

MATRIX FOR ASSESSMENT USING THE MARKS OF FAITHFUL AND EFFECTIVE MINISTRY

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Gaining Facility with the Marks of Faithful and Effective Ministry: A Resource

“Those who hold ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ are entrusted with and accountable for the faithfulness and effectiveness of their lives and ministries on its behalf. The development and demonstration of such faithfulness and effectiveness are guided by the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ (the Marks), a tool created to meet the aims of the 2005 Ministry Issues Pronouncement of General Synod.”¹

Introduction

The Marks describe ways authorized ministers can demonstrate their facility and competency as faithful and effective clergy. This resource contains suggested actions for Members in Discernment and authorized ministers to gain this facility and competency. It serves as a guide for a MID, a Committee on Ministry (COM), a Local Church Discernment Committee, or a mentor to encourage an individual's professional growth and development.

Using this Resource

The suggested actions and practices are precisely that. They offer ways for individuals to demonstrate competency with the Marks, which for a MID prepares them for ordination and for authorized ministers points to continued professional growth. Though the list is extensive, it is not a checklist nor should it be construed as a requirement for someone to accomplish every suggestion and action. These are examples for everyone to prepare for and grow in their ministry. Here are some ways this resource might be used:

- A MID can use the list to identify actions and practices to gain facility and competency in the Marks.
- A COM can use the list to guide a MID's ordination journey.
- A local discernment committee can use the list to identify opportunities and ways the MID's Local Church can support and be a part of the MID's journey.
- A mentor can use the list to prepare the MID through theological discernment related to some of the suggested actions and practices.
- An authorized minister can use the list to grow and develop their ministry.

¹ Manual on Ministry (2018) page 10

The Marks are divided into eight categories. Though an authorized minister should show facility and competency in all the categories, they do not have to be equally competent in every category. An authorized minister's spiritual gifts will be stronger in some areas than others. Thinking of each category as its own color wedge in a wheel, the color will be darker and richer in the areas where they are strongest. Hence, some wedges will be lighter, and some will be darker with all wedges having some color.

Some of the suggested actions and practices should prompt creativity. One action, "Presentation skills such as storytelling or learning improv," could be expanded to include stand-up comedy. Another, "Understand the gifts and wounds of introversion and extroversion," could be prepared as a meditation or prayer. Other actions, such as those around communion, could be addressed by writing an annotated communion liturgy and thereby address multiple actions. Also, many actions and practices will demonstrate facility and competency in multiple categories.

These actions and practices are also not comprehensive. The list emerged from several collaborative brainstorming sessions among its creators. All parties having a part in a MID's ordination journey can brainstorm their own actions and practices leading to an authorized minister's facility and competency in the Marks. The entire purpose of this matrix is to make room for the Holy Spirit to prepare a MID for ordained ministry and to encourage all ministers, including laity, to grow in their respective ministries to serve the Church and their community and to fulfill their call to discipleship in Jesus Christ.

Suggested Actions or Practices to Gain or Show Facility with the Marks	Inter and Intra-personal assets	Spiritual Foundation	Transformational Leadership	UCC Identity	Justice and Mercy	Sacred Stories	Caring for All Creation	Theological Praxis
Discuss financing one's ministry education (This should be one of the first meetings)		<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	
Attend association and conference events, including meetings, retreats, and training events	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>				
Take a polity class				<input type="checkbox"/>				
Experience a UCC tradition outside of one's own				<input type="checkbox"/>				
Experience a church not like one's home church, including other denominations				<input type="checkbox"/>				
Reflect upon UCC identity versus UCC loyalty				<input type="checkbox"/>				
Prepare a class on UCC history, including the shift from congregationalism to the UCC				<input type="checkbox"/>				
Participate in an ecumenical community event consciously representing the UCC			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Prepare a paper on the UCC Statement of Faith as it pertains to the Marks of Faithful and Effective Ministry				<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>
Peer group participation, such as a Community of Practice	<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Study in eco-theology through coursework, workshops, or readings							<input type="checkbox"/>	
Engage with spiritual direction or psychological counseling	<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>	
Clinical Pastoral Education or equivalent							<input type="checkbox"/>	
Field Education in a parish, supervised by experienced clergy (Particularly pertains to people holding Lay Ministerial Standing or who are currently licensed)							<input type="checkbox"/>	

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Sabbath-keeping							<input type="checkbox"/>	
Take a basic business class or a basic micro-economics class							<input type="checkbox"/>	
Cultivate healthy personal financial practices (Encourage MIDs and clergy to take advantage of the financial planning services offered through the Pension Boards)		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	
Prepare a theological statement on one's life story		<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Cultivate presentation skills such as storytelling or learning improv			<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>		
Preach in a Local Church		<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Write or present a paper on the history or theology of some creeds such as the Nicene Creed or the UCC Statement of Faith. Prepare a course, a lesson plan, or an outline of a course on a creed.		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Use scripture for pastoral purposes (Example: using a sacred story to help people through illness or grief.)		<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss the emerging realities of the Church universal and its local contexts (Read articles or books. Follow conference and national office blogs. Attend workshops or seminars.)					<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Experience working with different age cohorts and articulate the differences between them					<input type="checkbox"/>			

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Interview or engage in sacred stories with people from different cohorts. The cohorts could be by age, race, economic status, gender identity, or sexual identity. (How do they hear or experience the same story?)	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Write a communion liturgy (Suggestions: World Communion Sunday, Indigenous People Day, Maundy Thursday, Healing service (related to an event or for reconciliation), celebrating a local event)					<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepare a statement on one's personal theology of communion		<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate or articulate awareness/knowledge of communion as practiced in denominations with whom the UCC has full communion agreements				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Preside over a wedding if authorized, describe the laws regarding marriage ceremonies in one's state, articulate the intersection of the church and state in a wedding service and where does the MID stand, describe the MID's preparation practice for a wedding service with the couple					<input type="checkbox"/>			
Prepare a paper covering different aspects of baptism e.g. believers baptism vs. infant baptism, infant baptisms when parents to do not actively engage with the church, alternatives to infant baptism				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>

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Demonstrate and awareness of various translations of the bible						<input type="checkbox"/>		
Create (or describe) a ritual one has created, preferably for use outside of the church						<input type="checkbox"/>		
Preside over or assist with a funeral						<input type="checkbox"/>		
Prepare a liturgy based upon the Revised Common Lectionary for a Sunday in Ordinary Time						<input type="checkbox"/>		
Explain the use of each liturgical element for a Sunday in ordinary time and its placement in the service, including the music and various colors		<input type="checkbox"/>						
Experience doing ministry in thin places, such as street ministry or virtual worship experiences						<input type="checkbox"/>		
Take Boundary Awareness Training	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Take Racial Justice Training	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Prepare a statement on the theology of covenant	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>
Understand the gifts and wounds of introversion and extroversion	<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>	
Cultivate an awareness of one's own emotional intelligence	<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>	
Identify places and skills in need of strengthening	<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>	
Maintain a life-work balance and identify one's life's priorities in relation to home and work	<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>	

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Write a paper on the difference between career and calling (include a reflection on clergy privilege)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Develop a self-awareness of one's own interpersonal communication style (How do we use body language? How do we listen?)	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Understand one's own sense of humor	<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>	
Gain experience facilitating groups of larger than 18 people	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>					
Technological Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>					
Participate in Continuing Education			<input type="checkbox"/>					
Experience in leadership, not necessarily in a church (Particular experience with managing volunteers, building budgets, awareness of the difference between profit and non-profit environments.)			<input type="checkbox"/>					
Articulate one's perspective of the term "Accessible to all" (Examples: Racial Justice Training, Understanding LGBTQIA+. Note: one does not have to agree with the prevailing denominational position, but should be able to articulate one's own perspective)			<input type="checkbox"/>					
Articulate "Who is and who is not 'at the table'?" and how does the church address their needs?			<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Describe an issue or a doctrine and how their personal beliefs have changed over time (Examples could be shifts in one's Christology or soteriology)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Describe basic justice principles of the UCC, including the margins in the following: Race, environment, LGBTQ, Indigenous rights, economic justice, gender identity, disability awareness, mental health			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategically discuss the future of God's church (including pastoral leadership, external forces affecting the local church)		<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate a knowledge or facility with Asset Mapping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Demonstrate a knowledge or facility with Appreciative Inquiry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Demonstrate a knowledge or facility with church evaluations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Demonstrate an understanding adaptive leadership skills	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>					
Describe postmodernism			<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>
Address contemporary issues in the news through a theological perspective			<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>
Describe how they look at the world theologically (what tools do we have, what approaches, how does a theological perspective differ from a cultural perspective, describe their theological lens)			<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>
Read other theological perspectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>

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Create a lesson plan with a theological approach on a contemporary issue			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>
Articulate the theology underlying a hymn or a meme or reflect upon the theology in a piece of art or architecture, such as your church's sanctuary						<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide a reading list of theological texts they have recently read								<input type="checkbox"/>
Reflect upon your theological education, identify possible biases in that education. These biases could be racially-based, gender-based, or sexual identity-based. They could an over-emphasis on formal seminary training or an under-awareness of cultural perspectives. This is a broad question to signal aspects of ministry to develop further or gain awareness."		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describe the role and goal of global ministry and its impact on interfaith relationships					<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Describe the ministerial code's objective and how it will inform their ministry			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>
Describe their understanding of the Trinity		<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>
Describe their understanding of justice		<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Articulate the theology of the historic creeds of the church		<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>
Show familiarity with the World Council of Churches document <i>Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry</i> by describing it or creating an outline for a class		<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>

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Articulate discipleship: How do they live it out, what are its costs and joys, what is cheap grace and costly grace, why do we follow Jesus		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Discuss the costs of ministry in addition to its financial costs (e.g., family, lifestyle, "what are you saying 'no' to)		<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	
Prepare a paper on the nature of call and discipleship based upon a conversation with one or more experienced or seasoned clergy (consider a range such as 5, 10, 20 years) focused on ordained ministry. Consider answering, "What didn't you learn in seminary that you need to know?"		<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>
Report annually to the local COM on their progress and development of their call and discipleship		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>				
Describe their devotional life		<input type="checkbox"/>						
Describe different prayer forms		<input type="checkbox"/>						
Describe discernment from different traditions		<input type="checkbox"/>						
Describe the difference between ordained and lay ministry. What is the priesthood of all believers and why does ordained ministry matter?		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>
Articulate one's own understanding of sacramental theology		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide a video of leading a worship service for constructive critique		<input type="checkbox"/>						

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Maintain a journal. It can track time, talent and treasure, it can reflect upon the evolving nature of one's call, or moments when the Holy Spirit intercedes		<input type="checkbox"/>						