outgoing musician, plan and dream for the future, and move at a more deliberate pace in selecting a replacement. The interim musician may well embody what you decide you're looking for, in which case the advertising and interview stages may be ultimately quite brief.

### The Search Committee

The composition of a search committee varies widely from congregation to congregation. Often the committee charged with oversight of the music ministry will function as search committee, perhaps augmented at some point by representatives of specific segments of the congregation (Junior Choir parents, or members of the Senior Choir, for example).

### The Job Description, part 1

Using the discussion of the Job Description beginning on page 11 of this booklet, first determine what your musician has been doing. Even if you have a previous description, you may find that the position has changed. If your previous musician brought special gifts to the position, you should make note of these, particularly if they have become important to the congregation (composition skills, or strong gospel piano or classical organ skills, or dramatic directing ability, for example).

Once you have found out what the position did, dream about what you would like the position to do. Get a bit impractical at first, and don't worry about what it might cost. There will be plenty of time for reality later on.

## **The Congregational Profile**

At some point in your development of a job description, it should become clear that even a relatively minor music position affects the congregation. Prospective musicians should have some information about the congregation, even if they don't know they need it. In fact, if you are considering a musician who has no interest in the congregation, and has no time for coffee hour or any social contact with the congregation, you might want to reconsider whether this is the right person for you.

Start with the profile you used on your last clergy search. Update it, add in some annual reports, and give the musician a sense of the vision of the congregation. Where the musician will be focusing on music and its role in worship, consider among yourselves what you feel that role should be. How is this different from what you've done? Is this a goal or the starting point?

If you're looking for a musician who plays a supporting role, the procedure need not be exhaustive. In every case, it's important that you understand clearly what you want the musician to accomplish and how that function fits into the worship life of the congregation, and that you be able to communicate that vision to the musician.

## **The Job Description, part 2**

Now that you've dreamed about the position, and reexamined the congregation and evaluated how the musician should fill that position, be sure you're being realistic. Make use of the scenarios in this booklet, the list of job functions in appendix B, and the recommended unit values of appendix A.

Don't assume that, just because your congregation had a multi-choir program in the 50s, it should have one now. There have been a few demographic changes in the meantime. Ask careful—and sometimes painful—questions, such as:

- While some people want a Junior High choir, do the Junior Highs want it? Do their parents have the time to get them to rehearsal? When will they rehearse? Is there money in the budget for new music?
- Will the budget allow you to adequately recompense the musician for everything you want done? Make sure you're clear on the difference between "can't" and "don't want to." Remember that we are a people of faith; a strong musician who brings the combination of skills, talent and other characteristics you feel are needed may be worth a bit of a stretch. Even though most of your staff will put in whatever time is needed to get the job done properly, don't expect your musician to do 20 hours work on 15 hours pay. It's far better to scale back your expectations, examine alternate forms of compensation (see page 8 under the heading *Other Compensation*), and plan for future growth.

## GOING PUBLIC

At the end of this process, you should have a realistic job description and a profile or collection of materials that describes the congregation. You're ready to move on to the process of recruiting a musician.

### Who to Contact

If you're looking for an organist, an organist/choir director, or a choir director, your best source of help is the American Guild of Organists. Local chapters have placement services; the national magazine, *The American Organist*, offers free listings with about a two-month lead-time. Contact the national office for information.

Music conservatories and music departments of colleges and universities are also good about letting their students and graduates know about job openings. Depending on the nature of the position, you may want to contact the local high school. Offering a compensation package that includes paying for lessons may be a great way to encourage an outstanding young pianist to develop organ skills while giving you an enthusiastic, if inexperienced, keyboard player (and keep in mind that everything doesn't have to be played on organ!).

Letting the Area Minister and Conference staff know about an opening may help as well. You might also consider letting the musicians at neighboring churches know—not that you want to hire them away from their present position; they may well know of a colleague looking to make a change, or have a friend who wants to move into the area. Your least effective source of candidates is the local paper (although an ad in a major metropolitan paper like *The Boston Globe* might bear some fruit)

### Evaluating Candidates

You've let people know about your opening. You may have set a firm deadline, or decided to have a rolling close, starting to examine resumes as of a certain date. If you're lucky, you may have enough candidates to require some whittling down to a short list before interviewing. Most searches accomplish this by reviewing materials sent in by the candidate. This typically includes a resume and often a statement on the role of music in the church, as requested by the search committee. You may ask for letters of reference, although a list of referees with telephone numbers will give you a more useful tool. You should rarely ask for recordings and concert programs, unless these are an important aspect of the position.

Given the increasing number of assault charges and convictions involving coaches and other youth workers it is strongly recommended that a CORI search is requested of the police department to check for a possible pertinent record.

### The Audition

The interview itself is usually divided into two parts: a demonstration of the candidate's abilities, and an interview with candidate and search committee. Auditions will be different for each type of position, and the demands of the audition should come out of the job description/profile development phases:

- Section Leader/Soloist: Sing two contrasting solos; demonstrate sight-reading ability (sing a hymn or anthem at sight); demonstrate blend by singing with the other section leaders or with members of the section.

- **Choir Director:** Rehearse and direct the ensemble in two prepared pieces, chosen by the committee; demonstrate vocal and/or keyboard musicianship by sight-reading a hymn and an anthem.
- **Organist:** Perform two contrasting organ works suitable for prelude or postlude; play a hymn at sight; play a 4-part choral score at sight. You should have the candidate lead the committee in singing a hymn (this is an opportunity to see if you like the candidate's speed, approach to breathing between verses, and registration of the organ). If stylistic variety is important, include the opportunity to test the range of performance styles with which the candidate is comfortable.

## The Interview

In the interview itself, you'll certainly want to make sure the candidate can do the job. Remember that you're including in as well as narrowing down. If understanding of worship is important, ask the candidate's views. Do a short worship planning session in which the candidate serves as both participant and music consultant. Offer opportunities for two-way sharing.

Realize that the odds of finding the perfect candidate are slim. If the best candidate needs skills development in a particular area, include in the position offer the opportunity and support for continuing education.

For example, you're looking for a combined organist/choir director position, and the best finalist is a fine keyboard musician with weak conducting skills while your next finalist reverses the skills. You can't afford to hire the two of them. Offer the position to the one who best fits your present needs, requiring (and supporting) attendance at a summer workshop, or one-on-one lessons with a local teacher.



# APPENDIX A.

## MUSIC MINISTRY COMPENSATION WORKSHEET

1. Before considering actual compensation, decide what sort of music ministry the congregation needs.
2. Develop job descriptions, using the scenarios in the booklet as guidelines. Assign one unit for major events such as a Sunday service or weekly rehearsal. Assign compensation for extra preparation (a half unit for keyboard preparation of service or choral music, for example). Assign additional compensation for duties that involve a recognizable time commitment, fulfillment of administrative responsibilities, or more extensive preparation than the standard half unit.

Event	Unit value
Sunday services (1 unit)	_____
Weekly rehearsals (1 unit each)	_____
Preparation (varies)	_____
Meetings, administrative duties	_____
Other	_____
<b>total:</b>	_____

3. Determine the value of a unit to find either the minimum salary range if you are seeking a musician, or the minimum salary for your current musician(s), using the table of unit values we have prepared for 1998-1999. *For current figures please contact the Conference Office or your Area Minister.*

Number of Church Members	0 – 3 Years Experience		4 – 10 Years Experience		Over 10 Years Experience	
	Annual Unit	Weekly Unit	Annual Unit	Weekly Unit	Annual Unit	Weekly Unit
0 – 150	\$3200	\$62	\$3450	\$66	\$3750	\$72
150 – 300	\$3200	\$62	\$3650	\$70	\$4000	\$77
300 – 500	\$3200	\$62	\$4000	\$77	\$4650	\$89
500 – 1000	\$3200	\$62	\$4400	\$85	\$5350	\$103
Over 1000	\$3200	\$62	\$4800	\$92	\$6000	\$115

4. Determine the percentage (50% to 80%) applied to each associate musician.

Take into account the musician's training, experience, and skill. A low percentage indicates that little initiative and a restricted area of responsibility are involved in the position.

5. If the congregation is not offering at least the minimum, develop a plan that works toward the minimum, even if that requires a multi-year approach. Also consider adjustments to the workload, or negotiating additional time off or exploring other means of compensation.

<b>Compensation</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Minimum *</b>
Cash Salary	\$ _____	\$ _____
Social Security	\$ _____	\$ _____
Health Insurance	\$ _____	\$ _____
Pension or Annuity**	\$ _____	\$ _____
Professional Expenses***		
Continuing Education	\$ _____	\$ _____
Professional Dues	\$ _____	\$ _____
Specialized Equipment	\$ _____	\$ _____
Other	\$ _____	\$ _____
<b>totals:</b>	\$ _____	\$ _____

\*The total in the minimum column will be the amount derived from the table on the previous page.

\*\*Mainly for ministers of music with a unit load greater than 3.

\*\*\*All musicians should be encouraged to continue their education. Where possible, congregations should match or underwrite continuing education expenses, or at least encourage educational or professional development by offering some form of reimbursement beyond the musician's salary.

**Items to budget** (not charged against salary)

Substitute for sick leave	\$ _____	\$ _____
Substitute for vacation	\$ _____	\$ _____

Contact the Commission on Leadership Development through the Conference office for further assistance.

# APPENDIX B.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHURCH MUSICIANS

Ministers of music perform a range of tasks. The actual tasks depend on the size and needs of the congregation, the focus of the position, and the skills and training of the musician.

### **B1. ADMINISTRATIVE PLANNING**

- Meet weekly with the clergy to plan worship
- Collaborate in the planning of worship (liturgy, hymns, responses, anthems, etc.)
- Develop and administer an annual budget for music programs as authorized by the church
- Develop and maintain an adequate choir rehearsal space including
  - lighting
  - proper chairs
  - comfortable temperature
  - music storage
  - individual hymn books for each choir person
  - individual and original sheet music for every composition used
- Communicate with choir members via bulletins and newsletters
- Develop congregational participation in church music through emphasis on hymns (including new ones), other congregationally oriented music, and service music
- Coordinate activities with other groups in the church
- Arrange and coordinate social activities of the choir members
- Cooperate and assist in the preparation of printed bulletins/programs for regular services
- Coordinate publishers' permissions for the use of copyrighted materials
- Supervise the care, tuning, and maintenance of church musical instruments (organ, pianos, handbells/chimes, Orff instruments, harpsichord, etc.)

### **B2. ORGANIST/PIANIST**

- Practice hymns to faithfully interpret the text
- Prepare service music, anthems, opening Voluntaries (preludes), Offertories, and closing Voluntaries (postludes)
- Adapt choir accompaniments to the appropriate instrument
- Review, select and purchase new music appropriate for worship in the local congregation
- Accompany rehearsals of any choirs, ensembles, soloists, and instrumentalists
- Maintain organ keyboard and pedal skills and/or piano keyboard skills with regular practice
- Organize and maintain a personal library of organ/piano literature

### **B3. CHOIR DIRECTOR**

- Coordinate all musical offerings at regular and special services of worship
- Rehearse the choir before each service of worship
- Set out music, instruments (such as handbells) and other necessary equipment before

services and rehearsals, and put them away afterward

- Review, select, and oversee the purchase of new music appropriate to the ability and make-up of the choir(s)
- Prepare and study selected music to interpret the theological and artistic implications to the choir(s)
- Organize and maintain a choral library
- Prepare the rehearsal room
- Conduct the rehearsal, including vocal warm-ups, choral techniques, and the teaching of new music
- Rehearse all responses, spoken and sung, so that the choir is familiar with the content of the service
- Consult with individual choir members before and after rehearsals (including appointments and telephone calls)
- Recruit, train, and supervise choirs, soloists, and instrumentalists
- Engage, employ, and direct instrumental musicians where appropriate
- Audition and engage vocal soloists as needed
- Arrange and coordinate social activities of the choir(s)
- Minister to the needs of choir members

#### **B4. SOLOISTS, ACCOMPANISTS, AND SUBSTITUTES**

- Prepare required music in a timely fashion
- Be on time
- Assist and support the director's musical interpretation
- Meet with the director on a regular basis (soloists and accompanists)
- Allow adequate preparation and consultation time prior to the service so that the liturgy flows smoothly (accompanists)

#### **B5. OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Assist in arranging for a substitute musician when not able to be present or for vacation time
- Attend conferences and conventions of professional organizations that include educational sessions and concerts
- Teach or attend church music workshops and classes
- Attend performances and read current literature related to the profession
- Purchase and listen to tapes and recordings
- Plan and schedule music for special music programs, such as concerts, performances, productions, hymn-sings, tours, and choir camps
- Plan ecumenical services and festivals with area clergy and musicians
- Cooperate and assist in the extra preparation necessary for printed programs for special events (including layout and translations)
- Write articles for church publications
- Prepare publicity for newspapers, radio, and television, as needed

## B6. SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION

Director of Music

church name

The people of *church name*, staff and laity, encourage people to grow in faith through transformational public worship. Music is integral to this experience through the mood of the music and the content of the words. We offer our talents to the greater glory of God as experienced by all.

We are a caring, supportive, and nurturing body in community with one another and with Christ.

To this end we ask the Director of Music:

to work with the ministerial team in the development and leading of weekly worship and special services such as Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Christmas Eve, weddings and funerals

- plan and lead (or oversee) the worship music including adult choir, handbell choirs, vocalists, and instrumentalists; develop talent; work with section leaders/soloists
- play the organ and piano (or any other instruments) including prelude, postlude and incidental service music

to maintain and develop the Youth Music program

- plan and oversee teaching and rehearsal of vocal and instrumental groups to increase their musical proficiency and appreciation of music in worship
- plan and oversee special programs in conjunction with Christian Education such as the Christmas pageant, Youth Sunday, Vacation Bible School and other events

to coordinate, lead, and develop the overall music ministry of the church

- work with and report to the Music Committee the development, plans, and progress of music programs and budget
- participate in Church Council
- coordinate the maintenance of all musical instruments
- maintain and develop the music library
- work with church staff and laity to plan and coordinate the unified ministry of the church within the building and throughout the wider Church and community

to oversee and develop non-traditional musical offerings

- work with the ARTS Committee to plan and coordinate concert series
- work with appropriate leaders/groups to plan and develop other special offerings such as talent/variety shows, recordings, etc.
- be a liaison to the larger community through AGO relationships and developing cooperative programs

# APPENDIX C.

## RESOURCES

This appendix includes a listing of professional groups that may be of use to UCC musicians along with a list of books and publications which may be of use to clergy and music committees as well as musicians.

### C1. BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

Bock, Fred and Lois, *Creating Four-Part Harmony*, Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Company, 1989.

Corp, Ronald, *The Choral Singer's Companion*, New York: Facts on File Publications, 1987.

Decker, Harold, and Herford, Julius, eds., *Choral Conducting Symposium*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1988.

United Church Resources, *The Leaders' Box*

Orr, N. Lee, *The Church Music Handbook for Pastors and Musicians*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991.

Westermeyer, Paul, *The Church Musician*, San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1988.

United Church of Canada Association of Musicians, *Music, Ministry and the United Church Musician*, Toronto: The United Church Publishing House.

*A Handbook for Church Treasurers and Trustees*, Framingham, MA: Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ, 1998.

*Our Church's Annual Review*, Framingham, MA: Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ, 1992.

*Making Our Churches Safe for All*, Cleveland, OH: United Church of Christ.

### C2. PERIODICALS

American Choral Directors Association, *The Choral Journal*

American Guild of English Handbell Ringers, *Overtones*

American Guild of Organists, *The American Organist*

Choristers Guild, *Choristers Guild Letters*

*The Diapason*

Unit for Worship, Mission and Evangelism, The United Church of Canada, *Gathering: A Packet for Worship Planners*

Hymn Society of America, *The Hymn*

### **C3. PROFESSIONAL GROUPS**

- American Guild of Organists  
475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1260, New York, NY 10115  
212-870-2310
- American Choral Directors Association  
P.O. Box 6310, Lawton OK 73506  
405-248-ACDA
- American Guild of English Handbell Ringers  
601 W. Riverview Avenue, Dayton OH 45406  
513-227-9455
- Choristers Guild  
2834 W. Kingsley Road, Garland TX 75041  
214-271-1521
- Hymn Society of America  
Texas Christian University, P.O. Box 30854, Ft. Worth TX 76129  
817-921-7608
- UCC Fellowship in the Arts

### **C4. USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

- *Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ*  
P.O. Box 2246  
Framingham, MA 01701  
508-875-5233  
email: macucc@macucc.org
- *Central Association*  
485 Grove Street  
Worcester, MA 01605  
508-853-3446  
email: cmacucc@sprynet.com
- *Metropolitan Boston Association*  
14 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02108  
617-742-4450  
email: mbabos@ntr.net
- *Northeast Area*  
12 Phoenix Row  
Haverhill, MA 01832  
978-373-6748  
email: nematicucc@greenet.net
- *Southeast Area*  
8 Town Square  
Plymouth, MA 02360  
508-746-8330  
email: semacucc@tiac.net
- *Western Area*  
51 Center Street  
P.O. Box 443  
Ludlow, MA 01056  
413-589-7034  
email: wmacucc@juno.com