

MINISTERIAL FORMATION PLAN FOR ORDAINED MINISTRY

The Purpose of Ministerial 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”

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

CURRENT PROCESS FOR MULTIPLE PATHS

- MID who is following a traditional path enrolls in seminary which determines a formal educational plan
- MID who is following an alternative path with NEOSOM seeks the direction and approval of the Dean and NEOSOM Steering Committee
- MID then drafts a Plan of Formation based on the MARKS for the Discernment Working Group

PROPOSED PROCESS FOR MULTIPLE PATHS

The Discernment Working Group is responsible for directing and approving a MID's Ministerial Formation Plan including educational requirements.

HOW TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

The Discernment Working Group create a **Wisdom Circle** to work with each MID to chart their own uniquely designed Ministerial Formation Plan based on the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministry, to include academic learning and other education requirements. The Ministerial Formation Plan will vary depending on the MID's education, gifts, strengths, and experiences.

The Wisdom Circle could be:

1. A different group for each MID consisting of their (1) Advisor (who convenes and chairs the Circle), (2) Mentor, (3) a member of MID's church's Discernment Support Team and/or Pastor, (4) the AGM
2. One or more small groups consisting of persons from the COM who work with multiple MIDs

STEPS

1. MID completes the MARKS Self-Assessment, with the assistance of their Mentor
2. A Wisdom Circle is convened and meets with the MID to review the Assessment and chart a Ministerial Formation Plan listing educational and experiential requirements of the MID
3. The MID is in regular communication with, and offers updates to, their Mentor and Advisor as they progress through their Ministerial Formation Plan; documenting coursework, individual learning, seminars attended, etc

ACADEMIC EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Please note: the use of “equivalent” and/or “approved” below needs to be deemed as such by the Discernment Working Group. The minimum educational requirements for a MID 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

The Wisdom Circle may add other requirements to those listed above.

Required coursework may be completed at another approved educational institution or program, including but not limited to NEOSOM, NYSOM [*we might offer a list here with links to the schools*]

DISCERNMENT CHECKLIST FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF MID STATUS

_____ Create a Ministerial Formation Plan with Wisdom Circle

_____ Complete Educational requirements

- _____ 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

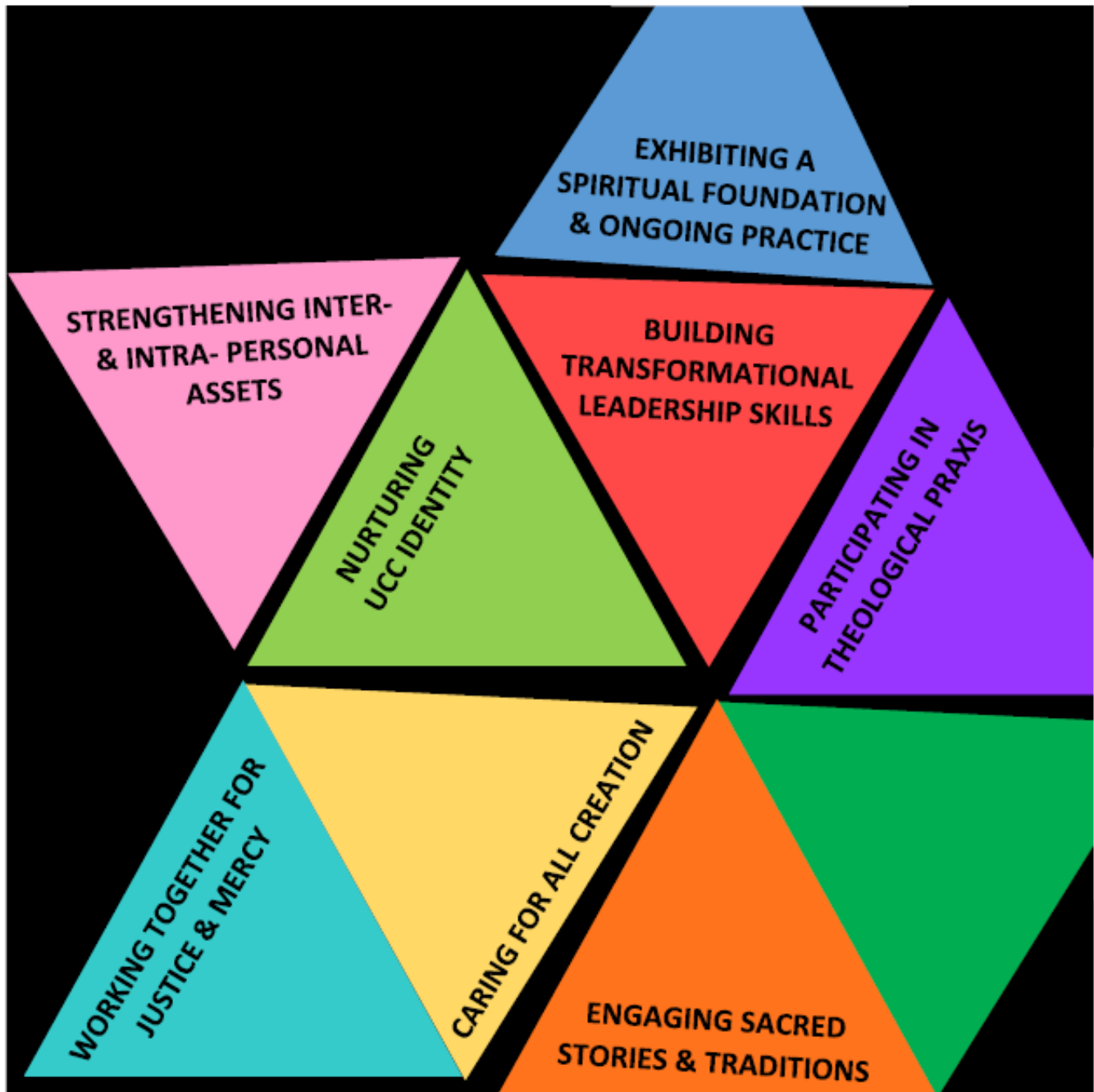
_____ Complete Field Education/Contextual Experience, either as part of the Master’s program or other approved training

- _____ Clinical Pastoral Education experience, either as part of the Master’s program or other approved training
- _____ Healthy Practices for Ministry / Boundary Awareness and Training
- _____ Diversity Awareness Training [*we might consider adding this requirement*]
- _____ (Other from)
- _____ (Other from)
- _____ (Other from)
- _____ (Other from)
- _____ (Other from)

Also required:

- Meetings with MID Mentor (monthly)
- Periodic updates to Discernment Working Group Advisor (frequency TBD)
- Active participation in MID Community of Practice (monthly)
- Review and evaluation meeting with COM (annually)
- Marks Self-Assessment (annually)
- Meetings with Discernment Support Team of local church (twice annually)
- Attendance at annual meeting of the Association and of the Spring Vitality Festival
- Attendance at Annual Meeting of the Conference
- Attendance at one LWA Healthy Practice in Ministry

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.

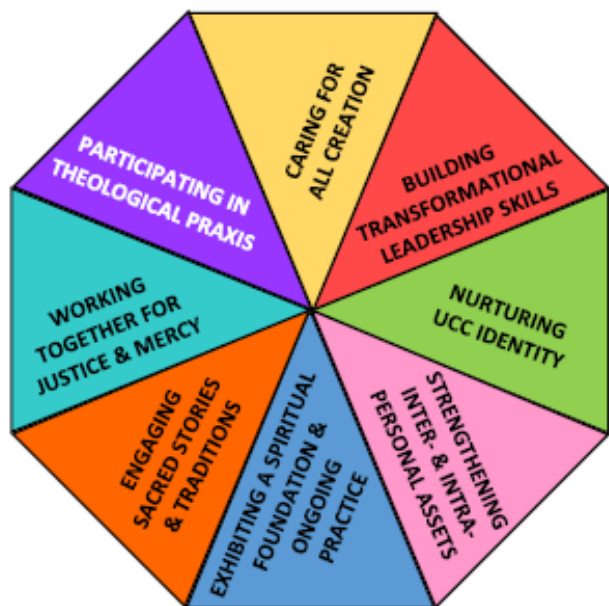
Despite their appearance on paper as a long list of specific skills, qualities and competencies, when taken as a whole the *Marks* help to paint a picture of a person’s initial preparation for and ongoing formation in authorized ministry. The *Journaling the Journey* workbook posits that the individual 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.

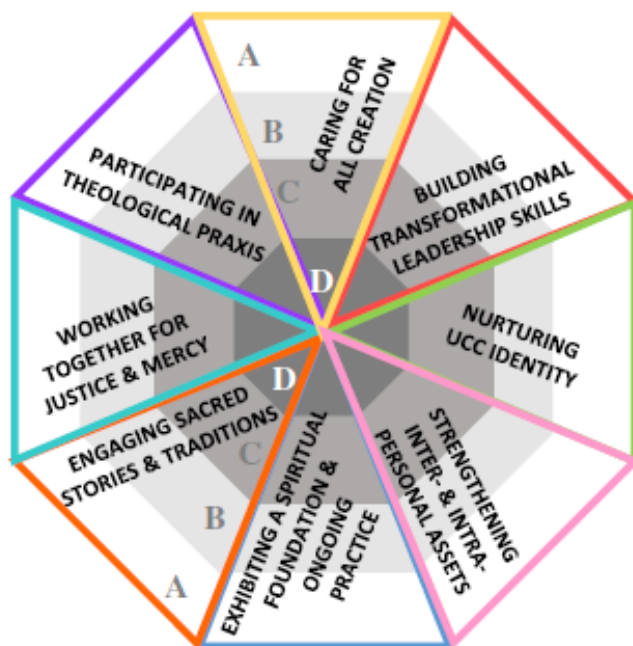


What do we mean by preparation and formation? **Formation** is the influence of time and activities, life experiences, education, practice, and reflection in community that collectively lead toward the development of knowledge, skills, understanding and commitment. **Preparation** imagines a particular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



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
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- 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.

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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.

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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.

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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

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.

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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.

Maintaining a basic understanding of mental health and wellness.0

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

Practicing self-care and life balance.

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

Providing hope and healing to a hurting world.

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

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

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

Stewarding the resources of the Church.

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

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PARTICIPATING IN THEOLOGICAL PRAXIS

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

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

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

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

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

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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.

_____ **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.

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- 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

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.

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) = _____

Chart for Ministerial Formation Planning

Instructions for Discernment Working Group:

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 a Ministerial 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 *Ministerial 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.

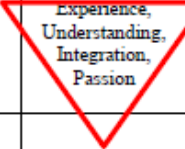
EXHIBITING A SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION AND ONGOING SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

	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.						

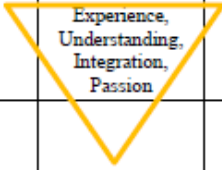
NURTURING UCC IDENTITY

	Initial Assessment: <small>Experience, Understanding, Integration, Passion</small>	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.						