

ORDINATION / ENDORSEMENT

FROM: Rev. Stephen Boyd, Denominational Endorser and MESA Minister for Chaplains and Ministers in Specialized Settings

MESA is noting an increased interest in chaplaincy and specialized ministries within the United Church of Christ. Some specialized ministry and chaplaincy positions require ecclesiastical endorsement of an individual minister by the United Church of Christ. Government chaplaincy positions in the military, VA hospitals and the Federal Prison systems require that chaplains have an Ecclesiastical Endorsement for employment. Other institutions (hospitals, hospice facilities, university and college campuses, counseling centers and other specialized settings) may require that chaplains and specialized ministers be endorsed by the UCC for certification by professional agencies.

Ordination and ecclesiastical endorsement are two separate procedures.

- Ordination (or the granting of ministerial standing for those ordained in other denominations) occurs when an Association declares that a person is sufficiently prepared and equipped for ordained ministry in, and on behalf of, the United Church of Christ.
- Ecclesiastical Endorsement is the verification that a person is in good ministerial standing with the UCC, has qualifying experience, understands the nature of specialized ministry, and is qualified to represent the United Church of Christ in diverse and pluralistic settings.

Ecclesiastical Endorsement for a government position is recommended by the Committee on Ministry, then verified and granted by the Ecclesiastical Endorser at the denominational offices of the UCC. Endorsement for professional agencies is determined by the Committee on Ministry, then processed and validated by the Endorsement Office at the national offices. When an individual presents themselves for ecclesiastical endorsement, MESA recommends that Committees on Ministry immediately contact the Rev. Stephen B. Boyd, the Ecclesiastical Endorser (for government endorsements) or Ms. Kathleen Sattler, the Endorsement Secretary (for professional agency endorsements). It is our intention to assist and offer guidance which will reduce confusion, duplication of effort and ensure that the proper procedure is followed.

Endorsement is not transferrable between denominations. An individual must secure endorsement through the UCC when awarded Privilege of Call and attaining full ordained ministerial standing.

Proof of ordination is a pre-requisite for both government and professional endorsements. Once ordained ministerial standing has been established, Committees on Ministry must refer to Section 9 of the Manual on Ministry outlining procedures for ecclesiastical endorsement and consult with the Endorsement Office for additional guidelines.

A Committee may agree to use selected ordination documentation for endorsement, however full ordained standing in the United Church of Christ must be established before an individual will be considered for endorsement. Ordination and Endorsement may be processed simultaneously if a Committee has determined that the call, to chaplaincy or a specialized ministry setting, is ordainable. However, due to additional requirements, military chaplaincy is not considered an ordainable call in the United Church of Christ.

Rev. Stephen Boyd
UCC Endorser
MESA Minister for Chaplains and
Ministers in Specialized Settings
boyds@ucc.org
562-301-1622 (PST)*

Ms. Kathleen Sattler
Endorsement Secretary
MESA Ministry Team

sattlerk@ucc.org
216-736-3850

**please note that this number is a correction from the UCC desk calendar*

ENDORSEMENT FOR A PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION

Instructions for both the Applicant and for the UCC Association

REQUIRED: Prior to initiating any endorsement, contact the endorsement office of the national setting for instructions and changes in the process. Combine email instructions with the MOM guidelines.

1. MANUAL ON MINISTRY, Section 9 – Ecclesiastical Endorsement

Please read the MOM, Section 9 (the first half is on government chaplaincy; the second half relates to professional organizations): www.ucc.org/ministers/manual

2. UCC APPLICATION FORM FOR PROFESSIONAL ENDORSEMENT

The application form can be found online: ucc.org/ministers/pdfs/professional-organizations-ecclesiastical-endorsement-form.pdf Faxes, copies and scanned copies of the application or letters are not acceptable. When the endorsement packet is complete, the applicant should make a copy of the packet before giving it to the Committee on Ministry during an interview with the COM.

3. ENDORSEMENT LETTER or FORM

After the interview, the COM Chair or other authorized person writes a letter of endorsement (or fills out a form if AAPC) addressed to the professional organization *but mailed to the national setting* so it can be stamped first. Always check online for the newest template of any letter of endorsement or AAPC form: ucc.org/ministers/endorsement/ecclesiastical-endorsement-1.html

Choose the appropriate template from list shown; for a template not listed on the webpage, contact the endorsement office in the national setting.

Instructions AAPC Endorsement Form

Letter Template [ACPE Endorsement](#)

Letter Template [APC Initial Endorsement](#)

Letter Template [APC Continued Endorsement](#) (special 5 year letter)

The letter, completed application, and supporting documentation (all originals except certificates & diplomas) are mailed to: Ms. Kathleen Sattler, Endorsement Secretary, United Church of Christ, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland OH 44115.

4. NATIONAL SETTING

Upon receipt, the paperwork will be reviewed for accuracy and completeness and then, if everything is in order, the letter will be stamped.

HELPFUL HINTS:

- The applicant should make a copy of the endorsement packet for his/her own records before giving it to the Committee on Ministry or the Association.
- Please be aware that reference letters should be focused on the specialized ministry for which the applicant is applying. Try to include letters from a supervisor or co-worker who is familiar with your work and the qualities needed for the specialized ministry.
- Reference letters must be originals. If, however, someone sends a reference directly to the professional organization, the applicant may copy it and have it count as one of the references; this is the only circumstance in which a copy of a reference letter is acceptable.
- All letters must be signed, dated, and include all of the following information: printed name of writer, title, company, phone number, email address and mailing address. If this information is not located in the letterhead, it can be added under the signature.
- When possible, ask writers to sign in blue ink to help differentiate originals from copies.
- For verification of a unit of CPE, include a copy of the certificate. If unavailable, a copy of a complete evaluation done by a supervisor may be submitted.
- The original application, original letter of endorsement and all original supporting documentation need to be mailed. Faxes, copies, or scanned attachments are not acceptable. Exception: Never send originals of certificates or degrees.
- A UCC ministerial profile is not needed for endorsement in professional organizations.
- Please note that one ecclesiastical endorsement for a certain organization or situation does not cover the applicant for a different organization. Endorsements are not transferable.

If the applicant or the Chair has any questions, please contact the endorser or the endorsement secretary who will be glad to assist.

PLEASE NOTE MAINTENANCE RULING BY APC:

APC requires a letter be written every five years following endorsement and initial certification to fulfill their maintenance requirement. In the case of already certified chaplains, only a continued endorsement application is needed and is located at: <http://www.ucc.org/ministers/pdfs/professional-organizations-continued-ecclesiastical-endorsement-form-2.pdf>. Some additional simple requirements may include a meeting with the COM, a letter from applicant's local church, etc. Please check with the endorsement office for further details by calling (216) 736-3850 or emailing sattlerk@ucc.org.

ENDORSEMENT FOR GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Military, Chaplain Candidate Program, VA Medical Centers,
and Federal Bureau of Prisons

Instructions for both the Applicant and for the UCC Association

REQUIRED: Prior to initiating any endorsement, you must contact Rev. Stephen Boyd at boyds@ucc.org or 562-301-1622 (PST).

1. MANUAL ON MINISTRY, Section 9 – Ecclesiastical Endorsement

Please read the MOM, Section 9 (the first half is on government chaplaincy; the second half relates to professional organizations): www.ucc.org/ministers/manual

2. UCC APPLICATION FORM FOR ENDORSEMENT

The application form can be found online at: ucc.org/ministers/pdfs/government-chaplaincy-application-for-ecclesiastical-endorsement-approval.pdf

REQUIRED: You must print two applications and complete both as originals. Send one original application to Rev. Boyd immediately before proceeding any further.

Use the other original for the endorsement packet that you will complete. Faxes, copies and scanned copies of the application or letters are not acceptable. When the packet is complete, make an appointment to be interviewed by your Committee on Ministry.

3. LETTER RECOMMENDING YOU FOR ENDORSEMENT

After the interview, the COM Chair or other authorized person writes a letter recommending endorsement (the association does not actually endorse the person as in professional organizations), detailing the reasons why the applicant is being recommended for the particular government agency. This letter along with endorsement application and supporting documentation (all originals except certificates & diplomas) are all mailed to the denominational endorser: Rev. Stephen B. Boyd, Minister for Chaplains and Ministers in Specialized Settings, 5352 E. Abbeyfield Street, Long Beach CA 90815.

4. NATIONAL SETTING

Upon receipt, the denominational endorser reviews the paperwork, interviews the applicant, and makes a decision regarding the applicant's endorsement (or military chaplain candidacy). If Rev. Boyd endorses or approves the applicant, he will complete an endorsement/approval letter or endorsement form, depending upon the particular government organization's requirements.

HELPFUL HINTS:

- The applicant should make a copy of the endorsement packet for his/her own records before handing it to the Committee on Ministry or the Association.
- Please note the applicant can call the association or conference for the Committee on Ministry Chairperson's name and email address, which you will need for 1) filling out the UCC government application form and 2) informing Rev. Boyd of your Chair's contact information.
- Please keep the endorser, Rev. Boyd, informed of your progress in the endorsement process at regular intervals or make a courtesy call if you decide to drop the process.
- Be aware that reference letters should be focused on the specialized ministry for which the applicant is applying. The letter should reference the applicant's abilities, skills and experience to meet the needs of the particular ministry. Try to include letters from a supervisor or co-worker who is familiar with your work and the qualities needed for the specialized ministry.
- Reference letters must be on letterhead and must be originals. When possible, ask writers to sign in blue ink to help differentiate originals from copies.
- It is your responsibility to convey to a reference the following information at the time you request a reference letter: All letters must be signed, dated, and include the printed name of letter writer, title, company, phone number, email address and mailing address. Please advise the reference that, if this information is not included in the letterhead, it can be added under the signature.
- For verification of one unit of CPE, include a copy of the certificate. If unavailable, a copy of a complete supervisor's evaluation may be submitted.
- An original endorsement application, original recommendation letter, and all original supporting documentation need to be mailed to the denominational endorser. Faxes, copies, or scanned attachments are not acceptable. Exception: Never send originals of certificates or degrees.
- Please ask Rev. Stephen Boyd if a UCC ministerial profile is needed for this particular endorsement.
- Please note that one ecclesiastical endorsement for a certain organization or situation does not cover the applicant for a different organization. Endorsements are not transferable.

If the applicant or the Committee on Ministry Chair has any questions, please feel free to contact the endorser or the endorsement secretary who will be glad to assist.

Armed Services Ecclesiastical Endorsement Guidelines for Members in Discernment

1. The Committee on Ministry (COM) must first approve the candidate as a Member in Discernment of the Association.
2. If the MID is applying to a Chaplain Candidate Program, s/he can request that the COM recommend the MID to the UCC Ecclesiastical Endorser for a “Letter of Approval.” The candidate must submit an original “Application for Ecclesiastical Endorsement/ Approval for Government Chaplaincy” (found on the UCC website) to the Ecclesiastical Endorser and the Committee on Ministry.
3. Along with this request, the Candidate must submit the necessary documentation as outlined in Section 9 of the Manual on Ministry. (Note: Required documentation is the same as that needed to obtain an Ecclesiastical Endorsement except for the CPE and three years of experience in a local church requirement. It is understood that a Master of Divinity degree will not yet be earned but a college degree is required.) All letters of recommendation must be on letterhead and have original signatures.
4. Once these documents are received, the COM will then proceed to interview the candidate and determine whether s/he is a qualified candidate, using the procedure outlined in Section 9 of MOM. The COM will focus its questions on qualifications for the military setting, including experience and knowledge of the military setting.
5. If approved, the COM sends all original copies of the documentation and a letter describing the interview process and determination of qualifications to the Ecclesiastical Endorser, recommending the individual for a Letter of Approval.
6. The Endorser will then make a decision as to whether the candidate will receive a “Letter of Approval” to enter a Chaplain Candidate Program.
7. When the Candidate has completed requirements for an MDiv from an accredited institution, s/he can begin the application process for Ordination and Ecclesiastical Endorsement with the Association.
8. To apply for Ecclesiastical Endorsement, the following qualifications must be met:
 - a. If applying for an Endorsement as a Chaplain in the National Guard or Reserves, the Candidate must be approved for Ordination and have received an ordainable call.
 - b. If applying for an Endorsement as an Active Duty Military Chaplain, the Candidate must have three years of experience serving in a local church setting.
9. When the above qualifications are met, the Candidate can apply for Ecclesiastical Endorsement to the Association, following the procedures outlined in Section 9 of the MOM. The Association reviews the documents, interviews the candidate, and determines whether it will recommend that the Ecclesiastical Endorser approve the request. The request to the Ecclesiastical Endorser is made in the same manner as described in step #5.

Transfer of Ecclesiastical Endorsement for Military Chaplains

Currently there is considerable 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 4 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 9 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.

Once 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. Once a deadline for transfer is determined, 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 Letter of Approval 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 Letter of Approval be transferred. The MID is required to complete the application for endorsement, the file as outlined in Section 9 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.

Rev. Stephen B. Boyd, Ecclesiastical Endorser
Minister for Chaplains and Ministers in Specialized Settings
Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization Team