

MFC April 2025 Week Agenda

Wednesday, April 2 - Sunday, April 6

Wednesday, April 2

Executive Committee Only

Thursday, April 3

Rebekah Savage, Amanda Poppei, Nathalie Edmond, DC Fortune, Shirley Lange, Cindy Malley, Alison ALG McLeod, Beth Norton, Kären Rasmussen, Michael Tino, Lindasusan Ulrich, Maria Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa, Takiyah Amin, Laura Shennum, Paul Langston-Daley, Karen LoBracco. UUA Staff: Cecilia Kingman, Darrick Jackson, Marta Valentín, Marion Bell, Aastha Poudel, Dawn Robinson.

Odyssey – Marion Bell

Welcome and Brief Check-In

Affirming Our Covenant & Commitment Covenant

December 2024 Minutes

Motion to approve the December 2024 meeting minutes: Paul moves, Karen 2nd. Approved (1 recusal).

Overview of the Week

Next Year's MFC Schedule:

- Fall 2026 (Yom Kippur Sept 20-21): Wed (Exec only), Sep 23-Sunday, Sep 27
- Winter 2026: Wed (Exec only), Dec 2-Sunday, Dec 6
- Spring 2027 (Easter March 28; Passover April 22): Wed (Exec only), March 31-Sunday, April 4

Panel Orientation for Candidate Interviews

Caucus Time

Working Groups Meet

Friday, April 4

Odyssey - Marion Bell

PANELS MEET FOR CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS

Saturday, April 5

Odyssey - Marion Bell

PANELS MEET FOR CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS

Sunday, April 6

Rebekah Savage, Nathalie Edmond, DC Fortune, Shirley Lange, Cindy Malley, Alison ALG McLeod, Beth Norton, Kären Rasmussen, Michael Tino, Lindasusan Ulrich, Takiyah Amin, Laura Shennum, Paul Langston-Daley, Karen LoBracco. UUA Staff: Cecilia Kingman, Marta Valentín, Marion Bell. Darrick Jackson Absent: Amanda Poppei, Maria Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa,.

Caucus Time

Memorial Service

Open Meeting:

1. Review of MFC Rules and Policies.
2. **Conversation on a Policy around Seeking Ordination Prior to Fellowship.**
Consider developing policy/guidance regarding candidates who have been ordained prior to seeing the MFC or come before MFC and are asked to return or have contingencies and then are ordained before completing any contingencies.

Issues/comments raised:

Our Polity makes this complicated.

What about discontinued candidates vs. someone who's given contingencies and choose not to do them. Or gets ordained in between finishing contingencies and seeing the MFC. What are the consequences?

How do we articulate the theology of fellowship vs theology of ordination? Ordination isn't exclusively for us. Fellowship is a status that describes a relationship. Quality of relationship that someone has of faith at large. If not in fellowship for whatever reason, you do not have the appropriate relationship to be representing our faith writ large in the world. So, congregations using their polity are within their rights to ordain and represent THEM in their community. Many don't get that distinction. That is the disconnect. Not articulated as well into our faith/polity classes, etc.

Why should we work towards full fellowship? Full fellowship signals a deepening of relationship and responsibility. Fellowship/Full Fellowship is accountability.

Re: the renewal process. The MFC helps ministers through the next three years. They are held with love and care and restorative-ness.

Credentialing is how we avoid rampant individualism.

Something's missing theologically and with process. In order to clarify, we strike a balance between the two. This is a conversation about relationships, accountability and care. You need accountability and support. Fellowshiping process is actualizing accountability for folk on this journey. In some areas, there is unawareness of the bigger faith and the Association. It's not only just that small congregation. Theology, accountability, covenantal. How does our process reflect all that?

The board asked Cecilia to explain what fellowshiping is. She explained the accountability to create safety for community. How do you want your therapist/doctor to be credentialed? It is important to lift up the educational piece. As well as theological piece. What is MINISTRY? It impacts questions about contract ministry and settled ministry. In the middle of big conversation around this. What is the unique role of fellowshiped ordained ministers.

We need to articulate the theological core of the work of ministry...

Reaffirmation of what ministry is and move towards a policy/guidance/language. We err on side of being able to explain, thoughtfully considered, etc. it's not what's happened, but their way to articulate a way of being grounded. Wisdom.

We need to consider to be sure that our answer theology and processes reflect the reality of parish and community ministry and innovative ministries.

We want to encourage people to come back into relationship if they are out of compliance.

Does everyone understand the theology of call?

It's not the MFC's charge to do the education on all of this. Whether contract or settled, healthy congregations want ministers who are credentialed. People who don't want to be fellowshiped, aren't necessarily lacking an awareness of what it is, people choosing to be ordained prior to fellowship or who decide not to go through the credentialing process – some may not want to be held accountable.

Possible Follow Up Items:

- Can the UUA develop educational materials about fellowship and ordination for congregations and lay leaders.
- Create content for UUA website (and UU World?) about the meaning and importance of fellowship and ordination.
- Regional Staff to possibly provide education and outreach to congregations about the importance of fellowship and right relationship in ministry.
- Create a service template/resource for congregations about fellowship, ordination, and right relationship in ministry
- Continue work on reframing and rebranding fellowship process
- Present reframed fellowship process to partners for implementation and communication to congregations
- Meet with Melissa Carvill-Ziemer to discuss UUMA guidance regarding ordination requirements
- Michael Tino will work on articulating the theology of ministerial fellowship and ordination during sabbatical time