

2018 Annual Report

St. Louis Association Committee on Ministry: Preparation

The Committee on Ministry, an Association committee granted authority in the United Church of Christ Constitution and Bylaws for authorization and oversight of clergy and churches, has been divided into two entities in the St. Louis Association for practical reasons. With Eden Seminary in our association, the number of student candidates for ministry is much greater than in most associations.

The Committee on Ministry: Preparation (COM:P) has responsibility for the preparation and authorization of Members in Discernment on behalf of the wider United Church of Christ. The COM:P meets monthly. When a candidate feels called to authorized ministry and has the support of their local congregation, they meet with the COM:P and then undergo a professional psychological evaluation.

Upon successful completion of this initial process, they then become a Member in Discernment (MID). They are assigned an advisor from the COM:P, continue their formative relationship with their home church and pastor -- and continue to meet at least annually with COM:P until all the many requirements have been met. They have an ordination interview and are 'approved for ordination pending a call'. They meet at least annually with the COM:P until a call is received. Then we have the privilege and joy of participating in a service of Ordination!

In June we engaged in a transition of Committee leadership, as Co-Chairs Kevin Cameron and Karen Tylka passed the baton to Betsy Happel and Jack Nobles. We are grateful for the three years of dedicated service provided by Kevin and Karen, and for their willingness to step into their roles on a moment's notice in 2015.

In addition to engaging in our ongoing relationships with our MIDs (see complete list below), during the past twelve months we have:

- Partnered with Care and Counseling (St Louis) and Good Samaritan (Memphis) for psychological evaluation of MID candidates and follow-up counseling as needed
- Maintained ongoing communication with SLA Committee on Ministry: Oversight, and involved a representative from their team in ordination interviews
- Updated and refined our many processes and practices, to include thoughtful discussions about requirements for ordination, and how we can deepen our relationships with MIDs and MID candidates
- Continued refining our official documents for the SLA section of our Conference website
- Participated in the Conference-wide Committee on Ministry Covenanted Ministry to better align our practices across all three associations of the MMS Conference
- Represented our committee on the St Louis Association Council
- Attended a two-day retreat in March with colleagues from the other associations' COMs, where we refined our processes and practices and delved further into use of the draft of the revised UCC *Manual on Ministry*
- Engaged in several conversations with the Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization (MESA) Team at the national offices of our UCC

Here is a recap of our SLA MIDs and Candidates as of September 13, 2018...

MID Candidates – Initial interview complete, MID Status pending (2):

Erick Falconer, First Congregational UCC, Webster Groves

Tracey Harris, First Congregational UCC, Webster Groves

Members in Discernment (8):

Kelly Archer, Peace UCC, Webster Groves

Phil Barbier, Hope UCC, St Louis

Doni Driemeier-Showers, Samuel UCC, Clayton

Valerie Jackson, First Congregational UCC, St. Louis

Tanya Jeffcoat, Faith UCC, Little Rock

Phyllis Long, First Congregational UCC, Memphis, Tennessee

Jeff Mignerone, Eden UCC, St. Louis

Cherie Stolze, Parkway UCC, St. Louis

Withdrew from the MID process during the past year (3):

Hope Gunderson, Church of the Master UCC, Florissant

Laura Oesterle, St. Peter's UCC, Ferguson

Sonya Vann, Christ the King UCC, Florissant

Approved for Ordination Pending a Call (4):

Christopher Czarnecki, Christ Church UCC, Maplewood

Chuck Lindsey, First Congregational UCC, Memphis, Tennessee

Andy Wilson, Parkway UCC, St. Louis

Dr. Bella Winters, Epiphany UCC, St. Louis

Ordained in the last year (2):

Jacquelyne Tyler, Grace UCC, St. Louis

Andy Wilson, Parkway UCC, St. Louis

Respectfully Submitted, Betsy Happel and Jack Nobles, Co-chairs

Committee Members: John Allen, Carole Barner, Kevin Cameron, John Gandy, Betsy Happel, Debby Harness, Sharon Love, Carolyn Mulhall, Jack Nobles, Joe Pfeiffer, Hannah Rice, Karen Tylka... and Douglas Anders, Nia Chandler and Ginny Brown Daniel