

**UCC Penn NE Conference  
Authorization Working Group (AWG)  
Ordination Paper Expectations and Guidelines**

Your ordination paper should be an organic expression of your understanding of ministry based on your faith journey, life experience, and relationship matrix.

Rather than follow a predetermined outline, you are encouraged to use a style with which you are comfortable, and which best expresses your journey. We would like to be challenged by your thinking, so you can be creative, raise questions, and express yourself freely. However, we expect your paper to demonstrate that your theology and biblical perspectives are sound.

**Topics to Include**

Your Ordination Paper should discuss the following:

- your spiritual formation – A limited discussion of your faith journey
- your theology – A full discussion of your beliefs about God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Church, Bible and other relevant topics
- your understanding of sacraments and sacramental authority
- your relationship with the UCC, its polity and practices, and how that impacts your leadership in the local church and covenanting with the other settings of the church,
- your movement toward mastery or growth in the Marks of Faithful and Effective Ministers,
- your understanding of your call and how you deal with doubt—intellectually, spiritually, or emotionally. You may share your vulnerability, concerns, and hopes as you share your movement into your sense of call.

**Guidelines**

We are looking for your thoughts, not the thoughts of others. However, as appropriate, use footnotes when you quote others. The format should follow those recognized for graduate work. We are more concerned about the quality of the thinking and content than we are about the length of your paper. However, we have found that around 20 pages is typical. Write something that people will want to read to the end. Take delight in what you are doing.

You are expected to work with your MID advisor to plan and write the paper. Your advisor will need to approve the final draft that will be given to the AWG. The AWG needs the paper one month before meeting with you. The AWG may ask you to revise the paper before an ecclesiastical council is scheduled.