## Appendix F:

## Discernment Covenant

Covenant made between a Member in Discernment, the Cumberland Association of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ and the Local Church.

## Preamble

A covenant is “an intentional agreement made between or among parties in the name of God. (It) has both horizontal and vertical dimensions and is not accidental, but deliberate.”\* Recognizing that carrying out the Covenant of Ministry in the United Church of Christ is both delicate and demanding, calling us to live by relationship with God and each other and not by rules — by grace more than law — still the Cumberland Association Committee on Church & Ministry feels the need for minimum guidelines for candidates for authorized ministry. These minimal guidelines follow.

## The Covenant

The Committee on Church & Ministry of the Cumberland Association of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ has accepted into the Discernment relationship. If the process leads to the candidate’s request for authorized ministry, a minimum of two years of reflection and discernment with the Committee on Church & Ministry and its appointed advisors is recommended prior to authorization.

**Part 1 — The Association**

The Cumberland Association of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ covenants:

1. to support and hold in prayer\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ as he or she continues

the journey of ministerial preparation.

1. to remain faithful to the processes for an Association as described in the United

Church of Christ Manual on Ministry.

1. to assume one-third of the cost of the candidate’s psychological and career assessment.

**Part 2 — Cumberland Association Committee on Church & Ministry covenants:**

1. to provide a Discernment Advisor to guide the candidate toward a vocational under-

standing consistent with the faith and mission of the United Church of Christ;

1. to provide scholarship information to the Member in Discernment, within the limits of

available Association funds, in support of seminary/MESOM preparation for ministry.

1. to provide advice and counsel regarding the skills and gifts required for the practice of

authorized ministry;

1. to schedule a meeting involving the candidate, pastor, advisor, and Discernment

Committee and advisor to review the roles of each in the MID Discernment process.

1. to provide the opportunity for the candidate’s psychological and career assessment,

ensuring that the costs for the same will be shared by the candidate’s home church, the

Association, in addition to the Member in Discernment.

1. to review and consider annual renewal of the Discernment relationship.

**Part 3 — Member in Discernment**

as a candidate preparing for authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ, the candidate agrees to follow the guidelines for the Discernment process, to accept the fellowship, counsel, evaluations, support, and guidance of the

Committee on Church & Ministry, and covenants:

1 to communicate periodically with the appointed Discernment Advisor to share academic

progress and faith, vocational and personal development;

2 to complete a psychological and career assessment for ministry, administered by a

qualified provider chosen by the Committee on Church & Ministry;

3 to worship regularly in a local UCC congregation and, if time permits, participate in the

work of the life of the Association and the Maine Conference.

4 to meet with the Committee on Church & Ministry at least annually for a review of the

Discernment relationship and process.

**Part 4 — Discernment Committee and Sponsoring Congregation**

The Discernment Committee and sponsoring congregation, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ covenant:

1. to support and hold in prayer as he/she/they continues the

journey of ministerial preparation.

1. to help with the cost of the candidate’s psychological and career assessment as needed and possible.
2. to meet periodically with the candidate to share gifts and experiences that might be mutually beneficial.
3. to consider financial assistance to the candidate to defray the cost of education.
4. to remain faithful to the processes for a Discernment Committee and sponsoring congregation as described in the United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry.

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Member in Discernment Date

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Committee on Church & Ministry Chair Date

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Discernment Advisor Date

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Sponsoring Church Representative Date

Note: A copy of this Covenant should be given to the following:

Member in Discernment

Association Clerk

Discernment Advisor

Local Sponsoring Church