

Marks Portfolio for RMC

**Marks Portfolio
Rocky Mountain Conference UCC
Committee on Ministry,
Formation and Authorization Subcommittee**

Overview

As a Member in Discernment (MID) you'll be creating a Marks Portfolio. The Marks Portfolio is intended as a medium for MIDs to both integrate and demonstrate their personal, professional, and spiritual formation and preparation for ministry. Using the United Church of Christ's *Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers*

<https://www.ucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Marks-of-Faithful-and-Effective-Ministers.pdf>

As a foundation, the Marks Portfolio should be curated and arranged to demonstrate competencies and experiences in each of eight main categories. There are also a number of tools available for the assessment of the *Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers* available in hard copy or digitally.

A free PDF rubric (also hard copy for sale)

<https://www.uccresources.com/products/the-marks-rubric?variant=35848196431>

A journal format for exploration and assessment

<https://www.uccresources.com/products/journaling-the-journey-engaging-the-marks-of-faithful-and-effective-authorized-ministers?variant=1247860844>

Cards for each Mark

<https://www.uccresources.com/products/marks-mosaic-playing-cards>

Working alongside and in consultation with your MID Advisor, your portfolio should be assembled, edited, and amended throughout your discernment process. Think of it as a living document that will grow, change, and develop over the course of your discernment and formation process, and as a guide to growth and goals throughout your vocation in ministry. For instance, you may find more clarity in your sense of call, and therefore, materials in one section may need revision. You may find that a sermon added in an early draft of the portfolio may

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later need to be replaced by a sermon that better reflects your preaching style or theology.

Each year a working draft of your portfolio will be submitted to the Committee on Ministry (COM) one month prior to your annual review. Because the portfolio is a work in progress you do not need to have the portfolio completed at your annual reviews.

Sections 1 and 2 are expected to have content from the application process. Additionally, we ask that at least 2 categories of the marks in Section 3 should be assessed. With each subsequent annual review the Marks Portfolio should reflect edits to section 1 and 2 and further development of Section 3. At each annual review the COM will ask you to discuss and reflect upon the additions and changes you have made to your portfolio.

At the conclusion of your MID process, you will submit a completed portfolio that demonstrates integration of all of the Marks. The Marks Portfolio is a key part of the final assessment of a candidate's readiness for ministerial authorization.

Contents of your Marks Portfolio

Marks Portfolios consist of four main sections. While there is room for creativity in the creation of the portfolio, be sure to center your work on the *Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers*.

Section 1 Spiritual Autobiography

Introduce yourself by way of sharing your spiritual autobiography.

A spiritual autobiography is the story of how significant events, relationships, and cultural influences have contributed to the author's spiritual formation, their relationship with God, and their interpretation of scriptures in understanding of how to live as a disciple of Jesus.

As a part of your reflection, be sure to interact with themes from the Marks. Conclude this section by writing your own personal statement of faith. You may structure your statement of faith in a variety of ways but may find it helpful to

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look at the structures and themes of the various versions of the UCC Statement of Faith. Please limit this section to no more than 700 words.

Section 2 **Understanding Your Call to Authorized Ministry**

Identify the gifts and strengths you bring to ministry and how and where God is calling you to share those with the church and the people of the world. Clarity in articulating a call to ordained ministry by God, the Church, and your continuing discernment in community are fundamental practices. Please respond succinctly to the following:

- Describe your theological understanding of ordination and the role of the Church in discerning a call.
- Describe in particular your call to the vocation of ministry and the setting to which you feel most drawn to.
- Why are you interested in ordination and ministry specifically in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ?

Please limit this section to 500 words.

Section 3 **Reflection and Demonstration of the Marks**

This section of the portfolio is for you to engage in reflection and demonstration of competencies in each of the 8 categories of the *Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers*.

An essential understanding as you approach the task of creating this section is to think of it as a journey of integration rather than a task of reiteration. Consider the Marks in each category holistically; and remember that no one is expected to reflect expertise in all of these Marks to the same degree. We all have unique gifts, interests, and strengths as well as areas for growth and development. It is also the case that no minister ever achieves final mastery of these Marks. So as a resource for your ministry, the Marks are intended to serve as a tool for assessment and readiness for authorization and as a guide for lifelong learning and ongoing professional development and continuing education.

For each of the eight categories, please write a reflection that weaves experiences, education, and preparation, and demonstrates your skills and speaks to how you are integrating each of the Marks of that category into actions

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in your ministry. Please also discuss where your strengths and experiences are, and where you need to continued development or practice.

Discuss one specific example of your ministry in greater detail. Examples might include a sermon, lesson plans for UCC polity class that you taught, photos, original songs or poems, descriptions from an art installation you created for Lent, meditations written, worship outlines, or notes used for terrarium-making to tell the story of creation in worship, among many other “products” that exhibit your action in the ministerial area. Describe the process, tools, and resources you utilized; what informed you theologically, socially, and culturally; what you learned as a result; and what you would do or try differently next time.

There is no required format for the Marks assessment. You are encouraged to find or develop a format which is intended to be an ongoing tool for your own use. For example, headings like Experience, Understanding, Integration, Passion may serve as a helpful way to frame a self-assessment. Finding, Learning, Thinking, Speaking, Doing are also possible headings. Or grayscale. Or red/yellow/green, or percentages, or emojis. You may wish to utilize a circle chart/dartboard style where your journey brings you closer to the center, or a thermometer where your progress moves you further up.

Section 4 **Additional Documents**

This section should be utilized to reflect 6 specific documents:

- Final Supervised Ministry evaluation by your supervisor (such as Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) or other supervised ministry experiences).
- Final Supervised Ministry self-evaluation.
- Final education and theological education transcripts or reports.
- Certificate of completion for A Position of Trust boundary training.
- Certificate of completion for all required Anti-Racism Training sessions.
- Documentation of completion for an approved UCC History, Polity and Theology course.

You may also include any other vital documents in this section needed to demonstrate the Marks that have not been previously included in your ministry examples. Accompany those documents with a brief reflection on how these documents demonstrate integration of specific Marks.

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Each draft to your portfolio should be reviewed and assessed by your MID advisor prior to submission. This is an opportunity for constructive feedback, deeper discussion, and further discernment. Additional reviewers such as your pastor and local church discernment committee are recommended before your final portfolio is submitted.

Submitting your Marks Portfolio

Whether you are submitting the draft prior to your annual review or the completed version for ordination, please send documents, photos, youtube links, podcast links, MP3 or MP4 files to the Registrar, Donna Bristow, COMRegistrar@rmcucc.org and she will share it with the FAS team.

Please be sure to include your name and the portfolio submission date when sending any information. Please also indicate whether it is your first, second, third (etc.) submitted draft or completed portfolio.

If you have Marks Portfolio related questions, please reach out to your MID Advisor, Local Church Pastor, or FAS Liaison.