

## LETTER FROM THE HABAKKUK GROUP

Grace, mercy, and peace to each of you involved in the sacred work of authorizing ministry in our beloved United Church of Christ.

The Manual on Ministry (MOM) equips the United Church of Christ to respond faithfully to changes in the Church and in ministry through our practices of ministerial authorization and oversight, both changes that have already occurred as well as those that will occur in the years ahead. This living guide speaks to our shared values and sets out a vision for shared authorization practices, even as it recognizes the diverse local embodiment of these shared principles.

The 2018 edition of MOM is the work of the Habakkuk Group, a 17-member committee representing breadth in life experience, theological and ecclesial perspective, church roles, and voice, called together by the Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization (MESA) Team of the National Setting. The group's goal, in the spirit of Habakkuk 2:2, was to write the vision of authorized ministry and to make it plain for the United Church of Christ. Its membership included:

Co-chairs Cameron Barr and Eleanore Chong, David Alicea, Liddy Barlow, Martha Ann Baumer, Ben Bohren, Cheryl Burke, Quentin Chin, Yelanda Collins, Sheldon Culver, Lois Farnsworth-Whysong, David Hill, Steve Moore, Jonathan New, Vickye Robinson, David Van Epps, and Bill Worley;

with support by the MESA Team's program staff (Stephen Boyd, Kathryn Clark, Elizabeth Dilley, Rachel Hackenberg, Holly MillerShank, and Malcolm Himschoot) and consultation from the Office of General Counsel (Don Clark, Heather Kimmel, and Richard Hilbrich).

Throughout this journey the Habakkuk Group has grounded itself in deep prayer, study and discernment. We were diligent in our

attention to the Triune God, so that new developments and practices might honor the tradition of making the faith our own in each generation. We listened carefully and thoughtfully to the needs of the Church—the Body of Christ—as they are manifest now and as they may be in the future.

It is with great thanksgiving that we present this gift to the United Church of Christ. May it “make plain” the theological rationale and best practices of ministerial authorization.

We extend profound thanks for your joining us in this sacred work.

Faithfully,

Cameron Barr and Eleanore Chong  
*Co-chairs of the Habakkuk Group*

Holly MillerShank and Rachel Hackenberg  
*on behalf of the MESA Ministry Team*

October 2018