Pastors With Promise Becoming Great Ministers

The yearning for strong, effective clergy leadership for Christ’s Church is constant and clearly evident. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has seen first-hand the need for well-prepared clergy in the 21st century.

The first years of a ministerial career are often challenging. Young ministers must establish new identities as pastors and develop the work and study habits necessary for providing spiritual leadership to their congregations. Yet many new pastors in their first congregations find themselves professionally and geographically isolated, receiving too little support in working through tough transitional issues and developing a healthy pastoral identity.

Community Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Kansas City, Missouri, is one of nineteen congregations of varied denominations across the nation chosen by the Lilly Endowment, Inc., to host a Clergy Residency Program. Through our Clergy Residency Program, Community seeks to enhance the experiences of the next generation’s most promising pastoral leaders by offering an exciting and invigorating entrance into a life of creative, successful ministry.

In the Clergy Residency Program, residents learn the expectations and textures of congregational life in a supportive and innovative context, with hands-on, day-to-day experiences in a wide variety of roles.

Community’s Clergy Residency Program continues to welcome cohorts of two residents for two-year tenures. Residents receive full-time salaries and benefits in keeping with the compensation guidelines recommended by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Applications for the program and inquiries are received on an on-going basis. Selected applicants will be interviewed in the early spring seasons of even numbered years. Residents begin their ministry with Community as soon after their graduation as is convenient.
Community Christian Church, founded in 1890, is located in the heart of the greater Kansas City metropolitan area. Throughout our history, we have sought to live out our name with a steadfast commitment “... to declare the church nothing else than it is – everybody’s church.” In 1942 the congregation moved to the present location at 4601 Main Street to live out its ministry in the “Church of the Future” designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

Over the past twenty years, Community has experienced a renaissance of growth and enhancement, with positive changes in its outreach and service, in pastoral care and property, in attitude and aptitude and action. The refurbishing and renovation of our sanctuary building and Activities Center, combined with a reinvigorated vision and an explosion in our outreach service to those in need, have helped to make Community a “24/7/365 church.” With 978 members and average weekly worship attendance of 426, Community seeks to fulfill its mission and vision with a steady focus on a constant theme: “Life is to be celebrated, not merely tolerated!”

Community’s “DNA” includes:

- Vital and relevant worship
- Social witness to the larger metropolitan area
- Celebration of the arts, especially music and the visual arts
- Serving as a leading institution regarding social transformation
- Ecclesial innovation (being on the cutting edge of sharing the gospel in new ways)
- Diversity in all aspects of life and ministry

Community has been enriched by ecumenical and interfaith friendships, working on social justice issues and other concerns that affect all of God’s children:

- Community has enjoyed a 75-year partnership of caring interaction with Temple B’nai Jehudah, a Reform Jewish congregation, with a long legacy of mutual support, dialogue, and joint service projects.
- Community has also treasured a strong connection with St. James United Methodist Church. Since 1989 we have enacted an annual pulpit/music exchange during the time of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.
- With Swope Parkway United Christian Church, we have created “C.O.L.O.R.s” (Christians Offering Love to Overcome Racism), with on-going activities such as an annual dinner-and-worship celebration of “Juneteenth,” educational fellowship events, and civil rights pilgrimages.
- In the wider reaches of Greater Kansas City, Community is looked to as a “leading light” congregation ecumenically and in interfaith circles, particularly at times of national and international crisis.
Program Purpose

The mission of the Clergy Residency Program is to provide opportunities through time and training for residents to acquire:

**Skills** that are developed and tested in the on-going ministries of a vital congregation that supports growth and pastoral mastery

**Experiences** that enhance the lives and increase the joys of both residents and congregation

**Deepened Commitments to Values** that will serve residents their entire ministerial journeys

**Wisdoms** for the attainment of excellence in all aspects of a minister’s calling to serve God’s people and spread the good news of Jesus Christ

Community’s Clergy Residency program strives to strengthen the following qualities and capabilities within clergy residents.

- Enthusiasm for congregational life
- Deepened understanding of God’s presence in daily life
- Enriched prayer life, for pastoral work and personal maturation
- Dedication to excellence
- Keen awareness of the gifts and graces of diversity
- Passion for the Gospel
- Adaptive work style
- Heightened appreciation of the arts
- Insightful imagination
- A sane and effective work ethic
- Creative vision
Our aim is to provide a quarterly rotation so that by the end of the twelve-months of the first year, residents will have been involved in all the major areas of congregational activity. Second year activities will be determined by evaluation of the first year rotation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Months 1-3</th>
<th>Clergy Resident A</th>
<th>Orientation (meeting people, familiarizing w. worship &amp; programming)</th>
<th>Clergy Resident B</th>
<th>Orientation (meeting people, familiarizing w. worship &amp; programming)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Months 16-21</td>
<td>Revisiting areas for growth/areas of passion</td>
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<td>Months 22-24</td>
<td>Transitioning out (search &amp; call; delegating/empowering; welcoming new residents)</td>
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Nurtured within a context of vitality and the dynamics of congregational life, residents will have weekly involvements in activities in which they exercise various leadership roles:

**Worshiping God**
- Weekly worship leadership, Sunday mornings and midweek (including offertory invitations, pastoral prayers, presiding at communion)
- Studying in preparation for worship occasions
- Ongoing and occasional prayer groups
- Preaching opportunities (monthly, Sunday mornings & Wednesday evenings)
- Spiritual retreats

**Growing Disciples**
- Fellowship events
- Staff meetings, subgroup meetings
- Research and study in preparation for classes
- Evangelism emphases
- Designing and teaching classes
- Leading study groups

**Serving the World**
- Pastoral Care (e.g. hospital calls, home visitation)
- Outreach service activities
- Community involvement and advocacy
- Community organizing
- Nurturing ecumenical relations and activities
Teaching Opportunities
Residents will have regular teaching opportunities, leading new classes they create and participating in on-going Bible study groups, cultural enrichment, and theology discussions.

Outreach Opportunities
Each resident will create and lead at least one Outreach Mission Trip per year. There will also be opportunities for involvement in other outreach activities, such as the Food Pantry, participating in the annual CROP-Walk, Monday Night at Micah Ministry, contribution to the Ivanhoe neighborhood renaissance through Front Porch Alliance, the Martin Luther King Interfaith Service, and other occasions of service to the wider community.

Leadership Opportunities
Clergy residents will have the opportunity to organize and lead Community’s young adult ministry, current event discussions, and our annual ethnic diversity festivals (Kirkin’ of the Tartan, Irish Fest, Cinco de Mayo, Juneteenth, Native American Heritage Festival, Martin Luther King Jr. celebrations). Residents will also provide leadership in the broader community through participation in local boards and establishing relationships with community members in need of emergency assistance.

Spiritual Retreats
Of primary importance for residents will be the implanting of a healthy sense of “keeping company with God.” Residents will encounter the wondrous powers of disciplined prayer, dedicated silence, and regular retreats. Regular check-ins regarding the disciplines of prayer, journaling, and listening for God’s voice will be part of the on-going framework for the program. At least two two-day retreats will be shared each year by the residents, together with members of the pastoral staff.

Special Training
Over a resident’s two-year tenure, each resident will participate in significant training sessions which focus on diversity and community organizing.

- **MAAFA** – The “Healing Journey” MAAFA, as presented by the St. Paul Community Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York, is a multi-sensory, dramatic learning opportunity provided to help with the healing of racism’s legacy in America. (‘Maafa’ is a Kiswahili word meaning “disaster” or “catastrophe,” used in reference to the devastating legacy of slavery.) Community’s pastoral team will share in this powerful experience together.

- **MACC** – The Mexican American Cultural Center in San Antonio, Texas, founded by Fr. Virgilio Elizondo, provides week-long cultural learning opportunities related to the rich heritage of Latino communities. Each resident will attend a week-long immersion experience at MACC and then consider possible actions relevant for Community and the greater Kansas City area.

- **MORE²** – The Metropolitan Organization for Racial & Economic Equity (or MORE²), is a new faith-based community organization of which Community is a founding congregation. It provides national training opportunities (through the Gamaliel Institute) for lay leaders and clergy alike. Through this week-long intensive training, residents will gain knowledge about their own spiritual journeys, interfaith relations, and the dynamics of transforming public policies related to poverty, discrimination, and disparities in resources and justice.

Our Highest Hopes - Residents will work with a real, live congregation in a supportive environment with oversight from experienced and seasoned clergy and lay persons. This will help assure that residents will be ready to serve with effectiveness and joy as preachers, pastors and leaders in the churches to which they will later be called. We believe that congregation/clergy relationships are most fulfilling when they contain: 1) a sense of purpose and 2) experiences of victory. It is the hope of our clergy resident program that residents will experience the awe and grace of such a belief.
“Community’s Clergy Residency Program has afforded me ways to strengthen my pastoral abilities in a wide variety of areas—worship leadership, congregational care, teaching and preaching, community organizing, fellowship, outreach, evangelism, and stewardship—in the context of a congregation that is truly invested in the vitality and effectiveness of my ministry. Successes are celebrated with enthusiasm; disappointments are met with grace and opportunity for reflection. Working alongside my fellow clergy resident has taught me the value of collegiality and the importance of being able to work collaboratively rather than competitively. Meeting regularly with our senior minister has provided many opportunities for questions, discussion, evaluation, and affirmation. Discovering the significant number of other young clergy in the area has encouraged me in ways I could not have anticipated. My pastoral identity has been positively shaped by the experiences I have had in partnership with the staff, congregation, and broader community that comprises Community Christian Church.”


“Community’s Clergy Resident Program is the best opportunity for young clergy to blend seminary training and past ministry experience with a teaching congregation and mentoring church staff. The residency program reinforces existing pastoral gifts while providing experiences and opportunities that shape and enrich the future ministry of the residents. The diversity of Community’s congregation, its location within urban Kansas City, and an experienced church staff teach residents how to operate within an exciting, Spirit-filled ministry, while finding places of sanctuary for rest and renewal. Whether I am participating in Sunday or Wednesday worship, leading Bible Study, serving the community, or providing pastoral care, I am allowed and encouraged to be creative and self-starting, while being fully supported and guided.”


The Clergy Residency Program is supported by a strong collegial team and a deeply committed congregation, working closely with one another and in a spirit of cooperation and celebration.

Robert Lee Hill, Senior Minister – Born in Hawaii, raised in Texas, and seasoned in California and Tennessee, Bob has served since 1987 as Community’s Senior Minister, maintaining an abiding passion for pastoral ministry. The author/editor of eight books, he has served as Adjunct Preaching Faculty in local seminaries and leads in a number of community-wide ecumenical organizations. Bob’s responsibilities in the Clergy Residency Program include overall direction, recruitment, on-going supervision, and mentoring.

Donna Muiller, Minister of Community Life – Donna has been involved in nearly all aspects of lay leadership at Community over the past 20 years and was granted her licensed ministry recognition in 2002. Donna’s serves the Clergy Residency Program as administrative coordinator, guiding the resident’s assimilation into the congregation, logistics, coordinating residency support committees, and re-location arrangements for residents.

Tom Haley, Associate Minister – Tom came to Community after an esteemed ministry of twenty-six years at Lee’s Summit Christian Church. Tom serves the educational and pastoral counseling needs of the congregation and provides residents direction and counsel regarding worship, overall ministry development, and the creation of new worship opportunities. Tom is also a Certified Instructor in Parent Effectiveness Training (PET).
Applying for the Clergy Residency Program

To apply for the Clergy Residency Program at Community Christian Church, we request that potential candidates send a signed Letter of Intent to indicate your interest in applying. Mail the letter to:

Donna Muiller, Clergy Residency Coordinator  
Community Christian Church  
4601 Main Street  
Kansas City, Missouri 64112

To be considered as an applicant, answer all the Application Questions (see below) and send them along with either your Search and Call profile or all of the following: (1) a current resume; (2) three written references; and (3) three telephone references.

For more information about the Clergy Residency Program at Community, please contact Donna Muiller (donna@community-christian.org) or Dr. Bob Hill (revhill@community-christian.org) at Community Christian Church at 816-561-6531.

Clergy Residency Application Form  
Community Christian Church  
Kansas City, Missouri

Name: ____________________________________________________________
E-mail: ____________________________________________________________
Telephone: __________________________________________________________
Address: ____________________________________________________________
City: _______________________ State: _____________ Zip: ________________
Seminary: ________________________________________________________________________
Graduation Date: ____________________________________________________________

Please answer the following questions, taking no more than 6 double-spaced pages (11 pt. font or larger):

1. What attracts you to the Clergy Residency Program at Community Christian Church?

2. What aspects of ministry interest you most?

3. What strengths do you feel you bring into ministry?

4. What areas of ministry do you feel you need to work on the most?

5. What are your primary goals, hopes and dreams for the next five years? The next ten years?

6. Describe a "life changing" event or experience in your life and explain how it transformed you and your direction in ministry.
Mission Statement
Seeking first the reign of God’s ways in the world, it is the purpose of the Community Christian Church through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to share the good news of Christ’s redeeming love in such a way that the human family might be made whole; to welcome all people into our midst for worship, nurture, and Christian fellowship; to minister—through sharing and caring—to the needs of others in their human predicament.

Core Commitments
Transforming Lives by . . .
Connecting the Unconnected, Reconnecting the Disconnected, Deepening the Committed
In the Community of Christ’s Love

Vision Statement
Worship God
Grow Disciples
Serve the World

The Clergy Residency Program of
Community Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
4601 Main St., Kansas City, MO 64112-1626
Phone 816-561-6531 Fax 816-561-0805
www.community-christian.org