

ORDINATION PREPARATION POLICY MINNESOTA CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST JANUARY 27, 2010

Introduction: This policy guides the Preparation and Ordination Subcommittee of the Committee on Ministry of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ, acting as an Association, as it advises and directs persons In-Care of the Minnesota Conference in their preparation for ordination in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ. It is the policy of the Minnesota Conference that the United Church of Christ *Manual on Ministry* guides the Committee on Ministry on all matters regarding preparation for Ordination. Section 3 of the *Manual* provides information on each step of the ordination process. Candidates and advisors are expected to know and use the *Manual* as they enter into the ordination process in the Minnesota Conference. This policy statement does not repeat that information, but is intended to specify how and when the appropriate steps toward ordination are to be taken. When an In-Care person has been In-Care with the Minnesota Conference for at least one calendar year, and has completed or will within six months complete all requirements for the M.Div. degree at a theological school or seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (or an equivalent formal educational program as specified in a policy statement adopted by the Committee on the Ministry), and is seeking a call to an authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ for which ordination is expected, the following steps are to be taken, leading to ordination, an Ecclesiastical Council, and a call to an ordained ministry position.

1.Required documentation: The following items are to be sent to the Conference Office to the attention of the staff person for the Committee on the Ministry:

- Request for ordination from candidate's local church
- Verification of local church membership in the UCC
- Verification of In-Care status
- Completed Profile from the Profile Office of Parish Life and Leadership
- Ordination paper (see number 2 below, pages 4-5 of Section 3 of *Manual on Ministry*)
- Sermon
- College and seminary transcripts, copies of diplomas
- Evidence of courses taken in UCC history, theology, and polity
- Evaluations from field education or contextual settings, Clinical Pastoral Education, or internships; the Minnesota Conference Committee on Ministry requires that one such setting be in a UCC ministry context.
- Letters of reference from a seminary professor, In-Care advisor, an ordained UCC minister, and one other person
- Completion of Phase II of the North Central Ministry Development Center assessment and counseling program, with the receipt of its report in the candidate's file. The cost of the assessment is shared, with 50% paid by the candidate and 50% by the Minnesota Conference. An ordination interview cannot be scheduled until the report is received and the bill for the assessment paid in full. (This is a separate and additional assessment process from those that may have been part of the candidate's seminary requirements. The Minnesota Conference assists with the costs of this additional assessment. Details are available from the Conference office.)
- Evidence of boundary training taken
- Current information about the candidate's search and call process
- Projected date of completing the submission of all documentation

2. Ordination Paper: The In-Care candidate for ordination writes an ordination paper of no more than 20 pages, double spaced, under the guidance of the In-Care advisor. The ordination paper should follow the three-part outline found in Section 3, pages 4 and 5, of the *Manual on Ministry*. In addition to these three parts, the Committee on the Ministry of the Minnesota Conference, acting as an Association, requires a 2 or 3-page discussion of healthy and unhealthy boundaries for ordained ministers, indicating how the candidate understands the importance of maintaining boundaries regarding sexualized behavior in the context of ministry leadership, avoiding inappropriate enmeshment in the lives of those being served in ministry, and maintaining appropriate self-care through friendships and support groups outside the ministry setting.

3. Ordination Examination: When all the documentation listed above has been submitted, and the ordination paper completed and approved by the In-Care Advisor, the Preparation and Ordination subcommittee reviews the documents and the paper, and determines whether the candidate for ordination is ready for the ordination examination. If approved for the examination, the candidate schedules his or her examination with the Chair of the Committee on Ministry. Ordination examinations are held on the dates of the quarterly meetings of the Committee. The Committee follows the schedule and observes the norms listed on pages 7 and 8 of Section 3 of the *Manual on Ministry*. After the examination the candidate and guests are excused, and the Committee determines its judgment according to the options listed on page 9 of Section 3 of the *Manual*. The candidate is then informed of the Committee's decision, and there can be discussion of next steps. If the Committee's decision is not an unqualified "Yes," then next steps to address concerns will be determined. The candidate will receive written statement of the decision, with a copy going to the In Care advisor.

4. Authorization to Circulate UCC Ministerial Profile: Members in Discernment may have their UCC Ministerial Profile approved by an Associate Conference Minister and released for circulation in the UCC only after receiving a "yes" vote at their Ordination Examination.

5. Ecclesiastical Council: When an In-Care candidate for ordination has been approved by the Committee on Ministry, an Ecclesiastical Council can be called. This next step is covered in detail by a separate policy statement of the Committee on Ministry, which can be obtained from the Conference office. The Ecclesiastical Council is also described on pages 10 and 11 of Section 3 in the *Manual on Ministry*. An Ecclesiastical Council can be conducted when the candidate has received a call approved by the Committee on Ministry, or while the candidate is still seeking such a call. An ordination service cannot take place until such a call has been issued and accepted. The process of seeking and accepting a call is detailed on pages 11 through 16 of Section 3 of the *Manual*.

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