

of time. Commissioned ministers are lay people who are called to a specific ministry that is recognized by the church and requires special knowledge and skill, such as Christian education or music or administration of a halfway house.

How can I discover my gifts for ministry?

You may be feeling that God is calling you to a particular ministry, or you may be unsure about your gifts for ministry. Since it is the role of the church to undergird the ministry of its members by nurturing faith, calling forth gifts, and equipping members for Christian service², you are encouraged to speak to your pastor or a trusted member of your community of faith. In your ministries you can find the joy of God's realm.

For more information contact your local United Church of Christ.



²Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, Faith and Order Paper No. 111. World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1982.

³Ibid.

GIFTS OF MINISTRY



Practices of Faith
in the United
Church of Christ

The United Church of Christ recognizes that God calls the whole church and every member to participate in and extend the ministry of Jesus Christ by witnessing to the Gospel in church and society.

UCC Constitution, 1997, Article IV, paragraph 17

What is ministry?

Ministry takes many forms and is the vocation of all who are baptized. We can minister as we give and as we receive. We minister as we offer prayers for others and as we receive the gift of others' prayers for us. We return our gifts from God by offering time, money, skill, compassion, acceptance and presence. We minister through meditation and Bible study as well as action. Our daily work can be ministry. We can minister in a way that touches one person or we can minister through change that reaches many.



We have clear guidelines for outreach ministry in Matthew 25. When we graciously give food, drink and clothes to people in need; welcome the stranger; and visit the sick and those in prison, in our neighborhoods or in a faraway place through our monetary gifts, we are ministering. We go about these ministries in different ways. Ministry happens in the mutuality between giving and receiving. Some do specific outreach such as Habitat for Humanity or volunteer at the food pantry while others work to affect governmental and corporate policies. Some study to learn and make changes.

What are gifts for our ministry?

The Holy Spirit provides a variety of gifts. All members are called to discover, with the help of the community, the gifts we have received and to use them for the building up of the body of Christ, the church, and for service to the world to which the church is sent. Our gifts may be sharing the Gospel in word and deed, healing, praying, teaching and learning, serving, guiding and following, and inspiring.¹

While all Christians are called to pray, read the Bible, and work for justice, different situations call for differing gifts. Some we develop in our work life and bring to the church; others we develop through our

spiritual life and bring to the school yard, office, factory, nursing home room or wherever we may be. You may learn more about spiritual gifts from Romans 12:6–8, 1 Corinthians 12:4–11 and Ephesians 4:11–12.

What is the role and work of ordained ministers?

While the whole church and every member are called to ministry, some individuals have a particular call from God, recognized by the community of faith, for leadership within the church. These individuals, who prepare for ordained ministry and demonstrate skill and knowledge for it, are ordained to ministry of and for the whole church in all places and for their lifetime. The primary responsibility of the ordained ministry is to build up the body of Christ by proclaiming and teaching the Word of God, by celebrating the sacraments, providing pastoral care and guiding the life of the community in its worship and mission. Clergy minister through many roles, including pastors, pastoral counselors, educators, missionaries, chaplains and denominational staff.



The United Church of Christ focuses on the ministry of the whole people of God and on Jesus' ministry and biblical texts that encourage equality of all people. Through ordination, the United Church of Christ recognizes and celebrates the call of people to ministry without regard to human differences.

Are there other authorized ministries?

While many churches in the United Church of Christ are served by ordained ministers, in some churches the pastor is a licensed minister. These licensed ministers are lay persons whom the local church and the association recognize as having gifts for pastoral ministry that are carried out in a specific local church for a designated period