

**Cumberland Association
Maine Conference
United Church of Christ**

**Supplemental Guidelines
For the In Care and
Ordination Process**

**Committee on Church and Ministry
Adopted January, 2002; 2006 edition**

Section One

Introduction

This document has been prepared by the Committee on Church and Ministry (CCM) of the Cumberland Association to provide guidance for candidates preparing for ordination, their local churches, and the CCM concerning the in care and ordination process. While these guidelines may seem long and complex, they are intended to set expectations and avoid “surprises” along the way.

No document of this nature can cover every individual situation and there may be occasions when the CCM will alter its process to meet individual situations. However, it should be emphasized that alterations to the process must be discussed with and authorized by the CCM.

This document supplements, but does *not* replace, the *UCC Manual on Ministry* (MOM). Persons involved with the process for ecclesiastical authorization for ministry in the United Church of Christ should be fully knowledgeable of the contents of the MOM for each step in the process.

These supplemental guidelines are divided into five major sections as follows:

Section One Introduction and General Guidelines

Section Two Guidelines for the In care Candidate

Section Three Guidelines for the Church Sponsoring the In care Candidate

Section Four Guidelines for the Advisor to the Student In care

Section Five Guidelines for the Process for Ordination

General Guidelines

I. What is in care?

In care is the relationship which exists between a student preparing for ordination and his/her church and Association. To be in care is to be in a covenantal relationship--one which involves the individual with the local church and the Association.

II. What is the purpose and value of being in care?

In care is a time for the candidate to:

- reflect about the meaning and significance of her/his decision to seek ordination while being in relationship with both a local church and the Association.
- participate in the life of the United Church of Christ; locally, and at the Association, Conference, and national levels when possible.
- grow and mature in faith by discerning areas of personal strength and weakness with the aid of advisors and trained supervisors.
- understand the identity of the United Church of Christ, learning its history, theological roots, and polity.
- learn about specific procedures, guidelines and requirements leading to ordination by the Association.
- build a network of caring and supportive relationships with persons in the local church and Association who will guide his/her pilgrimage toward ordination.

III. What are the roles and responsibilities of the local church?

The local church role can, and should, be one of prime responsibility for the in care candidate. This responsibility of "care" involves

1. Identification: do we have someone in our midst with the gifts and aspiration for ordained ministry?
2. Discernment: has this person developed suitable scholarship and used her/his personal gifts and skills in ministry in observable ways that would allow the local church to perceive that God was indeed calling this person into ordained ministry?
3. Support: in what ways can the local church free the candidate, financially, emotionally, and experientially, to develop and explore his/her faith, gifts, and aspiration for ordained ministry?
4. Action: to engage the Association in an ongoing conversation, examination, and support of the candidate during the Association's in care process.

IV. What are the roles and responsibilities of the Committee on Church and Ministry in the in care process?

- A. The CCM represents the Association and works in cooperation with the local church to help prepare the candidate for ordination.
- B. The CCM's overall task is three-fold:
 1. To offer support and guidance to the presenting local church and establish procedure

for
the local care of the candidate.

2. To offer fellowship, support, guidance and assistance to a candidate while (s)he completes the necessary requirements leading to ordination.
3. to sustain open communication with the student and the sponsoring congregation, the seminary, field education sites, student ministries, and CPE.
4. To assess a candidate's fitness for ministry and periodically to reassess his/her readiness
for ordained ministry in the UCC (See Article I, Section 102 of the UCC By-laws:
"The Committees on Ministry of the student's Conference and Association cooperate in examining the applicant with respect to fitness, aptitudes, Christian experience, and commitment. If found to be qualified, the applicant is received into the care of her/his Association. A student is expected to be in care for at least one year prior to ordination.")

V. How does the CCM provide for personal guidance in growth and maturing of faith?

- A. The CCM appoints an advisor to work closely with the student in care and with the student's local church and pastor. The purpose of the advisor is:
 1. To meet regularly with the student to aid in the fulfillment of the general goals and purposes of the in care process.
 2. To report to the Committee on Church and Ministry on the progress of the student toward fulfilling these goals and purposes.
- B. The CCM is given permission to have direct communication with the seminary and clinical pastoral education site regarding academic growth, understanding of pastoral identity, and a student's integrity and character.
- C. The CCM requires a psychological assessment of the student in care in the first or second year of seminary. The Committee will recommend a competent and sensitive psychologist whom the CCM has interviewed and who, in the committee's opinion, appreciates the nature of church and ministry. The purpose of the psychological assessment is:
 1. To help the candidate and the Committee determine those areas of ability and aptitude which will give shape and directions to her/his ministry, as well as those characteristics of personality and function where growth is desirable.
 2. To help assess the suitability and readiness of candidates for the ministry. A psychological assessment is never the sole criterion for deciding on the fitness of candidates.

Your Committee on Church and Ministry will provide information and guidance for securing these professional services. The cost will be shared equally by the Committee on Church and Ministry; the local church; and the student.

The CCM is concerned that the data provided about candidates in psychological assessments be treated with appropriate and professional confidentiality. Access to the full assessment will be limited to the members of a Psychological Assessment Subcommittee of the CCM and to the related Area Minister.

Generalized data for growth from the psychological assessment may also be shared with the full CCM, in care advisor, and ministerial advisor in those situations where the Psychological Assessment has included recommendations for some form of counseling or work to assist in the student's personal growth. At the time of ordination, the psychological assessment will be destroyed.

VI. In addition, what does the CCM expect of an in care candidate who is ready for ordained ministry?

The committee recognizes that discerning "readiness for ministry" is not an exact science and that differences emerge from one individual to the next. Nonetheless, some general "signs" of a candidate's readiness are deemed important for consideration. (see also the UCC Manual on Ministry, pp.74-75)

A. Knowledge and Skills

A candidate is expected to have completed course work in the following areas of study in fulfillment of the requirements for the M.Div. Degree from an accredited seminary.

1. Systematic Theology
2. Biblical Studies (Old and New Testament)
3. Church History
4. Church and ministry (such as homiletics, Christian education, pastoral care and administration, personal and professional ethics)
5. Ethics and Society (including Social Ethics, missions, Church and Society).
6. Polity and History of the United Church of Christ.
7. Clinical Pastoral Education = One unit (400 hours). If an accredited CPE program is not available through the student's seminary, other arrangements can be discussed.

B. Faith Affirmations

A candidate should be able to articulate, in her/his ordination paper and in ensuing discussions with committee members and others, a theological position on the important doctrines and concepts of the Christian faith. (See the guidelines for the ordination paper in Appendix II of this document.)

C. Experience

The candidate will complete a variety of field experiences related to preparation for ministry. Supervisors' evaluations will be required. These experiences will include:

1. One year of supervised field work (in a church other than the candidate's local church) as part of his/her seminary training leading to the M.Div. Degree.
2. Work at the sponsoring, or another, UCC church. The candidate should have opportunities to teach, preach, and assume leadership roles in the church as a way of learning how to translate theology into the practice of ministry.

D. Personal Growth

A candidate must be able to demonstrate signs of growth and maturity in the following areas:

1. Calling/vocation--a mature understanding of his/her calling to Christian Ministry and the reasons for seeking ordination in the United Church of Christ.
2. Faith/commitment--a strong commitment to the challenges and responsibilities of Christian Ministry.
3. Leadership--an ability to exert leadership working with and in partnership with others.
4. Communication--ability to communicate the "good news" of the Gospel and help people to understand the relationship between the Gospel and contemporary issues.
5. Mission outreach--a deep sensitivity to the needs and plight of the poor and oppressed and an awareness of the Church's mission in and throughout the world.
6. Covenant responsibility--eagerness to strengthen the covenant relationships which unite local churches together in Association, Conference, Denomination and which bind all Christians in the one body of the Church Universal.
7. Self and others--an understanding of one's self and how one relates to others, particularly in times of stress, crisis and conflict.

Section Two

Guidelines for the In Care Candidate

This Section provides information on Policies and Practices for candidates to be taken in care and to maintain the in care status while preparing for Ecclesiastical Authorization of Ministry. This section is addressed to the candidate.

Definition: *"A Student in Care of Association is a member of the United Church of Christ who has been called by God, and who, under the care of the member's Association, is preparing for the ordained Christian Ministry."*

*Constitution, United Church of Christ,
Article V Section 23*

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Guidelines In Care, Ordination
Cumberland Assoc, UCC 2002

I. When should I apply?

As soon as your decision to prepare for ordained Christian Ministry has been seriously made. It may be before or during your college years or between college and your decision to enter seminary. In order to take advantage of the counsel which the Committee on Church and Ministry can provide, your application should be submitted as soon as a firm decision has been made. At least one year before seminary enrollment is recommended.

The Cumberland Association CCM also requires that a seminary student be “in care” for 2 years before applying for ordination.

II. What is the process for being taken in care?

You have indicated your desire to prepare for the ordained Ministry and to secure status as a student in care of Cumberland Association. We welcome your inquiry and look forward to meeting with you. The Cumberland Association follows the UCC Manual on Ministry (MOM) in granting in care status. We provide this outline as a guide for your procedure.

A. Talk with your pastor concerning your call to ordained ministry within the United Church of Christ. This conversation should include the exploration of the expectations and procedures of the in care process of the Cumberland Association.

B. If you decide to proceed, an application should be made to the appropriate board within your local church for recommendation to the Association as a student in care of the Association. You can be accepted into the student in care relationship anytime after beginning college.

C. You will be expected to provide to your local church governing board written information about your desire and plans to prepare for the ordained ministry. Included in this packet of information are the following:

1. Biography and statement of your Christian pilgrimage.
2. Documentation of your three most recent years of formal education.
3. Statement of your educational plans.

D. You will then meet with your church's board and review your information and share your call

to the Ordained Ministry. After this meeting, the Board with the local Pastor determines whether to make application to the Association that you be received as a student in care of the Association. A letter should be sent to the Clerk of the Association stating the following:

VOTED: That our pastor communicate to the Committee on Church and Ministry of the Cumberland Association the desire of the _____ Church that one of its members, _____ be examined and if found acceptable, be received as a student in care of the Cumberland Association.

E. If the church chooses to make application for you to the Association, you should provide the following in support of that application to the Association.

1. Verification of membership in a local church of the United Church of Christ.
2. Three letters of reference including one from your pastor.
3. All the materials provided to the local church board, (see II.C. 1-3 above) revised if necessary.

F. The Association Committee on Church and Ministry receives the application and reviews the material received from the pastor, the governing board of the local church, and from the candidate. If it decides to proceed, it sets a date to meet with and examine the candidate.

G. You and your pastor will meet with the Committee on Church and Ministry at an appointed time and explain your beliefs and plans. After the oral examination, the Committee, meeting by itself, will make its decision regarding "student in care" status for you. If such status is granted, it will be for a period of one year, at which time your status will be reviewed by the CCM and, if appropriate, renewed for another year.

H. If the CCM recommends student in care status, the Committee, in consultation with you, will appoint an advisor who must be an ordained minister in good standing in the United Church of Christ, either from within the CCM or the Association.

Guidelines for Maintaining the Student In Care Status.

I. You are expected to meet with your Advisor at least three times a year (preferably after each academic semester, and after the summer season) to review goals, deal with problems, and evaluate your progress and experience to this point.

II. You are expected to maintain reasonable communication with the Committee on Church and Ministry and with the Association itself. Communication should include the following:

A. Regular contact with your own pastor.

B. Attendance at one Association meeting a year, at least.

C. Regular communication from your Advisor to the Chairperson or Clerk of the Committee on Church and Ministry on your experience and progress.

D. Completion and submission of an annual in care renewal application (sample at the end of this Section).

E. A Renewal Interview once a year with the Committee on Church and Ministry, or its sub-committee on in care, at which time you will report on your progress and plans in a written statement.

F. A written summary of the "Middler Review" from your seminary (if done).

III. The Association requires that you have a professional psychological assessment during your period of preparation for Ordination. There are two main values to be gained:

A. It serves to help you and the Committee determine those areas of ability and aptitude which will give shape and direction to your ministry, as well as those characteristics of personality and interest where growth would be desirable.

B. It may be used by The Committee on Church and Ministry also with other considerations to help assess your suitability and readiness for the ministry.

Your Committee on Church and Ministry will provide you with information and guidance for securing these professional services. The cost will be shared equally by the Committee on Church and Ministry; the local church; and you, the student.

You should be assured that when you enter a psychological assessment program, the information provided to the Committee on Church and Ministry or to a sub-committee thereof, will be treated with strict professional confidentiality.

IV. The granting of in care status does not assure ordination but assures guidance, counsel, and assistance in that direction.

A. It is expected that a candidate for ordination be in care of an Association for at least two years before application for ordination is made.

B. The in care status is not transferable from one association to another, but the Committee on Church and Ministry will write letters of reference to other similar Association Committees upon request.

Ordination

The in care relationship between the ministerial candidate and the Committee on Church and Ministry is designed to lead to ordination. However, the fact that you are in care of the Association is no guarantee, in itself, that you will be recommended for ordination.

Conclusion

You should not think of the above outline as a set of legalistic requirements or hurdles which you must overcome; but, rather, as a means of doing things in an orderly and responsible manner and providing a framework which will be of maximum help to you.

We wish you well.

**Cumberland Association
Committee on Church and Ministry
ANNUAL STUDENT IN CARE RENEWAL FORM**

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Advisor _____ Phone _____

1. I desire student in care status renewal for the next year beginning _____.

I am a student at _____.

2. How and how often have you and your advisor been in contact during this past year?
Specify (by phone, letter, meeting):

3. How many times have you been in contact with your sponsoring church? In what ways?

4. Are there ways in which we can improve the in care process as you have experienced it?

5. Do you wish to stay with the same advisor? Yes _____ No _____

Signed: _____
Student In Care

Date: _____

PLEASE RETURN TO: Cumberland Association, Committee on Church and Ministry, before your interview for renewal of In Care status

IN CARE AND ORDINATION SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDELINES

**Cumberland Association
Maine Conference, UCC**

Section Three

Guidelines for the Churches Sponsoring In Care Candidates

This Section provides information on Policies and Practices for churches sponsoring in care candidates preparing for Ecclesiastical Authorization of Ministry. This section is addressed to the local church.

You are considering a unique and special relationship with a person who is seeking in care status with the Cumberland Association of the United Church of Christ. You are one party to a triad which includes the candidate for ministry and the Committee on Church and Ministry (CCM) of the Association.

In the beginning a candidate who wishes to be received in care of the Association will consult her/his pastor and/or local church advisor. Then the candidate is expected to appear before the board charged with in care responsibilities in his/her own church. Ordinarily, this will be the Board of Deacons, although a particular church may commit this function to its Christian Education Committee, or some other specialized group within the local church.

The Cumberland Association expects that before a person comes before the CCM requesting in care status, (s)he will have been examined by the board or other appropriate church body as to his/her faith and call. While encouragement of future church leadership is very important, so also is testing of a person's Christian faith, maturity, and ability to articulate that faith and personal call. The board should expect the candidate to write an in care paper. Included are her/his Christian pilgrimage, biography, documentation of the three most recent years of formal education or experience, and a statement about educational plans.

The pastor and the governing board of the local church review the material and interview the local church member. This is a very important step in the in care process as the local church is a vital part of the discernment process. The local church will always know a candidate better than will the Association Committee on Church and Ministry; therefore, the questioning should not just be supportive but perceptive and discerning. The local church can decide to approve, to disapprove, or to wait until a later time to decide.

If the local church board is affirming of the candidate's call into ordained ministry and supports the candidate's request for in care status, it will take the following action:

VOTED: That our pastor communicate to the Committee on Church and Ministry of the Cumberland Association the desire of the _____ Church that one of its members, _____, be examined and; if found acceptable, be received as a student in care of the Cumberland Association.

The candidate and pastor then consult with the Chairperson of the Association Committee on

Church and Ministry to make arrangements for the appearance of the candidate and pastor (or other local church official) before the Committee.

The local congregation is the nurturing place of the future leadership of the Church. It is the community to which those who feel a "call" to the ordained ministry look for encouragement, and also openness and honesty. They need role models, female and male, lay and clergy. And they need opportunities to participate and develop leadership in various aspects of the church's life such as pastoral visitation, working with committees, teaching children and adults, preaching, administration, and planning. It is invaluable to see at firsthand how the United Church of Christ polity works.

The candidates need to be challenged intellectually, morally, and spiritually; to be asked some of the tough questions about their faith and its application to life, by you who know and love them, so that when they finally come before the Committee for ordination, the process will not be frightening, but an affirmation of growth in the Faith.

If the candidate is granted in care status with the Association, (s)he is assigned an In Care Advisor. The In Care Advisor should expect to keep in touch with the candidate in accordance with the "Guidelines for Advisors to Students In Care of Association," be ready to offer support, keep abreast of the candidate's theological and emotional growth and make sure that the candidate is following through with the proper CCM procedures at each step of the process. By the time a person is ready for ordination, at least two years after coming in care, the advisor should feel confident in recommending him/her to the Committee and should be thoroughly familiar with the person's ordination paper.

When candidates come before the Committee for ordination, we expect them to have gone through the process of in care, which ordinarily spans at least a two/three year period. We require, at the least, a two-year in care involvement with the Cumberland Association before the local church where she/he is a member recommends to the Association CCM that he/she be ordained in the United Church of Christ. We expect that the candidate will have a solid conviction of her/his "call"; an appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses which (s)he brings to the church; an ability to be articulate, both on paper and in person, about faith issues so that (s)he will be ready to communicate it to others; and an emotional maturity which can handle crises, authority, and conflict. We expect that the candidate be familiar with UCC polity and Covenant. It is a requirement of the Committee that a psychological evaluation (1/3 paid by the local church) be done, to help candidates meet these expectations.

The sponsoring church can help the in care candidate by being familiar with the guidelines and requirements for ordination (see Section Five of this document and the ***UCC Manual on Ministry***), and by working with the candidate at each stage of his/her pilgrimage toward ordained ministry. Making decisions about the future leadership of the Church is a serious responsibility. We hope that by all of us working together more closely, we can make the process less bewildering for candidates and more positive for the Church as a whole.

IN CARE AND ORDINATION SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDELINES

Cumberland Association Maine Conference, UCC

Section Four

Guidelines For Advisors to Students In Care of Association

This section provides information on Association Committee on Church and Ministry Policies and Practices for Advisors to in care students preparing for Ecclesiastical Authorization of Ministry.

First of all, the Committee on Church and Ministry wishes to thank you sincerely for accepting the task of advising an in care student. We feel certain that your acceptance is an acknowledgment of the importance of the role you will play. Generally the word advisor means just that: Someone who advises another on a course of action or inaction. But this can often be more difficult than it first appears! Realizing this, and also realizing that the Committee has a large responsibility in this matter, we have developed these guidelines. We hope to be helpful throughout your term as an In Care Advisor.

The Committee on Church and Ministry has the responsibility (along with the local church and its pastor) for guiding and assisting a student throughout his or her journey to ordination. These responsibilities and actions are best outlined in the *UCC Manual on Ministry*, and we suggest that you acquaint or reacquaint yourself with them. By its very nature, a committee would find it very difficult to properly fulfill these responsibilities -- too many people, too much turnover of members, etc. Hence, the appointment of an advisor to each student is a sincere attempt to "fill the gap."

The most important factor in any relationship is communication. Just as we as a committee cannot help you with a problem if we never see you or hear from you, so will you also be of little help to the student if you are always unavailable. This does not mean you should be a pest! However, you should meet with the student as soon as possible and let her/him know your "office hours", the times you are generally available, or whatever arrangement is mutually suitable. If this becomes impossible, (for instance, if the student or you should move to a location prohibitively distant), please advise us immediately so other arrangements can be made. It is far better to opt out of a difficult situation than to try to carry on poorly.

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Church and Ministry to assure that a student is on an appropriate path leading to ordination into the United Church of Christ. As the advisor, you are a main source of that assurance. Therefore, you are asked to report the student's progress to the Committee a minimum of one time yearly. Any logical substitute is certainly permissible; however, regular communication is highly recommended. In order to do this, it will be necessary to meet with the student at least three times a year (preferably after each academic semester, and

after the summer season). We suggest that at least one of these meetings each year be in the student's environment rather than your office. Actually seeing his/her seminary, room, classrooms, etc. and observing him or her in that environment might well add to your insight of the individual.

Your reports to the Committee must be written and the student must receive a copy. You are most welcome, in fact urged, to deliver the reports to the Committee in person and make any verbal additions which you feel the Committee should know. However, for many reasons, the written report, with any addendum (which must be copied and sent to the student) is the official report. If the student is far away from home these recommended procedures will have to be modified. It is the advisor's responsibility to see that communication is maintained. This may necessitate regular letters, telephone conversations, and personal visits when the student is home. Since many in care students are at a seminary some distance from their home Association, it is critical that the advisor be conscientious about communication.

Goals represent a person's intentions in life and give direction to her or his activities. Goals can be general or specific, short-ranged or long-ranged. Each person must decide these priorities on the basis of his/her values and commitments. It is essential that the student seeking ordination in the United Church of Christ evaluate and constantly re-evaluate her or his goals. It will be essential for you as his/her advisor, to review the student's evaluation of these goals. Then, always keeping the student's goals in mind, the following specific items should be covered and included in each report:

1. Student progress

Is the student making positive progress to obtain a thorough knowledge of United Church of Christ history, theological roots and polity? How is the student doing this? What is the student's academic record?

2. Progress toward ordination

Is the student on a meaningful and recognized path to ordination? State any unusual decisions by the student--both positive and negative in nature.

3. Growth

What evidence has the student shown of growth --spiritually, --intellectually, and maturity? What evidence has the student shown of growth in her/his understanding of the nature of God's call to ordained ministry?

4. Strengths

What is the student's strong point(s) and what has been done to explore that strength?

5. Weakness

What is the student's weak point(s) and what has been done to strengthen (or avoid) them?

6. Committee responsibilities

What more could the Committee on Church and Ministry do to support the student and enhance his/her growth?

7.. Seminary responsibilities

What more could the Seminary do to support the student and enhance his/her growth?

8. Potential

Based on the goals the student has set, how would you rate this student's potential for eventual ordination?

9. Miscellaneous information and conclusions

State all other factors you feel important for the growth of this student within the ministry.

The Association, in the form of the Committee on Church and Ministry, is very concerned for the welfare of our in care students. In any way possible we wish to stand beside the student and encourage progress toward the fulfillment of her/his decision to seek ordination. We are interested in every reasonable path chosen to attain that goal. Our last word of advice is to keep a very open mind and rely on the Committee for support.

(Note: see also the *UCC Manual on Ministry*, pp. 35-37)

**Cumberland Association
Committee on Church and Ministry**

ANNUAL "STUDENT IN-CARE" REVIEW FORM

Advisor: _____ Phone _____

Student In Care: _____

Instructions: Please comment on the following areas as suggested in Section Four of the In-Care and Ordination Supplemental Guidelines: Student Progress, Progress toward Ordination, Growth, Strengths, Weakness, Committee Responsibilities, Seminary Responsibilities, Potential, and Miscellaneous Information and Conclusions. Use additional pages as necessary.

Do you wish to continue as advisor to this student for another year? YES _____

NO _____

SIGNED: _____ DATE: _____

PLEASE RETURN TO: Chairperson, Cumberland Association, Committee on Church and Ministry,

**IN CARE AND ORDINATION SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDELINES
Cumberland Association**

Maine Conference, UCC

Section Five

Guidelines For the Process for Ordination

This section provides information on Association Committee on Church and Ministry Policies and Practices for candidates seeking Ecclesiastical Authorization of Ministry (Ordination).

We welcome your application for "Ordination" or "Ordination subject to Call" in the United Church of Christ. We want to do what we can to assist you and the church requesting this status on your behalf. Please be in touch with the Association Committee on Church and Ministry concerning procedures and preparations for meeting with the Committee for its examination and recommendation to the Association.

The Cumberland Association follows the *UCC Manual on Ministry* (1991) with some adaptations and additions. All correspondence may be addressed to the Cumberland Association Committee on Church and Ministry, % Clerk.

The following outlines the generally followed steps leading to the authorization for Ordination:

1. Most candidates for ordination will have been students in care of a local church and an Association of the UCC.
 - a. If the candidate has been in care of the Cumberland Association, the candidate will request the governing board of the local church to recommend to this Association that the candidate be examined for ordination, in accordance with the UCC Manual on Ministry and these supplemental guidelines and procedures.
 - b. If the candidate has been in care of another association in the UCC, or has not been in care of any association within the UCC, and chooses to commence the ordination process in the Cumberland Association, the Cumberland Association will normally take the candidate in care for a minimum of two years before proceeding with paragraph a. above. This is required in order that a working and knowing relationship can be established with the candidate.
 - c. If the candidate has received a call to ordained ministry within this association, the candidate may apply for licensure for that call. The calling church may then be considered the local church for this process.
2. The local church requests ordination through action taken by the church in meeting or by an appropriate board of the church; Council, or Executive Board, etc. (The parenthetical phrases in the following recommended action indicate the instance which the church requesting ordination does so in order that the candidate may serve that church as its ordained minister.)

VOTED: That the clerk of the _____ Church communicate to the Committee on Church and

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Ministry of the Cumberland Association the following request of the church: That the Committee on Church and Ministry examine _____, (whom this church proposes to call as its pastor) as to his/her fitness in character and training to be ordained to the Christian Ministry (and to review the records of the church regarding her/his call to the pastorate) and that, if the examination and review be satisfactory, the Association be summoned to meet as an Ecclesiastical Council to review the Committee's findings, to hear the candidate's statement of faith and experience, and if it be satisfied, to proceed on a date satisfactory to the church to a service of ordination according to the custom of the United Church of Christ.

3. Based on the above action, the local church submits a written request to the CCM for examination for Ordination.

4. The candidate for Ordination prepares the materials to be submitted to the CCM in preparation for meeting with the Committee. The documents may be submitted to the CCM Chair or Clerk at any time during the in care process, but at least five weeks prior to the scheduled CCM meeting to review the Ordination Paper.

The materials required are: (see Page 66, UCC Manual on Ministry)

- a. A certification of membership in the church requesting Ordination.
- b. A copy of the action of the church requesting Ordination.
- c. A call, if one has been received, to a church or agency requesting that the candidate be ordained for ministry.
- d. The candidate's in care and licensure files, if in another Association.
- e. Documents of standing in another denomination, if any.
- f. A transcript of the candidate's academic record for all college and seminary years to be sent by the schools directly to the Chair of the Committee on Church and Ministry.
- g. Four letters of reference from appropriate parties, including one from the present in care advisor, if in care, and one from a teacher, advisor or administrator of the candidate's seminary. All of the letters should request ordination for the candidate and indicate for how long and in what capacity the writer has known the candidate.
- h. A psychological evaluation or its acceptable equivalent completed within the past two years. The psychological evaluation, or its equivalent, is reviewed confidentially by the Committee on Church and Ministry and is removed from the records and destroyed after Ordination.
- i. The report from the supervisor for a unit (400 hours) of accredited Clinical Pastoral Education and the self-evaluation for the same period.
- j. A Ministerial Profile prepared by the candidate and provided by the Office for Church Life and Leadership. **Note: The candidate's Ministerial Profile should not be circulated before the CCM recommends the candidate for the Ecclesiastical Council unless specific permission has been granted by the CCM.**

5. The following materials must be in the hands of **each** member of the Committee on Church and Ministry and the related Conference Minister at least two weeks before the meeting. **It is**

the responsibility of the candidate to duplicate and distribute this material. A copy of the CCM mailing list is available from the Association Clerk.

- a. A sermon which the candidate deems to be one of his/her best.
- b. An ordination paper of approximately 3,000 to 5,000 words setting forth the candidate's Christian experience, call to ordained ministry, and an outline of her/his theological position.

(See Appendix II, Recommended Ordination Paper Outline.)

An ordination paper of app. 12-15 double-spaced pages that is a coherent oral presentation of the candidate's theological understanding of pastoral ministry. It should demonstrate comprehension of biblical authority, covenant, theodicy, the Trinity, and the Preamble of the UCC Constitution as to who Jesus Christ is, salvation, the sacraments, the historic church, and the essential faith and polity of the UCC. Seminary polity papers are not automatically accepted as the candidate's ordination paper.

6. Ordinarily, the candidates will meet with the CCM at one of its regularly scheduled meetings (generally the fourth Wednesday of each month September through June.) The agenda for the meetings are set by the CCM Chairperson approximately two weeks prior to the meeting. At the meeting, the CCM will examine the candidate in an interview.

7. Guests to come with the candidate should include his/her in care advisor and may include his/her pastor and members of the sponsoring church.

8. If the Committee decides to recommend the candidate to the Association for Ordination, the Association will advise her/him regarding the calling of his/her Ecclesiastical Council and Ordination Service. (NOTE: It is recommended that there be a month between the Ecclesiastical Council and the Ordination Service.) The candidate should be prepared with a preliminary outline of the Ordination Service including the names of persons who would be invited to participate, at least half of whom should be from the United Church of Christ; the prayer of ordination must be by a member of the United Church of Christ. Final plans should be shared with the CCM for approval. Members of the sponsoring church may well take part in the service.

9. After the recommendation of the Committee on Church and Ministry has been secured and the arrangements have been agreed upon, the call and a copy of the ordination paper will go out to the Churches of the Association for the convening of the Ecclesiastical Council. Usually, after the invitation is sent, the sponsoring Church will communicate with the minister of each invited church to be sure that at least 12 clergy and one delegate from at least 12 churches are present.

10. The Association may have other requirements as it deems suitable in individual situations.

We hope that these guidelines will be helpful to you in preparing yourself for the process of ordination. Please call the CCM Chair if you have any questions or comments about this process.

**IN CARE AND ORDINATION SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDELINES
Cumberland Association, Maine Conference, UCC**

Appendix I

The paragraphs of the UCC Constitution and Bylaws which refer to Ordination:

THE MINISTRY

17. The United Church of Christ recognizes that God calls the whole Church and every member to participate in and extend the ministry of Jesus Christ by witnessing to the Gospel in church and society. 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.

18. The United Church of Christ recognizes that God calls certain of its members to various forms of ministry in and on behalf of the church to which ecclesiastical authorization is required. Recognizing God's call, the ecclesiastical authorization is granted by an Association through the rite of ordination, through commissioning, licensing, granting ordained ministerial standing and other acts of authorization.

19. Ordination is the rite whereby the United Church of Christ through an Association, in cooperation with the person and a local church of the United Church of Christ, recognizes and authorizes that member whom God has called to ordained ministry, and sets that person apart by prayer and the laying on of hands. By this rite ordained ministerial standing is conferred and authorization given to perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ.

20. An Ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ is one of its members who has been called by God and ordained to preach and teach the Gospel, to administer the sacraments and rites of the Church and to exercise pastoral care and leadership.

United Church of Christ, Constitution, Article V

ORDAINED MINISTRY

105. Not more than six months prior to the completion of theological training, a student preparing for the ordained ministry applies through his or her local church to its Association for approval as a candidate for ordination. If the service of ordination is to be performed with an Association other than that of the student, the procedure, including that described in the following paragraph, is initiated by that Association and its Conference after consultation with the Association which holds the student in care.

106. The Committees on Ministry of the Conference and Association cooperate in examining the candidate to determine ability; reasons for seeking the office of the ordained Christian ministry; educational and theological attainments; knowledge of the history, polity, and practices of the United Church of Christ; and growth in Christian faith and experience; and make their recommendation of fitness to the Association. If upon acceptance of the recommendation or upon further examination and decision by the Association itself, the candidate is found to be qualified, ordination thereby is authorized, subject to a call recognized by the Association.

107. Ordination by an Association of the United Church of Christ, in cooperation with the local church, confers ordained ministerial standing as an Ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ.

108. After the ordination or in anticipation of it, a certificate is issued bearing the signatures of the proper officers of the Association and the President of the United Church of Christ.

United Church of Christ, Bylaws, Article I.

**IN CARE AND ORDINATION SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDELINES
Cumberland Association, Maine Conference, UCC**

Appendix II

Recommended Ordination Paper Guide

(Adapted from the UCC Manual on Ministry Pages 51-52)

The content of the paper will be a statement of the candidate's understanding of the practice of pastoral ministry. The oral presentation should be one-half hour in length, and the candidate should be prepared for one-half hour of questioning.

Areas for Theological Reflection:

How does your theological perspective come into dialogue with the historic Christian Faith?

How do you understand the Preamble of the Constitution of the UCC?

How do you understand the historic and theological roots of the UCC?

How are ordained ministers and congregations in covenant with the UCC?

Reflection on Ministry and Pilgrimage

- A. How would you relate the previously discussed issues to your own faith pilgrimage?
- B. What is your understanding of call, church, mission, and ministry?
- C. What is the challenge and vision of your own ministry?
- D. How do you see your gifts fitting into your call?
- E. What is the meaning of ordination in the UCC and how do you understand pastoral authority?
- F. How do you understand your commitment to the UCC?