



Responsibilities of the local church with a Member-in-Discernment

Local Churches play a vital role in identifying, nurturing, and supporting members who may be called to Authorized Ministry. The UCC affirms that all members are called to ministry by their Baptism. Some are called to Authorized Ministry on behalf of the whole Church. Each Local Church is encouraged to identify and nurture future leaders of the Church.

When a church member feels called to Authorized Ministry, Ordained, Licensed, or Commissioned, the Local Church Governing Body:

1. recommends them to the Discernment Working Group (DWG) of the Association's Committee on Ministry to begin the official Member-In-Discernment (MiD) process.
2. appoints a Ministry Discernment Team (3 to 5 members) who will:
 - o explore the person's understanding of Christian faith and practice, sense of call, gifts for ministry, experiences in leadership, personal history, spiritual journey, length of membership, and anticipated practical concerns around education and finances.
 - o discern that the member has gifts for ministry and a call by God to Authorized Ministry
 - o recommend the member to the Governing Body of the Local Church
3. makes a formal written request to the DWG that the member be received as a MID.

It is vital that the Local Church continue to support the MID during the discernment process, which lasts a minimum of one year. Generally the process takes at least three years, in some cases longer.

The Local Church will maintain contact with both the member and the DWG, may read and review papers written by the MID, and a representative might be asked to accompany the MID to meetings with the DWG. It stands with the MID in support and exploration.

Part of the application process involves a psychological evaluation. Usually one third of that fee is paid by the Local Church, one third by the applicant and one third by the Association.

As the process reaches a conclusion, the MiD is examined for Authorized Ministry. This process includes a worship service led by the MiD which members of the local church may attend. This is followed by an interview with the Committee on Ministry, which the Pastor of the local church and the MiD Advisor are expected to attend, in support of the MiD. If, after examination, the Committee on Ministry determines that the MID is fit for Authorized Ministry in the UCC it will make the determination that the MID is approved for Authorization pending a valid call. With a valid call, an appropriate Authorizing service, such as ordination, may be scheduled with the Association General Minister. Usually this service is held in the Local Church.

We have no Authorized Ministry without the recommendations and support of the Local Church. Thank you for helping someone from your congregation in discerning the ways in which God is calling them to ministry.