

## **ORDER FOR CREATION OR RENEWAL OF A LAY MINISTERIAL STANDING COVENANT**

This order is to be held during worship at a Local Church of an Association, or during an Association meeting or other event. It involves the participation of Local Church, Association, and Conference as covenantal representatives. It is appropriate for a Committee on Ministry representative to be present, along with the Lay Ministerial Standing pastoral supervisor, and a representative of the Conference.

This order may be incorporated into a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word following the sermon.

As stated in *Manual on Ministry*,<sup>1</sup> in cases where an ordained minister is not available to serve in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ, and when a lay member has been identified to meet the representative need of the United Church of Christ in a specific time and place of ministerial service, the Association can confer authority to celebrate the sacraments through Lay Ministerial Standing. Lay persons who hold Lay Ministerial Standing are required to participate in ecclesial systems of oversight and adhere to the UCC Ministerial Code.

This liturgy may be used for a lay member who has met the Association's requirements for Lay Ministerial Standing. That member might already be a Member in Discernment, or might not, or might become a Member in Discernment. In all cases, a Lay Ministerial Standing covenant is subject to annual renewal between the Local Church and the Association.

### **Outline**

**Greeting**

**Introduction**

**Lay Ministerial Standing Vows**

**Prayer**

**Declaration**

**Benediction**

*All may be seated except representatives of the Committee on Ministry, representative members of the Local Church where the candidate holds active membership, the candidate's advisor/supervisor, and the candidate.*

### **Greeting**

*A representative of the Committee on Ministry may greet the people, and the people may respond with these or similar words.*

***Committee On Ministry Representative:***

Greetings in the name of Jesus,  
God-with-us, Emmanuel.

***Congregation:***

**Greetings in the name of Christ,  
the Church's cornerstone.**

***Committee On Ministry Representative:***

We welcome all to this occasion  
recognizing a covenant between settings of the church  
and conferring the authority  
of Lay Ministerial Standing  
one year at a time, on behalf of the wider United Church of Christ.

*The candidate may be invited to come forward along with the Moderator or other representatives of the congregation. An unsigned covenant for Lay Ministerial Standing is presented at the communion table or baptismal font.*

### **Vows**

***Lay Ministerial Standing Supervisor (addressing candidate):***

Do you understand your service to be representative of the United Church of Christ for this particular season and for the particular role and tasks of \_\_\_\_\_?

***Candidate:***

I do.

***Lay Ministerial Standing Supervisor:***

Do you acknowledge that Lay Ministerial Standing is a temporary, accountable, and covenantal relationship with the Association, to meet the needs of the Local Church?

***Candidate:***

I do.

***Lay Ministerial Standing Supervisor:***

Do you commit this year to meeting regularly with myself as a representative of the Association?

***Candidate:***

I do.

***Lay Ministerial Standing Supervisor:***

For this coming year, do you accept the responsibility of sacramental service with accountability to the wider church?

***Candidate:***

I do, with God's help.

*Supervisor presents to candidate a copy of the UCC Ministerial Code.*

***Lay Ministerial Standing Supervisor:***

Do you commit to abiding by the ethical standards of the United Church of Christ, as given in the UCC Ministerial Code?

***Candidate:***

I do, with God's help.

***Conference Representative:***

Do you acknowledge that Lay Ministerial Standing involves a temporary and covenantal relationship between your Local Church and the Association?

***Members of the Local Church:***

We do.

***Conference Representative:***

Do you commit to mutuality in ministry with your Lay Minister, seeking the mind of Christ together, not expecting one member to be the entire church, but rather encouraging each person to play a part?

***Members of the Local Church:***

**We do, with God's help.**

**Conference Representative:**

The name of Conference Conference of the United Church of Christ commits to continue this journey with your congregation, seeking in prayer to listen with you to God's call for your future.

*If the candidate is a Member in Discernment, vows continue with the following questions to the congregation.*

**Lay Ministerial Standing Supervisor:**

Does name of local church United Church of Christ undertake with name of MID the journey of ministerial preparation and formation, expecting to hear annually from the Committee on Ministry concerning their status as a Member(s) in Discernment?

**Members of the Local Church Discernment Committee:**

**We do, with God's help.**

**Lay Ministerial Standing Supervisor:**

Do you who are members of the MID's Local Church Discernment Committee promise to support their journey of discernment through prayer, encouragement, through meeting together, and listening together to God's call?

**Members of the Local Church Discernment Committee:**

**We do, with God's help.**

*The document attesting the Lay Ministerial Standing covenant is signed by all parties. A song or hymn may be sung, such as an a capella "Amen" chorus.*

**PRAYER**

*All who are able may stand.*

**Leader:**

Let us pray.

**All:**

**We give thanks to you, God, for your ongoing call on our lives. We thank you for our companion in Christ, name of Lay Minister. We trust you to provide what is needed to carry out these responsibilities for this worshipping community at this time.**

**DECLARATION*****Committee on Ministry Representative:***

Having gathered in covenantal partnership  
and having witnessed these shared vows  
with the *\_\_name of Conference\_\_* and with *\_\_name of Local Church\_\_*,  
the Committee on Ministry of the *\_\_name of Association\_\_* confers Lay  
Ministerial Standing upon *\_\_candidate name\_\_*.

**BENEDICTION*****Conference Representative:***

Hear these words from Scripture:

The One who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it!<sup>ii</sup>

In Christ's name, and in covenantal partnership across Local Church,  
Association, and Conference settings of the United Church of Christ,  
now let us be equipped and built up for the work of the Body of Christ  
in the world, remembering the Way of Jesus, who came not to be served  
but to serve.

***All:***

**Amen.**

*The Committee on Ministry representative(s) may give a greeting of  
Christian love such as a sign of peace, and may present an appropriate  
certificate to the Lay Minister.*

*A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word may continue,  
or a hymn and a benediction may close the order.*

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<sup>i</sup> Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization. *Manual on Ministry: A Guide to Authorizing Ministry in the United Church of Christ*. (Cleveland, OH: Local Church Ministries, A Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ, 2018).

<sup>ii</sup> Philippians 1:6, paraphrase