## Appendix J:

**The Ecclesiastical Council**

**I Purpose:** The purpose of the Ecclesiastical Council, according to the MOM, is for the

association to authorize the candidate for ordination pending a Call to Authorized

Ministry.

## II Requirements:

* 1. In order for this to happen, two things must take place.
     1. First, the members of the association must have confidence that the Church and Ministry (C&M) committee has provided the thorough care

and oversight necessary

* + 1. Second, the Ecclesiastical Council (EC) must provide the members of the association with enough information to make a reasonable assessment of the candidate. This should cover their professional and theological preparation as well as insight into the character, personality, and gifts for the

ministry of the candidate.

* + 1. The primary way that the association members will know about preparation is through the Member in Discernment’s (MID) ordination paper. The Cumberland Association has guidelines for this paper, and it is the responsibility of the C & M committee to review, and if necessary, ask for revisions of this paper prior to recommending the MID for an Ecclesiastical

Council.

* + 1. The Clerk will validate that the appropriate documentation has been received from the MID and all applicable covenantal partners.

## III Process:

* 1. Distribution of the paper: When the C & M committee feels the candidate is ready, the Ecclesiastical Council is called, and the paper is distributed to the churches of the association. It should be made clear to pastors and delegates that the paper will not be read in its entirety at the council, so that delegates must read

it in advance to be prepared.

* + 1. Call of Ecclesiastical Council (EC): When a date has been set for the Ecclesiastical Council, the Association Clerk drafts the Call to Association

Clergy and Delegates which includes the date, location, time and directions.

* + 1. The Call clearly states that the Ordination Paper will be emailed to

Clergy and delegates for review.

* 1. Preparation of the interview: The C&M Committee will appoint a committee member to represent the committee in the EC interview. This could be a different person each time, or, if the Committee has someone who is a particularly adept

interviewer, could appoint him/her to serve regularly in this capacity.

* + 1. The C&M Representative(s) will meet with the candidate, and the candidate’s advisor and pastor. They will review the ordination paper. They will determine ~~if~~ part of the paper will be read or summarized at the meeting or if some other presentation will be given. (If a section of the paper is read, this section should not take longer than 10 minutes to read

out loud.)

* + 1. This group, minus the MID, will also develop 3-6 questions that will be asked in the interview to help stimulate questions from the Delegates and

Clergy.

* 1. The church will set up a comfortable meeting space, preferably not in the sanctuary. If there is room, tables for the delegates could be set up, and simple food and drink provided.
     1. The Candidate should present or read his/her paper from a podium and in the standing position to ensure that there’s good projection to

the audience

* + 1. A public address system should be used if available
  1. The Council (EC): The Association Representative (Moderator) will open the meeting. Welcomes, announcements, and other business may be taken

care of first.

* + 1. The Chair of the C&M Committee can then briefly review, for the

delegates, the MID process and explain the procedure for the EC.

* + 1. The candidate will be introduced, and will present or read the

previously chosen section of the ordination paper.

* + 1. Following the reading, the interviewer will sit with the candidate and ask questions. This will begin with the agreed upon questions, and include any follow-up questions that come from the MID’s answers. These may be related to any part of the candidate’s paper, not just the part that was

presented/read.

* + 1. It would be appropriate to ask questions that are both personal and professional—a mix would offer the delegates a more complete view of

the MID.

* + 1. After the interviewer has completed a 15-20-minute question period, the delegates will have the opportunity to ask questions as well. The Moderator or Chair of the C&M should be prepared to step in if the questions

become argumentative or off the point.

* + 1. Following the question-and-answer period, the Candidate and visitors

are asked to leave the room.

* + 1. The C&M Chair opens the floor to discussion from delegates and clergy. When discussions end, the Chair asks for a motion “to authorize the candidate ordination pending a call to authorized ministry”. A vote is taken. The candidate returns and is immediately informed of the

decision.

* + 1. A member of C&M offers a prayer for the candidate.
  1. The meeting is adjourned; a reception follows hosted by the sponsoring church