A Basic Guide to the Candidacy Process
Based on The United Methodist Book of Discipline 2020/2024
and
The Susquehanna Conference of the United Methodist Church

THE CANDIDACY PROCESS ¶310

Persons who are sensing a call to ministry in the church as clergy may want to discuss this with their pastor, a neighboring pastor or the Superintendent. Resources are recommended and available at www.gbhem.org

To further explore this calling, a person must

- Be a professing member of The United Methodist Church (or other UM ministry) for one year. This can occur concurrently with the candidacy studies, but the membership requirement must be fulfilled before Certification as a Candidate for Ministry.
- Write to the Superintendent of your district requesting admission to the candidacy process.
    - Be assigned a Candidacy Mentor and meet with that mentor to work through candidacy resources
    - Enroll in Passage – an online system to follow progress towards candidacy, licensing or further education
- 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
    - If your discernment is to continue towards licensed or ordained ministry, the DCOM will have you proceed with psychological testing
    - The Beginning Process is confidential – your name will not be published nor will your interest in pastoral ministry be made public by the District Superintendent, your mentor, your pastor or the District Committee on Ordained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 ¶312.

- Write a statement of call and be interviewed in light of Wesley's historic questions in ¶310.1.d 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.
- Request a Church/Charge Conference recommendation. This will be done with the approval of the Superintendent and requires a majority of 2/3 on a written ballot.
- Request to meet with the DCOM for certification as a candidate for ministry
    - Provide written material from your SPRC interview
    - Written answers to ¶310.2.a.(i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v)
    - Candidacy Mentor report
    - Medical report (Form 103 – GBHEM)
    - State Police Background check
    - FBI Fingerprint check
    - PA Child Abuse Clearance check
    - Trak-1 Credit Check
    - Notarized statements as described in ¶310.2.b) (1) and (2)
    - Read and agree to standards of Christian life as set forth in ¶103-105, 160-166; (see ¶ 301.2 d)
    - If a veteran, submit a copy of DD-214 discharge papers
- Meet with District Committee and be approved by 3/4 majority in written ballot

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) if seeking ordination OR attend Licensing school and make progress in Course of Study

- 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 ** Ministry Safe/Safe Sanctuaries Training and Sexual Ethics Boundaries ("Required Boundaries") training is required for all persons serving as pastoral leaders. This training is offered through the year and is offered as part of Licensing School. It 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 1 year before applying for commissioning
- You may be a certified candidate a maximum of 12 years
- Licensing School
    - Must be a certified candidate to attend
    - information about cost, times and dates will be publicized in QuickLink
    - Attend and pass Licensing School 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
    - Attend Seminary for a Master of Divinity degree

    - Attend Course of Study until the 20-class course is complete.
        - Full time local pastors must complete COS within 8 years
        - Part time local pastors must complete COS within 12 years
- Each course will be reimbursed in the amount of $225 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