

April 19, 2011

From the CMA Church and Ministry Ordination Subcommittee:

Attached you will find the latest version of “Steps and Procedures for Ordination”, dated 4-7-11. The CMA Church and Ministry Committee has approved two significant revisions:

All documentation is to be sent to the Chicago Metropolitan Association office, to the attention of the CMA Church and Ministry Ordination Subcommittee. The second revision involves documentation indicating the support of the In Care person’s local church. The foundation of the United Church of Christ is the local church, with laity and clergy in partnership in ministry. It is essential during the discernment of ordination process that the local church, both laity and clergy, give support to the In Care person. As written evidence of this support, the CMA Church and Ministry Committee now requires a letter of recommendation for ordination from not only the local church in care committee, but also from the local church pastor. Although the support of the local church pastor of a person in discernment of ordination has always been primarily evidenced by his/her attendance at the Ordination Subcommittee and Church and Ministry Committee interviews, this revision brings that support intentionally into the beginning of the ordination process. This requirement can be one letter signed by both the local church pastor and a representative of the local church in care committee, or two separate letters.

Please use only this current version (dated 4-7-11) of “Steps and Procedures for Ordination”.

If you are currently in the ordination process and a letter from your local church in care committee was received prior to 4-7-11, a letter from your local church pastor is not required.

Ruth Stewart,
Chair, CMA Church and Ministry Ordination Subcommittee

Steps and Procedures for Ordination
Chicago Metropolitan Association
United Church of Christ

I. INTRODUCTION

“An ordained minister in the United Church of Christ is one of its members who has been called by God and ordained to preach and teach the gospel, to administer the sacraments and rites of the Church, and to exercise pastoral care and leadership.” (Article V, Paragraph 20 of the Constitution of the UCC)

Bylaw 105 provides that not more than six months prior to the conclusion of theological training, a student can apply through his or her local church to its Association for approval as a candidate for ordination.

By now you are either completing or have completed your two-year CMA In Care requirement. This two-year period of In Care is a special requirement of this association. You have now reached that point when you are ready to submit your materials to the CMA Church and Ministry Committee. Another step in the process that began so long ago is about to commence; you will need to be examined by the CMA Ordination Subcommittee, the full CMA Church and Ministry Committee and an Ecclesiastical Council before authorization for ordination may be granted. **You will continue to be In Care through the entirety of this process. It is essential for you to maintain your relationship with the CMA In Care Subcommittee by submitting your annual CMA In Care Renewal.**

To initiate the ordination process, you will need to ask the pastor and the In Care committee of the local church where you hold membership, and which is sponsoring your petition for ordination, to send a written recommendation to the Chicago Metropolitan Association, to the attention of the Church and Ministry Ordination Subcommittee, affirming your readiness for ministry and asking that you be ordained. This can be two separate letters or one letter signed by both pastor and an In Care committee representative.

Chicago Metropolitan Association
Illinois Conference – United Church of Christ
1407 E. 60th Street, 2nd Floor
Chicago, IL 60637

Telephone: 773-324-7650
Fax: 773-324-7692
Email: bertha@cmaucc.org
www.cmaucc.org

Please bear in mind that these final steps leading toward ordination are really part of the process that started back when you first heard the call to ministry. Perhaps it started even earlier for you, when you became confirmed or joined a UCC church and became active. Whatever the case, these closing steps are to be entered into with as much deliberation and respect for the process as the beginning steps.

As you begin this process, continue to draw on the support of the In Care committee of your local church and the pastor. Also, your advisor-mentor will be asked to be part of the process, in continued support of you and to share with the committee during your interviews. Your cluster dean can also be a good resource to check with as the process moves forward.

Consult the United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry (M.O.M.). This book can answer the most frequently asked questions regarding ordination and ecclesiastical endorsement. The book is a good resource to clarify what topics pertaining to ministry should be in your ordination paper. The Manual on Ministry is posted on the UCC website. In addition, your local church may have a copy. However, when there are discrepancies between M.O.M. and the CMA, follow the CMA steps and procedures.

The ordination process can take six months or longer depending on how materials are gathered, and schedules arranged, on calendar commitments, and the agenda of the CMA Church and Ministry Committee. The CMA has approximately 60 In Care students each year. Therefore, as you initiate the process, the time to complete it depends on your being **proactive**. Candidates are scheduled to meet with the CMA Ordination Subcommittee in turn when all documentation is received by the CMA office and reviewed by the chair of the CMA Ordination Subcommittee. When the CMA Ordination Subcommittee is satisfied that the candidate has demonstrated ‘readiness for ministry’ (through the assembled materials and interviews) they will recommend that the candidate be examined by the full CMA Church and Ministry Committee, which will determine the person’s readiness for an Ecclesiastical Council.

If the CMA Church and Ministry Committee recommends that the person be examined by an Ecclesiastical Council, the candidate will notify his or her local church pastor, and the pastor and candidate then contact the Dean of the cluster and the CMA Associate Conference Minister. Together they all coordinate a date for an Ecclesiastical Council.

II. MATERIALS TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE CMA ORDINATION SUBCOMMITTEE

You will need to prepare and submit to the Chicago Metropolitan Association office the following list of materials. The first two documents will establish your file which will be used by the CMA Church & Ministry Committee in their decision making and, following ordination, all documents will be kept in the Chicago Metropolitan Association Ministerial files.

1. **A letter affirming your readiness for ministry and asking to begin your ordination process from the pastor and the In Care committee of the local church where you hold membership, or two separate letters from these sources. It(they) should verify your membership and participation in a local church of the United Church of Christ. This(these) letter(s) is(are) to be sent to the CMA office, to the attention of the CMA Ordination Subcommittee.**
2. **Verification that your CMA In Care status is in good standing. You should request this letter be sent by the CMA In Care Subcommittee to the CMA office, to the attention of the Ordination Subcommittee. To be in good standing, it is essential for you to maintain your relationship with the CMA In Care Subcommittee by submitting your annual CMA In Care Renewal.**
3. A professional profile prepared by you and provided by the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry through the local CMA office. Profile forms should be filled out on the UCC website.
4. Your ordination paper. You will eventually send a copy of your ordination paper to each member of the CMA Ordination Subcommittee. A current list of the membership of the subcommittee will be provided once you are scheduled for an interview with the subcommittee. The ordination paper is the vehicle by which the subcommittee will make judgments concerning your readiness to move on to the next level. Please understand it as a theological statement of your current thinking. The ordination paper should include the following:
 - a. A summary of your personal theological position, with some reflection on, but not limited to the following:
 - * The UCC Statement of Faith
 - * The Sacraments, Baptism and Communion
 - * The Bible: its authority, relevance and application for today.
 - * The Church: its mission and ministry.
 - * Your understanding of UCC identity. Why do you want to be ordained in the UCC? Briefly demonstrate how our history and polity influence your understanding of the church and its ministry and mission.
 - * Mention of the writers, theologians, and/or preachers that you draw on to formulate your theological position and how they have influenced you.
 - * Brief description of your present ministry and/or call.
 - * Your understanding of pastoral ethics and boundaries (refer to Section I, pages 14-15 [Ordained Minister's Code] in M.O.M.)
 - * Read the ordination vows in the UCC book of worship and reflect upon the promises of these vows in your paper.
 - b. Please speak about the milestones in your life and how they relate to your Christian experience and your request for ordination. Your

ordination paper may eventually be posted on the CMA website. Please do not include personal details about someone without that person's permission and, if possible, relate how the experience has informed your faith story and discernment of call without giving details that could identify the person.

- c. Your understanding of your personal call to ministry, sometimes known as the "inner call."
 - d. The paper should be approximately 15 to 20 typewritten pages in length, double-spaced. It will be read by a representative group of the church, and your ability to communicate your beliefs to lay people as well as clergy is important. See M.O.M. Section III, step 5 (Documentation), for further suggestions as to how to go about communicating your theological presentation in your paper.
 - e. Please include your full name and date on each copy of the paper. We strongly suggest that your advisor-mentor and other persons read and critique your paper before its submission to the subcommittee.
5. A certified transcript from college. A certified transcript from seminary, or documented evidence of equivalent practical experience. (The CMA Ordination Subcommittee seeks full transcripts of your completed undergraduate and graduate degrees.)
 6. Four (4) letters of reference – two from seminary and two others from persons who are familiar with your professional work, perhaps field work supervisors. These letters should specifically speak to the issue of your ordination to the Christian ministry. We may call your references.
 7. A letter of reference from your Advisor/mentor.
 8. One audio or video recording of a sermon you have preached. Please record it during a service of worship with a live congregation present. More and more search committees are requesting these during the interview process.
 9. Verification of the time and place that you finished the requirement for Clinical Pastoral Education. (one quarter)
 10. A copy of the Calling documents, where applicable. These documents should be modeled after the **Illinois Conference Guidelines: Call and support of Ministry Leadership** found on the CMA website at <http://www.cmaucc.org/compguidelines.html> (Please consult Sect. III, P 13-15 of MOM for further clarification of the calling documents.) If other special circumstances apply which these resources do not cover, contact your Associate Conference Minister.
 11. Boundary Training Certification authorized by the Chicago Metropolitan Association.

All documentation is to be sent to the Chicago Metropolitan Association office, to the attention of the Church and Ministry Ordination Subcommittee.

III. PROCEDURES FOLLOWING SUBMISSION OF MATERIALS

After all of the above materials have been received by the CMA office and reviewed by the chair of the Ordination Subcommittee, the chair will contact the candidate to set a date to meet for an interview with the CMA Ordination Subcommittee. The purpose of this interview (and any subsequent interviews) is to determine your readiness to be examined by the full CMA Church and Ministry Committee.

The CMA Ordination Subcommittee requires the presence of your mentor and your local church pastor at this meeting, and any subsequent meetings with the subcommittee. The subcommittee will want to speak with these persons privately at the time of the meeting(s).

IV. ORDINATION EXAMINATION – APPEARANCE BEFORE FULL CMA CHURCH AND MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Upon recommendation of the CMA Ordination Subcommittee, an appointment will be made for you to appear before the CMA Church and Ministry Committee for examination.

Your final ordination paper is to be sent to the full committee no later than two (2) weeks before the date of your interview. It is important to the committee to have time to read, reflect and to prepare for your interview.

An interview with the full committee will be scheduled. The candidate will be asked to bring support persons. These persons should be your advisor/mentor and local church pastor and a member (or members) of the In Care committee of your local church. These persons should be individuals who can speak to your readiness for ministry. The interview will ordinarily take place at St. Peter's United Church of Christ, 125 W. Church Street, Elmhurst, IL, 60126.

After the candidate and support persons have been dismissed, the committee will make its decision. Options before the committee include:

- “Yes.” The Committee believes that the candidate meets the requirements for ordination within the United Church of Christ, and in the Committee’s judgment will be an effective and faithful ordained minister.
- “Yes, but...” The committee believes the candidate has the potential for ordained ministry, but it has certain reservations or concerns which must be addressed. The Committee may want to stipulate additional requirements of the candidate before making its final decision.
- “No, but...” The Committee believes that at this time significant qualifications for ordination in the United Church of Christ are lacking. It may indicate under what terms and conditions it would consider the application again.

- “No.” In some cases the committee may have to say “No” to a candidate if in its judgment the candidate has not fulfilled and cannot fulfill in the foreseeable future the requirements for ordination or will not be an effective and faithful ordained minister for the United Church of Christ. At this time, the Committee terminates the candidate’s In Care relationship with the Association.

(M.O.M. Ordained Ministry pp. 55-56)

V. ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL – APPEARANCE BEFORE CLUSTER

If the outcome of the examination is favorable, the CMA Committee on Church and Ministry will recommend you to an Ecclesiastical Council convened by your cluster of the Chicago Metropolitan Association for examination and final approval.

When recommendation to proceed to Ecclesiastical Council is approved by the full committee, you are asked to notify your local church pastor. Together with your Cluster Dean and the CMA Associate Conference Minister, you and your pastor will coordinate a date for your Ecclesiastical Council and make arrangements for distribution of your ordination paper in advance to lay delegates and clergy.

Options before the Ecclesiastical Council are:

- Approval for ordination, if the candidate has received a call to recognized ministry.
- Approved for ordination, pending a call to recognized ministry.
- Not approved for ordination.

Further information regarding the procedures to be followed at the Ecclesiastical Council is available from the Cluster Dean.

VI. ORDINATION PLANS

If ordination is approved by your Ecclesiastical Council, and if verification of a call has been received, ordination plans may proceed in the following manner.

1. You, the local church, and the Associate Conference Minister for the CMA will cooperatively plan a suitable service of ordination. It is strongly urged that the hour of service not be on Sunday morning, but on such a day and hour that would make possible the maximum participation of other lay and clergy in the Association. The ordination date and time can be scheduled only after consultation with the local church that will host your ordination and the Associate Conference Minister for the CMA.
2. “The Order of Ordination” should be based on the Book of Worship produced by the Office of Church Life and Leadership of the United Church of Christ. (Copyright 1986)

3. The ordaining officer must be the Associate Conference Minister for the CMA or a person designated by the Association. Additional participants may include a member of the Church and Ministry Committee and the representatives of your Cluster.
4. It is requested that an offering be taken at the service of ordination for the “In Care Student Fund” of the CMA.

It is hoped that these final steps toward ordination will continue to enrich your spiritual growth and your understanding of your call to ministry in the United Church of Christ. The members of the CMA Ordination Subcommittee want to be of help to answer questions and work with you during this time. Please call on us.

**CANDIDATE'S ORDINATION DOCUMENTATION CHECKLIST
CHURCH AND MINISTRY COMMITTEE
CHICAGO METROPOLITAN ASSOCIATION**

___ Read current "Steps and Procedures for Ordination" (found on the Illinois Conf. website)

Documentation

- ___ 1) 2 Letters of recommendation for ordination from local UCC church:
From _____ (local church pastor)
(date requested) _____ (date receipt confirmed)* _____
And _____ (local church In Care comm.)
(date requested) _____ (date receipt confirmed)* _____
OR: 1 Letter signed by _____ (local church pastor)
and _____ (local church In Care comm.)
(date requested) _____ (date receipt confirmed)* _____
- ___ 2) Written verification of Good Standing with CMA In Care Subcommittee
(date requested) _____ (date receipt confirmed)* _____
- ___ 3) Profile (date requested) _____ (date receipt confirmed)* _____
- ___ 4) Ordination paper (date sent) _____ (date receipt conf.)* _____
- ___ 5) Transcripts: Undergraduate (date requested) _____ (receipt conf.)* _____
Seminary (date requested) _____ (receipt conf.)* _____
- ___ 6) 4 Letters of Reference:
2 from Academic sources:
(1) _____
(date requested) _____ (date receipt confirmed)* _____
(2) _____
(date requested) _____ (date receipt confirmed)* _____
2 from Professional sources:
(3) _____
(date requested) _____ (date receipt confirmed)* _____
(4) _____
(date requested) _____ (date receipt confirmed)* _____
- ___ 7) Letter from Advisor/Mentor (date requested) _____ (date receipt conf.)* _____
- ___ 8) Sermon: Audio or Video (date sent) _____ (date receipt conf.)* _____
- ___ 9) CPE verification (date receipt confirmed)* _____
- ___ 10) Boundary Training certificate (date receipt confirmed)* _____
- ___ 11) Calling documents (1) 3-way or 4-way call/covenant agreement
(2) Job description
(3) Financial package
(date sent) _____ (date receipt confirmed)* _____

*(Confirmation of receipt by CMA)