

Dear Local Church Discernment Committee,

Friends, discerning God's call of members within our communities of faith is an essential part of living out our covenantal promises. It is our hope as the members of the Church and Ministry Committee of the Southern Association to be faithful partners with you as you listen for the Still-speaking voice of God calling a member of your congregation into Authorized Ministry in the United Church of Christ.

A great theologian from the early days of the United Church of Christ, H. Richard Niebuhr, identified four aspects of a vocation.

- The call to be a Christian is the beginning of any call to ministry.
- The secret call between an individual and God, when one feels an inward invitation to become a minister.
- The providential call when one recognizes when God has given an individual specific gifts--intellectual, spiritual, psychological, and moral--to use in ministry.
- The ecclesiastical call when the communities affirm the call, help to prepare for ministry, and then ordains or commissions individuals for Christian ministry.

As you support your church member in making application to become a Member in Discernment of the Southern Association of the Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ, I want to encourage you to spend time in prayer and conversation with your church member as they begin to discern their call to ministry. Several Local Church Discernment Committees have found the **Discernment Travelogue** to be a helpful resource of support. Additionally, an invaluable resource is the **Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ**, Section 2, Article 1 of the **Manual on Ministry**, and the **Best Practices for Local Church Discernment Committees**.

Discerning a call to ministry in the United Church of Christ is communal work of mutual discernment, and there is a plethora of resources to assist you in this process. Included in this packet you will find links and/or attachments to all of the resources listed above, as well as the **Formal Local Church Discernment Committee Application**, which is a supporting document for your church member's formal Member in Discernment Application. At least 30 days before the initial interview with your church member, all formal applications and supplemental documentation must be received by the Southern Association office--this is to ensure that all members of the Church and Ministry Committee (Section A) have adequate time to review the application packet and prepare for the interview.

On behalf of Section A, of the Church and Ministry Committee, thank you.

Godspeed and Blessings,



The Rev. Dr. J. Lee Hill, Jr., Chair Section A
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LOCAL CHURCH DISCERNMENT APPLICATION

This form should be submitted to the Church and Ministry Committee (southernassociation@sascnucucc.com) by a Local Church Discernment Committee (LCDC) after the Local Church Governing Body has voted to recommend that an individual be accepted as a Member in Discernment by the Southern Association of the Southern California Nevada Conference.

Name of Candidate: _____

Name of Church: _____

Date of Membership: _____

Date of Governing Body vote to recommend candidate to Church and Ministry as a Member in Discernment: _____

Name of current pastor: _____

Contact information of Committee Chair: Name _____

Email: _____ Phone _____

Names of Local Church Discernment Committee Members:

Please provide a brief letter of recommendation for this candidate:

Signature: _____ Date: _____
Chair of Local Church Discernment Committee

Submit to: southernassociation@sascnucucc.com, or Southern Association, 4070 Jackdaw St., San Diego, CA 92103

Resources:

Discernment Travelogue: <https://www.uccresources.com/products/a-discernment-travelogue?s=recomatic&variant=17675334660>

Section 2, Article 1 of the Manual on Ministry: <https://www.uccfiles.com/pdf/ManualonMinistry-2018.pdf>

Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ: <https://www.uccfiles.com/pdf/MOM-Sect3-Marks-of-Faithful-and-Effective-Ministers.pdf>

Best Practices for Local Church Discernment Committees: <https://www.uccfiles.com/pdf/MOM-Sect3-Local-Church-Discernment-Committee.pdf>