



**Wisconsin Conference
United Church of Christ**

**MARKS OF FAITHFUL AND EFFECTIVE
AUTHORIZED MINISTERS**

MARKS OF FAITHFUL AND EFFECTIVE AUTHORIZED MINISTERS

Those who hold ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ are entrusted with and accountable for the faithfulness and effectiveness of their lives and ministries on its behalf. The development and demonstration of such faithfulness and effectiveness are

The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers affirm that the 21st century Church needs wise, knowledgeable, and ever-curious ministers. Consistent with the 2005 Ministry Issues Pronouncement of General Synod, the Marks convey that such learnedness is shaped through diverse educational experiences, lessons of life's journeys, personal character, and the Spirit's inspiration.

guided by the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ (the Marks), a tool created to meet the aims of the 2005 Ministry Issues Pronouncement of General Synod. The Ministry Issues Pronouncement sought to expand UCC definitions of learnedness and leadership in authorized ministry and to emphasize excellence in ministerial formation. Therefore, the Marks strive

to highlight the complex combination of talents, understandings, and skills needed for ministerial

leadership in the United Church of Christ. Committees on Ministry are guided in their work of authorizing and overseeing Ordained Ministers by the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers.

The Marks also have usefulness to Local Churches, ministry settings, Associations, and individuals as a discernment tool. The Marks are to be interpreted carefully within the many and varied contexts of particular UCC communities and ministries.

The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers, arranged in eight categories, are:

Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practices

- Loving God, following Jesus Christ, and being guided by the Holy Spirit; living a life of discipleship.
- Praying actively and nurturing spiritual practices.
- Being called to ordained ministry by God and the Church.
- Continuing discernment of one's call in community.
- Understanding the power of the Holy Spirit at work through the elements of Christian worship to nurture faith.

- Exhibiting a commitment to lifelong spiritual development and faithful personal stewardship.

Nurturing UCC Identity

- Acknowledging Jesus Christ as the sole Head of the Church.
- Communicating passion for the oneness of the Body of Christ (John 17:21).
- Holding active membership in a Local Church of the United Church of Christ.
- Participating in the various settings of the United Church of Christ, including Local Churches, Associations, Conferences, General Synod, and global ministries.
- Knowing and appreciating UCC history, polity, and theology.
- Exhibiting a commitment to the core values of the United Church of Christ: continuing testament, extravagant welcome, and changing lives.

Building Transformational Leadership Skills

- Empowering the Church to be faithful to God's call, reflective of Christ's mission, and open to the surprises of the Holy Spirit.

- Strategically creating the future of God's Church.
- Witnessing in the public square to God's redeeming power.
- Performing necessary and appropriate administrative tasks.
- Working collaboratively with intercultural awareness and sensitivity.
- Encouraging leadership development of self and others through continuing education and lifelong learning.

Engaging Sacred Stories and Traditions

- Exhibiting knowledge, understanding, and continuing study of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament.
- Maturing in effective proclamation and preaching.
- Understanding the history of the Christian Church, from biblical times forward.
- Bringing life to sacred stories and traditions in worship, proclamation, and witness.
- Leading faith formation effectively across generations.
- Holding the Holy with integrity, especially as represented in the sacraments.

Caring for All Creation

- Nurturing care and compassion for God's creation.
- Maintaining a basic understanding of mental health and wellness.
- Practicing self-care and life balance.
- Providing hope and healing to a hurting world.
- Attending to one's own spiritual and pastoral care, including engagement in supervision as appropriate.
- Stewarding the resources of the Church.

Participating in Theological Praxis

- Practicing theological reflection and engagement as part of one's sense of ministerial identity.
- Integrating theological reflection in teaching, preaching, and ecclesial and community leadership.
- Articulating a theology and practice of ministry consistent with the UCC Manual on Ministry.
- Demonstrating an appreciation for and participation in the ecumenical and interfaith partnerships of the United Church of Christ.
- Experiencing and appreciating a variety of theological perspectives.
- Embodying the UCC Ministerial Code.

Working Together for Justice and Mercy

- Drawing on the ministry of Jesus Christ to confront injustice and oppression.
- Practicing the radical hospitality of God.
- Identifying and working to overcome explicit and implicit bias in the life of the Church.
- Understanding community context and navigating change with a community.
- Engaging in mission and outreach.
- Building relationships of mutual trust and interdependence.

Strengthening Inter- and Intra-Personal Assets

- Developing and maintaining a healthy sense of self as shaped by God, community, and life experiences.
- Living in relationships of covenantal accountability with God and the Church.
- Exhibiting strong moral character and personal integrity.
- Respecting the dignity of all God's people.
- Understanding and ministering to stages of human development across the life span.
- Demonstrating excellent communication skills.

In the United Church of Christ, Associations⁸ have the authority to ordain ministers on behalf of the whole Church and to grant ministerial standing for the United Church of Christ. Associations, through their Committees on Ministry, work to discern God's call on a person's life for ordained ministry, both initially with a Member in Discernment and throughout an Ordained Minister's journey. While ordination itself is understood to be for a lifetime, ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ is a covenant that may be concluded by the person or the Association for a variety of reasons.

8 – Associations or Conferences acting as Associations.

Associations determine, usually through the work of Committees on Ministry and Ecclesiastical Councils, whether and when a person is to be ordained and/or received into Ordained Ministerial Standing. Associations are responsible, too, for oversight of all those with ministerial standing. Oversight includes the continuing support and accountability of those with standing, so that the United Church of Christ, in all its settings, may be led by faithful and effective servants.