Leadership Pathway: 2026 Cohort

Thank you so much for stepping forward to share your interest in leadership here at UCCMEDFIELD. We hope this process would - above all - be a discipleship experience for you and our church community.

The original intent of the Pathway was to create a process by which we discern, prepare, and present new board and deacon team members. Over the last couple years, it has developed into a pathway of spiritual formation *that includes* an opportunity for participants to learn more about and experience how leadership at UCCMEDFIELD functions. The goal of the process has expanded to include helping any participant learn and practice discerning God's will– both individually and as a part of a spiritual community.

Over the last 4 years, our Board and Deacon teams have gone through a fairly extensive learning process around spiritual discernment. This pathway and process reflects that work in an effort to equip new leadership community members to jump right in and lead. We also want to acknowledge that this is still a fairly new process - prayed over, discerned, and deeply desired - and yet still new. We are asking for your grace and patience as we inevitably experience bumps as we learn together.

The process involves the participation of self-identified participant(s), the board, deacon, and staff teams, as well as the congregation (specifically as they discern and affirm each team's slate of participants at the Annual Meeting).

The process begins when this packet is made available to the congregation in the first quarter of the year (February 2026) and culminates with a vote at the Annual Meeting in January/February of the following year (February 7, 2027).

We hope you find this to be a robust process that ensures the participant will:

- become familiar with the functions and synergy of all 3 leadership teams at UCCMEDFIELD (board, deacons, and staff)
- pursue and practice personal discernment rhythms regularly
- learn leadership community discernment practices
- understand how UCCMEDFIELD has contextualized and centered these discernment practices at the leadership community level
- have time to discern–both individually and with the leadership community–their specific calling to serve in the approaching season.

The time and intensity of the process also gives ample time for UCCMEDFIELD leadership:

- to get to know each participant personally, spiritually, and relationally
- to understand the unique gifts and skills of each participant
- to practice discernment with the participant
- to ensure we are–as a leadership community–following God's lead in the selection and preparation of each future team member

There are 7 distinct phases in this pathway:

1. Information/Application
2. Personal Discernment Learning
3. Leadership Discernment Learning
4. Team Shadowing
5. Discernment
6. On-Boarding
7. Let's Do This!

It should be understood that if the participant determines they are not called to a specific leadership team position at UCCMEDFIELD at this time, they may (and we hope they will) still continue in the Leadership Pathway process.

The following pages describe the objectives, participants, tasks, experiences, and timing of each phase. Once you have reviewed and prayed over this information, please fill out the interest form at the end of this document and return it to the church office, or scan and email it to khurst@uccmedfield.org.

We look forward to seeing what God will do in and through you in this coming season at UCCMEDFIELD.

Phase 1: Information + Application

Timing:

- February - Information packet and application made available
- April 7 - Deadline for accepting interest forms
- April - Touchpoint #1

Objective(s):

- present a clear pathway and invitation to discernment learning at UCCMEDFIELD
- identify interested individual(s) and learn about the participant(s) and their story
- establish a baseline to gauge participant(s) growth over time
- develop a connection between participant(s) and a leadership community lead[1]

Participants:

- self-identified participant(s)
- leadership community leads
- congregation (insofar as receiving the invitation)

Tasks:

- obtain and review Information packet
- submit interest form

Experiences:

- Touchpoint #1[2] (Pastor Kayla)
    - Q+A about information Packet and process

[1] Leadership Community Leads: The lead/chair(s) of the board, deacon and staff teams.
[2] Touchpoint: 1-on-1's with one of the Leadership Community leads

Phase 2: Personal Discernment Learning

Timing:

- by April 15 - deacon facilitator assigned + book delivered
- April/May - (6) 1-on-1 learning sessions
- June - Touchpoint #2 (deliver *Pursuing God's Will Together*)

Objective(s):

- discover and engage in personal spiritual practices
- create a "Rule of Life"[3] draft
- initiate a relationship between participant(s) and deacon facilitator[4]

Participants:

- participant
- deacon facilitator
- leadership community lead

Tasks:

- schedule + complete (6) 1-on-1 learning sessions facilitated by a deacon facilitator
    - Read *Sacred Rhythms* (by Ruth Haley Barton) as a part of these learning sessions
    - Draft a Rule of Life[3]

Experiences:

- (6) 1-on-1 learning sessions facilitated by a deacon
- Touchpoint #2 (with Wendy Ludwig)
    - process what the participant has experienced so far
    - share participant's Rule of Life draft

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[3] "Rule of Life": A self-curated collection of practices and rhythms crafted with prayer and discernment, in partnership with God, that encourage ongoing intimacy with God.
[4] Deacon Facilitator: One of the deacon team members who is paired with a participant to discuss and encourage them in their personal discernment learning process

Phase 3: Leadership Discernment Learning

Timing:

- Early June - book delivered (read prior to seminar)
- June - July - Group Discussions (mostly online)
- August 9 - Seminar on Leadership Discernment at UCCMEDFIELD
- September 12 - Leadership Summit

Objective(s):

- define spiritual discernment
- learn the basics of a leadership discernment process
- discover the history of leadership discernment at UCCMEDFIELD
- contextualize discernment practices and processes in UCCMEDFIELD leadership teams
- commit to spiritual discernment as the sole intent of leadership at UCCMEDFIELD
- engage with UCCMEDFIELD Leadership Community[5]

Participants:

- participant
- leadership community lead
- UCCMEDFIELD Leadership Community

Tasks:

- read *Pursuing God's Will Together* (by Ruth Haley Barton)
- engage in group discussions about Pursuing God's Will Together

Experiences:

- Group Discussions Online
- Leadership Discernment Seminar[6]
- Leadership Summit[7]

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[5] Leadership Community: The board, deacons, staff, and other major ministry team leads.
[6] Leadership discernment seminar: A one-day mandatory opportunity to learn about discernment in the context of UCCMEDFIELD's leadership teams.
[7] Leadership Summit: A yearly gathering of the leadership teams at UCCMEDFIELD for celebration, discernment, and vision clarity.

Phase 4: Team Shadowing

Timing:

- Aug/Sep - shadow board and deacon meetings
    - Deacon Meetings: 08/11-or- 09/08
    - Board Meetings: 08/17 -or- 09/21
- September (after shadowing) - Touchpoint #3 (with Brian Erickson)
    - Submit Statement of Calling *(see below)*

Objective(s):

- experience both board and deacon team meetings
- observe discernment process in practice
- describe your understanding of God's invitation to serve at UCCMEDFIELD

Participants:

- participant
- leadership community lead
- UCCMEDFIELD Leadership Community (board, deacons, staff, other ministry team leads)

Tasks:

- craft and submit your Statement of Calling (a written description of God's invitation and your response in this season)

Experiences:

- shadowing at a board meeting
- shadowing at a deacon meeting
- Touchpoint #3 with a different leadership community lead
    - process what the participant has experienced so far

Phase 5: Discernment

Timing:

- October - board + deacon team discernment
- On or Before Nov 9 - Touchpoint #4 (with Pastor Kayla)

Objective(s):

- (leadership) discern participant(s) next step
    - contingent call
    - contingent redirect
    - challenge + development pathway
- (participant) discern + respond to offered next step

Participants:

- participant
- leadership community lead
- board/deacon teams

Tasks:

- (leadership) discern participant(s) next steps
    - contingent call
    - contingent redirect
- (participant) discern + respond to offered next step

Experiences:

- Touchpoint #4 with Pastor Kayla
- (leadership) present team discernment and next steps
- (participant) process and ask questions

Phase 6: On-boarding

Timing:

- Nov/Dec - information sessions
- Nov/Dec - board/deacon meeting(s)
- by January 1 - photo and bio deadline

Objective(s):

- become acquainted with finance, operations, human resources, and staff:
    - information
    - processes
    - personnel
- acclimate to team and team meetings

Participants:

- participant
- board -or- deacon team
- staff team

Tasks:

- write 50-word personal bio for Annual Report
- (headshot) picture taken

Experiences:

- finance information session
- operations information session
- board/deacon meeting

Phase 7: let's do this!

Timing:

- Jan - board/deacon team meeting
- Feb 7 - Annual Meeting
- February Team Meetings - celebrate new team member(s)

Objective(s):

- receive affirmation of calling from congregation at Annual Meeting
- celebrate new team member(s) at board/deacon meeting(s)

Participants:

- participant -> *new* team member
- board/deacon team
- congregation

Tasks:

- present participant(s) to congregation for discernment
- engage in Annual Meeting preparation
- call for affirmation at the Annual Meeting

Experiences:

- Annual Meeting
- board/deacon team meeting

UCC**MEDFIELD**

Leadership Pathway Interest Meeting

2026 Cohort

Thank you for your interest in the Leadership Pathway at UCCMEDFIELD. This application needs to be received no later than April 7 in order to begin the leadership pathway process in a timely manner. Completed forms can be submitted

- at the church office (M-F, 9am-2pm), or
- mailed to UCCMEDFIELD,
  c/o Leadership Pathway
  496 Main Street
  Medfield, MA 02052
- Scanned and emailed to khurst@uccmedfield.org

Full Name _____

Home Address _____

Cell Phone _____ Email _____

How long have you attended UCCMEDFIELD? _____

Are you a member of UCCMEDFIELD? Y or N

Briefly describe your faith journey up to this point:

List/Describe your current areas of service at UCCMEDFIELD:

Describe any areas of service at previous churches (if applicable):

Briefly explain why you are interested in serving in leadership at UCCMEDFIELD?

Describe how you are currently pursuing God, building community and restoring justice in your personal life?