

Upper NY Annual Conference Steps Into Ministry

A Guide for Candidates

Adopted 10/01/13, Revised 1/2018

To the Seeker:

Welcome to this amazing and wonderful adventure of discerning God's calling on your life. In our United Methodist Church, we have a process that is designed to help you along that journey of discernment; a process that includes many people and resources. You may find some more helpful than others, as each one of us enters the process from our own place on our own unique journey. Please trust that each step is designed to help your discernment and help the Church to confirm the calling that you are experiencing.

The process steps below are derived from our United Methodist Book of Discipline, 2016 and include any process steps specific to our Upper NY Annual Conference within the outline below.

We pray that your journey will be a fruitful one for you and for the Kingdom which our Lord Jesus Christ announced. Blessings on your way.

Getting Started as a Candidate for Ministry: 2016 Book of Discipline ¶310.1

1. If you are sensing a call to ministry, the first step is to make an appointment to talk with your pastor.
 - a. If for whatever reason that isn't possible, you can talk with another ordained United Methodist pastor or deacon in your area, or even your local District Superintendent.
2. Read and discuss *The Christian As Minister* book with them.
 - a. If you or your pastor (or DS or another deacon or elder) would like to explore further before you begin the more structured candidacy process, you may wish to spend time with another book, *Understanding God's Call*. Both of these resources are available through Cokesbury (our United Methodist bookstore and church supply outlet) at 1-800-672-1789 or at www.cokesbury.com
 - b. In order to officially begin the candidacy process, you need to have been a member of the United Methodist Church or baptized participant of a recognized UM campus ministry or other UM ministry setting for one year.
 - c. You also need a high school diploma or equivalent certificate.

- d. All through this process, it will be very important that you keep a copy of everything (letters, forms, dates) for your records.
3. Send a letter to your district superintendent, including a statement about your call, requesting that you would like to begin the candidacy process.
 - a. You can find contact information for your district office through our Upper NY Annual Conference UMC website : www.unyumc.org.
4. The District Superintendent will help you schedule a “get to know you” meeting with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOM).
5. The District Superintendent will assign you a mentor.
6. Work through the candidacy process with your mentor over a period of months.
 - a. Your mentor and DS will help you get signed up with UMCares online candidacy system. (\$75 fee)
 - b. Discuss the Candidacy Guidebook
 - c. Complete (and keep copies of) the following:
 - i. Psychological Assessment (DCOM will send you an application; \$300 fee)
 - ii. Background Check (\$100 fee)
 - iii. GBHEM Form 102 - Biographical Information Form
 - iv. GBHEM Form 103 - Medical Report
 - v. GBHEM Form 114 - Disclosure Form
7. Write your statement of call, using Wesley’s historic questions (see below). Consult with your pastor (or equivalent in a campus ministry setting) to request a meeting of your church’s Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee (or equivalent body specified by the DCOM) to consider your statement of call and to be interviewed in light of Wesley’s historic questions found in *2016 Book of Discipline ¶310.1.d*:
 - a. Do they know God as pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire nothing but God? Are they holy in all manner of conversation?
 - b. Have they gifts as well as evidence of God’ grace, for the work? Have they a clear, sound understanding; a right judgment in the things of God; a just conception of salvation by faith? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?

- c. Have they fruit? Have any been truly convinced of sin and converted to God, and are all believers edified by their service?
- 8. The S/PPRC (or equivalent) will vote according to these instructions found at the end of Wesley's historic questions: "As long as these marks occur in them, we believe they are called of God to serve. These we receive as sufficient proof that they are moved by the Holy Spirit."
 - a. Get a letter or some official documentation from the S/PPRC (or equivalent), stating their approval and the date, for your records and the DCOM's records.
- 9. After approval by S/PPRC (or equivalent), work with your pastor to meet with a Charge Conference (or body specified by the DCOM) called to recommend you to the DCOM as a candidate for ministry.
 - a. At the Charge Conference, approval must be by two thirds written ballot.
 - b. Get a copy of the official minutes from this Charge Conference for your records and the DCOM's records.
 - c. Complete GBHEM Form 104 indicating recommendation by your home church (or equivalent campus ministry) and submit to DCOM Registrar

Becoming a Certified Candidate - 2016 Book of Discipline ¶310.2

After completing all the steps above, you are ready to apply to be a Certified Candidate.

- 1. Request to meet with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOM) for your interview applying to become a Certified Candidate.
- 2. Prior to this meeting (check with your DCOM for deadline), submit the following
 - a. Written responses to the historic Wesley questions (*2016 Book of Discipline ¶310.1d*):
 - 1. Do they know God as pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire nothing but God? Are they holy in all manner of conversation?
 - 2. Have they gifts as well as evidence of God' grace, for the work? Have they a clear, sound understanding; a right judgment in the things of God; a just conception of salvation by faith? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?
 - 3. Have they fruit? Have any been truly convinced of sin and converted to God, and are all believers edified by their service?

- b. Written response to the following (*2016 Book of Discipline ¶310.2a*):
 - i. The most formative experience of your Christian life
 - ii. God's call to licensed or ordained ministry and role of the church in your call
 - iii. Your beliefs as a Christian
 - iv. Your gifts for ministry
 - v. Your present understanding of your call to ministry as elder, deacon, or licensed ministry
 - vi. Your support system
- c. Written information that may help the DCOM determine gifts, evidence of God's grace, fruit, and demonstration of the call to licensed or ordained ministry;
- d. Written agreement, for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness of the gospel, and in consideration of your influence as minister, to make a complete dedication of yourself to the highest ideals of the Christian life as set forth in ¶102-104, ¶160-166. To this end agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and the knowledge and love of God.
- e. Check with your DCOM to see if they have any other requirements specific to your District for items to be submitted for this meeting.
- f. Contact your DCOM Registrar and confirm that the following items are in your file:
 - i. Biographical Information Form (102)
 - ii. Medical Information Report (103)
 - iii. Declaration of Candidacy and Charge Conference Recommendation Form (104)
 - iv. Disclosure Form (114)
 - v. Written Responses a,b,c, and d above
 - vi. Candidacy Mentor's Report
 - vii. Background Check (done no more than 5 years prior to the date of your meeting with DCOM)

- viii. Psychological Assessment Report (done no more than 5 years prior to the date of your meeting with DCOM)
- ix. High School Diploma (or equivalent certificate) and any other academic progress documents, such as college transcripts
- g. Your mentor is welcome to accompany you to all DCOM meetings. However, they will be in a supportive role as a silent presence and not take part in the dialogue.
- h. The DCOM will let you know their decision and, if approved, will submit GBHEM Form 113 (DCOM) Approval Report for Certified Candidate for Ordained Ministry).

Continuing Your Candidacy - 2016 Book of Discipline ¶313

Your mentor and the DCOM can help you decide on the next step in your education (Course of Study, seminary, etc.) as you continue towards licensing or ordination. You may continue as a candidate for no more than twelve years following certification (¶324.1). If at some point during this time you decide not to continue, put your decision in writing to the DCOM.

1. Meet with your mentor on a regular basis. In some cases, you may continue with the same person who has been your candidacy mentor, and in some cases the DCOM may assign you a new mentor.
2. Work with your pastor to have your church conference (or equivalent body) vote at its yearly meeting on your recommendation for candidacy.
 - a. Get appropriate documentation for your records and DCOM's records.
3. Send a transcript to your DCOM annually to show academic progress.
4. Meet annually with your DCOM.
5. Attend the Orientation to Ministry.
6. Continue on your chosen path toward Licensing or Ordination. You're on your way!

