

**THE MARKS OF FAITHFUL AND EFFECTIVE
AUTHORIZED MINISTERS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Revision as of April 29, 2009**

SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION FOR MINISTRY

1. A lived faith showing love of God, trust in Jesus, and openness to the Holy Spirit.
2. Devotion to the word of God as revealed through scripture and Christian traditions.
3. Commitment to life-long spiritual growth and practice, individually and in community.
4. A sense of being called by God and the community to authorized ministry in the church.
5. Openness to continuing discernment of one's call in community.

UCC IDENTITY FOR MINISTRY

1. Acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as sole Head of the Church.
2. A passion for the oneness of the body of Christ as expressed through commitment to ecumenism, justice, and the full embrace of all persons in the radical hospitality of God.
3. Active membership in a local church of the United Church of Christ.
4. An understanding of the concept of covenant and how it informs the nature, purpose, and polity of the United Church of Christ.
5. A willingness to live in the covenants of mutual accountability that characterize authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ.
6. Ongoing demonstration of commitment to the United Church of Christ.
7. Stewardship of resources, including financial support of the church in all of its settings.
8. Participation in the various settings of the United Church of Christ, including the conference/association and local church.

The ability:

9. to articulate diverse histories that comprise the United Church of Christ, to situate them in the broader evolution of faith traditions and to relate them to the theology, polity, and practices of the Member's local church, association, and conference.
10. to explain and work within the current polity of the UCC and its denominational structure, and to describe the covenantal relationships among the General Synod, national setting, conferences, associations, and local congregations of the UCC.
11. to share key elements of the UCC's statement of faith, constitution with its preamble, and bylaws regarding the governance, mission, and theologies of the UCC and their implications for the life of the church.
12. to articulate the UCC's commitment to being a united and uniting, multiracial and multicultural, open and affirming, accessible to all and just peace church.
13. to envision how the UCC in its various settings may respond to religious, social, economic, and political trends, changing demographics, and other emerging factors.
14. to use and promote the informational and educational resources available through UCC publications and websites.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL FORMATION FOR MINISTRY

1. A healthy sense of self as shaped by God, community, and personal experience.
2. A sense of theological identity and authority, while being responsive to the opinions and values of others, including those whom the Member will serve.
3. A healthy awareness of strengths, weaknesses and limits, and assumption of responsibility for one's body, mind and spirit.
4. Knowledge and observance of personal and professional boundaries in interpersonal, congregational, and community settings.
5. A commitment to continuing education, professional development, and life-long learning.
6. Demonstrated moral maturity, including integrity in personal and public life and responsibility to self, family, church, and community.

The ability:

7. to affirm the identities of others, including others very unlike oneself.
8. to engage in self-reflection and to seek and use feedback from others appropriately.
9. to engage productively in public discourse, expecting to grow and be transformed through the exchange of viewpoints.
10. to take initiative in leadership, and to frame and test a vision in community.
11. to listen empathically, communicate appropriately, and keep appropriate confidences.
12. to function as part of a team, to give and receive supervision, and to mutually equip and motivate the community of faith.

13. to be resourceful and adaptable, and know where to locate additional resources and seek consultation when needed.
14. to accept and promote diversity, to inspire others to do so, and to minister in a multicultural and multiracial, open and affirming, just peace, accessible to all, united and uniting church.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FOR MINISTRY

General Knowledge and Skills

The Ability:

1. to understand and appreciate a variety of perspectives of life.
2. to understand the profound differences that physical, psychological, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, class, cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic factors make in the ways that human beings experience the world.
3. to comprehend the impact of historical change upon the thoughts, feelings, and actions of individuals and societies.
4. to perceive how a person's perspectives and interests shape communication, and to appreciate the virtues and limitations of those perspectives and interests.
5. to grasp and evaluate the justifications that people give for their opinions.
6. to apply basic concepts of psychology to the understanding of oneself, others, and human interactions.
7. to appreciate the importance of symbols and images in human culture(s)
8. to understand various meanings and purposes of the arts.
9. to analyze social, political, environmental, and economic dynamics, using the tools of the social and natural sciences.
10. to use respectfully and relationally a basic knowledge of specific human cultures.
11. to communicate clearly and effectively with appropriate media and technologies.

Knowledge and Skills Specific to Authorized Ministry

1. A thorough knowledge of, and personal engagement with, the Bible.
2. Skill with methods of biblical interpretation, including the historic interpretive traditions of the church and contemporary methods, particularly those from historically underrepresented communities.
3. A deepening familiarity with the global history of the Christian churches through the ages and across cultures, including the newest Christian populations, and an understanding of the evolution of Christian communities in the United States.
4. A deepening familiarity with contemporary theological ways of thinking and with the rich and varied theological heritages, creeds, liturgies, and spiritual practices of the Christian churches.
5. An understanding of other religions and their foundational documents.

The ability:

6. to articulate a theological understanding of authorized ministry, and to relate it to the practice of ministry.
7. to analyze, evaluate, and integrate the biblical, historical, theological, and pastoral disciplines and practices in ways that contribute to fruitful and faithful Christian ministry.
8. to understand the nature, use, and misuse of power and authority, and to exercise them appropriately and effectively in authorized ministry.
9. to engage in community leadership that is collaborative and transformative.
10. to engage in respectful ecumenical and interfaith dialogue.
11. to celebrate the unique features of local faith communities while encouraging them to be receptive to perspectives from the broader church and world.
12. to appreciate, practice, and pass on traditions of faith while interpreting them in light of the context of a diverse and changing world.
13. to adapt the practices of ministry to the unique social, cultural, environmental and ecclesiastical aspects of particular settings.
14. to discern God's mission in the world and, in response, to lead ministries of compassion, nurture, justice, and proclamation that support fullness of life for all people.
15. to preach the good news, lead worship and participate in the sacraments in a manner faithful to the broader Christian heritage and appropriate to the characteristics of a specific culture and setting.
16. to provide effective and appropriate pastoral care and Christian education, and to equip and motivate others to share in these ministries.
17. to organize and implement programs, administer the operations of a complex organization, and initiate change when appropriate.
18. to read the contexts of a community's ministry and creatively lead that community through change or conflict.
19. to lead and encourage ministries of evangelism, service, stewardship and social transformation.
20. to understand and participate in the financial administration of the church and other religious organizations.