

A Basic Guide to the Candidacy Process

Based on The United Methodist *Book of Discipline* 2016
and
The Susquehanna Conference of the United Methodist Church

THE CANDIDACY PROCESS

- Be a member of The United Methodist Church (or other UM ministry) for one year. This can occur concurrently with the studies but the membership requirement must be fulfilled before Certification as a Candidate for Ministry.
- Meet with a clergy person in a local church, another clergy, or the District Superintendent
- Read through *The Christian as Minister* or *Beyond The Burning Bush* (both are optional)
- Meet with the District Superintendent requesting admission to the candidacy process. Include a statement of call and request registration with GBHEM for Candidacy Studies (UMCARES)
- A mentor will be assigned; complete registration for OCAS (\$75 fee, paid by applicant)
- Work on Candidacy studies with an assigned candidacy mentor
- Meet as requested with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry so they may get to know you. (the committee will continue to meet with you at least annually unless you withdraw from the process.)
- DO NOT request the psychological packet through the OCAS system! Susquehanna Conference uses a different assessment packet. Your mentor and DCOM will determine when you should begin the testing process and when you should initiate that process through the district office. The psychological assessment must be completed prior to certification as a candidate.
- The Beginning Process is confidential – your name will not be published nor will your interest in pastoral ministry be made public by the District Superintendent, your mentor, your pastor or the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (to protect current employment, etc.) unless you choose to make it known.
- Attend a *God's Call* event. This may be done at any time in the process but must be completed before certification. This fulfills the Orientation to Ministry requirement in ¶1312.
- Complete the Candidacy Guidebook with your Candidacy Mentor

When you have discerned that God is indeed calling you into some form of pastoral ministry, continue with these steps:

- Get a written recommendation from your charge Pastor

- Have a High School diploma or equivalent
- Write a statement of call and be interviewed in light of Wesley's historic questions in ¶310 by your church's Committee on Staff Parish Relations (or an equivalent group in a ministry setting defined by DCOM). The SPRC must vote to recommend you.
- Write a letter of Intention to the District Superintendent requesting your Church/Charge Conference's approval as a declared candidate
- Church/Charge Conference Vote (2/3 approval needed, must be written ballot)
- At the Charge Conference, your candidacy is public knowledge
- Fill out the Declaration of Candidacy Report (Form 104/2017-2020) and file with DCOM
- Attend a *God's Call* event. This may be done at any time in the process but must be completed before certification. This fulfills the Orientation to Ministry requirement in ¶312.

When you are ready to be interviewed by the DCOM, make sure all requirements have been met.

- Written report by Candidacy Mentor to District Committee
- Candidate's written statements: Call and written responses to ¶ 311.2 a) (i) (ii) (iii) (iv) (v) (vi)
- Complete and release required psychological, medical, criminal and credit checks
 - o Medical Report of Ministerial Candidate (form 103)
 - o Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance (Paid by applicant)
 - o PA Criminal Record Check (Paid by applicant)
 - o Special Trak-1 with Credit Check – a form will be provided from the District Office to authorize this check. (A Trak-1 clearance from a local church is NOT the same and does NOT fulfill this requirement)
 - o Notarized statements required by ¶ 324.12 Can use form 114/2017-2020
- Meet with District Committee and be approved by 3/4 majority in written ballot
- Read and agree to standards of Christian life as set forth in ¶102-104, 160-166; (see ¶ 311.2 d)

ONCE CERTIFIED, CANDIDACY CONTINUES, but may take different paths

For all, **CONTINUATION OF CANDIDACY** includes...

- Continue to show evidence of gifts, fruits, and God’s grace for the work of ministry
- Annual recommendation by Church/Charge Conference
- Annual evaluation and approval by District Committee
- Annual report of satisfactory progress of studies and copy of transcript from university or school of theology (attendance at a UM seminary is encouraged)
- Certified candidate at least one year and no more than 12 years prior to commissioning for those seeking to become Deacons and Elders

**** Special Note **** Safe Sanctuaries Training and Sexual Ethics Boundaries (“Boundaries”) training is required for all persons serving as pastoral leaders. This may be complete anywhere in the process but must be completed within six months of beginning to serve a church.

Certified Candidate to Local Pastor or Ordination

- A CLERGY mentor is assigned to the certified candidate
- Once you are a certified candidate, you have several *options* –
 - Attend college and/or seminary to complete the educational requirements for ordination without serving part or full time in a church
 - Attend Licensing School to become a local pastor and serve a charge part or full time while attending college and/or seminary and progress towards ordination (1/3 of M. Div. credits completed is acceptable for a License)
 - Attend Licensing School to become a local pastor and attend Course of Study to remain a Licensed Local Pastor
- You must be a certified candidate a minimum of 2 years before applying for commissioning
- You may be a certified candidate a maximum of 12 years

Licensing School

- Must be a certified candidate to attend
- Check with the District Superintendent or Local Pastor registrar for information about cost, times and dates
- Attend and pass classes
- Be examined and recommended by DCOM

- Be appointed to a charge by the Bishop (License is only valid while under appointment)

Licensed Local Pastors

- After completing Licensing School and being appointed, all LP's must continue their education
 - o Attend Seminary for a Master of Divinity degree
 - o Attend Course of Study until the 5 year (20 classes) course is complete.
 - It is expected that Full time local pastors will take 4 classes per year.
 - Part time must take a minimum of 2 classes per year.
 - Exceptions to the number of classes taken must be approved by the DCOM and the Local Pastor & Associate Member Registrars must be informed.
 - Full time local pastors must complete COS within 8 years; part time within 12 years.
 - currently each course will be reimbursed in the amount of \$200 per class after completion with a grade of C or higher
 - Persons not making appropriate progress in COS are subject to loss of License

Certified Candidates attending College and/or seminary to seek Ordination

- Discern if God's call is to ordination as Elder or Deacon
- Follow the Book of Discipline's requirements for undergraduate and graduate requirements appropriate for Elder or Deacon *and* any additional requirements set by the Susquehanna Conference Board of Ordained Ministry
- Continue to meet annually with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry
- Properly complete the Service Requirements for commissioning
- Contact the Elder's or Deacon's registrar to apply for commissioning and attend meeting with registrars to receive the application packet of materials
- Get recommendation of the District Committee for commissioning (3/4 written ballot)

Once recommended by the DCOM, begin the commissioning process with the Board of Ordained Ministry, declaring to seek ordination as an Elder or Deacon.