

A Checklist for Resigning Pastors

Prairie Association, Illinois Conference, UCC

There are a number of important items that need to be attended to when a pastor knows s/he will soon be leaving their current call. Some of these are mandatory and others are advisory. Your attention to these matters is very important.

Please remember that this list isn't exhaustive and doesn't attempt to enumerate all the things you will need to do before you leave your current place of service. Instead, it is a list of responsibilities and obligations that arise as a consequence of your covenantal relationship with the Prairie Association.

- " Please send a copy of your resignation letter to the Association office. Include with that letter specific information on your new call (church name and city and exact transition dates).
- " Encourage the Church Council (or other governing body) to arrange a meeting with the Association Minister before taking any other steps or making any other decisions. Some churches hurry to appoint a search committee or try to obtain an interim minister before receiving counsel on how best to pursue those actions. Try to calmly discourage your leaders from hasty action and rushed decision-making.
- " Communicate the date of your last Sunday to the Association office as soon as you know that date. It is our preference in the Prairie Association to have the association (usually in the person of the Association Minister) represented in worship at the pastor's last Sunday. As a part of that service plan to include the litany of Farewell as found in the UCC Book of Worship, pages 252-259.
- " Remember that policy of the Ministry Team for Authorized Ministry REQUIRES that a representative of the MTAM be present at and participate in an exit interview before you leave. Failure to attend to this item could jeopardize the team's willingness to transfer your standing to your new place of service.
- " Remember to request a transfer of standing from this association to your new association as soon as you have signed a call letter with your new church.
- " As soon as the Prairie Association knows of your resignation, you will be provided several resources, including an Alban Institute publication entitled, *Running Through the Thistles: Terminating a Ministry Relationship With a Parish*. Please read it carefully and attend to its suggestions.

The way a pastor leaves a church can have a significant impact on the way that church is able to welcome its new pastor AND on the way the departing pastor is able to embrace his/her new congregation. For more counsel and advice on any of these matters, speak to the Association Minister.