



Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

Thank you for your joyful willingness to journey with those who continue to say “yes” to God’s gracious invitation to serve within the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church. Your role as a clergy mentor is a vital part of this process. Your gifts, voice, wisdom, and experience can positively impact the lives of our ministry candidates and inspire a new generation of leaders in the life of our Conference.

Vocational discernment is a serious endeavor, and no person can make this journey alone—companions are always necessary. This manual is a faithful attempt to offer tools and information to equip you to journey with those discerning how God is calling them to offer their gifts and graces serving all of God’s people through the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Our conference’s mission statement reminds us that through our baptism, all of us, lay and clergy, are called to offer the love of Christ to the world. This is a work that begins wherever we find ourselves and requires no forms, official meetings, or advanced theological training. Nevertheless, as our Book of Discipline states, “Within the church community, there are persons whose gifts, evidence of God’s grace, and promise of future usefulness are affirmed by the community, and who respond to God’s call by offering themselves in leadership as set-apart ministers, ordained and licensed” (§ 301.2). Our candidacy process exists to aid this work of discernment. The question we seek to answer through this process is not, “Is God calling you?” but rather, “*How* is God calling you to offer your gifts in leadership as set-apart ministers, ordained and licensed?”

One of the earliest and most important steps of the discernment journey is the conversation between a candidate and their pastor and/or mentor. Whether formal or informal, this conversation sets the tone for all that comes next and how a candidate engages with the process going forward. We often tell candidates that the process of licensing, associate membership, or ordination is a journey in community, where the candidate, the local church, and the Board of Ordained Ministry—working through the District Committee on Ordained Ministry and the Cabinet—seek clarity about God’s calling in their lives and their gifts. Yet our deep care for the candidate can never come at the expense of our deep care for the church. Our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world is dependent on effective lay and clergy leadership.

Our goal in this manual is to offer information that will help you have a productive and meaningful conversation with your candidate and be a supportive partner for the journey of discernment. It is important for you to remember that the candidacy process may have changed significantly since you were a

candidate. What we ask of you is not to become an expert in the candidacy process but a willing and informed partner for the journey.

The manual will cover topics such as:

- The purpose of the candidacy process
- The different stages of the process
- The role of the clergy mentor
- How to prepare for your initial conversation
- The role of the SPRC and local church
- How to support the candidate through candidacy

We hope that this manual will be a valuable resource for you as you journey with those who are discerning God's call to ministry. We are grateful for your gifts and your passion for helping others discover their call and pray that the love of God, the grace of Christ, and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit will continue to be present with you as you journey with these beloved siblings.

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# Abbreviations

- **ABLC:** Appointment Beyond the Local Church
- **BAC:** Business of the Annual Conference Report
- **BGTS:** Basic Graduate Theological Studies
- **BoD:** Book of Discipline
- **BOM:** Conference Board of Ordained Ministry
- **BOME:** Board of Ordained Ministry Evaluation Conference
- **CLM:** Certified Lay Minister
- **COS:** Course of Study
- **CRC:** Conference Relations Committee
- **dCOM:** District Committee(s) on Ordained Ministry
- **DS:** District Superintendent
- **GBHEM:** General Board of Higher Education and Ministry
- **LOA:** Leave of Absence
- **MEF:** Ministerial Education Fund
- **OTM:** Orientation to Ministry
- **RIM:** Residency in Ministry
- **TWK:** Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of the United Methodist Church
- **UMC:** United Methodist Church

# Guiding Others Through The Candidacy Process

by Rev. Jefferson M. Furtado

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church directs candidates to speak with their pastor, another United Methodist clergyperson, or the district superintendent to inquire about the candidacy process. This is a significant moment and an opportunity to establish prayer as a central part of the journey of vocational discernment. As people of faith, we must remember that everything we do should be immersed in prayer, and the candidacy process is no exception.

To begin the candidacy process, a candidate must have obtained a high school diploma or equivalent and have been a member of The United Methodist Church OR a baptized participant of a recognized United Methodist campus ministry or other United Methodist ministry setting for at least one year.

The key steps in this stage are celebration and affirmation. By celebration, we mean a positive response to the potential candidate's encounter with the Divine and their desire to offer themselves in service to Christ through the Church. By affirmation, we mean an invitation to ongoing dialogue, prayer, and collaborative discernment about God's call in their lives.

For clarity, we define the following terms:

- **Call:** The sense of a prompting from God to do or be something.
- **Discernment:** The practice of spiritual disciplines (attending to the ordinances of God) to explore calling and vocation.
- **Vocation:** A way of life that enables one to 'do and be' what God has called us to do and be.

The goal of vocational discernment is clarity of calling, not a predetermined outcome. Those who feel a sense of call may choose to respond through lay, licensed, or ordained service. Conversely, one may arrive at the end of the process and discern an outcome beyond the options within our process. The mark of fruitfulness for this process is clarity.

It is important to note that not all those called to licensed or ordained ministry may be called to serve in The United Methodist Church, or more specifically, in the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church. Our task is to provide space for prayerful discernment and allow the Holy Spirit to move, speak, and clarify the direction and purpose. Our tradition informs this process and tells us that a structured process is necessary so we may more clearly understand the leading of God among us. Prayerful discernment and deep listening must be foundational for this early stage of the process.

The great Methodist missionary E. Stanley Jones wisely reminds us, "If I had one gift, and only one gift, to make to the Christian Church, I would offer the gift of prayer. For everything follows from prayer."

Therefore, your role is to be a wise guide who journeys with the candidate with grace, patience, and always through prayer. Remember, you are not alone. Our shared covenant calls all of us to journey together as we respond to God's calling in our lives.

## Starting Well:

- ☐ Read ***The Christian as Minister*** with the candidate

*Schedule at least four (4) meetings.*

- *Session 1: Getting Started*

- *Topics*

- Create a covenant with the candidate ([www.twkumc.org/equip/creating-a-covenant/](http://www.twkumc.org/equip/creating-a-covenant/))
    - Invite the candidate to describe their call to ministry—including how the church fits into the call.
    - Invite the candidate to describe their support system.
      - ◆ *Has the candidate shared their call with family members? How did they respond?*
    - Share your call story and ministry journey in The United Methodist Church.
    - Share about ministry opportunities within your context
    - Help the candidate understand **this is a process and that patience is a must.**
    - Set dates for additional meetings.

- *Session 2: The Christian Call to Servant Ministry*

- *Topics*

- The Mission and Ministry of The Church
    - Baptism and Call
    - Vocation and Servant Leadership

- *Session 3: Images of Servant Leadership*

- *Topics*

- *Young People In Ministry*
    - *The Ministry of the Laity*
    - *The Ministry of Deaconess and Home Missioner*
    - *The Ministry of the Deacon*
    - *The pastoral Ministry of Elders and Local Pastors*
    - *Chaplaincy and Pastoral Counseling*
    - *Higher Education and Collegiate Ministries*
    - *Missional Service*

- *Session 4: Steps Into Servant Leadership*

- *Topics*

- *Overview of the Candidacy Process*
    - *Educational Requirements*
    - *The Candidacy Assignment (See attachment)*
    - *Preparation for meeting with the SPRC & Next Steps*

- ☐ Schedule a meeting of the SPRC with the Candidate (*See attachment*)
- ☐ Write a letter of recommendation addressed to the DS/dCOM speaking of the candidate's gifts for ministry and opportunities for growth. Share the letter with the candidate before submitting it.

***Tips:***

- ☐ *Create opportunities for the candidate to practice leadership in the local church*
- ☐ *Serve as a mentor by helping the individual reflect theologically about their life, gifts, and call*
- ☐ If a candidate does not receive approval from the SPRC, the pastor should inform the District Superintendent of the circumstances and make every effort to work with the candidate so they may continue growing in their faith and calling.

# Capacities and Roles of Mentors:<sup>1</sup>

By Rev. Dr. Kevin Crawford

The mentoring relationship is a complex and often ambiguous one. As pastors serving communities of faith in and beyond the local church, the gifts you bring express the diversity of calling and the far reaches of God's grace moving throughout our Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference. We want to take a moment to acknowledge those gifts and graces as you apply them in your work of mentoring future clergy and lay ministers on their vocational journey. Our conference is full of clergy with mentorship capacities and skills that extend beyond this short list, but we offer these as a reflection of gratitude for your own formation and for the time, energy, and wisdom you give for the formation of others. This brief list of practices and roles has been adapted from the book, "Big Questions Worthy Dreams," written by Sharon Daloz Parks.

- **Curiosity and wonder for life's Big Questions** - Vocational discernment is founded upon asking big questions, and these questions must be greeted by the mentor with genuine and generous care to nurture curiosity and wonder. In *Being and Time*, Martin Heidegger offers that curiosity and wonder are two different ways of encountering one another and the world. *Curiosity*, he says, invites us to turn our attention to one thing or another and inquire into it. *Wonder*, however, grips us, and takes us up into a whirlwind of awe and reverence. Big questions deserve both curiosity and wonder.
- **Network of Belonging** - Belonging is a critical part of our connectional system. Our Wesleyan history and theology are founded upon making connections. It is in this tradition that we invite candidates to learn and practice finding and creating belonging for themselves. Mentorship relationships actively create and encourage connections while supporting candidates to nurture *new* relationships.
- **Ambiguity and Complexity** - Encouraging candidates to resist easy, one-sided answers allows them to actively pursue creative tension. Where discourse often points to an "either/or" relationship, it can be helpful to invite candidates to explore assumptions and positionality. Making room for complex issues with your candidate sets them up to think through issues from multiple sides and approach their ministerial relationships with a healthy humility.
- **Critical Thinking** - Settling on solid answers can often invite knowledge to take the place of faith or vice versa. Mentors who encourage candidates to think critically actually help them to examine how we think about thinking, or how we "know" what we think we know. We can nurture critical thinking by wondering with candidates the meanings of important words, actions, symbols, relationships, and practices (grace, being, transformation, sacraments, worship, etc.), as well as how we come to know those meanings..
- **Diving deep into Otherness** - Personal and professional development occurs along many continuums of experience. One of those is how often and in what ways we encounter sameness and difference. Differences in ability, class, gender, culture, race, ethnicity, and sexuality, provide a multiplicity of ways to share in the wonder and grace of God's ongoing creative work. Be prepared to experience, unpack, and make sense and meaning of experiences of "otherness" with candidates.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Sharon Daloz Parks, "Big Questions Worthy Dreams," 2019. (Fortress Press, Minneapolis).

- **Administrative and Organizational Skills** - It is important for candidates to understand the organization and relationships of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference. . As you help the candidate grasp the bureaucracy and complexities of conference life, you can also help them experience the role of the Holy Spirit empowering the Church at the local, district, conference, jurisdictional, and general conference levels. Organizational frameworks often result in “us vs. them” mentalities, but you have the opportunity to invite candidates to engage complex issues with open ended questions that lead to learning and understanding.

Mentoring relationships are not intended to follow rigid protocols. Flexibility is key for shaping the space where your candidate can grow and flourish. You will need the capacity to think and reflect spiritually, pedagogically, and developmentally in order to effectively mentor your candidate. In *The Inward Journey*, Howard Thurman describes how we might encounter those who have offered a special place of authorship in their own faithful journey of vocation and discernment.

*“In the long way that we take, in our growing up, in the vicissitudes of life by which we are led into its meaning and its mystery, there are established for us, for each of us, certain landmarks. They represent discoveries sometimes symbolizing the moment when we became aware of the purpose of our lives; they may establish for us our membership in the human frailty; they may be certain words that were spoken into a stillness within us the sound thereof singing forever through all the corridors of our being as landmarks... There are no reverences that bind us together as people if the landmarks are profaned. To understand one another is not merely to know another’s name or the number of their thoughts, to be acquainted with how they act or what they do. To know someone, is to know, somewhat, of their landmarks. For these are their points of referral that stand out beyond and above all the traffic of their lives, advising and tutoring them in their journey through life and beyond. In the language of religion, these are the places where the Eternal has been caught and held for a swirling moment in time and years. ‘Think twice before you move your neighbor’s landmarks’” (Thurman, 1961, p. 77).*

Again, this list of practices is not all-encompassing. We are grateful for the gifts and graces you bring to your ministry and to the formation of candidates for vocational ministry. We hope you take them to heart, make them your own, and develop them into something even better.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> If there are other mentoring practices you think would be important to add to this manual, please let us know.



## STEPS FOR THE CANDIDATE:

- ☐ Contact the pastor of your local church or United Methodist ministry setting.
- ☐ Read ***The Christian as Minister*** and complete 4 meetings with your United Methodist clergy to talk about your call.
  - Write a **Statement of Call** and share it with your pastor and P/SPRC (*See appendix*)
  - Receive P/SPRC approval
- ☐ Contact your District Superintendent and request admission to the candidacy process.
  - Include the following in your email:
    - Indication that you have read **The Christian as Minister** with your minister
    - Your name and contact information
    - Your ministry setting and pastor
    - Statement of Call
- ☐ Attend your meeting with the District Superintendent.
  - *If the request for admission is granted, you will be contacted by dCOM for an introductory meeting.*
- ☐ Meet with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM) to share about your calling.
  - Prior to meeting with the dCOM, complete [TWK Candidacy Form](#)
    - Biographical Information
    - Educational Background
    - Family Background
    - Candidate's Disclosure Form — ¶324.12
    - U.S. Work Authorization Form
    - Personal Data Inventory
  - *If affirmed by dCOM, attend **Orientation to Ministry Weekend Discernment Encounter***
- ☐ Complete **Orientation to Ministry**
  - At the end of OTM, submit **The Candidacy Assignment** to the dCOM.
- ☐ Complete the following steps:
  - **Psychological Assessment and Background Check (\$300)**
    - This is a multi-step process requiring
      - Complete **Reference Forms**
      - Complete **Background Report**
      - **Psychological Assessment** online or in-person at the Conference Office
      - Interview with the conference-assigned **Ministry Assessment Specialist (MAS)**.
  - Submit **Medical Report** (see appendix)
  - Receive Charge Conference Recommendation (two-thirds written ballot)
- ☐ Complete **Required Training**
  - **Boundaries and Sexual Ethics**
    - **Safe Gatherings: Clergy Ethics and Congregational Boundaries (\$29)**
      - <http://safegatherings.com/app/registration-invitation/c907f82bb9a51a1a548ba714915334b79fdc58994ecb209a55550dbc7fa63fa1>
    - **Lewis Center: Understanding Clergy Sexual Ethics (\$49)**

- <https://www.lewisonlinelearning.org/CourseInfo/10003>

➤ **Safe Sanctuaries**

- **Safe Gatherings (\$75) Includes Background Check + Safe Spaces Training**

- <http://safegatherings.com/app/registration-invitation/2863060da48c10e5269a15204fe3c267eb9e0cb7268f6bf17e4dfd637af0835e>

➤ **Inclusiveness**

- **Implicit Bias: What We Don't Think We Think (\$29)**

- <https://gcorr.teachable.com/p/implicitbias>

- ☐ Interview for certified candidacy with the dCOM and receive ¾ approval (written ballot, ¶ 666.6).

## BEYOND CERTIFICATION:

### Steps to Become a Local Pastor and Be Licensed (¶ 315)

- ☐ Become a certified candidate.
- ☐ Be recommended by a ¾ majority vote of the dCOM for initial license.
- ☐ Successfully complete Licensing School.
- ☐ Receive approval for licensing by a ¾ majority vote of the clergy session.
- ☐ Receive an appointment from the bishop.

### Steps to Become an Associate Member (¶ 322)

- ☐ Minimum forty years of age with four years' service as a full-time local pastor or equivalent.
- ☐ Complete the Course of Study and a minimum of 60 hours toward a B. A. or equivalent.
- ☐ Recommended by a ¾ majority vote of the dCOM.
- ☐ Accept and continue to serve in a full-time appointment.
- ☐ Satisfy BOM physical health requirements, psychological reports, and criminal background and credit checks.
- ☐ Complete the written doctrinal examination (¶ 324.9) and prepare a written sermon on the suggested Bible passage.
- ☐ Recommended by a ¾ majority vote of the BOM.
- ☐ Receive approval for associate membership by a ¾ majority vote of the clergy session.

### Steps to Become a Provisional Member via Course of Study (¶ 324.6)

- ☐ Complete four years of full-time service or the equivalent.
- ☐ Satisfy all requirements of Sections 1-3 and 7-14 of ¶ 324.
- ☐ Complete bachelor's degree.
- ☐ Complete Course of Study with no more than ½ taken online or via correspondence.
- ☐ Complete Advanced Course of Study through a University Senate-approved seminary.
- ☐ Present certificate of good health and Candidate's Disclosure Form.
- ☐ Be interviewed by dCOM and recommended in writing to BOM by ¾ majority vote of dCOM (¶ 324.10).

- ☐ Submit written work for BOM examination.
- ☐ Be interviewed by BOM and recommended to clergy session by  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote of BOM (§ 324.14).
- ☐ Receive approval for provisional membership by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote of the clergy session.

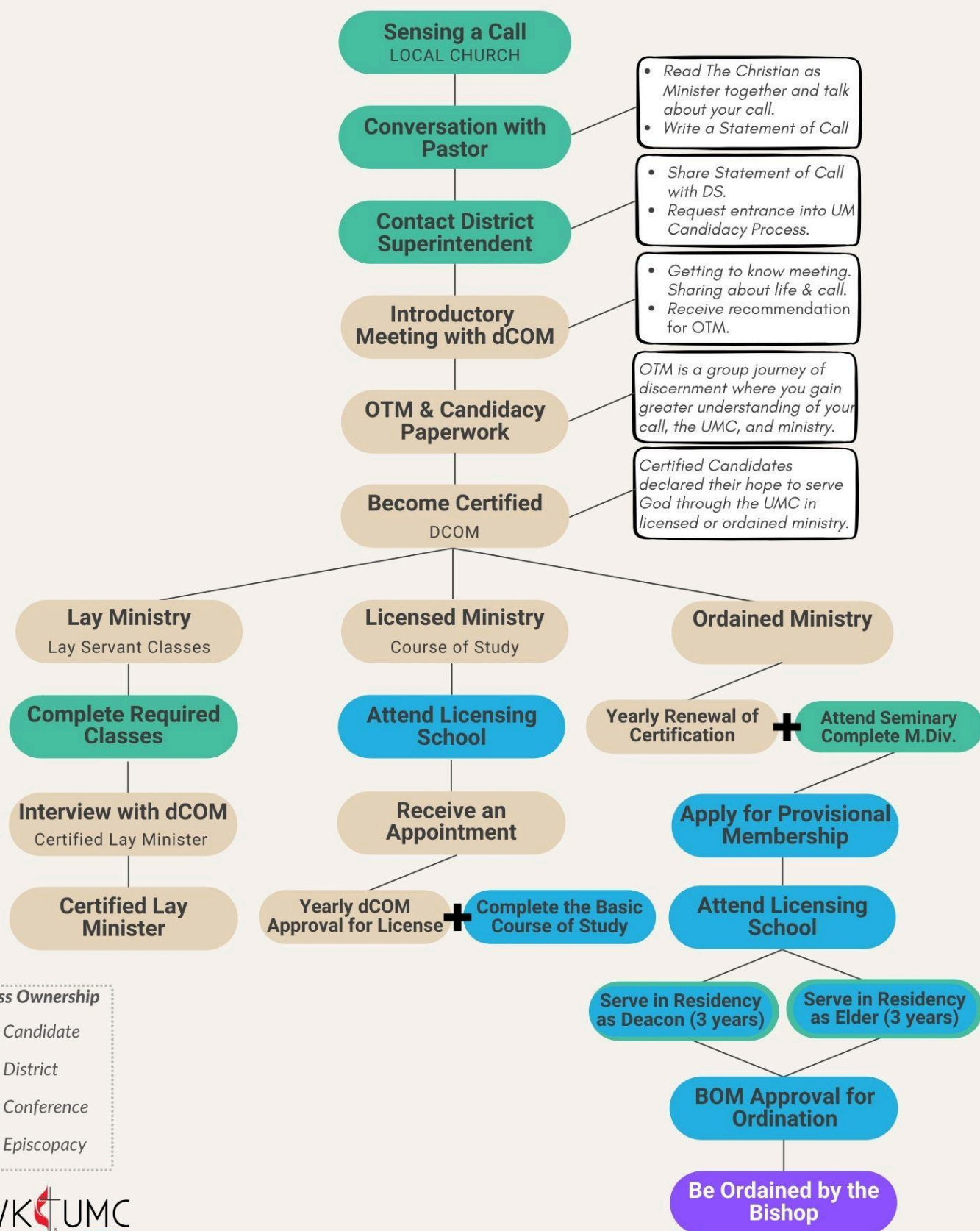
### Steps to Become a Provisional Member via Graduate Education (§ 324)

- ☐ Certified candidate for at least one year, maximum 12 years (§ 313.5, § 324.1).
- ☐ Demonstrate gifts for ministry of service and leadership to the dCOM's satisfaction (§ 324.2).
- ☐ Be interviewed by dCOM and recommended in writing to BOM by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote of dCOM (§ 324.10).
- ☐ Complete bachelor's degree.
- ☐ Complete M.Div. (deacon or elder), or master's degree in a specialized field plus Basic Graduate Theological Studies (deacon).
- ☐ Present certificate of good health and Candidate's Disclosure Form.
- ☐ Submit written work for BOM examination.
- ☐ Be interviewed by BOM and recommended to clergy session by  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote of BOM (§ 324.14).
- ☐ Receive approval for provisional membership by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote of the clergy session.

### Steps to Become a Full Member Deacon (§ 330) or Elder (§ 335)

- ☐ Been previously elected as a provisional member and fully participate in three full-time years of Residency in Ministry (RIM)
- ☐ Serve under full-time appointment for three full annual conference years.
- ☐ Submit written work for BOM examination.
- ☐ Present project demonstrating fruitfulness carrying out church's mission of "Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World."
- ☐ Interview with BOM to receive  $\frac{3}{4}$  BOM recommendation for ordination.
- ☐ Receive  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority approval of clergy session, participate in ordination service, and be ordained by a Bishop.

# Basic Overview of Ministry Paths in The United Methodist Church



## PATHS OF SERVICE IN THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Deacon	Elder	Local Pastor	Deaconesses and Home Missioners	Certified Lay Minister
Clergy	Clergy	Clergy	Lay	Lay
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word</li> <li>• Service</li> <li>• Compassion</li> <li>• Justice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word</li> <li>• Sacrament</li> <li>• Order</li> <li>• Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preach &amp; Teach</li> <li>• Lead in Worship</li> <li>• Receive New Members</li> <li>• Lead Sacraments in their appointment setting.</li> <li>• Perform services of marriage, burial and confirmation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Love</li> <li>• Justice</li> <li>• Service</li> <li>• Alleviate suffering</li> <li>• Eradicate causes of injustice</li> <li>• Facilitate full human potential</li> <li>• Share in the building global community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preach &amp; Teach</li> <li>• Lead in Worship</li> <li>• Offer Care</li> <li>• Develop new and existing faith communities</li> <li>• Establish community ministries</li> </ul>
Secure own ministry setting. Not itinerant.	Itinerant Ministry.	Authority limited to local appointment setting.	Church-related vocation or helping profession.	Local Church Service or Episcopal Assignment
Master Degree or M.Div.	M.Div.	Course of Study / Adv. Course of Study	Specialized Training	Specialized Training
Local Congregation / Appoint. Beyond Local Congregation	Primarily Local Church / Appt. Beyond Local Congregation	Primarily Local Church / Appt. Beyond Local Congregation	Church-related vocation / helping profession.	Local Church Assignment / Vocation Beyond Local Congregation

*Associate members are in the itinerant ministry of the Church and are available on a continuing basis for appointment by the bishop. Before election to Associate Membership, one must have reached age forty; served four years as a full-time local pastor; completed the Course of Study, and completed a minimum of sixty semester hours toward the Bachelor's degree.*

### CLERGY STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS<sup>3</sup>

A pastor is one of many leaders in the church, which is the Body of Christ. All baptized Christians are expected to exercise leadership according to the spiritual gifts they have been given. A pastor's gifts include the abilities of preaching and teaching the word of God, nurturing Christians in their faith, leading congregations in visioning and goal-setting, enabling congregants to discern their own call and equipping them to fulfill their call and the church's vision and mission. Beyond those particular gifts, pastors will have other specific gifts which are unique to their own faith and journey.

All those called into a life of ministry must recognize that changing times have called forth a "new" model of pastoral leadership which focuses on equipping laity to do the work of ministry as opposed to a pastor-centered, pastor-dependent church life. Based on practices of the New Testament church, this model of pastoral leadership involves:

→ Encourage disciples to listen for and hear their own call to serve Jesus Christ

<sup>3</sup> This work is based on work developed by the Illinois Great Rivers Conference.

- Teaching disciples how to reach out in the name of Jesus Christ
- Nurturing disciples in their journey of discipleship
- Sending disciples into the world to be the church.

The new model of spiritual leadership includes four essential leadership functions. Fulfilling these functions must be the pastor's highest priority.

1. Helping people discover and name the current reality in which they live.
2. Discerning, naming, and casting the shared vision.
3. Developing bridges by helping the congregation plan actions and develop systems.
4. Monitoring the journey by keeping an eye on the whole of the faith journey of the congregation.

Though pastors are ultimately responsible for the full life of the church, expecting a pastor to do all the relational and administrative work of the church (shut-in calling, hospital visits, evangelism, etc.) limits the ministry of the entire congregation. God has called the laity, not just the clergy, to perform the work of ministry every day as representatives of Christ and the Church in the world.

It is reasonable to expect, however, that pastors will give personal leadership in the development of congregational systems which provide a full range of ministries employing the gifts of each disciple/member.

#### **CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE CLERGY LEADERSHIP<sup>4</sup>**

Persons who wish to serve as clergy leaders must embrace the mission, vision, and values of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference. They must also commit to high standards of living and exhibit the following characteristics:

- **A personal passionate faith:** Deeply loves God, expresses a vibrant spirituality and lives a holy, healthy, grace-filled life that is evidenced by an ability to articulate the difference Jesus Christ makes in their life and the consistent practice of the means of grace.
- **An evangelistic heart:** Loves people and passionately desires to see lives transformed through a relationship with Jesus Christ by committing themselves to leading congregations to reach the least, lost and those left out—inviting people on a journey towards radical discipleship resulting in people growing spiritually and the church growing numerically.
- **Emotional and social intelligence:** Demonstrates self-awareness, interpersonal skills, self-confidence, emotional self-control, authenticity, and empathy for others.
- **Love for all God's people and the world:** Embraces the world as their parish, and therefore expects to be connectional in ministry, awake to the large, diverse world in which we live, and deeply engaged in working towards God's shalom for all people.
- **Adaptive leadership skills:** Thinks and works organizationally by creating, managing and navigating systems; developing and implementing strategic ministry plans; building teams and influencing others to achieve common goals; initiating change and managing conflict so as to increase a congregation's capacity for change and ability to address adaptive challenges; and adjusting their leadership style to fit the context.

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<sup>4</sup> This resource was originally developed by the Minnesota Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

- **Holy, healthy habits:** Sustains themselves for ministry by having a healthy, interesting personal life that is appropriately balanced with their vocational work, expressions of which are clear personal and professional boundaries; practices of good self-care; life-giving relationships outside the church; interests and hobbies that lead to a well-rounded life.
- **Life-long learner:** Seeks to be a lifelong learner and makes the investment in on-going personal and professional development.
- **A Wesleyan way of discipleship:** Inspires, engages and motivates others by preaching the good news with conviction, prepares and leads excellently executed worship services that connect people to God, each other and the needs of a seeking world, casts a compelling vision of what it means to be the body of Christ, offers a thoughtful Wesleyan theology that is relevant and meaningful to peoples' everyday lives, and unashamedly calls people into a life of stewardship where they offer their prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness to the work of the kingdom joyfully.

# The Statement of Call

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Throughout your candidacy process, you will be asked to articulate your understanding of God's calling in your life. At the beginning of the candidacy process, you will share this story with your district superintendent and your community of faith. This statement is to highlight your experiences with the Holy Spirit that have helped you discern God's call and your gifts for ministry. It reflects your present understanding of your call. As you journey through the candidacy process, and you will continually add to your call story as you more deeply understand how God is calling you to serve through the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church.

God's call for our lives is an invitation to live faithfully in the world and use all our gifts to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others. The Book of Discipline, ¶ 220 reminds that "All members of Christ's universal church are called to share in the ministry which is committed to the whole church of Jesus Christ. Therefore, each member of The United Methodist Church is to be a servant of Christ on mission in the local and worldwide community. This servanthood is performed in family life, daily work, recreation, and social activities, responsible citizenship, the stewardship of property and accumulated resources, the issues of corporate life, and all attitudes toward other persons."

God's call presents itself in our lives in different ways. Some experience a sudden call; others grow in their understanding over time. Some are very young, while others have already completed full careers. But no matter how or when one experiences God's invitation to service, we each respond based on our present understanding.

As you write your Statement of Call, include the elements below:

1. The most formative experiences of your Christian life;
2. God's call to ordained, licensed, or lay ministry and the role of the Church in your call;
3. Your beliefs as a Christian;
4. Your gifts for ministry;
5. Your present understanding of your call to ministry as an elder, deacon, licensed lay pastor, or other lay ministry, or lay ministry; and
6. Your support system.



# The Candidacy Assignment

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**NOTE:** This assignment is part of the requirements outlined in 2016 Discipline ¶¶310.1b, 310.1d, 310.2a, 310.2d. This reflection paper will “grow with you” as you continue to discern God’s call to ministry. Along the candidacy journey, you will be asked to submit updated versions of this assignment as you meet with mentors, different committees, and church leaders.

## 1. SHARE YOUR STATEMENT OF CALL

- a. **Please share an introductory paragraph to describe yourself and your stage of life.**  
(ex. “I am a sophomore student at University of Memphis,” and “I am an empty nester and longtime member of First UMC”.)
- b. **Describe your call to ministry.** *Please include how the church fits into the call you have discerned.*
- c. **How do you currently understand your call to relate to lay, licensed, or ordained ministry in the United Methodist Church (CLM, elder, deacon, or licensed local pastor)?**
- d. **Describe your support system as you pursue candidacy.**

## 2. THE NATURE OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- a. **What is your most formative experience as a Christian disciple?**
- b. **How do you know God as a forgiving and pardoning God?**
- c. **How do you believe that others know that the love of Christ abides in you?**  
*Share some examples of how you discipline yourself to be “holy in all manner of conversation.”*

## 3. GIFTS AND GRACE FOR MINISTRY

- a. **What are the gifts and grace for ministry that the Holy Spirit has given you to fulfill his work and mission?** *Share some examples of times when you felt your gifts for ministry were used by God.*
- b. **Please share how you believe that your theology and understanding of Christ’s saving grace are in alignment with historic United Methodist teachings.**

## 4. FRUITFULNESS IN MINISTRY

- a. **How have you made and nurtured disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world?** *Please share some recent examples of your fruitfulness in ministry as a layperson (ex: organizing a mission trip, leading a Bible Study or small group, sharing your faith, etc.)*
- b. **What have you learned about yourself and God through your service?**

## 5. THE MORAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF LICENSED AND ORDAINED MINISTERS ¶310.2d

*Candidates seeking to become certified for licensed or ordained ministry shall... agree, for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness of the gospel, and in consideration of their influence as clergy, to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life as set forth in ¶¶ 103-105; 160-166, and to this end they shall agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and the knowledge and love of God.*

- **What is your understanding of this agreement?**



TENNESSEE-WESTERN KENTUCKY CONFERENCE

**Medical Summary Report  
Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference**

Candidate's Name:

*First Name*

*Middle Name*

*Last Name*

**The Medical Report should be submitted to:**

**Board of Ordained Ministry, Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference**

% Rev. Jefferson M. Furtado, Ministry Associate

**Mailing Address:** 304 S. Perimeter Park Dr., Suite 5, Nashville, TN 37211

**Email:** equip@twkumc.org **Fax:** (615) 846-4431

**CONSENT FOR THE RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION – COMPLETED BY CANDIDATE**

Candidate's Name:

*FULL NAME*

*DATE OF BIRTH*

I hereby authorize and direct \_\_\_\_\_ (physician) to disclose to the **Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference Board of Ordained Ministry** the following information with regard to the records of \_\_\_\_\_ (candidate) for the purpose of evaluation by The United Methodist Church for entrance into ministry.

I, the undersigned, understand that I may revoke this consent at any time except to the extent that action has been taken in reliance upon it. This consent will expire sixty (60) days after the date treatment is terminated unless another date is specified.

I understand that the information requested may be disclosed from records whose confidentiality is otherwise protected by federal as well as state law. Any of the above-requested information may include results of alcohol/drug (substance) abuse and/or diagnosis and treatment of psychological disorders, as well as HIV status.

To the party receiving this information: This information has been disclosed to you from records whose confidentiality is protected by federal law. Federal regulations (42 CFR Part 2) prohibit you from making any further disclosure of it without the specific written consent of the person to whom it pertains, or as otherwise permitted by such regulations. A general authorization for the release of medical or other information is not sufficient for this purpose.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## SUMMARY REPORT – COMPLETED BY PHYSICIAN

### Comments for physician:

Complete the summary report. The United Methodist Church assumes you are completing this information based on a current physical examination of the candidate. Screening guidelines are provided for reference as needed. This person is a candidate for ministry in The United Methodist Church. Among other requirements, this includes being able to typically work a full-time week – with periodic weeks requiring longer work hours. Thriving in ministry will encounter situations that require the ability to cope with conflict and stress. Job-related tasks range from office work and traveling from site to site to communicating with and relating to a variety of people and managing multiple tasks simultaneously, among other responsibilities.

Candidate's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Physical Exam: \_\_\_\_\_

### Required Drug Screening (Please attach official laboratory report):

Amphetamines \_\_\_\_\_ Methadone \_\_\_\_\_ Barbiturates \_\_\_\_\_ Opiates \_\_\_\_\_ PCP \_\_\_\_\_  
Benzodiazepines \_\_\_\_\_ Cocaine \_\_\_\_\_ Propoxyphene \_\_\_\_\_ Marijuana \_\_\_\_\_

### Please Check One:

- ☐ Based on the physical exam I completed, this candidate appears to be healthy. I have no concerns about his/her physical fitness for ministry.
- ☐ Based on the physical exam I completed, this candidate has some health concerns that are summarized below.

### Summary of Concerns:

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### Typical treatment(s) for this condition could potentially include (medication, surgery, lifestyle modification, intervention by specialist, frequent monitoring, etc.):

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***Questions to ask, or conversations that a committee might have, to address these concerns could include:***

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**Examining Provider:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fax :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature :** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAMP**



## Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee Approval Form

*This form is to be used for candidates seeking first-time Certification.*

The Staff/Pastor Parish Relations (S/PPRC) Committee will meet with the candidate, must approve their candidacy, and must sign this form as a record of their endorsement of the candidacy. The senior pastor of the church should also sign the form. Please send this form to the District Superintendent and dCOM.

The form can be sent by the candidate, chair of SPPRC, or Senior Pastor to the District Superintendent and dCOM.

On \_\_\_\_\_, the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee from \_\_\_\_\_

United Methodist Church / Wesley Foundation / United Methodist ministry met \_\_\_\_\_.

After prayerful deliberation, the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee

☐ Offered

☐ Did Not Offer

*Please check only one option.*

full support and endorsement to pursue candidacy in the United Methodist Church.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, Staff Parish Relations Committee, *Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Pastor, *Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Candidate Meeting with SPPRC



## Charge Conference Certification Form

*This form is to be used for candidates seeking first-time Certification.*

The form shall be submitted to the District superintendent following the actions of the Charge Conference.

On \_\_\_\_\_, the Charge Conference of \_\_\_\_\_ United Methodist Church / Wesley Foundation / United Methodist ministry interviewed \_\_\_\_\_. After prayerful deliberation, and a  $\frac{2}{3}$  written ballot vote according to ¶310.1e, the Charge Conference

☐ Offered

☐ Did Not Offer

*Please check only one option.*

full support and endorsement to pursue candidacy in the United Methodist Church.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Charge Conference Chair, *Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Charge Conference Secretary, *Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Charge Conference Presider, *Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Candidate Meeting with SPPRC

# For Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee

## Interview of Candidate for Ministry

1. Open meeting with prayer.
2. Explain that in order for anyone to be licensed or ordained into ministry in the United Methodist Church, they must have a recommendation from their S/PPRC and Church/Charge Conference.
  - a. The Book of Discipline, 2016 ¶ 310.1d states that: *“The candidate will consult with the pastor or equivalent in a ministry setting specified by the district committee on ordained ministry to request a meeting of the pastor-parish relations committee or equivalent body specified by the district committee on ordained ministry to consider the statement of call and to be interviewed in light of Wesley’s historic questions.”*
  - b. The discernment of the local church about a particular candidate’s gifts and grace for ministry is a vital part of the process in determining the candidate’s fitness for ministry. This is holy work and should be done carefully, thoughtfully and prayerfully.
3. The S/PPRC Chair should appoint a person to record the outcome of the meeting, particularly the vote that will be taken. The facilitator should have paper ballots or ask the pastor to supply them.
4. Prior to the interview, the candidate is expected to provide the Pastor, S/PPRC Chair, dCOM Chair, dCOM Registrar and the Equip Office written responses to questions found in The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2016 ¶ 310.1d, ¶310.2a (i-vi), as well as, a written agreement to the highest ideals of the Christian life in ¶310.2d. The candidate’s responses should provide the framework for the interview conversation.
5. Please excuse the candidate to another room, so that the S/PPRC will have an opportunity to discuss the interview and take a vote. The vote is not to be a rubber stamp, but an honest appraisal of the gifts and grace of the candidate.
  - a. The vote is to be taken by written ballot. With this vote, you will recommend, or not recommend the candidate to your Charge Conference. Please spend a few moments in quiet prayer as you consider your vote.
  - b. Once the vote is taken and the ballots are tallied, bring the candidate in and report the results.
  - c. Report the outcomes of the S/PPRC interview to the District Office.
6. After the appropriate concluding remarks about the candidate or the process, thank the candidate and the pastor for their time and work.

Close the meeting with prayer.

# For Charge/Church Conference

## Interview of a Candidate for Ministry

To: Members of the Charge/Church Conference

Thank you for your faithfulness in meeting with { **candidate name** }. You have been charged with a very important task, deciding whether this candidate should be recommended to the district committee on ordained ministry as a certified candidate for licensed or ordained ministry. This is a responsibility that should not be taken lightly. It is your role to offer witness that { **candidate name** } is truly called a life of { **licensed or ordained** } ministry in the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church.

The following words can be found in The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2016, ¶310.1d. It reflects the long tradition of examination of those who would be called as ordained persons in the Church, and should be used as a guide for your conversation with the candidate who is now before you:

### **The Book of Discipline ¶310 .1d (Wesley's historic questions)**

- (1) Do they know God as pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire nothing but God? Are they holy in all manner of conversation?
- (2) Have they gifts, as well as evidence of God's grace, for the work? Have they a clear, sound understanding; a right judgment in the things of God; a just conception of salvation by faith? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?
- (3) Have they fruit? Have any been truly convinced of sin and converted to God, and are believers edified by their service?

As long as these marks occur in the life of the candidate, we believe they are called of God to serve. These we receive as sufficient proof that they are moved by the Holy Spirit.

### **The Book of Discipline ¶310 .2a (i-vi)**

The items below should also be incorporated into your dialogue/questions with the candidate.

- (i) The most formative experience of their Christian life;
- (ii) God's call to licensed or ordained ministry and the role of the church in their call
- (iii) their beliefs as a Christian
- (iv) their gifts for ministry
- (v) their present understanding of their call to ministry as elder, deacon, or licensed ministry; and
- (vi) their support system;



## Charge Conference Interview

1. Please explain the process and what this means to the candidate.  
*E.g.: The Charge/Church Conference is either recommending or not recommending the candidate to the district Committee on Ordained Ministry for consideration as a certified candidate for ministry. This is a disciplinary requirement and communal affirmation of the candidate's gifts and calls. (§310.1e The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2016)*
2. Determine that someone will take minutes and record the vote using the appropriate form.
3. Open with prayer.
4. Pastor or Chair of the S/PPRC should introduce the candidate.
5. Chair of the S/PPRC should report the result of the S/PPRC meeting with the candidate.
6. The Book of Discipline questions §310.1d (Wesley's historic questions) and The Book of Discipline §301.2a (i-vi) may be handed out to the members of the Charge Conference. This is meant to help guide the dialogue with the candidate. Adequate time for dialogue with the candidate should be allowed.
7. When conversation is complete, the candidate should be excused while the vote is taken.
8. With candidate out of the room, the facilitator should instruct the charge conference members in the voting process. A helpful question for committee members to ask themselves as they consider their vote is, "Would I want this person as my minister?" Care should be given to ensure candidates are not discriminated against based on race, color, national origin, ethnicity, age, gender, disability, status, economic condition, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
9. A time for silent prayer may be offered before members record their votes.
10. Vote is to be taken by written ballot. A 3/4 majority vote is needed for recommendation. (The Book of Discipline §310.1e)
11. A person designated by the facilitator should collect and tally the votes.
12. The candidate is called back and the vote announced.
13. The facilitator should thank those who came to the Charge/Church Conference and conclude the meeting with prayer.
14. The Presiding Elder should complete the appropriate form and return both the form and minutes to the district Committee on Ordained Ministry.