

ORDINATION / ENDORSEMENT

FROM: Rev. Stephen Boyd, Denominational Endorser and MESA Minister for Chaplains and Ministers in Specialized Settings

MESA is noting an increased interest in chaplaincy and specialized ministries within the United Church of Christ. Some specialized ministry and chaplaincy positions require ecclesiastical endorsement of an individual minister by the United Church of Christ. Government chaplaincy positions in the military, VA hospitals and the Federal Prison systems require that chaplains have an Ecclesiastical Endorsement for employment. Other institutions (hospitals, hospice facilities, university and college campuses, counseling centers and other specialized settings) may require that chaplains and specialized ministers be endorsed by the UCC for certification by professional agencies.

Ordination and ecclesiastical endorsement are two separate procedures.

- Ordination (or the granting of ministerial standing for those ordained in other denominations) occurs when an Association declares that a person is sufficiently prepared and equipped for ordained ministry in, and on behalf of, the United Church of Christ.
- Ecclesiastical Endorsement is the verification that a person is in good ministerial standing with the UCC, has qualifying experience, understands the nature of specialized ministry, and is qualified to represent the United Church of Christ in diverse and pluralistic settings.

Ecclesiastical Endorsement for a government position is recommended by the Committee on Ministry, then verified and granted by the Ecclesiastical Endorser at the denominational offices of the UCC. Endorsement for professional agencies is determined by the Committee on Ministry, then processed and validated by the Endorsement Office at the national offices. When an individual presents themselves for ecclesiastical

endorsement, MESA recommends that Committees on Ministry immediately contact the Rev. Stephen B. Boyd, the Ecclesiastical Endorser (for government endorsements) or Ms. Kathleen Sattler, the Endorsement Secretary (for professional agency endorsements). It is our intention to assist and offer guidance which will reduce confusion, duplication of effort and ensure that the proper procedure is followed.

Endorsement is not transferable between denominations. An individual must be awarded Privilege of Call and attain full ordained ministerial standing before applying for and securing endorsement through the United Church of Christ.

Proof of ordination is a prerequisite for both government and professional endorsements. Once ordained ministerial standing has been established, Committees on Ministry must refer to Section 2.5 of the Manual on Ministry outlining procedures for ecclesiastical endorsement and consult with the Endorsement Office for additional guidelines.

A Committee may agree to use selected ordination documentation for the endorsement file, however full ordained standing in the United Church of Christ must be established before an individual will be considered for endorsement. Ordination and Endorsement may be processed simultaneously if a Committee has determined that the call, to chaplaincy or a specialized ministry setting, is ordainable. However, due to additional requirements, military chaplaincy, VA chaplaincy and Federal Board of Prisons chaplaincy are not considered ordainable calls in the United Church of Christ.

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