

Upper NY Annual Conference

Steps Into Ministry

A Guide for Candidates

Adopted 10/01/13

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 which is designed to help you along that journey of discernment; a process which 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, 2012 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.

Inquiring Candidate: 2012 Book of Discipline ¶311

Persons, upon hearing and heeding the call to servant leadership through licensed or ordained ministry shall contact a clergyperson in their local church, another clergy, or the district superintendent of the district in which they participate in a United Methodist ministry setting to inquire about the process of candidacy. Persons are encouraged to use resources recommended by *GBHEM*, such as *The Christian as Minister* and the *Ministry Inquiry Process*.

2. 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 calling](#), 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

Beginning Candidacy ¶310.1.a---c

This is the beginning of the candidacy process which involves the DCOM (District Committee on Ordained Ministry) and a trained mentor to work through the process with you. The steps are as follows:

1. In order to 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 (1) year.

a) You shall have completed Disciple 1, or an equivalent study, or have had college studies in Old and New Testament. *(This is a requirement of the UNYAC, not the 2012 BOD.)*

b) You shall write a letter to your district superintendent requesting admission to the candidacy process. Include a statement of call. Request registration through the district superintendent with GBHEM; *each candidate is required to pay a \$75.00 registration fee to GBHEM. If they are a candidate coming in from a different denomination they shall also pay an additional \$20.00 psychological evaluation fee. The candidate and mentor shall follow the OCAS system of items to be accomplished and must check each off in order to proceed to the next item.*

c) After registration by the district superintendent with GBHEM, the mentor and candidate will study the resources adopted by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry;

d) (You shall write your statement of call.) The candidate will consult with the pastor or equivalent in a ministry setting specified by the district committee on ordained ministry to request a meeting of the pastor-parish relations committee or equivalent body specified by the : District Committee on Ordained Ministry to consider the statement of call and to be interviewed in light of Wesley's historic questions; :

(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?

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.

e) After approval of the candidate by Pastor Parish Relations Committee or equivalent body specified by the district committee on ordained ministry, the candidate shall meet with a charge conference or body specified by the district committee on ordained ministry called to recommend the candidate to the district committee on ordained ministry. Approval of the candidate must be by two thirds written ballot, and the candidate shall have been graduated from an accredited high school or received a certificate of equivalency.

2. Candidates seeking to become certified for licensed or ordained ministry shall:

a) request to meet with the district committee on ordained ministry. In preparation for the meeting with the district committee on ordained ministry, consult with the mentor to provide the following written information, in addition to the material written for ¶ 310.1d: (i) the most formative experience of their Christian life; (ii) God's call to licensed or ordained ministry and role of the church in their call; (iii) their beliefs as a Christian; (iv) their gifts for ministry; (v) their present understanding of their call to ministry as elder, deacon, or licensed ministry; and (vi) their support system;

b) complete and release required psychological reports, criminal background and credit checks totaling \$380.00 payable to the UNY Annual Conference. They shall submit, on a form provided by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry:

(1) a notarized statement detailing any convictions for felony or misdemeanor or written accusations of sexual misconduct or child abuse; or

(2) a notarized statement certifying that this candidate has neither been accused in writing nor convicted of a felony, misdemeanor, any incident of sexual misconduct, or child abuse.

The district committee on ordained ministry through the Board of Ordained ministry shall seek ways to consider cultural and ethnic/racial realities in meeting these requirements.

c) provide other information as the district committee may require for determining gifts, evidence of God's grace, fruit, and demonstration of the call to licensed or ordained ministry;

d) agree 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 clergy, to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life as set forth in ¶¶ 103-105; 160-166. To this end they shall 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. Where possible, the local church is encouraged to assist candidates with the expenses of candidacy;

e) be voted on by individual ballot by the committee members present. A three-fourths majority vote of the committee members present is required for certification (¶666.66); and

f) upon vote of certification, be encouraged by the district committee on ordained ministry to attend a United Methodist seminary.

3. in special circumstances, the district committee on ordained ministry may authorize other United Methodist ministry settings to serve in the role of the local church for the purpose of recommending candidacy and specify the persons or bodies that will serve in the roles of pastor, pastor parish relations committee and charge conference.

If at any time the candidate decides to withdraw from the above stated process they will put in writing their reason and give it to the district committee on ordained ministry.