

## **DISCERNMENT PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES**

### Member-in-Discernment Status Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ

#### **Member-in-Discernment status exists to fulfill several functions:**

1. provides an opportunity for future candidates for ordination to review their program of preparation for the ministry with official representatives of the groups who will be asked to confer ordination
2. gives personal support from the wider church to its future professional leaders
3. provides a “colleague relationship” with others at similar stages of vocational preparation
4. enables the church to identify, screen and foster the development of new leadership
5. provides a criterion of eligibility for financial aid

**Steps to be followed in the Member-in-Discernment process:** This list represents the practice of the Minnesota Conference UCC and replaces step five on page 40 of the *Manual On Ministry* and does include some variation. The responsibility for providing this documentation rests with the candidate.

1. The candidate for Member-in-Discernment status fills out an application form and provides:
  - a) a letter of reference from his/her pastor; b) a letter of endorsement from an official body of his/her congregation; c) reports on his/her academic or vocational program over the past three years; d) two additional letters of recommendation; e) a written statement setting forth his/her Christian experience and education and vocational plans, f) a single paragraph statement on “Why I Am Pursuing Ordained or Commissioned Ministry” and g) Phase I evaluation at North Central Ministry Development Center, New Brighton.
2. Candidate calls the Minnesota Conference UCC office to schedule an interview.
3. The Discernment and Preparation for Authorized Ministry subcommittee of the Committee on Ministry of the Minnesota Conference UCC will meet with the candidate, review the application papers and question the candidate.
4. The Committee, meeting by itself, will decide whether to grant Member-in-Discernment (MID ) status to the candidate, for a period of one year, renewable at the Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference UCC.
5. The Committee will recruit a clergy or lay person in the Conference to serve as advisor to the Member-in-Discernment. The MID maintains regular contact with the advisor.
6. Shortly before the end of the year, Members-in-Discernment and advisors will be requested to submit an updated report of progress. At the subcommittee’s discretion or their own request, the MID may be asked to meet with the subcommittee again.
7. Occasional gatherings of Members-in-Discernment, their pastors and advisors, and Committee on Ministry members may be held.