



# South Carolina Conference The United Methodist Church

# GUIDE FOR CANDIDACY



This guide is made for anyone who is exploring the possibility of licensed or ordained ministry with and through The United Methodist Church, and more specifically, the South Carolina Conference. Candidacy is the first step toward licensing or ordained ministry in the United Methodist Church. It is designed to help an individual and the church discern the nature of their calling, and examine the authenticity of their call to set-apart licensed or ordained ministry.

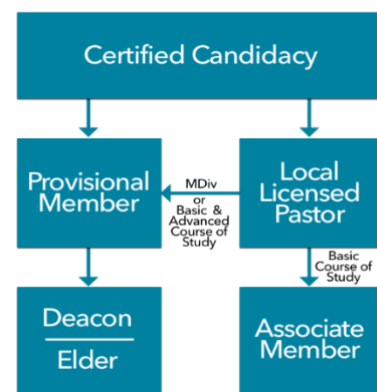
There are four stages of candidacy in the United Methodist Church. The first is “Inquiring Candidate.” During this portion of candidacy an individual has the initial conversations about ministry with their pastor and Superintendent. This would include reading and discussing *Christian as a Minister* with your pastor. The individual would then request in writing to their Superintendent that they be admitted to the Candidacy. Your written request should also include a statement regarding your call. The Superintendent may also want to schedule a conversation with you. This stage also includes the initial paperwork needed to be admitted to the Candidacy.

The second stage is “Exploring Candidate.” During this stage an individual would participate in the Candidacy Summit. The Candidacy Summit is our group candidacy mentoring program in South Carolina. It takes place twice a year, in the Summer and late fall. The Summit involves in-person and online group meetings with other candidates and mentors as they work through the book *Answering the Call*. On rare occasions the Superintendent may work with the office of Clergy Services to assign an individual mentor when participation in the Summit is not feasible. During this portion of candidacy, you will be aided by your mentor and fellow group members as you begin writing answers to John Wesley’s historic questions listed in the Discipline (§310.1.d). This also is the time where your candidacy group and mentors walk with and support you, as you examine more closely your calling. This time is designed to help you discern if you might be called to the set-apart ministry of the licensed/ordained clergy, or if your calling might be to another expression of lay ministry.

The third stage is “Declared Candidate.” Ideally this stage follows the completion of your Exploring Candidacy studies with your candidacy group and mentors. This stage is for those who have discerned a calling to licensed or ordained ministry in the United Methodist Church, and are officially declaring that calling to the church. This stage will require the candidate to be interviewed by the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee (S/PPRC) of their home church or ministry. This interview will include a review of their answers to Wesley’s questions and their call statement. Following a favorable recommendation of the S/PPRC, the candidate will meet with their church’s Charge Conference for the same purpose. Declared Candidacy status is granted with the approval of both the S/PPRC and the Charge Conference.

The final stage of candidacy is “Certified Candidate,” and it really has two groups. Certification will require the completion of credit and background checks, a medical report, a psychological and interview with your District Committee on Ministry (dCOM). It is at this stage of candidacy that you become eligible for financial aid through the Ministerial Education Fund while pursuing your theological education. The two groups of Certified Candidates are “Certified Candidates” and Certified Candidates Approved to be Licensed if Appointed.” A certified candidate must attend the Licensing School for Pastoral Ministry. Certified Candidates and Certified Candidates approved to be Licensed if appointed are lay persons, not clergy. You will not become clergy until you are appointed and licensed.

The guide is divided into six sections. The first four are check lists related to the four types/levels of candidacy for licensed or ordained ministry. Each checklist will address the different stages candidacy. These candidacy stages apply to everyone since candidacy is the initial discernment process for all Licensed or Ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church. A road map of the entire process is to the right. It may help you to better understand how someone becomes licensed or ordained. A list of important terms and understandings which may help you through this process can be found at the end.



We are so happy that you are exploring this avenue of ministry and excited to work with you on this journey!

## INQUIRING CANDIDATE

**Who does this?** *Everyone! Anyone who is going into any kind of ordained ministry must first be a Candidate.*

Who to talk to:	Steps:
Pastor or DS	<b>Learning About Ordained Ministry [Inquiring]</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Obtain a high school diploma or equivalency</li> <li>2. Be a UM member or an active, baptized participant in a UM ministry setting for at least one year.</li> <li>3. Talk to your pastor and let them know you're thinking about ordained ministry.</li> <li>4. Read "The Christian as Minister," and discuss it with your pastor.</li> </ol>
DS or Coordinator of Clergy Services	<b>Enrolling in the Candidacy Process</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contacting your DS in writing. In the letter               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Include a "Statement of Call"</li> <li>b. Request admission to the candidacy process</li> <li>c. Ask that the DS submit "Request for Candidacy Packet Form (10SCBOM)" to the Office of Clergy Services</li> </ol> <p><i>Notes: 1) The DS may require a personal meeting with you.</i></p> </li> <li>2. Candidacy Packet <i>(will be sent to you by the Office of Clergy Services)</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Biographical Information Form (Form 102)</li> <li>b. Candidacy Summit Application: Complete and submit to Clergy Services the Candidacy Summit Application <i>(will be sent to you by the Office of Clergy Services when all the forms and required information in the Candidacy Packet have been completed and submitted.)</i></li> <li>c. Report of the Candidate's Pastor <i>(confirming church/ministry membership and "The Christian as Minister" discussions)</i></li> <li>d. Credit Statement (Form 06SCBOM)</li> <li>e. Criminal Background Statement</li> <li>f. Proof of High School graduation or equivalent. <i>Notes: 1) Submit a copy of all Completed Forms and Requested documents to the Office of Clergy Services and a copy to your district office. 2) All completed forms and requested documents should be submitted by October 1 to attend the Candidacy "Fall Summit" or by June 1 to attend the Candidacy "Summer Summit."</i></li> <li>g. Complete the Criminal &amp; Credit Background Screening. <i>(After you submit your Criminal Background Statement, an email invitation will be sent with a link for you to complete a Criminal &amp; Background Screening. The cost will be \$20.00 and will be paid by you online.)</i></li> </ol> </li> </ol>

## EXPLORING CANDIDATE

**Who does this?** *Anyone who is discerning licensed or ordained ministry, and has completed the steps for Inquiring Candidate.*

Who to talk to:	Steps:
Coordinator of Clergy Services or the Associate Registrar for Candidacy	<b>Exploring Candidacy</b> <i>(candidate is known as an Exploring Candidate during this stage)</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attend the Summer or Fall Candidacy Summit, where you will be assigned your candidacy mentors.</li> <li>2. Complete the Mentor Group Meetings –The first two mentoring sessions while at the Summit. You will schedule four more meeting times with your mentoring group after the Summit to continue working Candidacy Guidebook.</li> </ol>

# DECLARED CANDIDATE

**Who does this?** Anyone who has completed the Candidacy Summit and Mentor Group Meetings, and has discerned a calling into licensed or ordained ministry.

Coordinator of  
Clergy Services  
And your Pastor

## Declared Candidacy *(candidate is known as a Declared Candidate when this stage is complete)*

1. Receive S/PPRC recommendation: Share your statement of Call with the S/PPRC and be prepared to discuss Wesley's historic questions in ¶ 310.1d.1-3.
2. Receive Charge Conference Approval and submit the Declaration of Candidacy Form 104 to the district office and the Office of Clergy Services.

*Notes: Items 1 and 2 require 2/3 vote by written ballot. The ballots should be given to the District Office for your file.*

# CERTIFIED CANDIDACY

**Who does this?** Declared Candidates who are going into any kind of ordained ministry must first become a Certified Candidate.

Who to  
talk to:

Steps:

DS

## Certified Candidacy

1. Complete the Psychological Assessment:
  - a. At the District Office, with Clergy Services or at the Summitt discuss the psychological process and sign the Psychological Consent Form. Submit a copy to the Office of Clergy Services, and send the original and payment to the Assessment Vendor.
  - b. Contact and begin psychological testing process with the vendor listed on the Consent Form.
2. Complete the Medical Report (Form F-103)
3. Request to become a Certified Candidate in writing to the dCOM
  - a. Include written responses to queries in ¶ 10.1d.1-3, and ¶ 310.2a.
  - b. Include a statement agreeing to the personal dedication outlined in ¶ 310.2d.
4. Submit to the District Office and the Office of Clergy Services the Report of the Candidacy Mentor *(Completed by you and your Candidacy Mentors)*
5. Meet with District Committee on Ministry (¶ 310.2)
6. Receive dCOM approval after being interviewed by the dCOM

*Notes: dCOMs may request an introductory interview prior to meeting your for certification.*

## Congratulations! You're A Certified Candidate!

To maintain your status, you must

- Meet with and be approved by the DCOM annually,
- Submit any transcripts or progress of education to the District Office.

*Note: Once Certified, a candidate has 8 years to progress to become a licensed pastor or provisional member.*

## HELPFUL TERMS TO KNOW

**Advanced Course of Study (ACOS)** – Advanced theological education program of the Division of Ordained Ministry, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. It is provided for those who are licensed as local pastors to complete the Disciplinary Basic Graduate Theological Courses. Participants in the program must have completed candidacy for ordained ministry, the studies for license as a local pastor, been approved/recommended for license by the dCOM and conference Board of Ordained Ministry, completed the Basic Course of Study and is serving an appointment.

*More on next page →*

## HELPFUL TERMS TO KNOW

**Approved for Service** – A process by which ordained, provisional and licensed clergy from other United Methodist Conferences, Methodist Denominations and other Christian Denominations can be approved to serve United Methodist Churches in South Carolina.

**Associate Member** – Associate members are clergy members of the Annual Conference and have voice and vote at annual conference on all matters except constitutional amendments and matters of ordination, clergy character and conference relations of clergy.

**Certified Candidacy** – Candidacy phase when a candidate has completed the mentoring process and has met with and been certified as a candidate for licensed or ordained ministry by the district committee on ordained ministry.

**Commissioning** – The credentialing of provisional deacons and elders. The act of the church that publicly acknowledges God's call and response, talents, gifts and training of the candidate. The church invokes the Holy Spirit as the candidate is commissioned to be a faithful servant leader among the people, to lead the church in service, to proclaim the Word of God and to equip others for ministry.

**Conference** – The governing and administering body for United Methodists in the South Carolina Area.

**Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (BoM)** – The body that oversees, cares for, and evaluates candidates for ministry through the candidacy process, and is also responsible for maintaining a relationship with local pastors in the conference.

**Course of Study (COS)** - The basic theological education program of the Division of Ordained Ministry, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. It is provided for those who are licensed as local pastors who are unable to attend an approved seminary. Participants in the program must have completed candidacy for ordained ministry, the studies for license as a local pastor, been approved/recommended for license by the dCOM and conference Board of Ordained Ministry, and is serving an appointment. Often referred to as the Basic Course of Study (BCOS).

**Deacon** – Persons called by God, authorized by the Church, and ordained by a bishop to a lifetime ministry of Word, Service, Compassion and Justice to both the community and the congregation.

**District** – The body that oversees, cares for, and evaluates candidates for ministry through the candidacy process, and is also responsible for maintaining a relationship with local pastors.

**District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOM)** - The body that oversees, cares for, and evaluates candidates for ministry through the candidacy process, and is also responsible for maintaining a relationship with local pastors in each district.

**District Superintendent (DS)** – an elder appointed by the bishop, usually for a six-year term. The DS oversees the ministry of the district's clergy and churches, provides spiritual and pastoral leadership, works with the bishop and others in the appointment of ordained ministers to serve the district's churches, presides at meetings of the charge conference, and oversees programs within the district.

**Elder** – Persons who are ordained to a lifetime ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order and Service; authorized to preach and teach the Word of God, to administer the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, and to order the life of the Church for mission and ministry.

**General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM)** – The GBHEM is the leadership development agency of the United Methodist Church. It prepares global leaders for a global church and the world. Every elder, deacon and licensed local pastor benefits from the training and candidacy programs.

*More on next page →*

## HELPFUL TERMS TO KNOW

**Local Licensed Pastor (LLP)** – Persons who are licensed and appointed to preach, conduct divine worship, and perform the duties of a pastor in the context of a specific appointment, but are not ordained as elders. Licensed local pastors are clergy members of the Annual Conference and have voice and vote on all matters except constitutional amendments and matters of ordination, clergy character and conference relations of clergy.

**Ordination** – The church affirms and continues the apostolic ministry through persons empowered by the Holy Spirit.

**Other Denomination (OF)** – Ordained Clergy Members of other Christian Denominations that have been Approved to Serve United Methodist Churches in South Carolina. They retain their membership in their home denomination and therefore do not have voting rights in the South Carolina Conference.

**Other Elder (OE)** – Ordained Clergy Members of other United Methodist Annual Conferences or Methodist Denominations that have been Approved to Serve United Methodist Churches in South Carolina. They retain their membership in their home conference or denomination and therefore do not have voting rights in the South Carolina Conference.

**Provisional Member** – Conference relationship of commissioned ministers (deacons and elders) who are on trial in preparation for membership in full connection in the annual conference as deacons and elders. During that three-year period, they are participants in the Clergy Leadership Academy and under the care of the Conference Board of Ordained. Provisional members have voice and vote at annual conference on all matters except constitutional amendments and matters of ordination, clergy character, and conference relations of clergy.