

GUIDELINES FOR DISCERNING AUTHORIZABLE CALL

An individual who is called to ordained ministry is authorized to serve and to lead on behalf of the United Church of Christ and the Church Universal. Once an individual has received an ordainable call and has been ordained by their Association, an Association/Conference may require that s/he must serve in an authorizable call (ministry setting) in order to maintain good standing within the denomination. The discernment of an authorizable call is a decision empowered to Committees on Ministry by their Associations. Such a decision considers both the local context and the wider context of the United Church of Christ. The Church Universal, the United Church of Christ and Committees on Ministry throughout the denomination are coming to understand that the setting for an authorizable call may or may not be in the Local Church and may or may not include full-time compensation. Like an ordainable call, an authorizable call should demonstrate three essential qualities to the Committee on Ministry.

This authorizable call is covenantal:

- the covenantal nature of this call is demonstrated in a **Three or Four-Way Covenant**;
- the call demonstrates an ongoing commitment to the United Church of Christ;
- the call serves a need of the Church Universal;
- the call demonstrates that the individual called is to function as part of a team, to give and receive supervision, and to mutually equip and motivate a community of faith, not necessarily a Local Church;
- the call demonstrates that the individual called is to engage in community leadership that is collaborative and transformative;
- the call integrates the Biblical, historical, theological and pastoral disciplines and practices in ways that contribute fruitfully and faithfully to the Christian ministry and demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the United Church of Christ.

This authorizable call responds to the needs of the Church and Church Universal:

- in this call, the individual is expected to appreciate, practice and pass on traditions of faith while interpreting them in light of the context of a diverse and changing world;
- in this call, the individual preaches and/or testifies to the Good News, in part through the sacraments, to a broader Christian heritage;
- this call serves the Church and serves God;
- this call exhibits a commitment to the core values of the United Church of Christ: continuing testament, extravagant welcome, and changing lives;
- this call experiences and appreciates a variety of theological perspectives;
- this call draws on the ministry of Jesus Christ to confront injustice and oppression;
- this call practices the hospitality of God;
- the authorizable call is within the capabilities, experiences and capacities of the Ordained Minister.

This authorizable call involves mutuality in ministry between the minister and the community.

- this call demonstrates mutuality of ministry through a Three- or Four-way Covenant;
- this call demonstrates an understanding of community;
- this call encourages the building of relationships of mutual trust and interdependence;
- this call integrates theological reflection in teaching, preaching, and ecclesial and community leadership;
- this call respects the dignity of all God's people;
- this call is within the capabilities, experience and capacities of the Ordained Minister;

Tools that can help a Committee on Ministry discern whether a call to ministry is Authorizable:

- Prayer and Discernment
- Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers
- Position Description and Scope of Work
- Call Agreement/Employment Contract
- Three- or Four- Way Covenants