

What has been the increased cost of bringing co-ministry into an already existing ministry?

Below is a compilation of responses from various UU Churches:

- Extra expenses (travel, etc.) for candidating was not a significant problem; Increased benefits included disability, life insurance, professional dues, conference, travel
- "Paid from budget --people need to understand that they'll have to pay more to get more."
- "Hard to give absolute figures. Higher benefits, an additional office, and increases in some other budget areas. Professional expenses are higher than a single minister's would be. Our Ministers are footing some extra costs. Not recommended!"
- "We did have an initial contract for 1 1/3 ministerial time. Financial constraints required decrease to 50% time for each."
- "Due to the size of our congregation, (small) *some* debate whether we can justify 2 ministers. The fact is that if we called one minister we would have to beef up the support staff (full time church administrator, for instance) and the total cost would be the same with our co-ministry."

Members of the UU Clergy Couples Association are available for volunteer consultation with couples and congregations on various clergy couple issues, including:

- Packet Preparation
- Letters of Agreement
- Benefits and Professional Expenses
- Conflict

Feel free to contact the current officers. See <http://www.clergycouples.org/officers.htm> for more information.

Often, search committees want to know how to develop ground rules for the ministers and for the congregation for a successful co-ministry. Here are some suggestions from other Search Committees and/or Committee's on Ministry.

- "The Letter of Agreement should describe areas such as how time allocation is decided; how people decide whom to approach for counseling, weddings, memorials, etc. "
- "It should be clearly spelled out what happens if one of the ministers leaves the co-ministry. Most agreements indicate that the co-ministry is over if that happens."
- "Our Search committee was very thorough: verbally & in writing, in explaining co-ministry to congregation before decision was made. The Search Committee then became the first Committee on Ministry to help with the transition period."

And finally, closing comments from one satisfied Search Committee on calling a Co-Ministry Team:

"Do it! . . . Be flexible . . . Be prepared for resistance . . . Be organized in your presentation to anticipate questions . . . Keep educating congregation & community . . . On the whole, it has worked well for us! . . . It's a relational way of working that many people don't experience in their lives and don't understand. At its best it can be an excellent model for the way the world needs to work. We ourselves treasure it deeply."

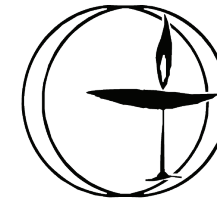
We hope you might too.

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CO-MINISTRY AND YOUR CONGREGATION

TO HELP YOU AND YOUR CONGREGATION LEARN MORE ABOUT CO-MINISTRY

Co-ministry may be a new idea in your congregation and you no doubt have some questions about how it might work. There are many congregations in the UUA that are served by clergy



couples and the Clergy Couples Association has drawn on their experience to provide some basic

information about what co-ministry might mean for your congregation. This brochure has been compiled from the results of a survey created by the First Unitarian Society of Denver, as well as information from a variety of co-minister's packets.

What is Co-Ministry? Each Co-Ministry team is unique. Sometimes the team is a married or partnered couple, sometimes not. Sometimes the ministry team present themselves as co-equals; other teams may configure their co-ministry differently. However, what is similar in all co-ministry cases is that a *couple* is desiring to work together as a co-ministry team.

The purpose of this brochure is to identify some questions that you may have and provide general answers. These questions were adapted from a FAQ document that was used when a search committee was considering a co-ministry team. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call the convenors of the Clergy Couples Association.

What might some advantages of co-ministry be for your congregation?

Many clergy couples feel that by working together as a collaborative clergy team, they offer a model of shared leadership. Some of the advantages of co-ministry include: ;

- a diversity of personal styles
- A variety of sermon styles & topics;
- complementary strengths & opinions;
- collaborative working together
- two choices for counseling & gender preference allowed;
- enhanced consensus building atmosphere; availability of ministerial services is increased;
- more variety, freshness & depth in Sunday services because each has more time between Sundays "on" to refresh & prepare.

Some additional benefits include:

- Each can attend separate committees;
- Board and committees get extra ideas and energy;
- Experience, training and skills of two people;
- Joint services --two different points of view on a variety of topics;
- Division of various duties can depend on gifts, skills, passions & constraints .

What might be the concerns or disadvantages of co-ministry?

- Getting more than you're willing to pay for, thus creating unrealistic expectations.
- Possible schisms as congregation turns to one or the other minister, i.e, individuals or groups may develop a "favorite" which could be divisive.
- A big fear for partnered couples is that marital issues might disrupt the ministry, or that dissatisfaction with one of the co-ministers would cause a problem. It's rare but it happens.
- Co-ministers may seem like an impregnable front to people when they have problems with either.
- Partnered Ministers need time off together (with two unrelated ministers, pastoral coverage is easier to maintain).
- If co-ministers are uncomfortable with shared leadership in a particular area and one needs to be "in charge."
- "Love me, love my dog," syndrome is possible where one person is more effective, popular or stimulating than the other in a particular area or overall.

"In short, you will have two heads to think with you, two hearts to care for you, two people to listen to you, and four hands to share the work."

How would you divide the work?

Clergy couples work together as equal colleagues, but many also think it's important to have certain areas of clear, primary responsibility, as well as areas where clergy couples share jointly. Final decisions about who does what will be made in consultation with the congregational leadership and may be revisited and revised from time to time as the church's needs change and skills and interests develop. Generally, most clergy teams meet together with a Worship Committee or Associates Team, with the Board of Trustees, and the Committee on

Ministry

What was the process to get a co-ministry established at your church? Did it take?

Here is how two search committees have responded to

this question:

- "Normal search process. Decided to go with the best applicants who happened to be co-ministers. Process took a year."
- "Search Committee spent many hours thrashing out the pros/cons before presenting to the congregation, so that an organized presentation was made that was consistent with presentation by new co-ministers themselves"

How would pre and /or candidating week work?

Each clergy couple's preference is different. Some may ask to do a Sunday service each (i.e, one might do an early service, another the later service). For candidating week, often times each minister would offer one service by him/herself, with the other serving as liturgist/celebrant.