UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Wisconsin Conference UCC

Where God is still speaking.

MANUAL ON LICENSED MINISTRY

for Use by Local Churches and the Divisions
on Church & Ministry/Committees on Ministry of the Associations
of the Wisconsin Conference, United Church of Christ

August 2024

www.wcucc.org

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

Welcome to the Wisconsin Conference Manual on Licensed Ministers! The goal of producing this manual was to give a current process for the Wisconsin Conference, United Church of Christ. As you use this Manual, you will find that all sections are relevant to all of those interested in learning more about Licensed Ministry in the Wisconsin Conference. Below are the categories that may be helpful for different readers with corresponding sections to look at first below.

Local Churches/Ministry Settings may want to look at the following sections first:

Page 4, Section 2:1 - Situations When Licensed Ministry Is Applicable

Page 4, Section 2:2 - Situations When Licensed Ministry Is Not Applicable

Page 4, Section 3:1 - The Responsibilities of a Ministry Setting with a Licensed Minister

Candidates for Licensure may want to look at the following sections first:

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Page 2, Section 1:3 - Licensed Ministers and the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers in the UCC

Page 2, Section 1:4 - Licensed Ministers and the UCC Ministerial Code

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SECTION 1:1

INTRODUCTION

The Local Churches of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ continue to adapt to the opportunities, changes, and challenges present in religious and spiritual communities today. The changing religious landscape has fostered creative approaches to all aspects of ministry and church life, including the important event of the calling a pastor to serve a Local Church. As Local Churches open themselves to the movement of the Spirit in their midst, Licensed Pastors will continue to play a vital role in Christian communities in the Wisconsin Conference well into the future.[1]

SECTION 1:2

WHAT IS A LICENSED MINISTER?

A Licensed Minister of the Wisconsin Conference, United Church of Christ is one who has been called and recognized by the Association to a designated ministry setting, for a defined period of time within a covenant of mutual accountability that includes appropriate supervision and guidance of the designated Committee on Ministry.

The specified duties of the Licensed Minister's role in a ministry setting of the Wisconsin Conference may be categorized as:
Priestly: Providing sacramental leadership.
Pastoral: Holding responsibility for others' spiritual care.
Representative: Demonstrating the public presence of the Wisconsin Conference, United Church of Christ.[2]

A Licensed Minister is an Authorized Minister in the Wisconsin Conference.[3]

[1] See Appendix A, The History and Background of Licensed Ministry.
[2] United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry 2018, Page 68.
[3] See Page 2, Section 1:5 Privileges & Requirements for Licensed Ministers.

SECTION 1:3

LICENSED MINISTERS & THE MARKS OF FAITHFUL & EFFECTIVE AUTHORIZED MINISTERS IN THE UCC

All Authorized Ministers in the Wisconsin Conference, United Church of Christ are "entrusted with and accountable for the faithfulness and effectiveness of their lives and ministries on its behalf."[4] The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers "strive to highlight the complex combination of talents, understandings, and skills needed for authorized ministerial leadership."[5] The Marks are organized into eight categories below and may be used in assessing candidates for licensed ministry in the Wisconsin Conference.[6]

SECTION 1:4

LICENSED MINISTERS AND THE UCC MINISTERIAL CODE

All Authorized Ministers in the Wisconsin Conference, United Church of Christ are expected to abide by the UCC Ministerial Code.[7] [8]

SECTION 1:5

PRIVILEGES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSED MINISTERS

A Licensed Minister must adhere to all the requirements of Authorized Ministers in the Wisconsin Conference, as well as special requirements for Licensed Ministers.

Currently, the requirements for Licensed Ministers in the Wisconsin Conference are the same as Authorized Ministers with Ordained Ministerial Standing:

[4] MOM, Page 10.
[5] MOM, Page 10.
[6] See Appendix B for a list of the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers.
[7] MOM, Page 62.
[8] See Appendix C for the UCC Ministerial Code.

1.maintain membership in a Local UCC congregation;[9]
2.submission of the Annual Information Review Form;
3.a boundary training course completed every four years;
4.an anti-racism training course completed every three years;
5.continuing education;
6.attendance at Association and Conference meetings.

Special Requirements for Licensed Ministers vary, but may include:
1.an annual Licensed Pastors' Retreat;
2.a Psychological Evaluation;
3.an Annual Licensure Review Meeting with the Committee on Ministry;
4.any further required education/courses, trainings, etc. as directed by the Committee on Ministry (which may include a History and Polity of the United Church of Christ course and/or specified theological educational courses or programs, such as those offered for Licensed Ministers through the Damascus Project);[10]
5.participation in a Community of Practice Group (COP).

The **Privileges** of Licensed Ministers in the Wisconsin Conference:
1.voting privileges in their Association of Licensure and in the Wisconsin Conference;
2.ability to serve on Association and Conference Committees, Teams, and Boards;
3.access to all ministerial support resources for Authorized Ministers in the Wisconsin Conference.

SECTION 2:1

SITUATIONS WHEN LICENSED MINISTRY IS APPLICABLE

There are two situations when Licensed Ministry is applicable in the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ:

1.A Ministry Setting in the Wisconsin Conference discerns that one of its members who is a lay person has the gifts and graces to respond to its need for an Authorized Minister.
2.A Ministry Setting in the Wisconsin Conference discerns that one of its employees, who is a lay person in the United Church of Christ and is a member of a Local Church in the United Church of Christ, has the gifts and graces to pursue the path towards Licensure for their current ministerial position within the church.

[9] The Committee on Ministry may waive this requirement for reasons such as emergency needs for Licensure, if the candidate has been known to the congregation for an extended amount of time, if polity restrictions apply, etc.
[10] See Appendix D for more information on the Damascus Project.

SECTION 2:2

SITUATIONS WHEN LICENSED MINISTRY IS NOT APPLICABLE

Below are four situations where Licensed Ministry is not applicable in the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ:

1.A Local Church does not have a settled pastor and does not want to enter the search and call process for an Ordained Minister with Standing in the United Church of Christ.[11]
2.A Local Church cannot provide a financial/compensation package that meets the minimum recommended compensation in the most current Wisconsin Conference Compensation Guidelines and believes that paying a Licensed Minister may cost less.
3.A lay person the United Church of Christ provides periodic pulpit supply on non-Communion Sundays in Local Churches in the Wisconsin Conference.
4.One-time Licenses are not granted for weddings or baptisms.

SECTION 3:1

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A MINISTRY SETTING WITH A LICENSED MINISTER

The Leadership Body of a Ministry Setting served by a Licensed Pastor is an important partner in covenant with the Licensed Minister and the Association. By employing a Licensed Minister, the Ministry Setting is covenanting with the above to:

1.write a letter to the Committee on Ministry each year requesting the continued Licensure of the Licensed Minister to the particular ministry position;[12]
2.provide just and fair compensation;[13]
3.encourage and financially support the Licensed Minister's engagement in a Wisconsin Conference Community of Practice Group;
4.create a Pastoral Support Committee (formerly Pastoral Relations Committee) for the Licensed Minister (Contact an Associate Conference Minister or Conference staff for more information on forming a PSC);
5.financially support continuing education and any other requirements of the Committee on Ministry for the Licensed Minister;
6.provide feedback yearly to the Committee on Ministry regarding the Licensed Minister and their ministry in the Local Church.[14]

[11] This includes the possibility that a Local Church cannot secure the volunteers to establish a Search Committee according to the Local Church's proscribed method of doing so in their own Constitution and Bylaws.
12] See Page 8, Section 5:1 Requirements for Licensure Renewal.
[13] See the Wisconsin Conference Compensation Guidelines, available on the Conference website www.wcucc.org.
[14] See Appendix E for the Local Church Licensed Minister Annual Report and Renewal.

SECTION 4:1

THE LICENSED MINISTRY PROCESS IN THE WISCONSIN CONFERENCE

A Candidate for Licensure is recommended to have been a member of a United Church of Christ congregation for at least one year.[15]

Discernment for the lay person and the Local Church includes discussions with the following:
1.The pastor of the Local Church.[16]
2.The Associate Conference Minister.
3.The designated Leadership Body of the Local Church.

When discernment leads to affirmation of a call to ministry, the following process should be taken:

1.The person completes and submits to the Committee on Ministry:
- a. the Licensed Ministry Application;[17]
- b. a criminal background check;[18]
- c. a statement of the person's spiritual journey;
- d. a statement of the person's understanding of their call to Licensed Ministry in the United Church of Christ, including any applicable ministerial experience;
- e. a resume, including work history and formal education;
- f. two references.

2. A representative of the leadership in the Local Church prepares and submits a letter to the Committee on Ministry that should:
- a. explain the need for a Licensed Minister in the Local Church;
- b. request Licensure for the person;

[15] The Committee on Ministry may waive this requirement for reasons such as emergency needs for Licensure, if the candidate has been known to the congregation for an extended amount of time, if polity restrictions apply, etc.
[16] If the Local Church does not have a pastor, the lay person should be in contact with the Committee on Ministry.
[17] See Appendix F for the Licensed Ministry Application. The application includes the Self-Disclosure Form and the Statement of Consent.
[18] See Appendix G for the criminal background check instructions.

3. The Committee on Ministry receives and reviews the submitted materials, and determines how to proceed from the following options:

a. The Committee on Ministry agrees that there is a need for a Licensed Minister and will move forward with an initial meeting with the person requesting Licensure.

b. The Committee on Ministry agrees that there is a need for a Licensed Minister, but will not move forward with an initial meeting with the person. In this decision, the Committee on Ministry contacts the Local Church leadership and the person with its decision and agrees to meet with a leadership representative and/or the person to discuss if requested.[19]

c. The Committee on Ministry does not believe there is a need for a Licensed Minister, and therefore will not move forward with an initial meeting with person for Licensure to the specific ministry position. In this decision, the Committee on Ministry contacts the Local Church leadership and the person with its decision and agrees to meet with a leadership representative and/or the person to discuss if requested.

4. If the Committee on Ministry agrees that there is a need for a Licensed Minister and will move forward with an initial meeting with the person requesting Licensure, the Committee on Ministry schedules an initial meeting with the person seeking Licensure.[20]

5. At the initial meeting, the Committee on Ministry:

a. asks the person seeking Licensure to share about their journey and call to Licensed Ministry;

b. engages in discussion with and questions of the person regarding:

-the submitted documents, including theological education, spiritual formation, Local Church involvement, etc.;

-the responsibilities of the specific call and the gifts and graces of the person to satisfy those responsibilities;

-the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers;[21]

-the expectations of the UCC Ministerial Code[22] and the person's capacity to adhere to the Code.

c. answers questions of the person;

d. prays with the person and notifies them that the Committee on Ministry will be in contact with further steps.

[19] In this case, the Local Church may be in contact with the Associate Conference Minister to continue to seek a Licensed Minister.

[20] The Pastor of the Local Church and/or a Local Church Representative may attend this meeting with the person. They may speak to the Local Church's need for a Licensed Minister and the qualifications of the person.

[21] See Appendix B for the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers.

[22] See Appendix C for the UCC Ministerial Code.

6. After the initial meeting with the person, the Committee on Ministry discusses and reflects on the initial meeting.

7. The Committee on Ministry makes a decision from the following options:

a. The Committee on Ministry comes to a decision of "Yes." The person is approved for Licensed Ministry to the particular Local Church and in an Association of the Wisconsin Conference. If the newly Licensed Minister has not recently taken a boundary training course or an anti-racism training course, the Licensed Minister must do so within a year.

b. The Committee on Ministry comes to a decision of "Yes, but." The Committee will identify any additional requirements and areas for discernment needed before a decision of "Yes." Additional requirements may be given with specific timeframes for completion, such as:

-a Psychological Evaluation (a Psychological Evaluation is recommended if the Licensed Minister will be serving as a settled pastor or an interim minister position lasting over a year;[23]

-continuing education;[24]

-additional conversation with the Committee on Ministry.

After a "Yes, but" decision and before the second meeting with the person seeking Licensure, the Committee on Ministry:

-prepares specific requirements that need to be fulfilled before and/or after Licensure;

-prepares questions and discussion topics for further discernment with the person seeking Licensure.

-contacts the person outlining any additional requirements needed.

c. The Committee on Ministry comes to a decision of "No." The Committee on Ministry does not recommend the person for Licensed Ministry. The process ends. The person and the Local Church are notified of the decision.

[23] See Appendix I for Psychological Evaluation

[24] See Appendix D for more information on the Damascus Project.

SECTION 5:1 REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE RENEWAL

A License to a specific Ministry Setting for Authorized Ministry in the Wisconsin Conference lasts for one year.[25] It is the responsibility of the Licensed Minister to initiate the Licensure Renewal Process and to guide the Local Church leadership in its requirements as well. A request for Licensure Renewal should follow the following process:

1. Before the end of the year term and with adequate time given to the Committee on Ministry to review, a representative of the leadership in the Local Church prepares the following and submits to the Committee on Ministry chairperson:
    a. a letter requesting the renewal of the Licensure of the Licensed Minister for another year.
    b. the Local Church Annual Licensed Ministry Report and Renewal Form. [26][27]
2. The Committee on Ministry receives and reviews the submitted materials, and determines how to proceed from the following options:
    a. The Committee on Ministry renews the License of the Licensed Minister for another year and notifies the Licensed Minister and the Local Church of its decision.
    b. The Committee on Ministry requests an Annual Review Meeting with the Licensed Minister before making a decision.
    c. The Committee on Ministry comes to a decision of "No" regarding a renewal of the License for the person. The person and the Local Church are notified of the decision.

[25] The Committee on Ministry at its discretion may grant a License for less than or than a year in special circumstances. See Page 11, Section 7:2 Licensure for Extended Periods of Ministry.
[26] See Appendix E for the Local Church Annual Licensed Minister Report and Renewal Form.
[27] The Annual Licensed Minister Review and Renewal Form may be completed by the Leadership Body of a Local Church or by the Settled Pastor of a Local Church if the Licensed Ministry Position is in a multi-staff Ministry Setting.

SECTION 6 SPECIAL SITUATIONS AND LICENSURE

SECTION 6:1 CALLING A LICENSED MINISTER AS SETTLED PASTOR

A settled call in Local Church may be held by a Licensed Minister. Licensed Ministers who are in a settled call in a Local Church are still responsible for fulfilling all the requirements of Authorized Ministers in the Wisconsin Conference. [28][29]

After a pastor is called to a settled call in the Local Church, the Licensed Minister should contact the Associate Conference Minister or Conference staff to plan and schedule an Installation Service. When a Licensed Minister is leaving a called Licensed Ministry position, the Licensed Minister should contact the Associate Conference Minister or Conference staff to plan and schedule a Service of Farewell.

SECTION 6:2 MEMBERS IN DISCERNMENT AS LICENSED MINISTERS

Members in Discernment (MIDs) may be approved for Licensure and serve as a Licensed Minister during their MID process. Much of the required materials for the MID process are similar to the required materials for Licensure. The Committee on Ministry should use applicable materials from the MID's MID File, which is held in the Wisconsin Conference Office, for the Licensure process.

A MID who becomes a Licensed Minister will continue in their MID process as outlined in the UCC Manual on Ministry and in the Wisconsin Conference MID Procedure Manual. As a Licensed Minister, they will also be required to fulfill all requirements designated by the Committee on Ministry. The Committee on Ministry is encouraged to work with the MID so that the requirements of both processes align and do not cause an undue burden on the MID.

A MID who is a Licensed Minister has all of the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of Authorized Ministers, minus one: The MID may not serve on the Committee on Ministry while they are in the MID process.

[28] See Page 4, Section 3:1 The Responsibilities of a Ministry Setting with a Licensed Minister and the requirements of Licensed Ministers in their Association
[29] See Pages 2-3, Section 1:5 Privileges & Requirements for Licensed Ministers.

SECTION 6:3

LICENSED MINISTERS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS

There are times where a lay person or person who has been ordained in another denomination that does not qualify for Privilege of Call or Dual Standing may seek Licensure in the Wisconsin Conference.

The person seeking Licensure should follow the process on Pages 5-7, Section 4:1 The Licensed Ministry Process in the Wisconsin Conference.

In any of the above situations, the Committee on Ministry reviews the materials, education, ministerial history, references, etc. of the person seeking Licensure. It is often necessary in such a case that the person seeking Licensure in the above circumstances must demonstrate adequate knowledge of the history and polity of the United Church of Christ.

SECTION 6:4

LICENSED MINISTERS AS INTERIM MINISTERS

There are times when a person has the training and/or experience to act as an Interim Minister and although not ordained, has the gifts and graces for Licensed Ministry. The person should follow the following process:

1. discern with the Associate Conference Minister.
2. follow the process on Pages 5-7, Section 4:1 The Licensed Ministry Process in the Wisconsin Conference.

If the terms of call in the Local Church setting change for an Interim Minister called as a Licensed Pastor, then a new License may need to be granted by the Committee on Ministry.

SECTION 6:5

SHARED MINISTRIES AND LICENSED MINISTERS

It has become more common in the Wisconsin Conference that a Licensed Minister may serve in a Shared Ministry between two or more churches. The processes outlined in this manual should be followed for any Candidate for Licensure. In the situation of a Shared Ministry, the Shared Ministry should request the Licensure of the pastor.

SECTION 7 OTHER LICENSURE CONSIDERATIONS

SECTION 7:1 NON-TRANSFERABILITY OF A LICENSE

A License granted by the Committee on Ministry of an Association of the Wisconsin Conference is only valid in the Association that granted the License and for ministry in the specific Local Church of the Association. Neither a Licensed Minister nor a License can be transferred from one Association to another or from one Local Church to another. However, the Committee on Ministry may accept the Licensure process of another Association in licensing a person, especially if the other Association is of the Wisconsin Conference.

SECTION 7:2 LICENSURE FOR EXTENDED PERIODS OF MINISTRY

The Committee on Ministry may, at its discretion, increase the length of a Licensure period.

All Licensed Ministers that plan to serve in a ministry capacity at a Local Church for an extended amount of time may consider the Member of Discernment Process in their Association, regardless of education level. If they are not in the process to obtain or currently hold a Master of Divinity from an accredited seminary, the Multiple Paths route of the MID Process is applicable (Please consult the Wisconsin Conference Member in Discernment Procedure Manual for more guidance).

SECTION 7:3 MENTORS FOR LICENSED MINISTERS

The Committee on Ministry may decide to assign a Mentor to a newly Licensed Minister for a period of time, most often for the first year. A Licensed Minister may also request a Mentor. A Mentor for a Licensed Minister must have standing as an Authorized Minister in the Wisconsin Conference. The Mentor should:

1. meet regularly (at least once a quarter) with the Licensed Minister to review their work and provide counsel and advice;
2. participate in the periodic review of the Licensed Minister with the leadership of the Local Church;
3. report quarterly to the Committee on Ministry, using the Licensed Minister Mentor Reporting Form.[30]

SECTION 7:4

EMERGENCY LICENSES

In rare cases, an emergency arises and a Local Church is in need of a Licensed Minister for a specific occasion, the most common of which is the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion at a Sunday worship service. The Committee on Ministry or the Associate Conference Minister may approve a License for the specific occasion. This approval is reported at the next Committee on Ministry meeting and recorded in the minutes.

SECTION 7:5

WEDDINGS IN WISCONSIN & LICENSED MINISTERS

Licensed Ministers in the Wisconsin Conference may only officiate at weddings where at least one of the persons being married is a member or friend of the congregation to which they are licensed.

SECTION 7:6

RECORD KEEPING FOR LICENSED MINISTERS

The creation of a file to be held at the Wisconsin Conference Office is recommended for each person seeking Licensure should be created at the beginning of the inquiry. This file should contain all documents provided by the person, including:

1. the Licensed Ministry Application;[31]
2. the completed criminal background check;[32]

[30] See Appendix I for the Licensed Minister Mentor Reporting Form.
[31] See Appendix F for the Licensed Ministry Application.
[32] See Appendix G for the criminal background check instructions.

4. the statement of the person's spiritual journey;
5. the statement of the person's understanding of their call to Licensed Ministry in the United Church of Christ, including any application ministerial experience;
6. the person's resume, including work history and formal education;
7. the Call Agreement of the Licensed Minister (if the Licensed Minister has been called to a settled pastor position);
8. Local Church Licensed Minister Annual Review and Renewal forms;
9. copies of Boundary Training Completion Certificates;
12. copies of Anti-Racism Training Completion Certificates;
11. participation in continuing education;
12. a copy of the psychological evaluation;
13. Any letters/correspondence from the Committee on Ministry;
14. documentation of any other requirements given by the Committee on Ministry;
15. documentation of any other requirements given by the Committee on Ministry.

SECTION 8 ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUPPORT

SECTION 8:1 SUPPORT AND OVERSIGHT OF THE LICENSED MINISTER

The Associations of the United Church of Christ vest their role in support and oversight of all Authorized Ministers in the Committee on Ministry. The Committee on Ministry is responsible for the support and oversight of all Licensed Ministers. The Committee on Ministry may request a meeting with a Licensed Minister at any time. Decisions of the Committee on Ministry regarding Licensure are final and may not be appealed.

SECTION 8:2 RESIGNATION OF LICENSURE

A Licensed Minister may resign their License as a result of the desire to withdraw from authorized leadership of the Local Church to which they are licensed.

After a resignation of Licensure, the Committee on Ministry still votes to terminate the License and the record of such a meeting should indicate the reason for resignation and the surrounding details in the anticipating the type of information needed for review if the person seeks Licensure again at a future time.

SECTION 8:3 TERMINATION OF LICENSURE

The Committee on Ministry, an Associate Conference Minister, or Conference may terminate a License. There are seven situations in which the Committee on Ministry may consider terminating a License. They are:

1. when a Local Church requests termination as the person is no longer serving in a ministry capacity;
2. when a Licensed Minister is no longer serving in a ministry capacity in the Local Church;
3. when the Local Church calls an Ordained Minister with Standing in the United Church of Christ to the position in which the Licensed Minister was serving;

4. when the period of Licensure expires;
5. when the Licensed Minister fails to complete the requirements given by the Committee on Ministry in the prescribed time;
6. when the Licensed Minister resigns their License;[35]
7. because of a violation of the Ministerial Code of Ethics and/or capacity to meet the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers.

After the Termination of Licensure, the Committee on Ministry keeps a record of such a meeting and indicates the reason for resignation and the surrounding details in the anticipating the type of information needed for review if the person seeks Licensure again at a future time.

[35] See Page 14, Section 8:2 Resignation of Licensure.

APPENDIX A
A LICENSED MINISTRY HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Licensed Ministry is an authorization and standing for a lay person or person without Ordained Ministerial Standing[1] with specific pastoral duties in a Local Church for a designated time, renewable at the discretion of the Committee on Ministry[2]. Licensed ministry is a form of ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ that was created by the adoption of 1983-1984 amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws, and written into the 1986 edition of the Manual on Ministry. By definition, a Licensed Minister performs specified duties in a designated Local Church or within an Association, mainly preaching and conducting services of worship, i.e. word and sacrament.[3] Licensed Ministry is not a track towards ordination, though Licensed Ministers may apply for the Member in Discernment program in the Association of their Local Church membership at any time.[4]

The Associations of the Wisconsin Conference, the Local Churches of the Associations, and Authorized Ministers with Standing in the Association all covenant with one another to work for the health and purpose of the Christian Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in the name of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This covenanted relationship is seen in the work of Licensed Ministers and in Licensure as an important expression of Authorized Ministry.

The 2018 UCC Manual on Ministry created a new standing titled Lay Ministerial Standing[5], which was offered to replace Licensed Ministry and Commissioned Ministry, giving the following explanation:

[1] In this manual, "lay person" will also refer to a person without Ordained Ministerial Standing even if they are ordained within another denomination and are seeking licensing.
[2] Associations and Conferences may have different names for their Committees on Ministry. This Manual will use the term Committee on Ministry.
[3] United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry 2018, Pages 76-77.
[4] See Page___, SECTION 7:2 MEMBERS IN DISCERNMENT AS LICENSED MINISTERS.
[5] United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry 2018, Pages 66-76.

New licenses are not anticipated after 2018, and Committees on Ministry that review and renew existing licenses are encouraged to discern the appropriateness of ordination for those Licensed Ministers called to ongoing service in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ, using the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers to assess a Licensed Minister's preparedness for ordination. General Synod's 2005 affirmation of multiple paths for preparation and formation toward ministerial authorization means that Licensed Ministers should not be unduly hindered from pursuing ordination if they demonstrate competency with the Marks. Committees on Ministry with currently Licensed Ministers can reflect upon the questions and definitions of "ordainable call" in Section 2 Article 5.[6]

The Associations of the Wisconsin Conference, along with other Associations and Conferences in the wider United Church of Christ, decided to continue with Licensed Ministry, despite the 2018 Manual on Ministry's recommendation to cease licensing. The 2018 MOM gives direction regarding the continuation of Licensed Ministry, which the Associations of the Wisconsin Conference have continued to follow.

A Resolution titled "Affirming Licensed and Commissioned Ministers as Authorized Ministers in the United Church of Christ" was presented at General Synod 34 in the summer of 2023. This Resolution called on the Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization Team (MESA) of the United Church of Christ National Setting to amend the 2018 Manual on Ministry to affirm Licensed and Commission Ministry and to include recommended processes and procedures for authorizing these forms of ministry. The Resolution was not voted on nor brought for debate but was forwarded to MESA. A collection of resources was added to the Section 3 Resource section online in 2024.

[6] United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry 2018, Pages 76-77.

APPENDIX B
THE MARKS OF FAITHFUL AND EFFECTIVE AUTHORIZED MINISTERS

EXHIBITING A SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION AND ONGOING SPIRITUAL PRACTICE
o Loving God, following Jesus Christ, and being guided by the Holy Spirit; living a life of discipleship.
o Praying actively and nurturing spiritual practices.
o Being called to ordained ministry by God and the Church.
o Continuing discernment of one's call in community.
o Understanding the power of the Holy Spirit at work through the elements of Christian worship to nurture faith.
o Exhibiting a commitment to lifelong spiritual development and faithful personal stewardship.

NURTURING UCC IDENTITY
o Acknowledging Jesus Christ as the sole Head of the Church.
o Communicating passion for the oneness of the Body of Christ (John 17:21).
o Holding active membership in a Local Church of the United Church of Christ.
o Participating in the various settings of the United Church of Christ, including Local
o Churches, Associations, Conferences, General Synod, and global ministries.
o Knowing and appreciating UCC history, polity, and theology.
o Exhibiting a commitment to the core values of the United Church of Christ: continuing testament, extravagant welcome, and changing lives.

BUILDING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS
o Empowering the Church to be faithful to God's call, reflective of Christ's mission, and open to the surprises of the Holy Spirit.
o Strategically creating the future of God's Church.
o Witnessing in the public square to God's redeeming power.
o Performing necessary and appropriate administrative tasks.
o Working collaboratively with intercultural awareness and sensitivity.
o Encouraging leadership development of self and others through continuing education and lifelong learning.

ENGAGING SACRED STORIES AND TRADITIONS
o Exhibiting knowledge, understanding, and continuing study of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament.
o Maturing in effective proclamation and preaching.
o Understanding the history of the Christian Church, from biblical times forward.
o Bringing life to sacred stories and traditions in worship, proclamation, and witness.
o Leading faith formation effectively across generations.
o Holding the Holy with integrity especially as represented in the Sacraments.

CARING FOR ALL CREATION

o Nurturing care and compassion for God's creation.
o Maintaining a basic understanding of mental health and wellness.
o Practicing self-care and life balance.
o Providing hope and healing to a hurting world.
o Attending to one's own spiritual and pastoral care, including engagement in supervision as appropriate.
o Stewarding the resources of the Church.

PARTICIPATING IN THEOLOGICAL PRAXIS

o Practicing theological reflection and engagement as part of one's sense of ministerial identity.
o Integrating theological reflection in teaching, preaching, and ecclesial and community leadership.
o Articulating a theology and practice of ministry consistent with the UCC Manual on Ministry.
o Demonstrating an appreciation for and participation in the ecumenical and interfaith partnerships of the UCC.
o Experiencing and appreciating a variety of theological perspectives.
o Embodying the UCC Ministerial Code.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE AND MERCY

o Drawing on the ministry of Jesus Christ to confront injustice and oppression.
o Practicing the radical hospitality of God.
o Identifying and working to overcome explicit and implicit bias in the life of the Church.
o Understanding community context and navigating change with a community.
o Engaging in mission and outreach.
o Building relationships of mutual trust and interdependence.

STRENGTHENING INTER- AND INTRA- PERSONAL ASSETS

o Developing and maintaining a healthy sense of self as shaped by God, community, and life experiences.
o Living in relationships of covenantal accountability with God and the Church.
o Exhibiting strong moral character and personal integrity.
o Respecting the dignity of all God's people.
o Understanding and ministering to stages of human development across the life span.
o Demonstrating excellent communication skills.

APPENDIX C
THE UCC MINISTERIAL CODE

All persons with ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ are expected to abide by the UCC Ministerial Code.

I acknowledge as the Church's sole Head, Jesus Christ, Son of God and Savior, and as kindred in Christ all who share in this confession. I will look to the Word of God in the Scriptures, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world.

Affirming that I have been called by God to be a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ and granted ministerial standing by the United Church of Christ, I agree to preach and teach the gospel, to administer the sacraments and rites of the Church with integrity, and to exercise pastoral care and leadership in covenant with others.

Relying on the grace of God, I…

COVENANT WITH GOD TO:

- Lead a life worthy of the calling to which I have been called.
- Demonstrate a sincere yearning for connection with the triune God, expressed in prayer, worship, Bible study, retreat, and other spiritual practices.
- Affirm the importance of discernment in relationship to my call and, using the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers, will continue to discern the nature of my call in community.
- Grow in faith, knowledge, and the practice of ministry through intentional continuing education, study, and devotional life.
- Cultivate a culture of call by nurturing the gifts of others in the Church and joining their gifts with mine in seasons of change and continuity for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ and the health of the Church.
- Honor the diversity of God's creation and work for the unity of the body of Christ (John 17:21).
- Recognize the communal nature of God, ensuring that ministry does not happen in isolation.

COVENANT WITH SELF AND FAMILY TO:

- Attend to my physical well-being by adopting a healthy life style including diet, exercise, and rest, setting aside time for Sabbath and vacation.
- Steward my time, talents, and personal financial resources responsibly.
- Accept responsibility for all debts that I incur.
- Refrain from abusive behavior including abusive behavior toward others, the abuse of alcohol, drugs, or any other substance; to seek appropriate care for physical and mental health concerns; and to avoid addictive behaviors.

- Engage in sexually healthy and responsible behavior.
- Honor my family commitments, including my family's need for privacy and time together.
- Develop and maintain meaningful personal relationships outside of my ministry setting.

COVENANT WITH THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST TO:

- Actively participate in the covenantal life and work of all settings of the United Church of Christ.
- Adhere to all requirements for maintaining ministerial standing as set forth by my Association, and abide by the terms of my call agreements and covenants with energy and vitality.
- Seek the counsel of others, including Conference staff and/or the Association Committee on the Ministry, should divisive tensions threaten my relationship with those with whom I minister.
- Serve as an ambassador for the United Church of Christ, and participate in activities that strengthen its mission, vision and purpose.
- Advocate for fair standards of compensation for all ordained and lay employees of the Church, and honor the search and call process of the United Church of Christ.
- Seek to know, understand and respect the diversity of opinions and people within the United Church of Christ, affirming that all settings of the UCC speak to the church and not for it.
- Encourage and participate in the evaluation of my ministry, understanding and demonstrating that ministry is of and for the Church as it seeks to advance God's mission in the world.

COVENANT WITH MY MINISTRY SETTING TO:

- Preach and teach the gospel without fear or favor, regarding all persons with equal respect and concern, and undertaking to minister impartially.
- Honor all confidences shared with me, telling only those who need to know, what they need to know, when they need to know it.
- Steward church funds and property faithfully, while overseeing the administrative tasks of ministry with integrity.
- Speak the truth, not using my position, power, or authority to exploit any person nor using my position for unwarranted personal financial gain.
- Assess with care the implications of accepting gifts from congregation members.
- Not perform pastoral services within a congregation or for a member of a congregation, without the invitation of the current pastor of that congregation.
- Neither interfere with nor intrude upon the ministry of my successor, upon my departure from a ministry setting; and to deal honorably with the record of my predecessor and successor.

COVENANT WITH ALL LAY AND ORDAINED MINISTERS TO:

- Work cooperatively and collegially, with intercultural awareness.
- Stand in mutual relationships with colleagues in ministry, offering and receiving counsel and support with intentionality.
- Use technology and social media responsibly.
- Act to prevent and to report known or suspected cases of physical or sexual abuse or neglect.
- Attribute the sources of words and ideas that are not my own.
- Accurately represent my professional qualifications, education, experience and affiliations, acknowledging the limitations of my office, abilities, skills and competencies, and making referrals when necessary and/or appropriate.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries and practice self-differentiation in both my personal and professional life, including within the Local Church where I hold membership.

APPENDIX D
THE DAMASCUS PROJECT

The Damascus Project is the shared theological education ministry of the Minnesota and Wisconsin Conferences, United Church of Christ.

Mission Statement: The Damascus Project exists to nurture vitality within the body of Christ by transforming the people of God through theological study and equipping them for effective leadership within their congregations and communities.

Orienting Statement: In a rapidly changing world that needs well-equipped leadership in a wide variety of settings, lay leaders who feel empowered, and access to safe spaces in which to form new communities and explore questions, we are a community of lifelong learners committed to walking together and participating in transformative conversations in the life of faith and leadership. We learn together so that we are better equipped to love each other, nurture the body of Christ and transform the world.

Foundational Values:

- We have a variety of beliefs - because spiritual diversity is a beautiful thing/a gift.
- We ask hard questions - because matters of faith are too important for easy answers
- We wrestle with our sacred texts - because God is Still Speaking and we are listening.
- We question our beliefs - because God calls us to learn and grow.
- We interrogate our church's past - because we believe in telling the whole truth.
- We imagine our church's future - because we believe the church is a vehicle for personal and social transformation.

Program Objectives:

1. Create brave, non-judgmental, theologically-open spaces so that learners can explore and deepen their faith.
2. Equip all the saints by providing relevant theological learning so that laity are empowered to boldly speak their faith and share their gifts for ministries of all kinds.
3. Provide high-quality continuing education for clergy to promote a culture of lifelong learning and professional development in our congregations and conferences.
4. Provide multiple pathways for MIDs, creating opportunities for ministry training in alignment with the UCC Marks for Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers.
5. Strengthen the whole body of Christ by creating interactive opportunities for clergy and laity to grow together as leaders and learners modeling healthy shared leadership and governance.
6. Respond in particular to the needs of small and rural churches and their leaders nurturing their vitality while also drawing on their wisdom for the benefit of the wider church.

Course Offerings

Faith Foundations (formerly WI Lay Academy) 2-year track focused on developing and deepening the foundations of faith. Topics include:
◯Reflecting theologically
◯Traditional & contemporary theology
◯Old and New Testaments
◯Christian History
◯Theological Ethics
Target audiences:
◯Adult seekers
◯Lay Leaders
◯Members-In-Discernment and others seeking licensure*
**To create a more robust learning experience in Faith Foundations, MIDs and licensed pastors have course additional requirements and instructor time (as well as increased fees)*

Leadership Skills (formerly year 3 of Lay Academy) A rotating series/track of courses focused on developing skills for congregational leadership. Some courses for lay people, some for MIDs/Clergy and some that might cut across all three audiences.Topics include:
+UCC History and Polity
+Transforming Conflict
+ Reflective Listening Skills
+Leading Effective Meetings
+Post-Pandemic Leadership Lessons
+Finance and Stewardship
+Good Governance
+Community and Missional Assessment
Target audiences:
◯Adult seekers
◯Lay Leaders
◯Members-In-Discernment and others seeking licensure*
**To create a more robust learning experience in Faith Foundations, MIDs and licensed pastors have course additional requirements and instructor time (as well as increased fees).*

Ministry Skills A two-year track focused on developing essential ministry skills:
+Faith Formation across the lifespan
+Children's and Youth Ministry
+Pastoral Care
+Worship and Preaching
+ Spiritual Discernment
+Prayer in Christian Tradition and Life
Target audiences:
◯Clergy (continuing ed)
◯Adult seekers
◯Lay Leaders
●Members-In-Discernment and others seeking licensure

Course Offerings

Damascus Project "Deeper Dive" Courses Offered on a regular, rotating basis throughout the Damascus Project program year. Designed to fit within Damascus Project's four Broad Themes, which are aligned with the UCC's Marks of Ministry:
○Personal & Spiritual Identity and Integrity
○Biblical, Theological & Sacramental Foundations
○Outreach, Care for Others, Social Justice
○Spiritual Imagination & Vision
●Sample Courses:
+Ecology and Theology
+Sacraments and Rites in UCC Traditions
+Hebrew Prophets
+Reading Paul
●Target audiences:
○Clergy (continuing ed)
○Adult seekers
○Lay Leaders
○Members-In-Discernment and others seeking licensure

Learner Assessment

●All courses - Align with the UCC Marks of Ministry
●Those who request or need them - including MIDs - will receive Marks-based learner assessments (example here) suited to their level of engagement
●A single course may satisfy more than one Mark

APPENDIX E
LOCAL CHURCH LICENSED MINISTER ANNUAL REPORT & RENEWAL

This document should be completed by a representative of the governing body or particular committee of the ministry setting. Please submit it to the Committee on Ministry upon completion.

Date: _____

Ministry Setting Information:

Name of current ministry setting:_____

Address: _____

Phone:_____ Email:_____

Person Filling Out Form:

Name:_____

Position title in ministry setting:_____

Phone:_____ Email: _____

Licensed Minister Information:

Name:_____

Position title in ministry setting:_____

Phone:_____ Email: _____

Please respond to the following prompts:

Is the ministry setting requesting a renewal for another year of licensure for the above Licensed Minister?

YES_____ NO_____

If you answered "NO" to the renewal of licensure, please explain:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Is there anything that the ministry setting would like to Committee on Ministry to know regarding the licensed minister and their ministry at the ministry setting?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Does the ministry setting want the Committee on Ministry to be in contact for any reason?

YES_____ NO_____

If you answered "YES" above, please state reason:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Signature of Person Filling Out Form:

_____

Date:_____

Thank you for filling out this form!

Please return it to the Wisconsin Conference Office at avik@wcucc.org.

APPENDIX F
LICENSED MINISTER APPLICATION FORM

Applicant's Contact Information:(Please type or print clearly):

Name: _____

Home address:_____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Local Church Information:

Name of Local Church for which Licensure is being sought:

_____

Name and Contact Information of Local Church Leader (Phone and Email):

_____

Church Affiliation:

Are you currently a member of the United Church of Christ? YES_____ NO_____

If so, how long have you been a member of the UCC? _____

Name of current church membership: _____

Location of church: _____

Church email: _____

Please list your involvement in your Local Church and in wider church work if applicable:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Ecclesial History

Have you ever applied for UCC status (including Member in Discernment Status) or standing (including Ordained Ministerial Standing) with this or any other UCC Association or Conference? YES _____ NO_____

If yes, which Association and Conference? _____

When? _____ *Outcome:* _____

Do/did you hold ecclesiastical status or standing with any other body, currently or previously? YES _____ NO_____

I*f yes, Name of Denomination/Entity:* _____

Type of Authorization: _____

Start date of authorization: _____ *End date:* _____

Comments: Please provide any additional relevant information regarding other ecclesiastical bodies.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Education and Training

	Name, Location	Dates Attended	Major/Minor or Areas of Study	Graduation or Completion
High School				
College				
Vocational or Technical School				
Graduate School (other than seminary)				
Seminary or Theological School				
Regional Theological Education Program				
Continuing Education				
UCC History, Theology Polity				

Supplemental Materials

The Committee on Ministry may request any of the list below or other supplemental items be included in an initial application packet for Licensure:

- Faith Journey;
- Statement of understanding of call into the United Church of Christ;
- Ministry Essays including engagement with the Marks on Faithful and Effective Ministers;
- A Resume;
- Transcripts;
- Letters of Reference;
- Psychological Evaluation;
- Copies of Ordination or Ecclesiastical Certificates from other denominations.

For Committee on Ministry Use

Self-Disclosure form, signed (date received) _____

Current Criminal background check (date received) _____

Psychological Assessment Interview Date: _____

Report on File with Committee on Ministry (date received) _____

Licensure Covenant on file: (date signed) _____

Licensure Annual Renewal Dates: _____

Supervisor Name and most recent conversation with COM: _____

Self Disclosure

Ministers applying for standing in the United Church of Christ must make a conscientious assertion about their ethical performance and are given space for relevant commentary.

Have you ever been the subject of a fitness review in any entity affiliated with or setting of the United Church of Christ that resulted in:

Censure (Required) Yes _____ No _____

Suspension (Required) Yes _____ No _____

Termination of Ministerial Standing (Required) Yes _____ No _____

Are you currently engaged in a program of growth as the result of a fitness review in the United Church of Christ? (Required)

Yes _____ No _____

Are there any fitness reviews pending against you at this time by any setting or entity of or affiliated with the United Church of Christ? (Required)

Yes _____ No _____

Have you ever been the subject of an official disciplinary proceeding by another denomination, professional association, credentialing body, guild or employer that resulted in disciplinary action? (Required)

Yes _____ No _____

Are there any official disciplinary proceedings pending against you at this time by another denomination, professional association, credentialing body, guild or employer? (Required)

Yes _____ No _____

Have you ever been the subject of a civil lawsuit alleging that you attempted or actually engaged in sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct; which has ever resulted in a judgment being entered against you, settled out of court, or dismissed because the statute of limitations had expired? (Required)

Yes _____ No _____

Have you had your driving license suspended or revoked within the last 5 years? (Required)

Yes _____ No _____

Self Disclosure Continued

Have you ever been found guilty of, pled guilty to, or pled no contest to criminal charges? (Exclude convictions that have been sealed, expunged or legally eradicated; any misdemeanor conviction for which probation was successfully completed; offenses about which inquiry is not permissible in the state in which you are seeking a position; acts of civil disobedience. With respect to driving record, only include matters of reckless driving, driving while intoxicated and/or driving under the influence of a controlled substance.) (Required)

Yes _____ No _____

Has your employment, a volunteer position, or professional credentials, ever been terminated or revoked, or have you been asked not to return to employment or a volunteer position in the future because you attempted or actually engaged in:

Sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation or misconduct (Required)

Yes _____ No _____

Physical abuse (Required) Yes _____ No _____

Child abuse (Required) Yes _____ No _____

Financial misconduct (Required) Yes _____ No _____

Have you ever terminated your employment, a volunteer position, or professional credentials in order to avoid facing or to avoid being terminated because of charges of actual or attempted:

Sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation or misconduct (Required)

Yes _____ No _____

Physical abuse (Required) Yes _____ No _____

Child abuse (Required) Yes _____ No _____

Financial misconduct (Required) Yes _____ No _____

Are there any facts or circumstances involving you or your background that should be disclosed and/or further reviewed before you are entrusted with the responsibilities of ministry on behalf of a calling body of the United Church of Christ? (Required)

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, please provide detailed explanation in an attached document for all such affirmative answers. In addition to providing other relevant material, be sure to include dates and information for related official decisions, actions, reviews, etc. (by you and/or other parties).

Statement of Consent

The United Church of Christ Constitution recognizes that God calls the whole church and every member to participate in and extend the ministry of Jesus Christ. God also calls certain of the church's members to various forms of ministry in and on behalf of the church.

Persons seeking Licensure with a UCC Conference or Association bring unique gifts, skills, and experiences. The integrity of this discernment process in the United Church of Christ depends upon supportive cooperation and considerate and appropriate sharing of information among UCC national offices, UCC Conference and/or Association personnel, search committees, local churches (UCC and otherwise), other ministry settings, educational institutions and those persons seeking Licensure.

We are called to speak the truth in love. Our primary goal is, in all circumstances, to build up the body of Christ. Relationships between church bodies and persons seeking Licensure require honesty, integrity, and truthfulness for the health of the church. In that spirit:

I attest that the information shared with the Committee on Ministry is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any misrepresentation of omission may be grounds for rejection of consideration for, or termination of, the ministerial authorization process or ministerial authorization itself after that authorization is approved.

An open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for continuing and healthy relationships between calling bodies and persons seeking a ministry position. In that spirit:

I authorize any member of the Committee on Ministry or the appropriate staff person of the conference to make inquiries regarding all statements contained in the information provided to the Committee on Ministry. I also authorize all persons, entities, former employers, committees on the ministry and their agents, current denominational representatives, courts, and law enforcement, educational institutions and other public agencies to respond to inquiries concerning me, and to supply verification of the information provided to any member of the Association or Conference Committee on Ministry or the appropriate staff person of the Association or Conference. I understand that such persons may comment on and state their opinions regarding my background and character to any member of the Committee on Ministry or the appropriate staff person of the conference. To encourage such persons to speak openly and responsible, I hereby release them from all liability arising from their responses and comments made in good faith and without malice.

_____ _____

Signature Date

Please return it to the Wisconsin Conference Office at avik@wcucc.org.

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APPENDIX G
CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK INSTRUCTIONS

The results of the criminal background check will come to the Wisconsin Conference office.

You will be asked to provide the addresses, cities, counties and states of both your personal residences and the churches you have served (or your secular employment) during the past seven years. You may want to have that information in front of you before you begin the application process on your computer.

Go to: https://www.oxforddoc.com/ucc/welcome-UCC.asp
• Click into the Ministerial Applicants, Staff/Volunteer Applicants section, where it says "click here to complete your online Authorization Form"
• On this screen type in the client number 1956. Select Position Code "1" – which is for pastors.
• On the next screen click "yes" if it identifies the Wisconsin Conference UCC.
• Then follow the instructions and complete the rest of the screens.
• You will need a VISA or Master Card to pay the fee.

The fee is $175 (as of April 2022)

APPENDIX H
PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Candidates for licensure should be in contact with either the Committee on Ministry or an Associate Conference Minister in order to move forward with the psychological evaluation.

Currently, the Northeast Association, Southeast Association, and Southwest Association use Midwest Ministry Development (https://www.midwestministrydev.org/chicago-office/) out of Chicago for this service. The Northwest Association uses LeaderWise (https://www.midwestministrydev.org/chicago-office/) in New Brighton, MN.

The cost of the psychological evaluation is typically split three ways between the candidate, the local church, and the Association.

APPENDIX I
LICENSED MINISTER MENTOR REPORTING FORM

Date_____

Licensed Minster Name _____

Mentor's Name _____

Mentor's Phone_____

Mentor's Address_____

Mentor's Local Church or Place of Ministry_____

Please comment on the following questions:

1. What has been your involvement with the Licensed Minister named above?

_____
_____
_____
_____

2. Reflect on the strengths or gifts this person brings to ministry? (You may use the Marks of Ministry, as applicable.)

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. What areas of growth have you witnessed during your relationship?

_____
_____
_____
_____

5. Do you have concerns or reservations about this person's licensed ministry? If so, explain.

_____
_____
_____
_____

6. Is there any way the Committee on Ministry can we be more helpful to you?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Signature_____

Date_____

Thank you for filling out this form!

Please return it to the Wisconsin Conference Office at avik@wcucc.org.