

## **In-Care Process**

### **A. REQUESTING AND GRANTING IN-CARE STATUS**

In the Northern California Nevada Conference, a person in process of discernment regarding Ordained or Commissioned Ministry applies to the Conference Committee on the Ministry [Section A] to be received as a Person in Care of the Conference.

1. The Committee on the Ministry [Section A] meets with the applicant in order to determine the applicant's aptitudes, Christian experience, commitment and fitness for authorized ministry. In preparation for meeting with the Committee on the Ministry [Section A], the applicant prepares the following materials and sends them to the Conference Office, to arrive 4 weeks prior to the scheduled meeting:
  - a. A letter of application requesting to become a Person in Care
  - b. Verification of membership in a Local Church of the Northern California Nevada Conference United Church of Christ
  - c. A letter from that Local Church affirming their support of the applicant's becoming a Person in Care and describing the process used to reach this affirmation.
  - d. Copies of the applicant's spiritual journey and plans for preparation for Ordained or Commissioned ministry in the United Church of Christ
  - e. A curriculum vitae or resume
  - f. Copies of diplomas or certificates of completion of formal education
  - g. Three letters of reference, one of which is from the pastor of the applicant's Local Church
  - h. Records of in-care relationships with other Conferences or Associations, or in other denominations, if applicable.
  - i. A completed Background Disclosure Form [available from the Conference Office]
  - j. A completed Release of Information Form [available from the Conference Office]
2. If the Committee on the Ministry [Section A] determines the applicant to be qualified, the Committee recommends to the Conference Board of Directors that the applicant be received into care of the Conference.
  - a. Upon such recommendation, the Conference Board of Directors acts to confirm the recommendation
  - b. Upon confirmation, the Board of Directors will furnish the Person in Care with official verification of in-care status.

### **B. THE IN-CARE COVENANT**

The Person in Care, Conference, In-Care Adviser, Local Church, and Association all participate in the In-Care Covenant. The in-care covenant extends for one year and can be renewed annually.

1. The Conference will extend fellowship, counsel, and assistance to the person-in-care, and, through the Committee on the Ministry [Section A]:
  - a. Request that the Local Church hold a service of recognition for the person-in-care.
  - b. Request that the Association place the person-in-care on Association mailing lists.
  - c. Furnish the person-in-care with a UCC *Manual on Ministry*, a copy of the Northern California Nevada Conference "Manual on the Ministry, Supplements and Appendices" and a Conference Directory.
  - d. Have the person-in-care placed on Conference mailing lists, listed in the Conference Directory, and placed on the subscription list for *The Pacific*.
  - e. Maintain communication with the person-in-care.
  - f. Maintain communication with the In-Care Adviser regarding timelines and requirements for authorization of ministry, and to share concerns regarding the progress of the Person-in-Care.
  - g. Meet annually with the Person-in-Care for review and consideration of renewal of in-care status.
2. The Person-in-Care will:
  - a. Within one year of being granted in-care status, complete the Candidate's Program at the Center for Ministry in Oakland, or at an appropriate alternative approved by Section A.
  - b. Remain in-care of the Northern California Nevada Conference for at least one year prior to ordination or commissioning.
  - c. Maintain Local Church membership in the Northern California Nevada Conference during the in-care process, remaining a member of the same Local Church for at least a year prior to ordination or commissioning.
  - d. Prepare academically for ordination or commissioning through an appropriate course of study at an accredited seminary or school of theology.
  - e. Prepare practically for ordination or commissioning through field education, internships, or other ministry experience.
  - f. Attend Association and Conference meetings regularly.
  - h. Meet annually with the Committee on the Ministry [Section A] for review and consideration of renewal of in-care status, supplying to Section A, in advance of the annual renewal review, names and contact information for: a seminary faculty member who can serve as a confidential reference as well as any field placement, internship, or clinical pastoral education supervisors with whom the Person in Care has worked over the past year.
  - i. Abide by the ethical standards and guidelines pertinent to Authorized Ministers.
3. The In-Care Adviser will:
  - a. Maintain communication with the Person-in-Care, regarding her/his progress and struggles in preparation for authorized ministry, and regarding the requirements and timelines set by the Northern California Nevada Conference.

- b. Advise the Committee on the Ministry [Section A] of any concerns regarding the progress of the Person-in-Care's preparation for authorized ministry.
4. The Local Church will:
  - a. Furnish opportunities for the growth in ministry of the person-in-care
  - b. Provide guidance and support through the Pastor and/or an in-care support committee
  - c. Hold a service of recognition for the person taken into care.
5. The Association will:
  - a. Maintain collegial contact with the person-in-care, including the person-in-care on its mailing lists.
  - b. Offer spiritual support.

**C. DISSOLVING THE IN-CARE COVENANT**

1. If the Committee decides the In-Care relationship should be dissolved, and in-care status either dropped or terminated, the Person-in-Care will be given full opportunity to present her or his views.
2. A Person-in-Care may request on her or his own behalf that the in-care relationship be dissolved and in-care status dropped.

**D. ORDINATION OR COMMISSIONING INTERVIEW**

1. When the in-care process is nearing completion, the person-in-care will meet with the Committee on the Ministry [Section A]. Prior to that meeting the person-in-care will submit the following materials to the Conference Office in quantities determined by Section A:
  - Ordination or Commissioning Paper
  - A sermon [for those seeking ordination] prepared and presented by the person-in-care
  - Verification of membership and active participation in the local UCC church which has supported the person-in-care during the in-care process.
  - A letter from that local church to the Committee on the Ministry recommending examination for ordination or commissioning in the United Church of Christ
  - For those seeking ordination: Certification of graduation, or upcoming graduation, along with course transcript from a seminary or theological school approved by the Local Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ.
  - For those seeking commissioning: Certification of educational attainment, including bachelor's degree or its equivalent and documentation of specialized education and training pertinent to the field of commissioning.
  - Record of completion of a course in United Church of Christ history and polity.
  - Evaluation from the Center for Ministry (or other comparable report).
  - Records and evaluations from any career assessment, field work, internship, or clinical pastoral education undertaken while in-care.

- Letters of reference for the person-in-care (one of which may serve as verification of church membership):
    - From the seminary of one seeking ordination
    - From the in-care advisor
    - From an ordained minister with standing in the United Church of Christ
    - A fourth letter of reference
  - Completed Ministerial Profile
  - A statement of status regarding a call to a particular ministry for which ordination or commissioning would be appropriate.
2. Guided by the principles found in the *Manual on Ministry*, and based on a review of the materials presented, the in-care relationship, and the interview, Section A determines whether to recommend the person-in-care to the Association for ordination or commissioning. (See MOMSA I.C. for specific procedures by the Association)