

The Manual

*Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines
For Preparing To Be Ordained*

in the

PILGRIM ASSOCIATION
MASSACHUSETTS CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Committee on Ministry

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The Basic Path to Ordination in the Pilgrim Association of the MACUCC

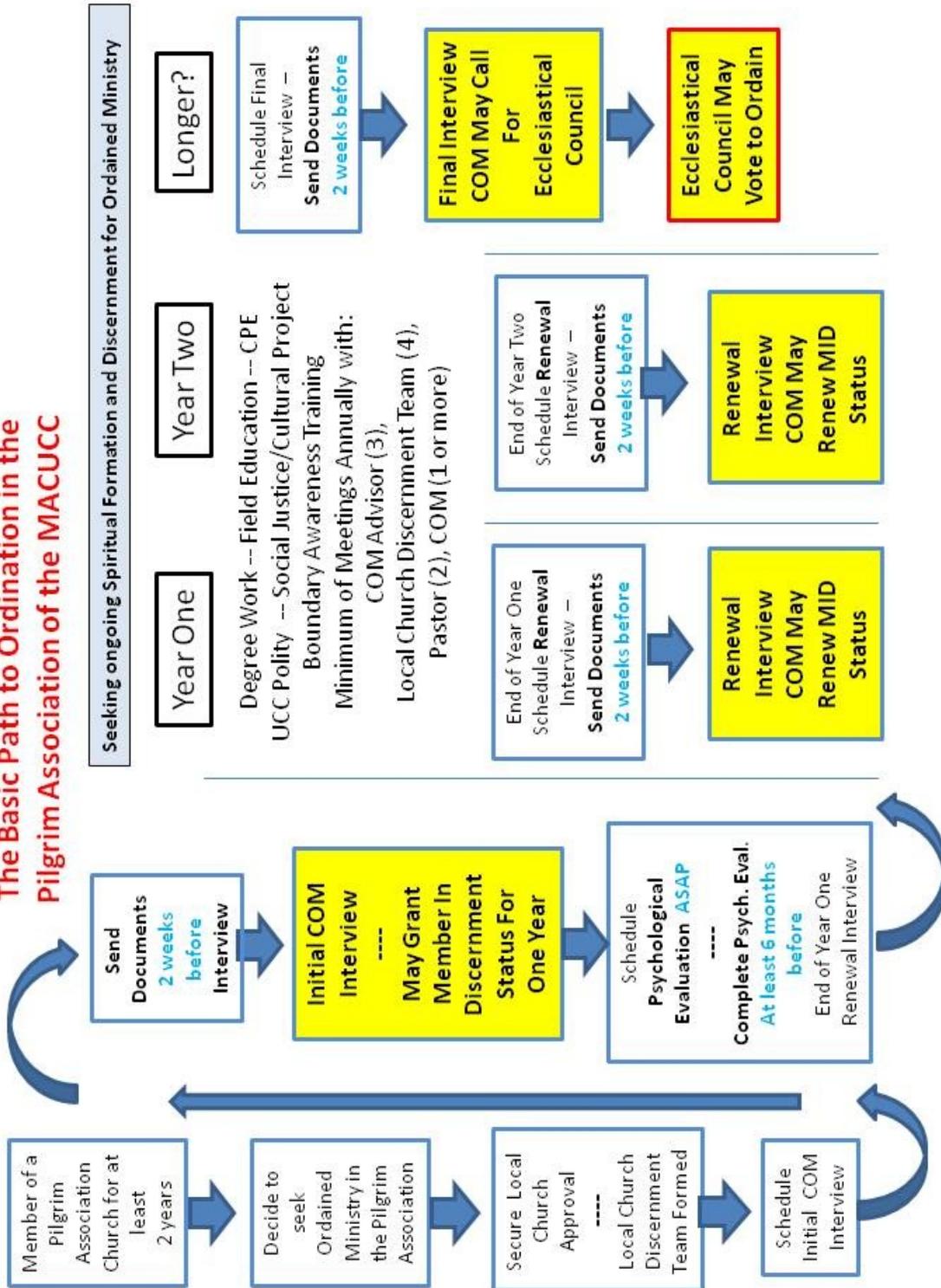


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1. OVERVIEW FOR ORDINATION CANDIDATES AND THEIR LOCAL CHURCHES

For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.
(Romans 12:4-5)

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.
(1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

~ INTRODUCTION ~

Welcome to the process of formation and discernment toward ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ through the Pilgrim Association of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ (MACUCC). An individual in this process is known as a Member in Discernment (MID) of the Pilgrim Association. Each MID preparing for ordination is in a special covenantal relationship with their local sponsoring church and the Pilgrim Association. Individuals are accepted as MIDs by vote of the Association's Committee on Ministry (COM). MID status is granted for one year but can be renewed annually by the COM.

~ THE ROLE OF THE CANDIDATE ~

As a candidate seeking United Church of Christ ordination through the Pilgrim Association, you need to take steps to be received into Discernment by the Association. Plan for a process lasting a minimum of two (2) years before ordination, including at least three (3) interviews with the COM of the Pilgrim Association.

Contact information for the Associate Conference Minister of the MACUCC and information about Pilgrim Association's Committee on Ministry may be obtained through the MACUCC office in Framingham at 508-875-5233 or at the MACUCC website at <http://macucc.org>.

The Pilgrim Association website is at <http://www.macucc.org/pilgrimassociation>.

This Manual is designed as a guide for you, as you seek MID status and ultimately ordination, and for the church which sponsors you during that process.

According to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ,

“A Member in Discernment is a member of the United Church of Christ who has been called by God and who is, in covenant with that member's Local Church and Association, engaging in a time of discernment of that call and preparation for authorized

ministry in response to that call.” (Article V, Section 20)

To be granted Member in Discernment status in the Pilgrim Association, one must be a member in good standing, normally for two (2) years, in a congregation of the Pilgrim Association.

To apply for MID status in the Pilgrim Association, you should first seek your Local Church’s approval. That approval is required before you contact the Association’s Committee on Ministry. The Committee on Ministry, together with your Congregation, your Pastor, Advisors, and Local Church Discernment Team will work to help you discern the most appropriate vocational direction for your preparation.

See page 2 for a Time Line depiction of the steps in the Pilgrim Association process toward ordination.

~ THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH, PASTOR, AND LOCAL CHURCH DISCERNMENT TEAM (LCDT) ~

The Local Church, its Pastor, and its Local Church Discernment Team play a variety of important roles in relation to the MID.

Every Local Church with a MID must have a group of their lay leaders who work directly with their MID and serve as a link between their church and the Committee on Ministry. Such groups are referred to as Local Church Discernment Teams (LCDT).

Local Churches are the primary places where persons are nurtured in the Christian faith, hear the call of God to ministry, and make decisions about the specific form their ministry will take. Pastors and Local Church Discernment Teams are key in helping MIDs identify and claim their gifts for ordained ministry. As these leaders discern the gifts for ministry of a MID, they should nurture, challenge, and guide that individual. The quality of the ordained leadership of the United Church of Christ is dependent upon this very important work.

While maintaining sensitivity to the way in which the Spirit of God may be working in the life of persons to call them to Ordained Ministry, the Pastor and LCDT also play an important role in ensuring that persons who are considering ordained ministry have the potential for this form of ministry; that is, can these leaders envision this person as a healthy, faithful, and effective minister in a UCC church or other ministry setting?

While supporting candidates as they grapple with decisions about ministry, their Pastors and LCDTs should work to educate them and their congregations about the nature of the ministry of all Christians and for some, ordained, licensed, or commissioned ministry. If the ministry to which the MID feels called is not one requiring ordination, these leaders may decide that this person should be encouraged to pursue another form of Authorized UCC ministry, such as commissioned or licensed ministry.

The link between the Local Church and the Association is very important. As the Committee on Ministry (COM) works with candidates, issues are often exposed that require

work to be done to help the candidates resolve those issues. The Local Church has the obligation to assist its Member in Discernment in addressing such issues. Some of those issues may be difficult and require confidentiality be kept within the Local Church Discernment Team which works directly with the MID. People chosen to serve in this support capacity for the MID should be able to respect these confidences and be able to “speak the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15).

One of the responsibilities of the Local Church is to pay 1/3 the expense of the Psychological Evaluation required by the COM of all persons seeking to be received as a MID of the Pilgrim Association.

Additional guidelines for the church’s Local Church Discernment Team are found on page 17.

~ IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE CANDIDATE ~

–Candidates for ordination need to be aware that being granted MID status does not guarantee that they will be ordained by the Pilgrim Association. During an MID’s process of formation and discernment, the COM could, for reasons it deems warrant it, put an individual’s MID status “on hold” or in rare situations even discontinue that status.

–Candidates for ordination need to consider the financial impact of meeting the educational and other requirements involved in preparing for ordination. It usually takes at least three (3) years to earn a Master of Divinity degree. Accelerating that education and formation process for financial reasons is not advised.

–Candidates for ordination need to be aware that once they are ordained, it might be difficult to secure a full time pastorate. Thus, it may become necessary for them to secure additional employment in another field to supplement their income.

–Candidates for ordination need to be aware that they will be required to pass an Oxford Document Background Check before their ministerial profile will be circulated by the United Church of Christ.

–Individuals must complete and submit a Self-Disclosure and Release Form to the COM as part of their initial application for MID standing.

See page 9 for more details about that initial application.

See Appendix A for the Self-Disclosure and Release Form.

**~ THE ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY (COM)
AND ITS ADVISOR TO THE CANDIDATE ~**

The Pilgrim Association Committee on Ministry (COM) grants the Association's Member in Discernment status to individuals who are deemed prepared and fit for that status both by their local church and by the COM. Annually, the COM will review the status of those granted MID status.

Once you are authorized to be a MID, the COM will partner with you in your time of preparation, providing you direction, support, and counsel. To facilitate that process the COM will authorize an Advisor to work with you and your Local Church Discernment Team (LCDT) closely. That Advisor, who represents the COM, will also serve as an important communication link between you, the COM, and your LCDT. Along with the sponsoring Local Church, the COM and your Advisor will attempt on an ongoing basis, to be candid with you, to speak the truth in love, to share concerns, and to assess your spiritual formation and fitness for ordained ministry. These steps are integral to the process of discernment that may lead to Ordained Ministry, but it does not mean that ordination will necessarily follow.

The COM expects that candidates received into Discernment will continually attempt to bring to light the form of ministry to which God is calling them. In addition to Ordained Ministry, as mentioned above, the COM affirms that one can serve God in the church as a Licensed Minister, a Commissioned Minister, or a Layperson. Most important, each of us who is involved in the Discernment process will be seeking the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

~ LICENSED MINISTRY AND COMMISSIONED MINISTRY ~

Individuals who discern that they have a call to Licensed Ministry or Commissioned Ministry, instead of Ordained Ministry, should contact the COM to learn the requirements for those types of ministry in the Pilgrim Association. Below are definitions of each.

Licensed Ministry: Lay persons granted Licensed Ministry status are authorized to conduct ministry, including all rites and Sacraments, in designated member churches of the Pilgrim Association, and only in those designated churches. Such authorization is granted by the Pilgrim Association's COM to an individual for a designated ministry. Licensed Ministry status is granted for a period of one year, but may be renewed by the COM. Such authorization is not transferrable and ends at the conclusion of the designated ministry.

Commissioned Ministry: Lay persons authorized for Commissioned Ministry serve in a church-related ministry which is recognized by the Pilgrim Association. Commissioned Ministry status is granted by vote of an Ecclesiastical Council upon the recommendation of the COM. Authorization for Commissioned Ministry can be transferred from one Association to another, provided the individual continues to serve in the same specific church-related ministry.

~ SUPPORT FROM OUR COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY ~

You may count on the prayers and encouragement of our Committee on Ministry members as you undertake this process of preparation and discernment for the vocation of Ordained Ministry or another form of Ministry in the United Church of Christ. We also invite your prayers for us as we develop and support strong leadership for such Ministries.

--The Pilgrim Association Committee on Ministry

2. THE STEPS TOWARD ORDINATION IN THE PILGRIM ASSOCIATION OF THE MACUCC

~ THE INITIAL STEPS FOR BOTH A CANDIDATE SEEKING ORDINATION AND THEIR LOCAL CHURCH ~

In order to be accepted as a Member In Discernment (MID) of the Pilgrim Association, a person who is feeling called to Ordained Ministry should be a member in good standing of a congregation of the Pilgrim Association for at least two (2) years, normally.

To the Candidate:

The spiritual discernment and formation process, which began with the nurture of your Local Church, continues as you talk with your Pastor about your sense of call to Ordination and about the Pilgrim Association's process and procedures for Authorized Ministry. If that conversation results in a decision to proceed with a request to your Local Church to sponsor you as a candidate for MID status in the Pilgrim Association, you need to submit the following materials to the governing body (such as the Church Council, Board of Deacons, Christian Education Committee) of your Local Church for review:

1. A statement of Christian spiritual formation and pilgrimage, including—
 - An autobiography that includes the impact on your faith of factors such as home, local church, community, culture, life experiences;
 - An understanding of your Call to Ordained Ministry.
2. Documentation (academic transcripts) of formal education and other learning experiences. An undergraduate degree is normally required by the Pilgrim Association for MID status.
3. A professional résumé, stating (with dates) work, education, civic, and other pertinent experience.
4. Three (3) letters of reference from the following: your Pastor and two (2) people who have worked with you within the last two years.
5. A statement indicating one's involvement and leadership roles both in one's local church and in the world.
6. An outline of further educational plans.

To The Candidate's Local Church:

After reviewing the above documents from your church member, the Pastor and governing body of your church should interview that member and decide whether or not it supports and recommends that member to the Pilgrim Association for MID status, which may lead to Ordination. If your governing board's decision is to recommend that member to the

Association, that decision should be expressed in a letter from your board in a form such as this:

VOTED: That it is the desire of the _____ Church that one of its members in good standing, (*name*) _____ be examined, and if found acceptable, be received as a Member in Discernment of the Pilgrim Association as a candidate for Ordained Ministry.

The church member so recommended will be responsible to see that their board's letter is presented to the Chairperson of the Association's Committee on Ministry at least two (2) weeks prior to that member's first interview with the COM.

Once your governing board votes to recommend a member to the Pilgrim Association, it should also see that a group of lay leaders representative of your church are selected to work directly with your recommended member and to serve as a link between your church and the COM. Such groups are referred to as Local Church Discernment Teams (LCDT). People chosen to serve in this support capacity should, in their work with your recommended member, be able to respect confidences and "speak the truth in love." (Ephesians 4:15)

Your board and Church should note the steps in the process of becoming an MID of the Pilgrim Association. (Please consult the chart on page 2 of this Manual.) When MID status is granted by the COM it is granted for the period of one year, but it may be renewed. Once a candidate is granted MID status, that individual is expected, as soon as possible, to schedule a psychological evaluation approved by the COM, so the evaluation will be completed within six (6) months. It is expected that the candidate, the COM, and the candidate's Local Church will each contribute one-third (1/3) the cost of the candidate's psychological evaluation.

~ THE PROCESS FOR SEEKING MEMBER IN DISCERNMENT (MID) STATUS ~

Preparation for the Initial Interview

You need to consult with the COM chairperson to arrange an interview with the COM. You can obtain that individual's contact information through the MACUCC office in Framingham at 508-875-5233 or the Associate Conference Minister who deals with the Pilgrim Association.

You will be expected to see that the following documents are sent to the Chairperson of the COM no later than two (2) weeks prior to your scheduled initial interview with the COM. Emailed documents are preferred, when available. **Your meeting with the COM may need to be rescheduled if your documents are not sent in on time or if you arrive at the Initial Interview alone.**

(Note: Your name should appear on each page of the following documents.)

1. A copy of the statement of Christian spiritual formation and pilgrimage that you prepared for your Local Church (see page 9).

2. A copy of your professional resumé.
3. Three (3) letters of reference from the following: your Pastor and two people who have worked with you within the last two years. These should be sent directly from the writers to the COM Chairperson.
4. A letter from your Local Church which shows their support and approval of your being received as a Member in Discernment of the Pilgrim Association.
5. The Self-Disclosure and Release Form found in Appendix A of this Manual.

You should bring your Pastor and up to two (2) members of your Local Church Discernment Team (or other designated committee) to the interview.

The Initial Interview

The purpose of the initial interview is to begin the process of determining whether or not the COM will grant you MID status for an initial period of one year. During the interview you will be asked to respond to questions about yourself and the materials you mailed to the COM. In the Committee's discernment process, the content of the materials you have provided will be considered, as well as how you handle the questions. You should be prepared to respond to questions such as these:

1. What can you tell us about your religious understanding or spiritual life as a child and teenager?
2. What has brought you to be thinking about ministry?
3. Do you have a sense at this point as to whether you are interested in parish ministry or some other form of ministry?
4. What do you like most about church life?
5. What are you looking forward to studying - if you have a sense of that?
6. What do you think you'll need in the way of support on this journey? Do you have a "support net" for this process? How does the support of family and friends and local church manifest itself in your life?
7. Have you worked out a financial plan? Do you have a time line envisioned?
8. We assume that because you want to work for the church and work in ministry you have some positive connection to Jesus and to God - can you speak about that?
9. As you look at the role of minister, do you have things that immediately "call your name"? Do you have areas that you are worried about?
10. What is your comfort level in being a moral compass and role model for a congregation?
11. What do you think the committee should know about you so that we can better support you as you start this journey.
12. Can we answer any questions that you might have about the nature of this committee and our process?
13. What aren't we asking you that you thought we might?

The COM Decision and Future Planning

After your interview the COM will decide whether or not to grant you Member in Discernment status for the period of one (1) year.

If you are granted MID status:

1. **Advisor** - The COM will assign an Advisor to you. It is your responsibility to establish and maintain contact with your Advisor at least three (3) times annually during your process of discernment. This relationship will be an important support for your journey.
2. **Your Local Church Discernment Team** – Throughout your process of discernment, you are expected to meet at least four (4) times annually with the Local Church Discernment Team (LCDT) your church has selected for you.
3. **Your Pastor** –Throughout your discernment process you should meet at least two (2) times annually with your Pastor.
4. **Your MID Work Sheets** – Throughout your MID process you are expected, in consultation with your Advisor, to follow the steps and keep up-to-date the “Member in Discernment Status Work Sheets” which appear in Appendix H of this Manual. Those work sheets provide a detailed and helpful checklist of the steps which are to be taken in your MID process.
5. **Involvement in your Church** – The COM expects MIDs to continue to be actively engaged in the life of the church which sponsors them, to the extent that their field work placement and seminary obligations allow. MIDs are advised not to accept leadership roles—such as Church Officer or Chairperson of a Committee/Board/Council—that will interfere with their need to concentrate on their seminary program.
6. **Involvement in the Pilgrim Association** – MIDs are encouraged to participate in the Pilgrim Association. The Association's Bylaws stipulate that MIDs may serve on Association committees. However, they may not serve as elected officers of the Association or as members of the Association's COM, Board of Directors, or Church and Leadership Committee.

The Psychological Evaluation

You will be asked to schedule a Psychological Evaluation as soon as possible following this initial interview, so the evaluation will be completed within six (6) months. **Note that your COM interview to renew your MID status after your first year will not be held until at least six (6) months after you have completed your psychological evaluation.** Acceptable evaluations are those conducted by the Center for Career Development, the Pastoral Formation Program, and other programs designated by the COM.

The COM will discuss these options with you at your initial interview. The cost of the evaluation will be divided up, with 1/3 being covered by the Association, 1/3 by the Local Church, and 1/3 by you, the candidate. The Psychological Evaluation should provide insight and guidance to candidates regarding their personal strengths and liabilities that will impact their effective exercise of Ordained Ministry. This information will be invaluable to you in your ongoing preparation and formation.

Copies of your evaluation report should be sent to the Chairperson of the COM and the Associate Conference Minister who deals with the Pilgrim Association. You can obtain their contact information through the MACUCC office in Framingham at 508-875-5233. The COM Chairperson and/or Associate Conference Minister may share information from your Psychological Evaluation report with the whole Committee on Ministry and your Advisor.

3. REQUIREMENTS FOR ORDINATION

~ EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERS IN DISCERNMENT ~

M. Div. Degree

You will need to earn a Master of Divinity graduate degree, or the equivalent as accepted by the COM, from a theological school which is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS).

Field Education

You will need to successfully complete at least one (1) year of supervised Field Education in a setting other than your home church. You are strongly encouraged to take advantage of additional Field Education opportunities and may be required to do so by the COM. You are also advised to begin Field Education as early as possible. Copies of your Field Education evaluation reports should be sent to the Chairperson of the COM and the Associate Conference Minister. The COM Chairperson and/or Associate Conference Minister may share information from those reports with the whole COM and your Advisor.

United Church of Christ Polity

You will need to successfully complete an approved course in UCC polity at a theological school which is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS).

Social Justice/Cultural Competence Project

You will need to successfully complete a Social Justice or Cultural Competence Project and write a paper reflecting on your experience in that project which you will submit to the COM for review, at least two (2) weeks before your MID renewal or final ordination interview. Guidelines for that project and paper are in Appendix C of this Manual.

Mid-Program Review

Your COM Advisor should be included among the people invited to your seminary Mid-Program Review, if such a review is part of your seminary's educational program.

Clinical Pastoral Education

You will need to successfully complete at least one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in a program approved by the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education. You must complete this unit at least six (6) months before your final COM interview for ordination. Copies of your CPE evaluation report should be sent to the Chairperson of the COM and the Associate Conference Minister. The COM Chairperson and/or Associate Conference Minister may share information from that report with the whole COM and your Advisor.

Boundary Awareness Training

You will need to successfully complete a Boundary Awareness Training Program which is approved by the COM. You must complete this training before your final COM interview for ordination.

~ **THE MARKS OF READINESS FOR ORDAINED AND
OTHER FORMS OF AUTHORIZED UCC MINISTRY** ~

Introduction

When a member of a Pilgrim Association church perceives a call to Authorized Ministry in the United Church of Christ and is accepted as a Member in Discernment by the Pilgrim Association, a time of discernment begins. This period of discernment is designed in part to assist the MID to ascertain the form of that Authorized Ministry, whether Ordained, Commissioned, or Licensed Ministry.

The process of exploring possible ways of living out the call to ministry in the United Church of Christ includes not only the individual, but also the individual's local church and the Association, in a covenantal relationship with each other. As the UCC's "Manual on Ministry" (Section 2) says regarding those in Discernment:

“Since it is a relationship, it is characterized by communication, trust, promises, and shared experiences. One does not simply relate to the local church or Association, but to persons who act on behalf of those bodies.”

Consequently, members of your local church and members of your Association will work with you in the next few years to discern whether, if, or when you might be ready to serve in one of the capacities of Authorized Ministry in the UCC.

Marks of Readiness

The UCC Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization (MESA) team has prepared a document to aid in preparing and authorizing those who feel called to ministry. That document is called “Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers.” Its *Marks* are listed in Appendix D of this Manual. The document itself is available at <http://www.ucc.org/ministers/marks.html>.

The *Marks* in that document are used to assess an individual's readiness to serve in any ministry setting "in and on behalf of the UCC." The New Ministerial Profile, prepared by UCC individuals seeking a call to a ministry setting, is based on these *Marks*. In our Pilgrim Association we are placing those “Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers” into the following categories of readiness:

Spiritual Readiness: this includes a faith that exemplifies an ongoing relationship with God in Christ. (You may find that the “Fruits of the Spirit” named in Galatians 5:22-23 are helpful guiding principles of spiritual readiness.)

Theological Readiness: the ability to think, write, and express an understanding of scripture and tradition with a theological adeptness.

Emotional Readiness: the ability, capacity and skill to perceive, assess and manage with a high degree of self-differentiation the emotions of one's self, of others, and

of groups.

Professional Readiness: the ability to work with professional skill, integrity and self-differentiation within the system, politics, ethos and personality of the UCC and with its member churches and organizations.

Covenantal Polity: an understanding of, and ability to articulate, our United Church of Christ Polity and our covenant among and between the Local Church, the Association, and the Denomination—and how you plan to remain connected. The ability to articulate why one finds a home in the UCC.

This basic principle is essential: Authorized Ministry within the UCC is a ministry among the various churches and organizations of the denomination. Thus, the Pilgrim Association of the MACUCC needs to be assured that the individuals it ordains are ready to serve in any type of UCC ministerial setting, such as a church, a chaplaincy, or an ecumenical/interfaith ministry. Both your local church and the Association will be working with you in this process through the years ahead, in an intentional partnership of formation and discernment, to help you become ready for such ordination.

4. GUIDELINES FOR THE LCDT AND MID ADVISOR

~ THE LOCAL CHURCH DISCERNMENT TEAM (LCDT) ~

Once your Local Church Discernment Team has been formed, it should, by letter or email, notify the Chairperson of the Committee on Ministry of its existence. That individual's contact information can be obtained through the MACUCC office in Framingham at 508-875-5233 or the Associate Conference Minister who deals with the Pilgrim Association.

At the beginning of your process, your LCDT should review this Manual and particularly note this section and the earlier section entitled "The Role of the Local Church, Pastor and Local Church Discernment Team (LCDT)" found on page 5.

Your LCDT should work closely with your church's Member in Discernment, meeting with that person at least four (4) times annually. Some representatives from your LCDT are also expected to accompany your church's MID to his or her interviews with the Association's COM. Your LCDT will often serve as an important communication link between your church and the COM.

Your Local Church Discernment Team should nurture, guide, and challenge your church's MID as that individual seeks to discern his or her gifts and potential for Authorized Ministry in the United Church of Church. As the MID process of formation and discernment proceeds, your LCDT should discuss the *Marks of Readiness* for ministry with your MID and also assess that individual's progress in achieving them. Those *Marks of Readiness* are noted in the previous section on page 15 and in Appendix D of this Manual.

Your LCDT should, on an ongoing basis, refer to the "Member in Discernment Status Work Sheets" which appear in Appendix H of this Manual. Those work sheets provide a detailed and helpful checklist of the steps in the MID process. **Your church's MID is expected to follow the steps of this checklist and keep it up to date, in consultation with her or his COM Advisor.**

The numbered items below spell out in more detail the work of Local Church Discernment Teams:

1. Be supportive of the candidate sponsored by your church as they apply to the Pilgrim Association's COM for MID status. Be aware that once individuals are granted MID status, they are required to schedule a Psychological Evaluation as soon as possible, so the evaluation will be completed within six (6) months. Your church is responsible to pay 1/3 the cost of that psychological evaluation. MID status is granted to a candidate for one year. That status may be renewed.
2. Get to know the MID sponsored by your church and assist him or her in clarifying their call to Ministry, identifying together the MID's strengths and areas for growth.
3. Recognize, nurture, and celebrate the gifts of the Member in Discernment.

4. Maintain contact with the MID, especially when he or she may be away for extended periods.
5. Offer opportunities for the MID to participate in worship and other activities of your church.
6. Provide support, encouragement, and care for your MID. Pray for her or him, and provide opportunities for your MID to lead in prayer.
7. Provide counsel about the nature and expectations of Ordained and/or, as appropriate, other forms of Authorized Ministry in the UCC.
8. Schedule time to critique the MID's worship participation, preaching, and/or other leadership activities after LCDT members observe them in your church or during a visit to the MID's field education site.
9. Be thoroughly familiar with the *Marks of Readiness* as shown on page 15 and in Appendix D, and use them in your discernment process with the MID. For instance, ask, "What are this candidate's gifts for ministry? What are some shortcomings that might hinder the use of his or her gifts for ministry?"
10. Be a source of information to the Association and the COM regarding the MID in your care.
11. Review your MID's Ordination Paper (Part A) and discuss with him or her any issues that may arise concerning it.

Before a Meeting with your MID:

1. Ask the MID to write a short paper in which she or he reflects upon a recent event in which the MID ministered to another person. Otherwise, the subject of the paper could be one upon which your LCDT and MID agree. The LCDT members should receive this paper at least three to four days prior to their meeting with the MID, in order to be able to read and reflect upon it. Read the MID's paper and try to understand his or her point of view and what spiritual and theological themes are present in the paper. Consider what questions you might ask to clarify your understanding of the paper or to help the candidate see a different point of view. Be familiar with the *Marks of Readiness* and look for them in the paper.
2. If the candidate preaches listen carefully and, if needed, take notes to help you remember the points of the sermon. Some aspects to consider:
 - Were you inspired by the sermon?
 - Did it make sense?
 - Was the sermon theologically sound?
 - Was it well organized?
 - How was it delivered?
 - What did you take away from the sermon?Be prepared to offer your MID a candid critique, in order to be helpful to that person.
3. From what you know of your MID, ask yourselves this question, "Can I envision this person as a healthy, faithful, and effective minister in a UCC church or other ministry setting? Why or why not? Share these responses with your MID.

During a Meeting with your MID:

1. Begin with a devotional and offer a prayer for the ministry of your candidate.
2. Your task during this time is to help the candidate discern her or his “Call” and the direction God is leading: whether toward ordination or some other form of Christian ministry.
3. Discuss with the MID the paper he or she has submitted and you have read. Offer affirmation where it is appropriate and challenge on things you do not understand or do not agree with.
4. Work constructively through the issues that come up during the discussion.
5. Use the *Marks of Readiness* to assist you in your discussions with the MID.
6. Provide counsel concerning the nature and requirements of Ordained Ministry.
7. Your goal is to provide support and encouragement and to challenge and care for your candidate during his or her time in Discernment.
8. Please discuss financial assistance and advise the candidate on available resources. (See the Pilgrim Association Scholarship Application in Appendix B of this Manual.)

After a Meeting with your MID:

1. Check in with the MID and ask how he or she felt the discussion went.
2. Use feedback from him or her to help improve your time together.
3. Write up a short summary of your candidate’s strengths and areas for growth and how you feel she or he is progressing on the *Marks of Readiness*. Share and discuss that summary with the MID and give it to the MID’s Advisor.
4. Speak with the candidate’s Committee on Ministry Advisor and share how you felt the meeting went and any issues that came up for the candidate, including financial and seminary concerns.

Our Pilgrim Association and its Committee on Ministry thank you, your fellow Local Church Discernment Team members, and your Pastor for the care and attention you give to working with your church’s MID. In so doing, you are conducting a vital ministry on behalf of the larger ministry within both the Pilgrim Association and our United Church of Christ.

~ THE COM AUTHORIZED ADVISOR TO A MEMBER IN DISCERNMENT ~

Welcome to a very important role in the preparation for Authorized Ministry in the UCC. The Advisor works closely with the Member in Discernment throughout the process offering time, wisdom, honesty and realistic feedback. The goal is not only to support and help candidates in their process but also to prepare candidates for professional ministry on behalf of the United Church of Christ. The Advisor is a mentor, liaison, and “gate keeper” of sorts, working with the MID, the Local Church and its Discernment Team, and the Committee on Ministry.

If you have reservations about your candidate, please address them with the MID and the COM as they arise throughout the candidate’s process. As indicated below, Advisors are also expected to submit annual written reports on their MIDs to the COM. Within the bounds of appropriate confidences, our goal in working with an MID is candor and transparency throughout the process. Serving as an Advisor to an MID is a serious and a rewarding ministry.

Initial and Ongoing Responsibilities of the Advisor

1. Carefully review the expectations, requirements, and procedures found in this Manual.
2. Hold an initial meeting with the MID soon after the COM has authorized you to serve as that individual’s Advisor. At that meeting develop an understanding of how you, as the Advisor, and the MID will relate and work together.
3. Initially meet with the candidate’s Local Church Discernment Team, and then contact them at least two (2) times annually to encourage their continuing support of the candidate. Also, suggest ways for the LCDT to recognize their church’s MID and to stay in close contact with him or her. Advisors are also encouraged to attend LCDT meetings with the MID on occasion.
4. Keep in close contact with the MID, meeting at least 3 times annually and through e-mail and telephone calls.
5. Review the MID’s educational progress, growth, goals, and needs.
6. Discuss with the MID their experiences with field education, UCC Polity Course, Social Justice/Cultural Competence Project, mid-program review from seminary, Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), Boundary Awareness Training, and their Local Church Discernment Team reports on their progress.
7. Provide opportunities for the MID to raise and explore questions about faith, the church, ministry, and the *Marks of Readiness*.
8. Help the MID coordinate seminary courses with ordination requirements and areas of growth needed.
9. Advisors may wish to visit a seminary class with their MID, if their MID gives them permission to do that.
10. Assist the MID in seeking financial aid when needed.
11. Provide written references on behalf of the MID when requested.
12. Work with the MID to keep the “Member in Discernment Status Work Sheets” updated.
13. Submit **Annual Written Reports** to the COM, keeping it informed of the progress and growth of your MID as well as any areas of concern. You should submit

those reports directly to the Chairperson of the COM no later than two (2) weeks prior to your MID's renewal interviews and final interview with the COM. **Your MID's interviews with the COM may need to be rescheduled if your report is not sent in on time.**

14. Meet with the candidate before any meeting he or she has with the COM.
15. Accompany the MID each time he or she meets with the COM.
16. Ensure that the MID maintains active participation in the life of a Local Church of the United Church of Christ. Encourage the MID to take an active part in Association and Conference activities.
17. Advise the MID regarding their ordination paper (Parts A & B).
18. Assist the MID in preparation for his or her Ecclesiastical Council, when one is approved by the COM.
19. Assist the MID in planning her or his Ordination service.

Our Pilgrim Association and its Committee on Ministry thank you for the care and attention you give to serving as an Advisor to an MID of our Association. In so doing, you are conducting a vital ministry on behalf of the larger ministry within both the Pilgrim Association and our United Church of Christ.

5. RENEWAL AND FINAL INTERVIEWS WITH THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

~ THE ANNUAL RENEWAL INTERVIEW FOR MEMBER IN DISCERNMENT STATUS ~

Member in Discernment status is initially granted for a one (1) year period. For that status to be continued it needs to be renewed annually by the Committee on Ministry. MIDs are expected to have an annual review interview, typically every twelve (12) months, with the COM.

As an MID, it is your responsibility to contact the Chairperson of the COM to have your annual COM review interview scheduled. The purpose of the annual renewal is to check your progress toward readiness for Ordination and to provide you with guidance and support. At your annual interview the COM will review your reports and your progress toward Ordination.

At each renewal interview you should bring your Pastor, your Advisor, a member of your LCDT, and one or two people who are familiar with your ministry and your spiritual formation and growth as a candidate for Ordination. Do not come alone. (Please do not bring another MID, however.)

Preparation for a Renewal Interview

You will be expected to see that the following documents are sent to the Chairperson of the COM no later than two (2) weeks prior to your renewal interview with the COM. **Your renewal meeting with the COM may need to be rescheduled if your documents are not sent in on time or if you arrive at the Renewal Interview alone.**

(Note: Your name should appear on each page of the following documents.)

1. MID Interview Summary Form (see Appendix G of this Manual).
2. A written report from your Local Church Discernment Team on how you are doing with the *Marks of Readiness* (see page 15 and Appendix D of this Manual).
3. Your Advisor's Annual Written Report (sent directly to the Chairperson of the COM by your Advisor).
4. A transcript of the seminary work you have completed. (If that transcript is not available two weeks before your renewal interview, bring it with you to that interview.)
5. A one-page (two page maximum) paper on your progress, your faith journey, your participation in UCC (Association, Conference and/or National) meetings and gatherings, your sense of Call, and your insights and learnings from the past year. Include ministry work you have performed and classes you have completed.

6. A copy of a sermon and a pastoral prayer.
7. A paper reflecting on your experience in a Social Justice or Cultural Competence Project, once you have completed that project. That paper should be presented to the COM for review at one of your renewal interviews or your final ordination interview (see Appendix C of this Manual).
8. An additional paper on a theme designated by the Committee may be requested.
9. You will be invited to close the interview with a prayer.

Be prepared at this interview to report on progress you've made on any recommendations the COM has made to you for your further growth and discernment.

~ THE FINAL INTERVIEW FOR ORDINATION ~

Your Final Interview is the last step in preparation for your Ecclesiastical Council, which decides whether or not you will be ordained by the Pilgrim Association (see the Ecclesiastical Council description in Appendix F of this Manual).

You must have reached a level of proficiency in all the *Marks of Readiness* before you request a Final Interview (see page 15 and Appendix D of this Manual).

The purpose of this Final Interview is (1) to discern if you are ready to seek a call as an Ordained Minister, (2) to review your ordination paper, and (3) to ensure that you are ready for an Ecclesiastical Council.

To this meeting you should bring your Pastor, your Advisor, a member of your Local Church Discernment Team, and another person who can attest to your fitness and readiness for ordination and who can clearly identify *areas of progress* in your growth toward readiness. Do not come alone. (Please do not bring another MID, however.)

In scheduling this Final Interview, the COM does not automatically presume you are ready for an Ecclesiastical Council. The COM *may* request further education, ministry experience, counseling, or mentoring before approving an Ecclesiastical Council for you.

Preparation for the Final Interview

You will be expected to see that the following documents are sent to the Chairperson of the COM no later than two (2) weeks prior to your final interview with the COM. **Your final interview with the COM may need to be rescheduled if your documents are not sent in on time or if you arrive at the Final Interview alone.**

(Note: Your name should appear on each page of the following documents.)

1. MID Interview Summary Form (see Appendix G of this Manual).

2. A letter from your Local Church Discernment Team recommending you for Ordination
3. Your Advisor's Annual Written Report (sent directly to the Chairperson of the COM by your Advisor).
4. A letter from your seminary or official seminary transcript which indicates that you have completed the Master of Divinity degree (or equivalent as accepted by the COM). (If that letter or transcript is not available two weeks before your final interview, bring it with you to this interview. Also, if your final official transcript indicating that you have earned that degree is not available at the time of this interview, you must send it to the COM for its records when that transcript is available.)
5. Four (4) new letters of reference sent directly from the writer to the Chairperson of the COM: one each from your Advisor, your Pastor, a layperson from a ministry setting where you served, and a person of your choice.
6. A paper reflecting on your experience in a Social Justice or Cultural Competence Project, once you have completed that project. That paper should be presented to the COM for review at your final ordination interview, if it was not presented at one of your renewal interviews (see Appendix C of this Manual).
7. A copy of a sermon and pastoral prayer.
8. Ordination Paper (Parts A and B in separate digital files). (See Appendix E of this Manual for guidelines on this paper.)

APPENDIX A

SELF DISCLOSURE AND RELEASE FORM

(Page 1 of 3)

Candidates for Member In Discernment (MID) standing in the Pilgrim Association of the MACUCC must fill out this Self Disclosure and Release Form, sign it, and submit it along with their other required documentation to the Chairperson of the Association's Committee on Ministry (COM) no later than two (2) weeks prior to their scheduled initial interview with the COM. **The candidate's meeting with the COM may need to be rescheduled if their documents are not sent in on time or if they arrive at the Initial Interview alone.**

The position, power, and authority associated with a ministry authorized by the United Church of Christ extends to 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 an in-care student/candidate for Authorized Ministry, nor have I been licensed or ordained, in any other association/conference/denomination.

True

False

Commentary

No civil lawsuit alleging that I attempted or actually engaged in: sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse or child abuse; or 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. And no such lawsuit is currently pending against me.

True

False

Commentary

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

True

False

Commentary

SELF DISCLOSURE AND RELEASE FORM

(Page 2 of 3)

I have not been found guilty or pled guilty or no contest to criminal charges. And no criminal charges are currently pending against me.

True

False

Commentary

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

1. sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct;
2. physical abuse or child abuse; or
3. financial misconduct.

True

False

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:

1. sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; or
2. physical abuse or child abuse; or
3. financial misconduct.

True

False

Commentary

In my judgment, there are no facts or circumstances involving me or my background that would warrant further review or call into question my fitness for ministry, before my being entrusted with being a candidate for Authorized Ministry in the Pilgrim Association of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ.

True

False

Commentary

SELF DISCLOSURE AND RELEASE FORM

(Page 3 of 3)

I authorize the members of the Committee on Ministry of the Pilgrim Association to copy, review and discuss my files when relevant to the work of discernment for Authorized Ministry. This includes all papers, transcripts, references, field education evaluations, and clinical pastoral education evaluations.

True False

I grant permission to the person assigned by the Pilgrim Association's Committee on Ministry to be my Advisor to be in contact with my seminary/theological school and/or academic advisor to discuss my progress as it relates to my formation and fitness for ministry.

True False

I agree to release the report from the Psychological Evaluation required of me by the Committee on Ministry to the Chairperson of the COM and the Associate Conference Minister who deals with the Pilgrim Association. I further agree that said individuals may share information from those results with the whole Committee on Ministry and my Advisor.

True False

I have considered the financial impact of meeting the educational and other requirements involved in preparing for ordination.

True False

I am aware that if I am ordained, it might be difficult to secure a full time pastorate. Thus, it may become necessary for me to secure additional employment in another field to supplement their income.

True False

I am aware that I will be required to pass an Oxford Document Background Check before my ministerial profile will be circulated by the United Church of Christ.

True False

Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX B

MEMBER IN DISCERNMENT SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION FORM Pilgrim Association Committee on Ministry

Date submitted: _____ Request for semester ending: _____

Amount requested: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Advisor: _____

Seminary: _____

Number of credits taken during the past semester: _____

Number of credits taken during the present semester: _____

Number of credits anticipated for next semester: _____

Please include a statement that provides an outline of your current financial situation. Please include income, other financial aid, current expenses, and any special circumstances. If seeking financial aid elsewhere, please list those sources for us. You may make this statement on a separate sheet of paper. Please note that scholarships are generally granted in September and January. Requests need to be submitted by the tenth day of the month to the Chairperson of the Committee on Ministry.

Signed: _____
(Student)

Signed: _____
(Advisor)

Amount awarded: \$ _____

Date awarded: _____

APPENDIX C

GUIDELINES FOR THE SOCIAL JUSTICE/CULTURAL COMPETENCE PROJECT

As a Member in Discernment with the Pilgrim Association of the Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ, you are expected to complete a Social Justice or Cultural Competence Project and write a paper reflecting on your experience in that project. You are also expected to submit that paper to the COM for review, at least two (2) weeks in advance of one of your renewal interviews or your final ordination interview.

The purpose of the project is to acquaint candidates with either the rich social-justice and interfaith heritage of our denomination or its commitment to extravagant welcome and respect for all persons. It is also meant to acquaint our MIDs with the logistics of organizing and implementing projects of education and advocacy. Here are the suggested parameters for acceptable projects:

1. The project shall encompass at least 15 hours.
2. The MID should consult with his or her COM Advisor as to the appropriateness of the project.
3. The project needs to demonstrate the MID's leadership, administrative abilities, and theological understanding of issues of social justice and/or cultural competence.
4. Candidates are asked to write a reflection paper (approximately 5 pages), sharing their insights, evaluation, and learnings gained from the project.
5. The project could involve –
 - a. Participating in an existing agency or program;
 - b. Developing and implementing a program of education and awareness;
 - c. Developing and leading a mission project with a local church or agency.

Appendix D

THE *MARKS OF READINESS* FOR ORDINATION

Introduction

The UCC Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization (MESA) team has prepared a document to aid in preparing and authorizing those who feel called to ministry. That document is called “Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers.” These *Marks of Readiness* are used to assess an individual's readiness to serve in any ministry setting "in and on behalf of the UCC." The New Ministerial Profile, prepared by UCC individuals seeking a call to a ministry setting, is based on these *Marks*. That UCC document itself is available at <http://www.ucc.org/ministers/marks.html>.

Basic Principles in Using the *Marks of Readiness*

Here are some basic principles which Local Church Discernment Teams and Advisors are encouraged to follow in using the *Marks of Readiness* with Members in Discernment:

1. **Assess the readiness of persons in discernment at every step along your journey with them rather than saving it for some big “event” at the end.**
 These *Marks of Readiness* for Ordination will be most helpful to all who are involved in the process of discernment, if they use these *Marks* throughout their relationship with MIDs. When used throughout the relationship, the *Marks* become an effective tool for helping to identify areas where growth is needed. Moreover, when used this way, the process of assessing a person’s readiness for Ordination becomes more manageable, since the assessment process can then be broken down into a series of smaller steps.
2. **Apply the *Marks* dynamically.** No single individual will exhibit all of these Marks equally well. No single minister who is currently ordained exhibits all of these *Marks* equally well. Instead, you should expect candidates to show different profiles of strength and weakness in relation to the *Marks*, and should use the *Marks* in ways that promote realistic assessment and encourage continuing development. For each *Mark* or set of *Marks*, an LCDT or Advisor will find it more helpful to ask “How consistently does this person display this characteristic?” rather than, “Does this person display this characteristic – yes or no?”
3. **Assess a person only in relation to those *Marks* where it is timely to do so.**
 For example, assessment of some *Marks of Readiness* under spiritual and personal formation might happen effectively at most any point in your journey with an MID. On the other hand, it makes no sense to assess a person in relation to *Marks* having to do with knowledge and skill in biblical studies until they have done the necessary study to gain that knowledge and skill.

4. **Assess how a person manifests the *Marks of Readiness* in relation to actual ministry.** The *Marks* have been written with an eye to what is actually important to ministry, out of the various areas of ministry they touch. You are encouraged to look for their manifestation in ways that have to do with actual ministry. For example, assess a person's abilities in biblical studies by asking to hear a sermon or see them teach a Bible study class. If you take this approach, you will be assessing their readiness based on what the future recipients of their ministry will experience.
5. **Be open to information and insights about your Member in Discernment from other persons and communities who have experienced your MID.** As a member of an LCDT or as an Advisor, know that you are not alone in this ministry of discernment and formation. Know that others may have had meaningful experiences with your MID and helpful insights about her or him to share. You need not rely only on your own knowledge and experience.
6. **Make your aim the promotion of growth in the MID.** Your goal should be to help the MID be ready for ordination, but do not recommend the ordination of the MID until that person seems truly prepared for it. This means applying the *Marks* developmentally, as a set of standards by which to measure where growth is needed.
7. **Let the assessment that an MID is ready for ordination emerge out of a process of mutual discernment of degrees *Marks of Readiness* and need for growth that is fed by these assessments.** This process will serve the church equally by promoting greatest growth among those whom God calls to lead it and greatest clarity about when they are truly ready to take up that ministry.

Below are the United Church of Christ's "*Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers*" listed under five (5) different headings:

Spiritual Foundations for Ministry

1. A living faith showing love of God, trust in Jesus, and openness to the Holy Spirit.
2. Devotion to the word of God as revealed through scripture and Christian traditions.
3. Commitment to life-long spiritual growth and practice, individually and in community.
4. A sense of being called by God and the community to authorized ministry in the church.
5. Openness to continuing discernment of one's call in community.

UCC Identity for Ministry

1. Acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as sole Head of the Church.
2. A passion for the oneness of the body of Christ as expressed through commitment to ecumenism, justice, and the full embrace of all persons in the radical hospitality of God.

3. Active membership in a local church of the United Church of Christ.
4. An understanding of the concept of covenant and how it informs the nature, purpose, and polity of the United Church of Christ.
5. A willingness to live in the covenants of mutual accountability that characterize authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ.
6. Ongoing demonstration of commitment to the United Church of Christ.
7. Stewardship of resources, including financial support of the church in all of its settings.
8. Participation in the various settings of the United Church of Christ, including the conference/association and local church.
9. The ability to articulate diverse histories that comprise the United Church of Christ, to situate them in the broader evolution of faith traditions and to relate them to the theology, polity, and practices of the Member's local church, association, and conference.
10. The ability to explain and work within the current polity of the UCC and its denominational structure, and to describe the covenantal relationships among the General Synod, national setting, conferences, associations, and local congregations of the United Church of Christ.
11. The ability to share key elements of the UCC's statement of faith, constitution with its preamble, and bylaws regarding the governance, mission, and theologies of the UCC and their implications for the life of the church.
12. The ability to articulate the UCC's commitment to being a united and uniting, multiracial and multicultural, open and affirming, accessible to all and just peace church.
13. The ability to envision how the UCC in its various settings may respond to religious, social, economic, and political trends, changing demographics, and other emerging factors.
14. The ability to use and promote the informational and educational resources available through UCC publications and websites.

Personal and Professional Formation for Ministry

1. A healthy sense of self as shaped by God, community, and personal experience.
2. A sense of theological identity and authority, while being responsive to the opinions and values of others, including those whom the Member will serve.
3. A healthy awareness of strengths, weaknesses and limits, and assumption of responsibility for one's body, mind and spirit.
4. Knowledge and observance of personal and professional boundaries in interpersonal, congregational, and community settings.
5. A commitment to continuing education, professional development, and life-long learning.
6. Demonstrated moral maturity, including integrity in personal and public life and responsibility to self, family, church, and community.
7. The ability to affirm the identities of others, including others very unlike oneself.
8. The ability to engage in self-reflection and to seek and use feedback from others appropriately.
9. The ability to engage productively in public discourse, expecting to grow and be

- transformed through the exchange of viewpoints.
10. The ability to take initiative in leadership, and to frame and test a vision in community.
 11. The ability to listen empathetically, communicate appropriately, and keep appropriate confidences.
 12. The ability to function as part of a team, to give and receive supervision, and to mutually equip and motivate the community of faith.
 13. The ability to be resourceful and adaptable, and know where to locate additional resources and seek consultation when needed.
 14. The ability to accept and promote diversity, to inspire others to do so, and to minister in a multi-cultural and multiracial, open and affirming, just peace, accessible to all, united and uniting church.

Knowledge and Skills for Ministry: General Knowledge and Skills

1. The ability to understand and appreciate a variety of perspectives of life.
2. The ability to understand the profound differences that physical, psychological, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, class, cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic factors make in the ways that human beings experience the world.
3. The ability to comprehend the impact of historical change upon the thoughts, feelings, and actions of individuals and societies.
4. The ability to perceive how a person's perspectives and interests shape communication, and to appreciate the virtues and limitations of those perspectives and interests.
5. The ability to grasp and evaluate the justifications people give for their opinions.
6. The ability to apply basic concepts of psychology to the understanding of oneself, others, and human interactions.
7. The ability to appreciate the importance of symbols and images in human culture(s).
8. The ability to understand various meanings and purposes of the arts.
9. The ability to analyze social, political, environmental, and economic dynamics, using the tools of the social and natural sciences.
10. The ability to use respectfully and relationally a basic knowledge of specific human cultures.
11. The ability to communicate clearly and effectively with appropriate media and technologies.

Knowledge and Skills Specific to Authorized Ministry

1. A thorough knowledge of, and personal engagement with, the Bible.
2. Skill with methods of biblical interpretation, including the historic interpretive traditions of the church and contemporary methods, particularly those from historically under represented communities.
3. A deepening familiarity with the global history of the Christian churches through the ages and across cultures, including the newest Christian populations, and an understanding of the evolution of Christian communities in the United States.
4. A deepening familiarity with contemporary theological ways of thinking and with the rich and varied theological heritages, creeds, liturgies, and spiritual

practices of the Christian churches.

5. An understanding of other religions and their foundational documents.
6. An ability to articulate a theological understanding of authorized ministry, and to relate it to the practice of ministry.
7. The ability to analyze, evaluate, and integrate the biblical, historical, theological, and pastoral disciplines and practices in ways that contribute to fruitful and faithful Christian ministry.
8. The ability to understand the nature, use, and misuse of power and authority, and to exercise them appropriately and effectively in authorized ministry.
9. The ability to engage in community leadership that is collaborative and transformative.
10. The ability to engage in respectful ecumenical and interfaith dialogue.
11. The ability to celebrate the unique features of local faith communities while encouraging them to be receptive to perspectives from the broader church and world.
12. The ability to appreciate, practice, and pass on traditions of faith while interpreting them in light of the context of a diverse and changing world.
13. The ability to adapt the practices of ministry to the unique social, cultural, environmental and ecclesiastical aspects of particular settings.
14. The ability to discern God's mission in the world and, in response, to lead ministries of compassion, nurture, justice, and proclamation that support fullness of life for all people.
15. The ability to preach the good news, lead worship and participate in the sacraments in a manner faithful to the broader Christian heritage and appropriate to the characteristics of a specific culture and setting.
16. The ability to provide effective and appropriate pastoral care and Christian education, and to equip and motivate others to share in these ministries.
17. The ability to organize and implement programs, administer the operations of a complex organization, and initiate change when appropriate.
18. The ability to read the contexts of a community's ministry and creatively lead that community through change or conflict.
19. The ability to lead and encourage ministries of evangelism, service, stewardship and social transformation.
20. The ability to understand and participate in the financial administration of the church and other religious organizations.

Appendix E

GUIDELINES FOR THE ORDINATION PAPER

Your Ordination Paper is the culmination and demonstration of all you have learned and all your preparation. It should demonstrate to the Committee on Ministry and the Association's Ecclesiastical Council all the *Marks of Readiness*:

Here is the summary of *Marks* from the "Requirements for Ordination" section of this paper:

- Spiritual Readiness
- Theological Readiness
- Emotional Readiness
- Professional Readiness
- Covenantal polity

Your paper should help people see your pastoral heart and professional readiness, your sense of Call, your journey of faith, and the integration of your education and experience into your ministry. Creativity is encouraged as you seek to thoroughly represent yourself.

Overall Description and Instructions

Your Ordination Paper should be in two parts, A and B. The two parts together should not exceed 20 pages in length, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font (or similar).

Part A

Part A should cover the themes asked for in numbers 1 & 2 below: your faith journey, your Call, your theological statement of your Christian beliefs, and your summary and conclusion. Part A will be reviewed by the COM. If the COM approves you for an Ecclesiastical Council, Part A will be distributed to Association members before your Ecclesiastical Council. At your Ecclesiastical Council you will be expected to present a briefer version of Part A of your Ordination Paper to the Association's delegates in attendance.

Before you submit PART A of your paper to the COM, you should discuss it with your Advisor, your Pastor, and your Local Church Discernment Team.

Part B

Part B should cover the themes asked for in number 3 below. It should apply aspects of your theological understanding to: your relationship with God, a pastoral care situation, and a challenge in one of your ministerial settings. Part B will be reviewed by the COM. However, because of the potentially more confidential nature of Part B, it will not usually be distributed to other Association members for one's Ecclesiastical Council.

Before you submit PART B of your paper to the COM, you should, to maintain confidentiality as needed, discuss it only with your Advisor.

Parts A & B

Once you have discussed Parts A and B of your ordination paper with the appropriate people, as indicated above, you should send a copy of each in its own separate digital file to the Chairperson of the COM.

The Contents of Your Ordination Paper (Parts A and B)

In Part A please cover the following:

1. Describe your faith journey that has brought you to the United Church of Christ, which is one model of faith and ministry. Describe your Call to Ordained Ministry. Help us to know what makes this particular expression of (a) faith, (b) ministry, and (c) polity compelling to you. How has your sense of Call evolved and been confirmed as you have discovered your gifts and talents and developed your skills? (up to 3 pages)
2. Your theological statement of your Christian beliefs, which should include all of the following (for a total of 10-12 pages):
 - A. God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit
 - i. Creation and Providence; Judgment and Grace
 - ii. Person of Christ: Incarnation, Atonement, Salvation, Resurrection
 - iii. Revelation and Scripture
 - B. Humanity
 - i. Sin, Evil, Repentance, Forgiveness
 - ii. Prayer
 - iii. Eternal Life
 - C. The Church and God's New Era (Realm)
 - i. The purpose of the Church in God's plan
 - ii. Your Christology as it informs the nature of the Church in the United Church of Christ.
 - iii. Church and the world (include evangelism, social action, and mission)
 - iv. Interfaith and ecumenical relations
 - v. Baptism and the Lord's Supper
 - vi. The Ministry (Lay and Ordained)
 - D. Summary and conclusion

In Part B please cover the following:

3. Please apply aspects from your theological statement (Part A of your Ordination Paper) to the following points. In the process, to maintain confidentiality as needed, do not include information which reveals the identify of individual people.
 - A. Briefly discuss a celebration and/or a struggle in your relationship with God. Use this situation to explore and share how your concept of God was

reinforced, challenged, changed, and affirmed.

- B. Briefly describe a situation where you were called upon to offer pastoral care. Without divulging confidences, share the approach you used and the ministry principles and Scripture that guided your thinking and responding. Share how the faith of the recipient of your care was impacted. Tell us about the prayer that you used in this situation.
- C. Briefly discuss a challenging situation within one of your ministry settings. Describe the professional skills and theological insight you applied to this situation.

APPENDIX F

PILGRIM ASSOCIATION ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCILS

Once a Member in Discernment successfully completes the ordination examination by the Pilgrim Association's Committee on Ministry, an Ecclesiastical Council will be scheduled for that MID by the COM in conjunction with the Association's Board of Directors. A quorum consisting of lay and/or ministerial delegates from 1/5 of the member churches in the Association is required for such a Council. The official call to such a Council shall be given at least three (3) weeks before it is held. As Bylaws of the Pilgrim Association indicate, ordained ministerial standing is granted, upon the recommendation of the Association's COM, by a majority vote of those present and voting at an Ecclesiastical Council meeting duly called to consider the matter.

In planning your Ecclesiastical Council, work with your Pastor, your Local Church Discernment Team, and your COM Advisor on the form of the Council and any worship elements you would like to include in it. You may wish to use a bulletin format you are familiar with from having attended other Ecclesiastical Councils. A simple reception following the meeting is appropriate.

~ Attendance and Voting at Ecclesiastical Councils ~

The Bylaws of the Pilgrim Association indicate that the following persons are entitled to one vote at all meetings of the Association, including Ecclesiastical Council meetings:

1. Official delegates from member churches
2. All elected officers and committee members of the Association
3. All persons authorized by the Association for Ordained or Commissioned ministries in good standing and not on a Leave of Absence
4. All persons granted Dual Standing in the Association in good standing

According to the Association's Bylaws, those who may attend Association meetings, including Ecclesiastical Councils, but who may not vote at such meetings are as follows:

1. Persons granted Member in Discernment (MID) or Privilege of Call status by the Association, or who are authorized by the Association for Licensed ministry, are encouraged to attend Association meetings, but they may not vote at Association meetings. The exception to this is that MIDs and persons authorized for Licensed Ministry may vote at Association meetings, provided they are official Lay Delegates to those meetings and are members in good standing of the Association member churches they represent.
2. Persons on a Leave of Absence and persons whose authorization for ministry is under Suspension may not vote at Association meetings.
3. Other ministers and lay persons present at a meeting of the Association, may, by

invitation of the Moderator of the Association or the Moderator's substitute, be invited to sit as honorary members of the Association for that meeting only. As honorary members they may speak at the meeting, but they may not vote.

The Bylaws of the Pilgrim Association indicate that proxy votes shall not be considered valid at any Association meeting.

Appendix G

MID INTERVIEW SUMMARY FORM

This form shows your progress in fulfilling some of the required steps toward Ordination. You should submit this form to the COM Chairperson, along with your other required documents, before each of your Annual Review Interviews and your Final Interview. **Your interviews with the COM may need to be rescheduled if your documents are sent in later than two (2) weeks prior to each interview.**

Name: _____ Advisor: _____ Date: _____

Sponsoring Church and its Pastor: _____

LCDT Chairperson & Contact Info: _____

Seminary: _____ Credits still needed for M. Div. degree: _____

Expected Graduation Date: _____ Date Became a Pilgrim Association MID: _____

Total Pilgrim Association Scholarship Funds granted to date: _____

Indicate the date, where, and under whose supervision (if that applies) you completed any of the following:

Psychological Evaluation _____

UCC Polity Course _____

Clinical Pastoral Education _____

Social Justice/Cultural Competence Project _____

Field Education _____

Boundary Awareness Training _____

Use for any additional information/comments:
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Appendix H

MEMBER IN DISCERNMENT STATUS WORK SHEETS – PILGRIM ASSOCIATION, MACUCC

Once a person has heard God’s call to ordained ministry, three different parties work together in covenant to accomplish this task: the person called, their local church and the Pilgrim Association of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ.

The primary responsibility of navigating the Discernment process rests with the person who wishes to be ordained. All three covenantal parties have tasks that need to be done. The responsibilities are outlined in the work sheets that follow this page. Please refer to the Pilgrim Association’s *The Manual - Policies, Procedures and Guidelines for Preparing to be Ordained* for full explanations of the process.

Note: In the following work sheets, page references in the Association’s *Manual* are shown in brackets.

The Process for <u>Seeking MID Status</u>	42
Member in Discernment Steps: <u>Year One</u>	43
Member in Discernment Steps: <u>Year Two</u>	44
Member in Discernment Steps: <u>Year Three</u>	45
Member in Discernment Steps: <u>Final COM Interview for Ordination</u>	46

MEMBER IN DISCERNMENT STATUS WORK SHEETS – PILGRIM ASSOCIATION, MACUCC

Name: _____ Date received into Discernment: _____ Graduation Date (expected): _____

Mailing Address: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

The Process for Seeking MID Status [2-13]

<u>Member Seeking Candidate Status</u>	<u>Local Church Tasks</u>	<u>Committee on Ministry/Staff Tasks</u>
<p>_____ Senses call to Christian ministry in UCC</p> <p>_____ Contacts local Pastor seeking support</p> <p>_____ Presents required documents to local Church [9] and seeks its support ++++++</p> <p>_____ Arranges to meet with COM for interview</p> <p>_____ Invites Church representatives to COM interview</p> <p>_____ Prepares documents for interview [11] including Self-Disclosure and Release Form [25-27], sends documents to COM</p> <p>_____ Chairperson at least 2 weeks before interview, 3 letters of reference sent <u>directly</u> by writers</p> <p>_____ Candidate attends COM interview, tells of call, faith journey, church activities, etc. ++++++</p> <p>_____ If accepted as MID by the COM: _____ MID schedules psych evaluation as soon as possible, must be completed within 6 months [12-13]</p> <p>_____ MID pays 1/3 of psych evaluation expense</p>	<p>_____ Church Pastor meets with church member, may decide to support MID candidacy</p> <p>_____ Church committee meets with church member. If decides to support, records decision in letter member will send to COM Chairperson at least 2 weeks before interview [10-11]</p> <p>_____ Church forms Local Church Discernment Team (LCDT) soon after its decision to support candidate</p> <p>_____ LCDT informs COM of its existence and meets with candidate before the COM interview [17] ++++++</p> <p>_____ Letters of reference by Pastor and 2 persons candidate worked with in past 2 years, sent <u>directly</u> by writers to COM</p> <p>_____ Chairperson at least 2 weeks before COM interview [11]</p> <p>_____ Church representatives attend COM interview with candidate ++++++</p> <p>_____ If candidate accepted as MID by the COM: _____ Local church expected to pay 1/3 of psych evaluation expense</p>	<p>_____ Contacted by candidate, COM chairperson schedules COM interview</p> <p>_____ COM Chairperson receives candidate's documentation and letters of reference, sent at least 2 weeks before interview</p> <p>_____ COM interviews candidate and Church representatives ++++++</p> <p>_____ If the COM decides to accept candidate as MID for 1 year, the COM [12] :</p> <p>_____ Assigns an Advisor to the MID</p> <p>_____ Begins its work with all parties in the discernment process</p> <p>_____ Pays 1/3 of the MID's psych evaluation expense</p>

MEMBER IN DISCERNMENT STATUS WORK SHEETS – PILGRIM ASSOCIATION, MACUCC

Name: _____ Date received into Discernment: _____ Graduation Date (expected): _____

Mailing Address: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Member in Discernment Steps: Year One [14-23]

<u>Member in Discernment Tasks</u>	<u>Local Church Tasks</u>	<u>Committee on Ministry/Staff Tasks</u>
<p>____ Schedules psych evaluation as soon as possible, must be completed within 6 months of acceptance as MID [12-13]</p> <p>____ Pays 1/3 of psych evaluation expense</p> <p>____ Seeks to grow in <i>Marks of Readiness</i> [15-16, 30-34]</p> <p>____ Meets at least 3 times with Advisor</p> <p>____ Meets at least 4 times with LCDT</p> <p>____ Meets at least 2 times with local Pastor</p> <p>____ Keeps work sheet up to date in consultation with Advisor</p> <p>____ Applies for financial aid, if needed</p> <p>____ Begins 1 year of Field Ed if possible [14] ++++++</p> <p>____ Arranges to meet with COM for end of Year One renewal interview</p> <p>____ Invites local Church representatives to renewal interview</p> <p>____ Sends documents to COM Chairperson at least 2 weeks before interview [22-23]</p> <p>____ Attends renewal interview with Church Representatives and Advisor</p>	<p>____ Local Church expected to pay 1/3 of MID's psych evaluation expense</p> <p>____ LCDT meets at least 4 times with MID using <i>Marks of Readiness</i> [15-16, 30-34]</p> <p>____ Local Pastor meets at least 2 times with MID ++++++</p> <p>____ LCDT prepares report on MID's progress on <i>Marks of Readiness</i>, sent to COM Chairperson at least 2 weeks before MID's end of Year One renewal interview</p> <p>____ Pastor, LCDT member, 1-2 other people attend MID's renewal interview</p>	<p>____ Pays 1/3 of the MID's psych evaluation expense</p> <p>____ Advisor meets at least 3 times with MID, work sheet kept up to date ++++++</p> <p>____ Contacted by MID, COM chairperson schedules end of Year One renewal interview</p> <p>____ COM Chairperson receives MID's documentation, sent at least 2 weeks before interview</p> <p>____ Advisor submits annual report on MID's progress to COM, sent at least 2 weeks before MID's renewal interview</p> <p>____ Advisor attends MID's renewal interview</p> <p>____ COM interviews candidate, Church representatives, and Advisor</p>

MEMBER IN DISCERNMENT STATUS WORK SHEETS – PILGRIM ASSOCIATION, MACUCC

Name: _____ Date received into Discernment: _____ Graduation Date (expected): _____

Mailing Address: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Member in Discernment Steps: Year Two [14-23]

<u>Member in Discernment Tasks</u>	<u>Local Church Tasks</u>	<u>Committee on Ministry/Staff Tasks</u>
<p>Seeks to grow in <i>Marks of Readiness</i> [15-16, 30-34]</p> <p>Meets at least 3 times with Advisor</p> <p>Meets at least 4 times with LCDT</p> <p>Meets at least 2 times with local Pastor</p> <p>Keeps work sheet up to date, in consultation with Advisor</p> <p>Applies for financial aid, if needed</p> <p>Completes Field Ed, if needed</p> <p>Completes CPE at least 6 months before Final COM interview [14]</p> <p>Completes Social Justice/Cultural Comp. Project, submits paper to COM</p> <p>Chairperson at least 2 weeks before renewal or FINAL interview [14]</p> <p>Completes Boundary Awareness Training before Final COM interview [14]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+++++</p> <p>Arranges to meet with COM for end of Year Two renewal interview</p> <p>Invites local Church representatives to renewal interview</p> <p>Sends documents to COM Chairperson at least 2 weeks before interview [22-23]</p> <p>Attends renewal interview with Church Representatives and Advisor</p>	<p>LCDT meets at least 4 times with MID, using <i>Marks of Readiness</i> [15-16, 30-34]</p> <p>Local Pastor meets at least 2 times with MID</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+++++</p> <p>LCDT prepares report on MID's progress on <i>Marks of Readiness</i>, sent to COM Chairperson at least 2 weeks before MID's end of Year Two renewal interview</p> <p>Pastor, LCDT member, 1-2 other people attend MID's renewal interview</p>	<p>Advisor meets at least 3 times with MID, work sheet kept up to date</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+++++</p> <p>Contacted by MID, COM chairperson schedules end of Year Two renewal interview</p> <p>COM Chairperson receives MID's documentation, sent at least 2 weeks before interview</p> <p>Advisor submits annual report on MID's progress to COM, sent at least 2 weeks before MID's renewal interview</p> <p>Advisor attends MID's renewal interview</p> <p>COM interviews candidate, Church representatives, and Advisor</p>

MEMBER IN DISCERNMENT STATUS WORK SHEETS – PILGRIM ASSOCIATION, MACUCC

Name: _____ Date received into Discernment: _____ Graduation Date (expected): _____

Mailing Address: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Member in Discernment Steps: Year Three [14-23]

<u>Member in Discernment Tasks</u>	<u>Local Church Tasks</u>	<u>Committee on Ministry/Staff Tasks</u>
<p>Seeks to grow in <i>Marks of Readiness</i> [15-16, 30-34]</p> <p>Meets at least 3 times with Advisor</p> <p>Meets at least 4 times with LCDDT</p> <p>Meets at least 2 times with local Pastor</p> <p>Keeps work sheet up to date, in consultation with Advisor</p> <p>Applies for financial aid, if needed</p> <p>Completes Field Ed, if needed</p> <p>Completes CPE at least 6 months before Final COM interview [14]</p> <p>Completes Social Justice/Cultural Comp. Project, submits paper to COM</p> <p>Chairperson at least 2 weeks before renewal or FINAL interview [14]</p> <p>Completes Boundary Awareness Training before Final COM interview [14]</p> <p align="center">+++++</p> <p>Arranges to meet with COM for end of Year Three renewal interview</p> <p>Invites local Church representatives to renewal interview</p> <p>Sends documents to COM Chairperson at least 2 weeks before interview [22-23]</p> <p>Attends interview with Church Representatives and Advisor</p>	<p>LCDDT meets at least 4 times with MID, using <i>Marks of Readiness</i> [15-16, 30-34]</p> <p>Local Pastor meets at least 2 times with MID</p> <p align="center">+++++</p> <p>LCDDT prepares report on MID's progress on <i>Marks of Readiness</i>, sent to COM Chairperson at least 2 weeks before MID's end of Year Three renewal interview</p> <p>Pastor, LCDDT member, 1-2 other people attend MID's renewal interview</p>	<p>Advisor meets at least 3 times with MID, work sheet kept up to date</p> <p align="center">+++++</p> <p>Contacted by MID, COM chairperson schedules end of Year Three renewal interview</p> <p>COM Chairperson receives MID's documentation, sent at least 2 weeks before interview</p> <p>Advisor submits annual report on MID's progress to COM, sent at least 2 weeks before MID's renewal interview</p> <p>Advisor attends MID's renewal interview</p> <p>COM interviews candidate, Church representatives, and Advisor</p>

MEMBER IN DISCERNMENT STATUS WORK SHEETS – PILGRIM ASSOCIATION, MACUCC

Name: _____ Date received into Discernment: _____ Graduation Date (expected): _____

Mailing Address: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Member in Discernment Steps: Final COM Interview for Ordination [See *Manual* pages 23-24]

<u>Member in Discernment Tasks</u>	<u>Local Church Tasks</u>	<u>COM/Staff Tasks</u>
<p>All requirements completed:</p> <p>___ Master of Divinity Degree (or equiv.)</p> <p>___ Field Education</p> <p>___ UCC Polity</p> <p>___ Social Justice/Cultural Competence Project</p> <p>___ Clinical Pastoral Education</p> <p>___ Boundary Awareness Training</p> <p>___ Psych Eval completed/accepted</p> <p>___ Proficiency in <i>Marks of Readiness</i></p> <p>___ Ordination Paper prepared [35-37]:</p> <p>___ –Discuss Part A with Advisor, LCDT, local Pastor</p> <p>___ –Discuss Part B with Advisor only</p> <p>++++++</p> <p>___ Asks to have Final COM interview</p> <p>___ Invites local Church representatives to Final COM interview</p> <p>___ Sends required documents and Ordination Paper (Parts A & B) to COM</p> <p>___ Chairperson at least 2 weeks before interview [23-24]</p> <p>___ Attends Final COM interview with Church Representatives and Advisor</p>	<p>The following letters are sent directly from writers to the Chairperson of COM at least 2 weeks before MID's Final COM interview for Ordination [24]:</p> <p>___ Letter from the LCDT recommending the MID be Ordained</p> <p>___ Letter of reference from local Pastor</p> <p>___ Letter of reference from layperson in ministry setting where MID served</p> <p>___ Letter of reference from person of MID's choice</p> <p>___ Letter of reference from Advisor</p> <p>___ Pastor, LCDT member, 1-2 other people attend MID's Final COM interview</p>	<p>___ Contacted by MID, COM chairperson may schedule Final COM interview for Ordination</p> <p>___ Advisor writes letter of reference for MID, sends <u>directly</u> to COM Chairperson</p> <p>___ COM Chairperson receives all MID's documentation and letters of reference, sent at least 2 weeks before Final COM interview</p> <p>___ Advisor attends MID's Final COM interview</p> <p>___ COM interviews MID, Church representatives, and Advisor</p> <p>++++++</p> <p>If the COM decides to recommend the MID for Ordination, the COM schedules a Pilgrim Association Ecclesiastical Council in conjunction with the Board of Directors of the Association. A majority vote of those present and voting at such a Council meeting is required for an MID's Ordination to be authorized by the Pilgrim Association. [38-39]</p>