

PREPARING FOR THE 2018 EDITION OF THE MANUAL ON MINISTRY

To our Committees on Ministry, conference colleagues, and the wider United Church of Christ,

Happy Easter and blessings in this Eastertide.

In 2017, a draft of the re-visioned Manual on Ministry was presented by the Habakkuk Group¹ for conversation across the United Church of Christ. The group was grateful for and listened deeply to the wider church's engagement of this draft: at the 2016 AM21 event and at a General Synod hearing in 2017, at five Regional AM21 events throughout 2017, in written feedback and through individual conversations, with judicatory staff and Committee on Ministry members, lay persons and authorized ministers, national staff, seminary and regional theological education partners.

At its December 2017 meeting, the Habakkuk Group worked to distill all of these conversations, placing the breadth of feedback alongside its own discernment in order to make the decisions necessary to move the drafted Manual on Ministry toward the next edition of the Manual on Ministry. While those decisions will be most effectively conveyed to the wider church through the completion of the next edition of the Manual on Ministry, three particular decisions are important to convey in the meantime:

- an option for Lay Ministerial Standing, rooted theologically in the priesthood of all believers;
- a title revision from “Omega Standing” to “Exempt Standing”; and
- explicit processes for accountability to the requirements of ministerial standing.

The work of incorporating these decisions requires time in editing, which is being undertaken this spring. We are also working to finalize resources for Committees on Ministry (Section 3, outlined at the end of this document). The release of the next edition of MOM is expected in Fall 2018, in both print and digital versions.

Please note that one unchanged recommendation from 2017 is the recognition of current commissions and licenses, according to their respective terms of call and authorization. While these authorizations are inherently limited in time (licensure by intervals of renewal and commissioning by duration of call), Committees on Ministry continue to be responsible for the ongoing support and oversight of Commissioned Ministers and Licensed Ministers for the length of their authorization. [The 2017 Discussion Guide](#) remains useful for conversations about the forms and uses of ministerial authorization.

¹ From 2014 to 2017, the Habakkuk Group – a 17-person committee formed by a nominations process and comprised of laypersons, specialized ministers, local church pastors, and judicatory staff – dedicated its time and collective wisdom with the MESA Ministry Team to considering the needs of the Church for authorized ministry in the 21st century and of UCC Committees on Ministry for a relevant & re-visioned Manual on Ministry.

The ministry of Committees on Ministry continues even as the next Manual on Ministry is completed. Committees on Ministry are encouraged to feel confident in their continued use of the 2017 drafted Manual on Ministry as an authoritative resource, noting the above changes. The following charts offer a more detailed guide to advise Committees on Ministry about the aspects of the 2017 drafted MOM that will be revised in the next edition of MOM as well as those that will remain largely unchanged.

The Ministerial Excellence, Support & Authorization (MESA) Ministry Team remains available to the wider church, especially our Committees on Ministry and conference colleagues, for practical support through this season of transition.

Blessings and gratitude,

Holly MillerShank and Rachel Hackenberg for the MESA Ministry Team

Eleanore Chong and Cameron Barr, Co-Chairs for the Habakkuk Group

SECTION 1 (Theological Grounding)

BASED ON THE DECEMBER 2017 HABAKKUK MEETING, THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS IN SECTION 1 ARE “RECEIVING FURTHER EDITS” OR “READY TO BE USED”:

RECEIVING FURTHER EDITS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The theology of the priesthood of all believers will be revised to include Lay Ministerial Standing when a lay person is identified to represent the United Church of Christ for a particular season in an accountable covenantal relationship. Regions that began to use “Limited Standing” with the 2017 drafted MOM may simply switch their language to “Lay Ministerial Standing.”
READY TO BE USED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The theology of ordained ministry, the description of covenantal polity, the revised Marks for Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministers, and the faithful and effective marks for Committees on Ministry are widely affirmed and will not receive substantial edits.

SECTION 2: ARTICLE I (Members in Discernment)

BASED ON THE DECEMBER 2017 HABAKKUK MEETING, THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS/IDEAS IN SECTION 2 ARTICLE I ARE “RECEIVING FURTHER EDITS” OR “READY TO BE USED”:

RECEIVING FURTHER EDITS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The parameters for granting Lay Ministerial Standing to Members in Discernment will be revised; most training experiences for MIDs do not necessitate the granting of Lay Ministerial Standing. Regions that began to use “MID with Limited Standing” with the 2017 drafted MOM may simply switch their language to “MID with Lay Ministerial Standing.”
READY TO BE USED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The overall description of the Member in Discernment process is widely affirmed and will not receive substantial edits. Multiple paths of ministerial formation, including paths that utilize seminary education, are affirmed as both practical and beneficial for the formation of authorized ministers in the 21 st century.

SECTION 2: ARTICLE II (Ministers from Ecumenical Bodies)

BASED ON THE DECEMBER 2017 HABAKKUK MEETING, THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS/IDEAS IN SECTION 2 ARTICLE II ARE “RECEIVING FURTHER EDITS” OR “READY TO BE USED”:

RECEIVING FURTHER EDITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No substantial edits are needed to this article. The final adoption of Mutual Recognition and Orderly Exchange between the United Church of Christ and The United Church of Canada must be approved by both denominations. Guidelines for the interim process can be found at http://www.ucc.org/ministers_regional-ministers.
READY TO BE USED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The entirety of Section 2 Article II is ready to be used. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Note that ecumenical agreements only pertain to Ordained Ministers. This is not a change, but a clarification regarding ecumenical recognition (or not) of various denominations’ forms of ministerial authorization. For those ministers ordained by ecumenical traditions with which the United Church of Christ has not established mutual recognition of ordination, Dual Standing is encouraged while serving in a UCC ministry setting (if the minister is not seeking Privilege of Call).

SECTION 2: ARTICLE III (Ministerial Standing)

BASED ON THE DECEMBER 2017 HABAKKUK MEETING, THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS/IDEAS IN SECTION 2 ARTICLE III ARE “RECEIVING FURTHER EDITS” OR “READY TO BE USED”:

RECEIVING FURTHER EDITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A minor edit has been made to the Ministerial Code and is posted at http://www.ucc.org/ministers_regional-ministers. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The proposed name “Omega Standing” will be revised to “Exempt Standing” to clarify its intended use for clergy and Committees on Ministry who discern together that the clergy person can no longer (or no longer needs to) meet the ongoing requirements for ministerial standing. Regions that began to use “Omega Standing” with the 2017 drafted MOM may simply switch their language to “Exempt Standing.” <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The parameters for Lay Ministerial Standing are being clarified.
READY TO BE USED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The entirety of Section 2 Article III is ready to be used, noting the above edits that have been made and/or will be forthcoming.

SECTION 2: ARTICLE IV (Covenants and Endorsements)

BASED ON THE DECEMBER 2017 HABAKKUK MEETING, THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS/IDEAS IN SECTION 2 ARTICLE IV ARE “RECEIVING FURTHER EDITS” OR “READY TO BE USED”:

RECEIVING FURTHER EDITS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No substantial revisions will be made to the guidelines for forming covenants and considering ecclesiastical endorsements.
READY TO BE USED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The entirety of Section 2 Article IV is ready to be used. Revisions will be made for increased clarity, and charts will be added for improved useability.

SECTION 2: ARTICLE V (Accountability and Support)

BASED ON THE DECEMBER 2017 HABAKKUK MEETING, THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS/IDEAS IN SECTION 2 ARTICLE V ARE “RECEIVING FURTHER EDITS” OR “READY TO BE USED”:

RECEIVING FURTHER EDITS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additions will be made to clarify the processes by which Committees on Ministry hold persons accountable to the requirements for ongoing ministerial standing (e.g. boundary training and continuing education). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No substantial revisions will be made to the guidelines for vocational support, situational support, and fitness reviews.
READY TO BE USED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The entirety of Section 2 Article V is ready to be used. Minor edits will be made for increased clarity, and charts will be added for improved useability. Processes of accountability and support apply to all those who hold any type of ministerial standing.

SECTION 3: RESOURCES (Table of Contents)

Resources in Section 3 will be stored online and maintained by MESA. Unlike Sections 1 and 2 of the Manual on Ministry, Section 3 resources will be updated annually in order to reflect the needs and best practices of Committees on Ministry. Dates will be marked on all Section 3 resources so users can easily confirm most current versions.

RESOURCES FOR SECTION 1: THEOLOGICAL GROUNDING

COVENANTAL POLITY

THEOLOGY OF AUTHORIZED MINISTRY

- ✓ Sample liturgy for ordination

MARKS OF FAITHFUL & EFFECTIVE AUTHORIZED MINISTERS

- ✓ [Marks Assessment Rubric](#)
- ✓ [Journaling the Journey](#)
- ✓ Marks Mosaic cards

MINISTRY OF COMMITTEES ON MINISTRY

- ✓ [Discernment Travelogue](#)
- ✓ Committee on Ministry orientation booklet
- ✓ [Committee on Ministry Research Report](#)
- ✓ Registrar Orientation and Instructions

RESOURCES FOR SECTION 2: MINISTERIAL AUTHORIZATION

ARTICLE 1: MEMBERS IN DISCERNMENT

- ✓ Best practices for Local Church Discernment Committee
- ✓ Member in Discernment application form
- ✓ Discernment Expectations
- ✓ Discernment process checklist
 - Sample outlines of multiple paths of preparation
 - Sample outlines of portfolios and ordination papers
- ✓ [Discernment Travelogue](#)
- ✓ Best practices for Psychological Assessments
- ✓ Best practices relating to mental health & illness with MIDs/ministers
- ✓ Member in Discernment Advisor best practices
- ✓ Best practices for Ecclesiastical Councils
- ✓ Sample Ordination Interview

ARTICLE 2: ECUMENICALLY ORDAINED MINISTERS

- ✓ UCC Ministerial Standing application form
- ✓ Discernment process checklist/decision tree
- ✓ [Formula of Agreement](#)

ARTICLE 3: MINISTERIAL STANDING

- ✓ Journal on UCC Ministerial Code
- ✓ Eligibility for UCC Ministerial Profile
- ✓ Ministerial File Chart and Sample File
- ✓ Transfer of Standing Chart
- ✓ Standings in Ministry flowchart
- ✓ Leave of Absence request form, sample covenant, and best practices
- ✓ Exempt Standing request form and sample covenant

ARTICLE 4: COVENANTS AND ENDORSEMENTS OF ORDAINED MINISTERS

- ✓ Guidelines to COMs for discerning an ordainable call
- ✓ Guidelines to COMs for discerning an authorizable call
- ✓ Three-Way Covenant template
- ✓ Four-Way Covenant template
- ✓ Understanding ordination vs. endorsement
- ✓ Endorsement guidelines
 - for MIDs re: Chaplain Candidate Program
 - for professional organizations
 - for federal government chaplaincy
- ✓ Guidelines for transfer of endorsement

ARTICLE 5: ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUPPORT OF ORDAINED MINISTERS

- ✓ Guiding principles for oversight
- ✓ [Information Review Form](#)
- ✓ [Marks of Faithful & Effective Boundary Trainers](#)
- ✓ Periodic Vocational Support best practices
- ✓ Situational Support Consultation
 - sample agenda
 - case studies
 - sample report
- ✓ Fitness Review resources:
 - Guidelines to COMs between the raising of concern and the start of a Fitness Review
 - Roles of the Response Team
 - Reporting form
 - Confidentiality notices
 - Flowchart
 - FR flowchart for review of Conference Ministers

- Sample Agenda
- Sample Growth Plans
- Unified FR best practices
- Media Guidelines in a Fitness Review
- Appeals
- Suggested resources for victims of clergy sexual misconduct