

PROCEDURE FOR TRANSFER OF MINISTERIAL STANDING BETWEEN ASSOCIATIONS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Ministerial Standing¹: Ordained Ministerial Standing is a mutual relationship with defined systems of support and accountability that the Ordained Minister and Association engage together. The Ordained Minister demonstrates commitment to view their ministry as part of the whole ministry of the United Church of Christ and, in turn, the United Church of Christ (through the Association) commits to an Ordained Minister and claims their ministry as its own. An Association through its Committee on Ministry grants and holds ministerial standing; an Ordained Minister maintains standing in the Association where the Ordained Minister keeps their Local Church membership. Ministerial standing may be held in only one Association at a time.

Transfer of Standing: Ministerial standing is allowed and expected to move between Associations throughout the career and lifetime of an Ordained Minister. When an Ordained Minister moves their Local Church membership and/or enters into a call agreement which includes taking Local Church membership in an Association that is not their current Association of standing, ministerial standing must transfer between Associations so that support and accountability can continue. Ordained Ministerial Standing must transfer between Associations when an Ordained Minister moves their Local Church membership across Association boundaries, regardless of whether the minister has a new call with accompanying Three- or Four-Way Covenant, is on Leave of Absence, or is actively seeking a call.

Scenarios: Ministerial standing transfers from one Association to another as follows:

- Ordained Ministerial Standing when a minister accepts a call to a new Three- or Four-Way Covenant;
- Ordained Ministerial Standing while a minister is on documented Leave of Absence;

¹ This document reflects understandings concerning ordained ministry. A Commissioned Minister may similarly have their standing transferred if they accept a call to a new Three- or Four-Way Covenant within the same field as their current commissioning.

- Ordained Ministerial Standing when a minister moves UCC Local Church membership apart from circumstances of a new call;
- Ordained Ministerial Standing when a minister is actively seeking a new call;
- Ordained Ministerial Standing when a minister is completing a program of growth with an outcome of *Conditional Affirmation* may transfer their standing, along with transferring oversight of that program of growth, following clear communication between both Committees on Ministry.
- Exempt Standing at the minister's request, which can be held in an Association separate from where the minister holds UCC Local Church membership;
- Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing when a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister departs from one UCC ministry setting to immediately enter another UCC ministry setting, in conversation with the appropriate Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Ministerial File: The process of Transfer of Standing has both administrative and relational components between the Authorized Minister, the originating Association, and the receiving Association (with Committees on Ministry acting on behalf of their Associations). The sharing of a complete and up-to-date ministerial file is used for the receiving Association's Committee on Ministry to verify the minister's standing and participation in processes of support and accountability. The ministerial file is a perpetual record of the United Church of Christ documenting a minister's covenants with the denomination, its Local Churches, Associations, and Conferences. During a transfer of standing, the ministerial file is copied by the originating Association and the copy is conveyed in total to the receiving Association, while the original is archived. The file does not belong to the minister and the minister's permission is not required during this process.

Procedure: Transfer of standing can be initiated by any of the parties. Steps for a common transfer procedure include:

- 1) The minister requests a transfer of standing and a meeting with the receiving Committee on Ministry. The receiving Committee on Ministry may also request this meeting when it becomes aware of a

minister beginning a call in their Association and/or transferring their church membership to a Local Church within the Association.

- 2) The receiving Committee on Ministry requests the ministerial file from the originating Committee on Ministry.
- 3) The originating Committee on Ministry receives the request and – unless the request does not fit one of the ecclesial situations listed above or one of the exceptions listed below applies – transfers standing.
- 4) The originating Committee on Ministry sends a copy of the ministerial file to the receiving Committee on Ministry.
- 5) The receiving Committee on Ministry reviews the file and meets with the Ordained Minister.
- 6) The receiving Committee, unless one of the listed exceptions applies, votes to receive ministerial standing.
- 7) The decision of the receiving Committee is communicated to the minister and to the originating Committee and is recorded in the UCC Data Hub.
- 8) The originating Committee on Ministry administratively approves transfer in the UCC Data Hub.

Listed Exceptions: Ministerial standing does not transfer from one Association to another in the following cases:

- A minister under a Fitness Review whose outcome has not yet been deliberated is subject to continued oversight by their Association.
- A minister completing a program of growth as part of a fitness review with an outcome of *censure* or *suspension* is subject to continued oversight by their Association.
- A minister who has *resigned* standing or whose standing has been *terminated* does not have standing within the United Church of Christ. This person must request reinstatement of standing from the terminating Association, prior to any transfer of such standing.
- An individual with ecclesial status (a Member in Discernment, an ordained minister with Privilege of Call, or an ordained minister who is seeking Privilege of Call or seeking Ordained Ministerial

Partner Standing) does not yet have a ministerial standing and cannot transfer their status across Associations.

- Dual Standing and Lay Ministerial Standing do not transfer.

Completed transfer of standing gives authority for oversight to the receiving Association. Any historical matter that the originating Association did not adjudicate through a Fitness Review is subject to the new requirements of the receiving Association and may warrant an accountability process in the future.