

PROCEDURES FOR TRANSFER OF GOOD MINISTERIAL STANDING BETWEEN ASSOCIATIONS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

■ “Standing” is that which brings an Authorized Minister, Local Church and Association into a covenant of mutual accountability, and gives an Association oversight of an Authorized Minister (UCC Bylaws, Article I Paragraph 157). The good standing of an Authorized Minister may be (1) *active*, (2) *leave of absence* not resulting from a fitness review, or (3) *retired*, all of which are considered equally to be forms of good standing. For Ordained and Commissioned Ministers, good standing may be transferred between Associations in accordance with the following procedures; Licensed Ministers may not transfer their standings between Associations, by virtue of the definition of licensure in the United Church of Christ.

Additional designations of “standing” include *suspended* and *inactive*. These ministerial standings are not transferrable between Associations.

- A minister with *suspended* standing is subject to continued oversight by her/his Association.
- An *inactive* minister is one who no longer is serving in a three- or four-way covenant and who no longer has authorization or standing in the United Church of Christ. Though no longer subject to oversight, the inactive minister’s Ministerial File is archived by the Association where standing was last held.

A minister whose standing has been *terminated* does not have standing within the United Church of Christ, and his/her Ministerial File remains with the Association that terminated standing. A person whose ministerial standing has been terminated usually must return to the terminating Association if seeking reinstatement of standing.

A *retired* minister may hold standing in the Association of her/his choice and may have local church membership outside of that Association. If, however, a retired minister enters into any covenantal agreement for ministry service with a local church or calling body, then ministerial standing should be transferred to the appropriate local Association, with continued documentation (e.g. boundary awareness training, continuing education, current criminal background check) in the Ministerial File.

Member in Discernment and *Privilege of Call* are not “standings” and therefore may not be transferred between Associations.

Dual Standing may not be transferred between Associations, as dual standing is terminated when a minister leaves the position for which s/he received such standing.

Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing may be transferred between Associations, in conversation with the appropriate Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

■ Good standing of an Authorized Minister is evidenced through the following documentation, which is collected continually as the **Ministerial File**, a record of the United Church of Christ that documents an Authorized Minister’s covenant with the denomination, its Local Churches, Associations and Conferences. During a Transfer of Standing, the Ministerial File is copied by the Association of an Authorized Minister’s current standing and it is conveyed in total to the receiving Association.

1. Record of local church membership.
2. Documentation of ordination or commission.
3. Documentation of the four forms of oversight in covenantal cooperation with an Association: Information Review Forms, Periodic Support Consultation reports, Situational Support Consultation reports (if any), Fitness Review reports (if any).
4. Documentation of boundary awareness training and continuing education.
5. Most recent validated ministerial profile; on rare occasions when an authorized minister receives a call without a ministerial profile, then the individual’s most recent criminal background check should be included in the Ministerial File.

6. Copy of current three- or four-way covenant and (for local church pastorates) copy of call agreement, unless the Authorized Minister's standing is *leave of absence* or *inactive*.
7. Copy of ecclesiastical endorsement, if applicable. Ecclesiastical endorsement is transferrable between Associations, however the Authorized Minister and Association should consult with the Denominational Endorser to review necessary forms.
8. Documentation of changes in ecumenical standing (e.g. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing with the Disciples of Christ, authorization with the Metropolitan Community Church, authorization with the Fellowship of Affirming Ministries, Dual Standing in another denomination) and any conditions thereof.
9. Addenda to the Ministerial File include:
 - Pre-authorization documentation for *Member in Discernment* and *Privilege of Call* discernment processes such as psychological assessment reports, original authorization in another denomination, educational records, ordination/authorization paper, Committee on Ministry minutes, third party references, etc.
 - Documentation of a Fitness Review procedure: timeline of events, Committee on Ministry minutes, interviews, outcomes (including program of growth if any), etc.

■ Transfer of Standing assumes (1) an Authorized Minister's good standing and (2) full faith between Associations. The process of Transfer of Standing has both *administrative* and *relational* components between the Authorized Minister, the Originating Association and the Receiving Association (with Committees on Ministry often acting on behalf of their Associations), as outlined in these steps:

	AUTHORIZED MINISTER	RECEIVING ASSOCIATION	ORIGINATING ASSOCIATION
1.	Initiates the Transfer of Standing process by requesting a meeting with the Receiving Association and/or its Committee on Ministry.	If the Receiving Association becomes aware of an Authorized Minister who is new in the region but has not yet initiated Transfer of Standing, then the Receiving Association invites the Authorized Minister to a meeting as outlined below.	If the Receiving Association and/or Authorized Minister do not initiate Transfer of Standing and the Originating Association has knowledge of the Authorized Minister's relocation or new call, then the Originating Association contacts the Authorized Minister to prompt a Transfer of Standing process.
2.		<p>Meets with the Authorized Minister in a timely fashion to become acquainted with the minister and inquire as to the reason(s) for a Transfer of standing.</p> <p>In response to this meeting, the Receiving Association <u>must say no</u> and decline to initiate Transfer of Standing procedures if there exists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ no evidence of call, in which case the minister is encouraged to seek a call and to maintain his/her covenantal relationship with the Originating Association; or 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ no local church membership, in which case the minister is encouraged to join a UCC church and to return to the Receiving Association at a later date to request Transfer of Standing. ▪ <i>Exceptions may be made for ministers who are retired or on leave of absence.</i> <p>The Receiving Association <u>may not decline</u> to begin the Transfer of Standing process due to personality conflicts, rumors, or “bad blood” between Associations.</p>	
3.	<p>With the Receiving Association’s agreement to begin a Transfer of Standing, Authorized Minister signs a Transfer of Standing Request and Consent to Information Release (see sample).</p> <p>Transfer of Standing does not continue without the signed Transfer of Standing Request and Consent to Information Release.</p>	<p>The Receiving Association accepts the signed Transfer of Standing Request and Consent to Information Release from the Authorized Minister and contacts the Originating Association in a timely fashion.</p> <p>Transfer of Standing does not continue without the signed Transfer of Standing Request and Consent to Information Release.</p>	

4.			<p>In response to the Transfer of Standing Request, the Originating Association <i>must say no</i> to the request if the Originating Association has a pending or incomplete oversight process (specifically Situational Support Consultation or Fitness Review). In such a situation, the Originating Association communicates promptly with the Receiving Association and makes concrete plans with the Authorized Minister to continue oversight. Matters of oversight should be handled with integrity and timeliness by every Association.</p>
5.			<p>Barring open processes of oversight, upon receipt of the Transfer of Standing Request, the Originating Association collaborates with its Conference Office to prepare the Ministerial File for transfer to the Receiving Association: copying the files outlined above, keeping one set of records in the Originating Association's archives while providing a duplicate copy to the Receiving Association.</p>

			The transfer of the Ministerial File does not represent the completion of the Transfer of Standing process nor of the Originating Association's responsibilities in the process.
6.		<p>The Receiving Association reviews the Ministerial File to discern its next steps in Transfer of Standing.</p> <p>The review of the Ministerial File is an <i>administrative</i> step in Transfer of Standing, accompanied necessarily by the <i>relational</i> step of meeting with the Authorized Minister. Because Transfer of Standing is specific to those Authorized Ministers in good standing, the Receiving Association reviews the Ministerial File with full faith in the Originating Association's processes of authorization and oversight.</p> <p>As it reviews the Ministerial File, the Receiving Association <i>must say no</i> to the Transfer of Standing request if:</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ there is a pending or an unfinished oversight process; or ▪ the Ministerial File holds zero documentation. <p>The Receiving Association <u>may say no</u> to Transfer of Standing if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ there is evidence in the Ministerial File of a lack of boundary training and/or continuing education (bearing in mind the varying expectations of Conferences and Associations); or ▪ the Ministerial File is significantly incomplete. <p>The Receiving Association <u>may not say no</u> to Transfer of Standing if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the Receiving Association disputes the Authorized Minister's formational/ educational path; or ▪ the Receiving Association has unverifiable concerns about the Authorized Minister or 	
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		<p>holds bias against the Authorized Minister's gender identity, gender expression, race/ethnicity, language, or sexual orientation; or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the Receiving Association holds bias against the Originating Association. <p>The Receiving Association conveys to the Authorized Minister its decision to decline or affirm the Transfer of Standing; the Receiving Association also reports its decision to the Originating Association.</p> <p>In the event of a decline, the Receiving Association should clarify next steps for the Authorized Minister and identify the appropriate oversight body for follow-up (most likely the Originating Association).</p> <p>In the event of an affirmation, the Receiving Association should outline (usually in the three- or four-way covenant) its expectations for the Authorized Minister's ongoing formation and oversight, including</p>	
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	<p>The Authorized Minister agrees, usually by virtue of his/her signature on the three- or four-way covenant, to fulfill the covenantal expectations of the Receiving Association that now holds his/her ministerial standing.</p>	<p>continuing education and boundary awareness training as well as the appropriate timing for an Information Review (often annual) and a Periodic Support Consultation (often every three years).</p>	
7.		<p>The Receiving Association reports the completed Transfer of Standing to the Association or Conference office and to the Association or Conference Registrar. The Registrar or Association/Conference office completes the Transfer of Standing in the United Church of Christ's Data Hub.</p>	<p>The Originating Association initiates the Transfer of Standing in the United Church of Christ's Data Hub.</p>

Request for Transfer of Ministerial Standing and Consent to Release Information

SAMPLE

I, _____, do hereby grant permission to the _____ Association of _____ Conference where my ministerial standing is currently held to send a copy of my Ministerial File, which it has kept and in which it has recorded the continuation of my standing and oversight, to the _____ Association of _____ Conference in order to facilitate my request for a transfer of my ministerial standing.

I understand that my Ministerial File is the property of the United Church of Christ; that my current Association may release the Ministerial File to a receiving Association within the appropriate bounds of standing and oversight; and that Association, Conference and other persons may comment on my background and character to the receiving Association, Conference and other persons. I hereby release such persons from all liability arising from their responses and comments made in good faith and without malice. I further understand that completion of this form is required for my transfer of ministerial standing request to be initiated and completed.

This request and consent form should be relayed to the Committee on Ministry Chairperson of the Association (or Conference acting as an Association) that currently holds my ministerial standing:

Name: _____ Street Address: _____
Email: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

The complete copy of my Ministerial File should be sent to the following person in the receiving Association:

Name: _____ Street Address: _____
Email: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Signed (Authorized Minister)

Date