

**Metropolitan Boston
Association**

**Discernment
&
Formation Process**

MBA Discernment & Formation Process

Local Church

Phase I

Initial Discernment

I think
I may
have a
call to
ministry



Let's
talk...
Let's pray...

Well,
Maybe
you do...



Local Church

Phase IIa

Preliminary Qualification

- Assoc. Conf. Minister meets w/ Pastor and Diaconate
- Spiritual Journey and Call Paper
- Why UCC
- Transcripts
- Resume
- Meeting with Pastor and Diaconate of Local Church
- ** If Voted Yes**
- Record of Vote
- Reference Letters
- Marks of Ministry Portfolio
- Pastoral Formation Program: initial testing and acceptance

COM

Phase IIb

Initial Interview

- Spiritual Journey
- Discernment of Call
- COM Advisor Assignment
- Review Marks of Ministry Portfolio
- 6-month Update Requirement
- Local Church Expectations

COM

Phase III

Ministerial Proficiency Development

- Bachelor's Degree
- M. Div.
- Local Church Prayer, Feedback, \$, Challenges and Sacraments
- Polity Course & Subsequent Meeting
- Field Ed
- Clinical Pastoral Education
- Wider Church Involvement



Phases IIb -> V COM Discernment is Ongoing

- 6-Month reports to Ministerial Advisor, COM Advisor, Local Church Committee and MBA office
- Progress discussion in COM meetings as necessary
- Meeting with CA (minimum annually)

COM

Phase IV

Evaluation of Ministerial Proficiencies

- **3 Interviews following examination, vote & request from Local Church**
- **Reference Letters**
- **IVa. Theological Depth and Articulation**
- Reintroduction to COM
- Theological Understanding and Applications
- Why UCC
- **IVb. Worship Leadership and Preaching**
- Preaching Demonstration
- Feedback from COM
- Sermon Text or Transcript and Reflection on Feedback
- **IVc. Ministerial Proficiency Assessments**
- Case Studies
- Targeted Proficiency Assessments

COM

Phase V

Ecclesiastical Council

- Paper and Presentation
- Spiritual Journey and Call
- Why UCC
- Theology (Revised IVa Paper)
- Plan for continued growth in ministry

Approved
for
Search &
Call

Search & Call
Process

Ordination

Phase VI

- Verify Call is Ordainable
- Association Ordains in & on Behalf of UCC

Ordained!

Glossary of Terms

- **Call:** The official invitation from a local church or calling body of a person to a pastoral leadership position. If accepted, a 3-way or 4-way covenantal relationship with the Association is formed.
- **COM:** The Committee on Ministry is charged with discerning vocation and preparation for authorized ministry in the UCC, approving calls and ordaining people on behalf of the UCC.
- **Ecclesiastical Council:** an official meeting of the Association for the purpose of authorizing a person the COM believes to be prepared to search for an ordainable call in the UCC.
- **Discernment & Formation:** The process engaged by a member of a MBA UCC church who is preparing for ordination through the MBA.
- **MBA:** The Metropolitan Boston Association of the United Church of Christ.
- **Ordination:** The rite whereby the UCC, through the MBA and in cooperation with a MBA church, recognizes and authorizes a person whom God has called to ordained ministry and sets that person apart by prayer and the laying on of hands. Ordained ministerial standing is thereby conferred and authorization to perform the duties of ordained ministry is granted.

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Metropolitan Boston Association

Guidelines for the Discernment & Formation Process

Revised: July 1, 2017

INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the process and the responsibilities of a person seeking ordination in the Metropolitan Boston Association (MBA) of the United Church of Christ (UCC); the local MBA church (also referred to as the “sponsoring church”) where the candidate for authorized ministry (hereafter referred to as “the candidate”) is a member and the pastor of that church; and the Committee on Ministry (COM) of the MBA. This document will also explain the roles of other people and organizations that contribute to the process of discerning whether or not a person is called, qualified and prepared to be ordained in the MBA on behalf of the entire UCC. This process is consistent with guidelines found in the Manual on Ministry, published by Parish Life and Leadership, and available on the national UCC website at <http://www.ucc.org/ministers/manual>. Sections 1, 2, and 3 are pertinent to this process.

DEFINITION

Since General Synod 2005, the term “Discernment & Formation” is used to describe the period of preparation, assessment and discernment that precedes a decision by an Association to permit a person to seek an ordainable call in the United Church of Christ. The Committee on Ministry of the MBA acts on behalf of the entire UCC and is called to counsel, evaluate and discern each candidate’s call, gifts and preparation for ordained ministry within the UCC. The local MBA church where the candidate is a member sponsors the candidate through the process, and is responsible for providing nurture and support, opportunities to grow in ministerial proficiencies and candid feedback. Many other entities contribute to ministerial formation. Becoming familiar with and following the MBA requirements is the responsibility of the candidate seeking ordination. Additionally, it is the candidate’s responsibility to convey expectations to others who contribute on their behalf throughout the process. The COM greatly appreciates the roles each play in the discernment decision the COM makes on behalf of the entire UCC.

GENERAL TIME LINE AND OVERVIEW OF REQUIREMENTS

The Committee on Ministry accepts people into the Discernment & Formation Process from many faith backgrounds. It feels deep experience with, understanding of and love for the UCC is crucial in people who would lead its local churches. Therefore, the COM will be especially attentive to the depth and breadth of each applicant’s experience of church life and their discernment and decision-making process if they are coming from another or no faith tradition. Plans to gain leadership experience in the UCC should be formulated as soon as a call to authorized ministry is perceived.

We estimate this process will take three years to complete. In some circumstances, people with significant ministerial, seminary and life experiences and the ability to demonstrate Ministerial Proficiencies may move more quickly through the process. You must be an active member of an MBA church for one year before being recommended by that local church to the COM. You must remain an active member of this sponsoring church for the entire time you are in the process. The MBA recommends that candidates prepare to be received into the Discernment & Formation Process during their first year in seminary. Some candidates may seek to begin this process even before their seminary education begins. Candidates who move to the MBA and seek to be admitted into the process here are expected to develop a Ministerial Proficiency Roadmap with the pastor of their new local church and to take steps toward preparation for ordination that conform with these guidelines in advance of completing the required one year of membership in an MBA church.

To be recommended to an Ecclesiastical Council, a candidate must have completed the preparation steps outlined below in Phase III and Phase IV, including the:

- M. Div degree from an Association of Theological Schools (ATS) accredited seminary;
- UCC polity course, paper, and subsequent meeting with sponsoring church and Committee Advisor (CA);
- one year of Field Ed;
- one unit of CPE;
- theology paper and interview;
- worship leadership and preaching demonstration and reflection; and
- ministerial skills proficiency assessment.

The sequence, general outline and details of these requirements are described below and in the appendices of this document.

NOTE: A candidate for authorized ministry with the MBA may not circulate a UCC Ministerial Profile until they have had a successful Ecclesiastical Council.

PHASE I: INITIAL DISCERNMENT

When you are considering whether you are called to ordained ministry in the UCC, you will discuss your sense of calling with the pastor of the local MBA church where you are a member. The pastor will discuss your possible candidacy with the Diaconate or other appropriate body within your local church. (Henceforth, this document will refer to the “sponsoring church committee”, acknowledging local church variances in how this committee is titled and constituted.) No subsequent step may be taken unless both your local church pastor and the sponsoring church committee agree to consider your potential candidacy for ordination in the UCC.

PHASE II: INITIAL DISCERNMENT & FORMATION PROCESS

PHASE IIA: PRELIMINARY QUALIFICATION BY THE SPONSORING CHURCH

- A. The Pastor notifies the COM that a member of the local church is considering applying to the Discernment & Formation Process, and requests a copy of the **Guidelines for the Discernment & Formation Process**. This may be done through the MBA office: (781) 369-1396 or MBA-NE@macucc.org
- B. The pastor of your local church will arrange for the Associate Conference Minister to meet with the candidate and the committee to discuss the process, the responsibilities of the sponsoring church, and the roles and responsibilities of other entities helping the COM to make its decision about this request for candidacy in the MBA. If the person is accepted as a candidate, the sponsoring church committee will continue in relationship with the candidate throughout the process. The pastor will serve as the Ministerial Advisor (MA); both play key roles in the process. Along with seminary faculty, field ed and CPE supervisors and others, they are partners assisting the candidate to develop the gifts and experiences that support the COM’s discernment process throughout the Discernment & Formation period.
- C. A meeting is scheduled for you to meet with the pastor and sponsoring church committee. The purpose of the meeting is to review your request to be received into the Discernment & Formation Process of the MBA, to determine if this sponsoring church committee preliminarily affirms your emerging sense of call to authorized ministry in the UCC, and to ascertain whether it is willing to recommend that you be received as a candidate in the MBA. This meeting also contains a discussion of the covenantal responsibilities of this church, the pastor and the candidate throughout the process for regular communication, opportunities for growth in ministerial proficiencies, and feedback.
- D. In preparation for your meeting with the sponsoring church committee, you provide them with the following material two weeks in advance of your meeting:
 1. A Spiritual Journey & Call Paper, approximately five pages, double-spaced (*see Appendix 1 for details*).

2. All academic transcripts from undergraduate and graduate schools, including seminary. A Bachelor's degree is required, or at least a plan and timeline for the Bachelor's degree;
3. Current educational plans;
4. Professional resume: state (with dates) work, education, civic, church and other pertinent experience. Be sure to explain gaps.

E. You meet with the sponsoring church committee and pastor. The following issues are explored:

1. Your history with the UCC and this local church. How have your experiences contributed to your sense of call? How have these experiences given evidence that you have gifts and maturity necessary for ordained ministry, gifts distinct from those of committed lay leaders?
2. To what extent have you gained experience in each of the Ministry Proficiency areas and what opportunities for further growth might take place in this local church?
 - a. We ask that the MA, the sponsoring church committee and the applicant specifically discuss how the applicant might gain experience in leadership in administration of the sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism, as well as pastoral leadership for weddings, funerals and memorial services, liturgical holidays, etc. We recognize especially that presiding at Holy Communion prior to ordination is governed by local church practices, and that Baptisms involve seeking the agreement of participants and / or parents. Nonetheless, we regard the local church where the candidate has membership as one of the primary formation sites for ministry, and believe that thorough preparation in leadership of the rites and sacraments of our church is essential for those who would lead our local churches.
3. Your understanding of ordained ministry. What is your view of the role of ordained ministry, of the church's expectations of its ministers, and of the variety of tasks entailed in ordained ministry? How do you understand authorized ministry within the UCC?
4. The requirements and procedures for the preparation for ordination, including the roles played by the Ministerial Advisor and the committee of the sponsoring church.

The sponsoring church committee and pastor then decide whether or not to recommend you to be received into the Discernment & Formation Process of the MBA. If the decision is affirmative, the following action shall be taken:

VOTED: That our pastor communicate to the Committee on the Ministry of the Metropolitan Boston Association the desire of the _____ Church that one of its members, (name)_____ be examined and, if found acceptable, be received as a candidate for authorized ministry in the UCC.

If the pastor and sponsoring church committee cannot affirm their support of your request to be a candidate for authorized ministry, they will discuss their reasons with you and will work with you to determine subsequent steps to support your vocational discernment process.

- F. If the vote is affirmative, the chair of sponsoring church committee and / or the pastor sends a letter to the COM asking that you be received as a candidate for authorized ministry. This letter shall incorporate the following:
1. The record of the above vote;
 2. Verification of your membership in the sponsoring church;
 3. Length of time you have been a member of the UCC, including the sponsoring church (minimum one year), and other UCC congregations, if applicable;
 4. A description of the process used by the church to evaluate you and recommend you to the Association;
 5. A statement regarding how the church and pastor will continue to relate to and support you, including financial support and opportunities to develop ministerial proficiencies and experience leading rites and sacraments of the church;
 6. The name, address, phone and email of the person chairing the sponsoring church committee.

This material must be in the MBA office one month ahead of a scheduled interview with the COM.

G. Concurrently, you must make arrangements to participate in the Pastoral Formation Program. This is a participative process of ministerial formation that strengthens your personal insights and helps to prepare you for the challenges and personal growth that every healthy pastor experiences in ministry. Before your Initial Interview, you must complete the first assessment of this program. To do so,

1. Submit a completed application for the Pastoral Formation Program. *See Appendix 2 for more information.* Your application including completed essay questions, a signed copy of the Authorization and Release Form, and resume (if applicable) should be sent via email to the MBA office (MBA-NE@macucc.org), with copies to The Rev. Dr. Cal Genzel, Supervisor, PFP, (crg@pcs-nh.org) and Katherine Mills Myers, M.S. ED. (millsmyers@comcast.net).
2. Next, after your paperwork has been received by the PFP Administrator *you will be contacted by* Katherine Mills Myers, M.S.ED., Pastoral Formation Program Psychometrician to complete psychological testing and an initial interview. In the event she is unavailable for testing, the Administrator will direct you to an alternate testing site. Please note that this Psychological Report must be received by the Association office at least one month prior to your initial Discernment and Formation Process interview with the COM. Therefore you should plan to get your paperwork in so that your testing can be scheduled at least seven weeks prior to your meeting date with the COM. Should your COM meeting date fall in Sep or Oct or early in the new calendar year, addition lead time for testing is necessary due to vacation and holidays.

Next steps include:

1. After completing the testing and interview with Ms. Myers, you will schedule a follow-up appointment with her to review the test findings. At this meeting Ms. Myers will review

the Psychological Report with you and you will be given a copy of the report. Copies of the Psychological Report will be mailed to the Association COM following this second appointment.

2. After being received into the Discernment and Formation process, you will be assigned a Pastoral Formation Guide (PFG). You will make 6-8 appointments with this person at your mutual convenience to complete the Pastoral Formation Program. Readings and reflection papers, as well as other assignments, will be required. The program is conducted over the course of 8-9 months, and must be completed within one year of being taken into the Discernment and Formation Process. Your Ministerial Advisor and Committee Advisor will participate in this process with you. Your PFG will be in contact with the advisors during the course of the Program, and a meeting mid-way through the program will be scheduled with your COM Advisor, you, and your Guide.
3. Your Psychological Report, application essays, and the final evaluation completed and reviewed with your PFG, will be a part of your Discernment and Formation records.

The cost of this program is \$3,000 split equally among you, your local church, and the Association. Please be prepared to present your \$1,000 check at the time of your testing. *Please note that this fee is non-refundable.*

H. Following the sponsoring church committee's recommendation to the COM that it receive you into the Discernment & Formation Process, you and your local church pastor will meet to discuss and come to agreement on your current abilities and experience in each of the Ministerial Proficiencies. This preliminary Ministerial Proficiency Roadmap is part of your application package to the COM, and it is your responsibility to update and distribute it regularly throughout the time you are in the process. Failure to do so is one reason for dismissal from the process. *The Ministerial Proficiency Roadmap is Appendix 3.*

PHASE IIB: INITIAL INTERVIEW

A. PREPARATION FOR THE INITIAL INTERVIEW WITH THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

1. You will consult with the MBA office (781) 369-1396 to arrange for an Initial Interview with the COM. The MBA office will send you electronic versions of three items: The Discernment & Formation Guidelines, the Pastoral Formation Process Guidelines, and the Background Self Disclosure form (*Appendix 4*). ***Please fill out, sign, and return the Background Self Disclosure form to the MBA office as soon as possible. At this point in time, the MBA office will also conduct a routine inquiry with the National Sex Offender Registry Database.***

You must be accompanied to the Initial Interview by a pastor of the sponsoring church who will serve as your Ministerial Advisor, and by the chair of the sponsoring church committee assuming responsibility for oversight and nurture within your local church. It is your responsibility to communicate with these people well in advance to ensure their availability for this appointment. In multi-staff churches,

discuss who among the pastoral team is best suited to the Ministerial Advisor responsibility.

2. In preparation for this interview, you will arrange for electronic elements and a complete hard copy of all elements of the applicant package to be sent to the MBA office. This package must be received *one month* in advance of your Initial Interview.
 - a. The applicant package (sent both electronically and via paper mail) includes: a current resume; your Spiritual Journey and Call paper, revised incorporating the sponsoring church committee's and MA's recommendations; the preliminary Ministerial Proficiency Roadmap created with your Ministerial Advisor. These must also be sent to each Committee member no later than *two weeks* before your meeting. Mailing labels and email addresses will be sent to you in a memo by the MBA office. *See example memo in Appendix 5.*
 - b. Please contact the MBA office with the date of your psychological assessment and the expected date of receipt of the psychological assessment report in the MBA office.
 - c. Four reference letters must also be received by the deadline date. The reference letters should come from
 - i. Your Ministerial Advisor;
 - ii. a seminary professor;
 - iii. two people who have worked with you in the past two years.The COM is interested in a critical evaluation of your fitness for the ministry. References should describe their experiences of your capabilities in the ministerial proficiency areas. Specific instructions are on the reference form. Please note: these references should be mailed directly to the MBA by the person writing the reference. *The reference form is Appendix 6.*
 - d. Arrange for all undergraduate and graduate schools you have attended to send official transcripts directly to the MBA office.

B. THE INITIAL INTERVIEW

The purpose of this interview is to determine whether or not to grant you candidate status in the MBA. Your Ministerial Advisor will be invited to meet with the COM as it plans the interview with you. Additionally, a member of the MBA psychological assessment sub-committee will share a synopsis of your psychological assessment report with the COM. During the interview you will be asked to respond to questions about the content of your Spiritual Journey and Call Paper, your resume, church and other life experiences, your current sense of call, your dreams for the future of the Church and your ministry, the results of your psychological assessment and your Ministerial Proficiency Roadmap.

You and the chair of your sponsoring church committee will be asked to leave the room as the COM deliberates and votes on whether to receive you into the Discernment & Formation Process. Your Ministerial Advisor will remain with the COM to observe its deliberations. Your MA will have no vote in the COM's decision at this meeting, or at

subsequent meetings with the COM. You will be invited back into the committee meeting room to be informed of the COM's decision.

Recognizing that preparation for ordination is incomplete at this point, nonetheless the COM will be discerning in this Initial Interview and throughout the process, if you are accepted, the viability of your candidacy for authorized ministry in the UCC. Sometimes this means the COM will decide *not* to receive an applicant into the process. This is a difficult, but ultimately faithful and compassionate decision to make. It is in the best interest of all concerned that this process be stopped at the earliest possible stage, before seminary debt and other life choices constrain your future vocational possibilities. If the COM declines to accept your application, the pastor who accompanies you to this meeting will work with you to understand the reasons why this is so, and to explore other vocational options to fulfill your call to ministry.

When the decision of the COM is to grant Candidate for Authorized Ministry status, a Committee Advisor (CA), a member of the COM, will be appointed to work with you and your MA. The COM may have requirements or recommendations regarding how you proceed with Phase III, gaining additional experience in the Ministerial Proficiency areas, and it may have suggestions about the plans you described in your Ministerial Proficiency Roadmap. After this meeting, ask your Ministerial Advisor and Committee Advisor to help you understand these expectations.

C. COMMUNICATION WITH THE COM FOLLOWING THE INITIAL INTERVIEW

It is your responsibility to establish and maintain contact with your Committee Advisor and your Ministerial Advisor, updating them on your progress meeting the Ministerial Proficiency areas throughout the Discernment & Formation period. You are required to be in contact with your Committee Advisor at least every six months. You must provide your CA, MA, the chair of your sponsoring church committee and the MBA office with an updated Ministerial Proficiency Roadmap every 6 months. To each section of the Ministerial Proficiency Roadmap, add information about how you did or did not follow your plan for proficiency development and what you believe your current proficiency level to be. Revise your plans for the next 6-month interval. Failure to comply with this is one of the grounds for dismissal from the process.

PHASE III: MINISTERIAL PROFICIENCY DEVELOPMENT

The Marks of Readiness for Ordination. See Appendix 7.

There are a variety of ways in which candidates for ordination prepare for local church leadership in the UCC. Some are well-established practices, for instance, the expectation that each candidate will have earned a Master of Divinity degree. Yet, there are skills, experience and wisdom to be gained other settings, and these are important sources of information for the COM's discernment process. The COM wishes to emphasize again the important role the candidate's Ministerial Advisor and sponsoring church committee play in the proficiency development, skill assessment and call discernment process. This is

made evident in prayer support, opportunities to stretch and grow in pastoral authority and leadership competence, financial support whenever possible, and candid and timely feedback to the candidate. The COM hopes this clear articulation of expectations will pave the way for a full and rich formation process for the candidate and the sponsoring church. The COM appreciates the local churches that accept the important role of sponsoring someone through the process, forming people who are called for leadership in the UCC.

The following elements of Phase III must be reflected on transcripts and in the candidate's Ministerial Proficiency Roadmap. Again, some of these elements are familiar; in each case, the COM has made its expectations more explicit, so it is important to become familiar with these revised or new expectations.

A. UCC Polity Course

You will successfully complete a course in UCC polity at Andover Newton, Harvard Divinity School or another UCC or UCC-affiliated seminary. Also acceptable equivalents are the summer polity courses in New Hampshire and Vermont and the course which precedes General Synod. Please share your final paper for said Polity Course with your Committee Advisor and Ministerial Advisor, and submit a graded copy to the MBA office for your COM file. However, regardless of your specific course requirements, as part of your MBA Discernment & Formation Process, you are required to write a paper reflecting on Polity, as detailed below.

This paper should be submitted to your Ministerial Advisor and to your sponsoring church committee after you complete your polity course and (if at all possible) no later than six months before your Phase IV meetings. Schedule a meeting of your Committee Advisor, your Ministerial Advisor, and your sponsoring church committee to review this paper. Your Committee Advisor will submit notes from this meeting to the COM. You may be asked questions regarding this paper at your Phase IV Theology meeting. *See Appendix 8 for more details on this Polity Paper.*

B. Field Education Guidelines

Please see Appendix 9 for details. Please note: employment of 20 hours or more for a UCC entity triggers the 90 day window for entry into the UCC Health & Dental Insurance plans. See Appendix 10 for more information.

C. Clinical Pastoral Education Guidelines

The candidate's CPE learning agreement must be shared with the MA and CA as soon as it is developed, preferably before it is finalized. The final CPE evaluation must be sent to the MA, the CA, the MBA office and the sponsoring church committee.

D. Wider Church Involvement

The MBA wishes its candidates for ordination to be familiar with the various settings of the UCC, and to experience the covenantal dimensions that define each setting of the church. It strongly recommends that you make opportunities to participate in Association meetings and the Massachusetts Conference of the UCC Annual Meeting. Additionally, since we live in an area that generates frequent visits, workshops, worship leadership and presentations from members of the national staff, you are encouraged to take advantage of these

opportunities for learning, networking and fellowship. Events like the East Coast Seminarian's Conference, Pastoral Excellence Program offerings, other Association, Conference, General Synod or regional activities of the UCC are worth your time. You will be asked to describe and write about your experiences and to wrestle with case studies that present dilemmas frequently faced across the synapses of our covenantal life together. Familiarity with the functions, services and resources offered by the UCC at the Association, Conference and national settings is essential.

It is the candidate's responsibility to know all of these expectations and to construct each element of their plan to develop Ministerial Proficiencies so they meet the COM's guidelines. Additionally, it is the candidate's responsibility to distribute the Ministerial Proficiency Roadmap and other documents to all persons indicated in these guidelines on a timely basis.

PHASE IV: EVALUATION OF MINISTERIAL PROFICIENCIES

PREPARING FOR PHASE IV:

When the sponsoring church committee, the Ministerial Advisor and Committee advisor concur with the candidate, based on examination and documentation, that the candidate's development of ministerial proficiencies is sufficiently deep and other elements of the Discernment & Formation Process are complete, they will help the candidate prepare to demonstrate these proficiencies to the COM. Phase IV starts with the local church committee examining your academic record, fulfillment of the COM requirements in Phase III, and your ministerial proficiencies. It also reads your paper for interview IVa: Spiritual Journey and Call; Why UCC, and Theology. It then considers the following motion:

VOTED: That the sponsoring committee (or appropriate name) of *name of church* convey to the Metropolitan Boston Association its decision, (with supporting reasons), to recommend *name of candidate* for ordination, and request that the Committee on the Ministry examine *them* as to fitness in character and training to be ordained to the Christian ministry. Further, if the examination be found satisfactory, it requests that the Association be summoned to meet as an ecclesiastical council to review the committee's findings, and to hear the candidate's statement of faith, knowledge and experience. Upon satisfactory completion of an ecclesiastical council, it requests that the Metropolitan Boston Association allow this candidate to search for a Call within the UCC Search and Call process leading to ordination by the Association on behalf of the UCC if the call they receive is deemed ordainable by the MBA Committee on Ministry.

If the sponsoring church committee vote is not positive, your Ministerial Advisor and the sponsoring church committee chair will discuss with you what steps might be taken for the sponsoring church to re-consider your readiness to move to Phase IV or to continue in the process.

Anticipating a positive action by the sponsoring church committee, you may contact the MBA office to schedule interview IVa. A tentative schedule of interviews IVb and IVc may also be developed at this time. However, there must be at least two months between each of these three interviews; i.e. they could happen in January, March and May, but not in three consecutive months. Interview IVa must be completed successfully in order to proceed with the subsequent steps. Interviews IVb and IVc may be done in either order. The COM strongly recommends that you plan to complete Interviews IVa, IVb and IVc within the 12-month period starting in May and ending the following April. This will be advantageous to you as it coincides with COM members' terms of service, and will help assure that you have the benefit of COM consistency through these elements of the process.

In all of the Phase IV interviews, your MA is expected to be in attendance. Discuss with your CA who, if anyone might also accompany you to these interviews, especially

Interview IVc, the Ministerial Proficiency Assessment. The chair of the sponsoring church committee is generally the person most appropriate to accompany you to interview IVa.

The following documents must be sent to the MBA office one month in advance of interview IVa:

1. A copy of the action of your sponsoring church committee as outlined above. This is a letter from your Ministerial Advisor and / or the chair person of the committee written on church stationery;
2. A complete copy of your seminary transcript showing Field Ed, a polity course and CPE. If you are not finished with the M. Div degree, please outline how the requirements that remain will be fulfilled within the next year;
3. Letters of reference from your CA, Field Ed Supervisor and MA assessing participation in the process and factors that indicate suitability and readiness for ordination. *The outline for these letters is found in Appendix 11.* These letters are confidential, and will be sent directly to the MBA office. The writer(s) may provide you with a copy if they wish;
4. An updated Ministerial Proficiency Roadmap;
5. A copy of the paper you wrote to fulfill the polity requirement;
6. A copy of your Field Education Evaluation;
7. Your Theology Paper that summarizes your faith journey and call, and demonstrates your theological literacy, articulation and depth, as well as your understanding of and call to authorized ministry in the UCC. The paper should be revised following discussions with your sponsoring church committee and your advisors. Your revised paper should be both emailed and mailed to the MBA office. *See Appendix 12 for more information about this paper.*
8. An updated resume.

*These last five items must also be **both** emailed and mailed out to all members of the Committee on Ministry, at least two weeks before your meeting. The MBA office will provide you with mailing labels and email addresses for the Committee members.*

INTERVIEW IVA: RE-INTRODUCTION TO THE COM AND THEOLOGICAL LITERACY, ARTICULATION AND DEPTH PAPER

The COM will prepare for its conversation with you by meeting separately with your Ministerial Advisor. In that meeting, it will receive a recap of your psychological assessment report from a member of the psychological assessment sub-committee, input from your Ministerial Advisor and Committee Advisor, review notes from your Initial Interview and prioritize topics it wishes to explore with you.

It is highly likely that there will have been turnover on the COM since you were received into the process. Therefore the committee will want to spend some time getting to know you and your spiritual journey. Following this introductory conversation, they will discuss your theology paper and other topics of interest to the COM. The chair of your sponsoring church committee will also be offered the opportunity to share briefly how the candidate has experienced your theological grounding in ministry. Following that, you and the

committee chairperson will be asked to wait while the COM and your Ministerial Advisor deliberate; you will then be recalled and the COM's decision will be discussed with you. In this, as in all meetings with the COM, there may be expectations for additional development or demonstration of proficiency. Your MA and CA will help you understand the COM's intent as you construct a plan to meet these expectations.

INTERVIEW IVB: WORSHIP LEADERSHIP AND PREACHING

Our local churches put a priority on a pastoral leader's ability to conduct worship and to preach. The COM would like to have direct experience of your capabilities in these critical functions. Therefore, this interview focuses on experiencing your worship leadership and then discussing this experience with you. You need to prepare a short worship service (18-20 minutes total) for the Committee on Ministry, providing worship materials, if necessary, to aid the COM's participation. Include in this service a sermon 10-12 minutes in length. At the conclusion of the service, the COM will share their reactions and discuss with you the choices you made preparing for and leading this worship service, as well as your experiences leading other worship services.

Within 10 days of this meeting, you must send an electronic copy of your sermon and worship materials, if any, to the MBA office, along with a 2-page reflection paper on the experience of preparation, delivery and receiving the COM's feedback. If you prefer to preach extemporaneously, please bring a tape recorder to this interview so you will be able to prepare a transcript of your sermon from the recording. (It isn't necessary to transcribe the whole worship service.) These documents will be distributed to all COM members, allowing each to understand your post-sermon reflection process.

INTERVIEW IVc: MINISTERIAL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENTS

The COM's attention in this interview will turn to the other six Ministerial Proficiency areas: Spiritual Strength; Leadership and Administration; Pastoral Care and Counseling; Teaching; Faith in the World; and UCC and Covenantal Behavior. Discuss well in advance with your MA and CA who might be best able to attest to your capabilities in these areas. Make sure it is someone who can speak from personal experience and observation about your pastoral skills, authority and judgment applied in the real time exercise of ministry. The CA and MA may have specific guidance about the COM's interest in a particular area, or may guide you to choose someone with more general knowledge of your proficiency levels.

Again, to plan for this assessment the COM will meet in closed session with your Ministerial Advisor reviewing your Ministerial Proficiency Roadmap and earlier papers and documents associated with the process. When you and the person who accompanies you join the committee, you will be asked to describe your approach to various situations and dilemmas found in local church leadership. Some of these may be drawn from what you have written or preached about; others will spring from brief case situations that will be presented to you. *Appendix 13 contains some cases that resemble the sort of situations to which you will be asked to respond.*

CONCLUDING PHASE IV: THE COM'S DISCERNMENT

Following completion of interviews IV a, b and c, the COM will synthesize and discuss all of the information, impressions and facts about your call to ordained ministry in the UCC and your preparation to fulfill these responsibilities. Sometimes, this discernment decision will come easily: you clearly are or are not ready to proceed to an Ecclesiastical Council; the COM believes you can or cannot do additional things to demonstrate ministerial proficiencies, pastoral judgment, or other key attributes essential for pastoral leadership. Other times, this discernment process will be protracted and will involve more people, steps and, yes, perhaps additional papers and interviews.

IT IS AT THIS POINT THE MBA COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY WOULD LIKE TO RESTATE ITS DISCERNMENT AND DECISION MAKING ROLE. THE PARAGRAPHS THAT FOLLOW ARE ADAPTED FROM THE MANUAL ON MINISTRY, AND GUIDE THE COM'S DELIBERATIONS.

Saying "YES" and Saying "NO"

The task of the Committee on Ministry is to discern appropriate gifts for ordained ministry in the UCC within candidates who apply for and are received into the Discernment & Formation Process. As a candidate proceeds through the process toward ordination, the COM continues its work of discernment regarding the development of their gifts (spiritual, intellectual, emotional, personal, interpersonal, theological). Finally the COM must decide if these gifts are developed to a point that the candidate may be authorized to provide ordained pastoral leadership in the Church.

In this act of discernment the COM uses a number of criteria to reach a decision, including: academic records, psychological assessment testing, papers submitted by the candidate, Clinical Pastoral Education and Field Education evaluations, personal interviews with the candidate, letters of reference, and last, but not least, the assessment of the sponsoring local MBA church.

The sponsoring church plays a crucial role throughout the entire process. The Committee on the Ministry anticipates that the sponsoring church will be a strong advocate for any candidate it presents to the Association. We hope it will also be a critical advocate working with the candidate throughout the process to build on their strengths and confront their weaknesses with corrective action. The Committee on Ministry will also join the sponsoring church in this type of constructive, critical advocacy. In doing so, it will make one of the following decisions at each interview with a candidate:

- A. "Yes": The Committee approves and authorizes the candidate to take the next steps in the ordination process.
- B. "Yes, but": The Committee approves and authorizes the candidate to take the next steps toward ordination, subject to taking specific action in reference to reservations/concerns enumerated by the Committee.

- C. "No, but": The Committee does not authorize the candidate to take the next step. However, the candidate may remain in the process and return to the Committee at a later date with evidence that they have addressed the identified deficiencies.
- D. "No": Occasionally the Committee decides not to proceed further with a candidate. This is not a decision that is made lightly or without considerable deliberation. But in cases where it is clear that the candidate does not appear to have the potential for ordained ministry, or is not authentic in their intentions, exhibits obvious immaturity or emotional problems, or fails to follow the expectations for candidates for ordination, the Committee can express its caring for the candidate and for the Church by removing the person from the process. As mentioned above, failure to comply with expectations for meetings with Committee Advisors and revisions to the Ministerial Proficiency Roadmap are grounds for potential removal from the Discernment & Formation Process. There are other reasons why this action might be taken, among them ethical difficulties, failure to complete the M. Div degree and problematic evaluations on the psychological assessment, Field Ed, or CPE requirements. This is not an exhaustive list. The COM's discernment will also include an assessment of the authenticity of the candidate's call and preparation for ordained ministry in the UCC.

If the COM's discernment is affirmative, it will pass the following motion:

<p>Voted: That <u>name</u>, member of <u>local church</u>, be approved for ordination in the United Church of Christ pending successful completion of an Ecclesiastical Council and participation in the UCC Search and Call process that results in receipt of an ordainable call.</p>
--

Continuing "Candidate for Authorized Ministry" Status

A candidate who has been approved for ordination by an Ecclesiastical Council is still considered a "Candidate for Authorized Ministry" of the Association until an ordainable call has been received and the ordination has taken place. The candidate's approval for ordination is reviewed and re-affirmed by the Committee on Ministry each year. During this time, the candidate has access to the support and counsel of the Committee on Ministry, the Committee Advisor and the Ministerial Advisor. Every year, near the anniversary of the candidate's initial approval for ordination, the candidate is required to send a letter to the Committee on Ministry documenting their pastoral work during the past year, any search committee interviews, or other progress toward ordination. After review of the letter, the COM will communicate its decision about the continuation of "Candidate for Authorized Ministry" status to the candidate.

PHASE V: ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL AND SEARCH AND CALL

PREPARING FOR AN ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL

The general steps to prepare for an Ecclesiastical Council are:

1. Reserve the date on your local church and the MBA office calendars;
2. Work with your Ministerial Advisor and sponsoring church committee to ensure attendance of sufficient representatives from MBA churches to meet a quorum;
3. Solicit advice from your Ministerial Advisor and others about revisions to paper IVa;
4. Prepare to present paper IVa at your Ecclesiastical Council.

The "Letter Missive", a formal letter sent to churches in the MBA inviting them to send representation to an Ecclesiastical Council is found in Appendix 14.

PREPARING FOR SEARCH AND CALL:

The Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ, through its Pastoral Excellence program and support of Our Churches Wider Mission has developed extensive programs and other support for people entering the UCC Search and Call process for the first time. The exact schedule of these programs varies from year to year. You are encouraged to start attending these sessions starting one year before you expect to enter the UCC Search and Call process. See the MACUCC web site, www.macucc.org for more information.

MARKS OF AN ORDAINABLE CALL:

Please see Appendix 15.

PHASE VI: ORDINATION

PRE ORDINATION AGREEMENT

There is a very narrow window of opportunity in which to enroll in UCC insurance and pension plans without onerous qualification requirements and the possibility of rejection. The MACUCC and MBA leadership believes that it is important to notify you of these important decisions and to document the fact that you have been provided with this information. *Please see Appendix 10 for more details.*

GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF A SERVICE OF ORDINATION

The order for the ordination service is found in the UCC Book of Worship. The Metropolitan Boston Association follows this order, with freedom to adapt it as needed.

A date and time for the service may be reserved on the Association calendar in advance. You should present an outline of your proposed ordination service to the Association office, and indicate who will be participating in the leadership of the service. You should also indicate for what purpose the offering will be designated. The Association recommends that offerings be designated in whole or in part for the MBA Scholarship Fund.

Ordination is a service of the Association in cooperation with the ordinand and the sponsoring church. The ordinand and sponsoring church take the initiative in planning the service in consultation with the Associate Conference Minister and/or a representative of the Committee on the Ministry. An Association representative will preside over the ordination rite itself. Usually this is the Associate Conference Minister or the Moderator or their designee. You will select all other participants in the service.

Four problem areas need your attention:

Clergy Triumphalism: In a clear and explicit manner the service needs to affirm the ministry of all the baptized, lay and ordained. While the focus of the ordination rite itself is on the ordinand, the ministry of the whole church can be emphasized in a variety of places such as the sermon, litanies and prayers. The ordination rite may be preceded by the congregation reaffirming its baptismal/confirmation vows.

Length: Ideally the service should not exceed 1 1/4 hours. This will take some discipline on your part, particularly if the order includes word and sacrament. If the service includes the Sacrament of Communion, optional aspects of the ordination rite, such as the "Charges" should be eliminated. Do not try to pack everything you know and believe into this one occasion. The liturgy will also flow more smoothly and expeditiously with fewer rather than many liturgists.

Wordiness: Our reformed heritage is a tradition of the Word, which does not necessarily imply many words. When there are several leaders for the liturgy, you need to emphasize verbal restraint to them. The service is enriched by ample music and other artistic expressions of faith.

Prayers of the Church: The prayer of ordination comes during the ordination rite itself and asks for God's blessings and gifts for the ordinand. The content of other prayers should be comparable to those in a regular Sunday worship service. They should not be prayers about or for the ordinand. More than one "ordination prayer" violates the integrity of the liturgy. You will need to call this to the attention of those whom you have asked to lead prayers.

Usually the ordination rite will follow the sermon or offering in the order of service used in your sponsoring church.

It is the practice of the MBA to use inclusive language in all Association gatherings for worship. We ask you to honor this tradition in your service of ordination.

The following are attached to these guidelines: (1) a form to be completed and sent to the MBA office, (2) a sample service of the Word incorporating the Order for Ordination to Ministry, (3) a sample Service of Word and Sacrament incorporating the Order for Ordination to Ministry.

As you prepare your Service in consultation with your sponsoring church, feel free to call the MBA office, 21 Church St., Winchester MA 01890, phone: (781) 369-1396, email: MBA-NE@macucc.org for any additional help you may need.

**See Appendix 16 for more guidance in planning an ordination service.*

Appendix 1: Spiritual Journey & Call Paper

The Discernment & Formation Process begins at the local church with consideration of your spiritual journey and call. The guidelines below provide an outline of the paper that you will write to prepare you to meet with the local church committee. Should the process proceed from there, this paper will also be the basis for your initial meeting with the COM. As noted, there may be recommended revisions of the paper for your meeting with the COM as suggested by the MA and the sponsoring church committee.

Guidelines for your Spiritual Journey & Call Paper:

- General faith pilgrimage: Christian experience, insights and encounters that have shaped your faith through home, local church, education, community and other settings.
- Call to ministry: a theological statement reflecting on personal faith and life experience that leads you to believe you are called by God to ordained ministry. This should include, but not be limited to, reasons for seeking to be a candidate and your vocational plans, in so far as you currently understand them.
- An explanation of why you believe the UCC is the denomination in which you are called to authorized ministry.

Appendix 2: Pastoral Formation Program Guidelines and Forms

The Pastoral Formation Program is administered by a group of specifically trained pastoral professionals functioning on behalf of the Committees on Ministry (COM). The purpose of the program is to provide insight and guidance to the COM regarding the personal strengths and challenges of candidates for authorized ministry that may impact the effective exercise of ministry on the part of the candidate. It is also meant to encourage insight awareness and psychological development for the benefit of the candidate and whatever future ministry the candidate pursues.

The first phase of this process is the submission of a completed application for the Pastoral Formation Program. Your application including completed essay questions, a signed copy of the Authorization and Release Form, and resume (if applicable), should be sent via email to the MBA office (MBA-NE@macucc.org), with copies to The Rev. Dr. Cal Genzel, Supervisor, PFP (crg@pcs-nh.org), and Katherine Mills Myers, M.S. ED. (millsmyers@comcast.net).

Next, after your paperwork has been received by the PFP Administrator *you will be contacted by Katherine Mills Myers, M.S.ED, Pastoral Formation Program Psychometrician to complete psychological testing and an initial interview.* In the event she is unavailable for testing, the Administrator will direct you to an alternate testing site. Please note that this Psychological Report must be received by the Association office at least one month prior to your initial Discernment and Formation Process interview with the COM. Therefore you should plan to get your paperwork in so that your testing can be scheduled at least seven weeks prior to your meeting date with the COM. Should your COM meeting date fall in Sep or Oct or early in the new calendar year, additional lead time for testing is necessary due to vacation and holidays.

Next steps include:

1. After completing the testing and interview with Ms. Myers, you will schedule a follow-up appointment with her to review the test findings. At this meeting Ms. Myers will review the Psychological Report with you and you will be given a copy of the report. Copies of the Psychological Report will be mailed to the Association COM following this second appointment.
2. After being received into the Discernment and Formation process, you will be assigned a Pastoral Formation Guide (PFG). You will make 6-8 appointments with this person at your mutual convenience to complete the Pastoral Formation Program. Readings and reflection papers, as well as other assignments, will be required. The program is conducted over the course of 8-9 months, and must be completed within one year of being taken into the Discernment and Formation Process. Your Ministerial Advisor and Committee Advisor will participate in this process with you. Your PFG will be in contact with the advisors during the course of the Program, and a meeting mid-way through the program will be scheduled with your COM Advisor, you, and your Guide.
3. Your Psychological Report, application essays, and the final evaluation completed and reviewed with your PFG, will be a part of your Discernment and Formation records.

The cost of this program is \$3,000 split equally among you, your local church, and the Association. Please be prepared to present your \$1,000 check at the time of your testing.

Please note that this fee is non-refundable.

AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE

Candidate: _____ Date: _____

I acknowledge that I participate in this Pastoral Formation Program to provide the Metropolitan Boston Association of the United Church of Christ with insights into my fitness for ordained or otherwise authorized ministry on behalf of the United Church of Christ. I authorize the release of this evaluation to the Metropolitan Boston Association, its staff, officers, committee members, attorneys, and consultants. I further authorize the Pastoral Formation Guide, Committee Advisor, Ministerial Advisor, and others with direct need to know, to be in conversation with the Rev. Dr. Cal Genzel and members of the Pastoral Formation Program to answer questions and provide further information related to my participation in this Pastoral Formation Program. I authorize the Metropolitan Boston Association, its staff, or officers to share this evaluation with ecclesiastical officers of other associations or denominations, where I may apply for employment, standing, or authorized ministry status.

I release, indemnify, and agree to hold harmless Metropolitan Boston Association, its staff, officers, committee members, attorneys, consultants and Pastoral Formation Program affiliates 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 ministry, or from the dissemination of the evaluation or further information to other persons.

I understand that any documents provided to the Metropolitan Boston Association in accordance with the Authorization and Release shall become its sole property and may be retained by the Association, notwithstanding any subsequent withdrawal of my application for, or resignation from, authorized ministry status. This Authorization and Release may not be rescinded or modified, except with the express written agreement of the Metropolitan Boston Association.

Executed as a sealed instrument.

Date: _____ Signed: _____

I have reviewed my Psychological Testing Report for the Pastoral Formation Program with Katherine Mills Myers, M.S.ED. on this date: _____

Signed: _____

Application for the Pastoral Formation Program (PFP)

Please complete the following in approximately 8 double-spaced pages.

Send your application, including responses to the questions below, a signed Authorization and Release form, and your resume (if applicable), to the MBA office at MBA-NE@macucc.org, with copies to both The Rev. Dr. Cal Genzel, Supervisor, PFP, crg@pcs-nh.org and Katherine Mills Myers, M.S. ED. at millsmyers@comcast.net.

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Full mailing address
- Preferred telephone numbers
- Email address
 - Name, address, telephone number of the UCC congregation in which you are, or expect to be sponsored by while in the discernment and formation process
 - Name, address (if different), telephone number and email address of your Ministerial Advisor
 - Please provide information regarding transportation – public only, or have access to auto
- PROVIDE AN OUTLINE OF YOUR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP, specifying tenure of membership in the UCC and in your current church, partnering with you in discernment and formation
- DESCRIBE THE NATURE OF YOUR CHURCH INVOLVEMENT, including leadership roles past and present
 - OTHER WORK HISTORY; attach a resume if applicable
 - INDICATE ANY FIELD EDUCATION/SUPERVISED MINISTRY EXPERIENCES
 - RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:
 1. How do you understand the purpose of this program? What do you hope to gain by participating?
 2. Describe 2-3 life/ministry events which have significantly challenged you. How did you manage these difficult issues?
 3. Identify and describe the dominant authority figures in your life. What is their impact on you?
 4. Please share what nurtures and sustains you in your personal life and any ministry experiences to date.
 5. Briefly describe your history of developing and sustaining significant intimate relationships in your adult life. Discuss relationship challenges.
 6. What is the reaction of family members and friends to your decision to enter into pastoral ministry?
 7. To whom will you look for encouragement and support as you go through seminary and the discernment and formation process?
 8. What literature and or world events have been stimulating your thinking in recent months, and why?

Appendix 3: Marks of Ministry Portfolio

Name:

Ministerial Advisor:

Date:

Provide a sense of where you feel you are at this point in your ministerial formation here. For each of the following areas describe experience, plans and evidence of particular interest or strength in your ministry. Particularly note purposeful growth, healthy integration and competency derived from practice, knowledge and training. You may write a brief paragraph or list concisely evidence that demonstrates your experience, deep understanding, integration or passion and love for a particular Mark of Ministry. *For example: Under the Mark, "Exhibiting A Spiritual Foundation" it might be citing some aspect of prayer life or spiritual practice then stating some way it has grounded or guided you during your ministerial formation process; or in the area of 'Nurturing UCC Identity' it might be integrating a specific personal experience of participating in denominational activities that prompted you to consider further exploration by you or in partnership with your local ministerial setting.* Please also describe succinctly particular areas within the Marks that need further development and how you plan to address them. *For example: under 'Building Transformational Leadership Skills', it might be to learn about UCC resources, activities or best practices to better equip oneself and one's church to face a particular initiative or challenge. If you list training courses you plan to take or other experiences you will seek, please indicate what proficiencies they will help to develop.*

Under 'Current Knowledge and Ability' please highlight only those skills and experiences that have most significantly shaped your ministerial development to date rather than attempt to list every experience you have had under each layer of every Mark. Doing so will help those who use the Marks, to remember they are not intended to be completed chronologically but rather viewed as a whole, and as an indicator that invites further conversation and reflection by you and those surrounding each candidate throughout the ministerial formation process.

EXHIBITING A SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION AND ONGOING SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Describe occasions in which you practiced or embodied or God's love, trust or openness to God and recognizable growth that was experienced as the result.

Evidence of current knowledge and ability...

Plans for further development ...

NURTURING UCC IDENTITY

Note experiences that contribute to your deepening understanding of what it means to live in covenant with one another within the United Church of Christ.

Evidence of current knowledge and ability...

Plans for further development ...

BUILDING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Cite times that have enabled you to identify and address issues critical to the well being of groups you lead, serve or for whom you advocate, both spiritually and practically.

Evidence of current knowledge and ability...

Plans for further development ...

ENGAGING SACRED STORIES AND TRADITIONS

Describe your recent approaches to form or deepen Christian faith among others in either individual or group settings across the lifecycle and/or over the course of worship during the liturgical year.

Evidence of current knowledge and ability...

Plans for further development ...

CARING FOR ALL CREATION

Identify situations that have helped you clarify the meaning of spiritual healing or faithful stewardship for you and any lasting influences on future practice.

Evidence of current knowledge and ability...

Plans for further development ...

PARTICIPATING IN THEOLOGICAL PRAXIS

Demonstrate growing ways in which you engage in ongoing theological reflection and engagement as part of your ministerial identity.

Evidence of current knowledge and ability...

Plans for further development ...

WORKING TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE AND MERCY

Cite experiences of change or challenge with others in which you've participated to model inclusion, justice or God's radical love or hospitality and effects on those involved.

Evidence of current knowledge and ability...

Plans for further development ...

STRENGTHENING INTER-AND INTRA-PERSONAL ASSETS

Name instances that enable shared growth and management of the web of relationships between you, those in your ministerial setting and the wider church.

Evidence of current knowledge and ability...

Plans for further development ...

Appendix 4: Background Self Disclosure

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. As such, please answer the following questions below, attaching additional pages if necessary to provide commentary:

I have not been a Member in Discernment/Candidate for Authorized Ministry, nor have I been licensed or ordained, in any other association/conference/denomination.

True

Commentary

No civil lawsuit alleging that I attempted or actually engaged in:

(i) sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct;

(ii) physical abuse or child abuse; or

(iii) financial misconduct;

has ever resulted in a judgment being entered against me, in an out of court settlement, or in a dismissal because the statute of limitations had expired.

True

Commentary

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

True

Commentary

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

True

Commentary

My employment has not been terminated because I attempted or actually engaged in any of the following:

(iv) sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct;

(v) physical abuse or child abuse; or

(vi) financial misconduct.

True

Commentary

I have not terminated my employment or professional credentials in order to avoid being terminated or being charged with committing or attempting to commit any of the following:

(vii) sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; or

- (viii) physical abuse or child abuse; or
- (ix) financial misconduct;

True

Commentary

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 Candidate for Authorized Ministry in the Metropolitan Boston Association of the MA Conference of the United Church of Christ.

True

Commentary

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix 6: Initial Letter of Reference

CONFIDENTIAL

Applicant's Name _____

Reference for person to be taken into the Discernment & Formation Process:

This person is seeking to be a Candidate for Authorized Ministry in the Metropolitan Boston Association. You have been asked to be a reference. Please address the following questions with regard to the applicant.

- How long and in what capacity have you known the applicant?
- Consider specifically the following Ministerial Proficiency areas: Theological Depth and Articulation; Worship Leadership and Preaching; Spiritual Strength; Leadership and Administration; Pastoral Care and Counseling; Teaching; Faith in the World; and UCC and Covenantal Connections. Where do you see this person's strengths? Give examples. Select one area in which you think this person needs further development and explain.
- What comments do you have regarding: the candidate's emotional maturity, attitude toward self and toward others?

Signed _____

Date _____

This material is confidential. If you would like to share it with the applicant you may do so by sending the candidate a copy. This reference must be mailed by the person giving the reference to: The Metropolitan Boston Association, 21 Church St., Winchester, MA 01890.

Appendix 7: The Marks of Readiness for Ordination

These *Marks* of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers will be most helpful to all who are involved in the process of Discernment if they are *used throughout* their relationship with the candidates for authorized ministry rather than saving their consideration for the end of the process. When used throughout the Member in Discernment (MID) relationship, the *Marks* become an assessment tool that, like completion of the companion *Journaling the Journey* booklet, invite reflection/insight rather than as a pass/fail measure of success.

The *Marks* assessment tool defines specific skills, qualities and competencies under eight categories and 48 individual *Marks*. They aim to describe both a person's initial preparation for as well as ongoing formation in authorized ministry.

Format and Contents of The Marks Themselves:

Below are the eight categories of the *Marks* as newly refined by United Church of Christ MESA team (Ministerial Excellence Support and Authorization). A complete set of *Marks* under each category and more extensive description from the national church is available on-line at <http://uccfiles.com/pdf/THE-MARKS-OF-FAITHFUL-AND-EFFECTIVE-MINISTERS.pdf> or <https://www.uccresources.com/products/the-marks-rubric?variant=35848196431>

- *EXHIBITING A SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION AND ONGOING SPIRITUAL PRACTICE*
- *NURTURING UCC IDENTITY*
- *BUILDING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS*
- *ENGAGING SACRED STORIES AND TRADITIONS*
- *CARING FOR ALL CREATION*
- *PARTICIPATING IN THEOLOGICAL PRAXIS*
- *WORKING TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE AND MERCY*
- *STRENGTHENING INTER- AND INTRA- PERSONAL ASSETS*

When taken as a whole, the goal of the *Marks* is to demonstrate growth, integration and deepening toward the center of ministerial leadership through a series of four levels:

- outer layer (A) indicates experience with a particular mark
- second layer (B) shows deep understanding
- third layer (C) demonstrates integration of a mark with other marks/areas of ministry
- the core layer (D) presents passion and love for the mark

Guidelines When Applying The Marks:

As MIDs, their Local Church Committees, and their Ministerial Advisors apply the *Marks* with each candidate, here are some basics to keep in mind:

- **Apply the *Marks* routinely during the ministerial preparation and formation process rather than saving it up for some big “event” at the end.** In becoming familiar with and applying the *Marks*, look for noteworthy evidence of a candidate's skills, experience, further development needs and maturity related to each *Mark*. This will allow you to engage the assessment task in manageable portions and promote a candidate's' development more effectively through conversation together about gifts and growing edges along the way.

Especially for Members in Discernment (MIDS):

- **From the beginning**, the assessment of competencies and related action plan based on the *Marks* become foundational pieces for each MID's Portfolio. Developing the Portfolio is intended as **a journey of integration rather than a task of reiteration so organizing each candidate's Portfolio around the eight *Marks* categories is recommended.**
- **After completing the *Marks* assessment and action plan**, it is suggested that **each candidate, in conversation** with their Ministerial Advisor, **write an essay that demonstrates integration of the characteristics and abilities outlined in the *Marks***. That essay and MID Portfolio are to be **used as basis for development of the candidate's theology paper** and other meetings with the COM.
 - **Assess a person in relation to *Marks* where it is timely to do so**, For example, *Marks* under the category *Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practice* might happen effectively at most any point. On the other hand, exploring the *Mark*, "Leading faith formation across generations" under the category labeled *Engaging Sacred Stories and Traditions* would most suitably take place only after acquiring direct experience or coursework concerning current best practices in that area.
 - **Assess how a candidate manifests the *Marks* in relation to actual ministry**. Since the *Marks* intend to reflect areas essential to ministry, you are encouraged to cite examples you've had of a candidate's practical skills in church related settings. For example, assess ability in biblical studies by asking to hear a sermon or see a Bible study class taught; or pastoral care skills by simulating real situations together or reviewing case studies. Using this approach will help you assess what future recipients of a candidate's ministry may well experience. Local Church Committees will also find that members are able to engage in effective evaluation based on observation of good ministry, rather than technical expertise.
 - **Consider a variety of ways in which ministerial skills can be documented** (eg: not only through transcript or resume, but also through stories, case studies or creative ways used to meeting continued learning needs).
 - **Gather knowledge and judgment from other individuals and communities who are familiar with the candidate**. You are not alone in this ministry. Inviting others from other contexts that have experience and knowledge of the candidate will be beneficial, as long as you share the *Marks* with them to know the basis as well as the questions you are asking.
 - **Apply the *Marks* dynamically**. Remember that no one is expected to reflect expertise in all of these *Marks* to the same degree, or even achieve final mastery of each *Mark*. Make your aim the promotion of growth. Alternate focus between specific competencies and overall development. Through reflection and conversation, you may identify additional *Marks* of assessment under one of the eight major categories that, for a particular candidate, may acknowledge cultural *Marks* of excellence, diverse learning edges, styles, or additional ministerial talents and aptitudes valuable to note in that MID's assessment of The *Marks*.

Let the decision when someone is ready for ordination emerge out of a process of mutual discernment of readiness and the need for growth that is fed by these assessments. This process will serve the church equally by promoting the greatest growth among those whom God calls to lead it and the greatest clarity about when they are truly ready to take up that ministry.

Appendix 8: Polity Reflection Paper

Polity is the form of governance and structure that guide the operations of a denomination, and the operations of local congregations. Polity is experienced differently on the denominational and local level. In 7-10 pages, reflect on the following:

- Describe how UCC principles of covenant and autonomy, local church governance practices that you have experienced, and our denominational polity shape your understanding of and practice of pastoral authority.
- Describe your understanding of lay and ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ.
- Describe how the constituent traditions of the UCC are experienced in contemporary polity.
- What are the sources of authority recognized in the UCC? What are the sources of authority upon which ordained pastors draw?
- How have you experienced the difference between local and denominational polity?

Nota Bene: This paper is not a history paper nor an encyclopedia article. Rather this paper should describe your theology of the nature of the church and the pastorate in the Reformed tradition.

Appendix 9: Field Ed Guidelines

The assumption of the MBA Committee on Ministry is that candidates for authorized ministry are preparing for pastoral ministry in a local UCC church. The MBA Committee on Ministry holds the opinion that *all* people it authorizes for ministry on behalf of the entire United Church of Christ need to demonstrate proficiency in local church pastoral ministry whether or not they perceive a call to local church leadership at this point in time.

1. If the local church is not where you understand your call to ministry to be, you must nonetheless complete one academic year (two semesters) of field education in a local church setting. You may, if you wish, complete additional semesters of field ed in social service organizations or other settings approved by your M. Div. program.
2. Field education may NOT take place in your home church, irrespective of whether this is acceptable to your M. Div program.

We highly recommend that you consider the following suggestions as you select a field ed site:

1. Select a site that differs in two or more significant ways from your sponsoring church, ie: average worship attendance is double or half that of your sponsoring church; it has socioeconomic, ethnic or educational demographics that are distinctively different; the liturgical style varies from that with which you are accustomed; it has a distinctive theology and practice of covenantal and / or ecumenical relationships.
2. Choose a UCC church.

Verify that the person who will serve as your supervisor is ordained or licensed by the UCC and is present at your field ed site. Some field ed sites have lay people, supervisory committees or off-site supervisors. This must be explained and approved in advance by your CA and the Associate Conference Minister.

Develop learning goals that address the eight ministerial proficiency areas, paying attention to ministerial proficiency areas where the need for development is noted on your Ministerial Proficiency Roadmap.

1. Preaching and worship leadership is a proficiency area of preeminent importance to the COM. Preaching in a field ed site is significantly different from leading worship in your local church. Take advantage of this opportunity to expand your skills and experience.
 - a. As the schedule of preaching and worship leadership is developed for your field ed site, inform your MA and CA, that they might observe you as their schedules allow.
 - b. Video tapes, CDs or DVDs of preaching and worship leadership experiences are highly preferred over text copies of sermon(s), so assume responsibility for having these recordings made when you preach;
 - c. Define the worship leadership / preaching evaluation or feedback process that will be used in your field ed site and be prepared to discuss this with your CA and / or MA.
2. Administration of sacraments and rites of the church
 - a. Each candidate must participate in the administration of Communion multiple times in field ed site and / or home church or other site of ministry
 - i. Discuss with your MA and field ed supervisor the practices and polity of these churches. Come to agreement on the circumstances in which you will be granted permission to preside or exercise pastoral leadership at the communion table.
 - b. Baptism

- i. Candidate must be involved in preparation of parents or baptismal candidates for baptism
 - ii. Candidate must be involved in a worship service that includes baptism, taking a significant role as permitted.
 - iii. Again, local polity and practice, schedules and circumstances will govern how this experience is gained. Work well in advance with your MA and your field ed supervisor to figure out how this will be accomplished.
- c. Describe how you will gain experience counseling and / or leading worship at weddings, funerals, memorial services, etc.

Participation in Wider Church

- a. Pay attention to the polity paper requirement that you gain experience assessing, influencing, discussing and reflecting upon a local church's understanding and practice of UCC polity.

Your field ed site selection, supervisor agreement and learning agreement **must be approved in advance** of the seminary filing deadline by your CA

- a. You must provide a copy of your mid-year field ed evaluation to your CA and MA
 - i. Your self assessment as well as your supervisor's assessment
- b. You must provide a copy of your and your supervisor's final field ed evaluation to your CA, MA, sponsoring church committee, the MBA office and to all Committee members of the Committee on Ministry in advance of your first Phase IV interview.

Appendix 10: Pre-Ordination Agreement

02-12-BD-17 PRE-ORDINATION AGREEMENT

You are eligible for the following benefits when you are employed by a UCC church or UCC-related entity. This document: (1) serves as a reminder of those benefits and (2) provides them to you in writing. To receive applications or additional information on any UCC plan, contact:

The Pension Boards – UCC

(212) 729-2700

**475 Riverside Drive
New York, NY 10115**

**(800) 642-6543
www.pbucc.org**

I. THE ANNUITY PLAN – UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

As a member of this national plan, it is recommended that your employer contribute a minimum of 14% of 130% of your cash salary if you live in a parsonage – or 14% of cash salary plus housing allowance – as annuity dues toward your account in a fund invested in accordance with your directions by the Pension Boards. At the time of retirement (age 55 or later), you receive a monthly benefit for your lifetime based upon the value of your account and a number of other factors, such as your age and the benefit option you select. If you leave ministry or choose to stop contributing to the Annuity Plan, the amount in your account remains vested and will provide a benefit to you on a monthly basis at the time of retirement. At retirement, you may elect to receive up to 20% of the account in a lump sum, but you must convert to an annuity at least 80% of the employer contributions (including earnings) to your account. You may also make tax-sheltered contributions from your salary to your account. Tax-sheltered contributions are always fully vested, may be withdrawn if you leave church employment, and are not required to be annuitized at retirement.

You can enroll as a lay person in this plan prior to ordination if you are employed in a UCC church or entity – then change your status in the plan to “clergy” following ordination. While there is no deadline for joining this UCC plan, it is advisable to become a part of it as early in your career as possible in order to realize the greatest benefits at the time of retirement.

Seniors in seminary who are in-care or licensed by a UCC Conference or Association should apply for a Herring and Stark Memorial Fund grant. These are grants that help to fund your annuity account. If you become ordained within 5 years of the grant, receive standing as a UCC minister and have contributions made to the Annuity Plan at the 14% level for at least two years, the Herring and Stark grant will remain in your pension account and contribute to your income in retirement.

The Annuity Plan - UCC has an excellent record of investment growth and clergy members receive special tax benefits after retirement. Some of the cost of managing the Annuity Fund is borne by endowment income.

II. UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST MEDICAL AND DENTAL BENEFITS PLANS

These national plans allow clergy to enroll without a physical exam or other proof of good health within a period of 90 days of initial eligibility (usually the first full-time (20 hours/week or more) employment by a UCC entity). After that 90-day period, enrollment in the Medical Plan will depend upon evidence of good health by the member and each eligible dependent. Subsequent enrollment in the Dental Plan can only occur during an open enrollment conducted periodically by the Pension Boards.

It is not necessary to belong to the Annuity Plan-United Church of Christ to participate in the UCC Medical Plan, nor is it necessary to participate in the Medical Plan in order to participate in the Dental Plan. They are “stand-alone” plans.

Clergy who elect to have the United Church of Christ Medical and Dental Benefits coverages may at any time leave the programs to be covered by another major carrier or Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), but re-admission into the UCC Medical Plan at a future date will only be allowed if the applicant and dependents provide proof of good health satisfactory to the underwriter employed to make such determinations. In these cases, enrollment in the UCC Dental Plan must await an open enrollment period.

While some other programs – especially HMOs – may offer health services for a lower premium, it should be remembered that if you belong to an HMO and move to another area or state, you may not be able to join either the UCC Plan or another HMO if you have a pre-existing medical condition, whereas if you belong to the UCC plan, your coverage will be transferred to a new place of employment.

III. FLEXIBLE BENEFIT PLAN FOR UCC MINISTRIES

This plan, commonly known as a “Flexible Savings Account” plan, allows members to pay for eligible medical and dependent care expenses on a pre-tax basis. Before each calendar year, members elect how much they want to contribute to the medical account and the dependent care account. These contributions are deducted throughout the year from their paycheck and taxes are not withheld and are not payable on these amounts. Members then submit claims for reimbursement of eligible claims directly to the plan administrator.

Individual churches and UCC-related entities must pay a one-time administrative fee of \$100 in order to participate in this plan. Members who do not participate in the UCC Medical Plan must pay a \$12 per month administrative fee. There is no administrative fee for members who participate in the UCC Medical Plan.

IV. UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST GROUP LIFE INSURANCE AND DISABILITY INCOME PLAN

The yearly contribution for this plan is 1½% of the salary basis (cash salary plus housing) used in the determination of the Annuity Plan dues. This plan includes short and long-term disability income and term life insurance components for the member and a small life insurance benefit for a spouse or same-gender domestic partner. There is a reduced life-time life insurance benefit for retirees at age 65 at no additional member cost. If the member becomes disabled before retirement, the plan provides, after a

30-day waiting period, that short-term disability benefits are payable weekly for 5 months, or the cessation of disability, if earlier. If the disability continues, long-term disability benefits are payable monthly until age 65, or cessation of disability, if earlier. While on long-term disability, the plan also makes annuity contributions at 7% of the pre-disability salary basis until retirement (usually age 65) and pays the medical and dental premiums if the member was a participant in the UCC plans. Contact the Pension Boards for more information because the terms of the plan control in all situations.

You can join this plan **within 90 days of initial eligibility (usually the first full-time employment (20 hours/week or more) by a UCC entity)** without a physical exam and proof of insurability. After that 90-day period, you may not be eligible for coverage if you have a pre-existing medical condition or if you are not insurable.

V. SOCIAL SECURITY

According to the Social Security Act, all ordained ministers are required to belong to the Social Security system and make regular contributions through the Internal Revenue Service. The only exception is that an ordained minister can apply to be exempted from Social Security on the grounds of being conscientiously opposed to the acceptance of public insurance – **“by filing for an exemption on or before the due date of the 2nd tax year for which you have had church related earnings.”** After that time, it is not possible to be exempted from the system or cease payments.

You should review your social security account every year to make sure you’re being properly credited with your payments. The Social Security Administration will send you a statement of earnings and a benefit estimate each year, about 3 months before your birthday.

While some investors suggest that there are other ways to invest a sum equal to Social Security payments that would yield greater earnings, one should know that your participation in Social Security is assumed in the design of the Annuity Plan – UCC and other UCC benefit plans. The benefits provided by the Annuity Plan – UCC (where contributions were made at 14% of salary basis over a full career) **plus** Social Security are estimated to provide a retirement income that will be sufficient to maintain your standard of living in retirement. *For further information about Social Security, contact the nearest Social Security Administration Office, listed in your phone book or their website at www.ssa.gov.*

VI. WORKER’S COMPENSATION

Each church should carry Worker’s Compensation for all employees – full and part-time. As you begin to search for your first pastorate, please keep in mind that this insurance is carried by the church for its – and your – protection. Health insurance and the church’s property/liability insurance will not cover any church employee who is injured on church property. A word to the wise – make sure any church to which you are called carries this insurance!

PRE-ORDINATION AGREEMENT
Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ

I have read the information regarding the Annuity Plan-United Church of Christ, UCC Medical and Dental Benefits Plans, UCC Life Insurance and Disability Income Plan, Social Security and Worker's Compensation.

I understand that it is my responsibility to contact the appropriate agencies and make arrangements for applying or opting out of membership in the above programs within the timelines stated for each.

Ordinand

Date

Church & Ministry Representative

Date

Area Conference Minister

Date

NOTE: *1 copy is retained by the Ordinand*
 1 copy is kept in the Regional Office

CONFIDENTIAL

Candidate _____

Reference for candidate to proceed to Phase IV: Evaluation of Ministerial Proficiencies:

Please address the following questions with regard to this person, sharing your assessment of this candidate's gifts for ordained ministry in the UCC:

1. What has the Discernment & Formation / Field Ed process been like with this person? Address things like
 - How engaged with the Discernment & Formation Process was the candidate?
 - Did the candidate demonstrate initiative? Openness to learning, feedback and coaching?
 - In which of the Ministerial Proficiency areas is this candidate particularly gifted? How has this candidate shared their gifts with others with whom they are in covenantal relationship?
 - Which Ministerial Proficiency area(s) are not strong points of this candidate? Do they share your assessment? How does the candidate plan to bolster their capabilities in this area? In your opinion, are these plans adequate and realistic for the setting to which they are likely to be called?
2. Address this candidate's leadership capabilities, drawing upon their psychological assessment, your observations of them before and during the process and Field Ed period, and evaluations from all other sources in the process (if they are available to you). Specifically address the health of their relationships with colleagues and congregants, their trustworthiness, ability to accept responsibility and keep confidences appropriately, and ability to work constructively towards restoration in problematic relationships.
3. What hesitations or reservations do you have regarding this person competently serving as pastoral leader in a local church or any other setting of authorized ministry in the UCC. Be sure to remark on authenticity of call, love of the UCC, propensity to be a life-long learner and ability to serve in covenantal relationships with others.

Signed _____

Date _____

This material is confidential. If you would like to share it with the candidate, you may do so by sending them a copy. This reference must be mailed by the person giving the reference to: The Metropolitan Boston Association, 21 Church St., Winchester, MA 01890.

Appendix 12: Theology Paper Guidelines

Process Phase IVa: Summary of your spiritual journey and call; assessment of theological literacy, articulation and depth, and understanding of the UCC.

A draft of this paper must be discussed with your Ministerial Advisor and your sponsoring church. Soliciting input from your Committee Advisor is also very strongly recommended. The paper should be revised following discussions with the sponsoring church committee and your advisors.

Outline:

1. Your spiritual journey and call to authorized ministry – summarize this to reintroduce yourself to members who have joined the COM since your 2b interview (3 pages).
2. Theology: Select five topics from the list below. In no more than 3 pages per topic,
 - a. Provide a summary of your own theology in each area you choose;
 - b. Describe a situation in your local church, Field Ed, CPE site or other UCC local church setting where this aspect of theology has been the basis for the ministerial actions you took or services you provided.

The COM suggests that you pay special attention to the theological coherence and pastoral implications among the five topics you address. Furthermore, the COM advises you that interviews IVa and IVc may contain questions or cases that call upon your theological understanding and pastoral experience in any of these areas.

Theological Literacy, Articulation and Depth

Baptism and the Lord's Supper (required)

Area One - God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit (choose two topics)

- The Trinity
- Creation and Providence
- Judgment and Grace
- The Person of Christ; Incarnation; Atonement; Salvation and Resurrection
- Revelation and Holy Scriptures

Area Two - Humanity (choose one topic)

- Sin, Repentance, Forgiveness
- Prayer
- Eternal Life

Area Three - The Church and God's New Era (choose one topic)

- Doctrine of history and eschatology
- Church and the world (including evangelism, social action, mission)
- Ecumenism and Interfaith Dialogue

Word to the Wise: Focus your practical and analytical skills on this paper. Show your scriptural and theological grounding in this paper and in this interview. Consider topic headings, a table of contents, and footnotes. In this paper and interview, perhaps more than at any other point in your process, the Committee anticipates experiencing your "learned clergy" side. Some blending of head and heart that can communicate your theology to lay and clergy alike is helpful. Your creative side, we hope, will be on display at the worship meeting. Your pastoral side will be on display during the Case Study meeting. In this meeting, please show us your authentic theological voice.

Appendix 13: Sample Case Situations

(This material is adapted from Parish Life and Leadership guidelines for Pastor / Parish Relations Committees, written by the Rev. Martha Ann Baumer.)

Sample Case #1:

"Pastor, we want our new baby baptized. We've invited the whole family and some of our friends. They'll all be at the house next Sunday, so come at three o'clock and we'll be ready. You can do the baptism in the living room."

Formulate your initial response:

Then, this is said, "But we have the arrangements all made. What's to talk about? Our other kids were done that way. Former Pastor didn't complain. In fact, he and his wife will be there, so forget it – we'll just ask him to do it."

Talking with the chair of the diaconate, you learn that this family has withheld pledges in the past when decisions didn't go their way. Given the financial straits of this church, she counsels you to be more flexible. How do you respond to her?

What's your plan for dealing with this situation – identify people or committees you'll work with, and what your approach will be. What is the theological basis for your actions?

Sample Case #2:

"Did you see the newspaper? Our pastor had a letter to the editor in the paper about the school bond issue. And I hear she's thinking about running for the school board."

"Really?! I didn't think a pastor could do that! After all, they don't pay taxes, do they?"

"I don't know. I think they pay state taxes, and I know they pay sales tax. I never thought about it. It just seems funny to have the pastor messing around in town politics."

"You know, she preaches about politics sometimes. Says we're supposed to vote. And she talks about civil rights a lot. I always thought religion and politics don't mix."

What is your approach preaching and teaching on political issues?

Have you participated in discussions with congregants where different political opinions were voiced?

Describe what you said and did, or what you would say or do.

What is the scriptural or theological basis for your actions?

Sample Case #3:

“Pastor, why don’t we say the creed anymore? I miss it. We always used to say it. We had to memorize it when I was a kid, and it doesn’t seem right not to use it.”

“What creed do you mean?”

“The Apostles’ Creed, of course.”

“Well, I think the language is difficult for lots of people today, including me. And I struggle with the line about the virgin birth since I have questions about that. So I just avoid it and use other things.”

“What? You have questions? I thought they taught you what to believe in seminary! Didn’t they? And I certainly believe Jesus was ‘born of the Virgin Mary’! Why, I’m shocked at what you said. I always thought you and I believed the same things.”

What is your response to this person? What steps might you take after this conversation ends?

Appendix 14: Letter Missive & Ecclesiastical Council Agenda

To Churches and Ministers of the Metropolitan Boston Association

Greetings:

At the request of _____ (name of church) _____ an Ecclesiastical Council of the Association comprised of the Churches listed on the back of this letter is called to examine _____ (name of candidate) _____ as to their fitness to be ordained to the Christian Ministry.

Each Church, represented by pastor(s), lay delegates, and other ministers, is urged to be present at (name of church) _____ on _____ (date) _____ at _____ (time) _____.

Representation and voting at such Council shall be by church, with each church having one vote. Members of the Committee on the Ministry (COM), together with the Associate Conference Minister, the Scribe, and the Moderator (or their representatives), shall be members of the council by reason of their office.

If the examination of the candidate is sustained and the ordination approved, the council will recess until a date to be determined for the Service of Ordination.

Representatives from eight of the MBA Churches shall constitute a quorum.

Please RSVP to: _____ (contact person for the church, phone #, email address) _____

Wishing you grace, mercy and peace,

Chairperson COM
Moderator MBA

**Metropolitan Boston Association
Ecclesiastical Council for Ordination
Agenda**

1. Call to order by the Moderator.
2. The reading of the call to Council (Letter Missive) by the Scribe.
3. The calling of the roll by the Scribe (written enrollment).
4. Establishment of the Quorum (8 or more MBA churches, per bylaws).
5. The Constituting Prayer.
6. The reading of the Records of the Local Church by its representative.
7. Move, Seconded, and Voted (MSVOTE) that those Records be deemed satisfactory.
8. Presentation of the Candidate's credentials by the Scribe.

(Name of Candidate) is a member of (Name of Church) in (Town/City). They were accepted into the MBA Discernment & Formation Process in (year) after (#) years of membership in this MBA local church. They are a graduate of (undergraduate school), (degree), (year); and (Seminary name), MDIV, (year). Polity was completed at (name) in (year). In (date) they completed their Ministerial Proficiency Demonstrations with Committee on Ministry and at that time was approved for this Ecclesiastical Council. The Candidate plans to start the UCC Search and Call process immediately.

9. MSVOTE to declare those credentials to be satisfactory.
10. Presentation by the Candidate: a paper describing their spiritual journey, theology, and call to ordination in UCC.
11. Examination of the Candidate, by roll call.
12. MSVOTE that the examination be *ended* and that the Council will be by itself.
13. MOVE that the examination be sustained and that the MBA, in association with the local church, will hold the Service of Ordination pending receipt of an ordainable call as determined by the Committee on Ministry of the MBA.
Request SECOND, then DISCUSSION. Following that, or if there is none, the Moderator will "ascertain the discernment of the Council".
14. The Moderator will invite the Candidate, and those with them, to return.
The Moderator will announce the action of the Council.
15. MSVOTE that at the conclusion of this session, the Scribe be authorized to and instructed to complete the minutes of the Council and inform the Scribe of the MACUCC. Furthermore, the Scribe will be advised and instructed to complete the record of the Service of Ordination and inform the Scribe of the MACUCC.
16. MSVOTE to adjourn.
17. Closing Prayer.

Moderator _____
Date _____

Scribe _____
Date _____

Appendix 15: Marks of an Ordainable Call

1. **AUTHENTICITY.** All parties in the proposed covenant discern that the candidate is called by God to the ministry in question.
2. **DISTINCTIVENESS.** The ministry requires the sacramental and pastoral responsibilities of an ordained minister.
3. **CALLING BODY.** The calling body requests that the candidate be ordained to the position. In the case of a 4-way covenant, the calling body agrees to be a full and active partner in the covenant.
4. **DURATION.** The ministry is at least half-time. The contractual duration is at least two years.
5. **COMPENSATION.** The Call Agreement reflects compensation at or exceeding the conference guidelines for the conference in which the calling body is situated. (If a congregation is not able to meet the guidelines, the Call Agreement should include a plan and commitment to achieve them within a certain timeframe.)

Appendix 16: Ordination Planning Documents

Metropolitan Boston Association
Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ
Ordination Service Information

Requested date and time of service reserved on the Association calendar

Outline order of service:

People leading worship:

Recipient(s) of the offering:

_____ Signed

A Service of Word and Sacrament - Incorporating the Order for Ordination to Ministry

PRELUDE

INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP

HYMN

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE WORD OF GOD AS FOUND IN

SPECIAL MUSIC

SERMON

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

ALL: AND ALSO WITH YOU.

One: Let us greet one another with a sign of God's peace.

ORDER FOR THE ORDINATION TO MINISTRY

GREETING

PRESENTATION

EXHORTATION

EXAMINATION

ACCLAMATION

Leader: People of God, you have heard the promises _____ Name _____ has made. What is you will?

PEOPLE: BY THE GRACE OF GOD, HE/SHE IS WORTHY! LET US ORDAIN HIM/HER. COME HOLY SPIRIT.

Leader: Will you support _____ Name _____ in the ministry of Christ?

PEOPLE: WE WILL

THE LAYING ON OF HANDS AND ORDINATION PRAYER

DECLARATION

PRESENTATIONS (IF ANY)

OFFERING

This offering is being received as a gifts to the scholarship fund of the Metropolitan Boston Association for the benefit of women and men attending seminaries in preparation for ordained ministry.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

HYMN, sung during presentation of offering, bread and wine

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

INVITATION

THE SURSUM CORDA

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

CHORAL SANCTUS AND BENEDICTUS

ACCLAMATIONS

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

THE POURING OF THE CUP

RESURRECTION ACCLAMATION

SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS

UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

RECESSIONAL HYMN

COMMISSION AND BLESSING

POSTLUDE

A Service of the Word
Incorporating the Order for Ordination to Ministry

PRELUDE

CHORAL INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP

HYMN

INVOCATION AND WELCOME

CONFESSION OF SIN

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

GLORIA PATRI (or other choral act of praise)

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

ALL: AND ALSO WITH YOU

One: Let us greet one another with a sign of God's peace.

SPECIAL MUSIC

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

SERMON

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH - -UCC STATEMENT OF FAITH

HYMN

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

OFFERING

The offering is being received as a gift to the Scholarship Fund of the Metropolitan Boston Association for the benefit of women and men attending seminaries in preparation for ordained ministry.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

OFFERTORY RESPONSE

ORDER FOR ORDINATION TO MINISTRY

GREETING

PRESENTATION

EXHORTATION

EXAMINATION

ACCLAMATION

Leader: People of God, you have heard the promises NAME has made. What is you will?

PEOPLE: BY THE GRACE OF GOD, HE/SHE IS WORTHY! LET US ORDAIN HIM/HER. COME HOLY SPIRIT.

Leader: Will you support name in the ministry of Christ?

PEOPLE: WE WILL.

THE LAYING ON OF HANDS AND ORDINATION PRAYER

DECLARATION

PRESENTATIONS (IF ANY)

HYMN

BENEDICTION

RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Appendix 17: The Format of Your Paperwork

In order to prevent us from confusing your paperwork from that of another student, please be so kind as to following the following format for every document you write for the Committee. (Documents written by others such as field education supervisors, CPE supervisors, etc, do not have to follow this format.)

A) Please include a dated cover letter indicating what meeting you are preparing for, who your Ministerial Committee Advisors are, and which documents are included. (See Example)

Example:

August 26, 2007

Dear Committee on Ministry Member,

Attached please find the materials for my Phase IVA interview, to take place September 16, 2007:

X

Y

Z

I look forward to meeting with you.

Peace,

Jose Jones

CC: Rev. Jane Doe, Ministerial Advisor; Ms. Sally Smith, Committee Advisor

B) Your name and date should appear at the top of every page of every document. This is easy to do in MS Word and WordPerfect using headers. Pages should also be numbered.

C) When emailing paperwork, your name or initials should appear in every file name. For instance it should be JohnDoeResume.doc (not Resume.doc) or JohnDoePaper.doc (not Paper.doc). The most preferred file name would probably be JohnDoeMay2006Paper.doc

D) When emailing paperwork, please send documents in.doc (MS Word) format to avoid file format problems.

E) When sending paperwork by postal mail, if possible, please be so kind as to print on both sides of the page, and staple individual documents.

Appendix 18: MBA Scholarship Fund & UCC Financial Resources

The MBA Scholarship Fund is established to support any Candidate for Authorized Ministry in the MBA. Grants are generally around \$500 per year for a lifetime maximum of \$2000 and will be used to reimburse the Candidate for any academic-related expense, with the exception of the required psychological assessment. This fund is supported by ordination and installation offerings and special gifts from Association churches and individuals.

The application process:

1. Submit application to the chair of the Committee on Ministry with approval of the Candidate's appointed advisor. The application form can be downloaded here:

<https://macucc.brtaapp.com/files/files/documentsmba/scholarship+fund+application+.pdf>

2. The Committee on Ministry will review applications and award scholarships.

The United Church of Christ's Scholarship and Grant award system provides broad support, increased access and ease of use to a large, diverse pool of qualified candidates.

The streamlined Scholarship and Grant award system increases efficiency for applicants, recommenders and evaluators; establishes consistent practices; improves communication; and strengthens relationships with recipients.

Members in Discernment may apply for the Brown Endowment Scholarship and ONE other UCC Ministry Education Scholarship per year.

The UCC has developed an online Scholarship and Grant application process. Scholarship application forms will open at 12:01 a.m. on January 1, 2016 and are due at 11:59 p.m. on March 1, 2016. To find out more about UCC Scholarship and Grant resources please visit this website:

<http://www.ucc.org/scholarships>

Herring & Stark Memorial Fund: funds set up by the Herring family and the Stark family to help new ministers start their retirement savings plans. The grants help create new member pension accounts in the Annuity Plan for the United Church of Christ, administered by the Pension Boards. If all the conditions are met, the Herring and Stark grant will stay in your pension account until you buy an annuity around or at the time of retirement.

Find out more here:

https://www.pbucc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=337&Itemid=377

Appendix 19: Leave of Absence Policy

Adopted April 17, 2012

A candidate may apply for a leave of absence at any time during the Discernment & Formation Process. This application must be in writing and addressed to the Chair(s) of the Committee on Ministry and the Metropolitan Boston Association office, and describe the reason(s) for the request. Authority for granting or denying a leave of absence rests with the Committee on Ministry. If a leave of absence exceeds two years, the candidate shall re-enter the process under the guidelines current at the time of re-entry. At the time of re-entry, the Committee on Ministry may require the candidate to repeat any previously-completed requirements that the Committee deems to be out-of-date.

Appendix 20: The Role of the Committee Advisor (CA) in the Discernment and Formation Process

What is a Committee Advisor?

Each member of the Committee on Ministry (COM) will have a special role (Committee Advisor) in relation to one or more candidates in the Discernment and Formation Process. The Committee Advisor's role is fourfold: 1) to support the candidate and help them understand and navigate through the Discernment and Formation Process, 2) to gain insight into a candidate's particular gifts for ministry as well as any special challenges they might face, 3) to communicate with the candidate about any special requirements or concerns the COM may wish to convey, and 4) to receive pertinent information from/about the candidate that will be reported back to the COM as needed.

How many candidates should I advise?

At any given time, there are roughly 35-40 candidates in the Discernment and Formation Process, and 21 members of the COM. Each member of the COM should expect to serve as Committee Advisor for 1-2 candidates, during the course of your three-year term on the COM.

How are candidates assigned to a Committee Advisor?

There are many considerations in the match-up between candidate and CA. Sometimes it's as simple as figuring out who, among the COM members present at a candidate's initial interview, does not yet have a "full complement" of candidates they are advising. At other times, the COM assigns a CA based on particular experience or expertise the CA might be able to offer a candidate. The COM occasionally looks for a particularly good personality fit, and occasionally for a CA who might challenge and support the candidate in especially helpful ways. Candidates vary widely in the gifts they bring and in their personalities.

When is the best time to take on the role of Committee Advisor?

There is no set time, but it is probably best to start as a CA sometime during your first year of service on the COM. That will give you ample time to follow the candidate's progress during your three-year term. This is a job that is nuanced and varied and we all learn by doing it, as well as by observing and participating in the COM. Committee Advisors bring a variety of gifts to the role and, it is expected that you may wish to consult with other members of the COM, COM chairs, or the Associate Conference Minister from time to time! Questions are good!

How long will I remain in the role of Committee Advisor?

It is generally expected that once you become the CA for a candidate, you will follow the candidate to the completion of his or her process. That said, there is a great deal of flexibility, as we seek to accommodate both the candidate's and the Committee Advisor's needs! When a CA rotates off the COM, candidate(s) are sometimes given the option of switching to another CA. Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis and considerations include: how rapidly the candidate is moving through the process, maintaining continuity of relationship between candidate and CA when possible and desirable, seeking the "best fit" for a given candidate, and allowing Committee Advisors to conclude their COM responsibilities in a timely way.

What are my specific responsibilities as a Committee Advisor?

Candidates are asked to contact their CA about twice a year on average to give an update on their progress. You may arrange to meet in person or to speak by phone. The Committee Advisor is encouraged to form a caring, supportive relationship with the candidate and to contact him or her as is helpful and necessary. However, it is **primarily the candidate's responsibility** to reach out to the Committee Advisor, since this initiative signals the candidate's investment in the Discernment and Formation process. The Committee Advisor's Responsibilities will vary according to the circumstances of each candidate. What follows are typical expectations of the Committee Advisor's role.

The Committee Advisor's role at each phase of candidacy

II b Interview

- When a candidate is accepted into the Discernment and Formation Process, a Committee Advisor will be assigned.
- At the conclusion of the II b interview, candidate and CA will introduce themselves and exchange contact information.
- It is the candidate's responsibility to initiate further conversations or meetings with the CA.
- In a subsequent conversation both Ministerial Advisor (MA) and CA will convey any pertinent information from the II b interview. (i.e. if the COM has any special concerns or requirements, etc.) This is especially critical if there are significant concerns, and in the case of a "yes but..." or "no, but..." vote of the COM.
- The CA should be constantly aware of and keep the candidate constantly aware of sharing with the Committee via their semiannual Roadmap updates, their spiritual development, and their vision of the future of the Church and their role in it. This will help inform the candidate in preparing the Phase-IVa theology paper.
- Receive results of candidate's Psych Testing for the Pastoral Formation Process. (Candidate will have completed Testing before coming before the COM for initial interview. See Appendix 1 for Guidelines.)

Pastoral Formation Process

- CA is invited to sit in on one of the candidate's sessions with his or her Pastoral Formation Guide, at a mutually agreeable time.
- This usually occurs sometime around the candidate's fourth meeting with his or her Pastoral Formation Guide, but times will vary depending on a variety of factors.
- (See Appendix 1 for Guidelines on the Pastoral Formation Process.)

Phase III

Ministerial Proficiency Development

- Clarify COM requirements as discerned during Initial Interview.
- Work with candidate to ensure they understand and work to overcome any issues or difficulties identified in Initial Interview (II b) as well as implementation of plans described in Roadmap)
- Meet with candidate at least once a year

- Expect to receive an updated Ministerial Proficiency Roadmap every 6 months with assessment of progress and revised plans

UCC Polity Course and Polity Paper

- Be sure the candidate is completing/has completed a course that meets MBA standards; if any question, CA must sign off on course in advance of enrollment.
- CA may advise candidate on his or her Polity Paper, as needed or desired. (See guidelines for paper in Appendix 5)
- Once the Polity Paper is completed, CA will meet with candidate, MA, and the appropriate committee from the candidate's home church (usually the Discernment and Formation Committee) to discuss the Polity Paper.
- The Polity Paper ought to include something about how UCC Polity might lend itself towards addressing the needs of the Church in the future.
- This meeting at the local church must be completed and documentation of the Polity Course (transcript) must be submitted to the MBA office in advance of the Phase IV interviews.

Field Education

- (See Appendix 4 for Field Education Guidelines.)
- Approve the site selection, supervisor agreement, and learning agreement in advance of seminary filing deadline
- Receive a schedule of preaching and worship leadership, plan to observe candidate, if possible.
- Receive a copy of the mid-year and final Field Education evaluations, self-assessments and supervisor's assessments.
- Be prepared to report to the COM any significant issues, successes, etc.

Clinical Pastoral Education

- Review CPE learning agreement, preferably before it is finalized.
- Review final CPE evaluation

Phase IV

IVa (Theological Depth and Articulation)

- As desired, give input on candidate's paper summarizing faith journey and call, theological literacy, articulation and depth, and understanding of call to ministry in UCC. Remember to track the candidate's spiritual development, their vision of the future of the Church, and their role in it as articulated in their Theology Paper.
- Consult, as needed, on who might accompany candidate to phase IV interviews--people best able to attest to ministerial proficiency.
- Provide letter of reference for the candidate's file. (Letters should be sent to the MBA office in advance of candidate's Phase IVa interview.)
- Following the interview, help candidate understand COM expectations for additional development.)
- A note on timeline: If a candidate wishes to seek employment as an ordained minister immediately following graduation from seminary, the Discernment and Formation Process--including the Ecclesiastical Council-- should be completed 6 months before graduation.

IVb (Worship Leadership and Preaching)

- As desired, CA may give input on preparing for the interview.
- Provide feedback on COM recommendations following 4b interview.

IVc (Case Studies)

- In consultation with candidate's Ministerial Advisor, select Case Studies for the interview.
- Provide feedback on COM recommendations following 4c interview.

Phase V and VI (Ecclesiastical Council and Ordination)

- As desired, CA may continue to advise candidate on preparations for his or her Ecclesiastical Council.
- Attend Ecclesiastical Council, if possible.
- CA may wish to attend candidate's service of Ordination.