

Receiving a Member in Discernment - York Association

Note: This is based on the current UCC Manual on Ministry, and Draft of the revised MOM, with additional information explaining specifics of the process in the York Association.

A candidate is first received as a Member in Discernment of the Local Congregation.

The process begins with the local congregation, with conversations between a local church member and his or her church pastor about a discerned call to [ordained] ministry. The candidate initiates this discussion after being an active member of that local UCC church for at least a year.

In the York Association, if the decision is made by the church member to proceed, the pastor contacts the Association Committee on Ministry Chairperson. The Chairperson will instruct the pastor and candidate to obtain copies of the UCC Manual on Ministry, "Student in Care" section (available online at ucc.org/ministers_manual).

Application is then made to the governing board of the local church (or other appropriate church committee), by the pastor and the candidate, for an interview. The candidate provides the governing board with information about desire and plans to prepare for authorized ministry (Ordained, Licensed, or Commissioned) in the United Church of Christ. To be included in a written statement is a description of his or her Christian pilgrimage, biography, and how the call is understood at this time. The candidate also provides documentation of formal education, and description of continuing educational plans.

The interview with the church governing board takes place after the candidate has provided the required materials. The governing board reviews the material and, after conversation with the candidate, makes a decision whether or not to initiate the Member in Discernment process.

In the York Association, if the decision of the church board is positive, the board will recommend to the Association Committee on Ministry that the person be considered as a Member in Discernment of the Association.

The local church is encouraged to form a Member in Discernment Committee (usually a small group) that will support the candidate throughout his or her journey to authorized ministry. That Committee should obtain a copy of the UCC Manual on Ministry, "Student in Care" section.

A candidate is received as a Member in Discernment of the York Association

Application to the Committee on Ministry on behalf of the candidate is made by the local church by contacting the Committee Chairperson and requesting an interview. As outlined in Step 5 on page 12 of the "Student in Care" section, Manual on Ministry, the following materials are required by the Committee on Ministry prior to the initial interview:

- The candidate's letter of application to be received as a Member in Discernment of the Association;
- Verification of membership in a local church of the United Church of Christ;
- Three letters of reference, including a letter of recommendation from the candidate's pastor;
- The material provided to the governing board and pastor, revised if necessary;
- A description of the process used by the local church to interview and recommend the candidate;
- The York Association **Application form**.

After the Committee on Ministry has received and reviewed the documentation material from the local church, an initial interview is scheduled with the candidate. The candidate's pastor is expected to attend. One or more members of the local church Member in Discernment Committee are welcome as well, if desired by the candidate.

If after the initial interview the Committee agrees to continue the process, the candidate is directed to schedule **psychological assessment (MAP testing)** through the Samaritan Center. Information is provided to the candidate about how to schedule the testing. The cost of testing is shared three ways by Penn Central Conference, the York Association, and the candidate's local church. Billing is done by the Conference.

Testing results in summary form are released by the candidate to the Committee on Ministry, which reviews the testing recommendations. This information is treated with confidentiality. A **post-testing interview** is then scheduled with the candidate and the Committee. The candidate's pastor is expected to attend.

Following the post-testing interview, a decision is made by the Committee on Ministry whether to continue the process, and if there are any conditions to be met. (See the Manual on Ministry for further explanation.) The decision of the Committee is shared with the candidate (either after the person has been excused for a brief period to allow for Committee discussion, or later by phone.) If necessary, a third interview is scheduled with the candidate to go over conditions of Member in Discernment.

If the outcome has been positive, the candidate is received as a Member in Discernment of the York Association, and an **Advisor** is appointed. (See the Manual on Ministry for a description of the role of an Advisor.) The candidate is then introduced to the whole York Association at the next meeting of the Association and through the Association newsletter.

The Member in Discernment engages in the prescribed process and course of study, and continues to communicate with the Advisor, the local church Member in Discernment Committee, and the Association Committee on Ministry regularly. Member in Discernment status is evaluated and renewed annually. (Details of this process are also outlined in the Manual on Ministry.)

Questions may be directed to the Chairperson at any time.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBER IN DISCERNMENT STATUS

The Committee on Ministry
of the York Association

CHURCH NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CHURCH CONTACT PERSON/PASTOR _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

EMAIL _____

APPLICANT'S NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

EMAIL _____

We request that the above named person be considered for Member in Discernment status in the York Association.

At an official meeting of the [church governing body] _____
on _____, **20**____, **it was voted to inform the York Association Committee on Ministry of this desire.**

The applicant has been a member of our congregation for _____ **years.**
We request that she/he be examined and, if found to be fit and ready, be received by the York Association as a Member in Discernment.

SIGNED _____

ROLE/OFFICE _____

**Action by the York Association Committee on Ministry:
(to be filled out by the Committee)**

Date for initial interview _____

Vote of the Committee _____

Advisor assigned _____

RELEASE OF INFORMATION AGREEMENT

The Committee on Ministry
of the York Association

I, _____ hereby authorize
_____ to release the

**summary of MAP testing to the Chairperson of the York Association
Committee on Ministry, with the understanding that this material is treated
with confidentiality.**

**I further authorize the release of evaluations (either written or oral) of my
progress (such as academic, field work, spiritual development,
psychological assessments, advisor's comments, and clinical pastoral
education records).**

SIGNED _____

DATE _____

Send when completed to:

_____, Chairperson
York Association Committee on Ministry

(Mailing address)