



CoM Discernment Working Group Presentation of Ordination Paper Worship

The Committee on Ministry aims to partner with you in your ongoing discernment of your ministry. We hope to be able to see you in all of the roles of ministry. Ordination is a step in a life-long process, not an end goal in itself.

THE ORDINATION PAPER

The ordination paper will give the Committee on Ministry (COM) a sense of you as pastor, in your roles as student, pastoral counselor, worship leader, priest, preacher and prophet. The paper will demonstrate to COM your competence in writing, the narrative and development of your call to ministry, the coherence of your theology, and your self-awareness.

Your ordination paper will express your theological understanding of Christian ministry framed by *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministry*. Please give examples of how *the Marks* are evident in your life and ministry. Include your theological perspective, and your knowledge of the history, theological roots, polity, and practice of the UCC, referring to the questions below.

This paper is expected to be approximately 4000 words (16 pages) and **will include your personal Christian experience, your call to ministry, and articulate your understanding of theological concepts**, both new and traditional, as they relate to the Christian life. You may feel free to include aspects of your Faith Journey Paper written at the beginning of your discernment process.

The following questions can help you think about *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministry*. You do not need to answer all the questions in each section. Choose one to three of the marks as a way to reflect on your ministry. Use them all as a guide.

Exhibiting A Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practices

- What is your experience of call: in relationship to God, the church and your community?
- What spiritual practices have helped you live a life of discipleship and prayer?
- What is your understanding of covenantal accountability?
- How does the Holy Spirit find expression in Christian worship in historic and current practice?

Nurturing UCC Identity

- How do you see the purpose, mission and vision of the United Church of Christ in its expression of the local and global work of the church? How do you personally live this out?
 - Purpose - To love with all our heart, mind, soul and strength and our neighbor as ourselves.
 - Mission - United in Spirit and inspired by God's grace, we welcome all, love all and seek justice for all.
 - Vision - United in Christ's love, a just world for all.
- What is your history with the UCC, as a member of a congregation and as a leader within communities of faith? How have you grown spiritually as a result?

- How does your Christian commitment call you to value and participate in ecumenical and interfaith activities?

Building Transformational Leadership skills

- In what ways do Christ's example and the Spirit's movement inspire your effective leadership and growth within the church?
- What principles of life-long learning encourage leadership development in yourself and others?
- How are administrative and practical needs of the church forms of ministry?
- What is your role in public spaces as a witness to God's redeeming work?

Engaging Sacred Stories and Traditions

- What is your understanding of Scripture and the nature of Biblical revelation?
- What role does scriptural study play in your preparation for ministry and worship?
- What is the "good news" you are called to proclaim?
- The Christian tradition is long and varied. How have you been shaped by aspects of the tradition, and what do you find particularly compelling to honor and build upon?
- What role has Faith Formation played in your life, and how do you see it needing to be expressed in the life of the church?
- How do you understand the Sacraments? What do they mean in your own life and in the life of the gathered community of faith?
- Where do you experience "the holy"?

Caring For All Creation

- How is the church called to be a healing community? Where do you see yourself as a part of that?
- How is that call expressed in ministry to those outside the local church? to all God's creation?
- How do you care for yourself? Where do you find the help you need? How does that aid your ministry?

Participating in Theological Praxis

- What is your process for theological reflection?
- What are your sources for a variety of theological reflections?
- With what theologians do you resonate and why?
- How does your theological reflection inform your teaching, preaching and leadership?

Working Together for Justice and Mercy

- What does the ministry of Jesus Christ demonstrate about confronting injustice and oppression?
- How do you demonstrate leadership in extending the radical hospitality of God?
- In what ways do you discover and address implicit bias in all ministry settings?
- How do you embody the UCC Ministerial Code of Ethics?

Strengthening Inter- and Intra-Personal Assets

- How do you maintain a healthy sense of self shaped by God, community and life experience?
- How do you show respect for the dignity of all people?
- What importance does exhibiting strong moral character and personal integrity have in ministry?

In addition to the Marks, include/focus on some of the key theological points listed below. Please delve more deeply into topics that are significant to you.

Ordination
Ecclesiology
The Trinity

Sacraments
Jesus Christ
Scripture

Nature of God
The Holy Spirit

Resources for writing your paper include COM, your advisor, and the Marks of Ministry. You may also find helpful a text on systematic theology, and other texts or writers who inspire you.

Take care with your paper; it is a professional document. Depth of topics is more important than breadth of topics. Choose a style manual and use it consistently. Ask another person to proofread your paper. COM may ask to see more than one version of your paper

THE ORDINATION INTERVIEW WORSHIP SERVICE

“a worship service of no more than 30 minutes designed and conducted by the candidate, including an original sermon by the candidate”

Beyond these basic requirements candidates for ordination have considerable room for creativity. This service is an essentially abbreviated Worship service and follows a similar outline such as:

Opening music/prelude
Call to Worship
Opening Prayer
Hymn
Scripture Reading (s)
Homily/Sermon
Prayers
Hymn
Benediction
Closing music/postlude

All of these elements need not be included nor ordered in this way. Some candidates have included some sort of ritual act (e.g., blessing with water) although this is not a requirement. The most important aspect is that the worship service provides the Committee on Ministry some idea of how you envision and lead worship and how you preach.

No musicians/accompanists are provided. You are welcome to provide musicians as you wish.

Bulletins are not necessary but some candidates do chose to provide one. Should you decide to provide a bulletin you will need enough copies for the full Committee on Ministry and staff (25 people) + any guests/supporters that may come to the service.

You may want to make a “field trip” to the church, where the service will be held, prior to the date of interview or plan to arrive early so you may familiarize yourself with the worship space and work out logistics.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Chair of the Discernment of Call working group by email or phone if you have further questions about the worship service and/or ordination interview.