

## **TRANSFER OF ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSEMENT FOR MILITARY CHAPLAINS**

Currently there is movement within the military chaplaincy for men and women to become endorsed by the United Church of Christ. This is a result of the climate changing within our Army, Navy and Air Force in response to the repeal of DADT and the Supreme Court ruling on DOMA. While we are welcoming these well qualified chaplains who are willing to openly serve the LGB community, the requirements for transfer of endorsement must fit with the UCC polity as well as meet the criteria set forth by NCMAF (National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces).

In order for a military chaplain to secure an ecclesiastical endorsement from the United Church of Christ s/he must have full ordained standing in the United Church of Christ. Once a Committee on Ministry has granted full-ordained standing to a military chaplain the ecclesiastical endorser will work with the branch of service and the original endorser to complete the transfer of endorsement.

When an individual contacts the ecclesiastical endorser for guidance on procedure, they are referred to the Manual On Ministry Section 2.2 and advised that the Committee will want to complete the process for Privilege of Call before granting full ordained standing. This is in addition to completing the Application for Ecclesiastical Endorsement and the file as outlined in Section 2.5 of the Manual on Ministry. It is also recommended that the individual immediately connect the ecclesiastical endorser with the Chair of the Committee on Ministry so that we can coordinate and ensure that there is no redundancy in the process of Privilege of Call and the transfer of ecclesiastical endorsement.

The standard procedure, as outlined in the Manual on Ministry, for advancing an individual from Privilege of Call to awarding full-ordained standing in the United Church of Christ differs here. Once the Committee has done its work and concludes that they recommend awarding Privilege of Call to the individual, they then must move directly to grant full-ordained standing in the United Church of Christ. The Chaplain seeking transfer of endorsement already has a call and the committee has determined that the individual will faithfully and with integrity represent the UCC in that setting; therefore full-ordained standing is granted based on their findings and the existing call to military chaplaincy.

When full ordained standing has been granted, the Committee on Ministry Chair issues a letter to the ecclesiastical endorser recommending that the individual's endorsement be transferred to the United Church of Christ. The ecclesiastical endorser will interview the individual to determine suitability for ministry in the military setting. Once determined that the chaplain will serve the United Church of Christ well, the endorser will contact the individual's original endorser to complete the required NCMAF documentation. A deadline for transfer is determined and the UCC ecclesiastical endorser will issue a DA 2088, notify the Chief of Chaplains Office of the branch

that the individual serves and notify the Chair of the Committee on Ministry that the transfer of endorsement has been complete.

While the Association of the receiving Committee on Ministry will be responsible for oversight of the newly acquired clergy person, the ecclesiastical endorser will monitor the chaplain's ongoing professional development, promotions, assignments and deployment history.

A Chaplain Candidate, who desires to transfer their endorsement to the United Church of Christ from another denomination, must proceed to become a Member in Discernment with the Committee responsible for their oversight. Once the individual has completed the requirements and the Committee on Ministry has granted MID status, the Chair of the Committee recommends that the endorsement be transferred. The MID is required to complete the application for endorsement, the file as outlined in Section 2.5 of Manual on Ministry and submit both to the ecclesiastical endorser. The UCC ecclesiastical endorser will interview the MID to determine his/her suitability for ministry in the specialized of the Armed Forces. Once approved, the UCC ecclesiastical endorser will issue the Letter, advise the branch of service that the Candidates is training with and coordinate with the original endorser for the transfer of the Letter.

In the cases of transfer of endorsement and Letter of Approval, once completed the individual is required to submit a letter to their original denomination, stating that they now have standing with the United Church of Christ and no longer have ordained standing (in the case of endorsed chaplains) or student status (in the case of chaplain candidates) with the denomination.

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