



# **Members in Discernment Process & Ministry Formation Plan**

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## Definitions

<b>Association:</b>	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 Living Water Association is part of the Heartland Conference United Church of Christ..
<b>Authorized Ministers:</b>	Ordained and Lay Ministerial Standing are the two forms of authorized ministry in the UCC.
<b>COM:</b>	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.
<b>DWG:</b>	Discernment Working Group
<b>EFP:</b>	Education Formation Plan
<b>MID:</b>	Member in Discernment. A lay member of a United Church of Christ Congregation who experiences the call to ministry and desires to prepare for authorized ministry.
<b>MID Mentors:</b>	A team of Association-appointed leaders who train MID's for authorized ministry. They include: home/local Pastor, Mentor, Field Education Supervisor.
<b>MID Advisors:</b>	A member of the Discernment Working Group assigned to advise the MID especially concerning process
<b>MOM:</b>	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.
<b>Ordained Minister:</b>	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.
<b>LWA:</b>	Living Water Association
<b>UCC:</b>	United Church of Christ
<b>AGM:</b>	Association General Minister
<b>DST</b>	Discernment Support Team of the local church

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## 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 completed 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 authorization for ministry process in the Living Water Association, on behalf of the entire United Church of Christ.

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 aware and intentional to this role.

This understanding 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.

When a member of a local UCC church expresses a desire to prepare for authorized ministry in response to God’s call, the Local Church Governing Body:

1. appoints a **Discernment Support Team** (3 to 5 members) who will:
    - explore the person’s understanding of Christian faith and practice, sense of call, gifts for ministry, experiences in leadership, personal history, spiritual journey, length of membership, and anticipated practical concerns around education and finances.
    - discern that the member has gifts for ministry and a call by God to Authorized Ministry
    - recommends the member to the Governing Body of the Local Church
    - continue to walk the discernment journey with the candidate to its completion, continuing to explore the person’s understanding of Christian faith, sense of call, gifts for ministry, experiences and practical concerns.
  2. makes a formal written request to the DWG that the member be received as a MID.
- A complete description of responsibilities for DST can be found in Appendix ??

It is vital that the Local Church continue to support the MID during the discernment process, which lasts a minimum of one year. Generally the process takes at least three years, in some cases longer.

As the person considering authorized ministry, the pastor and DST meet, they may wish to discuss

- 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? Do they understand the types of things an authorized minister does? Is there another form of ministry more suited to the person's gifts and passions?
- 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?

The DST can recommend **ASK THE QUESTION** a great resource for discerning a call to ministry to facilitate discussion about the person's call. The resource can be found here:

<https://www.ucc.org/ask-the-question>

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 Association's COM through the LWA registrar, [registrar@livingwaterone.org](mailto:registrar@livingwaterone.org). 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 completed in the order listed here.

### **a. Introduction of candidate to**

The candidate will meet with the AGM who will hear the story of the candidate's call and share a general review of the MID process and answer any questions and ensure that a copy of this document is available to the candidate.

### **b. Items needed prior to the interview with COM**

The candidate will provide the COM with the information:

- MID Application found in **Appendix ???**
- A paper about your Spiritual Journey and the story of your call

- Three letters of reference (including one from their local church pastor)
- Documentation of their formal education (transcripts, evaluations)
- Educational Plan
- Background Check – Handled through the Association’s office

Once the Registrar receives the above materials, an interview with the COM will be scheduled. The candidate's pastor and/or a member of DST will attend this interview to present the candidate.

**c. Interview**

At the meeting, the pastor will be given the opportunity to present and share information about the person's history and involvement with the local church. The DWG will interview the candidate as to their sense of call, their spiritual journey, understanding of authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ, and academic and professional intentions.

DWG may also wish 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
- LWA Ministerial Formation Plan
- Marks of Faithful and Effective Ministers of the UCC

At the end of this meeting DWG approves the candidate’s MID status, or not. The outcome 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.

**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.**

**d. Upon being granted MID status the candidate will:**

- Start using “Journaling the Journey,” form [www.uccresources.com](http://www.uccresources.com)
- 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.

**e. Vocational/Psychological Assessment**

A career assessment — which includes comprehensive personal, emotional, and psychological evaluation — is required through Midwest Ministry Development. The LWA Registrar will

contact the MID and with information about scheduling their appointment with Midwest Ministry.

The cost of the evaluation is shared between the candidate, Local church of their membership and the Association.

**f. 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.](#)

**g. 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

\_\_\_\_\_ Pastor, and Discernment Support Team and candidate meet to discern call

\_\_\_\_\_ When Pastor, DST and Governing Body 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
- 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 AGM

\_\_\_\_\_ Candidate begins to prepare the required documents to be presented to DWG

Part 3

\_\_\_\_\_ Candidate provides the DWG with the following documentation:

\_\_\_\_\_ MID Application – see appendix ??



- \_\_\_\_\_ Statement of Spiritual Journey and story of their call
- \_\_\_\_\_ Documentation of their formal education (transcripts, evaluations)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Educational Plan
- \_\_\_\_\_ Three letters of reference (including one from their local church pastor)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Background Check – Handled through LWA office

**ALL DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE EMAILED TO LWA REGISTRAR: [registrar@livingwaterone.org](mailto:registrar@livingwaterone.org)**

Part 4:

- \_\_\_\_\_ When all required documents are received, the candidate is scheduled to meet with DWG. It is requested that pastor or lay leader attend this meeting as well
- \_\_\_\_\_ At the end of this meeting the candidate is granted MID status or not.

**If accepted:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ MID receives a copy of “Journaling the Journey”
- \_\_\_\_\_ MID is assigned a Mentor and an Advisor
- \_\_\_\_\_ MID start working of Marks assessment along with Mentor
- \_\_\_\_\_ MID completes career/psychological assessment
- \_\_\_\_\_ MID and DWG begin working on the Educational Formation Plan

## **Part Two: DISCERNMENT – God’s call to Ministry**

Once MID status has been granted, the MID will begin a Plan of Formation through a process of assessment using the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers.

The MID will work on this with their mentor, as well as local church Pastor or supervisor. Once completed, the plan must be sent to the LWA’s registrar who will notify DWG. An appointment with DWG will be made to discuss the Plan of Formation.

Review and evaluation of the MID’s progress by the DWG will 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 ??)

The MID along with the DWG will work to form an EFP. This plan will vary depending on the MID’s education, gifts, strengths, and experiences. In conjunction with the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministry, the MID and DWG will use the formal education and training listed below and the “Chart for Educational Formation Planning” (Appendix N).

The MID would do a self-assessment of the Marks, listing options for educational content or experiences to develop those Marks where they feel growth is needed.

They need to list “Options for Educational Content or Experiences to Promote the Marks (EFP Possibilities)”, as well as “Required Educational Content or Experiences to Promote the Marks (Actual EFP)”.

The MID and DWG would list those educational/experiential requirements of the MID. This chart along with the EFP Checklist will determine the path forward.

**Please note that in what follows, items listed as “equivalent” and/or “approved” will be deemed as such by the DWG.**

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 MIDs 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
- Completion of Field Education/Contextual Experience, either as part of the Master's program or other approved training
- **CPE**

The DWG may add other requirements to those listed above.

## **MENTORS**

When an applicant is approved for Member-In-Discernment status, the Discernment Working Group assigns a Mentor. The Mentor will serve as both a role model and a guide during this time of discernment.

The Mentor will assist the Member-in-Discernment (MID) in the following ways:

- Work with the MID in a self-assessment using the Assessment Rubric for the Marks of Faithful and Effective Ministry. You will need a copy of this assessment tool as well as a copy of *Journeying the Journey*. This assessment form should be presented to the Discernment Working Group as part of their Plan of Formation.
- Help the MID in preparing a Plan of Formation. This plan will be reviewed and approved by the Working Group.
- Provide opportunities for the MID to raise and explore questions about faith, the Church, Ministry, etc.
- Ensure that the MID maintains active participation in the life of the Local Church, and if that is not his or her home church, that contact be maintained with the MID's home church.
- Encourage the MID to take an active part in Association, Conference, and denominational activities.
- Maintain monthly contact with the MID. Review educational progress, growth, goals, and needs.
- Report any ethical or boundary issues to the Association Minister

- Attend with MID at least some of the meeting with DWG

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 DWG 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*. Mentors serve as trusted companions and guides on the discernment journey by sharing important lessons learned from their own ministry careers. They help 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 MID is expected to be proactive in meeting with their mentor **at least** once a month. The MID is expected to be able to: articulate evidence of their spiritual growth; demonstrate awareness of, and work on, personal growing edges; name newly acquired ministry skills (preaching, teaching, visioning, counseling, etc.)

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

### **ADVISOR**

When an applicant is approved for Member-In-Discernment status, the DWG will assign an advisor who is serving as a member of the DWG. The Advisor will serve as a bridge and connector between the MID and The DWG and serve as advisor particularly to MID process.

The MID is expected to connect with the Advisor when they have questions about what's next and how to go about it.

### **REGULAR CONTACT WITH LOCAL PASTOR AND DST**

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

The MID is also encouraged to meet at least twice a year with the DST of the local church. This will encourage support and encouragement from the members of the church and help the MID as they clarify their call.

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 DWG 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 DWG 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 their mentor to be present for this annual review.

### **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 is reserved for Ordained Ministers. Pastor, Minister, Clergy person are reserved for authorized and ordained 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 as appropriate.

### **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
- \_\_\_\_\_ Diversity Awareness Training

\_\_\_\_\_ Healthy Practices for Ministry

\_\_\_\_\_ (Other from ) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Other from ) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Other from ) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Other from ) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Other from ) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Also required:**

- Meetings with MID Mentor (monthly)
- Review and evaluation meeting with COM (annually)
- Self-assessment of the Marks (annually)
- Meetings with Discernment Support Team of local church (twice annually)
- Updates to congregation about discernment/process (at least twice a year)
- Attendance at annual meeting of the Association
- Attendance at annual meeting of the Conference
- Attendance at one Healthy Practice in Ministry

## **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, DWG will conduct an interview to help the MID prepare for their ordination paper and interview with the whole COM.

### **ORDINATION PAPER**

The ordination paper is expected to be 4000 words, (16 pages), and will:

- Communicate a sense of you as pastor, in your roles as student, pastoral counselor, worship leader, priest, preacher and prophet.
- Demonstrate your competence in writing, the narrative and development of your call to ministry, the coherence of your theology, and your self-awareness.
- Include your experience of call to ministry and articulate your understanding of theological concepts, as they relate to the Christian life.
- Express your theological understanding of Christian ministry framed by The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministry.
- Focus on some key theological concepts, such as: Nature of God, Ordination, Ecclesiology, Trinity, Jesus Christ, Sacraments, the Holy Spirit, the Sacraments. Please delve more deeply into the topics that are significant to you.

The following questions can help you think about The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministry. Do not answer all the questions. Use them as guide to reflect theologically on your ministry. Give examples of how the Marks are evident in your life and ministry.

### **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 - 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 to you and to the life of a gathered community of faith?
- Where do you experience "the holy"?

### **Caring For All Creation**

- How is the church called to be a healing community? How are you a part of it?
- How is that call expressed in ministry to those outside the local church? to all God's creation?
- How do you care for yourself, 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?

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

### **ORDINATION PAPER IS PRESENTED TO DWG FOR REVIEW**

The purpose of this meeting with DWG is to discuss the ordination paper both in content and design and to finalize it for presentation to the whole COM.

The members of DWG will have read the ordination paper and will come prepared to make recommendations for improvement. Usually this take 2 meetings or more. The DWG team partners with MID to make it the best possible paper for presentation.

Once the paper is in its final form, the MID is scheduled to meet with the whole COM to share their paper and lead a worship service.

### **ORDINATION PAPER and WORSHIP WITH THE WHOLE COM**

During this meeting with the whole COM, MIDs will present:

- A 30 – 40 minutes worship service including sermon created by the MID
- An Ordination Paper
- **A current draft of the UCC Ministerial Profile with completed background check**

The purpose of this meeting is to examine and authorize the ordination of the MID. The following is a sample agenda:

- The DWG introduces the MID to COM. COM members would have accessed all documents including the ordination paper.
- The MID presents a worship experience followed by an interview 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 COM assesses the preparation and fitness of the MID to ordained ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ.
- On completion of the interview, the MID is excused, preferably with an accompanying member of the COM or other support person, while the COM votes whether or not to authorize the MID for ordination pending an approved call. The decision of the COM 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.

At the end of 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:

- The MID seeks a call to be approved by the association COM
- Once an approved call has been obtained the MID works with AGM 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. 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 and Conferences, 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.

In order to maintain good standing in LWA Authorized Ministers:

1. Must hold membership in good standing with a Local Church of the United Church of Christ
2. Must attend a Healthy Practice for Ministry event, the equivalent of Boundary Training, every other year. You will receive reminders from our office about those scheduled events.  
Retired Authorized Ministers who no longer perform ministerial functions may be exempt from this requirement. A request for exemption must be made to the Oversight Working Group of the Committee on Ministry.
3. We encourage and expect our Authorized Ministers to participate in a Continuing Education experience at least every other year. We ask that you send us your certificate of attendance for record keeping.

4. We offer Communities of Practice, which are groups for authorized Ministers who gather for personal and professional development. Information can be found on our website. Here is the Link: <https://livingwaterone.org/pastoral-excellence/>
5. Authorized Ministers must complete an Information Review form annually. The form can be found on our website: <https://livingwaterone.org/pastors-information-review-form/>

Other 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
- 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, healthy practices for ministry...
- Timely completion of the Association's standing requirements, including:
- 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



Application for  
Member in Discernment Status

---

**Name of Applicant:**

**Home Address:**

**Cell Phone:**

**Email:**

**Current Place of Employment::**

**Church Membership** (Name and Location of Church)

**Involvement in Local and/or Wider Church Activities**

**Academic Information**

**Other Information you would like the working group to have**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant Signature

**PLEASE EMAIL COMPLETED FORM TO [registrar@livingwaterone.org](mailto:registrar@livingwaterone.org)**

## 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 ??

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 but it also clarified that the leadership needs of the church can be defined by the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministry,

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 ordination.

The new MOM also suggests **Multiple Paths to Ordained Ministry**, which implies that the Discernment Process and Ministerial Formation path may be different for each person.

As a result, all potential MIDs apply to their Association COM and do all that is required for holding a MID status in their Association. As a candidate is granted the MID status they work with DWG for their own, uniquely designed Educational Formation Plan.

At the end of the process, the MID works with the DWG to create their ordination paper. When the paper is finalized the MID meets with the whole COM, presents ordination paper and worship experience, followed by a vote for Authorization for ordination pending a call, or not.

# Appendix ??

## Member in Discernment Assessment and EFP

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.

Because **Multiple Paths to Ordained Ministry** implies that the Discernment Process and Ministerial Formation path may be different for each person MID and DWG work together to create a unique, custom made Educational Formation Plan for each MID.

### HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN?

- DWG meets with the MID and mentor to begin a process of assessment using the MARKS of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers.
- DWG meets with the MID to develop a growth 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 and diversity training**
- annual participation in LWA MID Academy;
- participation in regional or national MID gatherings;
- participation in Association meetings and in Conference Meetings;
- engagement with the wider church, such as participation in General Synod;
- annual in-person meeting with the Committee on Ministry;
- ongoing self-assessment based on the Marks;
- monthly meetings with MID Mentor;
- completion of an ordination paper meeting the requirements set forth by 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, DWG will conduct an interview to help the MID prepare for their ordination paper.

**DWG'S ASSESSMENT**

**Name of Candidate:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date DWG 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 ??

### 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.)*

#### LOCAL CHURCH

We, the members of \_\_\_\_\_ United Church of Christ, located at \_\_\_\_\_, promise to support and nurture \_\_\_\_\_ in their period of discernment and formation as they explore a call to authorized ministry. We will, in partnership with \_\_\_\_\_ (MID), create a Discernment Support Team and work with them 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 them and the LWA, Ohio NorthEast, Heartland Conference of the United Church of Christ as a sign of our mutual ministry in Christ's name.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Church Moderator or President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

#### ASSOCIATION

We, the members of the Living Water Association 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 Discernment Working Group of the Committee on Ministry to develop an educational plan with \_\_\_\_\_ (MID) and accompany them as they engage 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 resources for financial support for costs associated with ministerial preparation and training. We will assign a mentor and be responsible for the oversight of this relationship. If \_\_\_\_\_ (MID) is determined to be worthy of authorized ministry, we will authorize them for ministry according to the faith and order of the United Church of Christ. We covenant with them and the \_\_\_\_\_ United Church of Christ, the Discernment Working Group of Committee on Ministry of the Living Water Association as a sign of our mutual ministry in Christ's name.

\_\_\_\_\_

Committee on Ministry

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

**MENTOR**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (mentor), promise to faithfully meet with \_\_\_\_\_ (MID) once a month. I promise to support and walk with \_\_\_\_\_ as they discerns their call. We will work together on the MARKS of Faithful and Effective Ministry by using *Journaling the Journey*. I covenant with \_\_\_\_\_ United Church of Christ, located at \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ (MID), the \_\_\_\_\_ Association, the DWG, and the LWA as a sign of our mutual ministry in Christ's name.

\_\_\_\_\_

Mentor

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

**DWG**

We, the members of the Discernment Working Group of the Committee on Ministry, promise to discern with you and the Living Water 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 Living Water Association as a sign of our mutual ministry in Christ's name.

\_\_\_\_\_ (DWG 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 DWG of the 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 LWA and the denomination, United

Church of Christ. I will provide material as requested that reflect my progress to the Committee on Ministry and DWG. I covenant with \_\_\_\_\_ United Church of Christ, \_\_\_\_\_, mentor, and the Living Water Association as a sign of our mutual ministry in Christ's name.

\_\_\_\_\_

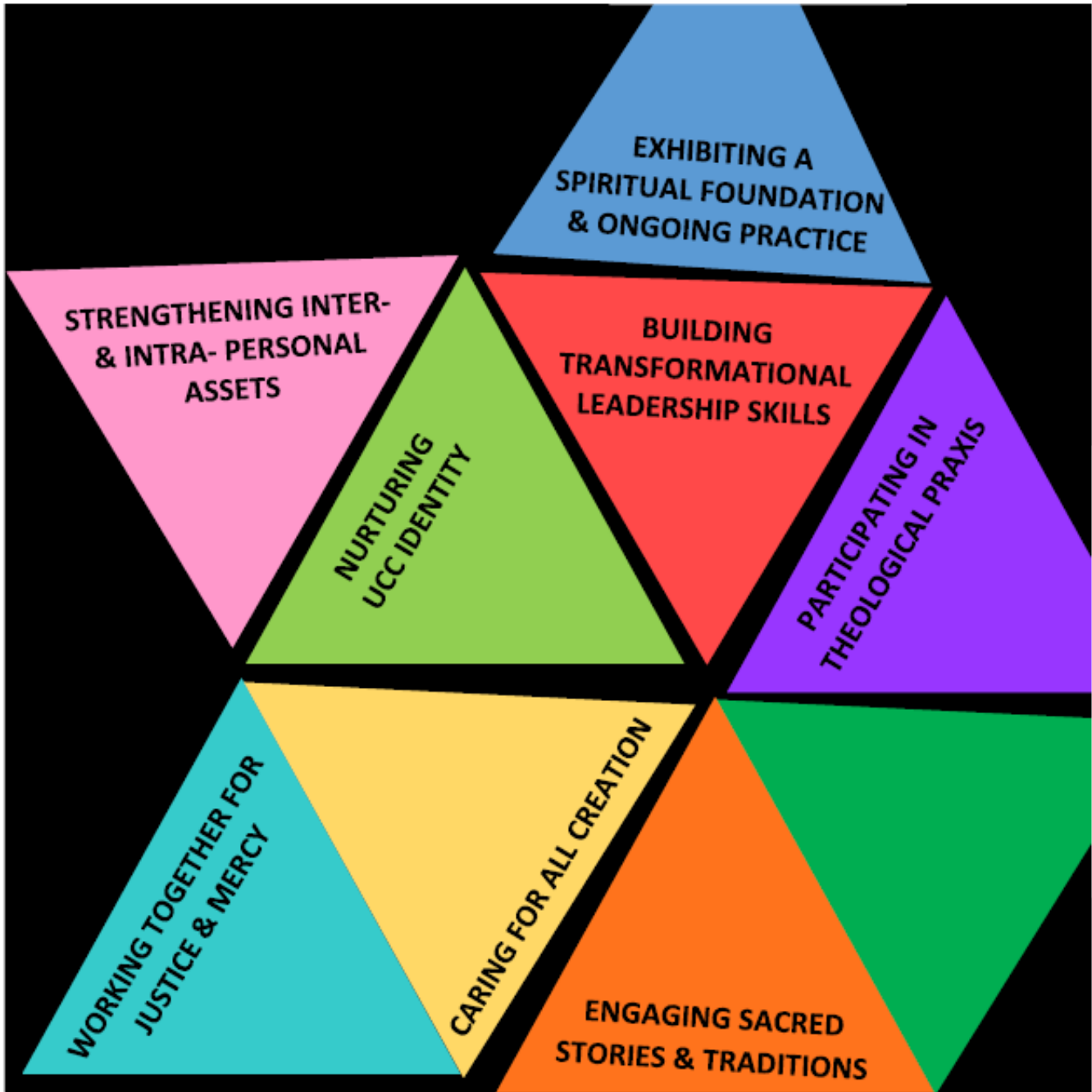
Member in Discernment

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## Appendix ??

### 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.



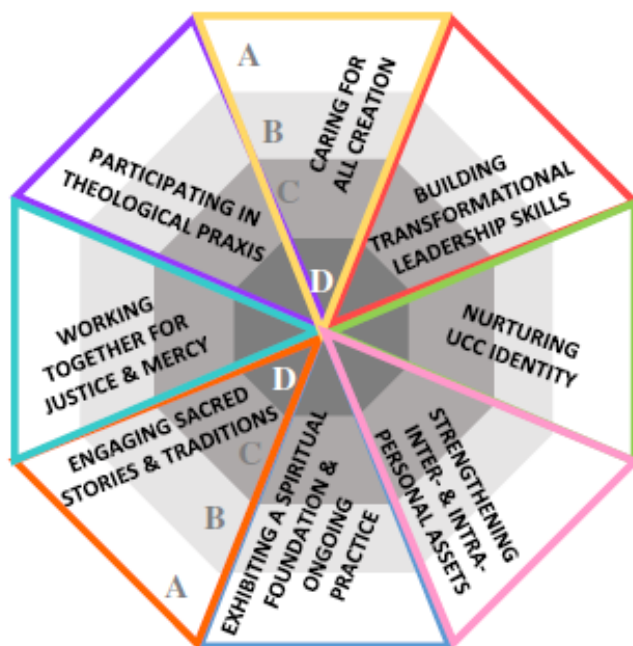
What do we mean by preparation and formation? **Formation** is the influence of time and activities, life experiences, education, practice, and reflection in community that collectively lead toward the development of knowledge, skills, understanding and commitment. **Preparation** imagines a particular 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 reimaged 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 PRAXIS

- 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.

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\_\_\_\_\_

**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.

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**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.

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**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**

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**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.

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**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.



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\_\_\_\_\_ **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.

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\_\_\_\_\_ **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.

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

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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 ??

# Chart for Educational Formation Planning

### Instructions for DWG:

1. Begin by reviewing **The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the UCC**.
2. Using the candidate's spiritual journey, transcripts, and documents 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 ??) should be completed by the MID, their Mentor, Advisor 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.
6. The DWG will meet regularly during the ongoing process of formation, preparation and continuing education.
7. LWA Registrar 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, "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.						

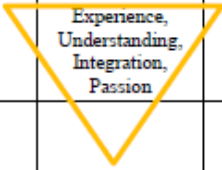
## NURTURING UCC IDENTITY

	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: Experience, Understanding, Integration, Passion	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**

### **Responsibilities of the MENTOR**

- Work with the MiD in a self assessment using the Assessment Rubric for the Marks of Faithful and Effective Ministry. You will receive a copy of this assessment tool as well as a copy of Journeying the Journey. This assessment form should be presented to the Discernment Working Group as part of their Plan of Formation.
- Help the MID in preparing a Plan of Formation. This plan will be reviewed and approved by the Working Group. .
- Provide opportunities for the MiD to raise and explore questions about faith, the Church, Ministry, etc.
- Ensure that the MiD maintains active participation in the life of the Local Church, and if that is not his or her home church, that contact be maintained with the MiD's home church.
- Encourage the MiD to take an active part in Association, Conference, and denominational activities.
- Maintain at least quarterly contact with the MiD. Review educational progress, growth, goals, and needs.
- Report any ethical or boundary issues to the Association Minister
- 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.).
- Accompany the MID to meetings of the Committee on Ministry in order to review progress.
- Assist the MiD with the critical review and editing of Ordination/ Licensure/ Commissioning papers. Attend interviews with the Working Group and the Committee on Ministry along with the MID. Pray with him/her and provide moral support.
- Assist the MiD in the preparation of a portfolio documenting their accomplishments and understandings related to the marks. This should include transcripts, documentation of coursework, creative writing (sermons, curricula, articles, etc.), and anything the person judges would be helpful to include. The MID should open their Snapshot on the UCC profiles website making it visible for others

## **Appendix ??**

### **Responsibilities of the Advisor**

Each MID will be assigned an Advisor.

The Advisor is s member of the Discernment Working Group assigned to advise the MID especially concerning The MID process and Ministerial formation path.

# Appendix ??

## THE ORDINATION PAPER

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 is expected to be 4000 words, (16 pages), and will:

- Communicate a sense of you as pastor, in your roles as student, pastoral counselor, worship leader, priest, preacher and prophet.
- Demonstrate your competence in writing, the narrative and development of your call to ministry, the coherence of your theology, and your self-awareness.
- Include your experience of call to ministry and articulate your understanding of theological concepts, as they relate to the Christian life.
- Express your theological understanding of Christian ministry framed by The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministry.
- Focus on some key theological concepts, such as: Nature of God, Ordination, Ecclesiology, Trinity, Jesus Christ, Sacraments, the Holy Spirit, the Sacraments. Please delve more deeply into the topics that are significant to you.

The following questions can help you think about The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministry. Do not answer all the questions. Use them as guide to reflect theologically on your ministry. Give examples of how the Marks are evident in your life and ministry.

#### 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 - 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 to you and to the life of a gathered community of faith?
- Where do you experience “the holy”?

### **Caring For All Creation**

How is the church called to be a healing community? How are you a part of it?

How is that call expressed in ministry to those outside the local church? to all God’s creation?

How do you care for yourself, 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?



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 can follow 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. There is room for creativity and ritual. Be authentic.

This worship experience will provide COM 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. Should you decide to provide bulletins you will need 27 copies for COM + any guests/supporters that may be your guests.

A “field trip” to the church where the service will be held, prior to the date of interview is a good idea. 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 Working Group or the General Minister if you have further questions about the worship service and/or ordination interview.

Blessings as you pen, prepare and preach!

## **Appendix ??**

### **Scholarship resources**