



Candidacy Handbook

Board of Ordained Ministry

Last Updated: January 2022

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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



Mission, Vision, and Values

AS ADOPTED JUNE 2019

Vision

Uniting to embody the love of Christ in Spirit-led actions one community at a time.

Mission

To discover, equip, connect, and send lay and clergy leaders who shape congregations that offer Christ to a hurting world, one neighborhood at a time.

Values

- The local church as the disciple-making center
- Transparency and integrity in our communication
- Seeking a purposeful and more generous way of love
- Courage to explore possibilities and take risks by being nimble, experimenting, permitting failure, and staying the course
- Empowering all leaders and enabling leaders with gifts and graces for the task
- Seeking input from both people and useful data
- We welcome diversity, rooted in Christ, a deep love of one another, celebrating our differences

Strategic Focus

Develop transforming lay and clergy leaders to engage the mission field to grow fruitful and faithful congregations.

Strategic Initiatives

- Develop transforming clergy and lay leaders
- Invest in and empower young (18-35) and diverse people
- Engage the mission field through partnering with communities
- Create fruitful and faithful congregations

Welcome

Congratulations on taking this exciting step in your discernment towards becoming a certified, licensed, or ordained minister. Our candidacy process is designed to guide you as you discern how God's calling, your gifts, and your talents may find home within the ministries of the United Methodist Church. Our conference's mission statement reminds us that each person, whether lay or clergy, is 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 reminds, "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 will help you in this work of discernment. Candidacy is the first formal step toward your ministry goal, whether that is to serve as a deacon, elder, licensed pastor, or even certified lay ministry.

Our life of faith is a journey in community and this process is no different. Throughout your candidacy process, you will journey with other individuals who are also discerning, God's call in their lives. You will continue to journey with your local community of faith—who will serve as a vital supporting partner for this journey. You will receive the support of:

- your pastor and your local congregation, who will encourage you, pray for you, and may be able to offer financial support to offset the cost of the process;
- clergy mentors, who will offer their time and experience to guide you;
- the District Committee on Ministry (dCOM), who shares responsibility for enlistment, candidacy, licensing, and recommending individuals for associate or provisional membership;
- the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM), who has primary responsibility for the enlistment and recruitment of ministerial leadership in the Annual Conference.
- the District Superintendent (DS), who serves as an extension of the bishop's authority and supervises clergy within the district.
- the Connectional Ministry Office—Equip Staff, who provides strategic and administrative support for the work of teams in Equip Strategic Ministry area.

It is my prayer, that the love of God, the grace of Christ, the wisdom of the Holy Spirit will continue to present with as you journey towards fulfilling God's call for your life.

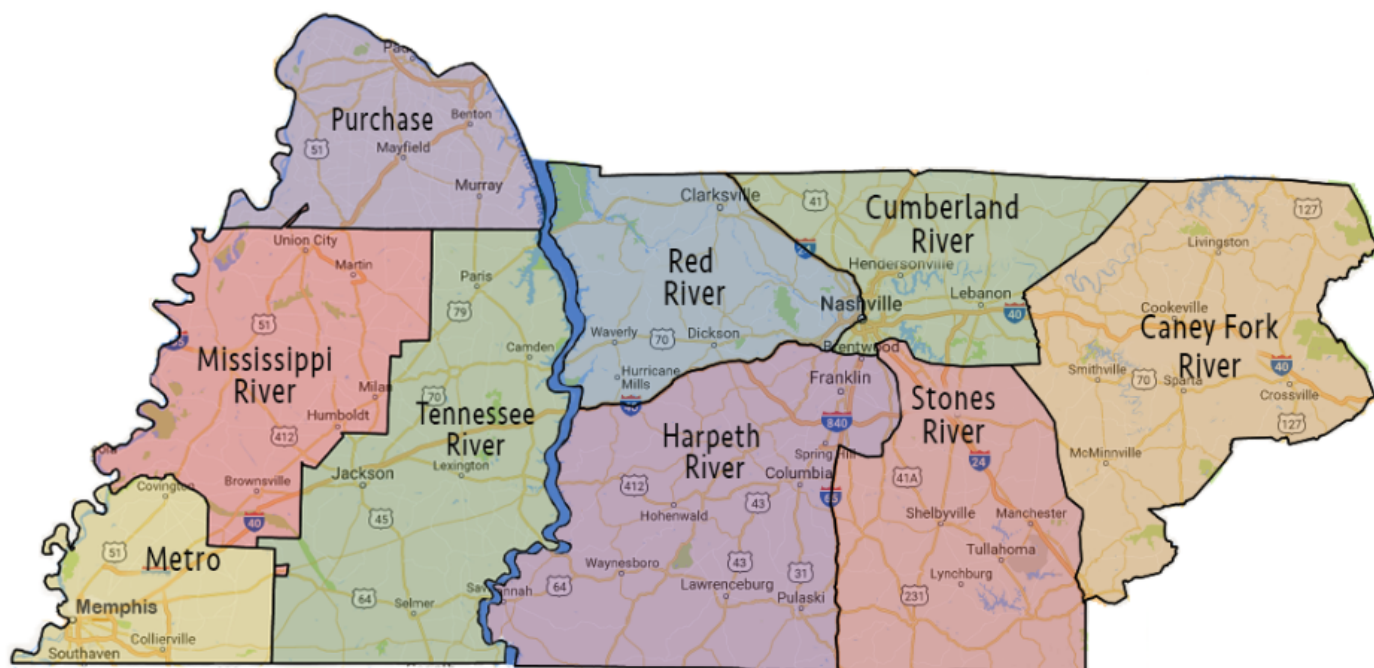
Rev. Jefferson M. Furtado, *Ministry Associate—Equip*
jefferson.furtado@twkumc.org

Contacts for Candidacy Process

Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference

Equip Staff & Board of Ordained Ministry OTM Chair

Rev. Jefferson M. Furtado	Lynn Patterson	Rev. Laura K. McMasters
Ministry Associate—Equip <i>jefferson.furtado@twkumc.org</i>	Ministry Assistant—Equip <i>lynn.patterson@twkumc.org</i>	BOM, OTM Chair <i>LuLauraKMcm@gmail.com</i>



dCOM Chairs Contact Information

Caney Fork River District	Cumberland River District	Harpeth River District
Rev. Connie Hall <i>chall@ffgumc.org</i>	Rev. Regina Hall <i>regina.hall@twkumc.org</i>	Rev. Kevin Marston <i>ckevinmarston@gmail.com</i>
Metro District	Mississippi River District	Purchase District
Rev. Dr. Bee French <i>revdrbee@gmail.com</i>	Rev. Barbara Blackmon-Fortune <i>revbebf@yahoo.com</i>	Rev. Joey Reed <i>pastor@mayfieldfirst.com</i>
Red River District	Stones River District	Tennessee River District
Rev. Jared Wilson <i>jared@madisonstreetumc.org</i>	Rev. De Hennessy <i>francis.hennessy@twkumc.com</i>	Rev. Rick Pinkston <i>pickwickumcpastor@gmail.com</i>

The Candidacy Process

Note: To begin the Candidacy Process you must have obtained a high school diploma or equivalency and been a member of The United Methodist Church (or baptized participant of a recognized United Methodist campus ministry or other United Methodist ministry setting for one (1) year.

Steps to Become a Certified Candidate (§ 310)

- ☐ Contact the pastor of your local church or United Methodist ministry setting
- ☐ Read **The Christian as Minister** and talk about the call with a United Methodist clergy.
- ☐ Contact your District Superintendent and request an introductory meeting.
 - ☐ Include the following in your email:
 - ☐ Indication that you have read **The Christian as Minister** with your minister
 - ☐ Name and contact information of your ministry setting (local church/campus ministry etc)
 - ☐ Statement of Call
 - ☐ Biographical Information Form
- ☐ Attend meeting with District Superintendent
- ☐ Meet with District Committee on Ministry (dCOM)
- ☐ Fully participate in Orientation to Ministry (February to August or August to February)
- ☐ Complete Candidacy Forms
 - ☐ Application For Clergy Relationship to the Annual Conference
 - ☐ Candidate's Disclosure Form — §324.12
 - ☐ U.S. Work Authorization Form
 - ☐ Reference Forms (UMCARES)
 - ☐ Background Report
 - ☐ Medical Report
 - ☐ Personal Data Inventory
 - ☐ Psychological Evaluation
 - ☐ Receive P/SPRC approval
 - ☐ Charge Conference Recommendation (two-thirds written ballot)
- ☐ Meet with Conference Assigned Ministry Assessment Specialist (MAS)
- ☐ Agree to live according to the highest ideals of the Christian life, as set forth in §§ 101–104 and §§ 160–166 (Social Principles).
- ☐ Complete Required Clergy Training
 - ☐ Boundaries and Sexual Ethics
 - ☐ Inclusiveness
 - ☐ Safe Sanctuaries
- ☐ Interview for certified candidacy with the dCOM and receive ¾ approval (written ballot, § 666.6).

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

- ☐ Become a certified candidate.
- ☐ Be recommended by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote of the dCOM for initial license.
- ☐ Successfully complete Licensing School.
- ☐ Receive approval for licensing by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote of the clergy session.
- ☐ Receive 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 Course of Study and minimum 60 hours toward a B. A. or equivalent.
- ☐ Recommended by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote of the dCOM.
- ☐ Accept full-time continuing appointment.
- ☐ Satisfy BOM physical health requirements, psychological reports, and criminal background and credit checks.
- ☐ Complete written doctrinal examination (§ 324.9) and prepare a written sermon on suggested Bible passage.
- ☐ Recommended by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote of the BOM.
- ☐ Receive approval for associate membership by a $\frac{3}{4}$ 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 $\frac{1}{2}$ 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 $\frac{3}{4}$ 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.
- ☐ 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.

Candidacy Process Fees

TITLE	FEE	DESCRIPTION
Process Fee	\$75 (paid in UMCARES)	<i>This fee covers the administrative costs related to the UMCARES and the book, "Answering the Call"</i>
OTM	\$75	Covers the cost for Background Screening, OTM material, and lunch.
Psychological Evaluation	\$225 (Paid online)	<i>The total cost of this assessment runs between \$500 and \$600. The Board of Ordained Ministry covers \$275 of the cost and candidates cover \$225.</i>
Medical Examination	<i>Varies by physician</i>	<i>As part of this medical exam, you are required to complete a drug screening with your physician that must test for the following substances: Amphetamines, Barbiturates, Benzodiazepines, Cocaine, Marijuana, Methadone, Opiates, PCP, & Propoxyphene.</i>
Licensing School	\$200 + books	<i>The total cost for Licensing School is \$600. However, the candidate will only be responsible for paying \$200. The Board of Ordained Ministry will cover the rest.</i>

Candidacy Process Details

Statement of Call

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 to you will share this story with your district superintendent and your community of faith. This statement is like a picture that captures a single moment in time. It reflects your present understanding of your call. As you journey through our candidacy process you will further discern and grow, bringing greater depth and understanding to how God is calling to serve in 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 our 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 lived full careers. But no matter how or when one experience's 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 experience of your Christian life;
2. God's call to licensed or ordained ministry and role of the church in your call;
3. your beliefs as a Christian;
4. your gifts for ministry;
5. the present understanding of your call to ministry as elder, deacon, or licensed ministry;
6. your support system.

Review your Statement of Call with your or ministry leader and share it with your SPPRC.

Submit your *Statement of Call* and *Biographical Form* to

1. **District Superintendent**
2. **Equip Team (equip@twkumc.org)**

Orientation to Ministry (OTM)

Description

Whether you are beginning your discernment process or feel sure about God's calling for your life Orientation to Ministry offers a space to discern your call and connect with others who are on the journey. During your time in OTM, you will learn about the various paths for ministry in The United Methodist Church and the distinctions between ordination, licensing, and certification. You will meet others who are also beginning this journey. At the end of this process, you should have a deeper understanding of your calling and the ways you can serve within The United Methodist Church. While you journey through OTM you will also complete several required steps needed before Certification.

OTM Details & Expectation

1. Each OTM cycle includes 2 retreats—one to begin the program and one to conclude.
2. Participate in OTM Group meetings between retreats. Each group will meet at least 3 times for 3 hours/each.
 - Each group will have 5-6 candidates and two mentors.
 - Mentor may be elders, deacons, associate members, or licensed local pastors who have completed the Course of Study.
 - When possible, groups will be organized by geographical region.
 - One mentor will be responsible for tracking candidate attendance and progress.
3. Participants will be required to read
 - selected Wesley Sermons (online and/or Kinghorn edited),
 - GBHEM handbook "Answering The Call (ATC),
 - *Celebration of Discipline* (Foster),
 - *By Water and the Spirit* (Felton),
 - *This Holy Mystery* (Felton);
 - *John Wesley's Message Today* (Weems) OR *Wesley for the Armchair Theologian* (Abraham).

Background Screening

The candidacy process requires a full background screen in order to be considered for certified candidacy. You will receive an email invitation from "**Smart-Trak Training Program - Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference Online Training - (Background Check Only).**" Please complete your background screen within 48 hours of the first OTM retreat. If you have not received an invitation to complete the background screen within 48 hours, contact the Equip Team by email at equip@twkumc.org.

Psychological Evaluation

The purpose of psychological evaluation at the Candidacy level is to gather information related to you and your mental/emotional strengths and growth opportunities.

Once you complete the EM360 step in the Candidacy Track, you will receive an invitation to register for the Psychological Assessment. This assessment consists of three online tests (two multiple-choice, and one open-ended). Dates are available multiple times throughout the year and rotate locations throughout the conference. During this season of pandemic, the assessment will also be offered online.

A portable computer or tablet with Wi-Fi capability will be required for the assessment. You should set aside between three to five hours to complete the assessment. The total cost for the psychological assessment runs between \$500 and \$600. The Board of Ordained Ministry covers \$275 of this cost, and candidates cover \$225. This fee must be paid before you are eligible to test.

Once testing is complete, your psychological assessments will be processed electronically and submitted to a BOM-assigned Ministerial Assessment Specialist (MAS). Once you have completed your psychological assessment, your MAS Psychologist will reach out to you to schedule an interview to discuss the results of your assessment. They will submit a comprehensive psychological report to the Connectional Ministry Office—Equip Staff. This report will include information regarding your psychological assessments, EM360, as well as your in-person interview with them.

If you wish to have access to this report, you may email the Equip Staff to request a copy.

Medical Examinations

A medical examination is also required for all candidates for ministry. This examination may be completed by your Primary Care Physician. Your provider must fill out the required Medical Report form provided in this handbook.

Once you have completed your examination, your physician's office must scan/email, mail, or fax a copy to the Connectional Ministry Office—Equip Staff with backup drug screening report. As part of this medical exam, you are required to complete a drug screening with your physician. This screening must test for the following substances: Amphetamines, Barbiturates, Benzodiazepines, Cocaine, Marijuana, Methadone, Opiates, PCP, and Propoxyphene.

In some cases, your medical provider may not be able to collect your drug screen, or it may be cost-prohibitive. Drug screen orders are available for \$69.00 that meet these requirements. You can order it online at <https://requestatest.com/9-panel-drug-test-urine-testing>.

Required Training

All ministry candidates and clergy in the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference are required to complete training in **Boundaries and Sexual Ethics, Inclusiveness, and Safe Sanctuaries**.

These training sessions are required before a candidate may be licensed, commissioned, or ordained. The training must be retaken once per quadrennium.

These courses are offered multiple times throughout the year. To register, visit www.twkumc.org/calendar to see the list of available dates and details.

Preparation for dCOM Certification Meeting

Upon satisfying all requirements for Certified Candidacy you will be eligible to meet with your District Committee on Ministry to become a Certified Candidate for ministry.

Please reach out to your District Administrative Assistant to be sure you have been scheduled to meet with your DCOM. Once certified as a candidate, you will be eligible for recommendation to attend Licensing School or begin the process towards Commissioning/Ordination.

Once you are certified as a candidate for ministry, you are also eligible to apply for Ministerial Education Funds (MEF). For more information about MEF, please visit www.twkumc.org/equip/board-of-ordained-ministry

Orientation to Ministry Guide



Group Contact Information

	Name	Email	Phone	Appointment/District
Mentor				
Mentor				
Candidates	1.			
	2.			
	3.			
	4.			
	5.			
	6.			
	7.			
	8.			
	9.			
	10.			

Meeting Dates:

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Equip Team Contacts:

Rev. Jefferson M. Furtado, Ministry Associate—Equip
jefferson.furtado@twkumc.org

Lynn Patterson, Ministry Assistant—Equip
lynn.patterson@twkumc.org

Orientation to Ministry Process

We look forward to walking with you these next six months as you explore your call to ministry. In the paragraphs below, you will find a brief outline of the Orientation to Ministry process.

OTM Retreats and Small Group Meetings

The Orientation to Ministry Retreats are held on the second Saturday in February and the second Saturday in August. During our time together at these retreats, we will spend time in worship, hold information sessions about specific paths to vocational ministry, and facilitated Small Group Sessions.

Mandatory attendance is required for both OTM retreats, as well as all three of your small group sessions throughout the six-month process. If you are unable to fulfill the six-month commitment, please see the OTM self-defer or withdraw option.

When you registered for the beginning OTM Retreat, you should have already paid the registration fee of **\$50**. This fee covers the cost of lunch, materials, and your background investigation.

A few weeks before the closing of your OTM process, the Equip Team will send out a registration link for the Ending OTM Retreat. The registration fee for the Ending OTM Retreat is **\$25**, which covers the cost of lunch and materials. You will pay this fee when you register online to attend the event.

As you are aware, there are several financial responsibilities associated with the Candidacy Process. While these financial obligations are significantly subsidized by the Board of Ordained Ministry, as a candidate, you will be asked to cover a portion of the costs. If these fees pose a financial hardship, please reach out to your home church or district to inquire about available funds.

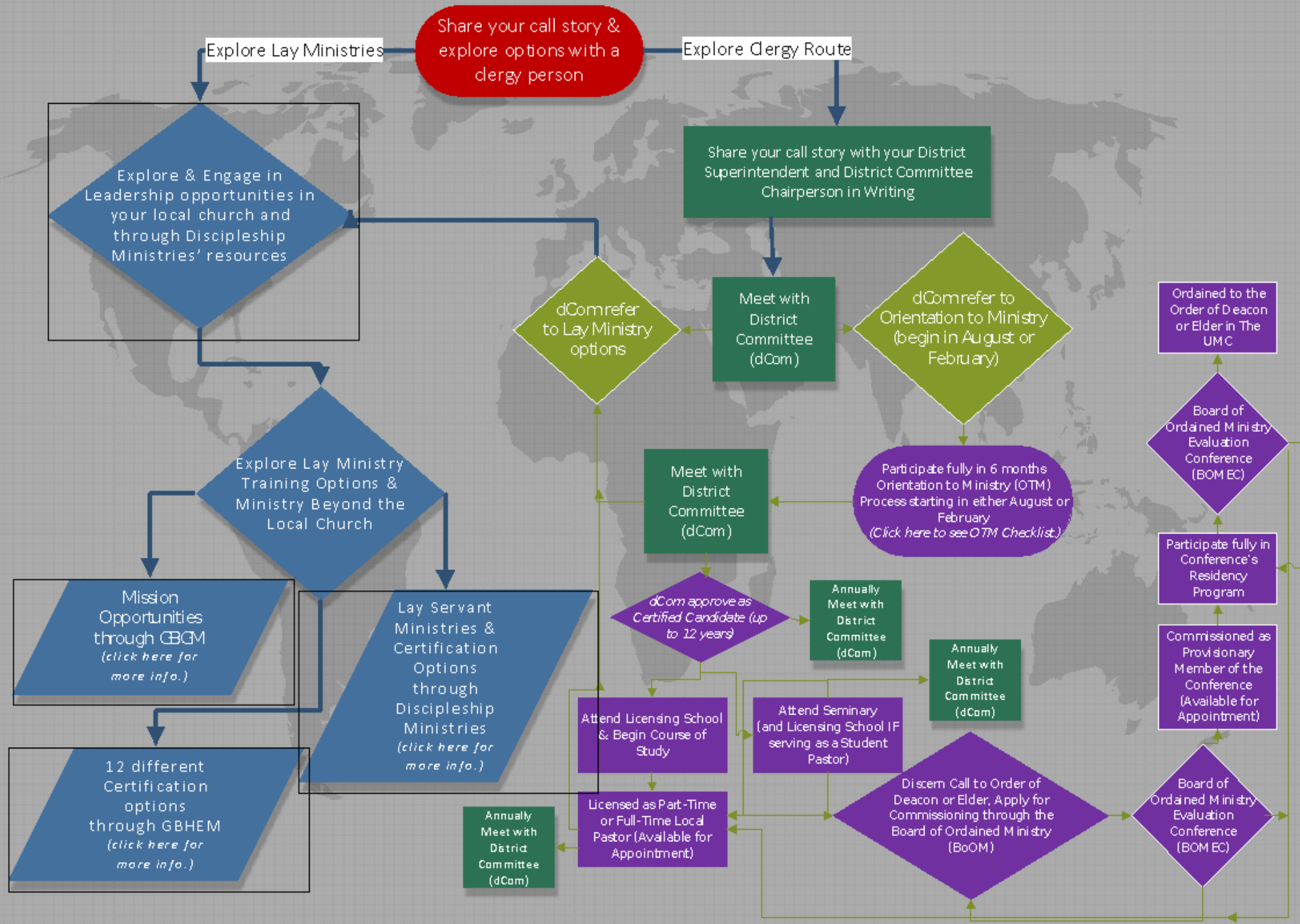
Orientation to Ministry Self-Deferral or Withdrawal:

If a candidate is unable to fully participate in the orientation process, they may choose to self-defer or withdraw from participation in OTM. The candidate must inform mentors, the dCOM chair, Equip Team, and the OTM Sub-Committee Chair in writing of their intent to self-defer or withdraw. Should the candidate desire to re-enter the process, they must communicate, in writing, their request to the dCOM Chair and the Equip Team.

Abbreviations & Acronyms:

UMC:	The United Methodist Church
OTM:	Orientation to Ministry
DS:	District Superintendent
DCOM:	District Committee on Ministry
BOM:	Board of Ordained Ministry
BOMECE:	Board of Ordained Ministry Evaluation Conference (for commissioning and ordination)
GBHEM:	General Board of Higher Education and Ministry
GCFA:	General Council on Finance & Administration
UMCARES:	GBHEM's online system for tracking ministry candidates in process.

Discerning God's Call in the Nashville Area of The United Methodist Church



OTM Mentor Responsibilities

Definition: An OTM Mentor is an Elder, Deacon, Associate Member, or Licensed Local Pastor (who has completed COS).

Task: An OTM Mentors will work in teams of two and must:

- a. attend a training session regarding the intent and content of the OTM process,
- b. meet a minimum of 5 times in a six-month period with an OTM Group of declared but not certified candidates who are in the process of discerning their call to ministry in The United Methodist Church, and
- c. remain in contact with the candidates through at least the next six months as an encourager in the candidacy process.

Participants: OTM participants are persons who have indicated an interest in formally considering a call to ministry, have met with a clergy person (Elder, Deacon, Associate Member, or Licensed Local Pastor), and have been approved by their District Committee (dCOM) to attend OTM.

Timeline: OTM Groups begin and end twice a year, in two cycles: 2nd Saturday of February to 2nd Saturday of August, or 2nd Saturday of August to 2nd Saturday of February. These two Saturdays are referred to as 'retreats,' where beginning and ending participants meet with their small groups, and join together for worship. Between the 'retreats,' OTM Groups will schedule a minimum of three meetings (2.5 – 3 hours per meeting). Attendance is required.

Locations: The retreats are held at Dickson First United Methodist Church, from 9 am – 3 pm. The location of the individual group meetings, between retreat days, is determined by the group itself.

Groupings: Persons are grouped according to available geographical information, regardless of District affiliation.

Resources: Mentors will be given specific outlines and resources.

The VocationCARE Practices

OTM Mentors, please use this as a model for interactions in your group meetings.

The four “CARE” practices to use with Orientation to Ministry mentoring groups*:

- C - Create** space to explore Christian vocation together;
- A - Ask** self-awakening questions together;
- R - Reflect** theologically on self and community; and
- E - Enact** the next faithful step.

Practices at a Glance:

1. Create Space

Set the stage: creating physical, inward and relational space

- a. Covenants of Presence
- b. Testimony and Holy Listening

2. Ask Self-Awakening Questions

- a. Frame and practice self-awakening questions
- b. Letting Go and Walking into the Future

3. Reflect Theologically on Self and Community

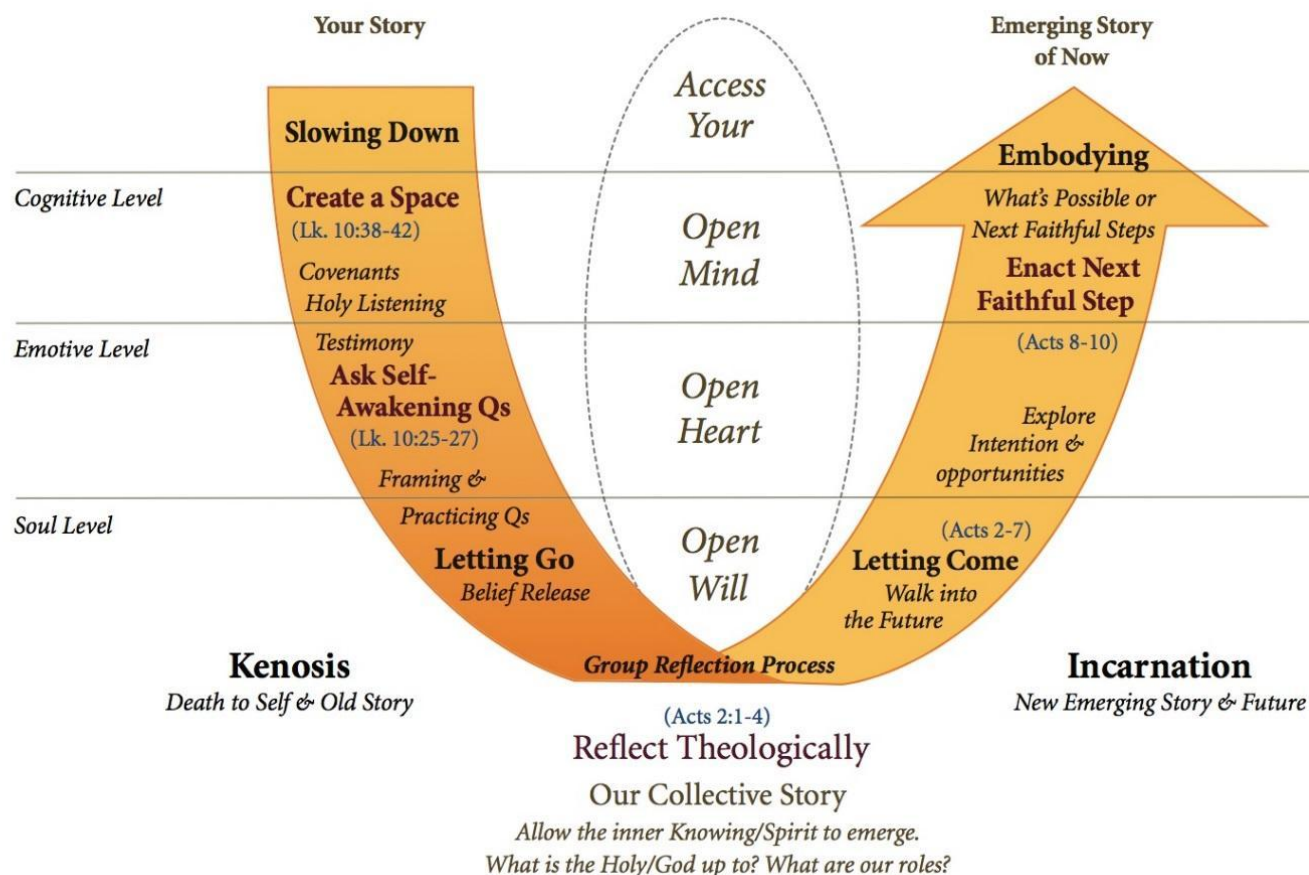
- a. Meeting content material
- b. Awaken your purpose through theological reflection

4. Enact the Next Faithful Step

Follow-up for this session and preparation for the next

** The CARE practices are modified from those presented in “The FTE Guide to Creating Pastoral Internships” published by The Fund for Theological Education, 825 Houston Mill Rd., Suite 100, Atlanta, GA 30329*

The Process



Adapted from Otto Scharmer's *Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges*.

Covenants of Presence (VocationCARE)

1. **Be fully present, extending and presuming welcome.** Set aside the usual distractions of things undone from yesterday, things to do tomorrow. Welcome others into this story space and presume you are welcome as well. (Nz: including phones)
2. **Listen Generously.** Listen intently to what is said; listen to the feelings beneath the words. As Quaker Douglas Steere writes, "To listen another's soul into life, into a condition of disclosure and discovery may be almost the greatest gift we can offer to another."
3. **Author Your Story.** All have a story. Some might say, "I don't have a story" or "a story worth telling." But you do and the world is in need of hearing it. You must claim authorship of your own story and learn to tell it to others so they might understand you, be inspired by you and discover what calls you to be who you are, to do what you do or to love what you love.
4. **We Come as equals.** We don't have the same gifts, limits, or experience, but no person's gifts, limits, or experiences are more or less important than another's.

5. **It is never “share or die.”** You will be invited to share stories in pairs and in a large group. The invitation is exactly that. You will determine the extent to which you want to participate.
6. **No fixing.** We are not here to set someone else straight, right a wrong, or provide therapy. We are here to witness God’s presence and movement in the sacred stories we share.
7. **Suspend judgment.** Set aside your judgments. By creating a space between judgments and reactions, we can listen to another person, and to ourselves, more fully.
8. **Turn to wonder.** If you find yourself becoming judgmental or cynical, try turning to wonder: “I wonder why she shared that story or made those choices?” Or “I wonder what my reaction teaches me?” or “I wonder what he’s feeling right now?”
9. **Hold these stories with care.** There are many people who will benefit from the stories they hear during our time together. Imagine hearing another as you would listen to Scripture—attentively, mindfully, and open to the Holy.
10. **Be mindful and respectful of time.** We all have something important to share and the discipline of time invites us to focus and make particular choices about what to share and how much to share so that we might hear the deep longings of another’s soul.
11. **Practice confidentiality care.** We create a safe space by respecting the nature and content of the stories heard. If anyone asks that a story shared be kept in confidence, the group will honor that request.
12. **Welcome discomfort and dislocation.** In the midst of new and uncomfortable places and the company of strangers, move against an instinct to construct a mental space of safety or to check out. In what causes unease, see another world to be discovered. Perhaps it already lives secretly within you.
13. **Love the questions themselves.** Let your questions linger. Release the compulsion to answer them or to have them answered. Trust the questions to guide you toward loving first what you do not altogether understand. As the poet Rainer Maria Rilke says, “Have patience with all that remains unsolved within your heart.”
14. **Believe that it is possible for us to emerge from our time together refreshed, surprised, and less burdened than when we came.** Expect that our work together can provide renewal, refreshment, and possibilities for what we can do together to create the future that is waiting to be born, and that seeds planted here will keep growing and flourish in the days ahead in service to God’s church and renewing work in the world.

Ask Self-Awakening Questions

The experience of self-awakening questions begins with hearing the evocative reading and listening to the story prompts. Our stories naturally lead to additional wonder questions, such as, “I wonder why he did that?” “I wonder what else helped her make her choice?” “I wonder what her parents/friends/siblings might think or say if they could hear her story told as she told it today?”

Self-awakening questions wake us up to our lives. As we share our stories, we consider where and how they interact with God’s great story. When we ask the storyteller self-awakening questions, we help them explore new, perhaps unexplored, dimensions of their story.

In other words, self-awakening questions help the storyteller reflect on feelings, images, passions, concerns, hopes, values and purpose — as well as themes and patterns. Our questions are not designed to push solutions to perceived problems.

Here are some guidelines to asking questions that help open up the storyteller to discerning the work of the Holy Spirit:

How to Frame Self-Awakening Questions

Adapted from Caryl Hurtig Casbon's "Framing Open Questions" and the Center for Courage and Renewal's "Guidelines to Asking Open and Honest Questions."

1. The best questions are simple, brief and to the point.
2. Think of questions that you could not anticipate the answers to—questions that invite the storyteller into deeper self-reflection on his or her faith, gifts and sense of call.
3. Avoid asking questions with right or wrong answers. Instead, ask "how," "what" or "why" questions. These questions focus inquiry, encourage reflection, touch a deeper meaning and generate curiosity.
4. Explore questions that invite images or metaphors because they can open things up in ways that more direct questions don't.
5. Ask questions that help the storyteller to reflect on clarifying feelings, vivid images, passions, concerns, hopes and values as well as patterns and themes in his or her story.
6. Ask questions that help the storyteller explore his or her inner realities as well as the outward facts — what he or she loves, cares about or values.
7. Ask questions aimed at helping the storyteller remember the risks or challenges, choices and outcomes in their story.
8. Pace questions to allow some silence between the last answer and the next question. Questions that emerge too quickly often feel a little intrusive, cutting off the deep reflection that can help the storyteller.
9. Trust your intuition in asking questions. If you are not sure about a particular question, sit with it for a while and wait for clarity.
10. As you listen deeply to the storyteller, allow your questions to emerge from a place where your head and heart are open to the presence of the Holy.

A Simple Exercise for Asking Self-Awakening Questions

Discuss the story told by the other person. First, sit with the story. See what question emerges for you to ask for the storyteller's benefit. After a few minutes of pondering, pose your question. The storyteller is not obligated to answer but is invited to sit with the question. He or she may respond by saying how or where the question takes them in deeper relationship to the story and its meaning. The storyteller may also choose to simply hear and hold the question without comment.

As with holy listening and testimony, the process of asking self-awakening questions is well-served by journaling. This allows each person to capture the questions and impressions that the process has stirred.

Holy Listening and Testimony: Gateways to Sharing Our Stories

Holy listening is a way to invite people to slow down and speak the truth of their lives out loud to one another. Testimony is the practice of sharing the stories that give meaning to our lives.

These two practices work together as we create our space for vocational discernment.

Holy Listening

Holy listening is very different from the common, everyday listening we do most of the time. In many of our daily conversations, we listen to what's being said only long enough to inject an opinion at the earliest possible moment. We listen with our "outer ear" while, with the rest of our minds, we prepare our own response. In holy listening, the focus is on the speaker. The listener practices a disciplined posture of care, hospitality, relaxed awareness and attentiveness. This practice creates space for calm abiding with one another, and for the shy soul that longs to be admitted.

As Quaker scholar Douglas Steere says in the *Covenants of Presence*, "To listen another's soul into a condition of disclosure and discovery may be almost the greatest service any human being performs for another." Consider reading this quote aloud when your group gathers.

Testimony

In some church settings, testimony means standing up to tell one's conversion experience or personal salvation story. For our purposes, testimony is simply telling the truths of our lives to one another. As we share our stories, we testify to our life's truths. This is how we can look together for the ways God is at work in our lives. We testify so that "the work of God in us may be made manifest" (John 9: 3).

Why Story?

Stories are the best containers for our dreams and our truths. We use stories in VocationCARE as the primary lens for viewing vocation.

Tips for First Hearing of Another's Story

- **Undivided Attention:** Make eye contact with the storyteller and give him or her your full attention as if there was nothing else more important than listening to his/her story.
- **Holy Listening:** Listen reverently as if you were in the presence of the Holy and witness the truth of this sacred story with no expectation of responding. Hold the space with your presence and receive the precious gift in this story.
- **Journaling:** Journal after listening and consider: What feelings emerged as you shared your stories? Where did you identify with one another's stories? How did this experience feel? What, if anything, might this experience suggest for you?

Tips for First Storytelling

- **Tell a story about a time when someone helped you hear the sound of the genuine in you.**
 - **Be Specific:** Talk about what actually happened. It helps to begin stories with "One time ..." or "I remember a time when ..."
 - **Be Descriptive:** Use images, feelings and places to provide texture, color and description to your story. Use the 5Ws: who, what, when, where and why.
 - **Be Self-Reflective:** Who noticed me or saw the genuine in me? How did I know? What did he or she say? Or what did I realize? What did I feel? How did it feel to reckon with my genuine self and have it named?

Tips for Second Hearing of Another's Story

- **Undivided Attention:** Make eye contact with the storyteller and give him or her your full attention as if there was nothing else more important than listening to his/her story.
- **Holy Listening:** Listen reverently as if you were in the presence of the Holy and witness the truth of this sacred story. Hold the space with your presence and receive it as a precious gift. Imagine you are listening with God's ears.

- **Journaling:** Journal after listening and consider: What images, keywords, or phrases stand out as meaningful to you? Is there a question you might ask your partner that would move the conversation deeper into “the heart of the matter”? What did you enjoy or find yourself wondering about?

Tips for Second Storytelling

Tell a story about a time when you created something from hearing the sound of the genuine.

- **Be Specific:** Talk about what actually happened. It helps to begin stories with “One time ...” or “I remember a time when ...”.
- **Be Descriptive:** Use words, images, feelings, and places to provide texture and color to your story description. Cover the 5Ws: Who, what when, where, and why.
- **Be Self-Reflective:** Where was I? What happened? What did I create? (Such as a program, relationship, artistic expression, or an interpretation of an experience) What was I feeling at the time? What mattered most to me at the time?

Notes: The concept of *the genuine* may be too abstract for the first time you try this practice. If so, here are other prompts to consider:

- *Tell a story of a time when someone noticed you and your gifts, and you knew it.*
- *Tell a story about why you do what you do, love what you love, care about what you care about.*
- *Tell a story about a time when something you cherished was challenged and you had to make a choice.*

We include steps for two rounds of storytelling. This hones the practice and takes VocationCARE participants to a deeper place in their souls. It prepares them for the other practices that follow. The steps are similar in each round; only the prompts for stories change.

Session 1 - "Call"

Date: August or February

Location: First United Methodist Church, Dickson, TN

Purpose: Participants will be introduced and hear each other's introductory stories, feel safe sharing in the group, review the OTM process and expectations for the next six months.

Schedule:

8:30 a.m. Registration and proceed to Group's room

9:00 a.m. Create Space & Light a Candle

- a. Brief Participant Introductions and exchange Contact Information
- b. Introduce Covenant of Presence & VocationCARE Practices
- c. Read Matthew 8:18-22.
Meditate and reflect: What did you hear from the Holy Spirit through these verses?
Traditional Wesleyan Question: *How is it with your soul?*

9:55 a.m. Move to the Sanctuary for Worship, Overview of OTM, Call Stories, etc.

11:45 a.m. Take lunch to your room

a. **Self-Awakening Questions:**

1. What hopes do you have for the OTM experience?
2. Be intentional to ask questions that challenge candidates to reflect personally (What? Who? How? When? Why?)

b. **Reflect Theologically:** Read and discuss pages 11-13 in *Answering the Call*.

1. What does it mean to you that calling begins at baptism?
2. Do you think all people are called? What does that mean to you?
3. Would you say that your calling came suddenly or gradually? How has it changed over time?
4. Read Wesleyan dimensions of calling: what do faith, grace, gifts, and fruit have to do with calling?
5. Share your call. How has your call been confirmed in community?
6. What is distinctive about the UMC? Why are you UM?

1:00 p.m. Plenary

1:45 p.m. Return to Group's Room

- a. Review the Road Map and Checklist
- b. Mentors Introduce River of Life & share theirs
- c. Confirm meeting dates, times, locations
- d. Review Assignment for next session

By 3:00 p.m. Benediction and Go in Peace!

Assignment in preparation for Session 2:

1. Read *Answering the Call*, pp. 15-33
2. Read *The Book of Discipline* ¶102—105
3. Do the "River of Life Exercise" from handout.
4. Read Wesley's Sermon #16, "Means of Grace".

OTM Required Reading

The following is a list of resources that you will read during OTM. You may buy them for your collection, or you may borrow them from a clergy person, church library, etc.

- A. *Answering the Call* (Provided at OTM Session 1)
- B. *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (2016 edition)
- C. *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster
- D. *By Water and the Spirit* by Gayle Carlton Felton
- E. *This Holy Mystery* by Gayle Carlton Felton
- F. John Wesley's Sermons:
 - #5 "Justification by Faith"
 - #11 "The Witness of the Spirit"
 - #16 "The Means of Grace"
 - #43 "The Scriptural Way of Salvation"
 - #40 "Christian Perfection"

A few places where you can find John Wesley's sermons:

- A. Kinghorn, Kenneth C., John Wesley on Christian Beliefs, Volumes 1-3, The Standard Sermons in Modern English. Nashville: Abingdon, 2002.
- B. <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/>
- C. Youtube

DEFINITIONS TO ASSIST WITH READING JOHN WESLEY'S SERMONS

Aldersgate (Street) Experience: John Wesley's first personal experience of God's forgiveness of his sins. This took place on May 24, 1738.

Analogy of Faith: "Understanding the Word of God" as a whole rather than through individual or obscure passages" (Manskar 2004, p.73). "The connection and harmony there is between those grand, fundamental doctrines, Original Sin, Justification by Faith, the New Birth, inward and outward holiness" (Wesley: Preface to *Explanatory Notes on the Old Testament*, 1765, p. ix).

Assurance Confirmation: "A sure confidence in God, that through the merits of Christ, [his or her] sins are forgiven" (Wesley: *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 1894, p.34).

Atonement: "The saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross" (Gonzalez: *Essential Theological Terms*, 2005, p.20)

Awakening: Through God's prevenient grace, one is made aware of one's sinful condition and the need for forgiveness.

Christian Perfection: Wesley believed that sanctification is a process of growth in holiness, resulting in loving both God and neighbor as fully as possible.

Conversion: As we turn away from sin, the Holy Spirit transforms us. This is also often referred to as repentance, justification, and the experience of the new birth.

Convicting or Convincing Grace: The form of God's grace that makes personal conviction of sin and repentance possible. This is also called justifying grace.

Conviction: Confirmation by God through the Holy Spirit that personal forgiveness of sins is necessary and possible, through cooperation with the Holy Spirit.

Doctrine: The teaching and views of the church.

Ecumenical: The effort to bring all Christians together for witness and mission; literally means, “universal.”

Enthusiasts: A derogatory term used to describe John and Charles Wesley and the early Methodists.

Entire Sanctification: John Wesley believed that it was possible for Christians to achieve complete holiness before their death.

Eschatology: The doctrine of assurance that at in the end, God will redeem the world.

Faith: “A divine evidence and conviction of God, and of the things of God” (Wesley: *Original Sin*, §111.3).

Fear of God: To be in awe and wonder of God.

Forgiveness: God’s free gift of mercy and pardon through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Glorification: Liberation from sin, usually occurring at death.

Gospel: The Good News of Jesus Christ.

Grace: The unearned love of God, which works in and through a person’s life, to bring about transformation and redemption.

Grand Depositum: A term used by John Wesley to refer to the contribution of Methodism to Christianity.

Heathen: Non-Christian.

Holiness: The total life transformation that occurs through one’s relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Holy Temper: Habits and attitudes by which we live out the teachings of Jesus Christ, such as the fruit of the Spirit.

Hope: “A gift of God [that] anticipates the fulfillment of God’s promises to and purposes for the world” (Migliore: *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 2004, p. 412).

Infirmities: “All inward our outward imperfections which are not of a moral nature” (Wesley: *Christian Perfection*, §1.7).

Justification: God’s gracious response of granting forgiveness of sins and pardon for one who seeks it.

Justifying Grace: The active grace of God manifested toward us in Jesus Christ, resulting in the forgiveness of sins due to Christ’s atoning death for us, which is the foundation for new life.

Kingdom of God: “The reign of God as a ‘new and different order’ rather than a place, which has an eschatological dimension (at hand, about to break in, already come) and a radical upheaval of the present order (e.g., the first shall be last)” (Gonzalez: *Essential Theological Terms*, 2005, p.92).

Latitudinarianism: Literally, to permit wide variation. A movement within the Church of England to include a variation of thought and practice.

Speculative Latitudinarianism: Indifference regarding essential doctrines

Practical Latitudinarianism: Indifference regarding the importance of practicing public worship.

Liberty: Our ability as humans to act, or not act, upon our desires.

Love: Caring for the well-being of another, as in the self-giving love of God for Israel or for the world.

Means of Grace: Outward and visible ways (signs, words, or actions) through which God works to offer prevenient, justifying, or sanctifying grace.

Ministry: The discipleship of every baptized Christian acting in love for others.

Moravians: Pietist Christians from the German Lutheran tradition who followed the teachings of Wesley’s contemporaries, Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf and August Spangenberg.

New Birth: The transformation of a person’s soul by the Holy Spirit through which God restores a person’s relationship with God and others. This is also the beginning of the renewal of the image of God in our lives; this often occurs at the time of justification, and is the beginning of sanctification.

New Creation: The coming of the new heaven and new earth as described in Revelation 21, through which the Kingdom of God is made real throughout creation, and the image of God is fully restored.

One Thing Needful: A life-long journey of prevenient grace, justification and the new birth, and Christian perfection; also called the Way of Salvation.

Oracles of God: Holy Scripture

Ordinances of God: Means of grace, or acts of discipleship, that draw us closer to Christ.

Original Sin: A corrupted relationship with God that is marked by human insecurity, anxiety, false pride, and irresponsibility.

Perfection in Love: Faith that allows us to love God and neighbor as fully as possible.

Pluralist: The belief that all religious teachings are a true revelation of God and that no religion has final and definitive truth.

Predestination: The teaching that God has already determined who will receive eternal life and who will not.

Prevenient or Preventing Grace: The grace that comes before our justification; grace that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, awakens us to our sinful condition and brings us to repentance.

Providence: The idea that God cares for our well-being, and that God is guiding the world.

Quietism: The belief that a person should not practice the means of grace without assurance of faith; a state of passivity toward God.

Real Christians: “earnestly love God with their heart, soul, mind, and strength,” expressed in “an inner transformation of assurance and the new birth; and a love for their neighbors as themselves. Real Christians do all in their power to grow in that love” (Manskar 2004, p.50).

Redemption: “The action whereby God in Christ overcomes sin” (Gonzalez: *Essential Theological Terms*, 2005, p. 161).

Repentance: Turning away from sin and back toward God in earnest desire to renew one’s relationship with God.

Righteousness: “The life of God in the soul” (Wesley: *Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount I*, §I.11)
Righteousness....is the image of God, the mind which was in Christ Jesus. It is every holy and heavenly and the love of all men for his sake” (Wesley: *Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount II*, §II.2.)

Sacrament: “An outward sign of inward grace, and a means whereby we receive the same” (Wesley: *The Means of Grace*, §11.1).

Salvation: To be reconciled with God through Jesus Christ; delivered from the power of sin for a fulfilled life with God.

Sanctification: The process of growing closer to the will of God by practicing the means of grace.

Sanctifying Grace: John Wesley articulated grace as prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying. The power of the Holy Spirit leading and empowering one to grow in holiness is Sanctifying Grace.

Sin (Inward): To willfully choose to disobey God and God’s commands.

Soteriology: The doctrine of God’s saving grace through Jesus Christ and believers’ participation in new life by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Theology: faith seeking understanding of God and all things related to God.

Way of Salvation: Recognizing God’s grace and God’s desires for humanity to be restored in God’s image.

Witness of the Spirit: “The assurance of salvation given to Christians when they accept the grade of God in Jesus Christ and trust in him and only him as Savior and Lord” (Manskar 2004, p.60).

Works Righteousness: The believe that is by our own words and actions that we can be accepted by God rather than fully relying on God’s grace.

MODERN ENGLISH DESCRIPTION OF TERMS USED BY JOHN & CHARLES WESLEY

<u>Term Used</u>	<u>Meaning in Modern English</u>
Barely	merely; only
Bowels	center or heart of emotion
Charity	giving of one's self to express love
Conversation	frequently means manner of life
Disinterested	impartial
Divers	many
End	purpose, goal, What is the purpose for what we're doing?
Event	result/outcome
Evidently	made clear
Experimental	one's experience of sonship, filial love
Gay (world)	sophisticated; also that part of the world given to social pleasures (from <i>Webster's Third New International Dictionary</i>).
In order to	"in order to do/have", such as "in order have faith"
Intercourse	relationship or interaction
Meet	fit, proper
Open (a text)	explain the meaning of (the text)
Peculiar	particular, distinct
Prevent	precede, such as "preventing grace"
Prevenient	preceding, coming before
Primitive	early, original
Prove	come to know by experience
Several	different, various
Singular	distinct; not conforming to the crowd
Styled	called, known as
Temper	attitude, temperament, disposition
To own	to acknowledge
Vulgar	popular, common
Want	need or lack rather than desire

Source: Expanded from a list originally compiled by Dr. Howard A. Snyder of Asbury Theological Seminary for The Wesley Center for Applied Theology, Northwest Nazarene University.

River of Life: A Life Review Activity ¹

Begin with a blank sheet of paper. Before you put anything on the paper, think briefly about the course of your whole life. If you were able to compare your life with a river, what would the river look like?

1. When and where are the smooth, flowing waters – those times when events and relationships seem generally positive or there is a sense of ease about your life?
2. When does the river take a sudden turn (and what caused the turn), or change from smooth waters to rough, tumbling rapids or to an excited rush of water?
3. Are there rocks or boulders falling into your river – unexpectedly landing there, changing its direction forever?
4. Are there points at which your river flows powerfully and purposefully or seems to slow to a trickle?

Instructions

- A. Draw your river of life with its bends and turns, its smooth waters and rough spots, its strength/vitality, and its direction.
 1. Write in your approximate age, and/or dates, along the flow of your river.
 2. Identify on your drawing the various key “marker events” in your life – the boulders in the river, or places where the river changes course – that shape your story.
 3. If you were able to divide your life journey into sections, where would the section divisions occur? Give names to each of the sections of your life river.
- B. Now think about the various people who have accompanied you along this river’s journey.
 1. What relationships have been the most significant at different points in your life?
 2. Who has most shaped you?
 3. Have there been significant losses of relationship along the way?
 4. What groups or communities of people were most important?
 5. Record these key relationships and losses in the appropriate places on your river of life.
 6. *If you wish, you might also want to jot down some of the thoughts and feelings that go along with these relationships.*
- C. As you look over the diagram of your life river, think about the different ways you have experienced and understood God across your life.
 1. Who or what was God to you at the different times depicted in your diagram?
 2. What caused you to feel closer to, or more distant from, God at these different times?
 3. What places or situations were encounters with the Sacred for you?
 4. Have you faced situations or experiences devoid of any sense of God/the Sacred?
 5. *Decide on a way to note these matters, with words and/or symbols, and place them into your river.*
- D. In relation to your life’s journey,
 1. Are there times of significant pain or suffering – yours or others’ – that shape the flow of your life river?
 2. What has happened along the journey of your life that you associate with evil?
 3. *Add these elements to your river.*

¹ Taken from Joyce Ann Mercer, *Girl Talk, God Talk: Why Faith Matters to Teenage Girls – and Their Parents* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 135-136. Used with permission of the author.

- E. Rivers do not exist in isolation but are always part of a larger ecology. So, too, is human life situated in a larger world.
 - 1. What was going on in the world – local, regional, and world events – that shaped the flow of your river?
 - 2. *Using words and/or symbols, place these events in the appropriate locations on your river.*
- F. As you reflect on your river of life,
 - 1. What values, commitments, causes, or principles were most important to you at a given point in your life?
 - 2. Toward what goals, if any, were your primary energies directed – or, metaphorically speaking, what purposes and ends helped to shape the flow of life waters at a given time in your experience?
 - 3. *Note these on your river.*

Taking a Step Back

As you finish depicting your river of life, take a look over the whole diagram.

- 1. Do its symbols and words seem to portray how you think and feel about the whole of your life?
- 2. Is there some important element left out?
- 3. *Make adjustments as needed.*

Remember that no drawing can possibly capture all that shapes a person's journey. This is intended to be a beginning point for reflection and/or conversation, not a comprehensive depiction of your life!

Session 2 - "Methodism Basics"

Date: _____

Location: _____

Purpose: Build trust in the group and in the 'mutual mentoring' process. Share the spiritual journey that has led each of us to this point. Discover and discuss the theological basics of Methodism.

Assignment in preparation for this session:

1. Read *Answering the Call*: pp 15-33
2. Read *The Book of Discipline* ¶102-105
3. Do the "River of Life Exercise" from handout
4. Read Wesley's Sermon #16, "Means of Grace."

Create Space – (usually 30 to 40 min, but this session is 85 min because of the "River of Life Exercise")

- a. Light Centering Candle and pray. (5 min)
- b. **Covenants of Presence** – go around group reading the covenant statements. Ask if there are any that stand out for anyone today. Are there additions that should be made to the statements? Covenant together. (10 min)
- c. "How is it with your soul?" Each person say what they wish (no more than 6 minutes each) about their "River of Life", then place it in the center of the group to represent their presence. (about 45 minutes)
- d. **Mentor(s) choose scripture:** Read _____, meditate, reflect, write. Silently reflect on what you heard from the Holy Spirit through these verses? (about 10 minutes)
- e. **Testimony and Holy Listening** – In pairs, one listens while the other looks at the River of Life and tells about a time when your family experiences influenced how you plan to serve in ministry. Then swap roles. (about 15 minutes max)

Form and ask self-awakening questions. – (15 min)

Use guidelines for self-awakening questions. (15 minutes max)

Reflect Theologically – (50 to 70 min)

- a. Discuss highlights from *Answering the Call* pages 15-33.
- b. From assigned reading, review four points about the Theological Task on page 25.
- c. Review Wesley's General Rules for Class Meetings on page 26.
- d. Review the 3 points of Mission & Connectionalism on page 27.
- e. Discuss importance of the Social Principles and Quadrilateral on page 28.
- f. Reflect on the 6 questions on page 30.
- g. Discuss Wesley's Sermon assignment. Share again the handout about reading Wesley sermons.

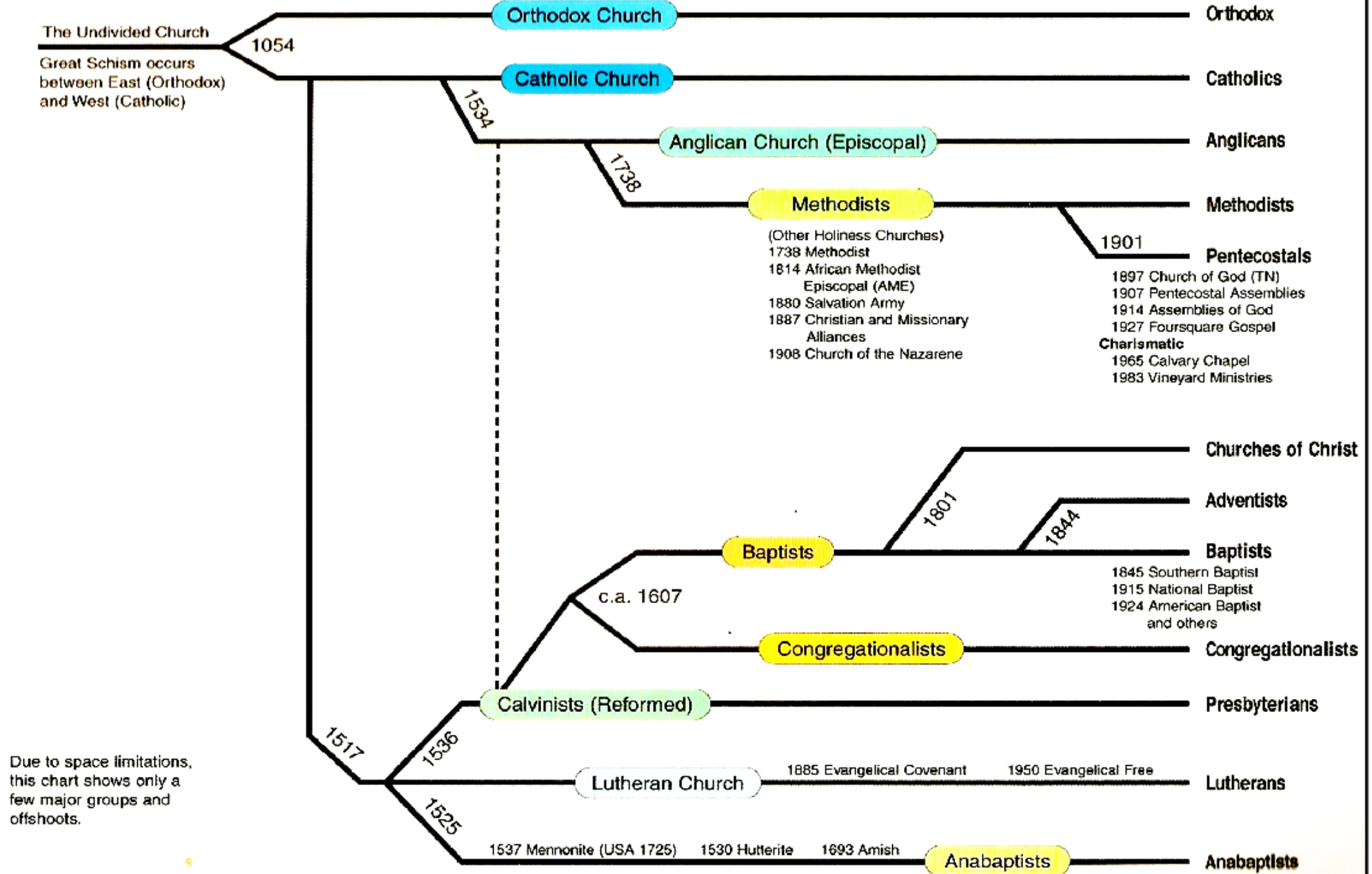
Enact the Next Faithful Step – (10 min)

What next steps has this week's workbook, readings and discussion suggested to you?

Assignment in preparation for Session 3:

1. Read *Answering the Call* Chapter 4 on Spiritual Disciplines.
2. Read: Richard Foster's book, *Celebration of Discipline*.
3. Read *The Book of Discipline* ¶ 120-143 (Part IV: The Ministry of all Christians).
4. Read Wesley Sermon #43, "The Scriptural Way of Salvation".

Family Tree of Denominations



Session 3 - "Spiritual Disciplines"

Date: _____

Location: _____

Purpose: Explore the Spiritual Disciplines, review The Ministry of all Christians as found in *The Book of Discipline*, and discuss salvation.

Assignment in preparation for this session:

1. Read *Answering the Call* chapters 3 and 4.
2. Read Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline*.
3. Read *The Book of Discipline* ¶ 102 - ¶ 143 Part IV: The Ministry of all Christians.
4. Read Wesley Sermon #43, "The Scriptural Way of Salvation".

Schedule

Create Space

- a. Light Centering Candle and pray. (5 min)
- b. **Covenants of Presence** – Go around the group reading the covenant statements. Ask if there are any that stand out for anyone today. Does anyone want to add anything? Covenant together by asking the Traditional Wesleyan Question: *How is it with your soul?* (10 min)
- c. Read Romans 12:1-8. Meditate and Reflect. What did you hear from the Holy Spirit through these verses?

Reflect Theologically:

- a. Name and discuss the Spiritual Disciplines outlined in *Celebration of Discipline*. Which spiritual disciplines have you practiced? Which spiritual discipline are you curious about trying? What interferes with your intention to practice spiritual disciplines?
- b. Explore *The Three Simple Rules*: Do no harm, Do good, Stay in love with God. With which Rule do you excel? And, with which Rule do you struggle? Introduced the Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience. OTM Mentor(s) share an example of how you have applied the Wesleyan Quadrilateral in a ministry setting.
- c. Share highlights from Wesley's Sermon #43 "The Scriptural Way of Salvation". What surprised you? What nuggets do you connect with your call? Describe "salvation", "going on to perfection", and "mutual accountability".
- d. Review "7 Characteristics of Methodism" and compare with Calvinism and Arminianism with the attached handout.

**Wesley's understanding of Grace and living out/conscious access = spiritual disciplines. God saves and our part is to consciously access responsible grace.*

HIGHLIGHTS from WESLEY'S #43 The Scriptural Way of Salvation

- *1. What is salvation? "It is not the soul's going to paradise...It is not a blessing which lies on the other side of death...It is not something at a distance: it is a present thing; a blessing which, thru the free mercy of God, ye are now in possession of... so that the salvation which is here spoken of might be extended to the entire work of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul, till it is consummated in glory."
- 2,3. "Salvation... consists of two general parts, justification (another word for pardon) and sanctification.... The immediate effects of justification are the peace of God, a 'peace that passeth all understanding,' and a 'rejoicing in hope of the glory of God' 'with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' "
4. "At the same time that we are justified, yea, in that very moment, sanctification begins. In that instant, we are born again, born from above, born of the Spirit; ... inwardly renewed by the power of God."

Enact the Next Faithful Step – (10 min)

What next steps have this week's readings and discussion suggested to you?

Assignment in Preparation for Session 4:

1. Read *Answering the Call*, Chapters 5 and 6
2. Read *By Water and The Spirit* (WS), and *This Holy Mystery* (HM)
3. Read *The Book of Discipline* paragraphs 301-335

Seven Characteristics of Methodism

From Christianity's Family Tree by Adam Hamilton

Wesley and Subsequent Generations of Methodists...

1. Were *ecumenical* and willing to work with and learn from Christians of other denominations.
2. Believed in bringing their *intellect* to their faith.
3. Valued *passion* and *experience*.
4. Placed major emphasis on a *personal faith*, drawing from the Pietist movement.
5. Stood against Calvin's teaching on predestination.
6. Brought together the high-church tradition of the Anglicans with the low-church simplicity of worship that characterized Puritan churches.
7. Placed major emphasis on two seemingly contradictory ideas: *grace* and *holiness*.

TWO PERSPECTIVES

Calvinism	5 points	Arminianism
1. Humans are so sinful they can't initiate a return to God by themselves		1. God elected those God knew would respond, believe, and persevere
2. God chooses who will be saved		2. Christ provided redemption for all, effective only in believers
3. Christ died specifically to save the chosen themselves		3. The Holy Spirit brings new birth; people can't save
4. God draws to Christ those whom God chooses		4. Prevenient grace: the Holy Spirit enables the believer to respond and cooperate
5. Those chosen will never fall away		5. "Conditional perseverance" – Capable of turning from grace and losing salvation

Additional information available at <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/do-united-methodists-believe-once-saved-always-saved>

Session 4 - "Sacraments & Calling"

Date: _____

Location: _____

Purpose: Participants will explore Wesley's understanding of Grace and the United Methodist understanding of the Sacraments. They will also begin to explore their own particular calls to ministry.

Assignments for Session 4:

1. Read *Answering the Call*, Chapters 5 & 6
2. Read *By Water and The Spirit* (WS), and *This Holy Mystery* (HM)
3. Read *The Book of Discipline* paragraphs 301-335

Schedule:

Create Space

- a. Light Centering Candle and pray. (5 min)
- b. **Covenants of Presence** – Go around the group reading the covenant statements. Ask if there are any that stand out for anyone today. Does anyone want to add something? Covenant together by asking the Traditional Wesleyan Question: *How is it with your soul?* (10 min)
- c. Read Matthew 3:13-17. Meditate and Reflect.
 1. What did you hear from the Holy Spirit through these verses?
 2. Remember your own baptism (or the story of your own baptism, if you don't remember). Where does your baptism fall in your *River of Life*? Where did it happen? Who was there? What difference has your baptism made in your own life? If you could capture the experience of your baptism in one word, what would it be? Share that word with the group.

Reflect Theologically: The Sacraments

- a. Discuss *By Water and the Spirit* (WS), and *This Holy Mystery* (HM) (additional resources from *Discipleship Ministries*).
- b. Why don't United Methodists practice "re-baptism"? (See "One Baptism," WS Session 4)
- c. What does it mean to be initiated and incorporated into the Body of Christ? (See "Incorporation Into the Body of Christ," WS Session 3)
- d. What does it mean to live out the ministry to which we are called through baptism? (See "Called to Ministry," WS Session 6)
- e. What does it mean that "Holy Communion always offers grace"? (See "The Presence of Christ," HM Session 3)
- a. How is Holy Communion practiced (in words, gestures, and postures) in your home congregation? What does it communicate to those in the congregation? What might it communicate to visitors?
- b. What is the relationship between Holy Communion and Social Holiness? (See "Holy Communion and Ethical Christian Discipleship," HM Session 7)

Reflect Theologically: Calling

- a. Discuss Chapters 5 and 6 in *Answering the Call* and paragraphs 301-335 in *The Book of Discipline*.
- b. Discuss the questions on pp. 66, 67, 85, 86 of *Answering the Call*.
- c. Share information about Lay Ministry options from the flowchart and the Certification handout.

Assignment in Preparation for Session 5:

1. Read *Answering the Call*, Chapters 7, 8 and 9
2. Read *The Book of Discipline*, ¶ 336 & ¶ 340
3. Read Wesley's Sermons: #5 - "Justification by Faith", #11- "The Witness of the Spirit", #40 - "Christian Perfection."

Ministerial Leadership Chart

	Supply Pastor	Local Pastor	Provisional Deacon/Elder	Deacon	Elder
Definition	Lay Person or Retired Clergy person	Clergy while under appointment	Person commissioned as Provisional Clergy for up to 12 years.	Full Connection Clergy, Ordained to Word, Service, Compassion & Justice.	Full Connection Clergy ordained to Word, Service, Sacrament & Order.
Primary Ministry	Preaching	Preaching & Pastoral Care *Some in Extension Ministry	Dependent upon clergy track and Bishop's appointment.	Emphasis upon connecting the Church & the World, some appointed to specialized ministries such as nonprofit organization, youth, chaplaincy, music, nursing, social work, education, etc.	Preaching, Pastoral Care, and Administration of the Local Church. Ordering the church as District Superintendent or Bishop. If serving outside of a local church, Elders are in Extension Ministry.
Sacramental Authority	None for Lay Person	Only in appointed ministerial setting	Provisional Elders may preside for Communion & Baptism in appointment setting.	With the Bishop's written approval.	Yes
Deployment	Appointed one year at a time, Appointment Not guaranteed	Appointed one year at a time and no guarantee of reappointment. Some may be asked to Itinerate. Can be Part-time or Full-Time.	Appointed 1 yr at a time, Provisional Elders are guaranteed an appointment & itinerate. Provisional Deacons seek employment and ask Bishop to appoint to ministry setting. If ministry setting is outside of the local church, the Provisionary Deacon has a Secondary Appointment to a Charge (local church or cluster of local churches). Itinerate (elder)	Appointed one year at a time, No Guaranteed Appointment, No Itineracy.	Appointed one year at a time, Guaranteed Appointment, and Itineracy.
Accountability	District Superintendent	Bishop & Cabinet District Superintendent District Committee on Ministry (dCOM)	Bishop & Cabinet District Superintendent Board of Ordained Ministry	Bishop & Cabinet District Superintendent Board of Ordained Ministry Supervisor in Primary Appointment	Bishop & Cabinet District Superintendent Board of Ordained Ministry
Training	None for Lay Person in first year of appointment	One Week of Licensing School, 20 classes through Course of Study (COS), Full-time must complete COS in 8 years, Part-time must complete COS in 12 years.	Elder Track - Master of Divinity required Deacon Track - Masters degree & required theological classes	Masters degree (MDiv or other) and required theological courses.	Master of Divinity
Liturgical Stoles	May wear Alb or Robe, but NO stole(s).	May wear Alb or Robe, but NO stole(s).	May wear Alb or Robe, but NO stole(s).	Diagonal Stole from Left Shoulder to Right Hip, representing the towel of the servant.	Yoke-style stole representing the "yoke of Christ".
Benefits	Salary	Salary & Pension Full-time receive health insurance if appointed to Local Church or Conference position.	Salary, pension, & health insurance if appointed to a local church or conference position.	Salary, pension, & health insurance if appointed to a local church or conference position.	Salary, pension, & health insurance if appointed to a local church or conference position.

Certification in Specialized Ministries

CERTIFICATION

What is Certification?

Many clergy and laypeople are employed to lead the church in specialized areas like Christian education, youth ministry, spiritual formation, ministry with people with disabilities, or other. Certification is The United Methodist Church's recognition that an individual has been called, made a commitment to serve, and has fulfilled the required standards for academic training, experience, and continuing study to serve with excellence in an area of specialized ministry.

Why Certification?

Those who've earned United Methodist specialized ministry certification demonstrate that they are committed to excellence and to continuing to improve their skills and knowledge. They are explicitly prepared to lead others in United Methodist churches and contexts. Deacons who lead in a specialized ministry area can earn specialization as part of their required education.

Professional certification entails training in Bible, theology, United Methodist studies, and skill development; professional experience; a community of support; and accountability to the annual conference. Follow the links on the left to learn the specific requirements and procedures on how to earn professional, undergraduate, or paraprofessional certification.

Three Tracks for Certification in The United Methodist Church

- Professional (for lay, licensed, or ordained leaders who have an undergraduate degree and take graduate level courses)
- Undergraduate (for undergraduate students)
- Paraprofessional (for those who do not have a college degree and are working or volunteering in a specialized ministry)

Each track is available in twelve areas of specialized ministry: camp/retreat ministry; children's ministry, Christian education, collegiate ministry, evangelism, ministry with the poor, ministry with people with disabilities, music ministry, ministry with older adults, spiritual formation, urban ministry, and youth ministry.

Certification Requirements

1. Recognized Christian character, personal competence, integrity, and commitment to the church's total ministry and mission
2. Ability to relate to people, to work with volunteers and staff, to function in the role with emotional maturity and sound judgment
3. Demonstrated leadership, ability to integrate theory and practice, an understanding of and commitment to the church's ministry
4. A member of The United Methodist Church for at least one year before enrolling in the certification process (affiliate or full member)
5. Knowledge of The United Methodist Church's structure, polity, resources, program, and mission
6. Completion of education and work experience required by the specific certification program
7. Evaluation by the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry
8. Participation in a professional organization related to the area of specialization

Links for Lay Ministry Options noted on Ministry Options file/Discerning God's Call in the TNUMC:

- Mission Opportunities through GBGM: <http://www.umcmmission.org/Get-Involved>
- Lay Servant Ministries & Certification Options through Discipleship Ministries <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/ministry-of-the-laity>
- 12 different Certification options through GBHEM <https://www.gbhem.org/education/certification>

Session 5 - "Personal Life & Next Steps"

Date: August or February

Location: First United Methodist Church, Dickson, TN

Purpose: Participants and mentors will gather for their last group meeting at the end of the six-month process. They will review Chapters 7, 8, and 9 of *Answering the Call*, the "Historic Questions", the different responsibilities for Licensed/Commissioned/Ordained Clergy, and Wesley's sermons.

Assignment in Preparation for Session 5:

1. Read *Answering the Call* Chapters 7, 8 and 9
2. Read *The Book of Discipline* ¶ 336 & ¶ 340
3. Read Wesley's Sermons: #5 "Justification by Faith", #11 "The Witness of the Spirit", #40 "Christian Perfection"

Schedule:

Registration and proceed to Group's room

Create Space & Light a Candle

- a. **Covenants of Presence** – go around group reading the covenant statements. Ask if there are any that stand out for anyone today. Does anyone want to add? Covenant together by asking the Traditional Wesleyan Question: *How is it with your soul?* (10 min)
- b. Mentor(s) choose scripture: Read _____, meditate, reflect, What did you hear from the Holy Spirit through these verses?

Move to Sanctuary for Worship and a session for those nearing completion of OTM

Take lunch to your room

- a. Discuss the last question on page 103 of *Answering the Call*.
- b. Review your "Planning for Ministry Financial Worksheet" p. 124-127. "What will be the biggest financial challenge for you as you move forward?" p. 119 of *Answering the Call*.
- c. As a group, review the "Historic Questions" found in Paragraph 336 of The Book of Discipline.

Plenary

Return to Group's Room

- a. What questions do you have about the OTM checklist and items you need to complete Before meeting with the District Committee (dCom)?
- b. Are there any questions about the responsibilities and duties of clergy as found in paragraph 340 of The Book of Discipline?
- c. How has the reading of Wesley's sermons informed your (1) beliefs and (2) discernment process?
- d. Take a moment of silence to read through "Gaining Clarity" on p. 130 of *Answering the Call*. Share with one another where you feel called in this process "no", "maybe" or "yes".
- e. Take time to pray for one another, for where you are now and where the Spirit will lead.
- f. Please be sure to complete the evaluation for OTM.

Benediction & Go in Peace!