

**PROCEDURES FOR AN ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL  
TO EXAMINE A CANDIDATE  
FOR ORDINATION OR FOR PRIVILEGE OF CALL**

Minnesota Conference, United Church of Christ  
122 West Franklin Ave., Suite 323, Minneapolis, MN 55404

**Purpose:** An Ecclesiastical Council (EC) is a special meeting of the Conference acting as an Association that is convened by a vote of the Committee on the Ministry for the specific purpose of examining a candidate for Ordination or Privilege of Call.

**Leadership:** The Ecclesiastical Council is moderated by a representative from the Committee on the Ministry (COM), supported by a second person from the COM who serves as clerk and makes a record of attendance, of the motion, and of the vote on the motion. This record is sent to the Conference office to become part of the candidate's permanent file.

The host pastor gives words of welcome and leads in an opening prayer.  
The candidate's In-Care Advisor introduces the candidate to the EC.

**Voting Delegates:** Each church in the Conference may send delegates in the same number that they do for the Annual Meeting of the Conference:

<u>Membership</u>	<u>Number of Lay Delegates</u>
1-199	2
200-399	3
400-599	4
600-799	5
800+	6

**Plus** one youth/young adult at each membership level

Since the host church may have more members attending than their number of allotted delegates, the names of the voting delegates from the host church will be designated on the sign-in list before the candidate's presentation.

Other voting members include those specified in Article IV, Section 3 of the Bylaws of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ. A quorum for an EC is seven (7) or more churches. Decisions of an EC are made by a majority vote of those present and qualified to vote.

**Preparations:**

- Refreshments (meal or snack provided by the host church)
- Name tags for delegates and visitors
- Sign-in list that includes name, local church membership, whether lay or clergy, and whether the person is a voting delegate (provided by the Conference office)
- Paper ballots, pre-printed with the name of the candidate and the date of the Ecclesiastical Council (provided by the Conference office)

### Presentation by the Candidate

The purpose of an EC is to provide an opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate the ability to communicate a theological understanding of faith, the church, and its ministry in ways that approximate the preaching and teaching expectations of the ordained ministry. This demonstration is to be prepared and presented under the following headings:

- A five-minute personal introduction for the candidate to describe his/her spiritual journey and call to ministry
- A presentation of five-minute answers to four questions selected from the following list:
  - Name a theologian who has influenced your thinking, with at least one important idea from that theologian, and how that idea would be part of your ministry
  - Choose a scripture passage or story; list and describe five sermon themes that might be drawn from the passage or story;
  - Outline a brief educational program (no more than four sessions) who are new to the life of the church; include major topics and specific teaching strategies you would use;
  - Give the arguments in favor of and against the practice of baptizing infants whose families are not part of a church community;
  - Choose two of the scripture passages suggested for funerals in the *UCC Book of Worship* (page 374); compare and contrast how they might be used to prepare a funeral homily;
  - Describe how you use scripture and prayer in pastoral care.
  - Describe the mutual obligations and accountability expected among local church clergy, conference (or association) staff members, and national setting staff members and bodies.
  - Name and briefly describe ways in which pastoral care can occur in the context of worship.
  - Name and describe ways in which a pastor's prophetic voice can effectively and faithfully be part of the daily life of a congregation.
  - Design a brief teaching session about ways a congregation can speak together about issues on which they disagree; include a handout (not more than one page) or Power Point slides (not more than five) that you would use in this session.

A time of discussion with questions from delegates, with the specification that these questions:

- Can be answered briefly;
- Are directly related to the ministry for which the candidate is seeking a call;
- Require the candidate to integrate various areas of ministry preparation—scripture, preaching, pastoral care, social justice, etc.

## Agenda for the EC

1. **Call to Order** Presiding COM member
2. **Welcome, Amenities, Gathering Prayer** Host Pastor
3. **Roll Call of Churches** Presiding COM member  
Persons attending are invited to introduce themselves and identify their local churches. The presider reminds any attending who are not members of Minnesota Conference UCC churches that they are welcome but cannot vote.
4. **Verification of a Quorum** COM member serving as Clerk
5. **Motion to grant Voice without Vote** Presiding COM member  
Persons attending who are members of other denominations or UCC churches in other Conferences can be permitted voice without vote by action of the EC.
6. **Introduction of the Candidate** In-Care Advisor  
This introduction should include information about the candidate's process, including:
  - In-Care application, interview and vote;
  - Seminary program and degree;
  - Supervised practice in ministry settings;
  - Professional vocational evaluation;
  - UCC Ministerial Profile;
  - Preparation of an ordination paper;
  - Examination by the Committee on the Ministry.
7. **Presentation by the Candidate** (see guidelines above)
8. **Close of Discussion** Presiding COM member
9. **Candidate (and family members) is excused** Presiding COM member
10. **Motion to Authorize Ordination or Privilege of Call**

The motion, usually made by the candidate's In-Care Advisor, begins the process of deliberation leading to the vote by the EC. The motion is worded:

For Ordination: This Ecclesiastical Council of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ acting as an Association authorizes the ordination of \_\_\_\_\_ [pending graduation from seminary] [pending acceptance of a call approved by the Committee on the Ministry], and directs the Committee on the Ministry, \_\_\_\_\_ [home church] United Church of Christ, and the candidate to proceed with plans for a service of ordination.

For Privilege of Call: This Ecclesiastical Council of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ acting as an Association authorized Privilege of Call for \_\_\_\_\_, and further authorizes him/her to circulate a UCC Ministerial Profile, and to be granted Ordained Ministerial Standing in the United Church of Christ upon receipt of an installation to a call to ministry in a setting recognized by the United Church of Christ.

The wording of these motions can be modified as required for specific candidates and situations.

The presiding COM member informs EC delegates of the following guidelines;

- Deliberations will be only on the motion.
- A motion can be amended by vote of the EC.
- If the motion does not pass, the EC can make additional motions, such as referring the candidate to the Committee on Ministry for further discernment. In that case the clerk should note concerns raised so they can be forwarded to the Committee.
- All voting is done by secret ballot.
- The actual vote count will be included in the record of the meeting.
- The presiding COM member appoints tellers to count the votes.
- The presider calls for the vote when the time seems right or when there are calls for the previous question or a motion to proceed to vote.

#### **11. Return of the Candidate (and family, if present)**

The presiding COM member announces the results of the vote.

- If the decision is affirmative, the candidate can be welcomed with applause or singing.
- If the decision is negative, the vote results are presented in a manner sensitive to the feelings and dignity of the candidate.

#### **12. Closing Prayer**

Host Pastor

#### **13. Follow-up**

COM Members

The clerk sends the minutes of the meeting, including the vote count, the original ballots, and the sign-in list of delegates to the Conference Office immediately.