

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Apostolic Ministry. The United Church of Christ “claims as its own the faith of the historic church” and joins the witness of Jesus’ apostles; Ordained Ministers bear particular responsibility to this witness as they engage in the ministries of Word and Sacrament on behalf of the United Church of Christ and the Church Universal.

Association. That body within a Conference of the United Church of Christ that is composed of all Local Churches in a geographical area and that is empowered by the United Church of Christ Constitution and Bylaws to authorize and oversee ministerial standing.

Call. In the life of the Church, the word “call” holds a variety of meanings, including but not limited to God’s provocation of a person to faith and vocation, the Church’s invitation to and authorization of a particular person for a particular ministry on its behalf, and the ministry setting in which a person is asked to serve on behalf of the Church.

Calling Body. An organization, ministry setting, or Local Church that has an identifiable structure of leadership and governance, a willingness to recognize and provide appropriate oversight for a person’s ministry, and a commitment to participation with the wider church. A calling body may extend an ordainable or authorizable call.

Conference. That body of the United Church that is composed of all Local Churches in a geographical area (except Calvin Synod), within which are Associations. Certain Conferences act as Associations in the work of authorizing and overseeing ministerial standing.

Covenant. Sacred commitments to relationship. The formal articulation of the relational and behavioral expectations for UCC ministerial standing is called a Three- or Four-Way Covenant, depending on the number of covenantal relationships pertaining to a particular minister’s standing and vocation.

Cultural Consultant. A person who helps to observe and teach differences in cultural norms to Committees on Ministry, when those attributes are not already present within the Committee.

Culture of Call. The characteristics of a Local Church that foster a dynamic atmosphere for equipping and empowering all persons to discern, test, and live out their unique ministries for the sake of the Church.

Dual Standing. A temporary form of UCC ministerial standing that may be granted to ecumenically ordained (or otherwise ecumenically authorized) ministers who are called to serve in a UCC ministry setting but who keep their affiliation with their denomination of origin.

Ecclesial. Related to church.

Ecclesial Status. A relationship of discernment between a person seeking ministerial standing and an Association through its Committee on Ministry. Ecclesial statuses cannot be transferred between Associations. Persons with ecclesial status do not have the authority to represent the United Church of Christ. In the United Church of Christ, ecclesial statuses include (but are not limited to) Member in Discernment and Privilege of Call.

Ecclesiastical Council. A gathering of an Association's delegates for the purpose of exercising the Association's authority to approve (or not) a person for ordination and Ordained Ministerial Standing in the United Church of Christ.

Ecclesiastical Endorsement. The assessment and verification—by an Association through its Committee on Ministry in collaboration with the UCC Endorsement Office—of an Ordained Minister's standing, qualifying experience, and capacity to represent the United Church of Christ faithfully and sensitively in diverse and pluralistic settings. Ecclesiastical endorsement is sought by an Ordained Minister when required by a professional or governmental agency for ministry in that setting.

Exempt Standing. A ministerial standing for Ordained Ministers who have discerned a conclusion to their public ministry and who have covenanted to no longer perform acts of public ministry. Exempt Standing modifies the expectations for the ecclesial relationship between the Ordained Minister and their Association, including optional exemptions from such requirements as boundary awareness training and continuing education. Exempt Standing is not to be confused with retirement, which is an employment-related decision by a minister and not a ministerial standing.

Lay Ministerial Standing. A temporary, accountable covenantal relationship among an Association, a lay member, and a Local Church of the United Church of Christ.

Leave of Absence. A ministerial standing for Ordained Ministers experiencing a prolonged (but not unlimited) life season when they are neither seeking nor actively engaged in professional ministry. Leave of Absence temporarily modifies the expectations for the ecclesial relationship between the Ordained Minister and their Association in order to make room for life changes and/or vocational discernment. Leave of Absence is not to be confused with administrative leave, which is an employment-related decision by a calling body to remove someone from active ministry for a duration of time.

Local Church. A body of Christians who organize for Christian worship, for the continuation of Christian fellowship, and for the ongoing work of Christian witness, in affiliation with the United Church of Christ. The ecclesial standing of a Local Church is held by its Association.

Local Church Discernment Committee. A small group of Local Church members who gather with a person exploring their sense of call, in order to listen, encourage, and provide feedback before and during a discernment process.

Marks Portfolio. A collection of materials that demonstrate competencies and experiences related to the Marks of Faithful

and Effective Authorized Ministers, usually during a process of discernment. This collection may take many forms and is the basis of developing an ordination paper or portfolio presentation for an Ecclesiastical Council.

Member in Discernment. An ecclesial status for a lay member of the United Church of Christ who is exploring and pursuing ordination with a Committee on Ministry.

Minister. Any Christian, regardless of employment or title, created by God, called by Christ and gifted by the Spirit; all Christians are in ministry when serving the needs of the world in God’s love and grace. As specified in certain parts of the Manual on Ministry, the term “minister” may be used specifically to refer to someone who holds UCC ministerial standing, e.g. “minister in question” for a Fitness Review in Section 2 Article 6.

Ministerial File. The documentation of a Committee on Ministry’s work of support and oversight for any person with UCC ministerial standing.

Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing. A temporary form of ministerial standing for Ordained Ministers of the United Church of Christ, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and The United Church of Canada who serve in a ministry position within one of these three denominations while maintaining affiliation with their denomination of origin. The ecclesial status of an Ordained Minister who is in discernment with a Committee on Ministry (or judicatory body) toward Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is called Seeking OMPS.

Ordained Ministerial Standing. Formal relationship between an Ordained Minister and the United Church of Christ through an Association.

Priesthood of All Believers. The understanding that all persons have access to God without an intermediary and that all persons have the potential to show God to others (to minister for God).

Privilege of Call. An ecclesial status of the United Church of Christ for an ecumenically ordained minister who is seeking to leave their denomination of origin and who is discerning with a Committee on Ministry the possibility of holding Ordained Ministerial Standing in the United Church of Christ alone. An ecumenically ordained minister with Privilege of Call status may be granted access to the UCC Ministerial Profile. An ecumenically ordained minister who is in discernment with a Committee on Ministry but who has not been granted access to the UCC search and call system has Seeking Privilege of Call status.

Redacted Case. A brief summary of the concern that has been raised about a minister, excluding (to the extent possible) any identifying details of the person, the ministry setting, or those affected, so that the Committee on Ministry can consider the concern without bias for or against those involved in determining whether to initiate a Fitness Review.

Sacraments. Acts of Christian worship and Christian community that are ecumenically recognized as visible signs of divine presence and grace. The United Church of Christ recognizes two sacraments: communion and baptism.

Triune God. The God who is three-in-one; Father, Son, Holy Spirit; Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer.

United and Uniting Church. Churches and denominations around the world that have historically worked and/or are currently working to unite with other Christian churches and denominations are called “united and uniting churches.” These churches and denominations collaborate through the World Council of Churches, and they offer a distinct witness and response to Jesus’ prayer “that they may all be one” (John 17:21).