

PROCEDURES FOR LICENSED MINISTRY
Living Waters Association Nebraska Conference UCCC
Adopted November 13, 2010 and Revised September 10, 2016

The Church and Ministry Committee (Committee) of uses the United Church of Christ (UCC) Manual on Ministry (MOM) as guidelines and, in connection with its own policies and procedures for licensing ministers who are members of the Living Waters Association (Association).

The purposes of the Association's process and procedures are to:

1. Ensure that Committee actions are consistent for all persons seeking licensed ministry in the Association;
2. Have written procedures to provide to the local churches seeking a call of a licensed minister and to the applicants seeking license status; and
3. Ensure that the Association's Licensed Ministers are educationally prepared to meet the Association Church members' religious needs.

The Association grants the Committee the authority to authorize licensing without the vote of the Association.

I. STEPS FOR LICENSURE

A. Eligibility for Consideration

1. *Membership in UCC Church in Association.* The candidate shall hold a current and active membership in a UCC Church in the Living Waters Association and be committed to service in and on behalf of the UCC. If the candidate is not already a member of a UCC Church in the Association:
 - a. The license becomes effective for ministers licensed to the Association upon joining a UCC Church in the Association; and
 - b. The license becomes effective for ministers licensed to a specific church upon joining this church.
2. *Faith Commitment.* The candidate shall:
 - a. Be compelled by the Gospel of Jesus Christ;
 - b. Have a sense of having been called by God and the church to be licensed;
 - c. Be committed to mission of the church; and
 - d. Be able to clearly articulate a personal theological position.
3. *Required background.* The candidate shall have been engaged in the formal or informal study of and give evidence of acquired knowledge in:
 - a. The Bible;
 - b. Biblical interpretation;
 - c. Christian ethics;
 - d. Church history;
 - e. Theology;
 - f. UCC history, polity, and practice; and
 - g. Worship, sacraments, and liturgy.

4. *Pass criminal background check.* The candidate shall sign a document authorizing the Committee to run a criminal background check. The Committee has the absolute discretion to determine whether the candidate has passed the background check.

It is noted that any of the above required items can be missing and a license may be granted contingent upon a plan to complete any missing time that is agreed up by the Association or Church and Ministry Committee

B. Licensure Process

1. *Candidate consults with pastor and local church*
 - a. The candidate talks to a pastor and seeks the pastor's expertise as well as procedures of the Association for becoming a Licensed Minister.
 - b. The candidate applies to a local church for sponsorship to become a Licensed Minister by submitting the documents listed in paragraph **I.B.4.** to the pastor and governing board of the church. After reviewing the documents and interviewing the candidate, the pastor and governing board decide whether to recommend the candidate to the Association for licensed ministry.
2. *Calling body requests that candidate be licensed.* A calling body, which could be a local church, the Nebraska Conference, or the Association Council, submits a written request for the candidate to be authorized to become a Licensed Minister and a copy of the proposed Call Agreement. If the call comes from a calling body other than the Association or Conference, the written request shall include a description of the process used by the church to determine whether to recommend the candidate.
 - a. *Request from local church.* The request from the local church shall also include a specific description of the ministry to which the person is being called and a statement as to why the person needs to be licensed for this call.
 - b. *Request from Nebraska Conference or Association Council.* The request from the Nebraska Conference or Association Council shall also include:
 - 1) Frequency of availability to preach and conduct services of worship;
 - 2) Availability for other duties; and geographic area covered.
 - c. *Request from other calling body.* The request from the calling body shall also include a specific description of the ministry to which the person is being called and a statement as to why the person needs to be licensed for this call.
3. *After Committee receives letter from calling body.* After receiving a letter from a calling body requesting that a candidate be authorized to become a Licensed Minister, the Committee shall:
 - a. Notify the candidate of what documents the candidate needs to submit to the Committee;
 - b. Provide the candidate with a copy of this document; and

- c. Seek the counsel of the Conference minister as to appropriateness of the call.
4. *Candidate submits documents to Committee.* The candidate shall submit the following documents to the Committee:
- a. A paper setting forth the candidate's theological perspective. Including the candidate's understanding of the sacraments.
 - b. A paper on the history, theological roots, polity, and practice of the UCC.
 - c. A sermon by the candidate.
 - d. At least four letters of reference attesting to the candidate's character and demonstrated skills and abilities. The letters should be represented by at least three of the following:
 - 1) A UCC ordained minister
 - 2) The pastor of the candidate;
 - 3) The mentor, advisor, or supervisor of the candidate;
 - 4) A person involved in the candidate's theological educational preparation; and
 - 5) A person chosen by the candidate;
 - e. Statement that the candidate will participate actively in the life of the Association and Nebraska Conference.
 - f. Verification of local church membership.
 - g. Current report on church-related activities.
 - h. Current report on educational background.
 - i. Completion of a Marks of Ministry Assessment by one's self and by a peer or mentor.
5. *Committee reviews documents.* After receiving the candidate's documents, the Committee shall review them.
6. *Committee meets with candidate.* Shortly after reviewing the documents, the Committee shall meet with the candidate to evaluate the candidate and the appropriateness of the candidate's proposed call. The Committee shall determine whether the candidate should be authorized to serve as a Licensed Minister.
- a. *Who else should be present?* Whenever possible a representative of the calling body should also be present. The candidate's pastor may also attend.
 - b. *Evaluation of candidate.* The Committee shall evaluate the candidate with respect to the candidate's Christian faith, character, ability to do the work expected, and knowledge of the history, polity, and practices of the UCC.
 - c. *Determination of duties authorized.* The Committee shall determine the specific duties that the candidate is approved to perform including, but not limited to:

- 1) Preaching;
 - 2) Conducting services of worship;
 - 3) Pastoral care;
 - 4) Church administration;
 - 5) Administering rites and sacraments.
 - 6) If rites and sacraments are approved, the Committee may require the candidate to receive additional training under the guidance of an ordained minister in the theological meaning of the rites and sacraments and in the mechanics of their administration.
- d. *Determination of any additional steps required for eligibility.* The Committee shall determine any additional steps that the candidate must follow to be eligible to become a Licensed Minister. Additional steps include, but are not necessarily limited to:
- 1) Completing training programs;
 - 2) Attending classes or workshops; and
 - 3) Completing additional reading.
- e. *Determination of conditions of ministry.* The Committee shall determine whether any conditions shall be placed on the granting of status as a Licensed Minister. Conditions that could be placed on the candidate include:
- 1) Completing training programs;
 - 2) Attending classes or workshops; and
 - 3) Completing additional reading.
- f. *Conditions are placed on the status.* The Committee shall establish deadlines for fulfilling the conditions that were established. The Committee may withdraw the license if the candidate fails to complete the conditions on time.
7. *License shall be granted only after Committee receives copy of Call Agreement.* The Committee shall not grant a license for Licensed Ministry until it has received a copy of the Call Agreement.
8. *Licensure Period* A license is granted by the Association for not more than one year to serve in a designated Local Church of within the Association for the first license period. Following a review by the Church and Ministry Committee the license may be renewed annual for two more years (for a total of 3 one year terms) after which the Committee may grant the license for a term of three years at a time. The Committee shall normally review the license at the end of the licensure period. When this is not possible the Committee may extend the license for an additional short period until the Committee is able to renew the license.
9. *Automatic expiration of license when minister loses call.* The license shall automatically expire when a Licensed Minister no longer has a call within the Association.
10. *Committee appoints supervising pastor.* If the Committee decides to authorize the candidate as a Licensed Minister, the Committee, after consulting with the candidate, shall appoint a supervising pastor.

11. *Registrar gives notice of decision.* The registrar shall provide in writing the details of the Committee's decisions to:
 - a. The candidate;
 - b. The calling body;
 - c. Any affected local church;
 - d. The Association Council; and
 - e. The candidate's file.

If the Committee decides to license the candidate, the Registrar shall also provide the newly licensed minister and the calling body with the requirements for renewal of the license. If the Committee decides to not license the candidate, the Registrar shall provide the former candidate with the procedure for appealing the Committee's decision to the Association Council. Appeals are limited to claims that the Committee did not follow its own procedures for licensing ministers.

12. *Transfer of licenses not allowed.* The license of a Licensed Minister may not be transferred from one association to another association.
13. *Record keeping.* The Registrar shall keep accurate records of proceedings and actions and file them in the candidate's personnel file. A Licensed Minister is listed separately from Ordained Ministers and Commissioned Ministers on the roll of the Association.

II. Supervision of Licensed Ministers and Renewal of Licenses

A. Supervision of Licensed Ministers.

1. *Relationship between supervising and supervised ministers.* The relationship between the supervising minister and supervised minister is based on a covenant that details the goals, expectations, and responsibilities to each other.
2. *Responsibilities of supervising pastor.* A supervising pastor is a ministerial partner who assists a Licensed Minister in setting and achieving goals in ministry. The responsibilities of the supervising pastor include:
 - a. Provide guidance, counsel, and support;
 - b. Meet with the supervised minister:
 - 1) At least phone or email contact once a month during the first year;
 - 2) At a frequency of between once a month and once a quarter during the second and third years with the supervising minister determining the frequency.
 - a) At least once a quarter during the fourth and ensuing years; Periodically watch or listen to a worship service conducted by the supervised minister and provide feedback. (The supervising minister may also ask a person to observe a worship service and submit comments to the supervising minister);
 - b) Suggest opportunities for continuing study;
 - c) Notify the Committee if the supervising pastor becomes aware of an

- issue about the fitness of the Licensed Minister;
 - d) Notify the Committee if the supervising minister concludes that the Committee should meet with the supervised minister;
 - e) Report to the Committee when the license of the supervised minister is up for renewal, when the Committee requests a report, and when the supervising minister concludes that a report is appropriate;
 - f) Meet with the Committee upon request.
3. *Responsibilities of calling body.* The calling body shall notify the Committee when the nature of the call or the responsibilities assigned to the Licensed Minister change or there is an issue about the fitness of the Licensed Minister.
 4. *Responsibilities of supervised minister.* The supervised minister shall
 - a. Participate fully in supervision;
 - b. Report to the Committee at least quarterly on progress made toward completion of any conditions placed on the minister's license;
 - c. Notify the Committee when the nature of the call or the responsibilities assigned to the Licensed Minister change;
 - d. Meet with the Committee upon request.
 5. *Suspension of supervision requirement.* After a Licensed Minister has been licensed within the Association for 6 years, the Committee may suspend the requirement that the Licensed Minister have a supervising minister.

B. Renewal of License

1. A license is granted by the Association for not more than one year to serve in a designated Local Church or within the Association for the first license period. Following a review by the Committee, the license may be renewed annually for two more years (for a total of 3 one year terms) after which the Committee may grant the license for a term of three years at a time.

III. EXPIRATION AND TERMINATION OF LICENSE

A. Automatic Expiration of License. The license shall automatically expire when a Licensed Minister:

1. No longer has a call within the Association;
2. Does not request renewal of the license and its term has expired;
3. Stops performing all functions for which the minister was called and licensed;
4. Resigns licensed ministry or surrenders the license; or
5. No longer is a member of a church in the Association.

When possible the Committee or a member of the Committee holds an exit interview with each Licensed Minister whose license has expired.

B. Termination of License.

1. *Termination of license for disciplinary reasons.* The license shall terminate if the Association has implemented its disciplinary procedures and voted to terminate the minister's license.
2. *Pastoral intervention.* When the issue of the fitness of a Licensed Minister has been raised, the Association (when feasible) shall attempt a pastoral intervention with the minister through a Committee member, designee of the Committee, the Conference Minister, or member of the Conference staff. The failure to conduct a pastoral intervention shall not invalidate any disciplinary action including termination of the license.
3. *Exit interview.* The Committee shall attempt to hold an exit interview with a minister whose license has been terminated.
4. *Record keeping.* The Association shall keep detailed records of all procedures involving the termination of the authority to serve as a Licensed Minister.
5. *Association shall report terminations to Conference.* The Association shall report each termination of a license to serve as a Licensed Minister to the Conference Minister and to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Conference.