



Pennsylvania Southeast Conference ~ United Church of Christ
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Ministry Formation Plan

*in the
Pennsylvania Southeast Conference
United Church of Christ
for*

Members in Discernment

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Definitions

Association:	Division of a Conference of the United Church of Christ made up of the churches in that geographic area. The Association holds the ecclesial authority over authorized ministers in that region. The Pennsylvania Southeast Conference has five: Covenant, North Penn, Philadelphia, Schuylkill, and Ursinus.
Authorized Ministers:	Ordained and Lay Ministerial Standing are the two forms of authorized ministry in the UCC.
COM:	Committee on Ministry. A group of clergy and lay members of an Association who are charged with oversight and formation of the authorized ministers of the Association.
EFP:	Educational Formation Plan
JMAT:	Joint MID Assessment Team
Lay Ministerial Standing:	A temporary, accountable covenantal authorization among the Association, the lay member, and a Local Church of the United Church of Christ.
MID:	Member in Discernment. A lay member of a United Church of Christ Congregation who desires to prepared for authorized ministry.
MID Advisors:	A team of Association-appointed leaders who train MID's for authorized ministry. They include: home/local Pastor, Mentor, Field Education Supervisor.
MOM:	The Manual on Ministry is a publication of the United Church of Christ which defines the shared expectations and accountability for authorized ministers across the denomination.
Ordained Minister:	An Ordained Minister has been called by God and recognized, trained, and ordained to preach and teach the gospel, to administer the sacraments and rites of the church, and to exercise pastoral care and leadership.
Privilege of Call (POC):	An authorized minister of another denomination who wishes to complete steps in order to permanently leave his or her current denomination and become an authorized minister in the United Church of Christ.
PSEC:	Pennsylvania Southeast Conference
UCC:	United Church of Christ

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Preface

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature personhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-13

Introduction

The biblical story of faith and salvation was initiated by God and carried out by a cast of characters who followed, as best they could, the leading of the Holy Spirit. That story is still unfolding in The United Church of Christ where God calls certain people to ministry in and on behalf of the church. These leaders receive ecclesiastical authorization to preach, pray, teach, administer the sacraments to ensure the spiritual and religious growth of individual disciples and faith communities.

This manual is a working document for Committees on Ministry (COM) in the five Associations of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference (PSEC) to identify and prepare Members in Discernment (MIDs) to practice authorized ministry. It draws primarily from the United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry (2018), The General Ministries Pronouncement as well as policies developed by the PSEC Church and Ministry Council. It provides a step-by-step process to clarify the goals of discernment by which leaders are equipped for ministry.

MIDs should use this guide to track their progress toward authorized ministry. The MID has the ultimate responsibility for his/her personal and professional development. This includes (but is not limited to) familiarization with the entire MID process, meeting all authorized ministry requirements, providing relevant documentation in a timely manner to the appropriate people and collecting authorizing signatures on MID documents and maintaining them in an up-to-date file.

COMs will use this guide to facilitate and document the discernment process in partnership with the MID and his/her Mentor. While COMs have primary responsibility for facilitating the MID process, ALL church leaders (lay and authorized) participate in training new pastors who have evident gifts and skills to lead and serve in various ministry settings. That responsibility is shared in a covenant between the MID, the local church where that MID holds membership, the Association and the MID's Mentor.

The critical nature of the MID process and our attention to it cannot be overstated. Greg Jones and Kevin Armstrong address in their book *Resurrecting Excellence*, the leadership crisis created, in part, by diminished vigilance to the system and the standards by which people are identified and prepared for pastoral leadership. Many people in our current culture are increasingly convinced that Christianity is marked more by destructive or mediocre congregations and leaders than by examples of excellent Christian life and leadership (p.24). We can do something about that. This guide is one small part of ensuring pastoral excellence in the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference.

Rev. William Worley
PSEC Conference Minister

Part One: EXPLORATION

This part of the journey involves asking essential questions of potential MID candidates who are considering their response to a call from God to authorized ministry. “Ask the Question” (Appendix A) was designed for this very purpose.

STEP 1: LOCAL CHURCH DISCERNMENT AND AUTHORIZATION

Note: The following steps must be done in the order listed here. The steps are listed in order and by participant in Appendix B.

There are important roles for the local church to play throughout the procedures for the recognition and authorization of ministry in and on behalf of the UCC. These roles are the result of certain principles.

First, local churches are primary places in which the gifts of persons for ministry are observed, called forth, nurtured, and celebrated. The UCC Constitution states: “*The United Church of Christ seeks to undergird the ministry of its members by nurturing faith, calling forth gifts, and equipping members for Christian service*” (paragraph 20). Local churches are instrumental in helping their members hear and clarify their call to ordained ministry. The ongoing and future leadership of the Church and its mission are dependent on local churches being very intentional and sensitive to this role.

This principle results in the requirement that a person **must** be a member of a local church of the UCC for at least a year in order to seek and maintain recognition and authorization as an ordained minister of the UCC. The only exception is the case of a UCC ordained minister serving a local church not affiliated with the UCC. They may retain their ordained ministerial standing as long as their Association approves. (Paragraph 114 and 115 in the Bylaws)

When a member of a local UCC church expresses a desire to prepare for authorized ministry in response to God’s call, the pastor and other church leaders should sit down together and thoroughly explore this. The person should provide the church leaders with the following:

- A statement about their spiritual journey
- A statement of how they understand their call at the present time
- Documentation of their formal education (transcripts, evaluations)
- Educational Plan

These documents become the foundation of the person's portfolio. A portfolio is a collection of documents that will grow throughout the discernment process which will take no less than one year (as mandated in the Manual on Ministry). The contents of the portfolio must be kept current. (See Appendix C)

As the person considering authorized ministry, the pastor, and church leaders meet, they may wish to discuss (See Appendix A for help with a Discernment Committee):

- Has the person been an active participant in the life of the local church? In their participation have they shown the gifts and maturity necessary for authorized ministry?

- What is the person's understanding of authorized ministry? Does the person have a realistic view of authorized ministry and understand the types of things an authorized minister does? Is there another form of ministry more suited to the person's gifts and interests?
- Does the person understand the educational requirements needed?
- Do they know about the need for Member in Discernment relationship with an Association in the UCC and understand the requirements to seek that status?

If the pastor and church leaders confirm a call to ministry, they will recommend the person to the Association's COM to become a Member in Discernment (MID) as part of the candidate's preparation for authorized ministry. This is communicated via a letter to the Chairperson of the Association's COM. This letter will include the following:

- The church's recommendation of the person for Member in Discernment status
- The process used by the local church to make that decision
- Verification of the candidate's membership in the local church and the amount of time the person has been in the UCC.

STEP 2: ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY DISCERNMENT AND AUTHORIZATION

Note: The following steps must be done in the order listed here.

a. Introduction of candidate to COM

The candidate will meet with a member of the MID committee or COM. This person will review the process with the candidate, answer any questions and orient the candidate to the process and the requirements in order to proceed to an interview with the COM. A copy of this document – the PSEC Ministry Formation Plan – will be given to the candidate.

b. Items needed prior to the interview with COM

The candidate will provide the COM with the information from Step 1 in addition to the following which is added to the portfolio:

- Member in Discernment Application (Appendix D)
- A self-disclosure form (Appendix E)
- Three letters of reference (including one from their local church pastor)
- A paper with three sections, each to be 2-3 pages:
 - Brief paper on your basic understanding and practice of the Christian faith
 - How have you been a leader and participant in your local church activities?
 - What is your understanding of ordination and why are you seeking ordination in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ?

Once the Chair of the COM receives the above materials, an interview with the COM will be scheduled. The candidate's pastor or, in the event the church is in transition, the Consistory Chair will attend this interview to present the candidate to the COM.

c. Interview

At the meeting, the pastor (or Consistory Chair) will be given the opportunity to share information about the person's history and involvement with the local church, the process the local church went through to recommend the person to the association COM, and why it did so. The COM will interview the candidate as to his/her sense of call, her/his spiritual journey, understanding of authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ, and academic and professional intentions.

Committees on Ministry are asked to review the following concepts with their potential MIDs:

- Biblical, theological and ecclesiological discernment of Call and Formation
- Developing and Assessing Readiness
- Ongoing Formation and Lifelong Learning
- PSEC Ministerial Formation Plan
- Marks of Faithful and Effective Ministers of the UCC

The candidate must also sign a “Consent for Communication Between Committee on Ministry and Joint MID Assessment Team and Consent to Duplicate Records” form (Appendix F). (For a description on what the JMAT is and the history behind it, see Appendix G. For the process the JMAT uses with candidates/MIDs, see Appendix H.) Now the Committee on Ministry will refer the candidate to JMAT (using Appendix I).

The COM at this meeting or a different one will meet with the candidate’s pastor without the candidate present in order to discuss the candidate and his/her strengths and weaknesses.

d. Interview with the Joint Member in Discernment Assessment Team

At this meeting JMAT, the candidate, the candidate’s pastor, and a member of the Committee on Ministry will discern together the candidate’s gifts and skills for ordained ministry. Following this meeting, JMAT will write a recommendation to the Committee on Ministry. A copy will be shared with the candidate, PSEC office, and everyone who was in attendance at the assessment. The JMAT recommendation can be: yes to MID status; yes, but; no, but; or no, they cannot be recommended for MID status.

e. COM meets with candidate to discuss recommendation (optional)

If the COM is considering a “yes” as a result of the interview, the COM, along with the Conference will work with the candidate to complete the required vocational/psychological assessment and criminal background check (PA Criminal Background Check, PA Child Abuse Clearance, and FBI fingerprint). At this point, the COM will meet with the candidate again to discuss his/her JMAT results. A definitive yes or no cannot be offered until Vocational/Psychological Assessment is completed and reviewed.

f. Vocational/Psychological Assessment

A career assessment — which includes comprehensive personal, emotional, and psychological evaluation — is required for all persons prior to being granted Member in Discernment (MID) status. Participants will be asked to provide personal and

biographical information and take a series of standardized assessments. (See Appendix J)

g. MID status determined

Following the meeting and receiving the results of the assessment and background check, the COM will make a decision about accepting the candidate as an MID. The possible outcomes can be:

- Yes, the candidate is accepted
- Yes, with certain conditions
- No, with willingness to reconsider if certain issues are addressed
- No, the candidate does not have the gifts for ministry or the candidate does not have a call to ministry. This ends the discernment process immediately.

With a “no, but” decision the candidate has the option to continue working with the COM for possible acceptance at a later date. With a “yes” decision along with satisfactory resolution of or plan to address any conditions, all involved parties sign the “Covenant of Discernment and Formation” as the MID along with the local church, her/his mentor, the Association MID Committee/COM, JMAT, and the Conference all begin their covenantal journey of preparation towards consideration for authorized ministry. The signed Covenant becomes part of the portfolio.

It is important to remember, acceptance as a MID is not a guarantee of ordination. It is a granting of status which enables the candidate to continue working towards authorized ministry.

Upon being granted MID status, Committees on Ministry will give the MID a copy of the UCC resource “Journaling the Journey.” MIDs will be assigned a mentor with whom they are expected to maintain regular contact. MIDs are also expected to maintain regular contact with their local church and their local pastor. There will be periodic reviews with the MID Committee/COM to maintain status as an MID.

h. Covenant of Discernment and Formation

It is the polity of the UCC to live in covenant. In this journey of discerning one’s call, it is important to covenant together to support, nurture and hold one another accountable so that together we can discern God’s call to authorized ministry.

To that end, we recommend that all parties of this new relationship covenant together by using this Covenant of Discernment and Formation found in Appendix K.

i. Exploration Checklist

Part 1

_____ Candidate is a member of a Local Church of the United Church of Christ for at least one year

_____ Member of local church approaches pastor and church leaders with his/her sense of call to authorized ministry

_____ Member provides the church leaders with the following documentation to begin portfolio

_____ Statement of Spiritual Journey

_____ Statement of how they understand their call

_____ Documentation of formal education (transcripts)

_____ Educational Plan

_____ Pastor, church leaders, and candidate meet to discern call

_____ When Pastor and church leaders feel the person is ready to move forward with the process, letter is sent to COM recommending the person to be considered as a candidate for MID status. Letter should include:

- The church's recommendation of the person for Member in Discernment status
- The process used by the local church to make that decision
- Verification of the candidate's membership in the local church and the amount of time the person has been in the UCC. Copy of letter becomes part of the MID portfolio.

Part 2

_____ Candidate meets with member of MID Committee or COM

Part 3

_____ Candidate schedules to meet with COM

_____ Prior to the meeting, candidate provides COM with the documentation from Part 1 and the following additional documentation to continue portfolio:

_____ Member in Discernment Application (Appendix D)

_____ Self-Disclosure form (Appendix E)

_____ Three letters of reference (including one from their local church pastor)

_____ A paper with three sections, each to be 2-3 pages:

- Basic understanding and practice of the Christian faith
- How have you been a leader and participant in your local church?
- What is your understanding of ordination and why are you seeking ordination in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ?

_____ Candidate meets with COM along with pastor and/or lay leader

- _____ COM meets with pastor to discuss candidate's strengths and weaknesses.
- _____ Candidate meets with JMAT. JMAT sends recommendation to COM.
- _____ Candidate meets with COM to discuss JMAT's recommendation and next steps.
- _____ COM and Conference work with candidate to complete career/psychological testing and criminal record check
- _____ Candidate meets with Conference Minister to discuss expectations and process.
- _____ COM makes decision, notifies candidate by letter which becomes part of portfolio
- _____ If accepted, COM gives MID a copy of "Journaling the Journey"
- _____ If accepted, COM assigns a Mentor
- _____ If accepted, Covenant of Discernment and Formation is signed and becomes part of the portfolio
- _____ If accepted, COM, MID, and pastor all complete a Marks assessment
- _____ If accepted, the MID is referred to JMAT for an Educational Formation Plan

Part Two: DISCERNMENT – God’s call to Ministry

Once MID status has been granted, the MID will meet with JMAT in order to begin a process of assessment using the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers. The MID will then meet JMAT for a third meeting (the mentor will be present, as well) in order to establish a series of learning goals and objectives called an Education Formation Plan (EFP). The MID works that plan with the help of the JMAT, the Mentor, the Field Education Supervisor and the Local Church Pastor. The plan must be sent to the COM and PSEC office. Review and evaluation of the MID’s progress by the COM must be scheduled on at least an annual basis.

EDUCATIONAL FORMATION FOR AUTHORIZED MINISTRY

The purpose of education formation is two-fold:

1. Acquire the appropriate knowledge and skills for authorized ministry
2. Develop the skills and practices of ministry as outlined in “The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministry” (Appendix L)

The MID along with the JMAT will work together to form an EFP. This plan will vary depending on the MID’s education, strengths, and experiences. In conjunction with the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministry, the MID and JMAT will use the formal education and training listed below and the “Chart for Educational Formation Planning” (Appendix N). Also, the Marks Assessment (Appendix M) should be completed by a member of the MID’s church, his/her pastor, and the COM. The MID would also do a self-assessment of the Marks, listing options for educational content or experiences to develop those Marks where he/she feels growth is needed in the column entitled “Options for Educational Content or Experiences to Promote the Marks (EFP Possibilities)”. Some suggestions are already listed there. In the next column entitled “COM Required Educational Content or Experiences to Promote the Marks (Actual EFP)”, the MID and JMAT would list those educational/experiential requirements of the MID. This chart along with the EFP Checklist will become part of the MID’s portfolio.

Please note that in what follows, items listed as “equivalent” and/or “approved” will be deemed as such by the Association Committee on Ministry (COM) or the Joint MID Assessment Team (JMAT).

The minimum educational requirements for a MID seeking ordination should include:

- Bachelor’s Degree or its equivalent
- Master of Divinity Degree from an approved and accredited Seminary or School of Divinity that includes study in the following areas. If these courses are not available or not part of the Master’s program they may be taken at another approved educational institution or program. All Members in Discernment, whether attending seminary or taking an alternative path to ministry, should possess proven experience, competency, and/or coursework in:
 - Biblical Studies
 - Biblical Interpretation
 - Theology
 - Worship, sacraments, liturgy

- Preaching and worship leadership
- UCC History and Polity
- Pastoral Care
- Stewardship Education
- Evangelism and Church Growth
- Pastoral Leadership
- Christian Education and Confirmation
- Church History
- Christian Ethics
- Spiritual Disciplines
- Annual completion of the Conference's "Member in Discernment Academy"
- Completion of Field Education/Contextual Experience, either as part of the Master's program or other approved training
- CPE

The COM and/or JMAT may add other requirements to those listed above.

LAY MINISTERIAL STANDING

"For a variety of reasons, there are instances when an Ordained Minister is not available to represent and serve the Church. In such circumstances and in the confidence of the priesthood of all believers, lay persons may be called to bring their gifts and graces to particular roles in which they represent the United Church of Christ and for which the United Church of Christ, through an Association, provides support and accountability in a formal ecclesial relationship for ministerial standing. Through Lay Ministerial Standing, a lay person demonstrates commitment to view their season in ministry as part of the ministry of their Association on behalf of the UCC, and, in turn, the UCC through the Association lays claim to the particular ministry in which the lay person is charged to serve for a season and commits to that ministry's vitality.

Lay Ministerial Standing is a temporary, accountable covenantal relationship among the Association, the lay individual member, and a Local Church of the United Church of Christ. The expectations of ministerial standing are outlined in covenants. When a lay person serves in a ministerial role for a Local Church as a representative servant of the UCC, membership is located in the Local Church being served, and a Lay Ministerial Standing Covenant outlines the ecclesial expectations for the Local Church, the person with standing, and the Association in relationship to each other. For a lay person serving in a ministerial role beyond the Local Church as a representative servant of the UCC, ministerial standing is held by the Association where they have membership in a Local Church, and the Lay Ministerial Standing Covenant outlines the ecclesial expectations for the Local Church of membership, the person with standing, the Association, and the ministry setting in relationship to each other.

Lay Ministerial Standing is limited to a single setting and for a recommended maximum of seven years, during which time the Association is responsible to engage in discernment with the lay person and with the ministry setting or congregation. Lay persons who hold Lay Ministerial Standing participate in ecclesial systems of oversight and adhere to the UCC Ministerial Code; a Committee on Ministry may find it

appropriate to offer specialized formation opportunities for Lay Ministers as part of the continuing education requirement of ministerial standing.” (Manual on Ministry (2018), pages 67–76.) See Appendix O for the Lay Ministerial Standing Process.

MENTORS

The role of the mentor is **CRITICAL** to help the MID understand and follow the discernment process, to explore various forms of ministry and to prepare for the challenges of authorized ministry. The mentor is appointed by the Association COM immediately upon granting MID status and is a partner in the MID Covenantal Agreement.

The MID and mentor meet at least once a month to work together on the MARKS of Faithful and Effective Ministry by using *Journaling the Journey* provided by the Association COM. Mentors serve as trusted companions and guides on the discernment journey by sharing important lessons learned from their own ministry careers. They help to clarify whether authorized ministry is the most appropriate response to the individual’s call or if the MID could better serve the church by not being authorized. They also help discern which particular form of ministry is most suited to that individual’s gifts and skills.

The mentor cultivates a commitment to excellence in the practice of all facets of the pastoral office including: encouragement of the MID’s prayer life; dedication to the process of life-long learning; participation in various forms of worship; meditation and devotional practices; community leadership; participation in the wider church. The mentor fosters an atmosphere of trust and candor in which the MID can raise and explore questions concerning faith, the Christian life, ministry, and the church.

The MID is expected to be proactive in meeting with her/his mentor **at least** once a month. The MID is expected to be able to: articulate evidence of his/her spiritual growth; demonstrate awareness of, and work on, personal growing edges; name newly acquired ministry skills (preaching, teaching, visioning, counseling, etc.)

The mentor is an essential component in the network of covenant relations between the MID, the Association, the Association’s COM, and the local congregation. Most centrally, the mentor serves as a link between the MID and the COM. The mentor embodies the church’s support for the MID. The mentor will help the MID explore ways to implement the recommendations of the COM regarding the individual’s Ministry Formation Plan.

A full list of the responsibilities of the Mentor are included as Appendix P.

REGULAR CONTACT WITH LOCAL PASTOR AND LOCAL CHURCH SUPPORT

The MID is encouraged to stay in regular contact with their local Pastor. The MID needs to be proactive in staying in contact.

The MID is also encouraged to meet at least twice a year with the Discernment Committee of the local church (See Appendix A). This will encourage support and encouragement from the members of the church.

The MID could write a quarterly letter to the local church for their newsletter so that all are aware of the journey and the process. It would also be very important for the MID to send that same quarterly report to the Consistory/Council and to their local Pastor.

Remember, this is a shared journey. All parties are in covenant and so communication is crucial.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The MID will meet with the COM on an annual basis. This meeting will help keep the MID connected to the Association, will offer a time for sharing joys and concerns, will allow an opportunity for the COM to be aware of the MID's journey of discernment and education, and offer a time to share any concerns or additional requirements on the part of the COM. The MID will invite his/her mentor to be present for this annual review. MID's may also invite their home church pastor/field education supervisor.

Prior to the meeting, the MID will complete the Annual Review (Appendix Q). This form will be a starting point for conversation between the MID and the COM. Also prior to the meeting, the COM will contact the JMAT for a progress update or written report on the MID's progress. During the meeting, the COM will engage in questions relating to the MID's education experience, field education experience if applicable, and their participation in the church at the congregational, association, and conference levels. In addition, there will be questions about theology, UCC polity, pastoral care, worship, and other topics which will guide and stretch the MID. The COM will refrain from merely asking what they can do for the MID. This meeting time will be used to keep track of the MID's discernment process, their educational journey, and their faith growth. It is recommended that the MARKS Assessment Tool and Journaling the Journey be used as part of this discussion. It will be a time to make sure the MID is on track and to gently guide them as necessary. The COM will relay to the MID exactly what they should be doing in the coming year in order to continue to move forward toward ordination. There should be no ambiguity.

The annual review is not optional. While all attempts will be made to schedule the meeting at a convenient time (i.e. not during the end of a semester, taking into consideration travelling distance, working around school/work schedules), the MID must meet with the COM annually. The COM will initiate the scheduling of a meeting but the MID must make sure to be available during the timeframe offered.

After the meeting, the COM will complete the MID Annual Review report for COM use (Appendix R) to document the date of the meeting, the participation of the MID along with any concerns which may arise during the meeting. This process will hold both the MID and the COM accountable for keeping the covenantal relationship. It will also document and acknowledge whether the COM wishes to renew the MID status for this

individual and keep track of the mentor assignment. This information will be conveyed to the MID after the meeting by the COM and will be placed in the MID portfolio. The process and status of the MID shall be as transparent as possible. At all times there will be space for the Holy Spirit to be present and to guide the conversations and process.

GENERAL MID PRACTICES OF MINISTRY

The autonomy of the local church, sacred to the UCC, has crept into all facets of church life and practices. The effect of that is the exercise of freedom from customs, traditions and practices (and in worst cases, ethics and values) that have formerly provided identity for our church and guidance for our leaders. The use of vestments, liturgical garb, and clergy titles is one small example. For training new leaders, clarification is significant. The following customs and traditions are practiced with subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) variations in each UCC Conference and Association. These descriptions are intended to serve as a guideline for clergy and MIDs in the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference.

The Geneva Pulpit Gown and Alba — are worn by authorized ministers and by MIDs working in field education placements who are invited (or required) to do so. The choice of the black gown (a Protestant symbol of educated clergy) or white alba (an early church symbol of purity and obedience) is at the discretion of MIDs in consultation with their field education advisor.

Stoles — are worn as a symbol of an authorized minister’s yoked relationship with Christ in service to God’s people. Stoles are bestowed upon MIDs on the day of their ordination and are not worn before then.

Clerical Collars — like stoles, tab and Anglican clerical collars are symbols of the pastoral office and are worn at the discretion of MIDs in consultation with their field education advisor.

Titles — Reverend, Pastor, Minister, Clergywoman/man, are reserved for ordained and licensed ministers. MIDs are sometimes referred to as “Student Pastor” or “Student Chaplain” but do not claim a clerical title until the day of their authorization to ministry.

Sacraments — the UCC recognizes and celebrates two sacraments, baptism and communion. Only authorized UCC ministers may preside at the table and the font. MIDs can, and should, co-celebrate sacramental liturgies with their field education supervisor or home pastor who would offer the Prayer of Consecration (communion) and/or the Triune Blessing (baptism).

Discernment Checklist

_____ Create an Education Formation Plan

_____ Complete requirements of Education Formation Plan:

- _____ Biblical Studies
- _____ Biblical Interpretation
- _____ Theology
- _____ Worship, sacraments, liturgy
- _____ Preaching and worship leadership
- _____ UCC History and Polity
- _____ Pastoral Care
- _____ Stewardship Education
- _____ Evangelism and Church Growth
- _____ Pastoral Leadership
- _____ Christian Education and Confirmation
- _____ Church History
- _____ Christian Ethics
- _____ Spiritual Disciplines
- _____ Completion of Field Education/Contextual Experience, either as part of the Master's program or other approved training.
- _____ Completion of required education/experiences as listed on Chart For Educational Formation Planning
- _____ Clinical Pastoral Education experience
- _____ Boundary Awareness Training (6 hours minimum)
- _____ Diversity Awareness Training (3 hours minimum)
- _____ (Other from COM or JMAT) _____
- _____ (Other from COM or JMAT) _____

_____ (Other from COM or JMAT) _____

_____ (Other from COM or JMAT) _____

_____ (Other from COM or JMAT) _____

Also required:

- Completion of the Conference's "MID Academy" (annually)
- Meetings with MID Mentor (monthly)
- Review and evaluation meeting with COM (annually)
- Completion of MID Annual Review form (annually)
- Self-assessment of the Marks (annually)
- Meetings with Discernment Committee of local church (twice annually)
- Updates to congregation about discernment/process (quarterly)
- Attendance at biannual meetings of the Association (twice annually)
- Attendance at biannual meetings of the Conference (twice annually)

Part Three: MINISTERIAL AUTHORIZATION – Seeking Ordination

FINAL ASSESSMENT FOR MINISTRY

The purpose of this step is to determine if the MID is ready for authorization as an Ordained Minister. Once ALL the requirements for ordination have been met, JMATA will conduct an interview to help the MID prepare for his/her ordination exams and/or Ecclesiastical Council. The MID will then be referred back to her/his Association COM for their assessment regarding approval for ordination pending call. JMATA sends the COM a recommendation letter and an interview is scheduled by the COM for the MID, accompanied by his/her MENTOR and, if the MID desires, a member of their Member in Discernment Church Committee.

MIDs seeking Ordination will present the COM with their updated portfolios and the following documentation:

- A revised self-assessment of the Marks (See Appendix M)
- Marks Assessments by the mentor and a member of the MID's church
- Verification of membership and participation in a local church of the UCC
- A recommendation from their Local Congregation leadership requesting the MID be considered for ordination
- Certification of attainment of previous education and specialized educational goals (EFP) previously agreed upon by the MID and COM.
- A sermon created by the MID.
- An Ordination Paper (See Appendix S)
- A current draft of the UCC Ministerial Profile with completed background check
- Certification of completion within the past 3 years of a Boundary Awareness Training course approved by the Association or Conference
- At least 4 letters of reference from the following:
 - MID's MENTOR
 - MID's Pastor
 - Someone from the MID's educational process familiar with the MID's educational preparation
 - Someone of the MID's choosing

Other items may also be included to document or describe the MID's readiness for Ordination, such as:

- Audio and/or video recordings
- Records from non-credit courses and/or workshops
- UCC history and polity documentation
- Demonstration of self-directed learning projects, reflective practice or on-the-job training
- Art work (with interpretation if desired)
- Programs from worship services
- Written papers/case studies/interview recordings
- Performance assessments

- Revised Marks Assessment completed by Mentor, a member of the candidate's church, and the Committee on Ministry.
- Description of projects undertaken in the local congregation, association, conference national church or wider church and community
- Evidence of related experience, knowledge, skills from other experiences
- Evidence of applicable corporate training (e.g. conflict resolution, financial management, computer skills)
- Military training and/or corporate/agency training

An outline and guidelines for the Ordination Interview are available in Appendix T. Following this meeting the MID will be informed of the COM's decision of approval for Ordination. The answer may be:

- Yes, the candidate is approved
- Yes, but the COM has some issues or requirements to be addressed before a final decision is made by the COM
- No, but the COM expresses willingness to reconsider if certain issues are addressed
- No, the candidate is not approved

If the MID is approved for Ordination by the COM:

- An Ecclesiastical Council is convened that will confer final Ordained Ministerial status

ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL

Once a MID has successfully completed the ordination examination by the association COM, the final step in the approval process is an ecclesiastical council. (Please check with your Association to see if they require an ecclesiastical council.) Depending upon the association's policy, the ecclesiastical council could be held before or following the point at which the MID has received a call to an ordained ministry position recognized by the Association.

The association COM arranges for an official meeting of an ecclesiastical council and decides with the MID what type of presentation the MID will make to the ecclesiastical council and how all or a portion of the MID's ordination paper and biographical overview will be made available to the delegates to the ecclesiastical council. Ideally, the distribution of advance materials will be made to the delegates with enough time for their reading and discernment before the ecclesiastical council. If this is not feasible, certain sections of the paper or a summary of the paper could be made available. In any case, the complete paper should be available to the delegates at the time of the ecclesiastical council.

The purpose of the ecclesiastical council is to examine and authorize the ordination of the MID. For more information on the Ecclesiastical Council, see pages 33-34 of the Manual on Ministry. The following is a sample agenda for the ecclesiastical council:

- The association COM introduces the MID and makes its recommendation that the MID be authorized for ordination. In making its recommendation, the COM

will provide details supporting its recommendation drawing upon the materials the MID has submitted throughout the MID process and the COM's experience in working with this person.

- The MID makes a presentation to the ecclesiastical council based upon the ordination paper. The presentation should demonstrate the person's theological, polity and functional understandings of ordained ministry and relate these to the commitment and preparation of the person authorized ministry.
- The ecclesiastical council engages in an examination of the MID in order to satisfy itself as the preparation and fitness for the MID to ordained ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ. The examination is not limited to the presentation and the ordination paper. A suggested best practice is to have a member of the association COM facilitate and moderate the examination, perhaps by asking delegates to submit written questions in advance of the council or at the council itself.
- On completion of the examination, the MID is excused from the ecclesiastical council, preferably with an accompanying member of the COM or other support person, while the ecclesiastical council votes whether or not to authorize the MID for ordination pending an approved call. The decision of the ecclesiastical council is made on behalf of the association and is a decision made for the entire United Church of Christ. It will be binding on and honored by other associations of the United Church of Christ.

If the MID is approved for Ordination by the Ecclesiastical Council:

- The MID seeks a call to be approved by the association COM
- Once an approved call has been obtained, the COM receives a Call Agreement from a local church or a Covenant and job description from the calling body detailing the nature of the call including items such as description of the ministry position, time requirements, and remuneration.
- The COM meets with the MID and church/calling body to confirm the call
- The COM and MID work together to prepare a service of ordination

Once ordained, the person is granted authorized ministerial standing and becomes a voting member of the association and conference in which the minister has standing.

Part Four: EXPECTATIONS OF CONTINUING COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIP

The United Church of Christ takes great care to provide adequate oversight for the ministers of the church for which ecclesiastical authorization is required. Ordained ministers of the United Church of Christ come under an oversight of watchful care provided by Association, since Associations are responsible for authorizing these ministers on behalf of the whole church. In addition, Associations grant Privilege of Call, receive Members in Discernment, and provide other forms of authorization for ministry. It is incumbent upon Associations, in covenant with others, to exercise careful oversight of these authorized ministers so that they may be carried out in a manner reflective of the purposes set for them by the Constitution and Bylaws of the UCC.

In acting on behalf of the whole church, Associations are covenantally related to other Associations, to the persons they have authorized for ministry and to local churches and other calling bodies. This spirit of covenantal relations is undergirded by the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, which establishes the relationship and authority of the various covenantal partners related to ministerial authorization.

Associations have the responsibility for extending nurture and ensuring ecclesiastical accountability for all authorized ministers, including retired ordained ministers and those serving in ministry settings other than in local churches such as chaplains, professors, pastoral counselors, and persons engaged in secular employment. (Manual of Ministry, Section 2, Article 6: Accountability and Support, p. 109-137)

Also, authorized ministers have the responsibility to be in covenant with their Association, other authorized ministers, and their setting of ministry. Just as Associations have the responsibility for supporting and holding accountable all authorized ministers; authorized ministers have the responsibility to be in covenant by supporting and being part of their Association, Conference and the wider UCC.

Some examples of how authorized ministers are expected to be in covenant with the Association, Conference, and the wider UCC include:

- Faithful preaching and teaching of the Gospel, the exercise of pastoral functions, and the administration of rites and sacraments of the Church as such time and in such places as may be appropriate
- Membership in good standing with a Local Church of the United Church of Christ
- Regular participation in Association Annual Meetings, Ministerium gatherings, and Conference Annual Meetings
- Adherence to oversight by the Association Committee on Ministry, including annual reviews, periodic support consultations, situational support consultations, and fitness reviews.
- Timely completion of the Association's standing requirements, including:
 - Boundary Awareness Training
 - Diversity Awareness Training
 - Continuing Education

- Faithful contributions to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) in recognition of the role of the wider church in the formation and oversight of authorized ministers in the United Church of Christ, as well as encouraging local churches to support the wider church with their finances, time, and talents
- Clear and timely communication with the Association and/or Conference when situations arise within your ministry setting that may affect the continuing healthy ministry of that setting
- Willingness to regularly volunteer in leadership and support roles for the work of the Association and Conference
- Adherence to the UCC Ministerial Code and the Marks for Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers

Appendices

Appendix A

Local Church Ministry Discernment Committee – ASK THE QUESTION

Ask the Question is a great resource for discerning the call to ministry. This also contains information to help a person discerning a call to ministry to create a Discernment Committee within their local church. This link will take you to that resource: <https://www.ucc.org/ask-the-question>

Appendix B

Process for pursuing Member in Discernment status

CANDIDATE	LOCAL CHURCH	ASSOC. COM	JMAT	PSEC
<p>1 A local church member of the UCC desiring to prepare for ordained ministry talks with his/her pastor about expectations. Member must have been an active member of this local church for at least one year.</p>				
<p>2 If church member decides to proceed, application is made to the governing board of the local church for an interview. Person sends: -A statement about their spiritual journey -A statement of how they understand their call at the present time -Documentation of their formal education (transcripts, evaluations) -Educational Plan</p>	<p>2 Governing Body sets a time to meet with person. Person sends: -A statement about their spiritual journey -A statement of how they understand their call at the present time -Documentation of their formal education (transcripts, evaluations) -Educational Plan</p>			
<p>3 Person meets with governing body for an interview.</p>	<p>3 Governing Body meets with candidate for interview regarding recommending them for Member in Discernment Status to their Association COM. This recommendation does not presume a specific outcome. This recommendation does affirm continued</p>			

CANDIDATE	LOCAL CHURCH	ASSOC. COM	JMAT	PSEC
	discernment and ongoing support of this person's process.			
<p>4 Person meets with COM member to go over steps and submits MID Application and other required materials listed in step 5 to the Association COM. A letter of recommendation from Local Church is also included.</p>	<p>4 Governing Body writes letter of recommendation to the Association COM including the process they used and the length of time the candidate has been a member.</p>	<p>4 A member of the COM meets with the candidate to introduce steps and start collecting materials.</p>		
		<p>5 COM receives application and the following material: ___ Self-disclosure form ___ 3 letters of reference with one from pastor ___ letters from church from step 4 ___ transcripts or certification of educational background from step 2 ___ Paper with the following four sections: (1) Describe your spiritual journey (from step 2) (2) Brief paper on your basic understanding and practice of the Christian faith. (3) How have you been a leader and participant in your local church activities? (4) Paper on your understanding of ordination and why are you seeking ordination in the United Church of Christ</p>		<p>5 COM sends items to PSEC to be placed in candidate's file.</p>

CANDIDATE	LOCAL CHURCH	ASSOC. COM	JMAT	PSEC
6 Candidate schedules meeting with COM	6 Pastor schedules time with COM alone	6 COM should also set a time to interview the pastor of this candidate and a time to interview the candidate individually.		
7 Candidate meets with COM	7 Pastor meets with COM separately and together	7 COM meets with candidate and pastor separately and together.		
		8 COM interviews and goes over PSEC Ministerial Formation Plan, MARKS and collects signatures on the consent form for all documents to be given to and be duplicated for JMAT. COM requests: PA Criminal Background Check, PA Child Abuse Clearance, and FBI Fingerprint		
		9 COM sends all information to JMAT		
10 Candidate meets with JMAT		10 COM assigns a member to attend JMAT meeting.	10 JMAT schedules a date to meet with candidate, their pastor, and a member of the COM.	
			11 JMAT writes a recommendation whether they prayerfully discern this person is being called to ordained ministry. This recommendation is sent to the COM.	11 JMAT sends to PSEC their recommendation and any documentation for candidate's file.
12 Person meets with COM		12 COM receives recommendation. Schedules a meeting with the candidate to share JMAT's		

CANDIDATE	LOCAL CHURCH	ASSOC. COM	JMAT	PSEC
		recommendation and to have an honest conversation to discuss what happens next—yes; yes, but; no, but; no.		
13 Candidate will make sure that all parties send in their funds for the psychological testing.		13 If answer is yes, COM will alert PSEC that this candidate is ready for psychological assessment.		13 PSEC is alerted to readiness for psychological assessment and sends out invoices to church and candidate.
14 Candidate receives contact info from PSEC and schedules assessment with Physis.				14 Upon receipt of monies, PSEC will send contact info to candidate to schedule assessment with Physis.
15 Candidate will receive report from the assessment and schedule time to meet with Rev. Worley. Candidate will receive decision of MID Status from COM.		15 COM receives results from psychological assessment and makes final decision on MID Status. They communicate this result to the candidate by letter which becomes part of the portfolio.		15 PSEC receives results of psychological assessment. Rev. Worley will be in touch with candidate to schedule a meeting to review psychological assessment and expectations of UCC authorized ministers.
16 MID meets with JMAT to begin an assessment and talk about an educational formation plan. Candidate will also complete a self-assessment using the MARKS assessment to be sent to JMAT.	16 Pastor completes Marks assessment on MID.	16 COM sends notification to JMAT that this person has been granted MID status and is ready to schedule a time with JMAT, MID, and member of COM to meet. COM assigns mentor and gives candidate “Journaling the Journey”. COM completes MARKS assessment and submits it to JMAT for help creating EFP.	16 JMAT schedules time to meet with MID.	

CANDIDATE	LOCAL CHURCH	ASSOC. COM	JMAT	PSEC
17 Sign Covenant of Discernment and Formation	17 Sign Covenant of Discernment and Formation	17 Sign Covenant of Discernment and Formation	17 Sign Covenant of Discernment and Formation	17 Sign Covenant of Discernment and Formation

Appendix C Marks Portfolio

As a Member in Discernment (MID), you will be creating a Marks Portfolio. The Marks Portfolio is intended as a medium for MIDs to both integrate and demonstrate their personal, professional, and spiritual formation and preparation for ministry. Using the United Church of Christ's Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers (Appendix L) as a foundation, the Marks Portfolio should be curated and arranged to demonstrate competencies and experiences in each of the eight main categories.

Working alongside and in consultation with your MID Mentor, your portfolio should be assembled, edited, and amended throughout the duration of your discernment process. Think of it as a living document that should grow, change, and develop over the course of your discernment and formation process. For instance, you may find more clarity in your sense of call; and, therefore, materials in section one may need revision, or you may find that a sermon added in an early draft of the portfolio may later need to be replaced by a sermon that better reflects your preaching style or theology.

Each year, a working draft of your portfolio must be submitted to the Committee on Ministry (COM) one month prior to your annual review. Because the portfolio is a work in progress, you do not need to have the portfolio completed for your annual review.

At your first annual review, sections one and two should have drafted responses as well as at least two categories of the Marks in section three. Each subsequent annual review, your portfolio should reflect edits to sections one and two and further development of section three. Throughout your discernment process, at your annual review the COM will ask you to discuss and reflect upon the additions and changes you have made to your portfolio.

At the conclusion of your MID process, you will submit a completed portfolio. A portfolio that demonstrates integration of the Marks is a key part of the final assessment of a candidate's readiness for ministerial authorization.

CONTENTS

Marks Portfolios are comprised of four main sections. While there is room for creativity in the creation of the portfolio, be sure to center your work on the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers.

Section 1: Spiritual Autobiography

Introduce yourself by way of sharing your spiritual autobiography. (A spiritual autobiography is a story of how significant events, relationships, and cultural influences have contributed to the author's spiritual formation, relationship with God, interpretation of scriptures, and understanding of how to live as a disciple of Jesus.) As a part of your reflection, be sure to interact with themes from the Marks. Conclude this section by writing your own personal Statement of Faith. You may structure your Statement of Faith in any variety of ways but may find it helpful to look at the structures and themes of the various versions of the UCC's Statement of Faith. This section should be no more than three written pages.

Section 2: Understanding Your Call to Authorized Ministry

Clarity in articulating a call to ordained ministry by God and the Church and continuing discernment of one's call in community are fundamental practices. Please respond succinctly to the following:

- Describe your theological understanding of ordination and the role of the Church in discerning call.
- Describe in particular your call to the vocation of ministry and the setting to which you currently feel most called.
- Expanding on the understanding of ordination, why are you interested in ordination and ministry specifically in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ?

This section should be no more than two written pages.

Section 3: Reflection and Demonstration of the Marks

This section of the portfolio is for you to engage in reflection and demonstration of competencies in each of the eight categories of the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers. The eight categories are as follow: Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practice; Nurturing UCC Identity; Building Transformational Leadership Skills; Engaging Sacred Stories and Traditions; Caring for All Creation; Participating in Theological Praxis; Working Together for Justice and Mercy; and Strengthening Inter- and Intra- Personal Assets.

For each of these eight categories, write a reflection that weaves experiences, education, and preparation that demonstrate your skills and speak to how you are integrating various particular Marks of that category into your ministry. You are expected to also discuss where your strengths and experiences are, and where you need continued development or practice.

As you write your reflection, discuss one specific example of your ministry in greater detail. Describe the process, tools, and resources you utilized; what informed you theologically, socially, and culturally; what you learned as a result; and what you would do or try differently next time.

Each of the eight reflections are a practice in the necessary skill for ministers of clear, concise, effective communication and should be no more than two written pages.

In addition to the reflection, include one ministerial example of your work that you reference in the narrative. Ministerial examples might include things like a sermon, lesson plans for a UCC polity class you taught, photos and descriptions from an art installation you created for Lent, meditations written, worship outlines and notes used for terrarium making to tell the story of creation in worship, etc. You are invited and encouraged to provide a diversity of ministry examples to reflect the Marks. In cases where your ministry example includes video, audio or large files, upload them to a server such as Dropbox, Google Drive, or Vimeo (all have free account versions) and then provide a hyperlink in the text of your portfolio. Be sure to password protect any sensitive information and provide details on how to access the file in your portfolio.

An essential understanding as you approach the task of creating this section is to think of it as journey of integration, rather than a task of reiteration. Consider the Marks in each category holistically. Remember that no one is expected to reflect expertise in all of these Marks to the same degree. We each have particular gifts, interests, and strengths as well as areas for

further growth and development. It is also the case that no minister ever achieves final mastery of these Marks. So, as a resource for your ministry, the Marks are intended serve as a tool for assessment of readiness for authorization and also as a guide for lifelong learning and ongoing professional development and continuing education.

Section 4: Additional Documents

This section should be utilized to reflect five specific documents:

- Final Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) evaluation by your supervisor
- Final Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) self-evaluation
- Final educational and theological education transcripts or reports
- Certificate of Attendance at Pastoral Boundaries Training class within the past three years.
- Documentation of completion of an approved UCC History, Polity and Theology course

You may also include any other vital documents in this section needed to demonstrate the Marks that have not been previously included in your ministry examples. Accompany those documents with brief reflection on how these documents demonstrate integration of specific Marks.

SUBMITTING DRAFTS OR THE COMPLETED PORTFOLIO AS ONE FILE

Each draft of your portfolio should be reviewed and assessed by your MID Advisor prior to submission. This is an opportunity for constructive feedback, deeper discussion, and further discernment. Additional reviewers, such as your pastor and Local Church Discernment Committee, are recommended before your final portfolio is submitted.

Your portfolio, whether the draft due prior to your annual review or the completed version, should be emailed to the conference office as one PDF file. If the file is too large to be sent over email, upload it to a service like Google Drive or Dropbox, and send the link or URL for the file to the Conference office for her to provide for the committee. Technology is ever evolving so each of these services has extensive support and how-to guides located on their website.

Please be sure that on the first page of the PDF file, you include your name as well as the portfolio's submission date, and indicate whether it is a draft (in which case please also indicate whether it is your first, second, third, etc. submitted draft) or a completed portfolio.



Appendix D

Committee on Ministry of the _____ Association Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ

Member-in-Discernment Application

Personal Information

Full Name: _____
Last First M.I. Nickname

Permanent Address: _____
Street Address Apartment/Unit #

City State ZIP Code

Current Address: _____
Street Address Apartment/Unit #
While in seminary/college or similar

City State ZIP Code

Home Phone: () _____

Cell Phone: () _____

Current Phone: () _____

Please place an asterisk* next to your preferred telephone contact number and mailing address.

E-mail Address: _____

Birth Date: _____

Marital/Partner Status: _____

Spouse's/Partner's Name: _____

Names of Children: _____

Please include ages if minors

Church Membership Information

Church: _____

Address: _____
Street Address

City State ZIP Code

Church Phone: () _____ Church E-mail: _____

Pastor: _____ Date of Membership: _____

Brief description of local church involvement: _____

Brief description of wider church involvement: _____

Are you involved in any other religious or secular volunteer activities? Yes No If yes, please explain: _____

Have you ever engaged in the Member in Discernment process with another UCC association or a similar ordination process with another denomination or ordaining community? Yes No If yes, please explain: _____

Academic Information

Undergraduate Institutions: _____
College/University *Dates Attended* *Degree/Certificate*

Seminary: _____
Seminary/School of Theology *Dates Attended* *Degree/Certificate*

Other Graduate Institutions or Training: _____
College/University/Seminary/Program *Dates Attended* *Degree/Certificate*

Current Employment Information

Position/Title: _____ Employer: _____

Work Address: _____
Street Address

_____ *City* *State* *ZIP Code*

Work Phone: () _____ E-mail Address: _____

Is it acceptable to call you at your workplace? Yes No Send e-mail to you at work? Yes No

Member in Discernment Application Statement

I, hereby, request that the Committee on Ministry consider my application for Member-in-Discernment status with this Association of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ. I understand that Member-in-Discernment status is a covenantal relationship between the local church, this Association, the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, the United Church of Christ and me (therefore, I must be a member of a UCC church in this Association). I understand that this application request does not guarantee the granting of Member in Discernment status. I further understand that the granting of Member-in-Discernment status does not ultimately guarantee ordination or lay ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ.

I understand, that to be considered for Member-in-Discernment status, I must submit, in addition to this Application, the following documents: 1) a letter of recommendation from the governing body of a local UCC church that is a) supportive of my request for in-care status, b) that verifies my membership (including length of membership), and c) describes the process by which the church came to recommend me for in-care status; 2) three letters of reference (one from the pastor of my church); 3) a spiritual journey paper; 4) a statement describing my understanding of my call to ministry; 5) transcripts of relevant academic work and a curriculum vitae or résumé; 6) a self-disclosure form; 7) a paper with three sections, each 2-3 pages, on a) basic understanding and practice of the Christian faith, b) how you have been a leader and participant in your local church, and c) what is your understanding of ordination and why are you seeking ordination in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ?; 7) a criminal background check; and 8) career/psychological testing. I attest that the information contained in this application, and in the written information requested by the Committee on Ministry for consideration for Member-in-Discernment status, is both accurate and complete.

Signature

Date

Name (please print clearly)

Please return this Member in Discernment Application to:

The Chair of this Committee on Ministry

Committee on Ministry of the _____ Association, Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ
Address, phone, email



Appendix E

Self- disclosure form for Members in Discernment and candidates

Name (First, Middle, Last): _____
 Address (address, city, state, zip): _____
 Phone: _____ Email: _____

Have you ever been the subject of an official disciplinary proceeding by an employer, credentialing body, guild, professional association, or denomination?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Are there any official disciplinary proceedings pending against you at this time by an employer, credentialing body, guild, professional association, or denomination?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Have you ever been the subject of a civil law suit alleging that you attempted or actually engaged in sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct; which has ever resulted in a judgement being entered against you, settled out of court, or dismissed because the statute of limitations had expired?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Have you ever had your driving license suspended or revoked within the last 5 years?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Have you ever been found guilty of, pled guilty to, or pled no contest to criminal charges? (Exclude convictions that have been sealed, expunged or legally eradicated; any misdemeanor conviction for which probation was successfully completed; offenses about which inquiry is not permissible in the state in which you are seeking MID status; acts of civil disobedience. With respect to driving record, only include matters of reckless driving, driving while intoxicated and/or driving under the influence of a controlled substance.)	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Has your employment, a volunteer position, or professional credentials, ever been terminated or revoked, or have you been asked not to return to employment or a volunteer position in the future because you attempted or actually engaged in:		
• Sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation or misconduct	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
• Physical abuse	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
• Child abuse	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
• Financial misconduct	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Have you ever terminated your employment, a volunteer position, or professional credentials in order to avoid facing or to avoid being terminated because of charges of actual or attempted:		
• Sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation or misconduct	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
• Physical abuse	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
• Child abuse	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
• Financial misconduct	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Are there any facts or circumstances involving you or your background that should be disclosed and/or further reviewed before you are entrusted with the responsibilities of ministry of behalf of a calling body of the United Church of Christ?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, please provide detailed explanation for all such affirmative answers. In addition to providing other relevant material, be sure to include dates and information for related official decisions, actions, reviews, etc. (by you and/or other parties) that affected your employment and/or ministerial standing and/or professional credentials.

Signature: _____



Appendix F

Pennsylvania Southeast Conference ~ United Church of Christ
1441 Laura Lane, Suite 100
Pottstown, PA 19464
484-949-8774
psec.org

**CONSENT FOR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN
COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY AND JOINT MID ASSESSMENT TEAM
AND CONSENT TO DUPLICATE RECORDS**

I, _____, do hereby grant permission to the Committee on Ministry (COM) of the _____ (Association) of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference where my Member in Discernment Status is currently held, to send a copy of any and all documents relating to my portfolio including the psychological assessment and vocational evaluation to the Joint MID Assessment Team

I understand that my portfolio/MID File is the property of the United Church of Christ; that my Association COM may release the portfolio/MID File to the Joint MID Assessment Team (JMAT) within the appropriate bounds of status and formation. The Joint MID Assessment Team, the Association COM, Conference and other persons may comment on my background and character to one another. I hereby release such persons from all liability arising from their responses and comments made in good faith and without malice. I further understand that completion of this form is required to proceed toward MID status and to maintain my MID status and journey towards possible ordination.

This consent form should be relayed to the Committee on Ministry Chairperson of the Association (or Conference acting as an Association) in which I am seeking MID status and a copy to the JMAT.

Name: _____ Email: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Signed (MID candidate)

Date

Appendix G

Joint Member in Discernment Assessment Team – JMAT

At the end of 2018, a new Manual on Ministry (MOM) was unveiled by the Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization (MESA) of the UCC. Its release provoked many conversations from the very broad (what does it mean to be ordained?) to the very specific (can a retired pastor with exempt standing still officiate at a wedding?). It also made clear that the leadership needs of the church, as most clearly defined by the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministry, are not being realized by the processes the Church uses to prepare people for ministry.

There are many reasons for this. Most Theological Seminaries, like local churches, are struggling to remain financially viable and have (in some cases) favored programs that appeal to a broader audience of potential students rather than focus on preparing leaders for local church ministry. Where the church could once rely on the Seminary to be a close partner in vetting future pastors, that role now belongs entirely to the church (for instance, most seminaries no longer require ecclesiastical endorsement as a prerequisite for enrollment or degree completion). An ever-increasing number of pastoral candidates come to ministry with minimal or no church experience (or even religious affiliation) and insufficient leadership skills. The evolving nature of the church creates a moving target for parish leadership preparation. As both the prestige, positive ministry environment and financial compensation of clergy continues to diminish (along with the promise of full-time employment), so does the appeal of ministry – especially among highly qualified candidates.

Associations' Committees on Ministry have had to respond to the effects of these changes without the commensurate awareness and support from their Associations and local churches – who may not be in the position to offer it. COMs were not designed to provide the oversight required to ensure that candidates for ministry (MIDs) receive the training and guidance from qualified and capable mentors, field education supervisors and local pastors as well as the committees and teams who take on the responsibility for ensuring a MID is “worthy” of authorization in and on behalf of the entire United Church of Christ.

Furthermore, the new MOM moves the UCC to two forms of authorization – Lay and Ordained – and ends Commissioned and Licensure. It does open the door for those who are already licensed and commissioned to discern with their COMs the possibility of becoming ordained. With this and other Multiple Paths to Ordained Ministry, COMs take on more responsibility to assess MIDs and create plans of growth that may be different for each person. In the light of this added responsibility, it is clear that not all COMs have the capacity, time, or knowledge required to care for and train well-prepared ordained ministers. We must find another way.

Therefore, Pennsylvania Southeast Conference (PSEC) created a Joint MID Assessment Team. This team, made up of persons from all Associations, is trained solely for working with MIDs and those seeking Privilege of Call (POC) in the UCC in the PSEC. This team creates assistance for each COM and helps to lighten their load just a bit.

All potential MIDs apply to their Association COM and do all that is required of becoming a MID in their Association. Before the COMs grant the status of MID, the candidate meets with the JMAT for an assessment. The recommendation of this team is used by the COM to make their final decision as to whether or not they grant the status of MID to this individual. Once a candidate has been granted MID status, the MID continues to work with JMAT. Each MID has a program of growth that is overseen by JMAT.

At the end of the process, the MID works with the JMAT to create his/her ordination paper. Then everything is turned back over to the MID's COM for ordination exam and Ecclesiastical Council and Authorization for ordination pending a call.

Appendix H

Joint Member in Discernment Assessment Team Process

The following process is created to support and help the MID grow their gifts and skills to become an Ordained Minister in the United Church of Christ.

A candidate for Member in Discernment (MID) status in the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference (PSEC) will first explore and discern their call to ministry with their local congregation. They will then approach the Committee on Ministry (COM) in the Association where their local church is geographically located.

It will be the responsibility of the local COM to complete the initial checklist needed from the candidate such as:

- Complete the MID Application Form
- Complete a self-disclosure form
- Consent for Communication with JMAT & Consent to Duplicate Records
- Submit 3 Letters of Reference (one of those being from local church pastor)
- A written statement that the applicant is a member of a UCC church for at least one year prior to being granted MID Status.
- A letter stating that said church officially recommends this applicant for MID status and how they reached that decision.
- Initiate & complete the PA Criminal Background Check, PA Child Abuse Clearance, and FBI fingerprint
- Submit Grade Transcripts and Certifications of completion of educational programs
- A paper with 4 sections, each to be 2-3 pages
 - _____ (1) Describe your Christian spiritual journey
 - _____ (2) Brief paper on your basic understanding and practice of the Christian faith.
 - _____ (3) How have you been a leader and participant in your local church activities?
 - _____ (4) Paper on your understanding of ordination and why are you seeking ordination in the United Church of Christ

At this point the COM and the candidate will initiate a meeting with JMAT. This meeting will consist of the team plus the candidate, their pastor and a member of their COM. The purpose of this meeting is to be a partner in discerning together their gifts and skills to ordained ministry. Following this meeting, the JMAT will send a recommendation to the COM and PSEC office.

This recommendation should be shared with the candidate and those who were in attendance of this assessment. An honest conversation needs to be held with the candidate to discuss what happens next—yes to MID Status; yes, but; no, but; no, they cannot be recommended for MID Status

If the recommendation is favorable and agreeable with the COM, the COM will then initiate the psychological and vocational assessment. After the results have been received from this assessment, it will be up to the COM to make the final decision as to whether or not they will grant this candidate MID Status.

NEXT STEPS

- COM will alert JMAT as to their decision, if they wish their MID to work with JMAT, and the name and contact information for the assigned mentor.
- JMAT will meet with the MID and mentor to begin a process of assessment using the MARKS of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers.
- JMAT will meet a third time with the MID to develop a growth plan which is then sent to the COM and PSEC office.

- A portfolio to document education and competencies will be developed by each MID. (See Checklist in Ministry Formation Plan)
- If the MID is enrolled in seminary, interviews will be scheduled to assess progress.
- If the MID is following one of the multiple paths toward ordination, the MID will schedule and hold regular meetings with their mentor as they progress through their learning plan, documenting coursework, individual learning and seminars attended. Frequency of meetings will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Educational formation should include:

- theological and practical education for ministry, with learning outcomes oriented toward the Marks;
- the development of a portfolio to document competencies around the Marks;
- successful completion of a COM-approved UCC History, Polity and Theology course;
- practical ministry experience under supervision (Clinical Pastoral Education, field placement, internship, etc.)
- successful completion of professional boundaries training;
- successful completion of diversity training;
- annual participation in PSEC MID Academy;
- participation in regional or national MID gatherings;
- participation in Association meetings and in Conference Spring and Fall Meetings;
- engagement with the wider church, such as participation in General Synod;
- annual report on their progress at the annual in-person meeting with the Committee on Ministry;
- ongoing self-assessment based on the Marks;
- monthly meetings with and reports from the MID Mentor;
- completion of an ordination paper meeting the requirements set forth by their Association COM
- drafted UCC Ministerial Profile including the Profile's criminal background check.

When the MID has completed their educational formation and has submitted all required documentation, JMAT will conduct an interview to help the MID prepare for their ordination exams and/or Ecclesiastical Council

The MID will then be referred back to their Association COM to complete the process to receive the status of approved for ordination pending call. The MID's portfolio and recommendation letter will be sent to the COM.

The key to this working will be continued communication between JMAT and the COM. As covenantal partners in this work, it is hoped that these two groups can work together and honor one another's recommendations.

Appendix I



Pennsylvania Southeast Conference ~ United Church of Christ
1441 Laura Lane, Suite 100
Pottstown, PA 19464
484-949-8774
psec.org

REFERRAL FORM

To be used by COM when sending candidate to JMAT

1. Name of candidate: _____

2. Contact info: Address: _____

a. Email: _____

b. Cell phone: _____

c. Local Church membership: _____

d. Current status: (ex. MID status; seeking MID status; seeking POC)

3. Association referring candidate: _____

4. Assoc. Chair: _____

email: _____ cell: _____

5. Last time the COM met with this person: _____

6. Purpose for referral:

___ Recommendation from JMAT for MID Status

___ Assessment of MID

___ Assessment of MID and create a growth plan

___ Assessment of MID and recommendation for ordination

7. Please attach to this form:

For MID Status:

Self-disclosure form, Consent for Communication between COM and JMAT and to duplicate records; 3 letters of reference – one from their pastor; a letter from local church of membership stating that they recommend this person for MID status and the process they used; a letter from local church of membership stating that this person is a member in good standing; PA CBC, PA Child Abuse Clearance, FBI Fingerprint; transcripts or items showing their educational background; a paper with 4 sections, each to be 2-3 pages: Describe your spiritual journey; your understanding and practice of the Christian Faith; how have you been a leader and participant in your local church activities?; Paper on your understand of ordination and why you are seeking ordination in and on behalf of the UCC.

For assessment to create educational formation plan:

Notes of specific concerns or issues you would like JMAT to specifically assess; MARKS Assessment by the COM; and MARKS self-assessment.

For ordination exam:

Ordination paper; draft of UCC profile including Oxford CBC; any other info that the COM has collected.

8. Would a member of the COM like to be present at the meeting? _____

9. Has the candidate been assigned a mentor? _____

JMAT'S ASSESSMENT

Name of Candidate: _____

Date JMAT met with Candidate: _____

Member's present: _____

Guests present (pastor, mentor, COM member): _____

Candidate's Strengths:

Candidate's areas for growth:

Impressions:

Recommendation:

Educational Formation Plan:

Appendix J

VOCATIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

**Pennsylvania Southeast Conference
United Church of Christ**

This assessment is an opportunity for growth and insight. We hope that all participants will approach this process with an open mind and willingness to hear those things about themselves that may need attention and support. We are all children of God and as such we have areas of strength and growth that need to be nurtured.

A career assessment — which includes comprehensive personal, emotional, and psychological evaluation — is required for all persons prior to entering the Member in Discernment (MID) Process. Participants will be asked to provide personal and biographical information and take a series of standardized assessments.

The assessment is conducted by trained counselors who are experienced in working with ministry candidates and seasoned clergy. The career assessment program is more than evaluative: it is educational and developmental. It is one discernment tool to evaluate fitness for ministry which is ultimately determined by Committees on Ministry during the entire course of a MID's training program.

This process requires a great deal of preparation and a degree of self-disclosure. The information that is gathered is intended to be used by potential ministry candidates to identify personal strengths, motivation, areas of needed growth, and potential for ministry success. This is the beginning of a self-examination process that is expected to continue throughout a candidate's professional career.

In order to initiate the assessment process, please call the Conference Registrar and Assistant for Search and Call at 484-949-8774 ext. 311.

- Vocational/Psychological Assessment Information Sheet –This form will be emailed to you for completion, to then be signed by your Association Committee on Ministry Chair and returned to the Conference Registrar and Assistant for Search and Call.
- The billing process: The cost of the assessment is shared by the applicant, the applicant's local church, and the Conference, with each party paying one third. You and your home church will receive invoices for payment. Checks should be made payable to: Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, indicating your name and "Vo/Psy" in the memo section. When the two payments have been received, you and Physis Associates, the assessment organization, will be notified. You will be given a contact name and number to communicate directly with Physis Associates to set up your assessment schedule.
- The assessment process: The assessment process normally takes approximately four to six weeks to complete, from initial appointment to final feedback appointment as noted below:
 - Advance work- comprehensive online testing is sent to the candidates for completion.
 - 1st visit- in office in Exton; 6 hours with interview & more testing.
 - 2nd visit- One hour feedback in Exton office or by phone.

PLEASE NOTE: When making the commitment to enter Vocational/Psychological assessment, you need to be able to confirm and keep time commitments with the Physis Associates staff. The Physis staff will make every effort to work with you in scheduling the appointments, and it is expected that you will make those appointments a priority on your calendar. If appointments are not kept, it could cost you an additional fee to Physis Associates.

- Copies of the assessment results will be shared, upon your signature of release, to the Chair of the Association Committee on Ministry and the Conference Minister.

Blessings to you in this process! May it be an opportunity for insight and growth as you continue to discern God's will in your service to the church.

2012; updated 3-25-15; updated 8-11-15; updated 2-25-20

Pennsylvania Southeast Conference
VOCATIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT INFORMATION SHEET

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

HOME PH: _____

CELL PH: _____

WORK PH: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS(ES) (Primary) _____

(Alternate) _____

HOME/SPONSORING CHURCH NAME & ADDRESS

ASSOCIATION: _____

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY CHAIR (please print) _____

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY CHAIR ADDRESS (for purposes of mailing Physis report*):

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY CHAIR SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

PURPOSE FOR ASSESSMENT: (check one)

Ordained Ministry

Lay Ministry

Reinstatement of Status

*NOTE: A copy of the report will also be mailed to the Conference Minister, Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, 1441 Laura Lane, Suite 100, Pottstown, PA 19464 and to the Committee on Ministry Chair noted above.

Appendix K

Covenant of Discernment and Formation

(To be completed upon granting MID status. It is the responsibility of the MID to assure that this covenant is completed and copies delivered to all parties.)



Pennsylvania Southeast Conference ~ United Church of Christ
1441 Laura Lane, Suite 100
Pottstown, PA 19464
484-949-8774
psec.org

Covenant of Discernment and Formation

LOCAL CHURCH

We, the members of _____ United Church of Christ, located at _____, promise to support and nurture _____ in her/his period of discernment and formation as s/he explores a call to authorized ministry. We will, in partnership with _____ (MID), create a Discernment Team and work with her/him to discern the call to Authorized Ministry using the resource *Ask the Question*. We will, as we are able, provide financial support for costs associated with ministerial preparation and training. We covenant with her/him and the _____ Association, the Joint MID Assessment Team, and the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ as a sign of our mutual ministry in Christ's name.

Consistory President Date

ASSOCIATION

We, the members of the _____ Association of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ, covenant with the people of _____ United Church of Christ, located at _____ and _____, (MID), to explore a call to authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ. We will work with the Joint MID Assessment Team to develop an educational plan with _____ (MID) and accompany her/him as s/he engages in a path of discernment, preparation and formation. We will provide counsel and support, and will meet with _____ (MID) at appropriate intervals to discern readiness for the authorized ministry sought. We will, as we are able, provide financial support for costs associated with ministerial preparation and training. We will assign a mentor and be responsible for the

JMAT

We, the members of the Joint MID Assessment Team (JMAT), promise to discern with you and the _____ Association, your call to ordained ministry. We promise to faithfully speak the truth in love. We covenant with you to create a plan that will hold to the expectations of the United Church of Christ for all UCC authorized ministers. We promise to support you and expect you to attend all MID gatherings and workshops. We covenant with you _____(MID), the _____ Association, the mentor _____, and the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference as a sign of our mutual ministry in Christ’s name.
_____ (JMAT representative)

MEMBER IN DISCERNMENT

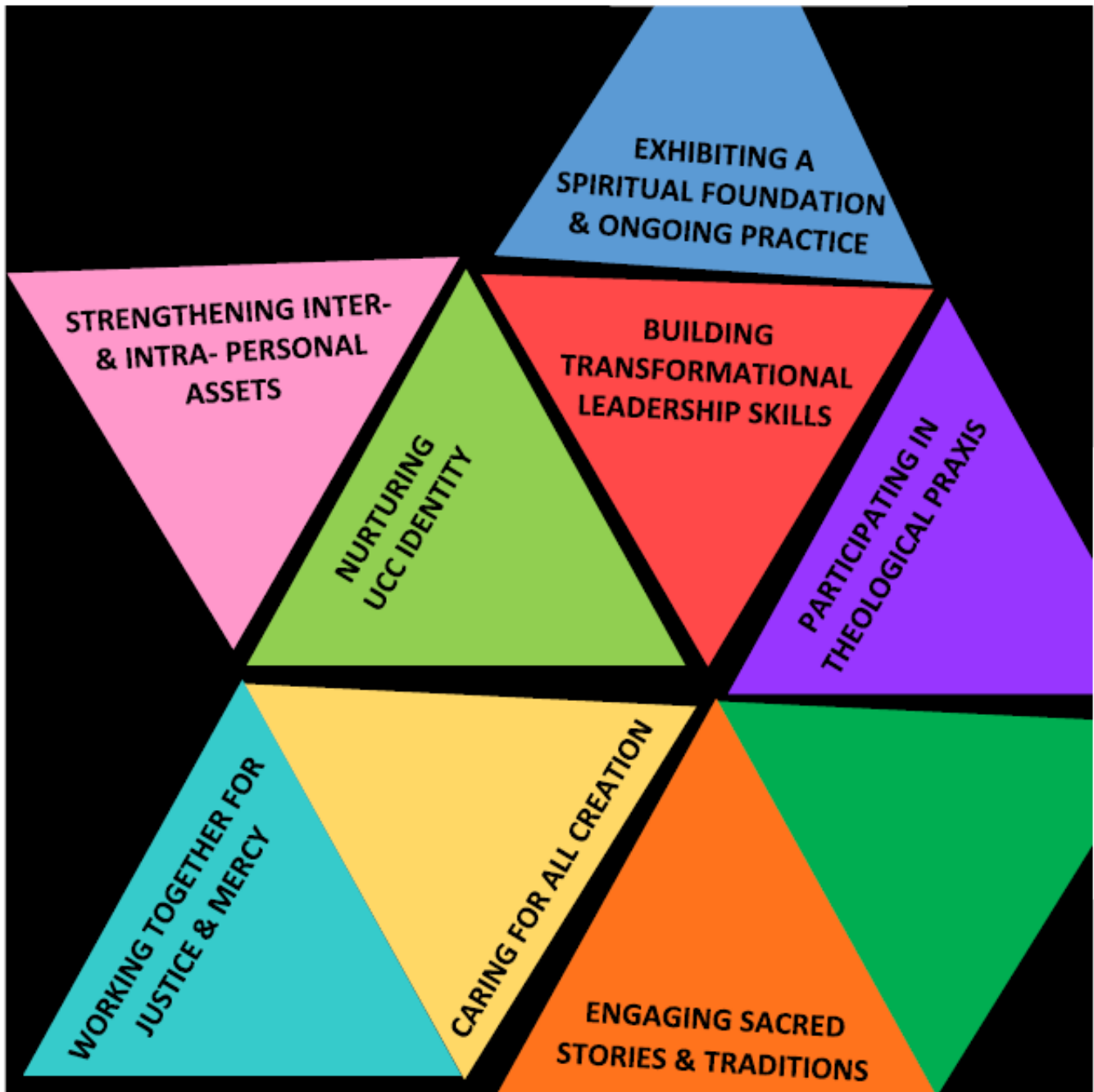
I, _____, promise to continue to faithfully discern with my covenant partners my call to ministry, including exploration regarding which form of authorized ministry may be the most appropriate response to my call. I will engage in the educational plan and formative practices developed with the Association COM that will prepare me for this calling. During this time, I will continue to participate with my Local Church, contributing to its life and witness as possible and appropriate. I will also participate in the Member in Discernment events that are planned by the PSEC JMAT. I will provide material as requested that reflect my progress to the Association Committee on Ministry and JMAT. I covenant with _____ United Church of Christ, _____, mentor, the _____ Association, and the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference as a sign of our mutual ministry in Christ’s name.

Member in Discernment

Date

Appendix L

The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ



The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ: **INTRODUCING THE REVISION**

The *Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministers* – developed as part of the work that followed General Synod’s affirmation of the Ministry Issues Pronouncement (2005) – strives to demonstrate the diverse paths of preparation and formation for authorized ministry and to highlight the complex combination of talents, understandings and skills needed for faithful and effective ministerial leadership in the United Church of Christ.

Despite their appearance on paper as a long list of specific skills, qualities and competencies, when taken as a whole the *Marks* help to paint a picture of a person’s initial preparation for and ongoing formation in authorized ministry. The *Journaling the Journey* workbook posits that the individual marks are like individual elements of a mandala – some larger, some smaller, all diverse and all necessary for the creation of a beautiful image.



Yet even the translation from a linear list of marks to a 2D mandala of marks has been insufficient, and the Habakkuk Group has identified a necessary third dimension of marks: movement indicating integration and growth. In the work of preparation and formation, the individual marks do not remain in place as stagnant elements of a picture; they tumble and shift and influence other marks, growing and reshaping across one’s journey in Christian discipleship and in authorized ministry. To use a playful 3D image, the various marks – working dynamically within and demonstrated through an individual’s life – could be said to be fragments of color in a kaleidoscope, tumbling and overlapping to create one dynamic image.

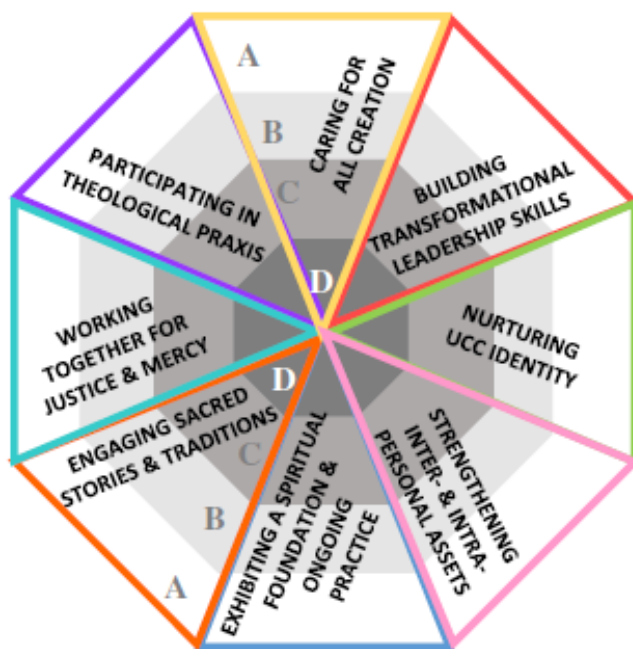


What do we mean by preparation and formation? **Formation** is the influence of time and activities, life experiences, education, practice, and reflection in community that collectively lead toward the development of knowledge, skills, understanding and commitment. **Preparation** imagines a particular end goal and strives to develop or learn what is needed toward that end goal, even while recognizing that the goal may change or may not be realized. Preparation is often particular to a season or task (e.g. Member in Discernment preparing with the hopes of being entrusted with authorization, or an authorized minister preparing for a new position in chaplaincy), while formation is lifelong. The particulars of a person’s preparation and formation for/in authorized ministry are unique: determined by call, ongoing discernment individually and in community, context, gifts and graces, and the needs of the Church, all integrated in practice and guided by God’s call to the individual, God’s call to the Church, and the *Marks*.



The Habakkuk Group, in its work to revise and re-vision the Manual on Ministry, revisited the original *Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministers* in order to unveil biases, to better highlight core habits of excellent ministerial leadership, and to slim down the total list of individual marks. The four sections of the original *Marks* have been recreated as eight primary categories and the full list of marks has been reimagined from 64 to 48, with an assessment tool and *Journaling the Journey* also updated to reflect this *Marks* revision.

With the dynamic kaleidoscope of eight categories and 48 individual marks, it becomes clear that faithfulness and effectiveness for/in authorized ministry include healthy integration and purposeful growth across the marks. The characteristics of this growth and integration can be illustrated by a deepening toward the center: The outer layer (A) indicates *experience* with a particular mark. The second layer (B) shows *deep understanding* of a particular mark. The third layer (C) demonstrates *integration* of a mark with other marks and areas of ministry. The core (D) represents *passion and love* for the mark – both the goal of growth and the originating foundation for each mark.



All Christians may exhibit any of the individual marks at any layer of growth, including the core of love for a particular mark, simply as a natural expression and demonstration of faith. These marks reflect many aspects of discipleship that Christians might strive to develop. **For authorized ministers and those seeking authorization in the United Church of Christ, the collection of marks must be taken as a whole – the *Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers*** – in which the various marks, wisdom and skills are developed and integrated together, always alongside individual and shared habits of discernment and assessment, as well as ongoing dedication to personal and professional formation. When taken as a whole and integrated (set in motion) for ministerial leadership, the *Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers* begin to look like this:



The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ

EXHIBITING A SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION AND ONGOING SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

- Loving God, following Jesus Christ, and being guided by the Holy Spirit; living a life of discipleship.
- Praying actively and nurturing spiritual practices.
- Being called to ordained ministry by God and the Church.
- Continuing discernment of one's call in community.
- Understanding the power of the Holy Spirit at work through the elements of Christian worship to nurture faith.
- Exhibiting a commitment to lifelong spiritual development and faithful personal stewardship.

NURTURING UCC IDENTITY

- Acknowledging Jesus Christ as the sole Head of the Church.
- Communicating passion for the oneness of the Body of Christ (John 17:21).
- Holding active membership in a Local Church of the United Church of Christ.
- Participating in the various settings of the United Church of Christ, including Local Churches, Associations, Conferences, General Synod, and global ministries.
- Knowing and appreciating UCC history, polity, and theology.
- Exhibiting a commitment to the core values of the United Church of Christ: continuing testament, extravagant welcome, and changing lives.

BUILDING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- Empowering the Church to be faithful to God's call, reflective of Christ's mission, and open to the surprises of the Holy Spirit.
- Strategically creating the future of God's Church.
- Witnessing in the public square to God's redeeming power.
- Performing necessary and appropriate administrative tasks.
- Working collaboratively with intercultural awareness and sensitivity.
- Encouraging leadership development of self and others through continuing education and lifelong learning.

ENGAGING SACRED STORIES AND TRADITIONS

- Exhibiting knowledge, understanding, and continuing study of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament.
- Maturing in effective proclamation and preaching.
- Understanding the history of the Christian Church, from biblical times forward.
- Bringing life to sacred stories and traditions in worship, proclamation, and witness.
- Leading faith formation effectively across generations.
- Holding the Holy with integrity especially as represented in the Sacraments.

CARING FOR ALL CREATION

- Nurturing care and compassion for God's creation.
- Maintaining a basic understanding of mental health and wellness.
- Practicing self-care and life balance.
- Providing hope and healing to a hurting world.
- Attending to one's own spiritual and pastoral care, including engagement in supervision as appropriate.
- Stewarding the resources of the Church.

PARTICIPATING IN THEOLOGICAL PRACTICE

- Practicing theological reflection and engagement as part of one's sense of ministerial identity.
- Integrating theological reflection in teaching, preaching, and ecclesial and community leadership.
- Articulating a theology and practice of ministry consistent with the UCC Manual on Ministry.
- Demonstrating an appreciation for and participation in the ecumenical and interfaith partnerships of the United Church of Christ.
- Experiencing and appreciating a variety of theological perspectives.
- Embodying the UCC Ministerial Code.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE AND MERCY

- Drawing on the ministry of Jesus Christ to confront injustice and oppression.
- Practicing the radical hospitality of God.
- Identifying and working to overcome explicit and implicit bias in the life of the Church.
- Understanding community context and navigating change with a community.
- Engaging in mission and outreach.
- Building relationships of mutual trust and interdependence.

STRENGTHENING INTER- AND INTRA- PERSONAL ASSETS

- Developing and maintaining a healthy sense of self as shaped by God, community, and life experiences.
- Living in relationships of covenantal accountability with God and the Church.
- Exhibiting strong moral character and personal integrity.
- Respecting the dignity of all God's people.
- Understanding and ministering to stages of human development across the life span.
- Demonstrating excellent communication skills.



Appendix M

The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers

AN ASSESSMENT

Date completed: _____ Name: _____

Assessing (self-assessment, MID name): _____

1 = Not at all; Have never encountered

2 = Heard of this, read about this, do occasionally

3 = Actively working on building familiarity with, and competence on, this MARK

4 = Most of the time; practice often, use often

5 = Consistently; definitely true; always practice, always make part of my life, ministry

EXHIBITING A SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION AND ONGOING SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

_____ **Loving God, following Jesus Christ, and being guided by the Holy Spirit; living a life of discipleship.**

- Understands and articulates the cost and joy of discipleship.
- Invites others into a life of discipleship through evangelism, preaching, teaching, and witness.
- Leads others to grow in a life of discipleship.

_____ **Praying actively and nurturing spiritual practices.**

- Demonstrates familiarity with various forms of prayer and spiritual practices.
- Prays in a number of contexts and/or cultures, both individually and communally.
- Walks with others as they discern their prayer style(s) and shape their prayer lives.
- Exhibits a personal life of prayer.

_____ **Being called to authorized ministry by God and the Church.**

- Demonstrates understanding of and commitment to what it means to be authorized in and on behalf of the whole UCC.
- Identifies and nurtures gifts in self and others.
- Affirms the ministry of all the baptized while articulating a theology of authorized ministry.
- Cultivates a culture of call for lay and authorized ministries in one's community of faith.

_____ **Continuing discernment of one's call in community.**

- Demonstrates familiarity with and appreciation for a variety of methods of discernment.
- Practices discernment in a variety of settings.
- Displays an openness to God's transforming action in one's life and recognizes the ongoing evolution of a personal sense of call.
- Leads others in discernment, within diverse cultural norms and traditions.

_____ **Understanding the power of the Holy Spirit at work through the elements of Christian worship to nurture faith.**

- Demonstrates familiarity with liturgical practices across a variety of cultures.
- Uses silence, language, art, music, ritual, and symbols in crafting meaningful liturgies that are respectful of cultures and peoples, and which lead to spiritual transformation.
- Connects creativity and the creative arts to an understanding of being made in the image of God the Creator in theology and practice.

_____ **Exhibiting a commitment to lifelong spiritual development and faithful personal stewardship.**

- Understands the value of ongoing spiritual nurture and development as an authorized minister of the United Church of Christ.
- Practices a variety of spiritual disciplines on a regular basis.
- Encourages and nurtures others in spiritual formation and faith development over the lifespan.
- Recognizes and resources constituents who have multiple or no religious affiliations.

TOTAL (6-30) = _____

1 = Not at all; Have never encountered

2 = Heard of this, read about this, do occasionally

3 = Actively working on building familiarity with, and competence on, this MARK

4 = Most of the time; practice often, use often

5 = Consistently; definitely true; always practice, always make part of my life, ministry

NURTURING UCC IDENTITY

_____ **Acknowledging Jesus Christ as the sole Head of the Church.**

- Orders one's life and ministry in relation to Jesus Christ's role as sole head of the church.
- Is faithful to Christ's presence and mission in the world.
- Articulates an understanding of the Church that is faithful to God's mission in the world and open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, both as the Church has been and is becoming.
- Teaches others the implications of Christ's role as head of the Church

_____ **Communicating passion for the oneness of the body of Christ (John 17:21).**

- Describes, appreciates and participates in the ecumenical relationships of the United Church of Christ.
- Welcomes and affirms diverse voices within the UCC, including those with whom the individual disagrees or has no experience.
- Leads others in ministries that cross boundaries of difference.
- Has a heart for UCC values of "Open and Affirming," intercultural and multiracial, and "Accessible to All."

_____ **Holding active membership in a local church of the United Church of Christ.**

- Maintains a covenantal relationship, as a baptized disciple of Christ, with a particular local congregation of the United Church of Christ.
- Exercises leadership in the local and wider church, in a variety of traditional and emerging settings.
- Mentors others in their relationship with the local church.
- Represents the United Church of Christ as the denomination of one's heart in its local expression.

_____ **Participating in the various settings of the United Church of Christ, including local churches, associations, conferences, general synod, and global ministries.**

- Understands the covenantal relationship of each setting of the United Church of Christ (local, association, conference, and national).
- Ministers in and appreciates the various settings of the United Church of Christ.
- Teaches others how the various settings of the church relate to one another covenantally.
- Encourages participation in and financial support of the wider church.

_____ **Knowing and appreciating UCC history, polity, and theology.**

- Articulates the diverse histories that comprise the UCC, both in its formation and ongoing development.
- Places one's own journey of faith within these contexts.
- Describes and appreciates the structure and governance of the United Church of Christ.
- Teaches others about the history, polity, theology and witness through the ages of the UCC.

_____ **Exhibiting a commitment to the core values of the United Church of Christ: continuing testament, extravagant welcome, and changing lives.**

- Understands the core values of the United Church of Christ.
- Incorporates these values into one's ministry.
- Leads others in the goals of the United Church of Christ: bold, public voice; welcoming, reachable congregations; engaged discipleship; and excellent, diverse leaders.

TOTAL (6-30) = _____

- 1 = Not at all; Have never encountered
 2 = Heard of this, read about this, do occasionally
 3 = Actively working on building familiarity with, and competence on, this MARK
 4 = Most of the time; practice often, use often
 5 = Consistently; definitely true; always practice, always make part of my life, ministry

BUILDING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Empowering the Church faithful to God’s call, reflective of Christ’s mission, and open to the surprises of the Holy Spirit.

- Takes initiative in leading.
- Leads by framing a vision in community.
- Motivates others to test and share in a vision and to work toward its realization.
- Demonstrates flexibility and a spirit of discernment.

Strategically creating the future of God’s church.

- Exercises effective and adaptive leadership.
- Models interdependence.
- Assesses needs; plans, implements and evaluates ministries to meet identified needs; and continues to improve the future of those ministries.

Witnessing in the public square to God’s redeeming power.

- Responds to local and global events and provides prophetic leadership in effecting systemic change.
- Speaks truthfully to and about systems of oppressions and interpersonal behaviors of bias.
- Accesses and promotes use of resources on social justice and advocacy.

Performing necessary and appropriate administrative tasks.

- Manages professional and supervisory relationships equitably.
- Demonstrates personal and organizational financial literacy.
- Delegates and lifts up the gifts of others.
- Learns new skills as needed in ministerial roles (e.g. technological).

Working collaboratively with intercultural awareness and sensitivity.

- Understands power dynamics and dominant privilege.
- Appreciates the gifts of diverse persons, and works cooperatively across cultures and generations.
- Practices humility; asks for and extends forgiveness when mistakes are made.

Encouraging leadership development of self and others through continuing education and lifelong learning.

- Commits to lifelong learning.
- Demonstrates a commitment to ongoing discernment about one’s call to ministry.
- Trains members of teams, boards and committees.
- Transitions well from one ministry setting to another, including retirement from active ministry.

TOTAL (6-30) = _____

ENGAGING SACRED STORIES AND TRADITIONS

Exhibiting knowledge, understanding, and continuing study of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament.

- Understands the historical development of the Bible, including the social, economic, and political contexts out of which biblical literature grew.
- Leads Bible studies informed by scholarly methods of Biblical interpretation.
- Reads the Bible prayerfully.
- Uses appropriate interpretive lenses, including those that bend toward love, compassion, and justice

1 = Not at all; Have never encountered

2 = Heard of this, read about this, do occasionally

3 = Actively working on building familiarity with, and competence on, this MARK

4 = Most of the time; practice often, use often

5 = Consistently; definitely true; always practice, always make part of my life, ministry

_____ **Maturing in effective proclamation and preaching.**

- Relates the social, economic, and political contexts of biblical literature to current issues and contexts.
- Crafts and delivers sermons toward individual and communal transformation grounded in sacred stories and traditions.
- Fosters appreciation for diverse ways of understanding the sacred texts and for diverse styles of preaching.
- Discerns and articulates, theologically, one's own sacred story.

_____ **Understanding the history of the Christian church, from biblical times forward.**

- Demonstrates knowledge of the development of Christianity through the ages and relates it to current and emerging realities of the Church Universal and its local contexts.
- Traces the development of Christianity globally, with sensitivity to colonial and post-colonial implications.
- Locates the history and heritage of one's constituencies within the broader scope of the historical development of global Christianity.
- Demonstrates an understanding of the dynamic history of new expressions of the Church.

_____ **Bringing life to the sacred stories and traditions in worship, proclamation and witness.**

- Affirms diverse practices in worship, proclamation and witness, and incorporates them into worship planning appropriately.
- Allows the Holy Spirit to move within the worship experience.
- Appreciates the role of music and the arts in worship.

_____ **Leading faith formation effectively across generations.**

- Demonstrates knowledge of current best practices in faith formation and implements them for particular contexts.
- Understands generational cohorts and generational differences.
- Forms and empowers faith leaders of all generations.

_____ **Holding the Holy with integrity especially as represented in the Sacraments.**

- Affirms the two sacraments of baptism and holy communion as described in the Preamble of the UCC Constitution.
- Presides over the sacraments meaningfully and with integrity.
- Teaches and preaches on the historical, biblical, ecumenical, and personal significance of the sacraments in particular contexts and settings.
- Distinguishes between sacraments and other rites of the church (such as funerals and weddings) and follows civil laws when representing both church and state.

TOTAL (6-30) = _____

CARING FOR ALL CREATION

_____ **Nurturing care and compassion for all God's creation.**

- Employs appropriate relational skills.
- Demonstrates emotional intelligence of oneself and in interactions with others.
- Expresses and helps others understand the notion of interdependence among all God's creation.
- Relates care for self and others to care for the earth.

1 = Not at all; Have never encountered

2 = Heard of this, read about this, do occasionally

3 = Actively working on building familiarity with, and competence on, this MARK

4 = Most of the time; practice often, use often

5 = Consistently; definitely true; always practice, always make part of my life, ministry

Maintaining a basic understanding of mental health and wellness.0

- Distinguishes “normal” from “pathological” behavior, and knows one’s own limits as a provider of pastoral care.
- Identifies and uses community resources for one’s own personal and professional wellness.
- Refers constituents to community mental health resources as needed.
- Accompanies individuals, families, and communities through periods of mental illness and recovery, or chronic mental illness, with appropriate spiritual support.

Practicing self-care and life balance.

- Leads by example and through active teaching how to live responsibly in relation to self, family, church, community, and the environment.
- Takes time away from work in order to play.
- Develops relationships outside of one’s ministry setting.

Providing hope and healing to a hurting world.

- Prays with and for those in need, and provides spiritual counsel appropriately.
- Plans and leads services of lament, healing and hope.
- Enacts the rites of the church with integrity and sensitivity to particular cultural contexts.
- Embodies hope and healing in the midst of struggle.

Attending to one’s own spiritual and pastoral care, including engagement in supervision as appropriate.

- participates in ministerial oversight, pastoral relations and evaluation congruent with one’s setting and within the UCC covenants of mutual accountability.
- Is cognizant of and practices appropriate personal boundaries.
- Participates in spiritual direction, communities of practice, counseling, or other practices of growth and accountability.

Stewarding the resources of the Church.

- helps the church plan faithfully for stewardship
- understand and oversees annual audits and monthly reporting of all finances
- helps others learn how they can use their gifts, talents, and skills for the building up of the Body of Christ.

TOTAL (6-30) = _____

PARTICIPATING IN THEOLOGICAL PRAXIS

Practicing theological reflection and engagement as part of one’s sense of ministerial identity.

- Thinks theologically and acts in ways consistent with one’s theological commitments.
- Reads and critically evaluates theological texts, informed by a variety of Christian traditions.
- Thinks theologically about contemporary issues related to the United Church of Christ’s mission, and helps others do the same.
- Reflects theologically on experience, opens oneself to new insights, and acts in new ways fueled by those theological insights.

Integrating theological reflection in teaching, preaching, and ecclesial and community leadership.

- Teaches others to reflect theologically.
- Helps constituents bring their theological commitments to bear on significant life decisions.
- Identifies and interprets theological implications of social discourse, public policy, and community engagement.

1 = Not at all; Have never encountered

2 = Heard of this, read about this, do occasionally

3 = Actively working on building familiarity with, and competence on, this MARK

4 = Most of the time; practice often, use often

5 = Consistently; definitely true; always practice, always make part of my life, ministry

_____ **Articulating a theology and practice of ministry consistent with the UCC Manual on Ministry.**

- Recognizes Jesus as the Sole Head of the Church
- Relates one's theology of ministry to the UCC's understanding of the priesthood of all believers and the nature of authorized ministry
- Integrates one's theology of ministry with the UCC's covenants of mutual accountability
- Demonstrates an appreciation for the formal ecumenical relationships in which the UCC participates
- Respects and encourages ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and activity, especially around issues of common concern within one's community

_____ **Experiencing and appreciating a variety of theological perspectives.**

- Demonstrates knowledge of and appreciation for theological perspectives other than one's own.
- Assists others to appreciate theological perspectives reflected in the diverse communities that comprise the United Church of Christ.
- Understands the variety of theological perspectives in the broader culture, and engages respectfully and boldly in public theological discourse.

_____ **Demonstrating an appreciation for and participation in the ecumenical and interfaith partnerships of the UCC.**

- Understands the history of the global community of United and Uniting Churches and the place of the UCC within it.
- Demonstrates appreciation for the formal ecumenical relationships in which the UCC participates.
- Respects and encourages ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and activity, especially around issues of common concern within one's community.
- Relates to constituents and their families/communities who experience multiple religious belongings.

_____ **Embodying the United Church of Christ Ministerial Code of Ethics.**

- Understands and incorporates of the Code of Ethics into one's personal and professional life.

TOTAL (6-30) = _____

WORKING TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE AND MERCY

_____ **Drawing on the ministry of Jesus Christ to confront injustice and oppression.**

- Preaches and teaches effectively about social, economic, and environmental justice as an essential part of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Serves as an educator, advocate and community organizer in an area of social justice work.
- Works effectively for justice with ecumenical and interfaith partners and with people of no faith.
- Analyzes systems and works for systemic change.

_____ **Practicing the radical hospitality of God.**

- Practices ministry within one's own culture with awareness and appreciation of the multi-cultural gifts of the UCC and Church Universal.
- Understands and commits to minister in ways that are accessible to all.
- Practices forgiveness and reconciliation, and works toward restorative justice.
- Reaches across cultures with mutuality for the sake of the Gospel.

1 = Not at all; Have never encountered

2 = Heard of this, read about this, do occasionally

3 = Actively working on building familiarity with, and competence on, this MARK

4 = Most of the time; practice often, use often

5 = Consistently; definitely true; always practice, always make part of my life, ministry

Identifying and working to overcome explicit and implicit bias in the life of the Church.

- Reflects self-critically on one's social location and areas of privilege.
- Helps others learn and practice intercultural competencies.
- Understands the impact of racism, sexism, classism, hetero- and cis-normativity, ableism, cultural imperialism, and other forms of oppression on the church and the world, and engages in sacred conversations about these topics.

Engaging in mission and outreach.

- Articulates a theology of mission consistent with critical presence, mutuality, community, justice, and peace.
- Accesses resources provided by the United Church of Christ for education, advocacy and empowerment, and promoting their use among constituents and the local church.
- Encourages others to support and participate in the wider church, including global and domestic ministry partnerships.

Building relationships of mutual trust and interdependence.

- Seeks out and uses tools to understand and provide leadership in relating a ministry to its constituents and geographic context.
- Navigates organizations and community systems effectively and with integrity.
- Builds relationships of mutual trust and collaboration.
- Solves complex problems and practices conflict transformation.

Understanding community context and navigating change with a community.

- Seeks out and uses tools to understand and provide leadership in relating a ministry to its constituents and geographic context.
- Navigates organizations and community systems effectively.
- Builds relationships of mutual trust and collaboration.
- Solves complex problems and practices conflict transformation.

TOTAL (6-30) = _____

STRENGTHENING INTER- AND INTRA- PERSONAL ASSETS

Developing and maintaining a healthy sense of self as shaped by God, community, and life experiences.

- Identifies one's strengths and weaknesses, functions within one's limits, and seeks the appropriate support of others in enhancing emotional maturity.
- Identifies one's own implicit biases that impact interactions with others and works to overcome those biases.

Living in relationships of covenantal accountability with God and the Church.

- Articulates a theology and spirituality of covenant.
- Lives covenantally among one's constituents or local church.
- Teaches or mentors others in relationships of covenantal accountability with God, each other, and various settings of the church.
- Participates in covenantal relationships with the wider church, such as the association, conference, and national setting of the UCC.

Exhibiting strong moral character and personal integrity.

- Demonstrates a commitment to spiritual, physical, emotional, and financial wellness sufficient for healthy ministry.
- Supports moral and ethical development through teaching, preaching, counseling, and engagement with the world, informed by Christian scriptures and traditions.
- Demonstrates knowledge and observance of personal and professional boundaries.

1 = Not at all; Have never encountered

2 = Heard of this, read about this, do occasionally

3 = Actively working on building familiarity with, and competence on, this MARK

4 = Most of the time; practice often, use often

5 = Consistently; definitely true; always practice, always make part of my life, ministry

_____ **Respecting the dignity of all God's people.**

- Provides pastoral care as needed to all, regardless of creed, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical and mental abilities, class, or theological perspective.
- Respects others across differences, interacts with others in ways that affirm their sense of dignity (individually and as members of particular communities), and helps others do the same.

_____ **Understanding and ministering to stages of human development across the life span.**

- Demonstrates a healthy understanding of the dynamics of childhood and adolescence, marriage and singleness, parenting and caregiving, death and trauma, grief and recovery.
- Walks as a spiritual companion with individuals, families and communities as they journey through life milestones, joy, grief, and healing.
- Provides sound spiritual counsel to those facing life transitions and the end of life, and to those making difficult decisions around major life events.

_____ **Demonstrating excellent communication skills.**

- Communicates respectfully and effectively in diverse settings.
- Uses social media effectively and appropriately.
- Engages in "holy listening and speaking" and keeps appropriate confidences.
- Engages productively in public discourse.

TOTAL (6-30) = _____

Appendix N

Chart for Educational Formation Planning

Instructions for the Joint MID Assessment Team:

1. Begin by reviewing **The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the UCC** (Appendix L). Pay special attention to the introduction (pages 2-3).
2. Using the candidate's spiritual journey, transcripts, and portfolio look for evidence of competencies for each Mark. You may want to make notes using colored pencils corresponding to each of the eight sections of the Marks.
3. Note initially which sections the candidate demonstrates strength and which sections need further development. For example, does the candidate have some experience with this Mark; do they demonstrate a deep understanding of this Mark; have they integrated this Mark with other Marks and with their ministry; do they exhibit a passion for this Mark, such that they can lead others in its development? A copy of **The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers Assessment** (Appendix M) should be completed by the candidate/MID, the Committee on Ministry, Joint MID Assessment Team, and several persons familiar with the candidate's spiritual journey and faith practices and reviewed jointly.
4. Use these initial assessments as the basis for dialogue as you enter into the discernment process with the candidate. Determine what further evidence needs to be presented and/or what areas need further learning.
5. Develop an *Educational Formation Plan* tailored to the individual that will enable the candidate to acquire the learning and/or experience to develop competency in Marks where growth is lacking. The *Educational Formation Plan* should indicate specific desired outcomes, a timeline, and how the learning will be subsequently evaluated. Feel free to consult field experts (e.g., seminary professors, mentors, and practitioners), as needed.
6. The Joint MID Assessment Team will meet regularly during the ongoing process of formation, preparation and continuing education.
7. JMAT will maintain records that are shared with the candidate to keep track of observations of maturation and integration. When the competency has been sufficiently demonstrated, use the form to "sign-off" on the Mark. Sufficiency does not mean perfection. It means evidence of competency (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) sufficient for authorized ministry, with the expectation that all ministers will be lifelong learners.

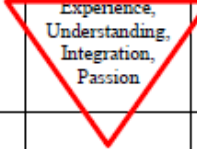
EXHIBITING A SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION AND ONGOING SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

	Initial Assessment: Experience, Understanding, Integration, Passion	Demonstration of Competency	Recommendations for Ongoing Growth	Observation of Maturation and Integration	Notes	COM Sign-off
Loving God, following Jesus Christ, and being guided by the Holy Spirit; living a life of discipleship.						
Praying actively and nurturing spiritual practices.						
Being called to ordained ministry by God and the Church.						
Continuing discernment of one's call in community.						
Understanding the power of the Holy Spirit at work through the elements of Christian worship to nurture faith.						
Exhibiting a commitment to lifelong spiritual development and faithful personal stewardship.						

NURTURING UCC IDENTITY

	Initial Assessment: Experience, Understanding, Integration, Passion	Demonstration of Competency	Recommendations for Ongoing Growth	Observation of Maturation and Integration	Notes	COM Sign-off
Acknowledging Jesus Christ as the sole Head of the Church.						
Communicating passion for the oneness of the Body of Christ (John 17:21).						
Holding active membership in a Local Church of the United Church of Christ.						
Participating in the various settings of the UCC, including Local Churches, Associations, Conferences, General Synod, and global ministries.						
Knowing and appreciating UCC history, polity, and theology.						
Exhibiting a commitment to the core values of the UCC: continuing testament, extravagant welcome, and changing lives.						

BUILDING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS

	Initial Assessment: <small>Experience, Understanding, Integration, Passion</small>	Demonstration of Competency	Recommendations for Ongoing Growth	Observation of Maturation and Integration	Notes	COM Sign-off
Empowering the Church to be faithful to God's call, reflective of Christ's mission, and open to the surprises of the Holy Spirit.						
Strategically creating the future of God's Church.						
Witnessing in the public square to God's redeeming power.						
Performing necessary and appropriate administrative tasks.						
Working collaboratively with intercultural awareness and sensitivity.						
Encouraging leadership development of self and others through continuing education and lifelong learning.						

ENGAGING SACRED STORIES AND TRADITIONS

	Initial Assessment: Experience, Understanding, Integration, Passion	Demonstration of Competency	Recommendations for Ongoing Growth	Observation of Maturation and Integration	Notes	COM Sign-off
Exhibiting knowledge, understanding, and continuing study of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament.						
Maturing in effective proclamation and preaching.						
Understanding the history of the Christian Church, from biblical times forward.						
Bringing life to sacred stories and traditions in worship, proclamation, and witness.						
Leading faith formation effectively across generations.						
Holding the Holy with integrity especially as represented in the Sacraments.						

CARING FOR ALL CREATION0

	Initial Assessment: Experience, Understanding, Integration, Passion	Demonstration of Competency	Recommendations for Ongoing Growth	Observation of Maturation and Integration	Notes	COM Sign-off
Nurturing care and compassion for God's creation.						
Maintaining a basic understanding of mental health and wellness.						
Practicing self-care and life balance.						
Providing hope and healing to a hurting world.						
Attending to one's own spiritual and pastoral care, including engagement in supervision as appropriate.						
Stewarding the resources of the Church.						

PARTICIPATING IN THEOLOGICAL PRAXIS

	Initial Assessment: Experience, Understanding, Integration, Passion	Demonstration of Competency	Recommendations for Ongoing Growth	Observation of Maturation and Integration	Notes	COM Sign-off
Practicing theological reflection and engagement as part of one's sense of ministerial identity.						
Integrating theological reflection in teaching, preaching, and ecclesial and community leadership.						
Articulating a theology and practice of ministry consistent with the UCC Manual on Ministry.						
Demonstrating an appreciation for and participation in the ecumenical and interfaith partnerships of the UCC.						
Experiencing and appreciating a variety of theological perspectives.						
Embodying the UCC Ministerial Code.						

WORKING TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE AND MERCY

	Initial Assessment: Experience, Understanding, Integration, Passion	Demonstration of Competency	Recommendations for Ongoing Growth	Observation of Maturation and Integration	Notes	COM Sign-off
Drawing on the ministry of Jesus Christ to confront injustice and oppression.						
Practicing the radical hospitality of God.						
Identifying and working to overcome explicit and implicit bias in the life of the Church.						
Understanding community context and navigating change with a community.						
Engaging in mission and outreach.						
Building relationships of mutual trust and interdependence.						

STRENGTHENING INTER- AND INTRA- PERSONAL ASSETS

	Initial Assessment: Experience, Understanding, Integration, Passion	Demonstration of Competency	Recommendations for Ongoing Growth	Observation of Maturation and Integration	Notes	COM Sign-off
Developing and maintaining a healthy sense of self as shaped by God, community, and life experiences.						
Living in relationships of covenantal accountability with God and the Church.						
Exhibiting strong moral character and personal integrity.						
Respecting the dignity of all God's people.						
Understanding and ministering to stages of human development across the life span.						
Demonstrating excellent communication skills.						

Appendix O

Lay Ministerial Standing Process

“When a lay member has been identified to meet the representative need of the United Church of Christ in a specific time and place of ministerial service, both the need and the person are introduced to the Committee on Ministry (COM) for its discernment of the appropriateness of Lay Ministerial Standing (LMS). The COM meets with the person, a representative of the congregation, and an Association or Conference Staff person to determine if the identified need warrants LMS for a lay person to represent and serve on behalf of the UCC in a specific role and ministry setting, and to make provisions for four steps of ecclesial due diligence:

1. A criminal background check through Oxford Documents Company;
2. A self-disclosure form;
3. A psychological assessment;
4. An interview with the COM to review the responsibilities of the call and the gifts and graces of the lay person to satisfy those responsibilities, as well as the expectations of the UCC Ministerial Code and the lay person’s capacity to adhere to the Code.

LMS should not be granted before the lay person has signed a self-disclosure form, the Committee has reviewed the criminal background check and psychological assessment report, and an interview has been held.” (MOM 2018, pages 69-70)

For the duration of LMS, a COM is responsible for the ongoing support and oversight of the Lay Minister, including the assignment of an LMS Supervisor who provides support and guidance on behalf of the COM. Please see the Manual on Ministry (MOM 2018, pages 67-76 for more information on the process.)

If a Member in Discernment is granted LMS, please pay close attention to the process in the Manual on Ministry on page 74-75.

Appendix P

The responsibilities of the MENTOR are as follows:

- Receive orientation from the Association regarding the advisor's role and seek appropriate training (spiritual direction, life coaching, listening skills workshops, etc.) for the work of advisement.
- Act on behalf of the Committee on Ministry with the Committee's full and current knowledge of the MID's progress and the MENTOR's practices, advice and role.
- Maintain frequent contact with the MID via e-mails, telephone calls, written communication, and face-to-face meetings. Meetings should occur **at least** once a month.
- Offer on-going advice and counsel.
- Provide guidance, in consultation with the Association's Committee on Ministry, concerning course work and other educational opportunities.
- Help the MID understand the expectations of the Committee on Ministry concerning the individual's path of preparation for authorized ministry.
- Help the MID understand the UCC's procedures for the authorization of ministries.
- Encourage the MID to participate in the life of his/her local congregation.
- Encourage the MID to be active in Association and Conference activities.
- Help the MID secure financial support for the preparation process. (See Appendix U)
- Help the MID evaluate and select appropriate educational opportunities from among the possible paths of preparation for ministry (seminary courses, regional theological education programs, mentoring, etc.).
- Help the MID prepare the necessary documentation and reports required by the Association and the broader church.
- Accompany the MID to meetings of the Committee on Ministry in order to review progress.
- Foster the deepening of the MID's Christian faith and life.

If applicable, please list all courses you plan to take in the upcoming year:

Name of Faculty Advisor: _____ Advisor's Phone: _____

Employment Information

Position/Title: _____ Employer: _____

Work Address: _____

Work Phone: _____ Email address: _____

Is it acceptable to call you at your workplace? No Yes Send email to you at work? No Yes

Reflections on the Past Year

Please attach a separate sheet of paper if additional space is necessary.

This year, did you:

- meet with the Joint MID Assessment Team? No Yes
- complete a field work assignment, internship, or CPE? No Yes
- attend the PSEC MID Academy? No Yes
- attend at least one Association meeting? No Yes
- attend at least one Conference meeting? No Yes

Attach your **growth plan** and indicate which items you worked on this year.

How many meetings did you have with your MID Mentor in the past year?

Over the past year, what have been your **most significant challenges/concerns** in your studies and/or work?

What gives you the **most satisfaction or sense of accomplishment** in your studies/work?

How are you involved in the life of your local church? In this Association? In the Conference?

Are you involved in any other religious or secular **volunteer activities**?

Do you have a **field placement** planned for the coming year? If yes, what are your objectives for that placement?

Are there any **issues or concerns** that you feel the Committee on Ministry needs to be aware of?

Please return this MID Review to:

Chair of the COM: _____
Address: _____

Email: _____
MID Subcommittee Use Only
Date Received: _____

Appendix R

Member in Discernment Annual Review (202__)

Question: Does this person show promise for becoming an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ? Is that potential being developed so it is likely that ordination can be granted at the conclusion of the process?

Date of **Notification** to Member in Discernment **of Annual Review**

(with Annual Review Form attached/enclosed): _____

Attach a letter or report from the **Joint MID Assessment Team** on this MID's progress in the past year.

Date of **Annual Review**: _____

Member-in-Discernment Subcommittee/COM Members present: _____

Current **Academic Status** and **Institution**

(e.g., College Junior, M.Div. Middler, D.Min. Cand., etc.): _____ at _____

If applicable, were **Transcripts/Grade Reports Provided**: Yes No

Did Member in Discernment provide completed **Annual Review Form**? Yes No

Was **Member in Discernment Process Checklist** reviewed and updated? Yes No

Were **PSEC Guidelines For Ordination** reviewed? Yes No

If applicable, was **Scholarship Information** disseminated? Yes No

If applicable, notified of any mandatory trainings (MID Days, etc.)? Yes No

Was a **Covenantal Agreement/Action Plan** previously developed? Yes No

If yes, is the Member in Discernment compliant? Yes No

Comments:

Concerns or questions voiced by Member in Discernment:

Decision to Renew person's Member in Discernment status for another year: Yes No

Mentor assigned for upcoming year: _____

Appendix S

THE ORDINATION PAPER

An ordination paper is a requirement of all MIDs seeking ordination and is to be prepared after the MID has completed the program of education and training as previously agreed upon with the COM. The paper will be written in three parts.

Part one is the candidate's theological perspective. This paper is to be seen as a setting forth of one's own theological perspective, not as an academic term paper. There are many ways in which a candidate could go about writing this part. One way would be to state what one believes in the context of or in relation to the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith, or in the context of, or in relation to, paragraph 2 of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ. The purpose of part one is to provide a way for the candidate to share her or his present grasp and understanding of the teachings and traditions of the Christian Church and relate this to her or his own theological perspective.

Part two of the ordination paper is intended to provide an opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate his or her knowledge and understanding of the history, theological roots, polity, and practice of the United Church of Christ. The student could write an interpretation of the history and theological roots of the United Church of Christ, referring to and commenting on key dates, persons, events, and documents that illustrate his or her interpretation in addressing the polity and practice issues. The candidate could identify and define some key words and use them to characterize the polity and practice of the United Church of Christ (e.g., covenant, unity, autonomy, congregational, etc.). The candidate then could illustrate how these understandings make claims on the way he or she will practice ministry as an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ. Another approach would be to write an interpretation of paragraphs 6, 9, 16, 17, and 18 of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ.

Part three of the ordination paper is intended to be an integrating statement that invites the candidate to relate the faith and practice of the Church to her or his own pilgrimage of faith and understandings of and intentions for her or his ministry as a person ordained by the United Church of Christ. Following are suggestions for subject matter for part three:

- The person as a person of faith. What has been your faith pilgrimage? How has your understanding of yourself as a person of faith changed and grown during the time of preparation for ministry?
- The person as one called to ordained ministry. How has your understanding of call changed or grown during the period of preparation? What is your understanding of ordination? church? mission? ministry? What is the challenge and vision you have for your ministry?
- The person as one called to a particular type of ordained ministry. Describe how you see yourself functioning in the type of ministry and setting for ministry for which you have been preparing.
- The person as one called to ordained ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ. How do you understand yourself as an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ? What are your commitments to the United Church of Christ and the Church Ecumenical? What are those aspects of the history, tradition, polity, and practice of the United Church of Christ that are most valued by you, and how will these shape the way you engage in the tasks of ordained ministry?

Appendix T

OUTLINE FOR THE ORDINATION INTERVIEW

Outline for the Ordination Interview

1. Introduction of the candidate, the advisor, the local church representative, each member of the Committee on Ministry, and any others who may be present.
2. A time for prayer or worship.
3. Preview of the agenda and procedure to be used in the ordination interview.
4. A statement by the mentor reviewing the Member in Discernment period and his or her perceptions of the candidate based on that experience.
5. A statement by the candidate about his or her pilgrimage during the Member in Discernment process and present sense of call to ordained ministry.
6. A statement by the candidate about the type of call being sought (local church pastorate or other type of ordained ministry position) or information about a call if one is being considered or has been extended.
7. Discussion by the COM with the candidate about questions or issues that were raised by the candidate's statement or by any of the documentation provided by the candidate.
8. Candidate and guests are temporarily excused while COM deliberates and votes.
9. COM informs candidate of decision.
10. Closure, including a statement by the COM to the Candidate about next steps.

Guidelines for the Ordination Interview

In conducting its examination, the Committee on the Ministry will use all of the data it has gathered to guide it during the examination and in making its decision. The Committee will be alert both to tangible and intangible evidences of the candidate's fitness for ordained ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ. It will recognize that fitness is more than having attained the educational qualifications. Using the Marks and the sample questions below, may enable the Committee to inquire into the substance of the candidate's fitness for ordained ministry.

- **Faith and Calling.** Is this a person of mature Christian faith? Does this person have a personal spiritual life and practice that can sustain her or him in the rigors of ordained ministry? Does this person understand the meaning of call to ministry and give evidence of an authentic call to ordained ministry? Can this person clearly articulate her or his theological perspective?
- **Church Loyalty and Commitment.** How does this person understand the polity of the United Church of Christ and the role and expectations of an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ within this polity? Is this person committed to the United Church of Christ? Will this person be a respected representative of the United Church of Christ? How does this person understand the ecumenical commitments of the United Church of Christ and what are his or her ecumenical understandings and commitments?
- **Knowledge and Skills.** Does this person have a general liberal arts education and give evidence of being an educated person? Is this person adequately educated in Bible, theology, church history, worship, pastoral care and counseling, administration, church education, and so on? Is there documentation that this person has acquired the skills necessary for ordained ministry? Does this person give evidence of knowing the norms of the United Church of Christ in these areas? Can this person do the work of an ordained minister?
- **Character and Personal Qualities.** Is this a mature person with a sense of integrity? Is this a person others will be able to trust and on whom they will be able to rely? Will this person be dependable? Will he or she continue to grow?
- **Understandings of Ordained Ministry.** Does this person have a realistic understanding of the expectations, requirements, and demands of ordained ministry? Has the person received or is the person seeking a call to a particular type of ordained ministry? How does the person see herself or himself functioning in that particular type of ministry and particular setting for ministry?

Appendix U

PENNSYLVANIA SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
GRANT ASSISTANCE FOR SEMINARIANS POLICY
Changes approved April 10, 2019 by the Church and Ministry Council -
This policy replaces any and all other policy statements made previous to this date.

For a number of years the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference has provided scholarships for members in discernment of the Associations. These scholarships have been funded by the income from the Heidelberg Endowment of the PSEC. Most recently we have been able to support full-time students at the rate not to exceed \$500/semester; part-time students have received half that amount.

In order to make the best use of Conference resources and support our students in an equitable way, the following refinements to the scholarship program (Student Grant Assistance) were approved by the Church and Ministry Council on September 10, 2012, and updated on April 10, 2019:

- Grants will be provided to each student enrolled full-time in a Master's of Divinity program at an accredited seminary not to exceed \$3000 over the course of study (based on six semesters of full-time coursework).
- Grants will be provided for part-time students enrolled in a Master's of Divinity program at an accredited seminary at the rate of half the amount granted to full-time students.
- The dollar amount of assistance in any given year may vary depending on investment income.

STUDENT GRANT ASSISTANCE FOR SEMINARIANS Guidelines and Application Procedures

GUIDELINES

The Conference Student Grant Assistance Program for Seminarians is administered by the Church and Ministry Council in collaboration with the Committee on Ministry of the Associations.

1. The Conference Student Grant Assistance Program for Seminarians seeks to provide assistance to persons enrolled in a Master's of Divinity program in an accredited seminary who are members of the United Church of Christ and officially enrolled as a Member in Discernment of an Association or Conference and who are preparing for a church-related occupation.
2. Awards under the Conference Student Grant Assistance Program for Seminarians are supplemental to all other resources available to the seminarian, whether from a college, seminary, local church, family, scholarships and other sources.
3. The awards are made payable directly to the student.
4. Awards are made semi-annually for the school year.
5. All applications must first be approved by the Association Committee on Ministry in which the seminarian has Member in Discernment status and recommended by that committee or its appointed officer.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND DEADLINES

1. Application forms will be made available by the Conference to Association Committee on Ministry chairs to pass on to the seminary students in their association.
2. The application forms should be completed in their entirety and be returned to the Association Committee Chair or its appointed officer for review, approval and recommendation by the following dates:

(Please note, incomplete forms will not be reviewed.)

Fall Semester: Forms to COMs by May 1st ; due to the Conference Office by June 15th
Spring Semester: Forms to COMs by August 1st ; due to the Conference Office by September 15th

3. The target dates for the distribution of awards are July 1st and October 1st. Checks will be mailed directly to the students.