

**MEMBER IN DISCERNMENT GUIDELINES
AND APPENDICES**

CHURCH AND MINISTRY COMMITTEE
PENOBSCOT-PISCATAQUIS ASSOCIATION
MAINE CONFERENCE
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Introduction

Discerning where and how the Holy Spirit is leading us is always a challenge, and an adventure in faith. The United Church of Christ has a new process which involves a covenantal relationship between the individual Member in Discernment, their local church, their Association, and the Association's Church and Ministry Committee. These Discernment Guidelines describe the entire process associated with being a Member in Discernment (MID) as practiced by the Church and Ministry Committee of the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association of the Maine Conference United Church of Christ.

The Office of Parish Life and Leadership and those working to implement the Pronouncement passed at General Synod 25 - "Ministry Issues: Forming and Preparing Pastoral Leaders for God's Church" - have recommended a change from Student In Care status to Member in Discernment status that will appear in the next revision of *Manual on Ministry*. This terminology change represents a shift in the emphasis on and the understanding of ministerial formation and discernment, both for candidates and those who will assess their fitness for authorized ministry. This shift is reflected in these Discernment Guidelines. However, during this time of transition, the terms should be considered interchangeable.

These Discernment Guidelines describe the journey to be taken by the Member in Discernment (MID), and describe the candidate for authorized ministry's relationship with each of the following Covenantal Partners:

- I. The Local Church
 - A. Local Pastor
 - B. Discernment Group
 - C. Sponsoring Body (e.g., Church Council or Board of Deacons)
- II. The Association Church and Ministry Committee
 - A. Overview
 - B. Initial Member in Discernment Decision
 - C. Continuing Relationship with the Church and Ministry Committee
- III. Additional Supports
 - A. The Discernment Advisor
 - B. The MID Liaison

The Member in Discernment process is the responsibility of the Church and Ministry Committee, composed of both lay and clergy members from the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association. Among its several responsibilities is recommending the licensing, commissioning, and ordaining of ministers. The Church and Ministry Committee works with each Member in Discernment (MID) (also referred to in this document as a "candidate for authorized ministry" or, simply, "the candidate"). Each of the other Covenantal Partners listed above makes contributions toward the candidate's readiness for ministry and helps in discerning the candidate's readiness and fitness for ministry.

No single set of guidelines can hope to cover all possible situations. If the Church and Ministry Committee feels that alternatives are warranted, it will seek to make exceptions that are

respectful of all parties involved in the process, and in the best interest of the United Church of Christ and the candidate. This document refers frequently to the United Church of Christ *Manual on Ministry*, which is available on line at <http://www.ucc.org/ministers/manual/>. References are cited as section number followed by page numbers [e.g. Section 4, pp.3-4].

Request for Member in Discernment Relationship An Overview

Following the leading of the Holy Spirit, an individual enters into Discernment to seek support and guidance in the process of discerning a call to an authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ.

When to Apply

A person seeking an authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ is strongly encouraged to apply for Member in Discernment (MID) status upon enrollment in an accredited theological seminary, if not before. To be considered for MID status a candidate must minimally have already acquired a high school diploma or GED and be participating in a bachelors degree program or its equivalent as determined by the Church and Ministry Committee.

Length of Relationship

The candidate should expect to be in the Member in Discernment process for at least two full years. Member in Discernment status is not automatically transferable from one Association to another either within the Maine Conference or to Associations in other Conferences of the United Church of Christ. Members in Discernment (or those who have been received “In Care” by another Association) who are moving from another Association in the United Church of Christ to the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association and who wish to continue their Member in Discernment (or In Care) status must make a request as outlined in these guidelines. Consideration will be given to years already in Discernment (or In Care) and where the candidate currently is in her or his process. MID status, once granted, is renewed on a yearly basis. Those Members in Discernment who have completed their education and have been granted authorization pending call by an Ecclesiastical Council of the Association will continue as Members in Discernment until they receive a ministerial call. Though the formal advisory relationship will cease, candidates approved for authorization pending call shall meet with the Church and Ministry Committee at least annually in an agreed upon review process, while maintaining their participation in the local church.

The Discernment Journey

The Discernment relationship is covenantal, with the purpose of helping the candidate discern a call to authorized Christian ministry through licensure, commissioning, or ordination. This journey begins with an individual's seeking to clarify his or her call to ministry and moves to request for Member in Discernment status. If Member in Discernment status is granted, the journey continues until the candidate is licensed, commissioned or ordained, or the Discernment relationship is ended either by the candidate or the Church and Ministry Committee.

Resources and Ethical Essentials

All Members in Discernment shall have a copy of the Discernment Guidelines and a complete current copy of the United Church of Christ publication, *Manual on Ministry*, which is available on line at <http://www.ucc.org/ministers/manual/> Members in Discernment shall be familiar with both of these publications and any updates to them.

Each person granted Discernment status shall be familiar with and accountable to the Codes of Conduct for their proposed authorized ministry in the *Manual on Ministry* (Section I). The Codes share the same Ethics of Ministry, (Appendix K). Any breach of these ethics will be investigated by the Church and Ministry Committee. A serious or chronic breach of ethics will be grounds for ending Member in Discernment status.

Partners in the Discernment Journey

I. The Local Church

A. Local Pastor

The formal discernment process begins when a person (hereafter referred to as "the candidate") seeks out the pastor of the local church in which she or he holds membership to discuss his or her sense of call. The pastor will listen to and counsel the candidate regarding his or her call, and will continue to be available throughout the successive stages of the process. The pastor will give the candidate a copy of these Discernment Guidelines, which may also be obtained from the MID Liaison or the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Chairperson.

B. Local Discernment Group

If the person and pastor decide to move further in the formal discernment process, a Local Church Discernment Group will be formed, consisting of the pastor and representatives from the local congregation, who will meet with the candidate to discern and clarify the call the candidate has received. The Discernment Group should explore with the candidate the issues outlined in Section 2, page 4, of *Manual on Ministry*. The composition of this group is left to the local church to determine. It may be an existing committee (e.g., Council or Board of Deacons) or one created specifically for the purpose. The candidate and the Discernment Group may be helpfully guided in their work of initial discernment through the use of the resource, "Ask the Question: A Resource for Discernment of Call," available through the UCC website at www.askthequestion.org.

C. Local Sponsoring Body

When both the Local Church Discernment Group and the candidate agree that the candidate is prepared to enter into the Member in Discernment process with the Church and Ministry Committee, notice shall be given to an authorized group of the congregation's choice (e.g., Church Council or Board of Deacons) by the Discernment Group of their intention to request formal sponsorship by the local church for the candidate as a Member in Discernment.

Before the local church's formal vote of sponsorship, a lay leader or the pastor shall notify the Chair of the Church and Ministry that the church needs a consultation with the MID Liaison. This person will meet with the appropriate church bodies, the pastor, and the candidate to outline the Discernment journey, including the requirements and expectations of all those in the Discernment process as indicated in the Discernment Covenant, Appendix G.

After meeting with the MID Liaison, the local church Sponsoring Body will receive the request of the Discernment Group that the candidate be sponsored by the Church. Information accompanying the request will include statements about the candidate's Christian pilgrimage and biography, how the call to ministry is understood by the candidate, educational plans for the future as well as documentation of formal education (i.e., a high school diploma/GED and/or other post-high school degrees and transcripts). The Sponsoring Body should engage in further discernment with the candidate, exploring the issues outlined in Section 2, page 4, of the United Church of Christ *Manual on Ministry*. The Sponsoring Body may also be helpfully guided in its discernment with the candidate by using the resource, "Ask the Question: A Resource for Discernment of Call," available at www.askthequestion.org.

The Sponsoring Body, on behalf of the local church, then decides whether to recommend the candidate to the Church and Ministry Committee to be received as a Member in Discernment. If the Sponsoring Body approves the request for sponsorship, the Request for Member in Discernment Status, Appendix B, should be completed and added to the candidate's Request materials. Only with the formal sponsorship of the local church may the candidate be presented to the Church and Ministry Committee for consideration of MID status. The candidate shall continue her or his membership and relationship with the sponsoring congregation. See Appendix Q for suggestions on continuing support of the MID by the Local Church.

At the completion of the Discernment journey with the Church and Ministry Committee, the local church shall request in writing that the Church and Ministry Committee examine the candidate for authorized ministry. Upon recommendation of the Church and Ministry Committee, the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association will be asked to convene an Ecclesiastical Council for Licensure, Commissioning, or Ordination.

II. The Association Church and Ministry Committee

A. An Overview

The Church and Ministry Committee is the body authorized to make decisions concerning Discernment status. The Association Committee on Ministry enters into a discernment process by responding faithfully and attentively to all parties, grounding the response in a spirit of hospitable openness and welcoming the other covenantal partners (the Local Church and the individual discerning the call) as they mutually embark on a new venture. Each time the members of a Committee on Ministry begin discernment with an individual and that individual's Local church, the lay and clergy members of the Committee on Ministry are also reminded that they themselves discerned a call to this particular responsibility. The work begins with a sense of gratitude for that privilege and a promise to create a hospitable environment intentionally open to the movement of the Spirit.

It is within this context that candidates seeking Member in Discernment status and authorized ministry shall meet with the Church and Ministry Committee at specific times during the process. Following these interviews, the Church and Ministry Committee will vote to either receive the candidate as a Member in Discernment or deny the request for MID status. If MID status is denied, the Church and Ministry Committee will discuss with the candidate its reasons for the denial. The candidate may then choose to work on the problem areas the Church and Ministry Committee has outlined and may later reapply to the Committee for reconsideration.

B. Initial Member in Discernment Decision

1. Initial Interview.

Upon the approval by the local church Sponsoring Body, the candidate is introduced in person to the Church and Ministry Committee by the local pastor and a lay member (the chair of the Deacons or other key layperson) of the local church.

The Church and Ministry Committee will examine the candidate at this initial interview based upon the material submitted (see Appendix F for required documents), as well as an oral presentation and dialogue. This is a two-way interview; the candidate should ask questions regarding the Discernment relationship and process, as well as any special concerns related to the candidate's particular situation. These questions or others may and should be raised by the candidate at any point in the Discernment process if these matters require clarification.

2. Psychological and Career Assessment.

Following the initial interview, and if the Church and Ministry Committee agrees to continue the process towards granting MID status with the possibility of authorized ministry, the candidate will have a psychological and career assessment by an examiner approved by the Church and Ministry Committee. The candidate will sign and send the Authorization and Release form, Appendix E, to the assessment center for its use. The cost of the assessment will be shared in equal portions by the candidate, the local church, and the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association.

3. The Post-Assessment Interview

The results of the assessment are confidential and are sent to the Chair of the Church and Ministry Committee. The chair will review the assessment and share the one page summary with the Committee. When the Committee has reviewed the summary, the candidate will be invited to a follow-up interview to discuss the report's implications for the candidate, his or her discernment process, and further formation and training for authorized ministry.

The candidate is encouraged to share their copy of the assessment with her or his Discernment Advisor. The full assessment report will be sent to the Maine Conference Office for storage in a locked file.

4. Initial Decision in Member in Discernment Status

After the post-assessment interview and further review of all the candidate's materials, the Church and Ministry Committee may, according to the criteria in Section 2, pages 5-8 of *Manual on Ministry*, decide that the candidate should be granted Member in Discernment status. If the Committee so decides, the Church and Ministry Committee will receive him or her as a Member in Discernment of the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association, assign a Discernment Advisor, and enter into Discernment Covenant, Appendix G. The Church and Ministry Committee will also present the candidate as a Member in Discernment during worship at a meeting of the Association. A liturgy for this is available in the *Book of Worship*.

If the Church and Ministry Committee decides not to grant Member in Discernment status, the person seeking MID status will be informed and invited to discuss the Church and Ministry Committee's concerns. The candidate may choose to address the concerns the Church and Ministry Committee has outlined and may later reapply for MID status.

C. Continuing Relationship with the Church and Ministry Committee

1. Annual Reviews.

Annual Reviews are held with the Church and Ministry Committee to evaluate the past year and look ahead to the next year of the Discernment journey. The Annual Review also seeks to maintain the covenantal relationship with the candidate and explores ways to improve the supportive relationship between the Church and Ministry Committee and the Member in Discernment.

Dates for each Annual Review will be determined by the Church and Ministry Committee in consultation with the candidate. The pastor and/or a member of the candidate's local church and the Discernment Advisor are expected to participate in each Annual Review. The Annual Review is expected to be in person. All materials for the Annual Review must be sent to the Chair of the Church and Ministry Committee four (4) weeks ahead of the meeting. See Appendix H for materials required for the Annual Reviews.

Annual Reviews with the candidate and Church and Ministry Committee consist of four parts:

- a. The Annual Review Preparation Sheet, Appendix I, along with written reflections on the Annual Review questions (see Appendix H), covering each subject adequately but concisely.
- b. If the candidate is in seminary, review of seminary transcripts, evaluations, (see Appendix J) and such other reviews as the Mid-Program Review and the Mentored Practice 'Final Exam'; if the candidate is in an alternate path to authorized ministry, review of appropriate information from that path;
- c. Any CPE evaluations; and
- d. A face to face interview.

2. Following Each Annual Review:

- a. One copy of all materials is placed in the candidate's permanent file.
- b. A vote is taken by the Church and Ministry Committee to either renew or end the candidate's MID status.
- c. If the Church and Ministry Committee votes to end MID status, the candidate will be informed and invited to discuss this decision by the Committee.
- d. Following a vote to renew MID status, the candidate will be notified in writing.

3. Final Year Review.

The Final Year Review between the candidate and the Church and Ministry Committee will be held at least two months prior to the ministry Authorization Interview with the Church and Ministry Committee, and not earlier than six months prior to the candidate's completion of preparation for authorized ministry, including alternate paths and seminary education. All materials for this Final Year Review are to be forwarded to the Chair of the Penobscot-Piscataquis Church and Ministry Committee one month before the date of the Final Year Review.

Materials Required for the Final Year Review:

- a. If the MID is in seminary, the most recent seminary transcripts and a copy of Masters of Divinity diploma, if granted. If preparation for authorized ministry, licensure, commissioning, or ordination has been completed through alternate preparation, the complete records of such preparation.
- b. A final draft of the candidate's licensure, commissioning or ordination paper, prepared in consultation with the Discernment Advisor. In addition, a candidate may consult with his or her home pastor and/or seminary advisor. The paper will follow one of the three suggested outlines listed in Appendix N. It should be double-spaced, using a 12 point font, and should not exceed 20 pages. The Church and Ministry Committee may review the paper with the candidate, making suggested revisions for when it is to be formally presented to the Church & Ministry Committee for the Licensure, Commissioning, or Ordination Interview.
- c. A written reflection on the features of the current polity, program, or theological posture of the United Church of Christ the candidate will work hardest to support or change during ministry, the theological basis for such support or change, and why the candidate believes it is important.
- d. The Annual Review Preparation Sheet, Appendix I, filled out by the candidate and his or her Discernment Advisor.
- e. A Request (see Appendix L) from the candidate's local congregation requesting that the Association examine the candidate for licensure, commissioning, or ordination, submitted no earlier than six months prior to the candidate's completion of preparation for authorized ministry (see Section 3, page 18, *Manual on Ministry*).

4. Decision on Proceeding to Authorization of Ministry

Following the Final Year Review, the Church and Ministry Committee will decide whether to proceed to the Licensure, Commissioning, or Ordination Interview. If the Authorization Interview is considering ordination in the United Church of Christ, the Committee will use the Marks of Readiness for Ministry (Appendix S) as a guide in their deliberations.

- a. If the decision is affirmative, a written report will be prepared by the chairperson of the Church and Ministry Committee or a designated committee member outlining the basis for the recommendation and sharing some of the committee's experience with the candidate. The chairperson or designated committee member shall be responsible to see that the candidate's complete file, including all required documents, assessments, reviews, and required evaluations, is included with the written report.
- b. If the Church and Ministry Committee decides to deny or postpone the recommendation, the candidate will be informed in writing and invited to continue conversation with the Church and Ministry Committee concerning what, if any, work still needs to be accomplished before a favorable recommendation can be made.

5. Authorization Interview.

The Authorization Interview is the final meeting with the candidate after which a decision will be made about authorization for an Ecclesiastical Council. This interview is conducted following the Final Year Review at a meeting of the Church and Ministry Committee. The primary purpose of the Authorization Interview is to determine the candidate's readiness and fitness for authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ. The Discernment Advisor will accompany the candidate to the Authorization Interview and will be free to participate. See Appendix M for materials required by this interview. If the Authorization Interview is regarding ordination in the United Church of Christ, the Committee will use the Marks of Readiness for Ministry (Appendix S) as a guide in their deliberations.

Upon completion of the Authorization Interview, the Church and Ministry Committee votes on whether to recommend ministerial authorization to the Association. The Committee has four options: Yes; Yes, but; No, but; No

- a. "Yes." The committee accepts and authorizes the candidate unconditionally and believes she or he will be an effective and faithful leader in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ and an asset to its ministry.
- b. "Yes, but . . ." The committee accepts and is prepared to authorize the candidate for ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ with the provision that certain conditions be met or additional information be provided within a specified time.

- c. “No, but . . .” The committee does not believe the candidate, at present, meets the standards for ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ. If certain conditions are met (e.g., additional study, experience, maturing, etc.), the application may be reconsidered by the Committee at some future time.
- d. “No.” The committee does not believe that the candidate is fit for ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ.

6. Ecclesiastical Council.

- a. The Church and Ministry Committee chairperson will
 - 1.) Notify the Association Moderator of the Committee’s recommendation concerning the Ecclesiastical Council.
 - 2.) Coordinate with the Association Moderator and the candidate to set the date and time for an Ecclesiastical Council. The Ecclesiastical Council will be held at a church chosen by the Church and Ministry Committee.
 - 3.) Plan with the candidate how the candidate's authorization paper will be shared with delegates to the Ecclesiastical Council.
- b. The Scribe of the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association will send out the announcement to each church in the Association. The authorization paper may be made available electronically to the churches in the Association.
- c. If the vote of the Ecclesiastical Council is positive, “authorization pending call” status may be granted. The Member in Discernment is authorized to circulate his or her Ministerial Profile.

7. Authorization Service.

When the candidate receives a call, the Authorization date will be set by the Association Moderator, in consultation with the Church and Ministry Committee chairperson, the candidate, and the sponsoring church. Coordination of the event is handled by the candidate and the Church and Ministry Committee chairperson. The Association Scribe sends out the announcement to the churches in the Association. The Authorization liturgy is based on the United Church of Christ *Book of Worship*. The Church and Ministry Committee chair orders the Authorization Certificate from the National setting of the United Church of Christ.

III. Additional Supports for the MID

A. Discernment Advisor

When a candidate is accepted as a Member-in-Discernment (MID), the Church and Ministry Committee assigns a Discernment Advisor who will be additional covenantal partner with the MID, alongside the MID’s home church, home church pastor, the Association Church and Ministry Committee, and other relevant advisors or supervisors involved in the MID’s ministerial formation. Together, this group participates in a communal discernment process with the MID as she or he prayerfully and practically pursues their understanding of God’s call.

The Discernment Advisor is typically an ordained, licensed, or commissioned minister but, on occasion, may be a qualified layperson. The primary responsibility of the Discernment Advisor is to engage the MID in theological and spiritual reflection on the MID's evolving sense of call and experience of ministerial formation. See Appendix P for the Discernment Advisor's responsibilities and discussion suggestions.

When a Discernment Advisor's relationship with a MID has ended for any reason, all confidential records (transcripts, evaluations, etc.) relevant to the MID will be returned to the Church and Ministry Committee and placed in the MID's files or destroyed.

B. MID Liaison

The MID Liaison is an ex-officio member of the Church and Ministry Committee. The primary responsibility of the MID Liaison is to support the MID in fulfilling the logistical requirements of the MID process as delineated in the *Manual on Ministry*, Section 2, and these Discernment Guidelines. See Appendix R for the MID Liaison's responsibilities. See Appendix O for the Member in Discernment Checklist that is maintained by the MID Liaison.

When a MID Liaison's relationship with a MID has ended for any reason, all confidential records (transcripts, evaluations, etc.) relevant to the MID will be returned to the Church and Ministry Committee and placed in the MID's files or destroyed.

Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

Association: A covenantal regional group of churches within a Conference which recognize one another as mutually accountable members of one common family of God. The Association supports the Member in Discernment through encouragement, engagement, financial assistance where possible, and, in particular, by paying 1/3 of the fee for the psychological and career assessment. Associations receive the recommendation of their Church and Ministry Committees concerning candidates who have completed the Discernment process, and call Ecclesiastical Councils for the purpose of examining candidates and determining whether or not to authorize candidates for licensed, commissioned, or ordained ministries, and structure appropriate events for authorization. Ministerial authorization is conferred by and ministerial standing is held in the Association.

Candidate: A term used in this document to refer to persons considering or in discernment about authorized ministry, whether or not these individuals have been formally received as Members in Discernment (MID) by the Church and Ministry Committee.

Church and Ministry Committee: This committee is made up of both lay and clergy members that recommend the licensing, commissioning, and ordaining of ministers to the Association. The committee also determines, confers, and recommends certification of standing of the local churches to the Association.

Covenantal Partners: All participants in the discernment process as defined by those who contribute to the candidate's readiness for licensed, commissioned, or ordained ministry, and help in discerning the candidate's fitness for ministry (e.g., the Local Church Discernment Committee, Local Church Sponsoring Body, the candidate's pastor, the Association, the Association Church and Ministry Committee, field education supervisor, CPE supervisor, academic advisor, alternate path advisor, Discernment Advisor, or MID Liaison).

Covenantal Relationship: A relationship based on promises of mutual, shared responsibility and caring. Covenantal relationships are the fundamental organizing premise of the entire United Church of Christ.

Discernment Advisor: Upon approval of the candidate for Member in Discernment (MID) status, the Church and Ministry Committee assigns a Discernment Advisor who engages the MID in theological and spiritual reflection on the MID's evolving sense of call and experience of ministerial formation. The Discernment Advisor usually is an ordained, licensed, or commissioned minister in good standing with the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association. On occasion the Church and Ministry Committee may assign a candidate to an ordained, licensed, or commissioned United Church of Christ minister not of the candidate's home Association, or a qualified lay person.

Local Church: The candidate for ministry's home church. The local church is a party to the Member in Discernment relationship, and is responsible for continued guidance and support of the candidate as he or she progresses toward authorized ministry.

Local Church Discernment Group: A group, consisting of the pastor and representatives from the local congregation, which meets with the candidate to discern and clarify the call that the candidate has received. This group may or may not be a pre-established group such as the Church Council or Board of Deacons. When both the Discernment Committee and the candidate agree that the candidate is prepared to enter into the Member in Discernment process, it presents the candidate to Sponsoring Body and requests local church sponsorship (unless the Representative Committee and Sponsoring Body are one and the same; see note on Section I, part D).

Local Church Sponsoring Body: A group within the local church (e.g., Church Council or Board of Deacons) that has been authorized to receive and act upon the request of the candidate for sponsorship as a Member in Discernment. After meeting with the candidate, and hearing from a representative of the Church and Ministry Committee concerning the Discernment process, the Sponsoring Body may approve the request for sponsorship and submit the Request for Member in Discernment Status to the Church and Ministry Committee. It is only with the sponsorship of the local church that the candidate may be presented to the Church and Ministry Committee for consideration of Member in Discernment status.

Manual on Ministry: The United Church of Christ *Manual on Ministry* provides perspectives and procedures for ecclesiastical authorization of ministry. All candidates for licensure, commissioning, or ordination in the United Church of Christ should obtain a copy of *Manual on Ministry* or view it at <http://www.ucc.org/ministers/manual/> and have a thorough understanding of Sections 2 and 3 (Student In Care of Association and Ordained Ministry or Sections 6 or 7, Commissioned and Licensed Ministry).

Member in Discernment: Also referred to in this document as a “candidate” or, more simply, as a “MID.” This term describes a relationship and a process. The relationship is expressed as a covenant between the Member in Discernment, the candidate's home church, the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association, and the Association Church and Ministry Committee. The MID process is that which the candidate follows on his or her way to authorized ministry, and is largely described in these Guidelines. In order to be considered for authorized ministry the candidate should expect to be in the Member in Discernment process for at least two full years. While authorization for licensed, commissioned or ordained ministry is normally the end result of the Member in Discernment process, this is not automatic, nor is it always the case. (Note: Until recently, this designation and process was referred to in the United Church of Christ *Manual on Ministry* as “Student In Care of Association.”)

MID: Member in Discernment. See above.

MID Liaison: Supports the MID in fulfilling the logistical requirements of the MID process as delineated in the *Manual on Ministry*, Section 2, and these Discernment Guidelines.

Psychological and Career Assessment: A psychological and career assessment is required of every person seeking Member in Discernment status. The assessment helps the candidate and the Church and Ministry Committee determine those areas of ability and aptitude that will give shape and direction to the candidate’s ministry, as well as those characteristics of personality and interest where growth would be desirable. The assessment is an essential tool that helps the

Church and Ministry Committee offer the candidate guidance and assistance. The Church and Ministry Committee uses the assessment along with other considerations to help evaluate the candidate's suitability and readiness for authorized ministry. Though valuable, the psychological and career assessment is never the sole criterion for deciding a person's fitness for ministry. The assessment is handled in the strictest confidence. After a candidate has been formally received as a Member in Discernment, one copy of the assessment remains in a secure file in the Conference Office.

Appendix B
Request to Receive a Member in Discernment

Congregation: _____ Phone: _____

Pastor: _____ Phone: _____

Church Leader: _____ Phone: _____

Candidate: _____ Phone: _____

Discernment Group: _____

In response to _____'s desire to prepare for licensed, commissioned, or ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ, this congregation hereby requests that the Church and Ministry Committee of the Penobscot - Piscataquis Association for accept him/her as a "Member in Discernment." We affirm that the attached Request is accurate and complete.

I. Enclosed with this Request:

Statement of Consent and Background Disclosure (Appendix C)

Verification of candidate's membership in a local United Church of Christ.

3 questionnaires (Appendix D), including one from the local church pastor.

A statement from the candidate describing his/her faith pilgrimage, biography, educational and vocational plans.

Documentation of the candidate's years of formal education.

A letter describing the process used by the Local Church Sponsoring Body to explore the candidate's calling.

A written statement from the candidate outlining a financial plan for completing academic or alternative educational preparation for authorized ministry.

II. The candidate has met with the local church governing board on _____ and this body hereby recommends that the candidate be considered for acceptance as a Member in Discernment.

III. Following the preliminary interview, and if the Church and Ministry Committee agrees to continue the process towards granting MID status, the candidate agrees to make, arrangements for a psychological and career assessment by an examiner approved by the Church and Ministry Committee. These results shall be available to the Church and Ministry Committee. The congregation agrees to pay 1/3 of the cost of this career assessment.

(Signed) Candidate: _____ Date: _____

(Signed) Church Leader: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Please return completed Request and all documentation to: Chairperson, Penobscot-Piscataquis Church and Ministry Committee (Please see the Maine Conference website for contact information.) "<http://www.maineucc.org>"

Appendix C

Statement of Consent and Background Disclosure

The United Church of Christ Constitution recognizes that God calls the whole church and every member to participate in and extend the ministry of Jesus Christ [paragraph 17]. God also calls certain of the church's members to various forms of ministry in and on behalf of the church [paragraph 18].

Persons completing a Member in Discernment Request bring unique gifts, skill, and experiences. The Penobscot-Piscataquis Association understands the integrity of the MID process to depend upon supportive cooperation and considerate and appropriate sharing of information among the Church and Ministry Committee, Maine Conference staff, Member in Discernment Advisors, and others involved in providing nurture or making decisions.

We are called to speak the truth in love. Our primary goal is, in all circumstances, to build up the body of Christ. Relationships between the Association and persons seeking Member in Discernment status require honesty, integrity, and truthfulness for the health of the church. In that spirit:

I attest that the information contained in my Request is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of consideration for Member in Discernment status.

An open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for continuing healthy relationships between the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee and persons seeking Member in Discernment status. In that spirit:

I authorize the persons or entities to whom I have submitted this Request and/or their agents to make inquiries regarding all statements contained in my Request. I also authorize all persons, entities, former employees, committees on the ministry and their agents, courts, law enforcement and other public agencies to respond to inquiries concerning me, and to supply verification of the information contained in my Request. I understand that such persons may comment on and state their opinions regarding my background and character to agents of the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church & Ministry Committee. To encourage such persons to speak openly and responsibly, I hereby release them from all liability arising from their responses and comments made in good faith and without malice.

The Member in Discernment process of the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association further rests on the sharing of the Request and relevant information in considerate and appropriate ways with those involved in the Member in Discernment process. In that spirit:

I authorize the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee to share information gathered in connection with the Member in Discernment process with the Maine Conference staff, my Discernment Advisor, and the Association Council.

I understand that those gathering information about me concerning my Member in Discernment Request are encouraged to share such information with me if requested by me to do so.

I affirm that the position, power and authority associated with a ministry authorized by the United Church of Christ extends and participates in the ministry of Jesus Christ and is intended to be of benefit to all served by this ministry. True

I affirm that I have not been an in-care student/member in discernment, licensed or ordained in any other Association/conference/denomination. True

No civil law alleging that I attempted or actually engaged in sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct has ever resulted in a judgment being entered against me, settled out of court, or dismissed because the statute of limitations had expired. True

With respect to driving record include matters of reckless driving, driving while intoxicated and/or under the influence of a controlled substance; with respect to criminal charges do not include acts of civil disobedience:

I have not had my driving license suspended or revoked within the last five years. True

I have not been found guilty or plead guilty or no contest to criminal charges. True

My employment has not been terminated because I attempted or actually engaged in:

sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct True

physical abuse True

child abuse True

financial misconduct True

I have not terminated my employment 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 True

physical abuse True

child abuse True

financial misconduct True

In my judgment, there are no facts or circumstances involving me or my background that would warrant further review before my being entrusted with being a Member in Discernment in the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ. True

If you wish to provide comment for any of the above statements you may do so.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name Printed: _____

Appendix D

Questionnaire Regarding Those Seeking Member in Discernment Status

On behalf of _____, who has given your name as an evaluator, please return this questionnaire to the Penobscot - Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee of the Maine Conference, United Church of Christ. This evaluation is intended to assist the process of selection and preparation of candidates for authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ. As best you can, please rate this person on the following characteristics. Please circle the number you think best fits using the following criteria:

X means you are unable to rate because of insufficient data on this trait.

A rating of 1 = POOR, 2 = FAIR, 3 = AVERAGE, 4 = EXCELLENT, 5 = SUPERIOR

In addition, your comments will help. If your anecdotes or comments exceed the space provided, please attach an additional page.

RATING TRAIT

X 1 2 3 4 5 Academic Potential: Intellectual alertness (i.e., ability, curiosity, openness of mind, enjoyment of learning)

Comments

X 1 2 3 4 5 Communication Skills: Ability to express himself or herself verbally and in writing

Comments

X 1 2 3 4 5 Psychological Stability: Establishes and maintains harmonious interpersonal relationships with others, copes well with stressful situations, displays adequate emotional control

Comments

X 1 2 3 4 5 Leadership Ability: Capacity and confidence to lead

Comments

X 1 2 3 4 5 Sensitivity to and Awareness of the Needs and Motives of Others: Cares about and considers others feelings; attempts to understand why people behave as they do; shows concern about social issues

Comments

X 1 2 3 4 5 Resourcefulness and Capacity to Assume Responsibility: Deals effectively and creatively with problems, and can be counted on to fulfill responsibilities

Comments

X 1 2 3 4 5 Physical Health:
Comments

X 1 2 3 4 5 Interpersonal Relationships: Relates well to others socially, spiritually and emotionally; elicit trusts from others
Comments

X 1 2 3 4 5 Breadth of Interest: Has varied interests, hobbies, leisure and creative pursuits
Comments

X 1 2 3 4 5 Ability to Articulate and Share His or Her Spiritual Journey:
Comments

X 1 2 3 4 5 Awareness of His/Her Own Physical, Emotional and Spiritual Needs
Comments

X 1 2 3 4 5 Overall Potential for Authorized Ministry in the United Church of Christ
Comments

What are the first words that come to mind to describe this person?

To the best of your knowledge, is she or he experiencing any current crises or problems (e.g., vocational, financial, marital, familial, etc.)?

Please give any additional perceptions that might be relevant (e.g., work experience, personal lifestyle, etc.) on an additional page.

Evaluator's Name: _____

Address: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

How long have you known this person and in what capacity?

Please check the appropriate statement:

Please keep this information confidential and do not share my perceptions with the candidate.

You may share my perceptions with the candidate if appropriate.

This information is for the exclusive use of the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ. This questionnaire should be mailed directly to:

Chairperson

Penobscot-Piscataquis Church and Ministry Committee

(Please see the Maine Conference website for contact information.)

["http://www.maineucc.org"](http://www.maineucc.org)

Appendix E
Authorization and Release Form

Church and Ministry Committee of the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association
Maine Conference, United Church of Christ

I, _____, hereby authorize
(Name of Candidate)
_____ to release the evaluation,
(Person, Program, School)

either written or oral, of my performance (academic transcripts and reviews, field education evaluations, spiritual development reviews, psychological assessments, Clinical Pastoral Education evaluations) to the Chair, Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee.

I acknowledge that this evaluation will provide the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee with insights into my fitness for ordained or other authorized ministry on behalf of the United Church of Christ.

I authorize the release of this evaluation to the Chair, Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee, its staff, officers, committee members, attorneys, and consultants, as well as to Maine Conference staff. I further authorize the evaluator(s) to answer questions, give opinions, and provide further information related to this evaluation to the Chair, Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee, its staff, officers, committee members, attorneys, and consultants, as well as to Maine Conference staff, and to share this evaluation with ecclesiastical officers of other Associations or denominations, where I may apply for employment, standing, or authorized minister status.

I release, indemnify, and agree to hold harmless the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee, its staff, officers, committee members, attorneys, and consultants, as well as Maine Conference staff, from any action or cause of action arising from any action taken under the above authorization, or from any use of the evaluation and further information in reviewing my fitness for ordained or other authorized ministry, or from the dissemination of the evaluation or further information to or among the persons authorized, or from the unintentional dissemination of the evaluations or further information to other persons.

Any documents provided to the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee, Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ in accordance with the Authorization & Release shall become its sole property and may be retained by the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee, notwithstanding any subsequent withdrawal of my request for, or resignation from, authorized ministry status. This Authorization & Release may not be rescinded or modified, except with the express written agreement of the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee.

Executed as a sealed instrument.

(Signature of Candidate)

(Date)

Instructions to the Candidate:

1. Sign your name to the top of the form, print the person(s) program or school from which this evaluation, transcript, or review is coming.
2. Fill in the date on the bottom of the page.
3. Retain a copy for your files.
4. Send a completed form to the following persons and any others required of you by the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee, Maine Conference
 - Psychological Assessor/Examiner
 - If in seminary:
 - Academic Advisor
 - Seminary Dean of Students
 - Seminary Field Education Director
 - Seminary Field Education Supervisor
 - Seminary Registrar
 - Clinical Pastoral Education Director and/or Supervisor
 - Discernment Advisor
 - MID Liaison
 - Chairperson of the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee

Appendix F

Documents Required for Initial Interview

The following documents must be submitted to the Chair of the Church and Ministry Committee four weeks before the initial interview for inclusion in the candidate's official file (see note below*):

1. The Request for Member in Discernment Status and Statement of Consent and Background Disclosure, Appendices B and C.
2. Written verification of church membership in the United Church of Christ.
3. The Questionnaire for Those Seeking Member in Discernment Status, Appendix D, completed by three people, one of whom is the candidate's pastor. The Questionnaire is used in place of or in addition to narrative recommendations. It is an integral part of the decision-making process concerning Member in Discernment status and later, if Discernment status is granted, as an indicator of those deficits the candidate may need to make up during her or his course of preparation for authorized ministry.
4. The background materials the candidate presented to the local church Sponsoring Body, revised if necessary, including the person's life pilgrimage, understanding of call, and formal education.
5. A letter from the Sponsoring Body describing the process used by the local church to examine the candidate.
6. If the candidate plans to attend seminary as part of their preparation for authorized ministry, the candidate shall prepare a written statement outlining a financial plan for pursuing theological education and living with the financial limitations that accompany authorized ministry. The candidate should respond to the following questions:
 - How will you financially support your seminary education?
 - How do you feel about potentially accruing significant seminary debt with the prospect of moderate income in ministry once you have completed your education?
 - Do you have any significant financial factors that may affect your proposed choices in ministry (e.g., mortgage payments, child support payments, elderly parents to support, child's college tuition, etc?)
 - Are you currently able to meet your debts as they become due? Do you expect this situation to change? Please explain.
 - Do you now need or do you anticipate needing financial assistance?
 - Do you have health care coverage?
 - With whom have you consulted in making your financial plans?

7. If the candidate is pursuing authorized ministry by alternative routes, a description of financial and other plans that support alternative routes and the methods by which the candidate will work with the Sponsoring Organization and the Committee on Ministry to complete those plans.
8. Any other materials that were provided to the local church Sponsoring Body, revised if necessary.

*Note: All materials submitted to the Church and Ministry Committee throughout the Discernment process shall be sent to the Chairperson of the Penobscot-Piscataquis Church and Ministry Committee for inclusion in the candidate's official file.

Appendix G

Discernment Covenant

Covenant made between a Member in Discernment, the Member in Discernment's Local Church, and the Penobscot – Piscataquis Church and Ministry Committee.

Preamble

A covenant is "an intentional agreement made between or among parties in the name of God. (It) has both horizontal and vertical dimensions and is not accidental, but deliberate."* Recognizing that carrying out the Covenant of Ministry in the United Church of Christ is both delicate and demanding, calling us to live by relationship with God and each other and not by rules - by grace more than law - the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee needs guidelines for candidates for authorized ministry. These minimal guidelines follow. [*Definition by the Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Nordbeck, Andover Newton Theological School]

The Covenant

The Church and Ministry Committee of the Penobscot - Piscataquis Association has accepted _____ into the Discernment relationship. If the process leads to the candidate's request for authorized ministry, licensure, commissioning, or ordination, a minimum of two years of reflection and discernment with the Church and Ministry Committee and its authorized advisors will be required prior to authorization for ministry in the United Church of Christ. .

Part 1 — The Association

The Penobscot - Piscataquis Association of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ covenants:

1. to hold a Service of Recognition of a Member in Discernment for the candidate during a gathering of the Association (see Book of Worship, page 394 ff.);
2. to support and hold in prayer _____ as he or she continues the journey of ministerial preparation;
3. to remain faithful to the processes for an Association as described in the United Church of Christ *Manual on Ministry*;
4. to offer financial assistance to the Member in Discernment, within the limits of available Association funds, in support of seminary or other authorized preparation for ministry;
5. to assume 1/3 the cost of the candidate's psychological and career assessment;
6. and to prayerfully consider the recommendations that the Church and Ministry Committee may make concerning the Member in Discernment.

Part 2 — Church and Ministry Committee

The Church and Ministry Committee covenants:

1. to provide a Discernment Advisor to guide the candidate toward a vocational understanding consistent with the faith and mission of the United Church of Christ;
2. to encourage the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association to offer financial assistance, within the limits of available Association funds, in support of seminary or other authorized preparation for ministry;
3. to provide advice and counsel regarding the skills and gifts required for the practice of authorized ministry;
4. to provide the opportunity for the candidate's psychological and career assessment, ensuring that the costs for the same will be shared by the candidate's home church, Penobscot-Piscataquis Association, and the Member in Discernment;
5. and to review and consider annual renewal of the Discernment relationship.

Part 3 — Member in Discernment

_____ as a candidate preparing for authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ, agrees to follow the guidelines for the Discernment process, to accept the fellowship, counsel, evaluations, support, and guidance of the Church and Ministry Committee, and covenants:

1. to meet at least quarterly with the appointed Discernment Advisor to share progress in academic or other authorized preparation for ministry, as well as in faith, vocational and personal development, guided by the Holy Spirit;
2. to complete a psychological and career assessment for ministry administered by persons chosen by the Church and Ministry Committee, and to assume 1/3 the cost thereof;
3. to worship regularly according to the faith and order of the United Church of Christ, and to participate in the life and work of a local church, Association, and Conference;
4. to offer the Church and Ministry Committee evidence of developing skills for ministry and continuing growth in faith through the power of the Spirit;
5. and to meet with the Church and Ministry Committee at least once annually for a review of the Discernment relationship and process.

Part 4 — Sponsoring Congregation

The sponsoring congregation, _____, covenants:

1. Trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit, to support and hold in prayer _____ as he or she continues the journey of ministerial preparation;
2. to assume 1/3 the cost of the candidate's psychological and career assessment;
3. to meet periodically with the candidate to share gifts and experiences that might be mutually beneficial;
4. to consider financial assistance to the candidate to defray the cost of seminary education and/or other authorized preparation for ministry;
5. and to remain faithful to the processes for a sponsoring congregation as described in the United Church of Christ *Manual on Ministry* and these Discernment Guidelines.

So Signed:

Member in Discernment	(date)	Chair, Church and Ministry	(date)
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Discernment Advisor	(date)	Association Moderator	(date)
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Sponsoring Church Representative	(date)
----------------------------------	--------

Note: A completed copy of this Covenant should be given to the following: Member in Discernment, the Penobscot-Piscataquis Church and Ministry Chair, Discernment Advisor, Maine Conference Ministers, Association Moderator, and the Local Sponsoring Church.

Appendix H

Materials for Annual Reviews

1. Candidates are asked to forward these items to the Chair of the Penobscot-Piscataquis Church and Ministry Committee, at least four weeks before each Annual Review (see note below*):
 - a. If the candidate is in seminary, all seminary grades, transcripts, or field education evaluations, along with any review processes initiated by the seminary in any area (including but not limited to Mid-Program Reviews);
 - b. If the candidate is in an alternate path to authorized ministry, review of appropriate information from that path;
 - c. Any CPE evaluations; and
 - d. The Annual Review Preparation Sheet along with written reflections to Annual Review questions, covering each subject adequately but concisely.

*Note: The Authorization & Release Form, Appendix E, should be used whenever necessary to ensure that the above documents may be released to the Church and Ministry Committee for consideration.

2. Several questions will be given to the candidate for response during each Annual Review. They may include any or all of the following:
 - a. What is the nature of your involvement in the life of the United Church of Christ in its Association and Conference spheres?
 - b. If you are in seminary, what aspects of your academic program do you most and least value?
 - c. What is your understanding of the ordination requirements and what progress do you see yourself making toward meeting them?
 - d. Describe a time when your relationship with God changed or deepened this year.
 - e. Name a person who has made an impact on your spiritual life and describe that impact.
 - f. How do you experience the influence of Jesus in your life?
 - g. What inhibits you from living out your faith?
 - h. What do you do to take care of your physical being?
3. **First Year Annual Review Questions (written responses).**
 1. **If you are in seminary:**
 - a. Reflect upon this past year's seminary experience in terms of expectations met and/or surpassed, disappointments, and overall impressions.
 - b. In the midst of the pressures of attending seminary, be specific about how you have been able to attend to your spiritual journey.
 - c. How are you meeting your seminary's requirements for theological education and/or those suggestions made by your Discernment Advisor?

2. **If you are in an alternate path to authorized ministry**, reflect upon your present process and how you, the Committee, your Discernment Advisor and your Sponsoring Organization are developing your process toward authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ.
3. Share any significant developments in your thinking in matters of faith, style of ministry, and ordination or authorization plans.
4. Name at least one issue that you believe the Church, in any of its various settings, needs to address as it moves into the next decade.
5. Are there physical or emotional health issues that you want to share with the Church and Ministry Committee?

4. Second Year Annual Review Questions.

1. Describe a difficult real-life situation you encountered this past year, and comment on the theological/spiritual concepts that may apply in this situation.
2. Reflect upon the past year's discernment experience in terms of expectations met and/or surpassed, disappointments, and overall impressions.
3. Describe how you make moral decisions for yourself. Address how you might deal with a congregation when your decisions run contrary to the norms of the majority of the congregation using one of the following issues or another of your choice:

abortion	AIDS	child custody
divorce	gambling	inclusive language
justice	issues of sexual orientation	UCC loyalty
women in ministry	peace/war	race
politics	church U.S. flag display	human sexuality
4. What do you see as your special personal qualities? How is the Holy Spirit using those qualities in ministry? What will you uniquely bring to the United Church of Christ that is needed?
5. If you are in seminary, how are you meeting your seminary's requirements for theological education and/or those suggestions made by your Discernment Advisor? If you are in an alternate path to authorized ministry, how are you meeting your path's requirements for theological education and/or those suggestions made by your Discernment Advisor?
6. Do you have physical or emotional health issues that you wish to share with the Church and Ministry Committee?

5. **Third and subsequent years** Annual Review questions. These will be developed each additional year, except for the final year, and given to the candidate four weeks before their due date.

Appendix I Annual Review Preparation Sheet

Penobscot – Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee, Maine Conference, United Church of Christ

To be jointly filled out by the Member in Discernment and the Discernment Advisor

Candidate's Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

Is the candidate knowledgeable and familiar with the current Discernment process and requirements? Yes / No

If the candidate is in seminary, respond to the following questions:

- a. what year and semester is the candidate in currently? _____
- b. in your judgment, is the candidate on track for meeting seminary and/or Church and Ministry Committee required education? Yes / No

Explain:

If no, please list areas of needed work:

<input type="checkbox"/> Biblical Exegesis	<input type="checkbox"/> Ethics	<input type="checkbox"/> Attention to Spiritual Direction
<input type="checkbox"/> O.T.	<input type="checkbox"/> Liturgies	<input type="checkbox"/> Christian Education
<input type="checkbox"/> N.T.	<input type="checkbox"/> Church History	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal Fitness for Ministry
<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Theology	<input type="checkbox"/> UCC History and Polity	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

Please speak to any deficiencies in the candidate's progress in coursework:

Rate the candidate's overall academic performance to date: __ Excellent __ Good __Fair __Poor

If the candidate is following another authorized process to ministry, describe the process and assess the candidate's progress.

What contacts has the candidate had with his or her local church?

List any Association or Conference events attended by the candidate during the past year

How does the candidate hope to grow in ministry during the next 12 months?

Do you have any concerns that should be raised at the candidate's yearly interview?

Does the candidate have physical or emotional health issues that should be addressed?

Please comment on the candidate's spiritual development:

What initiative has she or he shown in (a) scheduling, (b) honoring scheduled encounters, (c) openness in sharing, and (d) preparation when requested?

What gifts, talents and skills does she or he exhibit that give evidence of aptitude for authorized ministry?

What areas of ministry do you think she or he is best suited for?

Are there areas of growth you believe the Church and Ministry Committee should be lifting up and/or challenging the MID to recognize?

Does she or he trouble or perplex you in any way?

Is the candidate accepting of you as the Discernment Advisor? Yes / No Comments?

Is the candidate accepting of his/her relationship to the Church and Ministry Committee? Yes / No Comments?

Other comments/concerns:

Dates of Quarterly Meetings: _____

Please describe other contacts that you may have had with the candidate:

Member in Discernment Signature: _____ Date: _____

Discernment Advisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

This form should be mailed one month in advance of the Annual Review directly to:
Chairperson, Penobscot-Piscataquis Church and Ministry Committee (Please see the Maine
Conference website for contact information.)

["http://www.maineucc.org"](http://www.maineucc.org)

Appendix J
Annual Seminary Advisor Evaluation for Members in Discernment

Member in Discernment / Student's Name: _____

Seminary Advisor's Name: _____

Title: _____

Seminary: _____

Mailing Address: _____
town/city, state, zip code

Phone (____) _____

Length of time you have served as student's advisor: _____

Frequency of contact with the student: _____

1. Is this student an active participant in seminary classes? Does her or his written and oral work show clarity and depth? Is the student able to reflect theologically and integrate course material?

2. What strengths have you noted in the student which commend him or her for authorized leadership in the United Church of Christ?

3. What growth areas do you observe which would be helpful for this student to address during the member in discernment process in preparation for authorized leadership in the United Church of Christ?

4. What is your perception of the faith and integrity of this individual?

5. Other comments:

Additional pages may be attached as needed. Thank you for your time in providing important information about the education of one of our Members in Discernment. After you have completed this evaluation, please mail it to:

Chairperson

Penobscot-Piscataquis Church and Ministry Committee

(Please see the Maine Conference website for contact information.)

["http://www.maineucc.org"](http://www.maineucc.org)

Appendix K
The Ethics of Ministry
(Manual on Ministry)

I will regard all persons with equal respect and concern and undertake to minister impartially.

I will honor all confidences shared with me.

I will not use my position, power, or authority to exploit any person.

I will not use my position for personal financial gain, nor will I misuse the finances of the institution that I serve.

I will not perform pastoral services within a parish or for a member of a parish without the consent of the pastor of that parish.

I will deal honorably with the record of my predecessor and successor.

I will not, upon my termination and departure from a ministry position, interfere with nor intrude upon the ministry of my successor.

Commitments to Self and Family

I will live a life that honors my commitments to my family.

I will honor my need for time for physical and spiritual renewal, recreation, and vacation.

I will honor my family's need for privacy and time together.

I will be a responsible steward of my personal and family finances. I will honor and accept responsibility for all debts that I incur.

I will attend to my physical well-being and avoid abusive behaviors and abusive use of substances.

Relying on the grace of God, I will lead a life worthy of the calling to which I have been called.

Appendix L
Request to Review a Member in Discernment for the Authorization Interview
for the Ecclesiastical Council

Name of Congregation _____

Name of Candidate _____ Phone _____

Responding to this person's desire to enter Authorized Ministry in the United Church of Christ, this congregation hereby requests that the Church and Ministry Committee of the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association review this candidate for the Authorization Interview and Ecclesiastical Council. We affirm that the attached Request form is accurate and complete.

Enclosed with this Request:

- Sermon by the candidate (video or audio)
- Annual Review Preparation Sheet

Certification of:

- Bachelor's Degree or Church and Ministry Committee-approved equivalent
- Master of Divinity Degree or Church and Ministry Committee-approved equivalent
- CPE Clinical Pastoral Education coursework completion
- UCC Polity coursework completion
- Recent Boundary Training completion

Four letters of reference:

- Seminary/Alternate Path Advisor
- Discernment Advisor
- An ordained U.C.C. pastor
- One additional

- The candidate's ministerial profile
- Authorization Paper
- The candidate's reflection paper

The candidate has met with the local church governing board and this body hereby recommends that the candidate be considered for an Authorization Interview and Ecclesiastical Council. Attached is our written recommendation, describing the process used to make our decision.

Signature of candidate: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Church Leader: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____ Position: _____

Please return completed Request and all documentation to:
Chairperson, Penobscot-Piscataquis Church and Ministry Committee (Please see the Maine Conference website for contact information.) "<http://www.maineucc.org>"

Appendix M

Material Required for Authorization Interview

1. The following materials are required of candidates for the Authorization Interview:
 - a. A completed Ministerial Profile. This may be completed as early as six months prior to completion of preparation for Licensure, Commissioning, or Ordination, including graduation from seminary though it may not be circulated until an Ecclesiastical Council has been held and the candidate is "approved for authorized ministry, pending call."
 - b. Successful completion of the following:
 1. If the candidate has followed an alternate path to ordination, full documentation of completion of all required steps on the path.
 2. The requirements for an undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university or its equivalent as determined by the Church and Ministry Committee together with a seminary degree appropriate for her or his particular area of ministry.
2. At least one basic unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) that is accepted by the Church and Ministry Committee and the candidate's seminary or alternate path.
3. One school year of a field education program accepted by the Church and Ministry Committee.
4. A Clergy Boundary Training workshop or seminar accepted by the Church and Ministry Committee.
5. A United Church of Christ history, polity, and identity course.
6. At least four letters of reference, including one from the seminary or supervisor of the alternate path, one from the candidate's Discernment Advisor, and one from an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ, mailed directly to the Chair of the Church and Ministry Committee by the reference writers (see Section 3, page 25, *Manual on Ministry*).
7. An audio or video recording of a sermon recently delivered. This should be sent to the chairperson of the Church and Ministry Committee 60 days before the interview.
8. 10 copies of the candidate's authorization paper as approved by the Church and Ministry Committee, submitted at least 30 days before the Authorization Interview to the Chair of the Church and Ministry Committee.
9. Preparation for engaging in four areas of dialogue, as follows:
 - a. The candidate's personal faith and her or his journey to this day.
 - b. The candidate's theological knowledge and perspective on:
 - a) the Bible;
 - b) theology;
 - c) pastoral care;
 - d) ecumenism;

- e) worship and sacraments;
 - f) Christian education;
 - g) stewardship;
 - h) ministerial ethics;
 - i) mission.
 - j) evangelism
- c. The candidate's knowledge of the history, polity, and identity of the United Church of Christ.
- d. The candidate's ability to articulate ideas and feelings authentically.

Appendix N

Recommended Ordination Paper Outlines

The following three outlines for ordination papers are accepted by the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee. Any other outlines must be approved by the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee upon recommendation of the Discernment Group before writing the paper. The paper should be double-spaced, using a 12 point font, and should not exceed 20 pages.

Outline I

Based on the *Manual on Ministry*, Section 3 pages 3-6

I. Theological Perspectives

- A. What is your understanding of the historic Christian faith?

- B. What is your own theological perspective? Refer to the UCC Statement of Faith and paragraph two of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ.

II. The United Church of Christ

- A. How do you understand the historical and theological roots of the United Church of Christ?

- B. How would you explain the polity and practice of the United Church of Christ? (Please address the issues of covenant, unity, autonomy, etc., and discuss paragraphs 3, 7, 14, 15, 16 of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ.)

III. Ministry and Pilgrimage

- A. How would you relate the previously discussed issues to your own faith pilgrimage?
 - 1. What is your understanding of call, ordination, church, mission, and ministry?
 - 2. What is the challenge and vision of your own ministry?
 - 3. How is the Holy Spirit fitting your gifts into a call to ministry?
 - 4. What is the meaning of ordination in the United Church of Christ?

- B. How do you understand your commitment to the United Church of Christ and the ecumenical church?

- C. What aspects of the history, polity, and practice of the United Church of Christ are most valued by you?

Outline II

Based on the United Church of Christ *Book of Worship*, pages 407-408

- I. Are you persuaded that God has called you to authorized ministry in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, and are you ready to enter this ministry and faithfully serve in it?
 - A. Briefly relate a summary of your faith journey and your call to the Christian Ministry in the United Church of Christ.
 - B. Within the context of the universal ministry of God's people, why have you chosen to seek ordination, and what particular gifts do you bring to this ministry?

- II. Do you, with the Church throughout the world, hear the Word of God in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and do you accept it as the rule of Christian faith and practice?
 - A. How do you understand the nature of the Word of God as it is revealed in the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments?
 - B. What does it mean to accept this Word as the rule of Christian faith and practice?

- III. Do you promise to be diligent in your private prayers and reading of the scriptures, as well as in the public duties of your office?
 - A. How do you practice your devotional life and what is the place of prayer in your life?
 - B. How is the Holy Spirit shaping you for ministry?
 - C. How do you intend to find rest and renewal in the context of the Biblical theme of Sabbath within the context of the "public duties of your office," and how do the present (or future) demands of family or single life fit within the context of those duties?

- IV. Will you be zealous in maintaining both the "truth of the gospel" and "the peace of the Church," speaking the truth in love?
 - A. Concerning the "truth of the gospel," what is your understanding of the doctrine of salvation: the person of Christ, the incarnation, the Cross and Resurrection, sin, repentance, forgiveness, judgment, grace, and eschatology?
 - B. Concerning the "peace of the Church," how would you deal with those conflict situations when you are called to speak the prophetic word of "truth in love," both in personal and social justice situations?

- V. Do you accept the "faith and order" of the United Church of Christ; and will you, as an ordained minister in this communion, show compassionate affection toward all who are in Christ?
 - A. How do you understand the "faith and order" of the United Church of Christ, specifically concerning the Trinity, Baptism, Communion, Covenant, and the Statement of Faith?
 - B. What is your understanding of "The Church," local church, covenant, the wider church, and how does "The Church" relate to the world through evangelism, social action, and mission?

Outline III

I. Statement of Christian Experience

- A. Home and local church
- B. Education
- C. Call to the Ministry

II Statement of Christian Beliefs

A. God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit

- 1. Creation and Providence; Judgment and Grace
- 2. Person of Christ; Incarnation, Atonement (problem of evil). Salvation, Resurrection
- 3. Revelation and the Holy Scriptures

B. Humanity

- 1. Sin, Repentance, Forgiveness
- 2. Prayer
- 3. Eternal Life

C. The Church and the Dominion of God

- 1. Doctrine of history and the second coming
- 2. Church and the world (including evangelism, social action, mission)
- 3. My denomination and the Church
- 4. Baptism and the Lord's Supper
- 5. The ministry (lay and ordained)

III. Conclusion: Including "Why I desire ordination in the United Church of Christ"

Appendix O
Member in Discernment Checklist
(maintained by MID Liaison)

For those seeking Member in Discernment (MID) status in the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association of the Maine Conference United Church of Christ

Sponsorship by the Local Church

- _____ Meeting between pastor & candidate
- _____ Meeting between pastor, candidate & representative committee
- _____ Preparation of documents for Local Church Sponsoring Body
 - _____ statement of faith pilgrimage, biographical info & understanding of call
 - _____ documentation of formal education
 - _____ statement of current educational plans
- _____ Meeting between candidate, pastor, Discernment Group (if other than Sponsoring Body), Sponsoring Body, and MID Liaison
- _____ Meeting between the candidate, pastor, Discernment Committee, and Sponsoring Body to consider local church sponsorship. (Note: This may be held following the meeting with the MID Liaison.)
- _____ Sponsorship granted. Request for Member in Discernment Status (Appendix B) signed and submitted to the Chair, Church and Ministry Committee.

Initial Interview with the Church and Ministry Committee

- _____ This interview includes the candidate, the local pastor, and one lay member of the local congregation, as well as the Church and Ministry Committee.
- _____ Documents to be submitted to the Chair of the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee before interview:
 - _____ Request For Member in Discernment Status (Appendix B).
 - _____ Statement of Consent and Background Disclosure (Appendix C)
 - _____ Written verification of the candidate's local UCC church membership
 - _____ The Questionnaire for Those Seeking Member in Discernment Status (Appendix D), completed by three people, one of whom is the candidate's pastor.
 - _____ The background materials the candidate presented to the church Sponsoring Body, revised if necessary.
 - _____ A letter from the Sponsoring Body describing the process used by the local church to explore the candidate's calling.
 - _____ A written statement outlining the candidate's financial plans
 - _____ Any other documentation provided to the Sponsoring Body, revised if necessary.

Psychological and Career Assessment

- _____ After the initial interview, if the Church and Ministry Committee agrees to continue with the candidate, the candidate makes arrangements for a psychological and career assessment by an examiner approved by the Church and Ministry Committee.
- _____ The candidate fills out and submits to the examiner a completed, signed, and dated Authorization & Release Form (Appendix E).
- _____ The Psychological and Career Assessment is completed. Date: _____

_____ A summary of the assessment is then sent to the Chair of the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee.

Post-Assessment Interview with the Church and Ministry Committee

_____ Once the assessment report is received, the candidate meets with the Church and Ministry Committee to discuss the findings. Following this interview, the Church and Ministry Committee decides whether to recommend the candidate for Member in Discernment Status. The candidate is notified.

Member in Discernment Status Granted

_____ Member in Discernment Status granted. Date: _____

_____ Discernment Advisor assigned: _____

_____ Discernment Covenant signed (Appendix F).

Materials for Annual and Final Reviews

To be supplied to the Chair of the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee one month before each review:

_____ Transcripts from Seminary (required every year)

_____ First year

_____ Second year

_____ Third year

_____ Fourth year

_____ Fifth year

_____ Reports from supervisors of other authorized paths to licensed, commissioned, or ordained ministry.

_____ CPE Evaluations — required when completed

_____ Field Education Evaluations — required when completed

_____ Mid-Program Review — required when completed

_____ Other Reviews Initiated by Seminary or other authorized path — required when completed

_____ Written Responses to Annual Review Questions

_____ First year

_____ Second year

_____ Third year

_____ Fourth year

_____ Fifth year

_____ The Annual Review Preparation Sheet (Appendix I) filled out by the candidate and his or her Discernment Advisor.

_____ First year

_____ Second year

_____ Third year

_____ Fourth year

_____ Fifth year

Annual Reviews

First Year:

_____ Dates of Quarterly meetings with Discernment Advisor

_____ Date of First Year Annual Review: _____

Second Year:

_____ Dates of Quarterly meetings with Discernment Advisor

_____ Date of Second Year Annual Review: _____

Subsequent Years:

Following the second and before the year of ordination. Questions for each additional written review will be specified by the Church and Ministry Committee

Year: _____

Quarterly meetings with Discernment Advisor

Yearly Annual Review Date: _____

Year: _____

Quarterly meetings with Discernment Advisor

Yearly Annual Review Date: _____

Year: _____

Quarterly meetings with Discernment Advisor

Yearly Annual Review Date: _____

Final Year:

Quarterly meetings with Discernment Advisor

Final Year Annual Review must be at least two months before authorization for licensure, commissioning or ordination interview with the Church and Ministry Committee

Date of Review: _____

Documentation provided one month before Final Year Review

- _____ Most recent seminary transcripts and copy of M. Div. diploma if already graduated.
- _____ Most recent reports from the alternate authorized path to ministry
- _____ Final Draft of Licensure, Commissioning, or Ordination Paper (Appendix N).
- _____ The Annual Review Preparation Sheet (Appendix I) filled out by candidate and Discernment Advisor.
- _____ Written Reflection Paper on current UCC polity, program, or theological posture
- _____ Request from the local congregation requesting that the candidate's home Association examine the candidate for Licensure, Commissioning or Ordination.

Recommended for Licensure, Commissioning, or Ordination Interview.

- _____ Set time-table.
- _____ Authorization paper completion date for Licensure, Commissioning or Ordination Interview.
- _____ Review educational requirements and graduation dates.
- _____ Set date for Interview with the Church and Ministry Committee.
- _____ Set time-table for completion of United Church of Christ Ministerial Profile. (Note: The Profile may be completed as early as six months prior to graduation though it may not be circulated until an Ecclesiastical Council has been held and the candidate is "approved for authorization, pending call.")

Authorization Check List

Requirements to be completed before Licensure, Commissioning, or Ordination Interview with the Church and Ministry Committee.

- _____ Member in Discernment status for at least two years.
- _____ Recommendation from the Church and Ministry Committee for a Licensure, Commissioning or Ordination Interview.
- _____ Undergraduate degree from accredited college or university or its equivalent as determined by the Church and Ministry Committee.
- _____ Seminary degree(s) or Graduate degrees appropriate to area of ministry, or final report from the authorized alternative path.
- _____ Certificate of completion of 1 basic unit of Clinical Pastoral Education.
- _____ Completion of 1 academic year of Field Education or approved alternate experience.
- _____ Completion of a Clergy Boundary Training workshop or seminar.
- _____ Completion of a United Church of Christ history, polity, identity course.

- _____ Participation in leading worship at an Association meeting.
- _____ Audio or video recording of a sermon recently delivered. Sent to the Chair of the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee thirty (30) days before the interview
- _____ Licensure, Commissioning or Ordination paper. 10 copies submitted to the Committee Chair thirty (30) days before interview.
- _____ Four letters of reference.
- _____ Completed Ministerial Profile, if the candidate is seeking ordination, commissioning or licensure.

Interview Preparation

- _____ Interview date set: _____
- _____ All requirements completed.
- _____ Copies of required documents listed above, including completed Authorization paper and recording of sermon submitted to the Chair of the Penobscot-Piscataquis Association Church and Ministry Committee thirty (30) days prior to interview.
- _____ Review interview format and areas to be covered with Discernment Advisor.

Interview Outcome

- _____ Favorable vote. Candidate is recommended for an Ecclesiastical Council.
 - _____ Notification of Association Moderator by Discernment Subcommittee chair of the need for an Ecclesiastical Council.
 - _____ Date of Council: _____
- _____ Unfavorable vote. Return to work on concerns or terminate Member in Discernment status.

Ecclesiastical Council

- _____ The Ecclesiastical Council is held.
- _____ Vote of the ecclesiastical council is in the affirmative.

Authorization Service Process

- _____ Call received for authorized ministry.
- _____ Date of Authorization: _____

Appendix P

Discernment Advisor Responsibilities and Discussion Suggestions

Responsibilities

The Discernment Advisor offers spiritual and practical accompaniment on the MID's journey. To what ends is the Holy Spirit guiding the MID? Responsibilities include:

Prayer.

Conversations (in-person, if at all possible) with the MID at least four times a year, with an intentional focus on how the MID is experiencing God in the midst of his/her formation; the MID's understanding of call; the joys and challenges of the MID's spiritual life and practice; and reflection upon the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministry. Direct personal contact is best for these conversations, or telephone if necessary. Email is not appropriate.

Accessibility to the MID to raise and explore questions about faith, the church, and the Christian ministry throughout the year.

Contributing to the MID Annual Review process as requested by the MID or the Church and Ministry Committee. If the MID is in seminary, accompany the MID to the seminary middler review or its equivalent. If the MID is using an alternate path, accompanying the MID to review sessions where appropriate.

Advising the MID on the drafting of the licensure, commissioning, or ordination paper before submission to the Church and Ministry Committee for the Final Year Review.

Accompanying the MID to the licensure, commissioning, or ordination interview with the Church and Ministry Committee and actively engage in the conversation, as invited.

Providing written references on behalf of the MID when requested, as appropriate.

In addition, the Discernment Advisor will have the following structural responsibilities:

Familiarity with the general process and covenantal partners involved with the MID's experience as a MID.

Communicating with the Church and Ministry Committee if concerns arise regarding the MID.

Encouraging the MID to take an active part in the various settings of the UCC: Association, Conference, and Denomination.

Providing the MID with recommendations for further development, including reading, formal and informal opportunities for learning or growth, and mentors.

As invited, providing preparation support and attend the MID's recognition of authorized ministry, including, if the MID is to be ordained, the ecclesiastical council and ordination service.

Discussion Suggestions

Review one or more aspects of licensed, commissioned or ordained ministry at each session to expand awareness and to facilitate integration into professional role:

Worship

Preaching – resources, relating to real life, preparation, delivery

Pastoral Visitation

Hospital, crisis intervention, nursing home, prospective members, regular parish visit

Sacraments

Social action

Devotional life

Biblical Interpretation

Stewardship

Evangelism

Working with boards and committees

Recruiting and nurturing volunteers

Church administration

Relating to the "larger church"

Coping creatively with controversy/conflict

Invite the person (and spouse/partner) to dinner at least annually

Encourage growth in spiritual life

Deal with this person's questions and concerns

Discuss personal and emotional issues

Discuss theological issues and reflect on life theologically

Offer support and pray with the candidate

Give the person honest and immediate feedback on all issues discussed

Submit the Annual Review Preparation Sheet before the Member in Discernment renewal interview each year.

Appendix Q

Local Church Continuing Support of the Candidate

When MID status is granted by the Church and Ministry Committee, the pastor and the local church are encouraged to participate with the candidate in the following ways:

1. Assist in providing annual financial support. After approval for MID status by the Church and Ministry Committee, financial aid is recommended when appropriate. The local church is also encouraged to defray the costs of travel for interviews, as well as to share 1/3 the cost of the mandatory psychological and career assessment.
2. Maintain contact to remind the candidate of the constant prayer and support that she or he receives from many different sources. Examples:
 - a) Regular public prayers for the Member in Discernment may be offered by the pastor or lay leaders.
 - b) The pastor and/or local church members may offer spiritual direction to the Member in Discernment. Christian spiritual direction may be defined as help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God's personal communication with him or her, to respond to God, to grow in intimacy with God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship. The focus is on experience. This experience is viewed as an expression of the ongoing personal relationship God has established with each individual.
 - c) The pastor may be asked to read a rough draft of the candidate's ordination paper in advance of an Ordination Interview.
3. Maintain ongoing communication with the candidate through church mailings, cards for birthdays, anniversaries and holidays, and email.
4. Encourage participation in worship when the candidate is at home to promote and strengthen their ongoing relationship with the church.
5. Maintain an ongoing dialogue between the local pastor, local church board, and candidate to reveal concerns that may need to be conveyed to the Church and Ministry Committee for its consideration, advice, and assistance.
6. Participate in the candidate's Annual Reviews (See the format in *Manual on Ministry*, Section 2, pages 10-11, entitled "The Person and Local Church.")
7. Create a small group of 2 to 4 parishioners who would be available as a special Support Team for the candidate's entire journey. This Support Team may choose to create a Student Profile that documents the individual's experience with his or her local church, including but not limited to: preaching and participation in worship; working with various ministries or committees; ministering to the needs of the congregation.

Appendix R

Responsibilities of the MID Liaison

The MID Liaison is a structural guide through the Member in Discernment journey. The MID Liaison has the following responsibilities:

Prayer

Connection with the MID as soon as possible after the candidate expresses interest in the Discernment process to review the expectations, requirements, and procedures of the discernment relationship as outlined in these Guidelines. Initiate the signing of the Discernment Covenant, Appendix F, in these Guidelines.

In conversation with the MID, establishing a system of communication that will provide consistent review of the MID's status (at least quarterly) as well as offer a reliable, accessible opportunity for the MID to raise questions or concerns about the relationships and process outlined in these Guidelines.

Encouraging the MID to maintain consistent communication with all covenantal partners in the discernment process as outlined in these Guidelines, including the home church, home pastor, Discernment Advisor, Association, Church and Ministry Committee, and other related advisors and supervisors participating in the MID's formation for authorized ministry. Redirect questions and conversations to the appropriate setting.

Advising the MID regarding the required materials to be provided to the Church and Ministry Committee throughout the period of discernment.

In addition, the MID Liaison will have the following responsibilities:

Discussion with the Church and Ministry Committee if questions arise regarding the MID.

Encouraging the MID to take an active part in the various settings of the UCC: Association, Conference, and national setting.

As invited, providing preparation support and attending the MID's authorizing event for licensure or commissioning, and, if the MID is to be ordained, the ecclesiastical council and ordination service.

**The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ
- a tool for study and reflection**

Marks			
Spiritual Foundation for Ministry	Growing Edge	Spirituality Present	Spiritually Secure
1 .A lived faith showing love of God, trust in Jesus, and openness to the Holy Spirit.			
2. Devotion to the word of God as revealed through scripture and Christian traditions.			
3. Commitment to life-long spiritual growth and practice, individually and in community.			
4. A sense of being called by God and the community to authorized ministry in the church.			
5. Openness to continuing discernment of one’s call in community.			
UCC Identity for Ministry	Growing Edge	Present	Secure
1. Acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as sole Head of the Church.			
2. A passion for the oneness of the body of Christ as expressed through commitment to ecumenism, justice, and the full embrace of all persons in the radical hospitality of God.			
3. Active membership in a local church of the United Church of Christ.			
4. An understanding of the concept of covenant and how it informs the nature, purpose, and polity of the United Church of Christ.			
5. A willingness to live in the covenants of mutual accountability that characterize authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ.			
6. Ongoing participation in the life of the United Church of Christ.			
7. Stewardship of resources, including financial support of the church in all of its settings.			
8. Participation in the various settings of the United Church of Christ, including the conference, association and local church.			
9. The ability to articulate diverse histories that comprise the United Church of Christ, to situate them in the broader evolution of faith traditions and to relate them to the theology, polity, and practices of the Member’s local church, association, and conference.			
10. The ability to explain and work within the current polity of the UCC and its denominational structure, and to describe the covenantal relationships among the General Synod, national setting, conferences, associations, and local congregations of the UCC.			
11. The ability to share key elements of the UCC’s statement of faith, constitution with its preamble, and by-laws regarding the governance, mission, and theologies of the UCC and their implications for the life of the church.			

12. The ability to articulate the UCC's commitment to being a united and uniting, multiracial and multicultural, open and affirming, accessible to all and just peace church.			
13. The ability to envision how the UCC in its various settings may respond to religious, social, economic, and political trends, changing demographics, and other emerging factors,			
14. The ability to use and promote the informational and educational resources available through UCC publications and websites.			
Personal and Professional Formation for Ministry	Growing Edge	Present	Mature/ Committed
1. A healthy sense of self as shaped by God, community, and personal experience.			
2. A sense of theological identity and authority, while being responsive to the opinions and values of others, including those whom the Member will serve.			
3. A healthy awareness of strengths, weaknesses and limits, and assumption of responsibility for one's body, mind and spirit.			
4. Knowledge and observance of personal and professional boundaries in interpersonal, congregational, and community settings.			
5. A commitment to continuing education, professional development, and life-long learning.			
6. Demonstrated moral maturity, including integrity in personal and public life and responsibility to self, family, church, and community.			
7. The ability to affirm the identities of others, including others very unlike oneself.			
8. The ability to engage in self-reflection and to seek and use feedback from others appropriately.			
9. The ability to engage productively in public discourse, expecting to grow and be transformed through the exchange of viewpoints.			
10. The ability to take initiative in leadership, and to frame and test a vision in community.			
11. The ability to listen empathically, communicate appropriately, and keep appropriate confidences.			
12. The ability to function as part of a team, to give and receive supervision, and to mutually equip and motivate the community of faith.			
13. The ability to be resourceful and adaptable, and to know where to locate additional resources and seek consultation when needed.			
14. The ability to accept and promote diversity, to inspire others to do so, and to minister in a multicultural and multiracial, open and affirming, just peace, accessible to all, united and uniting church.			
Knowledge and Skills for Ministry	Growing Edge	Present	Perceptive

1. The ability to understand and appreciate a variety of perspectives of life.			
2. The ability to understand the profound differences that physical, psychological, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, class, cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic factors make in the way that human beings experience the world.			
3. The ability to comprehend the impact of historical change upon the thoughts, feelings, and actions of individuals and societies.			
4. The ability to perceive how a person's perspectives and interests shape communication, and to appreciate the virtues and limitations of those perspectives and interests.			
5. The ability to grasp and evaluate the justifications that people give for their opinions.			
6. The ability to apply basic concepts of psychology to the understanding of oneself, others and human interactions.			
7. The ability to appreciate the importance of symbols and images in human culture(s).			
8. The ability to understand various meanings and purposes of the arts			
9. The ability to analyze social, political, environmental, and economic dynamics, using the tools of the social and natural sciences.			
10. The ability to use respectfully and relationally a basic knowledge of specific human cultures.			
11. The ability to communicate clearly and effectively with appropriate media and technologies.			
Knowledge and Skills Specific to Authorized Ministry	Growing Edge	Present	Perceptive
1. A thorough knowledge of, and personal engagement with, the Bible.			
2. Skill with methods of biblical interpretation, including the historic interpretive traditions of the church and contemporary methods, particularly those from historically underrepresented communities.			
3. A deepening familiarity with the global history of the Christian churches through the ages and across cultures, including the newest Christian populations, and an understanding of the evolution of Christian communities in the United States.			
4. A deepening familiarity with contemporary theological ways of thinking and with the rich and varied theological heritages, creeds, liturgies, and spiritual practices of the Christian churches.			
5. An understanding of other religions and foundational documents.			
6. The ability to articulate a theological understanding of authorized ministry, and to relate it to the practice of ministry.			
7. The ability to analyze, evaluate, and integrate the			

biblical, historical, theological, and pastoral disciplines and practices in ways that contribute to fruitful and faithful Christian ministry.			
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(based on Draft 3.1 Ministry Issues Implementation Committee)