

The Union Church of Hinsdale; Senior Minister Position Description

Location: 137 S Garfield Ave, Hinsdale, IL 60521 **Position Type:** Full-Time, Settled
Conference: Illinois Conference — Chicago Metropolitan Association

Compensation: We offer a generous compensation package commensurate with experience, with full awareness of the cost of living in the western suburbs of Chicago.

1. Our Church & Our History

The Union Church of Hinsdale (UCH) is a vibrant, Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ with ~460 active members. We are a thoughtful and engaged community who value joyful faith, inclusive worship, and meaningful service to others.

In 1866, the Congregational Union Church was founded in Hinsdale. The current UCH was formed in 1918 when the Congregational Church of Hinsdale and the Presbyterian Church of Hinsdale united to create a single community church. From the beginning, this merger established UCH as a church defined not by narrow denominational identity, but by a spirit of openness and shared purpose — a posture that continues to shape our congregation.

Construction of our current building began in 1916. Located in the center of town, it is a beautiful example of the Late-Gothic Revival style with original stained-glass windows that fill the main sanctuary with light. The building also houses a smaller chapel, a remodeled gathering place, and modern classrooms and meeting spaces.

Music is a hallmark of our services, featuring choirs, instrumental ensembles, and rich congregational singing. We offer two Sunday services: a family-focused 9AM service and a more traditional 10AM service that welcomes families before children are invited to age-appropriate programming. Beyond Sunday mornings, UCH has an active congregational life through small groups, fellowship gatherings, adult education, and inter-generational events.

Financially, the church is in a strong and stable position with a well-designed budget, a supportive and faithfully giving congregational, and a healthy endowment. The church carries no debt.

2. Our Community

Hinsdale is an affluent, close-knit village in the western suburbs of Chicago, known for its excellent schools, walkable tree-lined neighborhoods, and strong sense of civic pride. While UCH is rooted in Hinsdale, our congregation draws from several surrounding communities

— including Clarendon Hills, Western Springs, La Grange, Westmont, Oak Brook, and Elmhurst — offering both the intimacy of a village setting and close proximity to the cultural, professional, and spiritual richness of the greater Chicago area.

Neighboring communities beyond a three-mile radius reflect increasing economic, racial, and cultural diversity, offering avenues for connection and engagement well beyond our immediate setting. UCH's commitment to early childhood education in the nearby community of Summit — through the Union Church Early Childhood Initiative (UCECI) — is a tangible expression of this outward-facing vision.

In the broader community, UCH is known as an open-minded, thinking church — a congregation recognized for its social outreach, progressive values, welcoming spirit, and outstanding music. New members consistently cite the church's inclusive, mission-driven work as why they became involved.

3. History of Our Senior Ministers

UCH has a rich tradition of senior ministerial leadership spanning decades. Each leader has brought distinctive gifts to the congregation, and our community has demonstrated both appreciation for and adaptability to a wide range of pastoral styles and strengths.

Our most recent settled Senior Minister served for eleven years, guiding the congregation through significant initiatives including the launch of "Before We Get to Mars" (now UCECI), the journey toward Open and Affirming status, and adaptation through the COVID-19 pandemic. Previous senior ministers led the congregation through a major building expansion, decades of growth, and formative periods of social engagement.

4. Leadership Characteristics & Personal Attributes

The congregation seeks a Senior Minister who embodies the following qualities:

- **Warmth and Pastoral Presence** — Genuinely caring, approachable, and committed to being integrally connected to the congregation. Present for members during life's milestones, challenges, and ordinary moments.
- **Skilled and Inspiring Preacher** — Able to deliver sermons that are intellectually engaging, spiritually grounding, and practically relevant.
- **Collaborative Leader** — Respectful of UCH's strong tradition of lay leadership, able to guide and inspire without directing from the top, and skilled at building consensus

among people with diverse opinions and backgrounds. Committed to fostering a culture where all staff support the church's overall ministry.

- **Embracer of Diversity** — Comfortable leading a congregation of educated, engaged, and sometimes opinionated members with a wide range of beliefs, and able to celebrate differences while uniting the community around common goals.
- **Conflict-Competent** — Skilled in navigating disagreement with directness, respect, and grace; able to help the congregation listen across differences and move forward.
- **Visionary yet Practical** — Capable of helping the congregation discern where God is leading while attending to the realities of a large, multi-program church.
- **Spiritually Grounded** — Living a life of active prayer, discipleship, and spiritual practice that models and inspires the congregation's own spiritual development.

5. The Role and Responsibilities of the Senior Minister

5.1 Spiritual Leadership

The Senior Minister serves as the spiritual leader of the congregation, responsible for:

- Preaching sermons that are engaging, compassionate, and thought-provoking — connecting Jesus' teachings to contemporary life, helping the congregation navigate current events and difficult seasons, and motivating members to act on their faith.
- Leading worship that blends tradition and creativity, working collaboratively with the Director of Music, associate clergy, and lay leaders to create services that nurture spiritual growth across generations.
- Guiding the congregation's spiritual development through prayer, teaching, and modeling a life of active discipleship grounded in scripture and the Holy Spirit.
- Strengthening adult education programming, including discussions on contemporary issues, guest speakers, and deepening the congregation's understanding of its identity as a lay-led congregational church within the United Church of Christ.
- Nurturing and expanding the Small Group Ministry to foster deeper community and relational spiritual growth among members.
- Supporting inter-generational faith formation, ensuring that worship, education, and congregational life invite participation and leadership from people of all ages.

5.2 Organizational Leadership

The Senior Minister serves as both Head of Staff and an Officer of the Church, providing organizational leadership across a complex and active institution:

- Supervising and supporting a staff of 36 employees, including 6 full-time professional staff members: the Associate Minister of Family Ministry, the Associate Minister for Pastoral Care, the Director of Music, the Director of Christian Education and Administrative Manager, the Financial Manager, and the Preschool Director.
- Directly supervising the Director of the Union Church Early Childhood Program (UCECP), which comprises approximately 66% of the church's staff, 50% of its total budget, and occupies 15 – 20% of the Senior Minister's time when functioning well. The Senior Minister also oversees the Union Church Early Childhood Initiative (UCECI), an outreach preschool partnership in Summit, IL.
- Staffing and supporting several key governance and ministry bodies: the Ministry for Change (missions and social justice), the Endowment Committee, the Executive Council (non-voting, ex-officio), and the Trustees/finance committee (non-voting, ex-officio).
- Fostering a collaborative team culture among staff, ensuring alignment around shared ministry goals and mutual support across program areas.

5.3 Program Leadership

The Senior Minister provides vision, guidance, and collaborative leadership across UCH's wide-ranging programs and ministries:

- Supporting and strengthening the Ministry for Change and the congregation's long-standing commitments to mission, social justice, and community outreach, including addressing homelessness, hunger, healthcare, and educational access.
- Championing the ongoing development of UCECI, the church's signature multi-year early childhood education initiative in Summit, IL, providing strategic guidance while honoring the congregation's strong tradition of lay-led execution.
- Advancing ministerial care in partnership with the Associate Minister for Pastoral Care and the Care Ministry, ensuring that members who are ill, homebound, bereaved, or facing personal challenges receive compassionate and timely support.
- Encouraging and supporting the Associate Minister of Family Ministry's efforts to attract and engage millennial-age individuals and families, helping UCH become an accessible, dynamic church for the next generation, and fostering inter-generational programming and collaboration.
- Engaging ecumenical and interfaith relationships within Hinsdale and the broader community, participating in the newly forming local clergy group, and collaborative community initiatives.

6. Experience & Qualifications

- 5-10+ years of pastoral experience. Senior minister or leadership experience a plus.
- Is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, a reciprocal denomination as recognized by the United Church of Christ, or other protestant denominations assuming they are willing to gain standing / status in the UCC.
- Proven track record of engaging, substantive preaching that connects scripture to contemporary life.
- Experience supervising professional staff and fostering a collaborative, team-oriented work environment.
- Strong skills in pastoral care, spiritual direction, and counseling, with an understanding of mental health and wellness.
- Experience in or demonstrated aptitude for organizational leadership, including working with boards, committees, and lay leadership structures.
- Commitment to social justice, community engagement, and mission-oriented ministry.
- A heart for education and willingness to oversee a significant early childhood education ministry.
- Excellent communication skills — in preaching, teaching, writing, and interpersonal relationships.
- Theological education at the graduate level (M.Div. or equivalent) from an accredited seminary.

The Union Church of Hinsdale is an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ. We affirm and welcome all persons as precious to God, just as they are.

For more information, visit hinsdale.church or contact us at UCHsearch@UChinsdale.org

