

Upper NY Conference
REQUIRED WORK FOR CANDIDATES SEEKING
PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP AND COMMISSIONING
Order of Elder & Deacon

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Due Date: on or before **January 12, 2026**. It is the policy of the Board of Ordained Ministry to accept nothing submitted after 11:59 pm on January 12. No exceptions will be granted.
2. Upload the work below onto the Passage UMC website. You will be given instructions regarding how to do this by the Board of Ordained Ministry Registrar, Rev. Caroline Simmons, BOMregistrar@unyumc.org.
3. Bring one copy of the work below to your interview, for your own reference.
4. Familiarize yourself with all of Paragraph 324 of the *2020/2024 Book of Discipline* and be sure that you have completed all of the requirements. It is your responsibility to verify that all paperwork has been sent in by schools, physicians, District Committees on Ministry, District Superintendents, mentors, and others.

Written Questions Guidelines

1. Answer the questions below
2. Please state the question in your paper, then give your response.
3. Begin a new page for each new question.
4. Double space writing and number your pages.
5. Answer questions within the specified page limits.
6. Professional standards of English composition and sensitivity to inclusive language are required in the presentation of all materials.
7. Use proper bibliographic citation (for example, MLA or Turabian style) for all quotations and ideas of others (full, partial, or paraphrased) that you use. Include a bibliography at the end of your questions.
8. When you upload your Discipline questions onto Passage UMC, upload them all as one document (do not upload each question separately). It will be helpful to give it a name that clearly can be tracked to you and this interview year, 2026. Therefore, please use the following file naming format: *Your last name Your first initial 2026 type of file*. For example: smithj2026writtenquestions.
9. Questions to ask yourself:
 - a. In the answers I've given, in what ways do I demonstrate knowledge of the biblical foundations and theological traditions of the United Methodist Church?
 - b. How and to what extent do I show the ability to articulate doctrines and issues important to each topic?
 - c. How and to what extent do I show the ability to make connections between theology and personal experience?
 - d. What sense of me and my call to ordained ministry is revealed?

- e. Have I answered the whole question?
- f. Have I proofread everything?

Written Questions

Answer each of the following questions within 2 pages:

1. Describe your personal experience of God and the understanding of God you derive from biblical, theological, and historical sources.
2. What is your understanding of evil as it exists in the world?
3. What is your understanding of humanity, and the human need for divine grace?
4. How do you interpret the statement Jesus Christ is Lord?
5. What is your conception of the activity of the Holy Spirit in personal faith, in the community of believers, and in responsible living in the world?
6. What is your understanding of the kingdom of God; the Resurrection; eternal life?
7. How do you intend to affirm, teach, and apply Part III of the Discipline (Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task) in your work in the ministry to which you have been called?
8. The United Methodist Church holds that the living core of the Christian faith was revealed in Scripture, illumined by tradition, vivified in personal experience, and confirmed by reason. What is your understanding of this theological position of the Church?
9. Describe the nature and mission of the Church. What are its primary tasks today?
10. Explain your understanding of the distinctive vocations of the Order of Elders and the Order of Deacons. How do you perceive yourself, your gifts, your motives, your role, and your commitment as a provisional deacon or provisional elder in The United Methodist Church?
11. Describe your understanding of an inclusive church and ministry.
12. Explain the role and significance of the sacraments in the ministry to which you have been called.

Answer each of the following questions within 1 page:

13. Describe your understanding of diakonia, the servant ministry of the church, and the servant ministry of the provisional member.
14. Discuss your understanding of the primary characteristics of United Methodist polity.

15. What is the meaning of ordination in the context of the general ministry of the Church?

16. You have agreed as a candidate 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 ministers, to make a complete dedication of yourself to the highest ideals of the Christian life, and to this end agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, social responsibility, faithful sexual intimacy expressed through fidelity, monogamy, commitment, mutual affection and respect, careful and honest communication, mutual consent, and growth in grace and in the knowledge and love of God. What is your understanding of this agreement?

Bible Study Teaching Plan

Each candidate for commissioning shall prepare a Bible study teaching plan consisting of 4–6 sessions on a book of the Bible or topic of their choice, intended for use in a local church or ministry context. The purpose of this plan is to demonstrate the candidate's ability to interpret Scripture theologically and apply it in a way that nurtures Christian discipleship.

The teaching plan must include:

- A descriptive title and selected Scripture text(s) for each session
- A brief description (1–2 paragraphs) for each session, including:
 - o The theological theme
 - o Learning objectives
 - o Intended audience/context
- One session must be fully developed and presented in one of the following formats:
 - o A written manuscript (5–7 pages)
 - o A fully annotated lesson plan with teaching notes and discussion questions

Candidates will also include a brief reflection (1–2 pages) on how they envision this Bible study supporting the mission of the Church in their particular ministry context.

The Board will assess the Bible Study Teaching Plan using the following criteria:

- Faithfulness to Scripture and Wesleyan theology
- Clarity and accessibility of teaching
- Appropriateness for the intended audience
- Evidence of contextual awareness and practical application
- Creativity and engagement in teaching method

Upload the Bible Study and Reflection together in a single document. Name your file *Your Last Name Your First Initial 2026 bible study* on Passage UMC.

Other Requirements

See the checklist available at <https://www.unyumc.org> on the Board of Ordained Ministry link for the full list of requirements.