

M A N U A L
for
ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION SERVICES
in
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCHES
by
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INTRODUCTION

Three elements mark formal preparation for and entrance into the Unitarian Universalist ministry. First, there must be academic and practical training as provided by a theological school of the Independent Study Program. This requires a graduate degree (Master of Divinity) or its equivalent. Second, in order to obtain denominational standing, all candidates for the Unitarian Universalist ministry must appear before and be certified by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Third, a person must be called to some ministry. A ministry in a parish takes place by the call of a congregation. Ordination to the ministry and installation in a church are solely acts performed by a local society, usually by congregational vote. While each church has the right to ordain anyone it chooses, the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association discourage the ordination of those who have not completed the two prior stages.

HISTORY

For 350 years on this continent, ordination in the Unitarian heritage has been granted only by a local congregation. This rite has a more mixed tradition on the Universalist side of our history, for often Universalist ordination was by some denominational body. We have evolved under congregational polity to the present situation in which only a local society can ordain a person to the ministry. The same general rubric applies to installation, though such a service may also be performed by academic institutions for faculty or by other groups within the UUA for denominational officials.

Our heritage is less clear about whom should be ordained. There is a long tradition, which holds that ordination should be conferred only upon those in some way certified as competent for ministry. The approval beyond the local church was sometimes provided by councils summoned from neighboring parishes and composed of both ministers and laity. At other periods, ministerial groupings in a particular geographic area claimed the right to certify the preparation and moral fiber of those who presented themselves for the ministry. In the past, and today, there are notable examples of local churches ordaining or calling ministers without, or sometimes in spite of, action by some wider, certifying group. Normative in our history, however, is that a congregation would choose a minister only after certification by some group responsible for upholding standards. Our clergy have continually claimed the right to take part in qualifying persons for the ministry.

By the 1920's what had been somewhat haphazard procedure began to become more systematic through the establishment of state, regional, and continental committees to pass on ministerial credentials. Such bodies were set up in both the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America. When the Unitarian Universalist

Association was created in 1961, the Association's by-laws provided a set structure for a continental Ministerial Fellowship Committee and put in place a procedure by which its rules might be adopted and changed.

Denominational policy is to recommend to churches only ministers who are in fellowship with the UUA. Certain privileges (e.g., eligibility for the service gratuity and General Assembly ministerial credentials) can only be given to those in fellowship. While each congregation still carries the complete right to call or ordain anyone to its ministry, it is rare for one of our churches to seek as a minister someone not in fellowship, unless the church also has a tie to another denomination.

The Difference in Planning an Ordination and An Installation

Ordination is the act by which a person becomes a minister. Strict rule suggests that no one be entitled "The Reverend" until after ordination. While a ceremonial occasion, ordination has deep roots in our particular polity and heritage. Ordination may also grant particular privileges within the laws of each state or province. For example, a number of states do not allow a person to officiate at weddings until after ordination. Every minister in a new settlement should check out the particular laws of that state, commonwealth or province relating to clergy.

Normally, a theological school graduate going to a first charge need feel no great haste to become ordained. The occasion can well wait until sometime into the first year settlement, so that ample time for planning the event can take place. A rushed ordination can often mar the sense of celebration, which should accompany the occasion. An ordination service and an installation service may, of course, take place at the same occasion.

Rather often, a theological school graduate feels a particular tie to some congregation due to family reasons, former association with the church as a member of the laity, or student work experience in the parish. While some purists hold that an ordination should only take place in a parish where the minister is settled, accepted practice today is that an ordination may take place in this "special" congregation, even if there is no intent for the minister to serve that particular church. Frequently, such an ordination will take place before a minister is called to some church. If a minister newly in fellowship is called to a church, when plans have already been made for an ordination elsewhere, this fact should be brought to the attention of the search committee during the candidating process.

An installation service is the recognition that a minister is settled in a particular society. Again there is an important history to this service relating to congregational polity. The fact that normally a minister is formally installed only some months after entering upon the actual ministry to a church suggests how mainly ceremonial such occasions have become. Whenever held, however, the installation highlights and reaffirms the bond between a minister and a society.

A case can be made that the installation service ought to be held at the first service after a minister arrives at a new church. If such practice is followed, it is primarily a service

without participants from beyond the congregation since it marks strictly the relatedness between a church and the minister it has chosen. The usual practice is to have the installation some months after the minister's arrival and to use the occasion to have other ministers attend and take part, as well as representatives from the wider community and the denomination, both lay and clerical. The approach highlights the connection of the church and minister to wider affiliations.

If it happens that a minister is being ordained and installed at the same service, care should be exercised to set each event in a proper context. Each has its own history and meaning and both ceremonies should be separately cherished. As installation results naturally from a congregational call or covenant with a minister. An ordination requires a specific congregational vote. For the minister new to fellowship, a church usually votes to call and ordain at the same meeting. If ordination takes place apart from settlement, care should be taken that a properly called congregational meeting votes to ordain.

Planning the Service of Installation or Ordination

1. The Initial Step

The most common failing in ordination or installation services is that they are conceived without enough lead-time. Such a service is an intricate matter; it can hardly be done well if it is planned casually. During candidating week, there should be at least preliminary discussion about the plans for such a service. This can be a delicate matter, for if the minister seems too eager about the matter, it may convey a false impression about the certainty of a call. While it would be ideal to set the date for the ordination/installation event during candidating week, this rarely happens because of the other priorities of that time and the necessity of making calendar arrangements with participants. Planning can hardly move beyond preliminary discussion until a call has been extended and accepted, but the need for such a service can be brought up during the candidating week. A general time, perhaps even a month for the event, can be planned and the process begun for budgeting. Many churches are unaware of the costs of such a service, so it is important to initiate cost considerations. Since the budget may have to go through several committees, it is wise to get this process underway as soon as possible. The candidate can also request that if a call is agreed to, the church board appoint an installation (or ordination) Committee. This will allow planning to get underway via mail and phone before the minister is actually settled.

The first weeks after arrival at a new church are hectic for ministers and lay leadership alike. Ordination or installation planning tends to give way before more immediate concerns. Any part of the work that can be done previous to arrival will facilitate a successful service.

2. The Date

A firm date for the service must be set before more than tentative planning can be done. A good first step is to contact the District Office and the Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association chapter president. This has a dual advantage. It will help avoid other major

events in denominational life in the area, which might prevent others from participating in the service. Further, it may be possible to “piggyback on” some other gathering by setting the service just before or just after some other major district event. In areas where there is a wide geographic spread, it is often the custom to hold ordination or installation services in conjunction with ministerial chapter meetings. This saves ministerial participants both time and expense.

Once the potential advantages or conflicts in particular dates are known, contact should be made with the people on the minister’s “must have” list. These individuals are deemed essential as participants in the service. Obviously, the more persons on such a list, the more difficult the clearing of calendars. It is far better if the “must have” list contains not more than two or three names. Rather than lose valuable weeks in the difficult effort to converge on a mutually acceptable date, it will be easier and often cheaper simply to get on the phone to contact these key persons. The best approach is to have a preferable date, plus a couple of alternatives, so that there is some latitude, if some participant cannot make it on the date chosen.

While an ordination/installation service can appropriately be held at any time on any day of the week, the most common choice is late afternoon or early evening on Sunday. This should allow most participating ministers to be in their own pulpits on Sunday morning before traveling to the service. Convenience more than any other factor should dictate the day of the week and the time. When the date of an ordination is definitely set, the Ministry Section of the UUA should be notified and an ordination certificate requested.

3. **The Budget**

The accepted practice is to pay all travel expenses for those whom you ask to participate in the service. Sometimes the church may also offer an honorarium to participants, particularly the minister giving the sermon. This is, however, not dictated by common practice. The service costs are probably expenses to the church and should be covered in full by the church, either from its budget or by special fundraising. If a participant brings other family members, these are not chargeable to the church unless it offers to pay for them.

If participants from afar are wanted and the church cannot afford the expense, alternative approaches must be sought. The service may be set at a time when such persons are in the area for other purposes. If not, there is another way, which needs to be handled with some delicacy. A person may be invited to participate, while making it clear at the time of the invitation that no funds or only limited funds (the amount should be stated) are available. Sometimes lining up a guest pulpit appearance with appropriate honorarium can lessen the travel burden. This kind of offer may put the person invited on the spot, but the invitation can express sorrow at the budget limitation and the understanding of why a refusal may be necessary. The ordinary practice is for denominational officials to take the travel expense for such an event from their own budgets.

In budget planning a number of costs must be considered. Some items, if desired, can be absorbed by other categories in the regular church budget or contributed in kind by church

members. The point to emphasize is that all costs be known before drawing a final budget. Once a budget is approved, stick within it unless changes are authorized. An installation that costs \$1,500, when only \$1,000 was budgeted, can lead to ill feeling in the congregation.

The following is illustrative of an installation/ordination budget sheet:

- \$ _____ Preliminary Expenses (phone call, letters, etc.) to set the date, arrange for participants, invite neighboring ministers.
- \$ _____ Formal Invitations - printing and mailing. These may be appropriately hand written, but never mimeographed for invitations going beyond the parish.
- \$ _____ Order of Service - usually printed, often in multiple colors, on fine paper. Order enough copies for sending to friends and family, keeping as mementos, placing in historical files, as well as for the service.
- \$ _____ Travel costs - this is all ordinary expenses home-to-home for those participating in the service.
- \$ _____ Hospitality - it is perfectly proper to offer home billets, but if this is not done, the church should cover housing costs.
- \$ _____ Pre-Service Dinner - this may be hosted in a private home or at the church, but the church ordinarily pays at least food costs unless the meal is potluck.
- \$ _____ Service Costs - this includes any expenses particular to the service such as flowers, gown rentals, ribbons, etc., as well as the cost for any musicians employed for the occasion.
- \$ _____ Reception Following the Service - refreshments, flowers, etc.
- \$ _____ **TOTAL**

The budgeting process should be the responsibility of the ordination/installation committee in consultation with the minister. The proposals should then be forwarded through the appropriate church machinery for action. Unless the committee is enthusiastic about the plans and budget, be prepared to move in less august ways. Remember that not only the current state of church finances but also other factors can affect budget consideration. Some churches love ceremonies and parties, while others have little real interest in what they deem "the peculiar rites" particular to ministry. In general, the rarer an ordination or installation is in the life of the church, the more energy will go into it. One can hardly fault a church that has installed six ministers in a decade, when it flags a little in its excitement.

The best solution to the financing of the event is to take it from the church budget, for this indicates a certain commitment by the entire congregation. In addition, special fundraising can be consuming of time and energy. But in some cases it will be necessary to have special fundraising in order to underwrite the costs of the ordination/installation. If this is done, it is preferable to fundraise through some special event, rather than to approach parishioners for individual gifts, as this begins to undercut the annual canvass or to suggest a "loyalty check" for the new minister. In no case should the installation/ordination committee or the minister commit the church to expenditures until they are properly approved.

4. **Setting the Program**

After the major participants have been chosen and their parts in the service assigned, there will be four other categories of participants to consider:

- a) Ministerial friends, who are deemed close enough to warrant their inclusion in the service;
- b) Ministerial colleagues, who have a particular tie to the church, or are in neighboring churches, or who have a particular standing in the district or area;
- c) Ministers and laity, who are appropriate to bring greetings by virtue of the positions they hold;
- d) Local personnel - this includes the officers of the church who will take part in the service, but also musicians, ushers, chancel decorators, etc.

Each participant should be contacted as early as possible.

The form of the service is usually elastic enough to include any number of persons, but the most frequent complaint lodged against installations and ordinations is their length. The mark for the service should be an hour, certainly no more than fifteen minutes beyond that. Long services occur for only two reasons: sloppy planning and a failure to give participants strict time limits. The inevitable tendency is for a service to go longer than intended, so that should be remembered in planning the event.

One trend in recent years has been to remove all greetings from the service and to have them given during the reception (see remarks under that section). This approach has much to recommend it and it certainly helps shorten the service itself.

Once the program is fleshed out, write each participant and confirm the understanding about expenses, part of the service to be taken, and the time limit for that part. The latter needs particular emphasis, since the common tendency among ministers is to ignore such limits. It is normative to ask for a reasonably short sermon (e.g. eighteen-minute).

5. **Invitation to Colleagues**

As soon as the program is set, a letter should go to every colleague in your District or UUMA chapter. If attendance is desired by local ministers in other denominations, they should receive a note of invitation. Proper form suggests that these letters should be personal, so an automatic typewriter is a great asset. Failing to acquire such as typewriter, a duplicated informational letter may be sent, but a personal note should be included. These letters are distinct from the formal invitation (see next section).

Be sure to be specific about requests made and ask for a response by a given date. If colleagues are to march in a processional, so state and indicate what garb is appropriate. If lay representatives from other churches are to march, so indicate to the ministers. If a listing is desired for the order of service of the colleagues and lay representatives who will be attending, then so inform and ask for a response with names and position held, specifying a deadline. The growing tendency is to do this and it certainly highlights to the

local members the many visitors who are attending. If colleagues are invited to a dinner before (or after) the service or to remain for a party after the reception, tell them so. Be early and be specific! Nothing is more irritating for a colleague than to receive the first notice of an installation/ordination service less than a month prior to the event. An ideal lead-time for colleagues is six months, so do the necessary invitations as soon as you can.

An installation/ordination service puts a church on display. Often a church will make a special effort to complete building projects before such an event. The service also communicates attitudes about ministry. A poorly planned service or inadequate arrangements give a congregation and its ministers a negative reputation. In turn, ministerial participants, who drone on or are insensitive to the spirit of the occasion, can make a local congregations feel that there is nothing to be gained by relatedness to the wider denomination. A well-done service however is a delight to all and can be an extremely moving worship event. There are few occasions that can more dramatically highlight collegiality among ministers and the bonds among the congregations in a particular area.

Responsibilities for an Installation or Ordination

Wisdom dictates that responsibilities for the total event be assigned and understood. The usual practice is for the minister to plan the service itself, though in some societies there will be extensive lay participation and advice. The other arrangements are normally handled by the installation/ordination committee. The best practice is to relieve the host minister and family of all hospitality responsibilities unless they choose otherwise.

The ordination/installation committee should be appointed according to normal church practice, usually by the board. The various aspects of the celebration suggest the kinds of skills that are needed on the committee. Once the date and the participants are known, full scale planning can start. Responsibility for each aspect of the service and the surrounding arrangements should be assigned to a particular person or sub-committee. The overall chair of the committee should be the coordinator, making sure that all matters are covered and appropriate deadlines met.

1. The Invitation

An invitation is simple to write. The first line should be the name of the inviting body, usually the church (e.g. "The Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Keokuk"). If the minister has not been called by the congregation, then the invitation should be altered according (e.g. "The Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Keokuk"). The next line may be modern and direct (i.e. "invite you to") or more traditional and polite (i.e. "requests the honor of your presence at"). After that comes the naming of the event (i.e. "the ordination of," or "the installation of," or "the ordination and installation of"). This is followed by the name of the person involved, which can be simple (i.e. "Jessica Jane Smith") or more formal (i.e. "Ms. Jessica Jane Smith," if the person has not been ordained, or "The Reverend Jessica Jane Smith," if the installation of a minister, previously ordained). Initials should never be used in writing names. The remainder of the invitation is straight forward, giving the day of the week, the month day, and year, followed

by the time, the place, and the address. The bottom of the invitation should indicate if a reception is not at the church. Sometimes a separate card is enclosed with the invitation to the clergy asking them to be in the processional and/or attend some other function (e.g. the pre-service dinner). This, as indicated previously, is far better accomplished by an earlier personal letter sent to ministers.

Difficult to decide is to whom invitations will be sent. Rather than being haphazard, it is important to invite all Unitarian Universalist societies and ministers within a pre-determined geographic area, usually the District. Another decision is to what churches and ministers of other denominations within the community invitations should be sent. The congregation members may be invited either by the formal invitation or through repeated notices in the church newsletter. In addition, there may be certain community leaders who should be included. Members may also want a formal invitation sent to particular persons, and notice that this should be circulated in the church newsletter. Do not forget to include former ministers, former church leaders now living elsewhere, and appropriate denominational officials.

Copy for the invitation should go to the printer two months prior to the event. The proof should be available a week thereafter. Never allow anything to be printed without checking the proof! With a little luck, the invitations should be in hand six weeks before the celebration, so that envelopes may be stuffed addressed, and stamped. Proper form dictates that invitations should be hand addressed and stamped. The former practice of using a double envelope with the name of the recipient written on the inner envelope is now an outmoded custom and can safely be ignored. If invitations are held up at the printer, the envelopes should still be obtained so that addressing and stamping can proceed. Invitations should go into the mail not later than a month prior to the event.

2. The Order of Service

A service of installation/ordination usually follows a pattern, but there can be drastic alterations to normal form when other ways are desired (several sample services included in Appendix I). Conviction rather than novelty should suggest changes in the usual pattern. The practice is for the installed/ordained minister to take only the benediction in the service except, of course, for involvement in the act of installation and/or ordination. A service can have its parts expanded or reduced depending on time factors, what is appropriate to congregation and a desire to increase or lessen the number of participants. If the service involves a Minister of Religious Education, children and youth may appropriately be included in the service. Sometimes there may be groups or persons, who because of their particular relationship to the minister or to the congregation need special inclusion. If these cannot fit into the normal "slots" in the service, they may fittingly be given some special part in the occasion.

A standard order of service might run as follows:

Prelude
Processional Hymn (see page 507 in Hymns for the Celebration of Life)
Call to Worship
Responsive Reading
Anthem
Reading(s)
Hymn
Sermon
(Act of Ordination) - See Appendix II
(Act of Installation) - See Appendix III
Prayer of Ordination or Installation
Charge to the Minister
Charge to the Congregation (omit if the minister is not to serve the congregation)
Greetings (if not done at the reception)
Right Hand of Fellowship
Recessional Hymn
Benediction

An installation or ordination is a celebration, but it is also a service or worship. An effort should be made to unify the service so that is more than a miscellaneous hodge-podge of participants “doing their own thing.” The ordainee or minister being installed may wish to provide guidance to participants as the mood sought, appropriate points to stress, and theme of the service.

Unless adequate numbers of hymnals are available the text of all hymns should be printed on the order of service. Participants should be listed by full title and position at the end of the order of service and then simply identified at the appropriate place (e.g. “Call to Worship: Mr. Smith”). If representatives from other societies, ministerial and lay, are attending, then they should be listed, if they respond to the invitation by press time.

There is no excuse for foolish mistakes on the order of service. Check the spelling of all names. Make sure the titles of participants and the names of the churches or organizations from which they come are accurate. Use consistency in how persons are named, so that one participant is not listed as John Smith, DD, and another as Dr. Polly Brown. Be careful to avoid redundancies, such as Dr. John Smith, DD. The word “reverend,” is an adjectival modifier and should never (not ever!) be used simply with the last name, as in Reverend Smith. This shows failure to follow elementary rules of English form. If you don’t care about good English usage, then still be assured that others do and that your church should not be embarrassed in the wider public eye.

If the budget allows, consult someone with graphic skills about the layout, design and type of fonts to be used. A beautiful work of printing is an aesthetic delight and helps highlight the significance of the occasion. It is, of course, possible to mimeograph the order of service, but this is to be highly discouraged unless the budget simply will not allow printing.

A cheap presentation by the order of service conveys a certain image of the church and its ministers to the wider community.

Be sure to allow enough lead-time for printing. Ordinarily, a final proof should be at the printer two weeks before the service. Again, do not let the order of service go to press until it is carefully proofread.

3. **Publicity**

An installation or ordination is usually worth some media notice. Make sure there is someone on the committee who is knowledgeable about this function. A photographer should be present for the event and the surrounding festivities, both for church historical records and to provide pictures to the press. If the church is significant in the community, it is worthwhile to try to obtain television coverage.

4. **Hospitality**

Two weeks prior to the event send all participants a complete schedule and any related materials (e.g. a map). This should contain notice of where and when all events will be held. The order of service, even if still in draft form, should be enclosed. The part for each participant should be marked and the time limit **boldly** noted on the order of service.

5. **The Dinner**

The custom is to have a dinner for participants and other honored guests just prior to the service, assuming it is to be in the evening. Dinner could also follow a service, which is held in the afternoon. If for any reason this practice is not followed, the arrangements for receiving and entertaining out-of-town guests prior to the service need to be planned. The dinner can usually be informal, given the time pressures, and is best scheduled to begin two and half-hours prior to the service. The social hour can be short, followed by a buffet dinner. This approach has the advantage of being able to include easily those who arrive late for whatever reason. Good planners will also move the dinner along so that participants can be **at the church** no later than half an hour before the ceremony.

This issue of whom to invite to the dinner is usually solved by the facility utilized. It may be difficult to have the meal at the church, if a later reception is planned there. The usual practice is to include the local board, the search committee members, the ordination/installation committee, and appropriate spouses. If there is more space available, then church committee chairs can be included or a general invitation made to members.

It is normative at such dinners to reduce formality and time constraints by having no talks or general introductions.

6. The Service

Some ministers are naive enough to believe that once the order of service has been printed, the service will take care of itself. The result is usually chaos. It is sad, even if ruefully amusing, to see ministers, who are supposedly experts in conducting public worship, make a shabby mess of an installation or ordination service. The following points are recommended for attention:

- a) Where will the participants gather and how will they get there? What is the line of march for the processional? A marshal, usually a minister with organizational skills, should be appointed to be in charge of the processional. Give the marshal a diagram of the processional lineup; then let him or her organize it.
- b) Get someone to be in charge of service logistics. This person should make sure orders of service are set aside for the choir and marchers, that necessary seats are saved and ribboned off for those in the processional, that it is clear who does what, when, and from what location. If a problem occurs during the service (e.g. a participant does not appear), who should cover this situation? Usually, the marshal should cover such emergencies during the service.
- c) Cues are important. Since ordination/installation services tend to run long, an effort should be made to get the event underway promptly at the appointed hour. This means coordinating with the person in charge of the music, so it is known what signal will be given to start the processional and who will give it. It is sad when a service gets underway fifteen minutes late, simply because the musicians doing the prelude were not made to understand the time framework. Are there places fraught with possible confusion during the service? If so, who is responsible for announcing a hymn, ending a silent meditation, etc.?
- d) Prior to the service the marshal should instruct the personnel in the processional how to form a line of march and other necessary details of the ceremony. Conditions are usually hurried at this point, so the simpler and more direct the instructions the better. It is also appropriate for the marshal to convey thanks to all marching on behalf of the host congregation and minister. The marshal also might wish to point out tactfully that the service is tightly scheduled, so let the sermon be the only sermon! The marshal can also state that keeping to the time limits given in advance will markedly enhance the meaning of the service.
- e) Participants who must interact during the service should go over the details. The minister and church president should be clear where each will stand during the act of installation and/or ordination. Is the minister expected to stand, and where, during the charge to the minister? Instructions to the congregation should be clear both as printed on the order of service and as given verbally. Often there is confusion about who is expected to stand during the congregation's part in the installation/ordination. The order of service should specify, "Members only of the congregation will rise." The church president should announce the same thing. This underlines the congregational nature of our polity; it is inappropriate to have guests stand or take

part in the acts of installation or ordination, even if they are members of other Unitarian Universalist congregations.

- f) At the end of the service, the marshal directs the recessional, being the last person out. The marshal is also the first in line for the processional and stands at the head of the aisle to indicate where marchers should go and be seated.

7. The Reception

The obvious must be planned - who will do the reception and what will be served? Some attention must also be given to flow through the room, particularly if a large attendance is expected. Sometimes it is wise to have several stations for serving refreshments. Rarely is it the custom to have a formal reception line for all the participants, but if such is held, then those attending should not be forced to go through a long wait before being served. It is better to have people refresh themselves and then tackle the reception line at their leisure.

If there are presentations to be made or greetings to be brought, then a place, preferably elevated, should be set up. Once everyone is assembled and before any start to leave is a good time for greetings. Greetings should be short and crisp, but they should be heard! It is insulting to ask persons to come from afar to bring greetings and then to drown out their remarks in the raucous babble of the reception. Someone with a strong voice should moderate this part of the program. A loudspeaker is often helpful. If messages from those not attending are to be noted, they should simply be announced (e.g. "We have greetings from the Board Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Keokuk").

If part of a greeting is to be read (e.g. from a former minister), make sure it is succinct. It is counterproductive to try to read the full text of all messages. These can instead be posted on the church bulletin board.

If billeting hosts are to meet participants at the reception, then someone should be in charge of brokering the process.

8. The "After" Party

The host minister often wishes to have a gathering at his or her dwelling after the reception. If participants are traveling with other members of their congregation, it is only polite to invite them, too. If such an event is planned, notice with an appropriate map should be sent out beforehand. The host ministers should be careful not to invite only particular favorites from within the congregation. If local laity are included at all in this party, it is usual to ask only the board president, the search committee chair, the installation/ordination committee chair, and their spouses.

9. Follow-Up

If the ministers are traveling on to some meeting from the installation/ordination, the host minister should make sure that arrangements for gathering and transport are in hand. The first free day following the event, the host minister should write a short note of thanks to

all participants and colleagues from out of town whom attend. This note should include a request for expense vouchers where appropriate. The host ministers should double check to make sure that the church treasurer pays expenses promptly.

CONCLUSION

A well-done service brings several benefits. There will be pride within the congregation that it has displayed itself well before the wider community and denomination. The ordained or installed minister will feel that the significance of the ministry has been highlighted. Guests should go away with a sense that they have taken part in a worship service of quality and have been royally entertained.

An ordination/installation service seeks to honor historic meanings relating to churches and the ministers they have chosen. That relatedness taps the roots of not just our polity but also a theology of what a church should be about. A congregation is a covenanted community and its minister is its chosen leader to mark the meaning of a religious life for that community.

The ordination and installation services underline the highest and holiest in church life. Such a service is an event of significance and deserves our best attention and concern.

Appendix I: Alternative Orders of Services

Examples of orders of service can be borrowed from the Department of Ministry at the Unitarian Universalist Association, District Executives, or other ministers. A few examples are given here of services which differ from the common practice.

Example 1: An Ordination and Installation Service

Sounds Of Life (music)
A Call to Gather Together (by five different persons)
The Invested Join With Us (the ministers' processional)
Why We're Here (a statement of the purpose of the occasion)
We Are Ready To Commence (by the board chair)
What Is A Minister? Why? (by five different ministers)
Music
The Act of Ordination
Investiture (a robing of the new minister)
Singing Together
Welcome To the Fellowship
The Act of Installation
Words Of Acceptance (by the newly installed minister)
Closing Words
Singing Together

Example 2: An Installation Service

Prelude
Processional Hymn
Call To Celebration
Upon This Occasion (by the chair of the search committee)
Act Of Installation
Brotherly/Sisterly Words to A Sister/Brother (charge to the minister)
Just Between Us (charge to the congregation)
Perspicio (right hand of fellowship)
The Broader Ministry (by a representative from the wider community)
Songs and Dances
Warm Welcomes and Presentation of Plants
- By a representative from the UUMA
- By a representative from the UUA
- by other ministers and board presidents as desired
Songs and Dances
For The Members of the Family (presentation on behalf of the minister's family)
Hymn
Benediction
Recessional

Example 3: An Installation Service

Prelude
Processional Hymn
Welcome To the Assembly and Introduction of the Marshal (by the church President)
Invocation (by the marshal, who from this point forward introduces each participant in turn)
Anthem
“The Work of the Church” (by a minister)
“The Work of the Minister” (by a minister)
Greetings
Act of Installation
Welcome Of the Minister to the Pulpit (by the church president)
A Confession of Faith (by the new minister)
The Prayer of Installation
Recessional Hymn
Benediction
Postlude

Example 4: An Ordination for A Minister of Religious Education

Prelude
Processional
Call to Celebration
Hymn
The Dream of Community (by four persons)
Chorale
The Dream of Religious Education
The Dream of Ministry
Interlude
The Act of Ordination
Presentation Have Stole
The Dream of the Future
Closing Remarks (by a new minister)
Recessional Hymn
Postlude

Appendix II: Examples of the Act of Ordination

Example 1

Church President: Will the members of (*name of congregation*) please rise. (*Full name of minister-to-be*), recognizing your sense of obligation to serve the cause of liberal religion and having received the recommendation of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Association, and by the authority of a vote of the members of this congregation, we desire to ordain you to the Unitarian Universalist (*ministry*). We offer you ordination, a privilege bestowed upon us by the nature of our free church. Among us, and wherever you may be called to serve, we would have preach the word of truth in freedom and in love, ministering alike to our joys and sorrows, setting forth no less by your example than by your precept the principles of our free faith. Are you ready to enter upon this ministry?

Minister Elect: I am

Congregation: We, the members of (*name of congregation*) do hereby ordain you, (*full name of minister elect*), to the Unitarian Universalist ministry. We do pledge ourselves to walk with you in unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace, and in all the ways of truth and love.

Minister: With a deep sense of obligation and opportunity, mindful of its privileges and responsibilities, I take up the ministry to which you ordain me.

Example 2

Church President: My friends, we have gathered together to ordain (*full name of minister elect*) to the ministry of religion and to install (*her/him*) as the minister of this church. Let us be mindful of the solemn responsibility entailed in the exercise of this power and authority to choose and to ordain, in the tradition of the congregationally governed church. We have recognized (*her/his*) qualification to a learned ministry, (*her/his*) recommendation from the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of our associated churches, and (*her/his*) profession of vocation and willingness to serve this church. We now recognize that the office we here create will be fulfilled only through the spirit of mutual cooperation and loyalty. In affirmation of our prior election of this (*woman/man*) to be a minister among us, the members of this church will please rise.

(Only the members of the congregation now stand)

Congregation: We, the members of the (*name of church*), standing together as a voluntarily covenanted community do invite you, (full name of minister elect), to accept our call to be ordained as the minister of this church.

Church President: We would have you speak the living word of truth in freedom and in love, serve the needs and purposes of our church, minister to us alike in our joys and in our sorrows, and set forth by your example, no less than by your precept, the religious way of life. Do you accept the call of our church to this office?

Minister Elect: I do.

Church President: Let us pray. O God, who has called all they people out of solitude unto the realm, that being one body that might be animated by the spirit;

Congregation: Now in solemn dedication before thee we do ordain (*full name of minister elect*) to the ministry of religion, promising to walk with (*her/him*) in the unity of the spirit and in the bond of peace in all thy ways, known, or to be made known, to us.

Minister: Trusting not in my own strength, O God, but in thy sustaining and judging power, I accept this office, and declare that I shall discharge it with my whole heart and mind, in the unity of the spirit and in the bond of peace, as I shall find grace and strength to do so.

Unison: In the love of truth and in the spirit of Jesus, we unite for the worship of God and the service of humanity. Amen.

Example 3

Church President: In our free churches, the relationship which we are about to recognize lies between the people of a church and the minister whom they have chosen. It is fitting, therefore, that the act of ordination be performed by the members of the church.

We now proceed formally to recognize the relationship of people and minister that exists between this congregation and (*full name of minister elect*).

(Only the members of the congregation now stand.)

Our purpose in this act can only be realized if we as a people acknowledge our own obligations of loyalty, truth, and love. Are we ready to assume these obligations?

Congregation: We are ready to take upon ourselves these obligations, and we do solemnly promise to fulfill them to the best of our ability.

Church President: (*Madam/Sir*): Recognizing your sense of obligation to serve the cause of liberal religion and having received the recommendation of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Association, and by the authority and consent of the members of this parish, we desire to ordain you to the ministry of religion. We offer you a free pulpit, even as we are a free people. Among us, and wherever you may be called to serve, we would have you preach the word of truth in freedom and in love, rebuking evil and maintaining righteousness, ministering alike to our joys and sorrows, setting forth no less by your example than by your precept the principles of our faith.

Congregation: We, the members of (*name of church*), do hereby ordain you, (*full name of minister elect*), to the Unitarian Universalist ministry. We charge you to lead us and all people, as you have opportunity, into the fuller knowledge of truth and the greater service of love. We do pledge ourselves, so far as in us lies, to walk with you in unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace, and in the ways of truth, known or to be made known unto us.

Minister: Mindful of its privilege and its responsibilities, I take up the ministry to which you ordain me. I do pledge myself, so far as it lies in me, to speak the truth and love, both publicly and privately, without fear of persons; diligently to fulfill the several offices of worship, instruction, and administration, according to the customs and needs of our fellowship; and in all things to live so as to show forth the way of righteousness, truth and love among this people and with all humanity.

Example 4:

Church President: Within the Unitarian Universalist religious movement the authority to confer ordination lies wholly with the local church. It is meaningful and joyous occasion when a congregation joins together, as we have, to recognize one who has chosen the ministry as (*her/his*) life's work. We come together this evening to ordain (*full name of minister elect*) into the ministry of religious education. Will the members of the congregation please rise?

Members and President: We, the members of (*name of church*) hereby ordain, you (*full name of minister elect*), to the ministry of religious education. We would have you speak to us of truth as you see it; teach us and our children of the wonder and mystery of life and each other; challenge us in witnessing to our moral and ethical concerns; share with us our human joys and sorrows; celebrate the principles of our faith; and serve us with love. We pledge ourselves, so far as in us lies, to walk with you in unity of spirit in the bond of peace in love and truth as we see it.

Church President: (*Name of minister*) family and friends also wish to participate in this occasion. Will they please rise and join me?

Family and Friends: (*Name of minister*), you have touched our lives in many ways. You have been a support for us in times of trial and sadness. You have laughed with us, played with us, celebrated with us in times of joy. You have given steady loyalty, wise counsel, and delightful companionship. We are proud of you, as we too enter into the spirit of your ordination with this church community.

Congregation and President: We celebrate your presence now as our minister.

Minister: It is with joy and appreciation that I now accept this ministry to which you ordain me. I will keep alive the meanings of this service so that my ministry and my life will be enriched by the spirit and trust we have given one another. It is with understanding and faith that I pledge myself to continue our mutual search; to nurture and kindle curiosity, enthusiasm and questioning; to encourage growth and sensitivity; to foster a sense of wonder and mystery about the universe, and to act courageously in our quest for truth, peace, and justice.

Appendix III: Examples of the Act of Installation

Example 1

Church President: We gather (*today/tonight*) to install (*full name of minister*) as the (*appropriate number*) minister of this church (*or minister of religious education of this church*) and, in a spirit of mutual concern to rededicate ourselves to the values of this religious society and the liberal religious tradition of which it is a part. (*Full name of minister*), at the conclusion of (*appropriate number of years*) of service by this church to this community and denomination, we have chosen you as our minister. We have called you to live among us, to make our concerns your concerns, and to lead us, as you are enabled, in the paths of understanding, righteousness, and peace. Mindful of the great traditions of our heritage and this church, and mindful of its vast promise, we look to you for moral leadership, for religious insight, and for spiritual guidance. We would have you speak the truth to us in freedom without fear of favor of persons or position, to minister to us alike in our joys and in our sorrows, and to set forth, by your example not less that by your precept, the religious way of life. Do you accept the invitation of this church to its ministry?

Minister: I do.

Church President: In formal recognition of our election of (*full name of minister*) and of (*her/his*) acceptance, I ask the members of the church to rise and say with me:

Members: We, the members of (*name of church*), do hereby install you, (*full name of minister*), as (*minister or minister of religious education*) of the (*name of church*). For our part, we pledge to walk with you in all the ways of God known, or to be made known, to us. We offer you a free pulpit, the cooperation of our hearts and hands, and our resolute good will as you take up your work among us.

Minister: With joy and a deep sense of responsibility I take up the ministry to which you have called me. In my truth, I pledge myself, so far as the power in me lies, worthily to maintain the freedom of the pulpit, to speak the truth in love, both publicly and privately, diligently to fulfill the several offices of worship, instruction, counsel, service, and administration, for the renewal and consecration of life, and in all things so to live as to promote righteousness, love, and excellence among all people.

Example 2:

Search Committee Chair: In pursuance of the work of the Search Committee, the negotiations of the Board of Trustees, and the call of this congregation we will proceed to install the Reverend (***full name of minister***) as minister of the (***name of church***). In our churches, the relationship which we are about to recognize lies wholly between the people of the church and the minister they have chosen. It is therefore fitting that the traditional act of installation be performed by members of this church. In this way we give testament to our freedom and heritage in congregational democracy. (**The members stand.**)

Church President: (Madam/Sir): We desire to install you as our (***minister or minister of religious education***). We recognize that this act symbolizes a covenant together. We would have you dwell among us preaching the truth in freedom and love. We would have you educate our children and counsel our youth. We would have you minister to us in our times of joy and sorrow. We would have you demonstrate by your example, as well as by precept, the way of calm and courageous life. We would have you call attention to the evils and failures of our lives. We would have you lead us in a mutual quest toward a greater understanding of the religious life. Are you willing to take up these obligations?

Minister Elect: I am, with your help.

Church President: We, on our part, pledge ourselves to remember that the work of this church belongs to us all. As we would ask you to be charitable toward our failures, so will we also remember that you are human and can falter. We recognize that we bear a responsibility in your material welfare and spiritual development. We pledge ourselves to maintain the freedom of both pulpit and pew. We pledge to assist and cooperate with you in our common growth in a religious life. Are you willing to take up these obligations?

Members: We are ready and willing to take upon ourselves these obligations. Therefore, we, the members of (***name of church***), do install you as minister (***or minister of religious education***) of this church and offer you our encouragement and assistance in discharging your duties among us.

Minister: With a deep sense of responsibility and with gratitude for your confidence, I take up my duties. May our association together promote justice, righteousness, love, and the divine in all life among these people and with all humanity.

Example 3:

Church President: No right is more precious to a free congregation than that of choosing its own minister. By the same token, no right is more precious to a Unitarian Universalist minister than of choosing the congregation (***she/he***) will serve. The coming together of congregation and minister assumes special significance when there is involved, as here, a

great tradition of liberal leadership. It is with profound feeling, therefore, that we formally recognize the relationship now existing between the people of the (*name of church*) and the Reverend (*full name of minister*), whom we have freely chosen and who has freely chosen us. Our choice is based not only on our heritage, but also upon the hopes and aspirations we hold for the future. This service symbolizes our dedication to new efforts. We affirm by this act the goals toward which we strive and the ideals by which we are sustained and strengthened. Will the members please rise and join me in the following words:

Members: We cherish our church for its historic achievements and for its efforts to keep abreast of changing times and changing human needs. We celebrate its devotion to freedom, its belief in the intrinsic dignity and worth of human personality, its belief in the intrinsic dignity and worth of human personality, its responsiveness to the desires and aspirations of its people.

We cherish the memory of those who founded, nurtured, and progressively transformed our existence as a congregation.

We cherish our church for all that it now has to give: the friendships it makes possible, the loyalties and common endeavors it fosters, the imagination and creativeness it stimulates, the comfort and solace it brings, the quickened sense of conscience it engenders, the influence it exerts on children, youth, adults, and the wider community.

We cherish our church for what it may yet become through our united efforts.

Church President: Having thus expressed our love and concern for our church, we now entrust its ministry to you, (*full name of minister*), confident that you share our feelings in full measure, and that you will do all in your power to advance our cause. We ask God's blessing upon you. We offer you our honored and unfettered pulpit.

Minister: Mindful of the privilege and responsibility which are mine as minister of this great congregation, this fountainhead of religious liberalism, I pledge my consecrated efforts on your behalf. I look forward to the opportunity to know you even better and more deeply. To the best of my ability, I will live the truth of love, and fulfill the several offices of a minister of religion according to the custom of our free churches. Above all, I will cherish and cultivate the ways of reason, freedom, and spiritual growth among you, and with all people.

Congregation: We have chosen you, (*full name of minister*), to be the minister of our church. We offer you a congregation eager to seek the truth and to live our lives in the spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood. Will you accept the responsibility of leading and guiding us in this search?

Minister: I will.

Congregation: Will you preach in the love of truth and freedom, with responsibility? Will you lead us in intelligent service to human brotherhood and sisterhood? Will you serve us devotedly to the best of your ability?

Minister: I will.

Church President: Then by the power invested in me as a representative of this congregation, I now install you as minister of the (***name of church***).