

Committee on Church and Ministry B

Purpose

COCAM B is the committee which acts on behalf of the churches and the lay people of our ministries to maintain our covenant which is - to operate autonomously, and independently but with accountability in substantial ways. We are tasked with assisting churches in keeping the covenant with all other churches in our conference and with the conference office and the staff.

Without hierarchy as our polity, we commit as the UCC to covenant with each expression of the church: the National Church, the Conference, the Association, the local church, and each individual member. Everything COCAM B does must be done with covenant as our goal. This committee has no authority to enact recommendations. It might be said that this committee is the face of the SW Conference and the wider church. As that face, we assist the conference in maintaining partnership with other SWC churches.

Our committee is made up of 10-12 members - both lay and clergy - to cover multiple perspectives in our conversations and negotiations.

What we actually do

1. This committee receives all SWC grant applications for review. We vote on whether to accept the proposal for funds for the following grants: Social Justice, Solidarity grant and Hybrid Church grants. Some of the seed grants come to COCAM B but are approved by the Conference and Associate Conference ministers.

2. We walk with the applicants seeking to be a new church start. We explain and assist with the paperwork and help find a church to partner with them until their application is approved by the Conference at our annual meeting. This occurs when all requirements have been met.
3. Each member of COCAM B is assigned 4-5 churches with whom we are required to check-in with the lay leadership. This is one way that we build and maintain relationships with our churches, over and above the conference's relationship with pastors.
4. COCAM B seeks to assist churches when any conflict arises. We hold to a practice of strict confidentiality. We are happy to host someone at our meeting who may want to have a conversation about their church and then assist with discernment about next steps.
5. At any point when it appears that a conflict may threaten the church, we offer a Situational Support Consultation. It is up to the church's leadership whether to accept our help. No less than three members of our committee will organize to meet with all affected parties and consult with them. The UCC Manual on church is our guide.
6. When a clergy fitness review occurs, this is completed by COCAM A. In this case, COCAM B may be asked to perform a church consultation. We go to support. We are not there to judge. A situational support consultation is not a reportable activity and does not appear on a clergy profile. The 3 member committee will write an in depth report for all of the parties involved. Conflict mediation may be involved. Many members of this committee are so trained and will work with a conference minister to resolve the conflict.

written 10/18/23

