

United Church of Christ  
**SEARCH AND CALL**

A Pilgrimage through  
Transitions and New Beginnings

**SECTION SIX**

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
MINISTERIAL PROFILE**

*"Can You See Anything?"*

*Mark 8:23b*

## SECTION SIX

### THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST MINISTERIAL PROFILE

*"Can You See Anything?"*

*Mark 8:23b*

#### INTRODUCTION

The components of a UCC Ministerial Profile offer members of your Search Committee the opportunity to read—in one document—a candidate's personal faith statement, reflections on ministry, references, employment and educational history, ecclesiastical verifications, salary expectations, and background check information. The document is much more than a resume, much less than a theological essay. What you have before you is exactly what its name implies: a "Profile" of a ministry candidate who seeks, along with your Search Committee members, to discern whether God is calling him or her to serve with your congregation in the mutual ministry of Jesus Christ. **(See Sample Profile, Resource #9.)**

After you have carefully read through one or two Ministerial Profiles, you will begin to see the rhythm and flow of the four-part design:

***Basic resume information is found in the opening pages, followed by an indication of the types of ministry that interest the candidate as well as salary/benefit expectations;***

***Ecclesiastical authorizations and information about local church and denominational involvement are next as well as an in-depth, two page Statement on Ministry;***

***Reference material begins with phone references, followed by the candidate's self-appraisal and eight written references;***

***"Bookends" are the Consent Form (cover page) and the concluding documents: Background Check/Release Form and Criminal Background Check report.***

## **READING A PASTORAL PROFILE: THREE SUGGESTED PROCESSES FOR YOU TO CONSIDER**

Once you have familiarized yourselves with the different sections of the Ministerial Profile, your committee members will want to make a decision about a uniform way to approach the reading and evaluating of this comprehensive material. Committees most commonly follow one of three approaches:

### **1. A Meditative, Prayerful Process - See Resource #1**

Rev. Dr. Karen E. King of the Penn Central Conference has developed a reflective and prayerful profile reading process that is described in **Resource #1**; many Search Committees have found this process helpful because the design incorporates the individual reader's meditative/prayer practices. In this process each committee member reviews the profiles in a very particular order over a period of several days.

***Once you have familiarized yourselves with the different sections of the Ministerial Profile, your committee members will want to make a decision about a uniform way to approach the reading and evaluating of this comprehensive material.***

You begin with several Ministerial Profiles, first reading the Statement on Ministry (only) of each profile, taking time for prayer and meditation as you review your notes on the Statements on Ministry. After a break, follow the same pattern with the Self-Appraisal statements for the same profiles, comparing those notes with your notes from the Statements on Ministry. Then move on to references, concluding your process by making notes on the opening portions of the Ministerial Profiles. You are also encouraged to pray for the candidates as you read their material. Members then share their reflections when the committee meets again.

Search Committees who choose to follow this procedure often find it easier to engage in group discernment; because each member has already established a prayerful process for evaluating candidates, it is a comfortable "next step" for the entire committee to turn to God for guidance.

### **2. A Six Step Process: Reading an Individual Profile in a Specified Order**

#### **Step One: The Statement on Ministry**

The "Six Step Process" begins with reading the Statement on Ministry first; the process differs from the above procedure because you will read through one complete profile at a time. Because you are searching for a spiritual leader, it is appropriate to begin each Ministerial Profile—not with the biographical/historical material on the first few pages—but rather with the Statement on Ministry. Those two pages form the core of the profile; clergy spend many hours composing their

statements so that Search Committees will have a clear understanding of their beliefs. Candidates invite you to reflect on their ministry perspectives and transformative faith experiences while you prayerfully ponder whether their particular understandings of scripture, worship, mission, and pastoral care are compatible with those of your church.

As you will soon discover, there is no “right or wrong” way to prepare a Statement on Ministry. Some candidates will speak very personally about a conversion experience or a moment when they knew they were called to Christian ministry. Others will write in the format of a creed, affirming their beliefs in God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Still others will write about the role of the church in the world or the church’s responsibility for the faith formation of young people. Some will tell you a story while others will present their information much more formally. Just as your church is unique among all UCC churches, so too each Statement on Ministry is unique, reflecting the pastoral perspective of that one UCC minister.

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Because the statements are so distinctive, committees often discover that it is not helpful to “compare” them to one another. Rather than trying to discuss which ones you “like,” you may find it more helpful to identify a number of questions—questions that can be applied uniformly to all the Statements on Ministry.

Is the material clear?

Is it engaging?

Does it challenge my faith in positive ways?

Is it interesting?

Is it well-written?

Do you sense the presence of God in this person’s life?

Assuming that the writing style is similar to the candidate’s preaching style, ask yourself how you think you would respond if you were sitting in the pew. Would the members of your church find themselves drawn into a positive conversation with the pastor on this subject matter?

Approach the material from a prayerful position, one that is open to the Holy Spirit. Remember that you need not agree with everything the candidate says. But you should be able to sense whether this person’s experience of Jesus Christ would nurture, enrich, and expand the views of your own congregation.

### **Step Two: The Self-Appraisal**

Now read the candidate's written self-appraisal. This personal statement should reflect how the candidate sees his/her own strengths, skills, and "tools" for implementing their calling to parish ministry.

### **Step Three: References**

A third step then takes you to the narrative portion of the references. Is there consistency between the candidate's personal statements and the evaluative reflections of others? Do not look at the grid until after you have read the narrative reference material. The grid should then offer additional information on how the pastor and the chosen references perceive particular qualities, gifts, and skills. Again, look for congruence and consistency between the self-perceptions of the pastor and the perceptions of others.

### **Step Four: Reviewing the Qualities your Search Committee Identified**

Before looking at the other data in the profile, return to the list of qualities that your own Search Committee has identified. After reading all the narrative and reference portions, ask yourself: how much congruence is there between this particular candidate and the kind of candidate your own committee is seeking? (**Resource #2** provides a worksheet that will assist you in this process.)

### **Step Five: Biographical Data**

Now take a look at the first few pages of the profile. Remember that economic factors vary widely; never eliminate candidates on the basis of the salary they are currently receiving or the salary they are asking. As you note other personal data, be conscious of the dangers of letting personal biases influence your ranking of the profile. Discriminatory attitudes may emerge within yourself (or your committee members) in regard to age, race, gender, names that may indicate a particular ethnic/racial background, family information (if offered), sexual orientation (if indicated), disabilities, or previous religious affiliation. Your committee may need to remind yourselves of your commitment to fairness and your openness to the leading of the Spirit of God.



As you examine educational background and the list of previous secular and ministerial work/positions, do not overlook the importance of relevant secular work experience, volunteer leadership, and overall life experience.

### **Step Six: Background Forms**

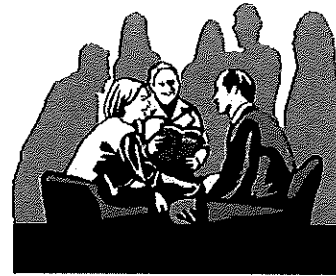
Review the signed Consent Form, the signed Background Check/Disclosure Form, and the Criminal Background Check. If the disclosure form indicates a previous ecclesiastical disciplinary process, then the profile should contain an attached supplementary page that will offer more information. Remember that this candidate is now fully authorized by his/her Committee on Ministry to circulate a profile and apply for positions.

Like the Background Check/Disclosure Form, the Criminal Background Check document should never be an automatic disqualifier. The search of public records is intended to be a verification of information long required by the Ministerial Profile self-disclosure form.

Additional information on both of these documents is found in **Resource #7**. Should the background forms contain information that requires further explanation, please review **Resource #7** carefully and consult with your Conference/Association staff person.

### 3. **A Small Group Process**

In this third suggested process, members of your committee are divided into groups of three to work together during a Search Committee meeting. Initially each group reads one profile. (The order of the reading can follow the Six-Step Process or can simply be a "front to back" reading.) One or two other groups will be working on different profiles. Each group will then be asked to introduce your candidate to the remainder of the committee members—describing the person's educational background, ministry experience, skills and gifts that emerged from the references and presenting a summary of the main ideas in the Statement on Ministry and the Self-Appraisal. Each small group then identifies a few questions that your subcommittee would like to ask this person if she/he were to be interviewed. Conclude with your overall recommendation.



While the small group process allows immediate conversation and sharing among three people who have carefully read the profile, the disadvantage of this system is that profiles are sometimes discarded without the rest of the members ever having read them. For that reason, this process is usually adapted so that the small group introduction is simply that—an introduction. Committee members then take the Ministerial Profiles home for their own further reading and discernment. You will ensure that you are treating each candidate as fairly as possible if every profile is read by every member of your committee.

## DISCERNMENT

**Chaplains:  
See Page 10 of  
"Biblical"  
Resources"**

*"Biblical Resources for Search Committees"* suggests that the healing story found in Mark 8:22-26 can be a useful resource as you read Ministerial Profiles. In this account, Jesus heals a blind man through a gradual process. When Jesus asks him, "Can you see anything?" the man replies "I can see people, but they look like trees, walking." Jesus then takes the extra time that is needed in order for the man's distorted vision to progress to clear-sighted vision.

After you have chosen one of the three profile-reading procedures, you will begin to discuss various Ministerial Profiles at your committee meetings. Reflecting on those profiles and making decisions is a slow process . . . as it should be. Your chaplain may wish to review with you the Biblical Resource meditation on Mark 8:22-26. As you participate in group discussion, remember the "extra time" Jesus needed in order for the blind man to see everything clearly. Relying on God's guidance, you will also see clearly whether a candidate might be a potential future pastor for your church.

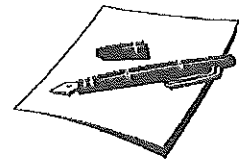
An additional document to aid your discernment process is found in **Resource #12 of Section Three**; this Biblical reflection is titled "**What are we Doing Here? or The Challenging Work of Group Discernment.**" (The reflection is particularly designed to assist you later in the process, but you will find the story of Elijah helpful any time you make group decisions concerning candidates.)

Most Search Committees use their discussion/discernment time to place a profile in one of three piles: Group A (or 1) is composed of the profiles of a few outstanding candidates; these individuals are the ones your committee (at this time) definitely wishes to consider. Group B (or 2) is composed of the profiles of a number of candidates in whom the committee continues to have some interest; these individuals will require further discussion. Group C (or 3) is composed of the profiles of candidates in whom the committee has no further interest. (You will then continue this ranking process as weeks pass and you receive additional profiles.)

A word of caution: in the early stages of their work, Search Committees sometimes discard profiles that they later wish they had retained. If in doubt, leave a candidate's profile in Group B until you have received more Ministerial Profiles and have more experience reading and evaluating the documents.

## COMMUNICATION

Unless your Conference/Association staff person advises you differently, your first communication with a candidate should have taken place when you notified her/him that you had received the profile. Once the profile has been read and a preliminary decision made about a candidate, it is essential that you communicate with the person again. Timely communication will make a significant difference in your relationships; one of those people may well be the pastor God is calling to serve in your midst. (See sample letters: **Resources #3, 4, 5 and 6.**)



If you are enthusiastic about one or more candidates (Group A), it is important that they hear from you because they may be seriously considering other possibilities. Knowing of your possible interest (even at this early stage) may be a factor in their discernment process. Group B could receive a short note indicating that you are continuing to read profiles and have retained theirs at this time. If you have no further interest (Group C), it is only fair to share that information as soon as possible. Remember that you expect the same courtesy from your candidates if they decide to withdraw their names from consideration.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Your committee will already have made a commitment to confidentiality. But it is essential that you reaffirm that commitment while you are reading profiles. Not only are the names of candidates confidential, so too is the material in the Ministerial Profile itself. The *"Search Committee Guide to Confidentiality"* is found in **Resource #8** and should be reviewed on a regular basis.

## A PERSPECTIVE ON PROFILE-READING

God has called you to serve your church in this particular role. Serving on a Search Committee truly is a sacred trust. When you eliminate some candidates whose gifts are more suited to another church setting, you should approach that elimination process with a feeling of sacredness. The paper you hold in your hand represents an individual's vocational hopes and dreams. As such, it should be treated with reverence.

***Serving on a  
Search Committee  
truly is a sacred trust.***

While reading profiles, your committee may want to watch the DVD/Video *"Sailing on Faith: Look Who God Sent"* for a second time. Listen carefully to the comments of the members of that Search Committee whose experiences form the core of the documentary.

As you move on to the next steps in your search process, remember that each step after profile reading will provide additional, valuable information: a sermon tape, other material you may request, conversations with phone references, possibly a telephone interview with a candidate, a face-to-face interview, a worship experience with a candidate. You will find it challenging to balance these aspects of the search, keeping in mind your commitment to justice and fairness while reviewing your list of the pastoral skills and gifts identified by your congregation. The Holy Spirit will be moving among your committee members as you engage in this work. Prayerfulness, reverence, openness, courtesy toward candidates and one another, hard work, and more hard work will lead you to the "right" candidate. With the grace of God, one of those candidates will eventually move from an unknown name on a piece of paper to the wonderful, faith-filled woman or man your Search Committee presents to the congregation as the one you firmly believe God has sent to serve Jesus Christ in your midst.



*Note: All scripture passages are taken from The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.*



### **Addendum: UCC Ministerial Profiles and Applicants from Other Denominations**

This addendum describes **normative practices** related to ordained ministers from other denominations who wish to seek positions in a UCC congregation. If you have questions about any of this material, be certain to contact your Conference/Association Minister.

The UCC Search and Call process facilitates the circulation of Ministerial Profiles in order to assist and serve UCC congregations and UCC authorized ministers in the discernment of call. Occasionally, Search Committee members will ask for information about processes for receiving applications from ordained ministers in other denominations. The following questions and answers provide a Search Committee with information about the specific UCC processes and procedures whereby pastors with ecclesiastical credentials from other denominations may apply for your vacancy. Such processes are never automatic, and each one requires involvement of the Association Committee on Ministry and the Conference/Association Minister.

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#### **How does an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) apply for a vacant UCC pastorate?**

**Ordained Ministerial Partner** is a full partnership and reconciliation of ministries between the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ. Every Disciples of Christ ordained minister is considered a "*Ministerial Partner*" by the UCC, (and every UCC minister is considered the same by the DOC). To seek a call in the UCC, a DOC pastor takes the additional step of requesting "*Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing*" from the UCC Association Committee on Ministry in the area where the pastor resides. Because a full partnership already exists between the two denominations, the process for seeking pastoral positions in one another's churches is not a complicated one.

The UCC Association Committee on Ministry will interview the DOC pastor in order to be assured that the candidate has proper knowledge of and commitment to the UCC. (Often a UCC Polity Course is required.) "*Provisional Partner Standing*" is conferred, and the DOC minister may then complete a UCC Ministerial Profile. The "*Provisional Partner*" is free to use the UCC Ministerial Profile to apply to any vacant UCC congregation in the country. If the Disciples of Christ minister receives a call to a UCC church, then the DOC minister serves in that congregation with the formal authorization of "*Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing*." This authorization remains in effect until the pastor leaves that congregation. The pastor continues to hold full credentials in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

#### **What about the special arrangement the UCC has with clergy from partner denominations?**

The **Formula of Agreement** is a reconciliation of ministries among four denominations: the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, the Presbyterian Church USA, the Reformed Church of America, and the United Church of Christ. Within this Agreement there is a provision for what is called "**Orderly Exchange**." The Orderly Exchange agreement does not open the UCC Search and Call process to ministers from the Formula of Agreement Communions. The agreement is designed to assist all four denominations in utilizing the gifts of one another's pastors in situations where the needs of a specific church may be best served through the Orderly Exchange process.

A UCC Association Committee on Ministry will meet with a candidate who approaches the UCC and expresses an interest in "Orderly Exchange." (The Committee on Ministry often will recommend a UCC polity course.) After meeting with the Committee on Ministry and the Conference/Association Minister, an ELCA, PCUSA, or RCA clergy person MAY be considered by a local UCC congregation at the invitation of the Conference/Association staff person; if such an invitation is forthcoming, the candidate submits her/his own denominational profile to that specific local church Search Committee.

A pastor who serves a UCC congregation under the "Orderly Exchange" agreement retains his/her own denominational credentials; if desired, the pastor may apply to the Association Committee on Ministry for **UCC Dual Standing**. This authorization is specifically granted to pastors of other denominations during the time they are serving in a UCC church, thus allowing the pastor to participate actively in the UCC Conference/Association. (Dual Standing is also frequently granted to pastors from other denominations who serve in a yoked charge or federated church that is also affiliated with the UCC.) Pastors with Dual Standing cannot complete UCC Ministerial Profiles and cannot apply to vacant UCC churches.

### **How does a minister from another denomination "become" a fully credentialed UCC minister?**

**Privilege of Call** is a process by which an ordained minister of another denomination seeks full UCC ecclesiastical credentials. ("Privilege of Call" is identified on page four of the Ministerial Profile with the words "*Authorized to Seek Call.*")

An ordained minister of another denomination begins this process with the Association Committee on Ministry in the geographic area where the minister resides. The Committee on Ministry reviews the candidate's educational and ecclesiastical credentials, explores the candidate's reasons for seeking to enter the UCC, obtains references, recommends a course in UCC polity, and conducts an ecclesiastical examination according to the procedures of the association. After completing this carefully prescribed process, the pastor is granted the "privilege" of completing a UCC Ministerial Profile and seeking a call in vacant UCC congregations. When the pastor of the other denomination then receives a call to serve in a UCC setting, that minister relinquishes his/her standing with the former denomination and receives full standing in the United Church of Christ.

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**RESOURCES**

*"Can You See Anything?"*  
*Mark 8:23b*

## **HOW TO READ A PASTORAL PROFILE**

### **Resource 1**

*"...discern what is the will of God..." Romans 12:1-13*

#### **I The Purpose of the Pastoral Profile:**

- to **begin the discernment process** between committee and candidate;
- to aid in the **listening process** for committee members;
- to identify **initial candidates** for **initial interviews**.

#### **II Things to Remember about Pastoral Profiles:**

- they offer a picture, an **incomplete picture**, of who the candidate is;
- they are an **initial screening tool** only;
- **never use the profile as the only or total means** by which you decide on a candidate;
- once a candidate has been identified through the profile process, use a variety of ways to develop a "data bank" about the candidate.

#### **III Steps in Reading a Pastoral Profile**

##### **Initial Reading**

- 1.) Set aside a quiet place and a period of time (30 minutes as a start) for your initial read-through. Have the profile, pen and/or marker and paper to take notes on nearby.
- 2.) Read the **Statement on Ministry ONLY** of the first Pastoral Profile. Read it as if the person was sitting across the room from you. If something gets you excited, underline it. If a sentence troubles you, highlight it. If you would want to follow up on something the candidate wrote, make a note of it. Engage in a conversation of sorts with the candidate while you read through the Statement on Ministry.
- 3.) After you finish reading that first Statement on Ministry **set that first Pastoral Profile aside!** Pick up the second one, and read that **Statement of Ministry ONLY**. Read it in the same fashion as the first one. The only difference is **you will find yourself reading the second Statement of Ministry in light of the first one**. You should! You will compare and contrast the two statements in your mind, and you may want to make some notes on paper. **That is exactly what you should be doing.**
- 4.) Once you finish the second Pastoral Profile, go on to the other Pastoral Profiles in the same fashion. **Read the Statement on Ministry section ONLY!** Remember to do so as if you were in a conversation with the candidate. After you have finished all of the Pastoral Profiles you will be reading, **set them all aside and do not look at anything else!**

##### **Discernment . . . Reflection . . . Meditation**

This part of the task is a crucial component to your ability to engage in a discernment process. Take some time to thoughtfully and prayerfully consider the material you have just read:

- Lift up each potential candidate in prayer.
- Seek God's blessing on each person and on their call to ministry.
- Ask for God's guidance in your decision-making process regarding each individual.
- Listen for stirrings in your heart and excitement in your mind regarding each person.

### Second Reading

5.) At least a day later, go back to all the profiles – and in the same order as before – read the **Self-Appraisal Statement**. Read the statement from the first Pastoral Profile that you considered and **compare the notes you take on this statement with the notes you have taken on the Statement of Ministry**. See how well they fit, or do not fit. Make notes on questions you might have regarding their self-appraisal. Read through each of the subsequent Pastoral Profiles in the same fashion, making notes as you go along and comparing those notes with the ones you took on the Statement of Ministry. **Remember, you are not to read any other parts of the Pastoral Profile at this time.**

- 6.) **Checklist of 43 . . .** once you have read both the Statement on Ministry and Self-Assessment piece for all the Pastoral Profiles you are currently considering, it is time to move on to the Checklist of 43. Several things to take note of:
- a. There is a code to identify who said what P=pastor; A-H = person's references.
  - b. The references are described in general terms, i.e., "church member, known 13 years" or "Colleague, Known 4 years."
  - c. As you read how each person rated the pastor, keep in mind who the reference is, and from what perspective they are offering their reference.

Read the **written reference by that person**. Note what kind of matching there is between the pastor's selections and the references' selections. Note also **how much and what kind** of matching there is between your Local Church Profile's checklist of 43 and the candidate's checklist. **Once you have completed this portion of the reading of Pastoral Profiles, set them aside again, this time for at least one full day.**

### Discernment . . . Reflection . . . Meditation

Again, take some time to thoughtfully and prayerfully consider the material you have just read. You may follow the process suggested earlier:

- Lift up each potential candidate in prayer.
- Seek God's blessing on each person and their call to ministry.
- Ask for God's guidance in your decision-making process regarding each individual.
- Listen for stirrings in your heart and excitement in your mind regarding each person.

### Final Reading

- 7.) On the final reading of all the Pastoral Profiles, you are invited to take a look at the statistical information on the front and following pages. Look at the kind and depth of experience, potential for growth and readiness to assume the challenges present in your congregation. Remember, not having done the kind of ministry you are looking for **should or does not indicate that the candidate cannot meet the challenge**. Sometimes churches are well served to call someone who will grow into the position; at other times it is best to call someone with significant prior experience. **Do not overlook nor devalue life experience and secular employment in second and third career candidates. Age and or gender can bring unexpected gifts to a call that may not be apparent upon first blush.**
- 8.) Bring all of your notes with you to the Search Committee meeting. Be prepared to both **LISTEN AND SPEAK WITH YOUR HEART AND YOUR HEAD**. Remember to prayerfully consider each candidate and seek to listen for God's voice among the competing voices around the table and present in the congregation.

**YOU ARE SEEKING TO MAKE A DECISION THAT WILL PLEASE GOD FIRST . . .  
... AND BY DOING SO, THE CONGREGATION CANNOT HELP BUT BE PLEASED!**

### A Word on Baggage

Everyone brings a certain amount of life experience, preconceived notions, personal preferences and deeply held notions to the table of the Search Committee. **Some of those things will be of great value in the search process; some of those things will weigh you down and get in the way of discerning the will of God for the life of the congregation** as you seek new pastoral leadership. It's a lot like packing for a trip. You lay out all that you think you will need on your bed. Then, if you are really disciplined, you set aside half of it and pack half of what you think you will need. If, however, you are like most of us, you are not quite that disciplined. You pack everything, and I mean everything! At the end of the trip, after lugging those bags around everywhere, you wished that you had left much of it at home.

Hopefully all of the "baggage" that you bring to the table of the Search Committee will be helpful, but be aware that some of your stuff might get in the way. May you have the grace to see what gets in the way, and discard it along the journey – lightening your load and making for a delightful trip. May God bless you in this exciting and challenging journey.

*(This document was developed by Rev. Dr. Karen E. King, Penn Central Conference)*



## Resource 2

Members of your Search Committee may wish to use this chart to supplement your individual notes. Characteristics you seek in a new pastor should be written across the top and names of candidates in the column on the left. Record a check mark if a particular skill, gift, or characteristic shows up in your reading of that candidate's profile. Occasionally committees have used a numerical ranking system (1-5 points for each characteristic, with 5 being the highest.) Such numerical rankings tend to be less helpful because they can be very subjective, (i.e. one reader may give a 5 to "excellence in preaching" based on comments in one particularly glowing reference while another reader may seek several such comments before awarding a 5.)





**SAMPLE LETTER TO CANDIDATE – Acknowledging Receipt of a  
Ministerial Profile**

**Resource 3**

Dear

This letter comes to you from the Search Committee of \_\_\_\_\_ Church, United Church of Christ, located in \_\_\_\_\_. We want to acknowledge receipt of your UCC Ministerial Profile recently forwarded to us by the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference/Association office.

We are very grateful for your interest in our pastoral position, and we want to assure you that your profile will be read carefully and will receive thoughtful consideration by the members of our Search Committee.

As you know, the process of reading and evaluating Ministerial Profiles is a time-consuming one. We plan to move as quickly and prayerfully as possible, and we will be back in touch with you after all of our members have had an opportunity to review your material.

We pray for God's continued guidance on your search process.

Sincerely,

**SAMPLE LETTER TO CANDIDATE - No Longer Under Consideration**

**Resource 4**

Dear

The members of our Search Committee have prayerfully and carefully reviewed your Ministerial Profile. At our most recent meeting we came to the point of decision about your materials, and we want you to know that you are no longer under consideration.\*\*

Making these decisions is a painful process—for committee members and candidates alike. We are grateful for your interest in our church, and we ask that God continue to bless your life and ministry.

Sincerely,

\*\* Your Search Committee could be more personal and more specific in the next sentence, sharing information that may help the candidate understand why you made your decision.

*We made the decision to eliminate you from our pool of candidates because one of our expectations is that the new pastor will have . . .*

*several years of previous parish experience . . .  
more experience working with small, family-sized churches . . .  
firsthand experience with mission and outreach programs . . .  
more experience supervising church staff . . .*



**SAMPLE LETTER TO CANDIDATE - Whose Profile You Have Retained**

**Resource 5**

Dear

The members of the Search Committee of \_\_\_\_\_ Church have completed our careful review of your Ministerial Profile. We want you to know that we decided to retain your profile for further consideration.

We are still in the very early stages of our process, and we are continuing to read a number of profiles. We will try to be in touch with you every few weeks to keep you updated on our progress.

In the meantime, we would ask that you contact us if you accept another offer.

May God bless your ongoing ministry.

Sincerely,

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**SAMPLE LETTER TO CANDIDATE - In Whom You Have Particular Interest**

**Resource 6**

Dear

The members of the Search Committee of \_\_\_\_\_ Church have completed our careful review of your Ministerial Profile. We have retained the profile because we are enthusiastic about your ministry experience as well as your many gifts and skills.

As you know, we are still at a very early stage in our process; we will continue to review profiles for several more weeks. We will keep you informed at regular intervals because we do have particular interest in your candidacy.

We would ask that you be in touch with us if you are seriously considering accepting another offer.

Our committee members will hold you in prayer, and we ask that you do the same for us as we move through our discernment process.

Sincerely,



## **BACKGROUND FORMS**

## **Resource 7**

The United Church of Christ first began requiring signed consent and background forms in 1994. Twelve years later, criminal background checks were instituted. All profiles placed in circulation after December 15, 2006, include both documents. When the background form requirement was first established, the UCC Office for Church Life and Leadership described the importance of this requirement with the words "*Care in Calling*." Portions of that material (adapted) will be helpful to your committee in reviewing both the background form and the criminal background check.

### **CARE IN CALLING**

Care in calling requires that calling bodies take reasonable steps to determine whether or not individuals they call have a history of misconduct. As the "calling body," the local church must acknowledge its responsibility for care in calling, while remaining fair and just to candidates. The consent form, the background check/release form, and the criminal background check all address the issue of taking reasonable steps in behalf of care in calling. Failure to take reasonable steps may have legal consequences.

### **Preliminary Discernment**

The purpose of these various background documents is to provide candidates with an opportunity and a means to share information with Search Committees. The purpose is NOT to provide Search Committees with an automatic way of dismissing candidates from consideration. Such preliminary rejection may be based upon inadequate information and is, therefore, unfair to calling bodies as well as to candidates.

Search Committees do themselves, potential candidates, and the local church a favor when the early reading of profiles is based solely on matching the future needs of the local church for ministerial leadership with the faith, character, skills, and abilities of the candidates whose profiles are being reviewed. Preliminary elimination of candidates on the basis of background information—whether in the disclosure form or the criminal check—could end up denying Search Committees an opportunity to take a closer look at someone who could be the very one who is most suited. A person's demonstration of having overcome a past difficulty and a committee's considered awareness of that strength promotes care in hiring and provides such a person with the opportunity to continue in ministry in faithful and fruitful ways.

### **Seeking Further Clarification**

Consultation with your Conference/Association staff person is very important if your committee wishes to seek clarification of information in the background forms or supplementary attachments. If you do contact other individuals for information (for example, a Committee on Ministry chairperson who may have written a letter that is attached to the Ministerial Profile), remember to be specific. Isolate the piece of information you want to have clarified, and be direct when making the inquiry. If you are wondering how a person would work out in your setting, describe your situation to the individual from whom inquiry is sought.

## **Criminal Background Checks: Some Guiding Principles**

When the criminal background check was instituted, Parish Life and Leadership suggested that Search Committees consider these guiding principles:

*“The presence of a criminal conviction in a candidate’s history should not result in an automatic rejection of a candidate. Just as the absence of criminal history does not automatically make a candidate fit for a specific call to ministry, neither does the existence of criminal history automatically make a candidate unsuitable for such a call. When evaluating criminal history, all relevant factors should be taken into account. Examples of circumstances that may be considered when evaluating an offense include:*

- *the nature and seriousness of the offense\**
- *the circumstances under which the offense occurred*
- *the passage of time since the offense and the absence or presence of additional criminal behavior during this period*
- *the relationship of the criminal behavior to the responsibilities of the position sought*
- *the probability that the candidate will repeat harmful behavior associated with the offense*
- *other evidence of the person’s fitness for ministry*

*The determination of whether a particular criminal offense is serious enough to result in a decision not to extend a call is at the sole discretion of the calling body.*

*Calling bodies may have reservations about a candidate who makes a false statement of any material fact or attempts any deception or fraud with respect to the candidate’s criminal history.”*

***\*Note that the Criminal Background Checks do reveal and report speeding tickets. If a speeding ticket fine is paid or if the person did not dispute the ticket, it is considered a criminal offense in most jurisdictions.***

*(Adapted from Parish Life and Leadership documents.)*

## SEARCH COMMITTEE GUIDE TO CONFIDENTIALITY

### Resource 8

Search Committees receive a great deal of information about those individuals whom they consider for ministry positions. It is important for Search Committees to remember that this information can be used in ways that enable Search Committees to do their work well. This same information, misused, can have painful and destructive impact on the lives of individuals seeking a call in the United Church of Christ. Therefore, Search Committees need to consider carefully and prayerfully the role of confidentiality as they consider various candidates for a particular position.

The information contained in the Ministerial Profiles of individuals is confidential information to be treated with care and respect. It is a serious violation of confidentiality and trust to use this information for anything other than its intended purpose, to circulate the information contained in a Ministerial Profile beyond appropriate individuals, or to disclose information when it is not essential for the recipients to have the information in order to carry out their obligations. Search Committees must take active steps to ensure that no violation occurs.

Confidentiality is not secrecy. When we declare that certain information is confidential, we accept certain responsibilities and limitations on the use of this information. Generally, confidential information is protected or restricted in three ways:

- 1) Confidential information is used **only for its intended purpose**. In the context of the search process, information about candidates is used only as it relates to the call. If the information does not inform the search, it need not be shared.
- 2) Confidential information is shared **only with appropriate persons**. Generally, these are individuals who use the information in order to carry out their responsibilities on behalf of the church. Within the context of the search process, this normally includes members of Search Committees and Conference/Association staff working with Search Committees. It may be necessary and appropriate to share certain information with others in the congregations (such as the governing body) in order for those people to fulfill or carry out their responsibilities at various steps in the search process. When this occurs, it is good to indicate to the candidate your intent to share the information.
- 3) Confidential information is to be shared **only when appropriate and essential**. Only information germane to the responsibilities of the appropriate people is shared, and then, only at that time when the information informs those responsibilities. Within the context of the search process, this means that some information needs to be guarded and protected with some people at one stage in the deliberation, but shared with them at an appropriate time.

Confidentiality applies to all Ministerial Profiles Search Committees receive, including those the committee no longer has under consideration. Once the search process is complete, calling bodies should retain the profile for the person being called. The Conference or Association office should indicate whether Search Committees destroy the other forms or return them to the Conference or Association office. Under no circumstances should the Ministerial Profiles that the Search Committees received be left where unauthorized individuals have access to them.

*(Adapted from Parish Life and Leadership documents.)*





**SAMPLE MINISTERIAL PROFILE**

**Resource 9**

**A Sample Ministerial Profile follows this page.**

## Ministerial Profile for Serene Davis

### Statement of Consent

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"The United Church of Christ recognizes that God calls certain of its members to various forms of ministry in and on behalf of the church for which ecclesiastical authorization is required." United Church of Christ Constitution, Article VI, paragraph 21.

Use of the UCC Ministerial Profile signifies that an individual has an Association's ecclesiastical authorization to seek a call as a minister in and on behalf of the church; has completed background check screening and fitness verification; has attested to certain statements in a document of self-disclosure; and has gained three references which speak to their practice of ministry. The Profile is a tool of testament and transparency, meant to demonstrate covenants of supportive cooperation and appropriate sharing of information among national offices, Conference and/or Association personnel, calling bodies, and the minister, as expressed in paragraph 25 of Article VI of the United Church of Christ Constitution.

It is essential that information contained within this document be sensitively and responsibly reviewed and interpreted. All those seeing the document have the responsibility to maintain or dispose of its contents confidentially.

Any practice by calling bodies of routinely rejecting profiles on a perfunctory basis without a complete and individualized assessment, including a thoughtful review of commentary offered by the candidate, is strongly discouraged. In particular, criminal history information, including the conduct underlying that history, should be evaluated in terms of the nature and gravity of the offense or conduct, the time that has passed since the offense, conduct, and/or sentence, and the nature of the position sought by a candidate, so as to foster call and hiring decisions that are based on an individualized assessment that is job/ministry related and consistent with ministry/business necessity.

Relationships between calling bodies, authorized ministers, and those holding ministerial standing and fitness oversight rely upon practices of discernment and dialogue. Because such relationships require integrity and an honest exchange of relevant information, for the health and mission of the church, this minister pledges the following:

1. I attest that the information contained in the UCC Ministerial Profile is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for a calling body's declined consideration for, or termination of, a ministry position. I acknowledge that it is my duty in a timely manner to amend the responses and information I have provided if I come to know that a response or information was incorrect when given or if the response or information, though accurate when given is no longer accurate.
2. I understand that I may designate certain Conference and/or Association staff and other persons and entities, to receive and circulate my UCC Ministerial Profile. I authorize all such persons and entities, and/or their agents, to make inquiries regarding all statements contained in my UCC Ministerial Profile. I also authorize all persons, entities, former



employers, committees on ministry and their agents, courts, law enforcement and other public agencies to respond to inquiries concerning me and to supply verification of the information provided in my UCC Ministerial Profile. I understand that such persons may comment on and state their opinions regarding my background and character to those who execute the search process, such as members of a calling body or judicatory staff persons. To encourage such persons to speak openly and responsibly, I hereby release them from all liability arising from their responses and comments made in good faith and without malice.

Signature

*On File*

Name

Serene M. Davis

Timestamp

Wed Feb 16 2022 19:57:36 GMT-0500 (Eastern Standard Time)

### Contact Information

---

First Name

Serene

Middle Name

Monique



Preferred Name

Last Name

Davis

Suffix

Serene

I Prefer To Be  
Contacted By

Email Address

### Address

---

123 Main Street  
Cleveland, OH 44115  
United States



**Serene Davis**

## Phone Numbers/Emails

---

### PHONE

Business

987-654-3210

### EMAIL

Primary Email Address

exploringuccpolity@gmail.com

## Ecclesiastical Authorization for Ministry

---

I am a member of Mount Zion United Church of Christ Church in Cleveland, OH US.

---

### Authorized Minister

I am an Ordained Minister with full standing in the United Church of Christ. I was ordained on Apr 1, 2022. My current standing is held in the MESA Conference by the ProfilesOffice Association.

## Verification

---

- ☒ The minister's standing is current and the candidate is deemed fit for ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ.
- ☒ A current criminal background check is attached at this time.
- ☒ To the best of my knowledge, current employment information is accurate.
- ☒ To the best of my knowledge, the background disclosure statement is accurate.

My signature below attests to the above four items.

Signature

*On File*

Name

Jeff Nelson



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

**Serene Davis**

**Title**

Minister for Ministerial Calls and Transitions

**Conference**

MESA

**Association**

ProfilesOffice

**Timestamp**

Wed Feb 16 2022 14:59:01 GMT-0500 (Eastern Standard Time)

**Standing**

---

**Conference**

MESA

**Association**

ProfilesOffice

## Ministry Essays

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Some essay questions reference *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers* at the United Church of Christ

The United Church of Christ recognizes *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers* in the formation of ministers, in the practice of active ministry, and throughout life. For the purposes of completing a denominational Profile, ministers are asked to spend some time with the *Marks*.

**My sense of being called to ordained ministry by God and the Church (from the "Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practice" section).**

My sense of call was fostered at an early age by my home church, an American Baptist congregation in San Francisco, California, which encouraged the participation of all members in the work of ministry. As a young adult, I was blessed with opportunities to teach and preach in the church; these invitations and affirmations from the congregation, in addition to the mentorship of my pastor, convinced me of God's call to commit my life to the faithful service of the Living Word and the Body of Christ. Thus called and committed, but uncertain of my precise professional direction in ministry, I continued my vocational discernment through the Master of Divinity program at Andover Newton Theological School. My studies in practical theology and my internship years with Eighth Congregational UCC revealed my passion for congregational life and leadership as lived expressions of Christ. Now with almost thirty years of pastoral experience, it is still the ongoing transformation of the Body of Christ that energizes my work and renews my sense of call.

**My concept of covenant and how it informs UCC history, polity, and theology (from the "Nurturing UCC Identity" section).**

Because God has aligned God's well-being to humanity (Exodus 6:7, "I will take you as my people, and I will be your God"), we commit ourselves to one another in imitation of God's covenantal commitment to humanity. Bound to one another by covenant -- like oxen bound by a wooden yoke or children bound together for a three-legged race -- we strive to live in such a way that the entire world is blessed by the knowledge of the love of God. The United Church of Christ, which I joined during my undergraduate years, has established covenantal relationships between ministers and churches, Conferences and Associations and national offices, deeming us equal and necessary partners in the work of loving God and all neighbors. Authorized ministers in the United Church of Christ are joyfully burdened with the responsibility of creating and fostering partnerships within their ministry settings, as well as in and on behalf of the wider church.

**I am passionate about ...**

I am passionate about community as a living expression of Christ. While the Church has its share of flaws and skeptics (among them, institutionally-wary Gen-Xers and a rising trend in Spiritual-but-not-Religious aficionados), I believe that we are called to practice the teachings of Christ within and extending out from

covenantal communities, rather than striving to emit "This Little Light of Mine" entirely on our own as individuals. Thus from Council meetings to church bylaws, Sunday worship to Saturday breakfast group, in all that we do as a faith community, we aim to embody the fullness of Christ's love and grace.

**Reflect on your personal and professional formation for ministry in light of any Mark from another section.**

Section 3, Mark 10: "The ability to take initiative in leadership, and to frame and test a vision in community." In my experience of pastoral ministry, the discipline of leadership is a daily and prayerful practice of holding a vision that I do not own. The vision of who/what a faith community has been, is and will be, belongs to the people of that faith community itself first of all, and it belongs to Jesus Christ most of all. As the pastor, I lead the community in naming its vision, telling its stories and dreams, and living into Christ's ever-renewing call, always mindful that my leadership does not make the vision "mine"; rather, it is my privilege to catch sight of the vision in cooperation with the congregation and by the inspiration of Christ.

## **Educational Formation of Ministry**

---

In the following section, I include a record of my College and Graduate Education, any Regional Education Training Programs, or other formative educational experiences I have completed, as well as Continuing Education.





## College and Graduate Education

---

Chicago Theological Seminary

Chicago , US

2006-2009

Doctor of Ministry in Congregational Transformation

---

Andover Newton Theological School

Newton Centre , US

1993-1996

Master of Divinity

---

Ohio State University

Columbus , US

1989-1993

Bachelor of Arts in History

---

San Francisco City High School

San Francisco , US

1985-1989

High School Diploma

## Regional Theological Educational Programs and Formative Educational Experiences

---

*None Provided*

## Professional Development

---

### Continuing Education

*No response*

### Community and Wider Church Involvement

Led Annual Youth Mission Trip with Habitat for Humanity (2000-2014); Organized Ecumenical Community Meal Program (2009-2014); Initiated Interfaith Pride Worship Service (2015-2022); Served on Association Committee on Ministry (2021-2022)

### Awards, Honors, and Publications



**Serene Davis**

"Alumni Excellence in Pastoral Ministry" Award from Andover Newton Theological School (2013); Blog called "Living as Church" (2017-2022); Book of poetry entitled "Step by Step" (Cleveland Publishing, 2020)

## **Vocational History**

---

Mt. Zion United Church of Christ  
Shaker Heights , US  
2015-2022  
Senior Pastor  
Full-Time

---

Lakeside United Church of Christ  
Evanston , US  
2004-2014  
Pastor  
Full-Time

---

Hilltop Congregational United Church of Christ  
Waltham , US  
1997-2004  
Associate Pastor for Youth and Families  
Full-Time

---

Eighth Congregational United Church of Christ  
Newton , US  
1994-1996  
Student Pastor  
Part-Time

## Key Accomplishments

---

### Location / Setting

Mt. Zion

### Description

I'm proud of the vision work that is underway at Mt. Zion UCC, driven by the question "What does it mean to be the Body of Christ to our local community?" Responses thus far focus on hospitality: the congregation hosts an annual Interfaith Pride Worship Service, participates in an ecumenical clothing bank, and shares space with a Spanish-speaking congregation. In addition, Mt. Zion is learning to "vision" our faith in our budget; the Church Council recently committed funds to hire an ASL interpreter for worship and the congregation has increased its OCWM giving.

---

### Location / Setting

Lakeside UCC

### Description

At Lakeside UCC in Illinois, the work of faith formation was key to the church's revitalization. The congregation and I examined its traditional faith formation goals before daring to dream in new ways. An intergenerational faith formation program was initiated, incorporating the study of scripture with the love of neighbor; the congregation transformed its belief in justice to a practice of justice (exemplified in its participation in the ecumenical community meal program).

---

### Location / Setting

Christ's

### Description

Across my years in ministry, I am proud of my consistency in preaching and pastoral care. I believe firmly in the impact of excellent pastoral care to foster congregational vitality by demonstrating Christ's presence at bedsides and firesides, across communion tables and kitchen tables. I continue to invest time and energy in the development of my preaching through both informal and formal education, so that I can be the best vessel possible for God's word.



## Skill Sets

---

Anyone who has marked a Credential below should be able to provide corroborating information in the profile beyond just a basic unit of training.

NAME	PASSION	DEMONSTRATED EXPERIENCE	CREDENTIAL
Church Growth and Size Transitions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Committee on Ministry Experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disabilities Ministry / Accessible to All	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ecumenical Dialogue	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interfaith Dialogue	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Large Church Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Open and Affirming	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pastoral Care / Counseling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth Group Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## References

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### Reference from Jeffrey (Jeff) Nelson

#### Completed

Feb 15, 2022

#### Contact

13290 Summerfield Ave. NW

Uniontown, OH 44685

nelsonj@ucc.org (Email Address) **Primary**

revjnelson@hotmail.com (Email Address)

2167363838 (Business)

3306359851 (Mobile Phone)

#### ROLE AND RELATIONSHIP TO MINISTER

Serene has been a friend and colleague for the past 5 years.

#### AREAS OF STRENGTH

Serene is a deeply centered minister and spiritual caregiver, no doubt nurtured by years of faithful service, dedicated pursuit of justice, and commitment to her own spiritual development.

#### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Serene's passion often has her over-commit to projects, and she would be well-served by partners in ministry who remind her to rely on others for some tasks and to take proper care for her own needs.

#### SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCE

I was grateful to be a part of a weekly prayer group that Serene organized for local clergy. This time exhibited the deep spiritual well from which she draws, and I and the other participants greatly appreciated her leadership.

#### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Any ministry setting that calls Serene will gain a thoughtful and prayerful spiritual leader.



**Serene Davis**

## Reference from Elizabeth Dilley

### Completed

Feb 15, 2022

### Contact

1432 W. 81st St.

Cleveland, OH 44102

liturgygeek@gmail.com (Email Address)

dilleye@ucc.org (Email Address) **Primary**

liturgygeek@yahoo.com (Email Address)

(216) 736-3841 (Business)

7127899253 (Mobile Phone)

### ROLE AND RELATIONSHIP TO MINISTER

I have known Serene since she first was invented by our team as a sample minister for use in training and reference in 2013.

### AREAS OF STRENGTH

Serene is a wise and capable pastor whose leadership is faithful and steady. She is a thoughtful preacher whose messages are tailor-made for her context, and she has a true gift for pastoral care. At the same time, she also has deep gifts for helping discern and cultivate a congregation's vision, and translate that into action. Serene also has the ability to communicate across difference, and helps congregations in conflict learn how to listen and talk to each other in healthy ways. In fact, Serene is particularly gifted at helping congregations in conflict address what is dividing them and help them root themselves in their core values as they make decisions.

### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Like many clergy, Serene's passion for ministry sometimes leads her to overcommit or to work on her days off. She is diligent, and she runs the risk of burnout if she does not keep her expectations for herself realistic.



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

**Serene Davis**

#### **SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCE**

Serene once led a congregation that was extremely divided about how to use the abundant space they had. One faction was convinced that their glory days were right around the corner and there would very soon be a need to use all the classroom spaces again. Another faction wanted to rent out some of those rooms to community partners, some of whom had beliefs very different from the church's values. Still another faction wanted to vet potential renters based on their theology. Serene was able to help the congregation identify their values, their present needs, their future hopes, and bring them together to develop policies that aligned with their values and addressed the concerns of all. It was not easy, and not everyone got everything they wanted, but everyone was able to commit to the shared decisions made.

#### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Serene is a gifted bridge-builder and has plenty of experience in pastoral ministry settings. Her heart is in the local church.



**Serene Davis**

**Reference from Tara Barber**

**Completed**

Feb 15, 2022

**Contact**

14069 Hilltop Ln NW

Seattle, WA 98177

barbertara@hotmail.com (Email Address) **Primary**

425-213-9335 (Mobile Phone)

**ROLE AND RELATIONSHIP TO MINISTER**

previous colleague and friend of six years

**AREAS OF STRENGTH**

Serena has a passion for justice and a commitment to supporting those harmed by systems of oppression. She can be found on the front lines advocating, protesting, bringing others alongside to engage in transformational ministry. She is engaging and inspirational in the pulpit, and connects with youth and older adults.

**AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

She sometimes shows her impatience with the slow moving changes within the church. She has ruffled the feathers of established church leaders. This area of improvement is also a part of her giftedness, it just needs some nuancing.

**SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCE**

Our town had news that refugees were coming and needed everything to get a fresh start. Serene organized our church and worked across the community to find housing - and all the household goods, possible jobs, and support services. It was incredible to watch her work with people to serve the newest members of our town.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

You'd be lucky to have her as your pastor.





## Self-Appraisal

---

### Some Areas of Strength in My Practice of Ministry

Perhaps most outstanding in my practice of ministry is my dedication to the work of congregational vitality (regardless of a church's numeric size, annual budget or community context) through the identification of gifts and passions already present in the faith community and an inclusive invitation for all to invest their creative gifts in the congregation's life.

### Some Areas for Growth in My Practice of Ministry

I believe that a minister is never finished in her learning, through formal and continuing education opportunities, but most of all through maintaining a teachable spirit in leadership.

### A Meaningful Experience I Have Had in Ministry

During my pastoral service at Mt. Zion, I have been moved and inspired by the inclusion of ASL interpretation in worship. The visual representation of language, the dance-like quality of ASL, not only calls my attention to the continued need for greater worship accessibility at Mt. Zion but also teaches me that language -- like community - is at its best when we invite all of its dimensions into conversation together.

### Additional Comments

In addition to the joy that I continue to find in pastoral ministry, I have been blessed by the joy of parenting two children, now adults. A rescue dog named Gustav keeps me active and helps me meet neighbors on our long walks each day.

## Self-Disclosure

---

In your response to the "Vocational History" question in the profile, did you omit any ecclesiastical employment?  
(Required)

No

Have you ever been the subject of a fitness review in any entity affiliated with or setting of the United Church of Christ that resulted in:

Censure (Required)

No

Suspension (Required)

No



**Serene Davis**

**Termination of Ministerial Standing (Required)**

No

Are you currently engaged in a program of growth as the result of a fitness review in the United Church of Christ? (Required)

No

Are there any fitness reviews pending against you at this time by any setting or entity of or affiliated with the United Church of Christ? (Required)

No

Have you ever been the subject of an official disciplinary proceeding by another denomination, professional association, credentialing body, guild or employer that resulted in disciplinary action? (Required)

No

Are there any official disciplinary proceedings pending against you at this time by another denomination, professional association, credentialing body, guild or employer? (Required)

No

Have you ever been the subject of a civil law suit alleging that you attempted or actually engaged in sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct; which has ever resulted in a judgment being entered against you, settled out of court, or dismissed because the statute of limitations had expired? (Required)

No

Have you had your driving license suspended or revoked within the last 5 years? (Required)

No

Have you ever been found guilty of, pled guilty to, or pled no contest to criminal charges? (Exclude convictions that have been sealed, expunged or legally eradicated; any misdemeanor conviction for which probation was successfully completed; offenses about which inquiry is not permissible in the state in which you are seeking a position; acts of civil disobedience. With respect to driving record, only include matters of reckless driving, driving while intoxicated and/or driving under the influence of a controlled substance.) (Required)

No

Has your employment, a volunteer position, or professional credentials, ever been terminated or revoked, or have you been asked not to return to employment or a volunteer position in the future because you attempted or actually engaged in:

Sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation or misconduct (Required)

No

Physical abuse (Required)

No

Child abuse (Required)

No



Financial misconduct (Required)

No

Have you ever terminated your employment, a volunteer position, or professional credentials in order to avoid facing or to avoid being terminated because of charges of actual or attempted:

Sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation or misconduct (Required)

No

Physical abuse (Required)

No

Child abuse (Required)

No

Financial misconduct (Required)

No

Are there any facts or circumstances involving you or your background that should be disclosed and/or further reviewed before you are entrusted with the responsibilities of ministry on behalf of a calling body of the United Church of Christ? (Required)

No

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, please provide detailed explanation for all such affirmative answers. In addition to providing other relevant material, be sure to include dates and information for related official decisions, actions, reviews, etc. (by you and/or other parties) that affected your employment and/or ministerial standing and/or professional credentials. (Required)

n/a

## Criminal Background Check

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*Attached*

**Status:** Completed

**Report Date:** Feb 16, 2022

**Expiration Date:** Aug 16, 2023

**Supplemental Material**

---

Interpreting The History

*No response*



Additional Comments

*No response*

Optional Web Presence

---

✎ <http://www.living-as-church.com>

Type: Blog

**Primary**

Interim Ministry (Optional)

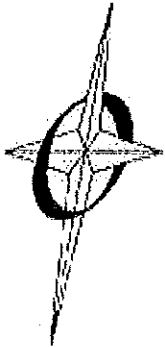
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*Not Selected*

Closing Thoughts

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May the LORD bless you and keep you, may God guide us both in wisdom and in mystery, and may the Spirit spark something new through our fellowship.



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### **FINAL REPORT CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK**

February 16, 2022

UCC Ministerial Excellence, Support, & Authorization  
ATTN: Rev. Elizabeth Dilley  
1300 E. 9<sup>th</sup> St.  
Cleveland, OH 44115

**RE: Rev. Serene M. Davis**  
Location: Clergy

Dear Rev. Dilley:

We have completed our investigation of the above-named person in accordance with your request. We are reporting results with the following services performed:

National  
State  
Local

This report is submitted with the understanding that it is to be held in strict confidence. Except as may be required by law, no information may be revealed directly or indirectly to any third parties not involved in the decision-making process.

Oxford Document Management has used good faith in attempting to obtain the information in this report from sources deemed reliable. Because this information is received from and collected by fallible sources (human and otherwise), Oxford Document Management cannot be either an insurer or guarantor of the accuracy of the information reported.

If you have further questions about this report, feel free to call.