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A-Typical Week

The Unitarian Universalist Minister's Association advises ministers to work 48 hours a week including 8 hours for study. Most ministers have difficulty keeping down to that amount. I typically work about 60 hours not counting necessary study. For those curious about where this time goes, a typical week is typically atypical. But the following tries to describe some patterns.

Sunday

Rather than take a Sunday off each month like most ministers, if I'm in town, I come to services whether I'm in the pulpit or not. The Sunday gathering is the closest we come to having everybody together. I would rather be there and take time off elsewhere.

6:30

When I'm in the pulpit, I am up by 6:30 to go through the service and do last minute preparations. When I'm not in the pulpit, I usually get up and meditate.

8:45 - 9:30

I get to church 30 to 45 minutes before the service for final setup and coordination with others participating.

9:30 - 12:30 Services

If I am not leading the service, I usually spend the early service with the children and youth and come to the second service.

12:30 - 1:00 After Service mixing

I try to stay available to individuals between and after the services (and go to as few meetings as possible). I do a lot of informal pastoral care during this time and try to discourage business.

1:00 - 2:00 Sunday Meetings

There are many groups that meet after church. We are a regional church which means many people come from long distances. So it is convenient to have Sunday meetings. I try to get to the Community Conversations, the Forum as well as various Committee meetings if they have not finished up before I am free.

2:00 - 5:30 Appointments and Administration

By early to mid-afternoon I'm usually available for individual or family appointments, hospital visits, etc. Occasionally I'll have a second meeting. I also try to get caught up on accumulated emails and other items on my to-do list so that I won't have to work on Monday, my day off. Occasionally I may get free by 4:30. Sometimes not until 7:00.

Monday

Monday is my usual day off. But if I'm home, I usually spend at least a half hour checking to see if there are emergency emails or other communications. If there is a heavy week coming up, I may spend time getting ahead. On average I work 2.5 to 3 hours on Monday.

Tuesday

I'm up early to meditate most days.

Morning

I'm usually at my home office between 7:30 and 9:00. Tuesday through Friday I try to keep the morning free for writing – sermons, orders of service, newsletters, etc. In practice I'll check emails and other pressing items. As much as half the morning can be taken up with these and administrative tasks. If I have lunch I usually eat it at my desk.

Afternoon

Most Tuesdays there is an all staff meeting at 1:00. Once a month the Board's Executive Committee meets at noon for an hour or two. The Program Council Steering Committee meets once at month at 2:00 for an hour or two.

I have official office hours from 3:00 until 5:00. But I'm usually at church until 6:30 or so. This time is spent with pastoral counseling, meeting individually with staff or lay leaders and an array of administrative and programming tasks. And emails: I receive an average of 20 to 40 substantive emails a day.

Evening

Tuesday evening meetings include Lay Ministers, the Committee on Ministry and the Religious Services Committee.

Wednesday

Morning

Similar to Monday

Afternoon

Office hours from 1:00 to 3:00.

I try to get to the gym or get some exercise for an hour or so Wednesday afternoon. I actually manage that about every other week, leaving the church by 4:00 or so. Other times I leave closer to 5:30 or 6:00.

Evening

I lead the Spiritually Grounded Leadership Program most Wednesdays.

Thursday

Morning

Similar to Monday.

Afternoon

The senior staff usually meet from 12:30 until 2:15. We do planning, coordinating, catch up on what's going on in our various areas, etc.

My official office hours are from 3:00 to 5:00. In practice I'm usually doing something around the church from the end of staff meeting until 6:30 or so.

Evenings

I lead the Ministry Circles Facilitator group and meet with the Program Council and Board on various Thursday evenings.

Friday

Morning

Similar to Monday.

Afternoon

I try to take Friday afternoon off. It rarely happens. I'll meet people for lunch, come in to campus for appointments that couldn't be fit in elsewhere, get caught up on service preparation, and a wide variety of other tasks that couldn't be fit in elsewhere.

Evenings

Family time unless there is a church event, hosting a new member dinner, etc.

Saturday

Saturdays are unpredictable. If I'm in the pulpit, there is at least an hour or two of worship preparation. It is also another time to get caught up on things that have piled up through the week.

Other

There are many events that happen irregularly and don't have a typical time. These include:

Second Saturday meditation

Church retreats: Fall and Winter Worship Leader, Board, Program Council, bi-monthly Grounded Spiritual Leadership, Lay Ministry, Ministry Circle Facilitator

Member ceremonies: child dedications, weddings, memorials, graveside services

Public speaking: rallies, protests, news conferences, campus forums, Capital visits, Community Service of Remembrance, etc.

Special church events: Harvest Festival, Service Auction Events, Family Camp, Theater One, Family Promise, Congregational Meetings, hosting new member dinners, new member orientation, Stewardship visits

Regular Church events: Alliance meeting, Long Range Planning, Nominating Committee consultation, Green Sanctuary, Staff supervision, Family Friendly dinners, Forums, church socials, Servetus Club

Consultations

Emergencies

Hospital and home visits

Meeting town clergy

Denominational events: Fall and Spring Minister retreats, District Assembly, General Assembly, Minister Convocation, Starr King School for the Ministry events, UU Minister Association Executive Committee meetings, District working groups, Minister Institutes, monthly Clergy cluster meetings, Good Offices work, Intern Supervisor's retreat

Miscellaneous: everything from court appearances to ministry evaluations

Study time for ministry – for example, this last season books I've read and used in sermons include *Spiral Dynamics* (Beck and Cowan), *Spiral Integral* (Cowan), *Social Intelligence* (Goleman), *Integral Spirituality* (Wilber), *Perfect Love, Imperfect Relationships* (Welwood), *Buddha* (Armstrong), *The Case for God* (Armstrong), *The Island* (Passano and Amaro), *The Great Transformation: The Beginning of Our Religious Traditions* (Armstrong), *American Gods* (Giaman), *One Two Three of God* (Wilbur) as well as periodicals and articles.