

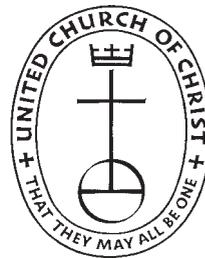
Ecclesiastical Endorsement

Section 9 of 10

United Church of Christ

MANUAL ON MINISTRY

Perspectives and Procedures for
Ecclesiastical Authorization of Ministry



Parish Life and Leadership Ministry
Local Church Ministries
A Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ

Ecclesiastical Endorsement

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ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSEMENT

Section 9 of 10

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Manual on Ministry

Perspectives and Procedures for Ecclesiastical Authorization of Ministry

Manual on Ministry is published in ten separate sections or booklets. Each section is available separately or as part of the complete *Manual* that includes all ten sections in a single binder. The ten sections are:

1. Partners in Authorizing Ministry

An overview of the covenantal relationships and underlying assumptions about authorized ministry, including the ministerial codes.

2. Student in Care of Association

Commentary, processes, and procedures for those preparing to enter the Ordained Ministry of the United Church of Christ.

3. Ordained Ministry

Commentary, processes, and procedures for Ordained Ministry, including Ordained Ministerial Standing.

4. Dual Standing and Privilege of Call

Commentary, processes, and procedures for those ordained ministers of denominations other than the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who seek to serve in the United Church of Christ or who seek to enter the Ordained Ministry of the United Church of Christ. Ordained ministers of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) should see section 5, "Ordained Ministerial Partner."

5. Ordained Ministerial Partner

Commentary, processes, and procedures related to the reconciliation of ministries with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

6. Commissioned Ministry

Commentary, processes, and procedures for Commissioned Ministry, including Commissioned Ministerial Standing.

7. Licensed Ministry

Commentary, processes, and procedures for Licensed Ministry.

8. The Oversight of Ministries Authorized by the United Church of Christ

Commentary, processes, and procedures for the nurture and accountability of the ministries of the Church.

9. Ecclesiastical Endorsement

Commentary, processes, and procedures for those seeking to serve as chaplains in professional organizations and military or other U.S. government agencies.

10. Supplemental Materials

Commentary, appendices, and a glossary related to multiple sections of *Manual on Ministry*.

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ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSEMENT AND APPROVAL OF PERSONS FOR UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT CHAPLAINCIES AND CHAPLAINCY PROGRAMS

ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSEMENT

U.S. GOVERNMENT

COMMENTARY

ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSEMENT

Ecclesiastical endorsement is the judgment of and verification by the United Church of Christ Endorser on behalf of the United Church of Christ that an ordained minister seeking endorsement is in good standing and has the ecclesiastical qualifications and personal qualities to minister competently as chaplains in settings of the United States Government.

The United Church of Christ Endorser is the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team of Local Church Ministries, a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ.

The United States Government requires a national denominational agency to endorse all of its denominational chaplains serving in United States Government chaplaincies. In fulfilling this function for the United Church of Christ, the Endorser enlists the assistance of the Associations. The Associations examine applicants for ecclesiastical endorsement and recommend them to the Endorser. The Endorser makes the final decision about both the initial and continuing endorsement of persons. The Endorser can withdraw its endorsement of a person at any time if it has cause.

Ecclesiastical endorsement is the authorization granted by the United Church of Christ to ordained ministers to serve as chaplains in settings of the United States Government through:

- The United States Armed Forces Active Duty
- The United States Armed Forces Reserves
- The National Guard
- The Federal Bureau of Prisons
- The Department of Veterans Affairs

Ecclesiastical endorsement is a prerequisite for formal application for these chaplaincies. It is also a necessary authorization for continuing to function in these settings.

The procedures for ecclesiastical endorsement or approval are similar to the procedures for ordination and the granting of ordained ministerial standing. However, in the case of ecclesiastical endorsement or approval, the Endorser is the only endorsing agent for the United Church of Christ.

It is the expectation of the United Church of Christ that applicants for Ecclesiastical Endorsement have experience and clearly demonstrate their gifts for ministry in a setting that is recognized by an Association. To this end, it is expected that one or more Associations will have observed that person's practice of ministry for no less than three years and that the Association considering the application for endorsement is in a position to make a judgment and verify the applicant's ecclesiastical qualifications and personal qualities to minister as a chaplain in settings of the U.S. Govern-

ment. Settings such as local churches or environments where pastoral ministry, mutual accountability, and collegiality are valued and affirmed are venues where such experience is likely to be attained. Except for students in care, the United Church of Christ expects this of all persons seeking either endorsement or approval.

It should be noted that the U.S. Government requires persons to have two years of experience in the practice of ministry in order to be eligible for any of the endorsements or approvals except for candidates for inactive reserves and the Chaplain Candidate Programs. Some branches of the military may require that this experience be earned after a person has been ordained. This two year requirement may be included within, but does not reduce, the three years experience expected by the church as stated above.

To be considered for endorsement, a person must have ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ. In addition, the person must have particular qualities and skills suited to the specialized setting in which the chaplain will serve. Chaplaincies within the military, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons have been judged as recognized settings for ministry qualifying for ordained ministerial standing within the United Church of Christ.

Once endorsed, persons continue to be subject to all of the requirements and oversight procedures for the nurture and accountability of ordained ministerial standing. In instances when the ordained ministerial standing of an endorsed person is being questioned by an Association, the Endorser should be notified of these proceedings.

ECCLESIASTICAL APPROVAL

Ecclesiastical approval is the judgment of and verification by the United Church of Christ Endorser on behalf of the United Church of Christ that an ordained minister seeking approval is in good standing and has the ecclesiastical qualifications and personal qualities to minister competently as a chaplain in the Civil Air Patrol.

Ecclesiastical approval is also the judgment of and verification by the United Church of Christ Endorser on behalf of the United Church of Christ that a student in care is in good standing and has the ecclesiastical qualifications and personal qualities to participate in the Chaplain Candidate Program of the United States Army, Navy, or Air Force. Through these programs, various branches of the Armed Forces build a pool of trained chaplains to meet future ministry needs. The student receives the benefit of basic chaplaincy training as well as full pay and allowances as authorized for periods of active duty during that training. Following graduation, ordination, and parish ministry experience, a person with ecclesiastical approval may apply for ecclesiastical endorsement and a commission as a chaplain in a particular branch of the Armed Forces. Ecclesiastical approval by the Endorser is required for students in care to participate in one of the Chaplain Candidate Programs.

SUPPORT FOR PERSONS

Every United Church of Christ chaplain in a setting of the United States Government is a person with United Church of Christ ordained ministerial standing and is a representative of the United Church of Christ and its mission and ministry to all persons. Endorsement and approval of chaplains does not mean, however, that the United Church of Christ necessarily endorses or approves of the military establishments, involvement in military conflict, prisons, or particular policies or positions of the U.S. Government. Ecclesiastical endorsement or approval of chaplains is granted with the recognition that the Church's ministry to persons is inclusive of persons and their families in these settings.

While the following commentary refers to chaplaincies and chaplaincy programs in general, a detailed description of the unique features and requirements of each of the various chaplaincies and programs is available below. See the section *Supplemental Information Unique to Each Chaplaincy* following the general commentary.

INITIATING THE ENDORSEMENT OR APPROVAL PROCESS

Conference and Association staff persons are the basic source of information for persons interested in chaplaincy. For detailed information, Conference and Association staff persons may consult the United Church of Christ Endorser. Upon request, the Endorser will provide information to interested persons about any of the chaplaincies or chaplaincy programs, including potential prospects for openings. Because requirements determine the availability of opportunities for different denominations, there may be a waiting list for any particular chaplaincy. An interested person must make a formal request in writing to his or her Association Committee on the Ministry to initiate the process leading to the recommendation of the person to the Endorser for ecclesiastical endorsement or approval. The request should include the specific endorsement or approval sought and contain a brief statement about why the person is interested in this type of ministry. The person sends a copy of the request to the Endorser.

CONSIDERATION OF THE REQUEST

The Association Committee on the Ministry receives and considers the person's request. Based on its knowledge of the person, it decides if the applicant has the potential for ministry in the chaplaincy or program in which she or he is interested. Unless there is a compelling reason for not proceeding with the request, the Committee appoints an advisor to assist the applicant in preparing the prescribed materials. The Committee then notifies the Endorser that the process for endorsement or approval has begun.

PROCEDURE FOR SEEKING ENDORSEMENT

STEPS 1-4

STEP 5

STEP 6

DOCUMENTATION

The applicant prepares and submits the following materials to the Association Committee on the Ministry:

- a. Verification of membership and participation in a local church of the United Church of Christ.
- b. Verification of current ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ.
- c. An Ecclesiastical Endorsement Application and Information Form prepared by the applicant and provided by the Endorser.
- d. Verification of three years experience in the practice of ministry in a setting recognized by an Association or its equivalent. The United Church of Christ requires this of all persons seeking endorsement or approval. It should be noted that the U.S. Government requires persons to have two years of experience in the practice of ministry in order to be eligible for any endorsements or approvals except for candidates for inactive reserves and the Chaplain Candidate Programs. Some branches of the military require that this experience be gained after ordination.
- e. At least three letters of recommendation.
- f. A paper describing the person's faith journey.
- g. Certification of educational attainment including:
 1. a bachelor's degree and a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent.
 2. any other degrees or continuing education units.It should be noted that the U.S. Government requires that academic degrees be obtained from accredited educational institutions recognized by the U.S. Government.
- h. Verification of one quarter of clinical pastoral education or its equivalent.
- i. A paper containing a summary of the following:
 1. identification of the specific chaplaincy in which the applicant seeks to serve.
 2. applicant's interest in and understanding of the specific chaplaincy for which endorsement is sought.
 3. applicant's understanding of being a representative of the ordained ministry of the United Church of Christ in his or her ministry setting.

INTERVIEW AND DECISION

STEPS 7-8

The Committee on the Ministry receives and studies the materials provided by the applicant. If the materials are complete and in order, and if the person's advisor agrees, an interview with the applicant is set.

The Committee may want to invite a reserve or active duty chaplain to be present for the interview, both to sharpen the questions to be explored and to provide information to the Committee and the applicant.

The purpose of the interview is to help the Committee gain satisfactory answers to the following questions:

- Does the person fulfill all of the current requirements for ordained ministerial standing in that Association? (The Committee may wish to use "The Church's Expectations of Its Candidates for Ordination" in "Ordained Ministry," a section of *Manual on Ministry*.)
- Does the person have a realistic understanding of the specialized ministry being sought?
- Is the person adequately grounded in the faith perspectives and commitments of the United Church of Christ?
- Can the person function in a ministry setting which is theologically and denominationally diverse?
- Can the person function collegially in a team ministry?
- Will the person be an effective, faithful, and respected representative of the United Church of Christ in U.S. Government chaplaincy?
- Has the person and his or her family explored the implications of this type of ministry for family life and life-style considerations, such as mobility and long periods of separation?

At the conclusion of the interview, the applicant is dismissed and the Committee deliberates on whether to recommend the person for endorsement or approval. It communicates its decision to the applicant and to the Endorser. If the decision is to recommend the applicant for endorsement or approval, the Committee forwards its documentation and recommendation to the Endorser along with all of the documentation provided by the applicant. The recommendation should include a description of the process used and a report of the Committee's perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the person for the particular ministry being sought.

DELIBERATION AND DECISION

STEP 9

At least one month prior to the time the endorsement is needed, the Endorser receives the recommendation of the Committee on the Ministry along with its documentation and the documentation provided to the Committee by the applicant.

The Endorser studies the recommendation and documentation in light of the Endorser's understanding of the qualifications, requirements, and needs of the particular ministry setting being sought, and United Church of Christ standards and expectations of its ordained ministers in that setting. Before reaching a decision, the Endorser may consult with the Association Committee on the Ministry or any of the references provided by the applicant.

The Endorser decides whether or not to grant the ecclesiastical endorsement or approval being sought and communicates its decision to the applicant and to the Committee on the Ministry. If endorsement or approval is granted, the Endorser provides the required documentation to the appropriate service or agency.

STEPS 10-12

APPLICATION AND APPOINTMENT

The endorsed or approved person applies for a chaplaincy position directly to the specific service or agency for which endorsement or approval has been granted. (See addresses at the end of this document.)

The person completes the application process, keeping the Endorser and her or his Association Committee on the Ministry informed of progress.

Upon receiving an appointment to a chaplain position, the person will be notified directly by the service or agency to which he or she applied. The person should then immediately inform the Endorser and the Association Committee on the Ministry in writing of the appointment and her or his acceptance of the appointment. The person also provides other pertinent information about his or her duty assignment as it becomes available.

STEP 13

REPORTING AND RECORD KEEPING

The Endorser maintains records of all United Church of Christ chaplains. The Endorser provides this information to the appropriate Association and to the Office of General Ministries for inclusion in *The United Church of Christ Yearbook*.

To ensure current and accurate information in the files of the Endorser, the endorsed or approved person provides updates of pertinent information about her or his duty assignment as changes take place. The Endorsers shares this information as necessary with the appropriate Association and the Office of General Ministries for inclusion in *The United Church of Christ Yearbook*.

STEP 14

LOCATION OF ORDAINED MINISTERIAL STANDING

It is recommended that chaplains hold ordained ministerial standing in an Association that knows them and in which an ongoing relationship can be maintained. Chaplains and Committees on the Ministry should take care to maintain a meaningful relationship, especially when the chaplain is serving outside the geographical boundaries of the Association where standing is held.

All ordained ministers with ecclesiastical endorsement are subject to the oversight of the Association in which they have ordained ministerial standing. Extra care needs to be taken to find ways for chaplains to receive support from the church and to be held accountable through these oversight proceedings when a chaplain is serving outside the geographical boundaries of the Association in which standing is held.

Ecclesiastical endorsement may be withdrawn at any time by the Endorser if it has cause or if the person has his or her ordained ministerial standing terminated by the Association.

I. ARMED FORCES ACTIVE DUTY

A. Ecclesiastical endorsement for active duty in the United States Armed Forces Chaplaincy is granted initially for three years and for a specific branch of the Armed Forces.

Endorsement procedures are described in the attached chart. Note the following in reference to the chart:

1. Step 6, item d. The U.S. Army and U.S. Navy require a minimum of two years full-time post ordination experience. This may be included within the three years experience in ministry expected by the United Church of Christ.
 2. Step 6, item i. Summary paper must include the identification of the specific branch of the Armed Forces in which the applicant seeks to serve.
 3. Step 8. When interviewing the candidate, the Committee on the Ministry should note particularly the person's ability to:
 - a. minister within a setting that is theologically and denominationally diverse.
 - b. participate collegially in team ministry.
 - c. function maturely and effectively in a setting for ministry that values rank and lines of authority.
 - d. adapt to the realities of family mobility and separation which may be required.
 4. Step 10. The applicant requests an application form from the Office of the Chief of Chaplains of the specific branch of the Armed Forces or from the local Armed Forces Recruiting Command. (Addresses are at the end of this section of *Manual on Ministry*.)
 5. Step 12. The applicant informs the Endorser of an appointment and her or his acceptance, date of commission, rank, first duty assignment, and mailing address.
- B. After the initial three years of service, endorsement must be renewed for a chaplain applying for indefinite extension on active duty. The chaplain should initiate the procedure as soon as she or he is eligible to apply for indefinite status. The Endorser will consider renewal of endorsement in consultation with the Association in which the chaplain holds ministerial standing.
- C. Endorsement may be renewed for a chaplain in the United States Armed Forces Reserves who has received a regular commission. Regular commission is an active-duty appointment, generally for 17 years, which involves administrative, supervisory, and policy-making responsibilities.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION UNIQUE TO EACH CHAPLAINCY

- D. Procedures for the renewal of endorsement follow those used in the initial granting of endorsement as outlined on the chart. Note the following in relation to the chart:
1. Step 4. The applicant requests that his or her Committee on the Ministry recommend to the Endorser that his or her ecclesiastical endorsement be renewed.
 2. Step 6. Information and materials are to be updated as appropriate and prescribed by the Committee on the Ministry.
 3. Steps 10 and 11 are to be omitted.
 4. Step 12. Notification to the Endorser includes date of commission, rank, new duty assignment, and mailing address.

II. ARMED FORCES RESERVES AND NATIONAL GUARD

Procedures for endorsement for chaplaincy in the Armed Forces Reserves or National Guard are described in the attached chart. Note the following in relation to the chart:

1. Step 6, item b. A written statement of approval from the applicant's calling body for the applicant to serve as a chaplain must be included.
2. Step 6, item d. Three years experience is only required for persons on active duty.
3. Step 6, item i. The summary paper must include the specific branch of the Armed Forces in which the applicant seeks to serve.
4. Step 8. The Committee on the Ministry should note particularly the person's ability to:
 - a. minister within a setting that is theologically and denominationally diverse.
 - b. participate collegially in team ministry.
 - c. function maturely and effectively in a setting for ministry that is built on rank and lines of authority.
 - d. adapt to the realities of family separation if mobilized for active duty.
5. Step 10. Request an application form from the Recruiting Command of the specific branch of the Armed Forces for which the person is applying. (Addresses are at the end of this document.)

III. FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS

Procedures for endorsement for chaplaincy with the Federal Bureau of Prisons are described in the attached chart. Note the following in relation to the chart:

- A. Step 8. The Committee on the Ministry should particularly note the person's ability to:

1. counsel effectively in crisis situations.
 2. relate effectively in a setting of ministry that is culturally and theologically diverse.
 3. participate collegially in interfaith and interdisciplinary teams.
- B. Step 10. Request an application form from the Administrator of Chaplaincy Services, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons. (Address is at the end of this section of *Manual on Ministry*.)

IV. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Procedures for endorsement for chaplaincy with the Department of Veterans Affairs are described in the attached chart. Note the following in relation to the chart:

- A. Step 8. The Committee on the Ministry should note particularly the person's ability to:
1. exhibit skills and abilities in ministries of pastoral care.
 2. participate collegially on an interdisciplinary team.
- B. Step 10. Request an application form from the Board of Accepted Service Examiners, Department of Veterans Affairs. (Address is at the end of this document.)

V. ECCLESIASTICAL APPROVAL FOR CIVIL AIR PATROL

When an ordained minister seeks to serve as a chaplain of a Civil Air Patrol unit, permission in the form of ecclesiastical approval (not endorsement) is required. Procedures for ecclesiastical approval to serve as chaplain of a Civil Air Patrol unit follow the procedures for endorsement described in the attached chart. Note the following in relation to the chart:

- A. Step 6, item b. A written statement of approval from the applicant's calling body for the applicant to serve as a chaplain must be included.
- B. Step 10. Request an application form from the National Chaplain for the Civil Air Patrol Auxiliary of the United States Air Force. (Address is at the end of this section of *Manual on Ministry*.)

VI. ECCLESIASTICAL APPROVAL FOR CHAPLAIN CANDIDATE PROGRAMS

When a seminarian who is a student in care seeks to participate in the Chaplain Candidate Program of the United States Air Force, United States Army, or United States Navy, ecclesiastical approval is required. Procedures for ecclesiastical approval to participate in these programs are described in the attached chart for endorsement. Note the following in relation to the chart:

- A. Step 6.
1. Item b. Applicant must submit verification of student in care status instead of Ordained Ministerial Standing.

2. Item e. Evaluations from, and recommendations of, a seminary advisor and dean must be included.
 3. Item g.1. Only a college transcript is required.
- C. Step 10. Request an application form from the Recruiting Command of the specific branch of the armed forces to which the person is applying. (Addresses are at the end of this section of *Manual on Ministry*.)
- D. Ecclesiastical approval for these programs does not mean that ecclesiastical endorsement for reserve or active duty chaplaincy will be necessarily granted after graduation from seminary, ordination, and qualifying experience.

ADDRESSES FOR SECURING APPLICATION FORMS FOR CHAPLAINCIES IN THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

United Church of Christ Endorser
Local Church Ministries
Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team
700 Prospect Ave
Cleveland OH 44115

AIR FORCE

Air Force Recruiting Service
Chaplain Division
HQ AFRS/RSOCC
550 D Street, West Suite 1
Randolph AFB TX 78150-4527

ARMY

Headquarters, U.S. Army Recruiting Command
ATTN: RCRO-SM-CH
1307 3rd Avenue
Fort Knox KY 40121-2726

NAVY

Commander, Navy Recruiting Command
ATTN: Chaplain Program Manager
5720 Integrity Drive, Building 784
Millington TN 38054-5057

FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS

Administrator of Chaplaincy Services
U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Prisons
320 First Street NW, Room 516
Washington DC 20534

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION

National VA Chaplain Center (301/110C)
Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center
Hampton VA 23667

CIVIL AIR PATROL

National Chaplain
HQ CAP-USAF/HC
105 South Hansell Street
Maxwell AFB AL 36112-6332

**ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSEMENT OR APPROVAL FOR U.S. GOVERNMENT
CHAPLANCIES AND PROGRAMS**

STEPS 1-6

Procedures for the Applicant	Procedures for the Endorser	Procedures for the Committee on the Ministry
<p>1 The potential applicant consults with a Conference staff person to explore career possibilities and interest in ministries or programs related to the United States Government.</p>		<p>A Conference staff person meets with the applicant to explore career possibilities.</p>
<p>2 The applicant writes to the Endorser, requesting information regarding ministries or programs related to the United States Government.</p>		
	<p>3 The Endorser receives the request and sends the applicant information regarding the availability of opportunities in the chaplaincy and a copy of this document.</p>	
<p>4 The applicant requests in writing that his or her Association Committee on the Ministry begin the process whereby the Committee recommends to the Endorser that she or he be granted ecclesiastical endorsement or ecclesiastical approval, whichever is appropriate for the particular chaplaincy. A copy of the request is sent to the Endorser.</p>	<p>The Endorser receives a copy of the letter of request.</p>	<p>The Association Committee on the Ministry receives the request in writing.</p>
<p>The applicant is informed of the Committee's decision.</p>	<p>The Endorser is informed of the Committee's decision to proceed with a review.</p>	<p>5 The Committee on the Ministry considers the applicant's request. If the Committee decides to proceed with a review for recommendation of ecclesiastical endorsement or ecclesiastical approval, it informs the applicant and the Endorser and names an advisor to assist the applicant in preparing the necessary materials.</p>
<p>6 The applicant, with the assistance of the advisor, prepares and submits the following materials to the Association Committee on the Ministry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Verification of membership and participation in a local church of the United Church of Christ. b. Verification of current ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ. c. An Ecclesiastical Endorsement/Approval for Government Chaplaincy Form prepared by the applicant and provided by the Endorser. d. Verification of three years experience in the practice of ministry or its equivalent. 		

**ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSEMENT OR APPROVAL FOR U.S. GOVERNMENT
CHAPLANCIES AND PROGRAMS**

STEPS 7-9

Procedures for the Applicant	Procedures for the Endorser	Procedures for the Committee on the Ministry
<p>e. At least three letters of recommendation.</p> <p>f. A paper describing the person's faith journey.</p> <p>g. Certification of educational attainment including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a bachelor's degree and a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent. 2. any other degrees or continuing education units. <p>h. Verification of one quarter of clinical pastoral education or its equivalent.</p> <p>i. A summary paper containing the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identification of the specific chaplaincy in which the applicant seeks to serve. 2. applicant's interest in and understanding of the ministry of the specific chaplaincy. 3. applicant's understanding of being a representative of the ordained ministry of the United Church of Christ in his or her ministry setting. 		
		<p>7 The Committee receives and reviews the materials from the applicant and sets a date to interview the applicant.</p>
<p>The applicant is interviewed by the Committee on the Ministry.</p>		<p>8 The Committee interviews the applicant using the "Church's Expectations of Its Candidates for Ordination" and the materials provided by the applicant and decides whether or not to recommend to the Endorser that the applicant be endorsed or that approval be granted. The decision of the Committee is communicated to the applicant and to the Endorser.</p>
<p>The applicant is informed of the decision of the Endorser.</p>	<p>9 At least one month prior to the time the endorsement is needed, the Endorser receives the documentation and recommendation of the Committee on the Ministry along with the materials provided by the applicant to the Committee. The Endorser decides whether or not to grant ecclesiastical endorsement or approval and informs the applicant and the Association Committee on the Ministry of its decision. If the endorsement or approval is granted, the Endorser informs the appropriate service or agency.</p>	<p>The Association Committee on the Ministry is informed of the decision of the Endorser.</p>

ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSEMENT OR APPROVAL FOR U.S. GOVERNMENT CHAPLANCIES AND PROGRAMS

STEPS 10-14

Procedures for the Applicant	Procedures for the Endorser	Procedures for the Committee on the Ministry
<p>10 The applicant requests an application form from the specific chaplain's program.</p>		
<p>11 The applicant receives and completes the application and informs the Association Committee on the Ministry and Endorser of progress.</p>		
<p>12 When appointed into a specific chaplaincy or program, the person informs the Endorser and his or her Association in writing of the appointment and also of her or his acceptance.</p> <p>The chaplain informs the Endorser of current mailing address, branch of service, duty assignment, and rank.</p>	<p>The Endorser receives notice of the applicant's appointment and records the name of the chaplain as an ordained minister in that chaplaincy.</p> <p>The Endorser informs the appropriate Association and the Office of General Ministries of the United Church of Christ of the chaplain's mailing address and branch of service.</p>	
<p>13 The chaplain continues to inform the Endorser of current mailing address, branch of service, duty assignment, and rank.</p>	<p>The Endorser maintains an accurate record of the pertinent information (mailing address, branch of service, duty assignment, rank) regarding the chaplain's service.</p> <p>The Endorser keeps the Association and Office of General Ministries informed of changes.</p>	
<p>14 If necessary, the chaplain follows the procedure for the transfer of ordained ministerial standing as outlined in <i>Manual on Ministry</i>.</p>		

ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSEMENT AND APPROVAL OF PERSONS FOR CERTIFICATION BY PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSEMENT

PROFESSIONAL

COMMENTARY

ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSEMENT

Ecclesiastical endorsement is the judgment of and verification by an Association of the United Church of Christ that an ordained or commissioned minister seeking endorsement for a professional organization is in good standing and has the ecclesiastical qualifications and personal qualities to minister competently in settings of pastoral care and counseling. Normally, the Association Committee on the Ministry acts on behalf of the Association in granting this particular form of ecclesiastical endorsement.

Ecclesiastical endorsement for certification by professional organizations is primarily for institutional chaplains, clinical pastoral education supervisors, and pastoral counselors.

Commissioned ministers are eligible for ecclesiastical endorsement for certification by professional organizations in fields related to their area of commissioning and where the administration of the sacraments is not required.

It is the expectation of the United Church of Christ that applicants for ecclesiastical endorsement have experience and clearly demonstrate their gifts for ministry in a setting that is recognized by an Association. To this end, it is expected that one or more Associations will have observed that person's practice of ministry for no less than three years and that the Association considering the application for endorsement is in a position to make a judgment and verify the applicant's ecclesiastical qualifications and personal qualities to minister in settings of pastoral care and counseling. Settings such as churches or clinical environments where mutual accountability and collegiality are valued and affirmed are venues where such experience is likely to be attained.

Once endorsed, persons continue to be subject to all of the requirements and oversight procedures for the nurture and accountability of ministerial standing. If at any time an endorsed person's ordained or commissioned ministerial standing is terminated, his or her endorsement is terminated concurrently.

United Church of Christ ecclesiastical endorsement is required for one of its ordained or commissioned ministers when he or she applies for membership in and certification of professional competency by:

- The American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC)
- The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE)
- The Association of Mental Health Clergy (AMHC)
- The Association of Professional Chaplains (APC)
- The American Protestant Correctional Chaplains' Association, Division of the American Association of Correctional Chaplains (APCCA)

Associations examine applicants for ecclesiastical endorsement and decide to endorse or not endorse a candidate. A decision to endorse is then communicated to the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team. The Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team maintains a database of endorsed persons for *The United Church of Christ Yearbook* while also serving as the denomination's liaison with certifying professional organizations. The Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team is the agency through which endorsement decisions of Association Committees on the Ministry are certified and communicated to professional organizations on behalf of the denomination. The Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team provides advice and counsel to Committees on the Ministry on endorsement procedures and the changing requirements of the professional organizations of which the Team is regularly apprised.

The basic requirements for ecclesiastical endorsement are:

- Ordained ministerial standing or a commission in the United Church of Christ
- Bachelor's degree or its equivalent
- Master of Divinity degree, or its equivalent, from a theological seminary approved by the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team if ordained. A master's degree in an appropriate field of study from an accredited university if commissioned
- One quarter of clinical pastoral education or its equivalent
- Three years experience in the practice of ministry in a local church or other recognized setting
- Perceived gifts in the ministry of pastoral care and counseling

It should be noted that ecclesiastical endorsement is just one of the qualifications necessary for the certification of professional competence by one of the professional organizations for which ecclesiastical endorsement is required. Each professional organization has its own set of requirements and qualifications for the certification of professional competence. The review leading to ecclesiastical endorsement focuses on the requirements of the United Church of Christ and not upon the requirements and qualifications of the professional organizations.

ECCLESIASTICAL APPROVAL

Some professional organizations have training level certifications for students in care who are preparing for ordained ministry. Ecclesiastical approval by an Association of the United Church of Christ is required for these certifications. Although not all of the requirements for ecclesiastical endorsement by the United Church of Christ can be fulfilled by students in care (e.g., experience in the practice of ministry and a Master of Divinity degree), the Association Committee on the Ministry should seek to ascertain the student's perceived gifts for the ministry of pastoral care and counseling and the student's covenantal commitment to the United Church of Christ. The Committee also should verify that the student has received a bachelor's degree or its equivalent and that the student has been involved in a program of clinical pastoral education or its equivalent.

It should be noted further that some professional organizations have several levels of membership and levels of certification for professional competence. Each level of membership or certification for professional competence may require a new ecclesiastical endorsement.

INITIATING THE ENDORSEMENT PROCESS

The applicant informs the Association Committee on the Ministry in writing that he or she is seeking a specific level of membership in a specific professional organization.

The Association Committee on the Ministry then provides this section of *Manual on Ministry* and any other related material to the applicant.

The applicant requests in writing to his or her Association Committee on the Ministry that it initiate the process leading to its decision on Ecclesiastical Endorsement of the person. The request should include the specific endorsement sought.

CONSIDERATION OF THE REQUEST

The Association Committee on the Ministry receives and considers the person's request. Unless there is a compelling reason for not proceeding with the request, the Committee informs the applicant of its decision to proceed and requests her or him to prepare documentation to support the request.

DOCUMENTATION

The applicant prepares and submits the following materials to the Association Committee on the Ministry:

1. Verification of membership and participation in a local church of the United Church of Christ.
2. Verification of current ordained ministerial standing or a commission in the United Church of Christ.
3. A completed Ecclesiastical Endorsement Information Form.
4. Verification of three years experience in the practice of ministry.
5. At least three letters of recommendation.
6. A paper describing the person's faith journey.
7. Certification of educational attainment including:
 - a. bachelor's degree or its equivalent and either a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent if ordained or other master's degree if commissioned.
 - b. any other degrees or continuing education units.
8. Verification of one quarter of clinical pastoral education or its equivalent.
9. A paper containing a summary of the following:
 - a. applicant's interest in and understanding of the specific specialized ministry for which endorsement is sought.

GENERAL PROCEDURE FOR SEEKING ENDORSEMENT

STEPS 1-2

STEP 3

STEP 4

- b. applicant's understanding of being a representative of the ordained ministry of the United Church of Christ in the ministry setting for which he or she is applying for endorsement.

STEPS 5-7

INTERVIEW AND DECISION

The Committee on the Ministry receives and studies the materials provided by the applicant and sets a date to meet with and interview the applicant.

The Committee interviews the applicant using the criteria for ecclesiastical endorsement for certification by professional organizations and the materials provided by the applicant as a basis for discussion. The Committee may invite a person who already has ecclesiastical endorsement to be present for the interview, both to sharpen the questions to be asked and to provide information to the Committee and the applicant.

Questions which the Committee may explore with the applicant include:

- What are your basic understandings of the goals of this type of ministry and why are these important to you?
- How do you understand this type of ministry in terms of your career in ministry?
- How do you see yourself in this ministry as a representative of the United Church of Christ?
- How will you continue to be part of the United Church of Christ and participate in the life of the United Church of Christ?
- What is the distinctiveness between your ministry in this field and the similar work of a person not endorsed by the United Church of Christ?

Following the interview, the applicant is dismissed and the Committee deliberates and makes its decision on whether to endorse this person. It communicates its decision to the applicant and to the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team. If the decision is to endorse, the Committee sends its documentation to the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team.

STEPS 8-10

REVIEW AND TRANSMISSION OF DECISION

At least one month prior to the time the endorsement is needed, the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team receives the decision of the Committee on the Ministry along with its documentation. The Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team reviews the documents provided, affixes the endorsement seal of the United Church of Christ, records the endorsement and communicates the decision along with the supporting documentation to the appropriate professional organization in question. In some cases the documentation may be returned to the endorsed person for inclusion with other materials to be forwarded to the certifying professional organization.

The applicant informs the Association Committee on the Ministry and the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team of the professional organization's decision on the applicant's request for certification. If certification is granted, the person provides verification of the certification to the Association Committee on the Ministry and to the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team.

The Association Committee on the Ministry and the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team maintain records of the status of the person's certification. The Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team of Local Church Ministries reports this status to the Office of General Ministries of the United Church of Christ for inclusion in *The United Church of Christ Yearbook*.

ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSEMENT FOR CERTIFICATION BY PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

STEPS 1-4

Procedures for the Applicant	Procedures for the Parish Life Ministry Team	Procedures for the Association Committee on the Ministry
<p>1 The applicant writes to the Association Committee on the Ministry about his or her intention to seek endorsement for certification by a professional organization.</p>		
		<p>2 The Association Committee on the Ministry receives the request and sends information to the applicant about endorsement.</p>
		<p>3 The Committee on the Ministry considers the applicant's request. If the Committee decides to proceed, it informs the applicant of the documentation to be prepared.</p>
<p>4 The applicant prepares and submits the following materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Verification of membership and participation in a local church of the United Church of Christ. b. Verification of current ordained ministerial standing or a commission in the United Church of Christ. c. A completed Ecclesiastical Endorsement Information Form. d. Verification of three years experience in the practice of ministry. e. At least three letters of recommendation. f. A paper describing the person's faith journey and a brief sketch of the person's pilgrimage in life and ministry. g. Certification of educational attainment including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a bachelor's degree or its equivalent and either a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent if ordained or other master's degree if commissioned. 2. any other degrees or continuing education units. h. Verification of one quarter of clinical pastoral education or its equivalent. i. A summary paper containing: 		

ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSEMENT FOR CERTIFICATION BY PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

STEPS 5-10

Procedures for the Applicant	Procedures for the Parish Life Ministry Team	Procedures for the Association Committee on the Ministry
<p>1. applicant's interest in and understanding of the specific specialized ministry.</p> <p>2. applicant's understanding of being a representative of the ordained ministry of the United Church of Christ in his or her ministry setting.</p>		
		<p>5 The Committee receives and reviews materials requested from the applicant and sets a date to interview the applicant.</p>
<p>The applicant meets with the Committee on the Ministry.</p>		<p>6 The Committee interviews the applicant.</p>
		<p>7 The Committee makes its decision and communicates it to the applicant and the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team.</p>
	<p>At least one month prior to the time the endorsement is needed, the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team receives the Committee's documentation and decision. The Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team reviews the documents provided, affixes the endorsement seal of the United Church of Christ, records the endorsement and communicates the decision with supporting documentation to the appropriate professional organization.</p>	<p>8 If the decision is to recommend the person for endorsement, the Committee sends its documentation and the materials provided by the applicant to the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team at least one month prior to the time endorsement is needed.</p>
<p>9 The applicant informs the Committee on the Ministry and the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team of the professional organization's decision on the application.</p>		
	<p>The Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team maintains records on the status of the person's certification and reports the status to the Office of General Ministries of the United Church of Christ.</p>	<p>10 The Committee on the Ministry maintains records on the status of the person's certification.</p>