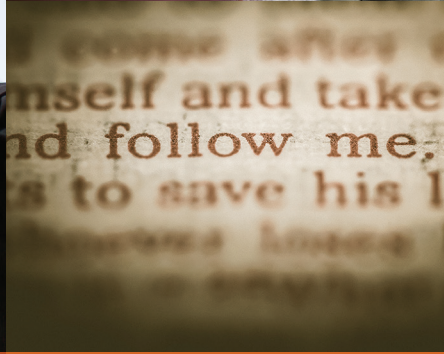


Living Out the POWER of We



District Committee on Ordained Ministry Handbook

Mississippi Conference
Board of Ordained Ministry

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DCOM HANDBOOK CHANGE LOG

The purpose of this change log is to provide a quick reference for changes which have occurred in either the processes and/or paperwork related to the work of the DCOM from the previous year or handbook publication. The log is organized in reverse chronological order so that the most recent changes are listed first.

If you notice any typos or errors, please let us know. If you have more substantial recommendations for refinements or changes to the process, please submit them as well. You can utilize the online form at this hyperlink: <https://mississippi-reg.brtapp.com/DCOMupdate>. Your insights and recommendations are both helpful and appreciated.

Date	Summary	Submitted By
12/15/21	Addition of advanced degree terminology, last bullet on page 50.	Trey Harper
11/10/21	Revised definition of #11 Definitions of Improper Sexual Conduct on page 44.	Pamela Cameron
9/27/21	Updates to DCOM Form 1 - Checklist Added “(\$25 registration fee required)” at the bottom of page 1 to check box item “Complete the online Biblical DiSC profile” Change bulleted item “\$75 Registration” to “\$25 Biblical DiSC Registration” at the bottom of page 2	Pamela Cameron
9/27/21	The 2021 DCOM Handbook represents a major update from last year’s handbook. Copies of previous handbooks and forms are all superseded by this handbook. Highlights of this update include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reorganized the handbook into four major sections where the content is more logically grouped and easier to follow. • Reduced the number of candidate types from five to three: candidate, certified candidate, and continuance candidate. A detailed narrative was added explaining these types along with explicit guidance on what must take place in order to transition forward from a given candidate status to the next step in the ordination process. • Streamlined, refined, and/or clarified <i>many of the forms and processes</i>. 	Pamela Cameron
1/15/20	COS Extension Requirement; add text <u>COS Timeline Extension</u> While the <i>Book of Discipline</i> and GBHEM policies are very clear about the timeline in which both full-time and part-time Local Pastors have to complete their... through the end of item 3.	Trey Harper
1/29/20	Format the following documents for inclusion in handbook: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave of Absence Form • Spiritual Growth Sabbatical • Voluntary & Involuntary Leave 	Dorothy Ellis
2/11/20	Text addition to Voluntary Leave of Absence Process and Requirements, under 1. ii. Also include the appropriate itineracy form for either itineracy compliance, limited itineracy request or limited service request as appropriate to your desires in returning. One of these signed forms must be included with your written request to both BOOM and your District Superintendent.	Trey Harper

DCOM HANDBOOK CHANGE LOG – Continued

Date	Summary	Submitted By
2/11/20 <i>continued...</i>	Format and add the following documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS Methodist Conf. Limited Itinerary Request • MS Methodist Conf. Less than Full-Time Service Request • MS Methodist Conf. Itinerary Compliance Agreement 	Trey Harper
4/27/20	Add paragraph “Digital Competence” Text addition to Affirmation of membership to UMC church...	Pamela Cameron
8/12/20	Revisions to Leave of Absence Form Added under Type of Leave: “Medical Leave” and “Maternity/Paternity Leave and Voluntary & Involuntary Leave Added paragraph numbers “355, 358” to title of Changes of Conference Relationship; Paragraphs regarding “Maternity or Paternity Leave” and “Medical Leave due to Medical and Disabling Conditions”	Dorothy Ellis
9/14/20	Sent MS Course of Study School Cover Sheet for formatting.	Trey Harper
12/16/20	Text addition to transfer updates Formatted “Process of Transfer from another United Methodist Annual Conf. to the MS Conf. of The UMC”	

I. District Committee on Ordained Ministry



Mississippi Conference
of The United Methodist Church

Living Out
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A. OVERVIEW

1. Introduction

As reflected in our Baptism, all followers of Christ are called to serve. Likewise, all baptized believers have spiritual gifts to be used for the work of the body and for the glory of God. Some are called to be spiritual leaders in the faith community through licensed, commissioned, or ordained ministry. Spiritual leaders invite and equip others to become disciples of Christ Jesus and to live out that discipleship in tangible ways.

Therefore, in our Christian tradition, the call of leadership is always the call of the servant, never to status or position or for personal validation. In our denomination, this call is manifested in certified, licensed, or ordained ministry. Each manifestation is God-ordained, spiritually valid, and critical to the life and health of the Church.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM) to assist persons in the discernment of the nature of their call to spiritual leadership. Throughout a discernment and training process, the Board of Ordained Ministry looks for evidence of Faith, Fruitfulness, and Readiness, as it evaluates, nurtures, and credentials those called by God to servant leadership in the Local Church.

By extension, the District Committee on Ministry (DCOM) is responsible for leading those who are called in the beginning steps of discernment, preparation and evaluation in through the Candidacy and Local Pastor processes. This handbook is designed to educate and to clarify the work of those entrusted with this special task.

As always, this is a “living” document that is attempting to define a “living” process, therefore things are often progressing and changing. This is best reflected in the addition of our DCOM Handbook Change Log at the very start of this publication. It will highlight the changes that have been made, and who to contact if you have questions.

Thank you for your faithfulness, your patience, and above all your commitment to Christ and our beloved United Methodist Church.

Blessings,

Rev. Trey Harper, Director
Office of Spiritual Leadership

2. Candidate and Certified Candidate Transitions

Guidance in handling candidates and transition requirements to attain “Candidate” and “Certified Candidate” statuses.

When Someone Feels Called

When someone begins to sense a call to vocational ministry, their first step should be to have a conversation with their pastor or Wesley Foundation Director. After that conversation, the pastor or director will direct them to contact the district superintendent (DS) in their district to setup an initial meeting. The candidate will meet with the district superintendent and discuss their call to ministry.

First Meeting with District Superintendent

District Superintendent will ask the candidate to write a statement of their call. If they have not already read and discussed *Christian as Minister*, the DS will provide them with a copy and instruct them to read it and discuss it with a United Methodist clergy person as soon as possible. They will also be provided with “Form 1 – Candidacy Checklist” which outlines several required forms and procedures which will ultimately have to be completed. The candidate will need to submit biographical, background, disclosure and medical forms. Background checks are run by Dorothy Ellis in the Office of Spiritual Leadership. Candidates must email dellis@mississippi-umc.org with their email and phone number to initiate the background check process. Candidates will receive an automated email invitation to complete a consent form for the background check. Additionally, the candidate will need to collect an affirmation letter of their membership in either their church or Wesley Foundation on letterhead. College and seminary transcripts are also required for every post-secondary school the candidate has attended. These need to be sent to the district office from the institution. Once these documents and everything outlined on the “Form 1 – Candidacy Checklist” has been completed and submitted to the District Superintendent, a meeting will be scheduled with their District Committee on Ministry (DCOM). **After meeting with the District Superintendent, they will be officially designated as a ‘Candidate’.**

First Meeting with District Committee on Ministry

The initial meeting with the DCOM will be an introductory meeting. The person will discuss his or her call to ministry and answer any questions the committee might have. The DCOM will meet after the person has departed to determine if the candidate should move forward or not. Generally within one week, the candidate will receive a letter from the DCOM Chair stating if they have been approved.

“Hearing Your Call” Discernment Retreat

In the United Methodist Church, we honor that God’s call upon servant leaders is a unique and individual experience. We also honor that our journey of discernment is best done in community. The “Hearing Your Call” Discernment Retreat is a time of worship and exploration into the many and varied avenues and opportunities for leadership within the United Methodist Church. All people who are discerning a call to special service are strongly encouraged to attend this event. Contact the Office of Spiritual Leadership for more information.

Ministry Track Interviews

To those candidates for ministry who are seeking certification, but have been unable to attend a “Hearing the Call” Retreat, have the option of working with their Candidacy Mentor to explore the avenues and opportunities for United Methodist ministry through a series of interviews that are to be processed within the Mentor relationship, as well as in DCOM interviews.

Candidates and Mentors can contact the Office of Spiritual Leadership for the contact information for clergy and laity who are prepared to share from their wisdom in ministry. Candidates are expected to interview:

1. A Lay Speaker/Lay Servant/or Certified Lay Minister
2. A Part-time or Full-time Local Pastor or Associate Member
3. A Deacon in Full Connection
4. An Elder in Full Connection

Each of these four interviews will include answer the following questions, although it is the hope that more discussion will naturally occur.

1. Name, Status and Current Appointment/Assignment of the person being interviewed
2. What parts of the *Book of Discipline* outline and govern this person’s ministry?
3. What is the credentialing process for this status? Does it require a license? What is ordination?
4. What are the responsibilities and roles as given their status?
5. How are they loving these roles in their current appointment or assignment?

District Committee on Ministry Policy for Digital Competence

We live in a digital world, and therefore candidate certification comes with the expectation that each candidate will have or acquire basic knowledge of computer skills including working email and an understanding of the Internet. They will need to exhibit skills for electronic documents, zoom, statistical reports, and their people portal as well. If the candidate does not have email and these basic skills, they should not be passed by the DCOM.

Psychological Evaluation, Staff Parish Relations and Charge Conference

The DS will meet with the candidate during which the DS will contact the Office of Spiritual Leadership to schedule the candidate's psychological evaluation. The candidate will then go back to their pastor to schedule a meeting with the Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee (SPPRC) to discuss their progress towards becoming a "certified candidate" and ask the SPPRC to recommend that they continue on their path to ministry. Once recommended by their local church, the candidate must be approved by their local church charge conference. The DS and the pastor may need to call a special charge conference for them to be approved as a recommended candidate for ministry.

The candidate must meet the following three conditions in order to participate in a second meeting with the DCOM.

1. Complete the psychological evaluation.
2. Receive approval from their local church charge conference as a candidate for ministry.

At the conclusion of this meeting, **the DCOM will make a determination as to whether the candidate can transition to becoming a "Certified Candidate."** If the DCOM recommends the candidate to move forward, the DCOM will outline the next steps the certified candidate should take.

Certified candidates are eligible to apply for Ministerial Education Funds (MEF) and will receive an application from the DCOM. Certified candidates should typically begin seminary or begin licensing school within six (6) months.

Licensing School

If a certified candidate is to receive an appointment as a Local Pastor, the DCOM will provide information about licensing school at the Center for Ministry. They must complete all courses of licensing school before being eligible to serve as a local pastor. Licensing School consists of classes scheduled over a 12 month cycle. Candidates can begin licensing school at any point in that cycle. Upon their completion of licensing school, certified candidates will be eligible to receive a license for pastoral ministry. They will be required to continue their education through seminary or course of study.

Course of Study (COS)

Course of Study is comprised of 20 courses that provide a strong foundation for ministry in the local church. All local pastors are eligible to attend Course of Study (COS) at Candler School of Theology (Emory) or Duke Divinity School. Part-time local pastors have the additional option to attend COS through the Center for Ministry at Millsaps College, which is an extension of Emory's program. See "Local Pastor Timelines" on the next page for more details. After completing Course of Study, eligible local pastors should consider pursuing associate membership.

Seminary

During their seminary education, certified candidates shall still report back to their DCOM Committee. This meeting usually takes place once a year. The certified candidate will bring a transcript of classes completed and a current class schedule. The DCOM will discuss the certified candidate's progress and whether to approve them for another year. This annual review will happen as long as the candidate is in seminary. Once the certified candidate has completed half of their seminary program or is in their last year of seminary, they can be recommended by the DCOM for provisional membership as a deacon or elder to the Mississippi Annual Conference.

Residence in Ministry (RIM)

Upon completion of seminary and approval for provisional membership, certified candidates may begin the Residence in Ministry program in the Mississippi Conference. This program includes membership in peer cohort group and lasts for a minimum of three years. During these three years, candidates will be mentored by six different clergy prior to ordination—two different ones each year.

During the first year, certified candidates are mentored by two elders or deacons in full connection. These relationships focus on accountability with each other and reading certain books as provisional members. Certified candidates meet with their mentors once a month from August to May. They will attend a Residence in Ministry Seminar once a year.

During their second year, certified candidates are mentored by two different elders or deacons in full connection. It is during this year that they will focus on fruitfulness in their ministry. They will still meet once a month from August to May with their peer group. They will attend a RIM seminar once a year as well.

During year three, participants are mentored by the Director of Spiritual Leadership and the Associate Director of Ministerial Services. During this year they meet once a month from August through May. Their focus for this year is their ordination paperwork such as the 16 questions they answer, the sermon they will turn in, and the Bible study they will write. Over each meeting, they will turn in drafts of the questions they will be writing for feedback. In January of the next year, they will turn in the final draft of the questions they have answered, their sermon and their Bible study to be reviewed by the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM). They will interview with the Board for approval of their ordination or continuance in the RIM program for another year. This process is the same for both provisional deacons and provisional elders.

Once approved for ordination by BOOM, certified candidates will be voted on at the clergy executive session of the Mississippi Annual Conference which is typically held in June each year. Approved candidates will become full members of the conference after the clergy session. During the ordination service, they will be ordained by the Bishop and become an ordained elder or deacon.

3. Local Pastor Timelines

Local Pastor Timelines

Full Time local pastors (FL) must complete their education in 8 years, and must take 4 classes a year at a regional school such as Candler School of Theology or Duke Divinity School. Part Time local pastors (PL) must complete their education in 12 years, and take 2 classes a year at Millsaps College an extension school. During 2020, all pastors were granted a free year because of the pandemic. If a candidate faces significant challenges or undergoes a change in appointment status, it is the responsibility of the candidate to clarify timeline expectations or exceptions with the DCOM.

Education has Exceeded their Timeline

Extensions to the timeline may be granted under extenuating circumstances by the Board of Ordained Ministry, with the consent of the cabinet. Requests are to be submitted to the Office of Spiritual Leadership detailing:

- a. Reason for the inability to complete the required education within the specified time frame.
- b. A detailed plan for the completion of the outstanding courses meeting the required course load of 4 classes for full time or 2 classes for part time service.

B. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. DCOM Leadership Job Descriptions

District Superintendent

- Receives requests to begin candidacy.
- Interviews candidate prior to the assignment of mentor and gives the candidate the criminal and sex offender's background and credit check form.
- Notifies DCOM chair of request and candidate needing interview with DCOM.
- Following interview, works with DCOM to assign the candidacy mentor.
- Invites candidate to begin candidacy through United Methodist Candidate and Record Entry System (UMCARES).
- Presides at Charge Conference where candidates are voted on.
- Nominates District Committee on Ordained Ministry members.
- Reviews the Minute Questions to make sure all certified candidates and licensed local pastors are listed.

Chairperson

- Sets date and place for meetings.
- Writes letter to each candidate regarding the results of the interview and recommended action with a copy in the candidate's file.
- Sets the agenda and presides at the meetings.
- Makes sure that all DCOM leaders are following through on their responsibilities.
- Makes sure that the DCOM interviews candidates at the appropriate time with the appropriate documents in hand.
- Works with the district superintendent to assign candidacy mentors.

DCOM Secretary

- Sends meeting notices to DCOM members.
- Records and sends minutes of the meetings to the DCOM members and to the Office of Spiritual Leadership.
- Keeps a file of all DCOM minutes (*in the district office*).

Registrar

- Maintains the official file for each candidate (kept in the district office). A Candidacy File Checklist" or "Local Pastor's File Checklist" shall be used to keep a record of documents in each candidate's file. Record keeping

procedures shall be governed by the “Personnel File Guidelines” prepared by GCFA.

- Keeps a copy of all forms.
- Records all formal actions of the DCOM on the prescribed spreadsheet, and forwards the Action Report promptly to the office of Spiritual Leadership. Maintains copies of Action Reports for DCOM minutes. Keeps a copy of this DCOM Roster and Action Report. Sends copies of candidate letters detailing the actions taken will be placed in the candidate’s file and sent to the Office of Spiritual Leadership following each meeting with a candidate.
- Makes sure that all paperwork is in the file prior to a candidate’s interview.
- Makes sure that the candidate’s and local pastor’s file is complete (see file contents checklist).
- Works with the district superintendent to review the Minute Questions.

Board of Ordained Ministry Representative

- Appointed by the Board of Ordained Ministry.
- Leads the DCOM in compliance with Board of Ordained Ministry policies and procedures.

Candidacy Mentors

- At least 2 people on the DCOM are recommended as candidacy mentors.
- See mentor relationships description below.

Local Pastor Mentors

- At least 2 people on the DCOM are recommended to be local pastor mentors.
- See mentor relationships description below.

2. Mentor Relationships in the Mississippi Conference

The Board of Ordained Ministry recognizes the importance and value of both group and individual mentoring. We trust DCOMs to discern the best practices for their districts and to hold mentors accountable for training and active participation.

Candidacy Mentors – It is recommended that every DCOM select at least two members who shall serve as Mentors for Candidates. Candidates will meet monthly in small groups for accountability, discernment and support. Candidates who are out of state will make arrangements to meet with mentors by way of ZOOM or call; and are encouraged to make the group meeting when able. DCOM registrars will support the monitoring and submission of all required work.

Local Pastor Mentors – It is recommended that every DCOM select at least two members who shall serve as Group Mentors for Local Pastors. We recommend that Local Pastor Groups be not larger than 8-10 people, so the number of Group Mentors may need to be adjusted upward, but there will always be a minimum of two. Groups will meet monthly for accountability and support.

RIM Peer Group Facilitators – The Office of Spiritual Leadership will select two Peer Group Facilitators for each RIM class. These Facilitators are responsible not only for the educational content of the specific year, but also for serving as a support and counsel for ministry settings. In addition, RIM students will select a

3. What Does it Mean to be a Mentor? Best Practices for being a Mentor

Candidates and Mentors meet regularly in a covenant of mutual accountability. This provides a place where persons can share their ministry experiences and receive feedback. It will also be a conversation about theological reflection and support for the covenant in building relationships with other minister colleagues.

1. Mutual Accountability

- To practices of spiritual growth, theological education, and growth in ministerial effectiveness agreed upon in the mentor relationship
- **BUT: You are there for them. Set boundaries. Find your primary support system outside of this relationship. Model the use of Employment Assistance Program (1-800-880-5658).**

2. Mentorship in the Wesleyan Tradition:

A Pattern for Reflecting on the Question “How is it with your soul?”

- What has been life-giving for you since we last met?
 - What specific practices of ministry have been life-giving for you?
- What has been life-draining for you since we last met?
 - What specific practices of ministry have been life-draining for you?
- What has been most challenging for you in your ministry since we last met?
- What has been most fruitful in your ministry since we last met?
- How has God been present to you since we last met?
- How have you been present to God since we last met?
- How are you practicing your self-care plan?
- To what do you sense God is calling you for this coming month, or beyond?
- How can I be in prayer for you today, and until our next meeting?

3. Exploring Vocational Identity and Growing in Understanding of Effective Ministry

- Our gifts guide us in discerning our calling (vocation: to call, summon).
- “Gifts are those abilities that seem to arise from within you without any training on conscious development. . . . Using them energizes us, feeds us at some deep level. . . . Skills, on the other hand, are learned and deliberately developed. . . . Living that primarily uses skills wears us out much of the time. Our inner resources get drained when we exercise skills too often; continuing to use skills primarily empties our internal reservoirs. . . . When we use our gifts more than our skills, we feel alive and energized. The inner resources seem boundless and constantly refilled rather than depleted.” – *Debra K. Farrington, Hearing with the Heart*
- Reflection on what is life-giving and what is life-draining for us helps us identify our gifts. Reflection on what is fruitful and what is challenging for us helps us identify our skills. Our calling is to that place where our skills and gifts intersect with one another, with the needs of the world, and with the work of the Church as guided by Scripture, tradition, reason, and the experience of the Holy Spirit.

4. Theological Reflection, Spiritual Nurture, and Covenant Building Relationships

- Practices informed by the discipline of spiritual direction are most helpful here.
 - Holy listening
 - Looking for the Holy Spirit’s movement in life and ministry
 - Noticing how God has been present to us
 - Noticing how we have (or have not) been present to God
 - Asking how it is with our souls
 - Engaging in practices of prayer and spiritual formation
- Modeling theological reflection from a Wesleyan perspective is also key.

Mentors are responsible for three areas:

1. Supervising the Candidate or Local Pastor’s progress in developing vocational goals and skills.
2. Sharing with the Candidate or Local Pastor in the mutual practice of servant leadership within the church.
3. Developing a covenant of mutual accountability for spiritual and theological growth and for decision-making in the pursuit of effective ministry.

4. Candidacy Mentor Guidelines including the Review of “Answering the Call: Candidacy Guidebook”

First Meeting with Mentor

- Review Candidate Checklist (Form 1) in the *DCOM Handbook*.
- Review *Christian As Minister* book if they have not already done so with their pastor.
- Review the Biblical DiSC™ Assessment and see what their gifts are.
- Review *Answering the Call: Candidacy Guidebook* (Note: A PDF copy of this text can be downloaded here: <http://tiny.cc/answeringthecall>) chapter 2: *What United Methodists Believe: Theological Task, General Rules, Connectionalism, Mission, and the Social Principles*. Then review chapter 3: *What United Methodists Believe: Grace and the Sacraments*.
- The intent of this conversation regarding these two chapters is to ensure candidates understand the beliefs and doctrine of the UMC.
- Discuss how to prepare for the next meeting:
 1. Read and be prepared to talk about chapters 4-6 of *Christian As Minister*. These chapters include *Spiritual Disciplines, Vocation, Call, and Gifts*, and *Same Spirit, Many Callings*.
 2. Assign a few examples of stories of God’s call in Scripture for the candidate to read and reflect upon.

Some Examples of God's Call in Scripture:

- Moses - Ex. 3:1-4:3 - Tried to talk God out of using him
- Ehud - Judges 3:12-30 - Made a plan (didn't just rush out and try to assassinate Eglon) and used his quirkiness (being left handed)
- Gideon - Judges 6:33-40 - We need affirmation from God
- Jephthah - Judges 11:29-40 - Don't jump into this too fast and make a rash vow to God
- Manoah - Judges 13:1:24 - God will offer us guidance but we might still want more
- Samuel - I Samuel 3:1-18 - Sometimes we hear his voice but don't recognize him (we need someone to tell us it is him)
- David - I Samuel 16:1:13 - God looks at you heart not appearance
- Isaiah - Isaiah 6:1-13 - Whom shall I send?
- Jeremiah - Jeremiah 1:4-10 - God has a plan for you to speak his word
- Jonah - Johah 1:1-17 - How long will you resist his calling (did you have to spend time in the belly of a great fish?)
- Matthew (Levi) - Matthew 9:9-13 - Saying yes to offer
- Peter/Andrew/James/John - Matthew 4:18-22 (Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11) - Drop and follow
- Mary - Luke 1:26-38 - I am the Lord's servant
- Andrew/Peter - John 1:35-42 - Come and see
- Philip and Nathanael - John 1:43-51 - You are the son of God
- Paul - Acts 9:1-19 - Dramatic knock you on your can call

Luke 5:1-11, New Living Translation

¹One day as Jesus was preaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee,^a great crowds pressed in on him to listen to the word of God. ²He noticed two empty boats at the water's edge, for the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets.

³Stepping into one of the boats, Jesus asked Simon,^b its owner, to push it out into the water. So he sat in the boat and taught the crowds from there.

⁴When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Now go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish."

⁵"Master," Simon replied, "we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, I'll let the nets down again." ⁶And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear! ⁷A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking.

⁸When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, "Oh, Lord, please leave me—I'm too much of a sinner to be around you."

⁹For he was awestruck by the number of fish they had caught, as were the others with him. ¹⁰His partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also amazed.

Jesus replied to Simon, "Don't be afraid! From now on you'll be fishing for people!"

¹¹And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.

3. Read chapter 6: *Same Spirit, Many Callings* (Deacons, Elders, Local Pastors) – Whatever track they are interested in put them in touch with someone in that track.

Second Meeting with Candidacy Mentor

- Discuss candidate's practices of spiritual discipline
- Discuss candidate's ongoing discernment of calling and their reading of call narratives
- Ensure that the candidate understands the roles of deacons, elders, and local pastors.
 - Give them contact information for one or more people who serve in the role(s) that they're considering for ministry.
- Discuss how to prepare for the next meeting:
 1. Read chapters 7 & 8 or Christian as minister. These chapters include *Yes, No, Maybe: Health and Wholeness* and *Yes, No, Maybe: Financial Literacy*
 2. Provide them with the annual conference financial guidelines for candidates (p. 43 of the *DCOM Handbook*.)

Third Meeting with Candidacy Mentor

- Discuss candidate's practices of self-care.
- Talk about candidate's spending and saving habits and ensure that they understand the financial guidelines of the annual conference.

C. DCOM INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Guidelines for Preparing for an Interview

- Allow thirty minutes ahead of each interview to review the file, the written documents, and the psychological assessment. Discuss concerns and issues that need to be addressed in the interview.
- Decide on the most important questions and who will ask each question (do not have the chair or one person ask all the questions).
- Decide on the size of the interview group. DCOM can subdivide for most interviews and then report back a recommendation to total committee for final decision.
- **Refer to the *DCOM Handbook* to make sure all items are in the file prior to the interview.**
- Decide how long the interview will be.

Role of the Chair

- Make sure that prior to scheduling an interview, the necessary papers have been submitted and the psychological assessment (unless this is introductory interview) is in the file.
- Welcome the candidate to the interview and introduce by name and church to the DCOM. State the purpose of the interview (for exploring candidacy, for certification, for provisional or associate membership, etc.)
- Ask members of the DCOM to introduce themselves.
- Ask someone to begin with a prayer.
- State the time available for the interview and be the time-keeper.
- The chair may want to ask the first question. A possible first question might be: “Tell us about yourself, your sense of call, and where God is leading you.”
- Be careful to involve the members of your committee in asking the questions. After the first question, the chair should focus on process and time-keeping rather than asking questions.
- Ask someone to close with prayer.

Things to Remember

- Decide how to begin the interview. Do not begin with the psychological assessment.
- Remember that the mentor may not speak in the interview.
- The candidate does most of the talking.

- Do not allow other committee members to answer questions or to engage in an argument or discussion with the candidate.
- This is not a therapy session.
- Recommendations should be determined by the whole committee after the interview, rather than individual committee members offering advice during the interview, and must be put in writing.
- Requirements are often better than recommendations.
- Decide how the decision of the DCOM will be communicated: having the candidate wait in the hall vs. a phone call and/or letter following the DCOM meeting.
- Evaluate the interview. What was effective in the interview? What would we do differently next time? Were any questions asked that were inappropriate?
- Remember the distinctions between candidates on the elder track and the deacon track. Ask appropriate questions.

1. DCOM Introductory Interview

Checklist Before Interview *(these things must be in the file prior to interview)*

- 1. Uses the DCOM Roster and Action Report to record and report to the Board of Ordained Ministry all actions of the DCOM.**
- 2. Written statement of call.**
- 3. State Criminal, Sex Offenders and Background Credit Check in file.**

Documents to be Copied and Distributed to Committee Members

Written Statement of Call

Suggested Questions

- Tell us about your journey, your call to ministry.
- Tell us about your leadership experiences in the church.
- What are your plans for the future... personally... for the church?
- Share about your devotional life. How are you growing spiritually?
- Tell us about your personal strengths... your areas of growth.
- What are your goals for the year ahead?
- What have you read that has been helpful in your spiritual life?
- What 2-3 characters in the Bible emulate your own spiritual life/journey?
- Talk about your family.
- Talk about positive and negative relationships in your life.
- What do you do to take care of yourself physically?

- Share a leadership experience you have had this year.
- Tell us about your seminary classes (for seminary students).
- Written Statement of Call – A brief narrative articulating sense of call and experience in the church. Statement should be approximately one page in length, describing the following:
 - How God is calling?
 - To what they are being called?
 - How they envision living out God's call
 - Current and previous involvement/leadership in local church and/or campus ministry.

Action Required

While a formal vote is not required, the district committee must recommend that the candidate be assigned a registered candidacy mentor and begin the exploring phase of the candidacy studies program. The committee could recommend delay of the assignment of a mentor and recommend more involvement in a local church.

**2. DCOM Interview for Candidacy Certification for
Ordained or Licensed Ministry**

Checklist Before Interview (*these things must be in the file prior to interview*)

- Completed Candidacy Information Packet
- Written Statement of Call.
- Psychological Assessment Report in file.
- Candidacy Mentor Report

Suggested Questions

- Tell us about your journey, your call to ministry.
- Share several highlights of your ministry this year.
- Tell us about your leadership experiences as a student.
- What were some of your frustrations in ministry this year?
- What are your plans for the future... personally... for the church?
- Share about your devotional life. How are you growing spiritually?
- Tell us about your personal strengths... your areas of growth.
- What are you doing to avoid burnout?
- What are your goals for the year ahead?
- Questions about theology and sacraments.

- What have you read that has been helpful in your spiritual life?
- What 2-3 characters in the Bible emulate your own spiritual life/journey?
- What did you learn about yourself in the psychological assessment process?
- Talk about your family.
- Talk about positive and negative relationships in your life.
- What are the most stressful aspects of ministry for you?
- What do you do to take care of yourself physically?
- Share a conflict situation in which you have been involved and how you dealt with it.
- Share a leadership experience you have had this year.
- Tell us about your seminary classes (for students).

Action Required

Individual written ballot, three-fourths majority required to certify

Criteria:

- Spiritual fitness
- Psychological fitness
- Physical fitness
- Potential for effectiveness

[If candidate for licensing as local pastor: upon certification, candidate is eligible to enroll in licensing school, if DS anticipates appointment.]

3. DCOM Interview for Licensing for Pastoral Ministry (Local Pastor)

Checklist Before Interview *(these things must be in the file prior to interview)*

- Certification as a candidate for ministry (see requirements for Candidacy Certification).
- Available appointment (has to have appointment in order to get their license)
- Completion of Licensing School (do you have copy of license on file)

Documents to be Copied and Distributed to Committee Members

None

Suggested Questions

- Tell us about your journey, your call to ministry.
- Share about your experience at Licensing School.

DCOM Interview Guidelines

- Share several highlights of your ministry this year.
- Tell us about your leadership experiences.
- What were some of your frustrations in ministry this year?
- What are your plans for the future... personally... for the church?
- Share about your devotional life. How are you growing spiritually?
- Tell us about your personal strengths... your areas of growth.
- What are you doing to avoid burnout?
- What are your goals for the year ahead?
- Questions about theology and sacraments.
- What have you read that has been helpful in your spiritual life?
- What 2-3 characters in the Bible emulate your own spiritual life/journey?
- What did you learn about yourself in the psychological assessment process?
- Talk about your family.
- Talk about positive and negative relationships in your life.
- What are the most stressful aspects of ministry for you?
- What do you do to take care of yourself physically?
- Share a conflict situation in which you have been involved and how you dealt with it.

Action Required

Majority vote with recommendation required to specify full time local pastor, part time local pastor, or student local pastor (note that “student local pastor” is for only those students from other annual conference not in the candidacy studies in Mississippi).

Criteria:

- Spiritual fitness
- Psychological fitness
- Physical fitness
- Readiness for ministry
- Potential for effectiveness

4. DCOM Interview for Renewal of Certified Candidacy (Annually)

Checklist Before Interview *(these things must be in the file prior to interview)*

Note: *The district committee must let the candidate know what is required. The candidate has the responsibility for requesting these reports be sent to the district committee.*

1. Annual recommendation of the candidate's home church charge conference in file
2. A written report from the candidacy mentor in file
3. An official transcript from the school, college, or seminary
4. A written report from the candidate on the service setting and/or progress in ministry with reference to ¶312.3 (i.e. growth in these areas since certification)
5. If the candidate is not in college, seminary, or a ministry setting, a letter from the local church pastor as to the candidate's involvement in the local church

Documents to be Copied and Distributed to Committee Members

#2 from above, Mentor Report

#4 from above, written report from candidate

#5 from above, written report from local church pastor (where applicable)

Suggested Questions

- Tell us about your journey, your call to ministry.
- Share several highlights of your ministry this year.
- Tell us about your leadership experiences as a student.
- What were some of your frustrations in ministry this year?
- What are your plans for the future... personally... for the church?
- Share about your devotional life. How are you growing spiritually?
- Tell us about your personal strengths... your areas of growth.
- What are you doing to avoid burnout?
- What are your goals for the year ahead?
- Questions about theology and sacraments.
- What have you read that has been helpful in your spiritual life?
- What 2-3 characters in the Bible emulate your own spiritual life/journey?
- Talk about your family.
- Talk about positive and negative relationships in your life.
- What are the most stressful aspects of ministry for you?

- What do you do to take care of yourself physically?
- Share a conflict situation in which you have been involved and how you dealt with it.
- Share a leadership experience you have had this year.
- Tell us about your classes.

Action Required

Individual written ballot, three-fourths majority required to renew.

Completion of Form 115 (copy in candidate file and copy to Office of Spiritual Leadership by March 15.)

5. DCOM Interview for Local Pastor Continuance (Annually)

Checklist Before Interview *(these things must be in the file prior to interview)*

Note: The district committee must let the local pastor know what is required. The local pastor has the responsibility for requesting these reports be sent to the district committee. Grade of C or above is required. D or F MUST BE RETAKEN AT THE LOCAL PASTOR EXPENSE.

1. Evidence of satisfactory progress in the required studies:
 - a. Local pastors preparing for provisional membership shall complete the Local Pastors' Licensing School and then present annually to the district committee on ordained ministry an official transcript from college, seminary, or Course of Study.
 - b. All other local pastors shall complete the Local Pastors' Licensing School and present annually until completion an official transcript from the five-year Course of Study (must be completed within eight years for Full Time Local Pastors and in 12 years for Part-time Local pastors, see ¶319. Full Time Local Pastors must complete four courses, each year (¶318.1). Part Time Local Pastors must complete two courses, each year (¶318.2)
2. For local pastors preparing for provisional membership:
 - A written report on the service setting ¶324.2 and progress in ministry with reference to ¶312.3 (i.e. growth in these areas since certification)
3. Annual written report of the clergy mentor.
4. Recommendation of the district superintendent.

Documents to be Copied and Distributed to Committee Members

#2 from above if applicable, written report from candidate

#3 from above, written Mentor Report

Suggested Questions

- Were you assigned a clergy mentor to work with you during the past year? If so, describe the relationship and what you worked on with your mentor. If not, is there someone you look upon as your mentor? Was this a helpful relationship? If not, why not? Can this committee be of any help in providing a more helpful mentor relationship?
- What was the most difficult challenge you faced as pastor this past year and how did you meet it? What did you learn from it? How do you feel you have grown as a result of it?
- Talk about your pastoral appointment? Has it been what you expected when you felt called to become a local pastor? In what ways have you been surprised? In what ways have you been affirmed that you are properly responding to God’s call in your life.
- What is the single most important thing you need at this point in time to become a better pastor?
- What was the greatest joy you experienced in the past year? Why do you feel this was so?
- How do you integrate your personal and professional responsibilities? Do you experience tensions between family and church expectations of you?

Action Required

Majority vote of the committee, specifying annually full time or part time.

6. DCOM Interview for Recommendation for Commissioning and Provisional Membership

Checklist Before Interview (these things must be in the file prior to interview)

Note: The district committee must let the local pastor know what is required. The local pastor has the responsibility for requesting these reports be sent to the district committee. Grade of C or above is required. D or F MUST BE RETAKEN AT THE LOCAL PASTOR EXPENSE.

1. Annual renewal of certified candidacy or license for pastoral ministry
2. Certified candidate or licensed local pastor for at least one year
3. **Met the educational requirements of the Mississippi Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (which include the educational requirements in ¶324 which include an completed undergraduate degree, degree from seminary accredited by University Senate or completed 60 hours of seminary work completed)**
4. **Or for those applying under ¶324.6: reached 40 years of age, completed the five (5) year Course of Study, and 32 semester hours of graduate theological**

study and met the educational requirements of the Mississippi Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (*which includes an completed undergraduate degree*)

5. **Up to date Psychological no more than 5 years old (*if it is older than 3 years old then schedule an up to date one for them.*)**
6. If this is also the interview for candidacy renewal or local pastor continuance, see the requirements on those pages.

Documents to be Copied and Distributed to Committee Members

Documents required for candidacy renewal or licensing continuance

Suggested Questions

- Each of us is called by God. Share about your specific call to ordained ministry?
- Questions that would integrate their theology with their practice of ministry.
- At this point, the Board is looking for **readiness for ministry**. Readiness will be evaluated in four areas: call, theology, personal growth and development, and practice of ministry.
- Questions that make the connection between their seminary/Course of Study education and their practice of ministry.
- How has your theology changed since you have been in seminary/Course of Study?
- Where/what are your support systems?
- What did you learn about yourself and about ministry through the CPE experience?
- Questions about itinerancy are appropriate for elder candidates.
- Questions about plans for identifying a ministry setting are appropriate for deacon candidates.

Action Required

Written ballot with three-fourths majority vote, recorded on the DCOM Roster and Action Report with a written narrative by the chair of the DCOM attached to the letter describing the candidate's areas of strength and areas of growth submitted directly to the Office of Spiritual Leadership by August 15.

Criteria:

- Areas of developing competencies
- Academic background
- Consider field education experiences, internships, other practice of ministry experiences

- Review how theological understanding has evolved since certification.
- Review carefully educational requirements. Contact the Office of Spiritual Leadership with any questions
- Readiness will be evaluated in four areas: call, theology, personal growth and development, and practice of ministry.

7. DCOM Interview for Recommendation for Associate Membership

Checklist Before Interview *(these things must be in the file prior to interview)*

1. Minimum forty years of age
2. Served four years as a local pastor in the Mississippi conference
2. Annual renewal of license for pastoral ministry with service as a full time local pastor for four years (or equivalent)
3. Completed the five year Course of Study - need transcript in their file
4. Completed at least sixty semester hours toward the Bachelor of Arts or equivalent degree in an accredited college or university listed by the University Senate
5. **Up to date Psychological no more than 5 years old** *(if it is older than 3 years old then schedule an up to date one for them.)*

Requirements for Recommendation

1. Recommended by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry and the Board of Ordained Ministry
2. Declared their willingness to accept continuing full-time appointment
3. Full-time appointment available
4. Satisfied the BOM regarding physical, mental, and emotional health (psychological reports, criminal background and credit checks, and reports of sexual misconduct and/or child abuse to provide additional information on the candidate's fitness for the ministry)

Documents to be Copied and Distributed to Committee Members

None, unless this is also the interview for local pastor continuance, then see page 20.

Suggested Questions

- All of us are called by God. Share about your specific call to licensed ministry?
- Questions that would integrate their theology with their practice of ministry.
- For associate membership, the Board is looking for **effectiveness in ministry**.

DCOM Interview Guidelines

Effectiveness will be evaluated in four areas: call, theology, personal growth and development, and practice of ministry.

- Questions that make the connection between their Course of Study education and their practice of ministry.
- How has your theology changed since you have been in the Course of Study?
- Where/what are your support systems?

Action Required

Majority vote, recorded on the DCOM Roster and Action Report with narrative submitted directly to the Office of Spiritual Leadership. The DCOM Roster and Action Report is due in Spiritual Leadership Office by August 15.

Criteria:

- Areas of competencies
- Academic background
- Consider current practice of ministry
- Review how theological understanding has evolved since licensing
- Effectiveness will be evaluated in four areas: call, theology, personal growth and development, and practice of ministry.

II. Guidelines and Policies



Mississippi Conference
of The United Methodist Church

Living Out
ThePOWER of We

A. GENERAL CLERGY GUIDELINES

1. Clergy Excellence

This is the baseline expectation for ALL clergy.

- **LOVING: GOD AND OTHERS (ENGAGE AND CONNECTING)**
 - High Christian Character in Every Aspect of Life and Ministry
 - Lives with Integrity
 - Faith and Authenticity
 - Demonstrates Holiness of Heart and Life
 - Attention to the Pastoral Needs of the COMMUNITY
 - Build Relationships
 - Mission and Evangelism
 - Ministry of Caring: Church
 - Pastoral Presence: Community
- **LEARNING: PERSONAL GROWTH and DISCIPLINING OTHERS (EQUIPPING)**
 - Clearly Communicated the Gospel and Wesleyan Tradition
 - Three-fold Fullness of God’s Grace
 - Wesleyan Quad and ability to convey to others
 - Preaching and Teaching
 - Life Long Learner
 - Active Participation in both required training (COS/ACOS/LS) as well as Continuing Education
 - Strength of Connection/Connectional
 - Conference/District Events, Mission Shares
- **LEADING: EVANGELISM AND ORDER (SENDING)**
 - Dedicated to Making Disciple of Jesus Christ
 - Vital and Viable Worship: Proclamation and Design
 - Generosity: Tithing and Cultivating Culture of Giving
 - Intentional Faith Formation: Small Groups, Spiritual Disciplines
 - Mission and Service
 - Development of a Culture of Call: Candidates and Priesthood of All Believers

- Able to Organize and Implement all Aspects of Church Order
 - Loving, Learning, Leading
 - Collaboration with Laity
 - Forming Teams and Team Building

2. Mississippi Conference Social Media Covenant

When using social media, we covenant as the Clergy of the Mississippi Annual Conference, to observe Wesley's General Rules and the Great Commandments:

- Do No Harm
- Do Good
- Stay in Love with God
- Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, strength, soul
- Love your neighbor as yourself

Remembering that we are stewards of not only our Social Media witness, but also that of the congregations we serve; we covenant to:

- Claim, maintain and monitor our congregation's social media profiles and websites, and take care to keep them current.
- When we are unsure about appropriate use of social media, we will ask for help. If we have any questions about a post, we will choose not to post it.
- We will be respectful, collegial, and intentional of other's privacy including the announcing of prayer concerns and where locations are concerned.
- We will be professional and maintain the integrity of the office of clergy through social media.
- We will protect the safety of congregants, minors, vulnerable adults, and ourselves.
- We will be friendly and fair—allowing others to friend us instead of vice versa.
- When posting photos, we will allow others to identify themselves.
- We will take care to adhere to Safe Sanctuary guidelines, adapting them to our personal and congregational social media practices.
- Before I Post, I will always ask, "Does this build up others or the Kingdom?"
- I will remember my Christian witness and allow my use of social media to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Stewardship and Boundaries

While Social Media is a gift, our Wesleyan theology reminds us that even good things must be consumed and used in moderation. When using social media, we must remain attentive to the stewardship of our time and the time of others. We will always maintain appropriate boundaries with others and take care to watch for the proverbial "slippery slope." We will use care in our language, as meaning

and tone are often lost in translation. Knowing this, it is important that we take the time to carefully craft words, especially when dealing with potentially sensitive topics. If we would hesitate to say something in person, it is probably best not to say it via social media. Remembering the Wesleyan commitment to care for others, we will be inclusive and abide in love through our use of social media. After all, “the greatest of these is love”.

Three Simple Rules for Social Media

Social media guidelines for MSAC United Methodists

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, lived by and taught three simple rules: Do no harm, do good, and stay in love with God. Those simple rules can be applied to many facets of life, including our use of social media. The Mississippi Conference supports the use of social media and believes it can be a valuable tool for ministry. We affirm these guidelines to help use social media in a manner that positively represents the church, the Gospel, and Jesus Christ and that helps us fulfill our Gospel imperatives to grow in love of God and neighbor, reach new people, and heal a broken world.

No. 1: Do No Harm One of the benefits of social media is that it provides the opportunity to share views, thoughts, joys, and concerns about all areas of life. Our social media contributions can be very effective tools for ministry if we apply caution before we post. We will be careful that our posts are not “doing harm” by insulting or damaging the reputation of others. We will make sure our posts are respectful and in good taste. And we will remember that everything we post—status updates, comments, tweets, blogs—becomes public immediately after we click “send” (even if we’re using a limited-access setting). We can’t take it back once it’s out there, so we will use discernment with everything we post.

No. 2: Do Good Social media can serve as an effective method of church networking and communicating. It has the potential to have an encouraging influence on our congregations and communities and to serve as a powerful tool for delivering the Gospel message to a large audience that extends beyond our contact list. It’s also a great way to share news about our church and ministry—and to invite others to join us in worship and service. Additionally, it can be a useful tool for obtaining feedback and ideas from our audience and can be used to gain insight for sermons, Bible study topics, worship times, and needs of the community. The “good” and positive uses of social media are endless.

No. 3: Stay in Love with God Social media is a great way to find meaningful devotional materials, thought-provoking blogs, inspiring worship videos and media resources, and current articles and tools for our ministry. Users have reported that their social media usage helps keep them informed and enthusiastic about their ministry on a daily basis. While it can definitely help us “stay in

love with God,” it also can be very distracting. We will make sure our use of social media does not occupy so much of our time that we are no longer fully participating in meaningful devotion, worship, Bible study, and conversations with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Social media can serve as a tool to aid, promote, and conduct discussions, studies, and devotional times but should not be our primary source of interaction with the world.

Things to Think About and Questions to Ask Ourselves

- Is the post “doing harm” to the reputation of the church, Christ, or another person or organization?
- Can the post be interpreted as harmful, offensive, rude, or distasteful? If I’m posting photos, do I have the permission of the people pictured?
- If using the post as an outlet to vent, what’s the most productive and least harmful way to seek resolution or reconciliation? Is there a less public, more respectful way to do so?
Can the post be described as “good”?
- Will it help the kingdom and fellow believers? How will it be perceived by non-believers? How will the post be received by people with different cultural or faith backgrounds?
- Are we communicating effectively by asking questions in addition to providing information?
- How is social media helping me to stay in love with God? How is it hindering me?
- How am I helping others stay in love with God by my social media contributions?
- How am I engaging in meaningful interactions that don’t involve social media? When is personal dialogue more beneficial?

Our character and faith are reflected in each post we make, so if we are unsure about something, we won’t post it.

3. Continuing Formation for Full Members and Local Pastors *Continuing Education and Spiritual Growth*

A clergy member’s continuing education and spiritual growth program shall include professional formation leaves at least one week each year and may include at least one month during one year of every quadrennium.

Formation and Spiritual Leave:

1. Leave is not part of the minister’s vacations and should be planned in consultation with their charges or other agencies to which they are appointed as well as the bishop, district superintendent, and annual conference continuing education committee.

2. A formational and spiritual growth leave may last up to six months while continuing to hold appointment in the local church.
3. Clergy members who have held full-time appointments for at least six years are granted a formational/spiritual growth leave.
4. A formational and spiritual growth leave must be approved by the committee on pastor-parish-relations, the church council, and the district superintendent.

Sabbatical

A sabbatical leave should be allowed for a program of study or travel approved by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

Sabbatical Leave:

1. Granted to associate and full connection members who have been serving in a full-time appointment for six consecutive full-time years, or in a less than full-time appointment equivalent to six consecutive full-time years, from the time of their reception into full or associate membership.
2. A sabbatical leave term is up to one year.
3. A written request, including plans for study or travel must be submitted to the Board of Ordained Ministry for the sabbatical leave.
4. Request of the sabbatical leave ordinarily should be made six months prior to the opening session of the annual conference.

4. Changes of Conference Relationship ¶352, ¶353, ¶354, ¶359

A change in conference relationship may occur by voluntary or involuntary leave of absence. Provisional, associate, or in full connection members of the annual conference who for sufficient reason choose to temporarily take leave from their ministerial appointment is considered as a voluntary leave of absence. On the other hand, the bishop and the district superintendents may request an involuntary leave of absence without the consent of the provisional, associate, or full member.

Reasons for Voluntary Leave of Absence

Personal Leave:

Granted to clergy who self-determined for personal reasons that they are temporarily unable or unwilling to continue in a ministry appointment.

1. An annual written request for a personal leave should be **made at least ninety days prior to annual conference** stating reason(s) for the request.
2. Personal leave shall not be granted for more than five years in succession. This period shall be counted as part of the eight-year limit for provisional members.

3. A written request at least six months prior to the session of annual conference is required to end a personal leave.
4. Failure to request an annual extension or do not indicate willingness to receive an appointment at the end of the five-year period of the personal leave, the provisions of administrative location may be invoked.

Family Leave:

Granted to clergy (due to an immediate family member's need for full-time care), are temporarily unable to continue in a ministry appointment.

1. An annual written request for a family leave should be **made at least ninety days prior to annual conference** stating reason(s) for the request.
2. Family leave shall not be granted for more than five years in succession. This period shall be counted as part of the eight-year limit for provisional members.
3. A written request at least six months prior to the session of annual conference is required to end a family leave.
4. Failure to request an annual extension or do not indicate willingness to receive an appointment at the end of the five-year period of a family leave, the provisions of administrative location may be invoked.

Transitional Leave:

Granted to provisional, associate, and full clergy members in good standing who are temporarily between appointments. Also, provisional or full member deacon in need to seek and secure an appointable primary position compensated or non-salaried; provisional, associate, or full member in need to transition from an extension ministry to another appointment, or from a local church appointment to an extension ministry appointment.

1. A quarterly substantiation shall be provided of his or her effort to obtain appointable position to the bishop and the Board of Ordained Ministry executive committee.
2. **Leave is up to twelve months with the approval of the bishop and the Board of Ordained Ministry executive committee.** This period shall be counted as part of the eight-year limit for provisional members.

Involuntary Leave of Absence

The bishop and the district superintendents may request an involuntary leave of absence without the consent of the provisional associate, or full member.

Involuntary leave of absence shall be approved annually upon written request of the district superintendents and shall not be approved for more than three years in succession.

When an end to the involuntary leave of absence is requested by the bishop and district superintendents, it shall be by written request at least six months prior to the session of annual conference.

If the district superintendents and bishop do not intend to appoint a person after three years on involuntary leave, they will notify both the Board of Ordained Ministry and the clergyperson at least six months prior to the session of the annual conference and pursue administrative location or initiate the complaint process, if it has not already been initiated.

Maternity or Paternity Leave

Maternity or paternity leave is not to exceed one-fourth of a year. The leave shall be granted by the bishop and the cabinet, and the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry to any local pastor, provisional member, associate member, or clergy member in full connection who so requests it at the birth or arrival of a child into the home for purposes of adoption.

Medical Leave Due to Medical and Disabling Conditions

A medical leave may be granted by the bishop to clergy who are members of the annual conference who are unable to perform their ministerial duties between sessions of the annual conference. However, a medical leave may be granted upon reasonable and appropriate investigation of the case including accommodation provisions by the joint committee on clergy medical leave of the annual conference, or the party responsible for managing clergy medical leaves in accordance with the annual conference's policies, which will report its findings to the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the conference board of pensions.

5. Voluntary Leave of Absence Process and Requirements

The Board of Ordained Ministry requires the following for those on any Leave of Absence:

1. Submit a written request

- i. To Initiate Leave: request should be submitted to the Board of Ordained Ministry at least ninety days prior to annual conference, including specific reasons for the leave (§353.3). **Also include the appropriate itineracy form for either itineracy compliance, limited itineracy request or limited service request as appropriate to your desires in returning. One of these signed forms must be included with your written request to both BOOM and your District Superintendent.**
- ii. To End Leave: formal written request should be submitted to the Board of Ministry at least six months prior to annual conference (§353.1) outlining how you fulfilled the goals of your leave and your plan for healthy and

effective clergy leadership for the future. A copy of this request should be sent directly to your District Superintendent. **Also include the appropriate itineracy form for either itineracy compliance, limited itineracy request or limited service request as appropriate to your desires in returning. One of these signed forms must be included with your written request to both BOOM and your District Superintendent.**

2. Submit to an Interview with the Conference Relations Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry:
 - i. In order to be granted a leave.
 - ii. In order to end a leave.
 - iii. By request of the Board of Ordained Ministry.
3. Submit a “Leave of Absence Annual Report” to the Office of Spiritual Leadership every year during a leave of absence. The annual report will also serve as the required annual written request to continue a leave of absence, which shall not be granted for more than five years in succession. (§353.3).
4. Report to a Charge Conference (§353.8). A copy of the charge conference report must be given to the Board of Ordained Ministry by attaching it to the “Leave of Absence Annual Report.” The charge conference report must also be shared with the charge and the pastor in charge and must include all marriages performed, baptisms administered, funerals conducted and other ministerial activities.
5. Submit to a new psychological exam and background check after five years on a leave (this includes signing a release for psychological report and HIPAA) or by request of the Board of Ordained Ministry. You are responsible for the cost of the psychological exam by a Conference approved psychologist.
6. Additional Note:

Voluntary Leave of Absence shall count as a part of the eight-year limit for provisional members (§353).

6. Candidacy Mentor’s Report to the DCOM

The central purpose of the Candidacy Mentor’s report to the DCOM is to describe the issues examined in the candidacy process as part of the vocational decision for licensed or ordained ministry. The report should be brief and provide useful information to the DCOM and the candidate.

The Candidacy Mentor’s report to the DCOM is to be prepared prior to the DCOM meeting, early enough that you can share it with the candidate and include any modifications that you wish to make.

The report can be in narrative form and will probably be one or two pages in length. The following are guidelines for what factors need to be included in your report.

- What are this person's gifts, grace and promise of potential effectiveness in the licensed or ordained ministry? This could include:
 1. Passion for studying and sharing God's Word and work
 2. Academic and educational potential
 3. Interpersonal skills bonded in compassion and kindness
 4. Leadership skills and potential
- Can this person articulate their experience of the Holy Spirit?
- Does this person feel a call from God into the ordained or licensed ministry?
- How has this person responded to information about the calling and the work of ordained or licensed ministry in the United Methodist Church?
- What is this person's self-understanding in relation to a possible career in the ministry?
- How does this person respond to and use feedback from others?
- What Spiritual Disciplines does this person utilize in their daily/continuing journey with God?
- What personal considerations (family, local church, work or other) are important for this person in relation to the licensed or ordained ministry?
- What issues do the candidate and DCOM need to explore together in the meeting?
- What are your thoughts about welcoming this person into a connectional system?
- What other factors, comments or suggestions about this individual can you offer that are important for the district committee's consideration of this person?
- Has this person kept the covenant which the two of you made, including meeting regularly, etc.?

At the end of the report, after your signature, attach the following statement to be signed by the candidate:

"I have read the report of my candidacy mentor and authorize its release to the district committee and board of ordained ministry."

B. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH GUIDELINES FOR BOARDS OF MINISTRY

In the process of selecting candidates for ministry District Committees on Ordained Ministry (DCOM) and Boards of Ordained Ministry (BOM) must discern each potential candidate's "gifts, evidence of God's grace, and usefulness" (Paras. 301.2 and 666.8, see also Para 605.7, *2016 Discipline*). The constant pastoral concern for both the Church and candidates is to maximize effectiveness in ministry (on the positive end of the continuum) and minimize ineffectiveness and harm to all involved, both now and in the future.

These mental and behavior health guidelines seek to describe the boundaries of healthy functioning, beyond which distortions of health become serious problems for the church and its ministry as well as for the person involved. The central question is how experiences impact a person's inner being or spirit and how a person's inmost spirit transforms behavior patterns (I Cor. 13, Romans 12). Concern about a person's mental and emotional status and behavioral patterns, including mental processing, emotional states, identity, personal boundaries, and responses to stress, are part of our pastoral concern in selecting candidates.

Since our ministries are treasures of God in earthen vessels (2 Cor 4:7), we seek to discern how human vessels can be refined and strengthened in order to be more durable and useful in the ministry of Christ in the world. Where negatives exist, can they be sufficiently healed and transformed with the available resources to enable a candidate to incarnate love in ministry? Where positives exist, can they be used to strengthen trust, enable safety, and express grace and love in relationships without giving in to temptations and distortions?

To address these concerns, the Division of Ordained Ministry's Advisory Committee on Psychological Assessment offers the following Behavioral Health Guidelines as a resource in candidacy selection. **As the title suggests, these are general guidelines rather than hard-and-fast regulations.** They relate to behavioral health issues, broadly defined, that our Committee believes are critical to effectiveness in ministry and the avoidance of misconduct. Our primary purposes in this effort:

- To guide and advise DCOMs and BOMs.
- To assist BOMs in establishing their own standards.
- To provide a vehicle for BOMs to raise questions about standards.
- To flag areas of concern.

Our Committee proposes standards in the categories listed below, along with brief rationales explaining our sense of their importance. Most candidates will meet these standards immediately, but some may evidence critical behaviors or conditions that would require further exploration. Questions are provided to

facilitate this exploration. If the results continue to raise concerns, the Board or Committee may need to take some action, such as postponement of the candidacy process (for further exploration or remediation) or, in serious cases, permanent disqualification. Each recommendation or guideline requires interpretation on a case-by-case basis. The Advisory Committee on Psychological Assessment welcomes feedback regarding these guidelines. Address correspondence to: Candidacy Assessment Office, Division of Ordained Ministry, Post Office Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203-0007.

Definitions:

Category: A general area of concern.

Standard: A minimum requirement necessary to address the area of concern.

Rationale: An explanation of the standard.

Critical Behavior: A specific behavior or condition that indicates the standard has not been met.

Exploratory Question: A recommended question which may assist in assessing whether a critical behavior does indeed violate the standard.

Recommendation: A decision recommended when exploratory questions indicate that a standard is not met.

1. Category: Physical Health

Standard: **The candidate demonstrates no obvious physical health concerns.**

Rationale: Neglect of physical health is known to impair function in pervasive ways. Responsible preventive health care maximizes the functional abilities of the individual and minimizes the health care costs to the annual conference.

The physical health concerns listed below may have a strong psychological component, and may reflect psychological disorders.

Critical Behaviors: (considered in cultural context)

- Morbid obesity (Body weight 100 lbs. or more above maximum ideal weight)
- Markedly underweight (body weight at least 15% or more below the candidate's healthy minimum weight)
- An un-treated, chronic, medical condition such as hypertension, diabetes, etc.
- Non-compliance with prescribed medical treatment for any condition

Exploratory Questions:

- How do you evaluate your overall physical health? What steps do you take to care for your physical health? When was your last medical checkup?

- Do you have any current or chronic health problems? If so, what steps are you taking to care for yourself?
- How does your physical health impact your ability to be an effective minister?

Recommendation: Candidates should be able to articulate their plans for physical health care. Candidates with medical problems should demonstrate medical consultation and cooperation with treatment plans.

2. Category: Management of Personal Finances

Standard: The candidate is not in debt so as to embarrass the Church.

Rationale: While this may not, on the surface, seem to be a behavioral health issue, personal financial management has to do with general maturity, including the ability to set priorities, maintain discipline and delay gratification.

Difficulties in this area raise concerns about judgment and impulse control.

Critical Behaviors:

- The candidate has been reported to a credit bureau for nonpayment.
- The candidate has a history of a personal bankruptcy.
- The candidate has had money judgments filed against him/her.

Exploratory Questions:

- Describe the history (sequence) of your difficulties.
- Are there extenuating circumstances? (Possible mitigating circumstances: major medical expenses, divorce. NOTE: Business failures and unemployment are not necessarily mitigating conditions, but require further exploration.)

Recommendation: If the candidate has a history of having been reported to the credit bureau, then three years of a good credit history is recommended. If the candidate has a history of a personal bankruptcy, then five years of good credit is recommended. If the candidate has a history of money judgments, then it is recommended that the judgments be satisfied prior to continuance.

3. Category: Mental Illness

Standard: The candidate has no current or recurring disqualifying psychological impairment.

Critical Behaviors:

- The candidate has received a diagnosis of bipolar disorder, schizophrenia or any other psychotic disorder.
- The candidate has received a diagnosis of a personality disorder.
- The candidate has been hospitalized for psychiatric treatment.

- The candidate has been prescribed psychiatric medications (including antidepressants and anxiolytics)
- The candidate has attempted suicide.

Exploratory Questions:

- Describe the history (sequence) of your treatment for your difficulties.
- What specific potential vulnerabilities do these difficulties create for your ministry, and how do you see yourself protecting both yourself and the people you would serve?
- Would you be willing to authorize communication between those who have treated you and this committee?

Recommendation: The more severe the psychiatric impairment, the more important the need for direct consultation with the treating mental health practitioners. The Board may wish to bring in its own mental health consultants in order to evaluate the candidate's situation. The candidate has a history of remission from any moderately-to-severely impairing conditions for not less than five years without necessity for psychiatric hospitalization, though treatment may continue. The candidate has a history of responsible management of any mildly-to-moderately impairing conditions for not less than five years, and has an effective treatment program in place.

4. Category: Alcohol Abuse/Dependence

Standard: The candidate demonstrates no present abuse or dependence upon alcohol.

Rationale: Alcohol abuse (short-term intoxication) and/or alcohol dependence (chronic over involvement) are mental disorders known to impair functioning in pervasive ways. Candidates who suffer from these disorders will have greatly limited effectiveness and are at much greater risk for professional misconduct.

Critical Behaviors:

- A history of drinking to the point of intoxication.
- A history of arrest for driving while intoxicated.
- A history of an arrest for public intoxication.
- Complaints by family or others regarding the candidates' use of alcohol.

Exploratory Questions:

The "CAGE" questions below may be helpful: two or more "yes" answers predict alcoholism with about 75% accuracy.

1. Have you ever felt you should Cut down on your drinking?
2. Have people Annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?

3. Have you ever felt bad or Guilty about your drinking?
4. Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover? (Eye-opener)

Where there is a history of alcohol use, the following questions may be helpful:

- Are you currently abstinent, and if so for how long?
- If you are abstinent, how and why were you able to become abstinent?
- What are you currently doing to maintain abstinence? (Possible answers: Alcoholics Anonymous, outpatient dependency counseling, other counseling)

Recommendation: Consider requiring a minimum of one year's sobriety prior to certification for candidacy.

If any of the critical behaviors are recent (within five years), then consider requiring a formal "substance abuse evaluation" by a certified chemical dependency treatment specialist.

If there is clear evidence of alcohol dependence at any time, then consider requiring participation in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or equivalent program and continued involvement in such a program for not less than five years prior to certification for candidacy.

5. Category: Chemical Abuse/Dependence

Standard: The candidate demonstrates no present abuse or dependence upon either nonprescribed pharmacologic agents or prescribed medications.

Rationale: Chemical abuse and/or dependence are mental disorders known to impair functioning in pervasive ways. Candidates who suffer from these disorders will have greatly limited effectiveness and are at much greater risk for professional misconduct.

Critical Behaviors:

- Any use of illegal or non-prescribed substances, including but not limited to marijuana, cocaine, hashish, hallucinogens, sedatives, amphetamines or other stimulants.
- Misuse of prescribed pharmacological agents of any type

Exploratory Questions:

- What is your history of chemical abuse or dependency?
- Are you currently abstinent, and if so for how long?
- If you are abstinent, how and why were you able to become abstinent?
- What are you currently doing to maintain abstinence? (Possible answers: Narcotics Anonymous, outpatient chemical dependency counseling, other counseling)

Recommendation: If the history reveals occasional and/or experimental use limited to an adolescent period, then consider requiring not less than five years of sobriety prior to certification for candidacy.

If the history reveals any adult use of illegal substances, or any misuse of prescribed pharmacological agent, then consider requiring a formal chemical dependency assessment from a credentialed chemical dependency treatment specialist. A period of not less than five years of sobriety prior to certification for candidacy would also be appropriate.

6. Category: Legal (*General*)

Standard: The candidate shall be respectful of the law and evidence legal responsibility in personal habits.

Rationale: This may not, on the surface, appear to be a behavioral health issue, but similar issues around maturity, discipline, and judgment come into play. In addition, one's approach toward the law often is a barometer of one's respect for authority generally, and unresolved authority issues may significantly hamper clergy effectiveness.

Critical Behaviors:

- More than three moving violations (traffic) within the preceding three years
- An arrest or conviction for any misdemeanor
- An arrest or conviction for any felony

Note: *“Conviction” includes a “no contest” plea without admission of guilt, deferred adjudication and/or probation.*

Recommendation: Candidates may have no more than three moving violations (traffic) within the preceding three years. A history of arrest for any misdemeanor or felony requires investigation of the circumstances of the arrest including review of the offense (police) report. Results of the investigation may require an appropriate period without history of difficulty or further arrest prior to certification for candidacy or continuance. A history of conviction for any felony is, under most circumstances, permanently disqualifying.

7. Category: Family Violence

Standard: The candidate has a history of resolving family conflict in a nonviolent manner.

Critical Behaviors:

- Any report or complaint (against the candidate) of family violence.
- Any history that a law enforcement unit has been called to the candidate's residence because of his/her behavior.

- Any report or complaint (against the candidate) to protective services for inappropriate treatment of children or adults.
- Any history of protective orders against the candidate.

Recommendation: The candidate shall ordinarily have not less than three years without reports as described.

The presence of any critical behaviors requires an investigation into the facts and circumstances and an appropriate period may be required prior to certification for candidacy or continuance. The candidate shall acknowledge his/her behaviors and may have entered into family counseling or other appropriate treatment.

8. Category: Divorce or Infidelity

Standard: If the candidate has been divorced, or if there is evidence of infidelity, the candidate must have done sufficient exploratory and reparative work to demonstrate and/or articulate the impact of the health of married life on quality of ministry.

Critical Behaviors:

- A divorce in the past three years
- A history of having been married more than twice
- A history of infidelity

Exploratory Questions:

If a recent divorce:

- What steps have you taken to understand the nature of your own contribution to the dissolution of the marriage?
- What steps have you taken to move yourself through a healthy grief process?

If multiple marriages:

- What steps have you taken to identify and deal with any dysfunctional patterns in intimate relationships?

In either case:

- Have you maintained fidelity in marriage? If not, what steps have you taken to understand your actions and decisions so as to safeguard current or future marriage covenants?

Recommendation: If there is a recent divorce (within 2-3 years), then the candidate should be able to articulate any dysfunctional patterns in intimate relationship and have taken steps to safeguard current or future marriage covenants. If there is insufficient evidence that sufficient exploratory or reparative work has been done, the Board may wish to recommend or require a course of psychotherapy and /or other conditions, such as a delay of one year.

9. Category: Sexual Misconduct

Standard: The candidate has no history, or complaints, of sexual misconduct or charges of sexual harassment having been brought against him/her. See addendum for definitions.

Rationale: Candidates must model in their personal life and behavior a healthy and sacred view of sexuality so as not to misuse the clerical office.

Critical Behaviors:

- A history of complaints or charges (either formal or informal) of sexual harassment
- A history of improper sexual conduct

Exploratory Questions:

- Have you ever had a complaint or charge (either formal or informal) of sexual harassment or misconduct brought against you? (If so, describe the circumstances)
- What steps have you taken to insure that the behavior does not occur in the future?

Recommendation: Consider further assessment.

The Board of Ministry should explore in an interview with the committee the steps the candidate has taken to identify and understand and deal with the psychological vulnerabilities that contributed to the behavior, and what safeguards the candidate has put into place to guard against the possibility of similar behavior in the future.

The candidate should have no evidence of sexual misconduct for a minimum of three years.

A candidate must articulate a plan to insure that such behavior is unlikely to recur. This plan may include intensive psychotherapy and/or ongoing supervision, or other conditions required by the Board.

10. Category: Legal – Sex Related Crimes

Standard: The candidate shall have no history that poses risk of sexual harassment, sexual assault to adults or children, nor history of any sex-related offense.

Critical Behaviors:

- Treatment for any sex-related crime.
- Arrest, conviction, or written accusation for any sex-related crime.
- Written allegations of any sex-related crime

Recommendation: If the candidate has committed a sex-related crime, he or she should be permanently disqualified. Certainly the candidate is entitled to be considered innocent until proven guilty, so a written accusation or arrest alone is not sufficient for disqualification, but either one would raise significant questions which the Board would need to explore in depth.

The recommendation for permanent disqualification reflects the massive legal exposure an Annual Conference would take on were it to place in ministry a known sex offender. Behind that reality,

however, is the awareness that currently available treatments for such offenses are of limited utility, with high rates of recidivism.

11. Definitions of Improper Sexual Conduct

1. Sexual Harassment

Includes solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct consisting of a single act, or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts, by a candidate toward another individual, that are sexual in nature and occur whether in connection with the candidate's clerical activities or personal life, and that are perceived and made known by the individual to be unwelcome, offensive, or create a hostile environment for the affected individual, regardless of the candidate's intent.

2. Sexual Impropriety

Sexual impropriety is deliberate or reasonably perceived, comments, gestures, or physical acts of a sexual nature that include but are not limited to:

- a. Behavior, gestures, or expressions which may reasonably be interpreted or perceived as seductive or sexually demeaning,
- b. Making comments about an individual's body,
- c. Making sexual comments to an individual,
- d. Making comments about an individual's potential sexual performance,
- e. In a counseling relationship, requesting details of a person's sexual history *or preferences* when not clinically indicated for the type of consultation,
- f. Requesting a date,
- g. Initiating conversation regarding the actual or perceived sexual problems, preferences, or fantasies of either party,
- h. Kissing
- i. Sharing or displaying pornographic material with another person.

3. Deviant Sexual Behaviors

Deviant sexual behaviors include, but are not limited to, behaviors such as pedophilia, exhibitionism or other paraphilias, and preoccupation with pornographic materials for sexual stimulation and gratification.

C. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY GUIDELINES AND PROCESS FOR CANDIDATES, LOCAL PASTORS AND PROVISIONAL MEMBERS OF THE MISSISSIPPI ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Excessive debt can impede life's goals, especially effective ministry. All appointed ministers should counsel their youth on the importance of sound financial management but particularly youth who show the gifts and graces for ministry. As individuals begin the process of becoming ministers in the United Methodist Church, however, it is incumbent on the District Committees on Ministry to ensure that the individuals are mindful of their responsibility to effectively manage their debt. Inordinate debt held by candidates for ordination or consecration may be considered grounds for deferment by the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. Therefore, the following guidelines are presented.

1. Upon beginning the **Candidacy process**, all candidates will receive a copy of these guidelines and submit information for a credit check.
2. Minimum Financial Standards
 - a. A status of good credit above 75%
 - b. No more than \$50,000 in debt, excluding mortgages
 - c. No more than \$10,000 in credit card or unsecured loan debt in addition to debt in 2b
 - d. No bankruptcies, collections, tax liens or judgements within 10 years
3. Candidates who DO NOT MEET THE MINIMUM STANDARDS will be required to begin a process of financial review with the District Committee on Ministry that will include:
 - a. A written and detailed recording of all current debt
 - b. A written and documented meeting through the UM Foundation to develop a written budget and financial plan to pay down the debt
 - c. Documented progress of adherence to the financial plan detailing regular payments
 - d. A written statement of personal understanding of the importance of Stewardship and financial faithfulness in ministry
4. FINANCIAL REVIEW shall be a part of the candidate's annual meeting with the District Committee on Ministry.
 - a. LOCAL PASTORS: Successful and consistent PROGRESS will be required to continue licensed appointment.
 - b. PROVISIONAL MEMBERS: Successful and consistent PROGRESS will be required prior to recommendation by the DCOM for Provisional Membership.
5. FINANCIAL REVIEW shall continue for all PROVISIONAL MEMBERS under the supervision of the Board of Ordained Ministry. Successful and consistent

PROGRESS will be required prior to recommendation by the BOOM for Ordination or Consecration.

6. All Candidates under FINANCIAL REVIEW will submit to an updated credit check at the request of the District Committee on Ministry or the Board of Ordained Ministry as needed as part of the plan for financial accountability. Credit Checks may be at the expense of the candidate.

PLEASE NOTE:

7. For persons who are beginning their candidacy, they will adhere to the guidelines effective immediately, August 29, 2019.
8. For persons who are currently already relating to the BOM (not DCOM level), we are proposing a Financial Review on a case by case basis using the current guideline debt ceiling. However, we are empowering the Finance Teams to review each candidate's interview content including debt plan, narrative, and (proposed) progress to determine the Finance Team's recommendation to the full Board. This stipulation will expire in 2022 and, without intentions to bind future Boards, is aimed at meeting those persons who are already in process with the BOM.

D. EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The United Methodist Church is proud of our historic commitment to an educated clergy leadership. It is the responsibility of all clergy to be life-long learners. It is the responsibility of the DCOM to provide an annual review of the education of local pastors and candidates and to provide the DS with information on progress to be shared with the local church. It is the responsibility of the DS to provide accountability for ongoing education for associate members, provisional and clergy in full connection. They are strongly encouraged to share progress with the appointed local church.

III. Clergy Process in the **Mississippi** **Conference** of **The United** **Methodist Church**



Mississippi Conference
of The United Methodist Church

Living Out
ThePOWER of We

A. GENERAL EDUCATION GUIDELINES

- **Local Pastor Licensing School**

Once a person is a certified candidate, they should enroll in licensing school at the Center for Ministry at Millsaps College. They must finish licensing school before they can register for Course of Study. For information on licensing school go to the website www.centerforministry.com

- **Local Pastor BASIC Course of Study**

- Full-time Local Pastors are required to complete 4 COS classes within a year. Full-time Local Pastors must attend Course of Study at a University Senate-approved seminary.
- Part-time Local Pastors are only required to complete 2 COS classes a year. Part-time Local Pastors are encouraged to attend the Mississippi Course of Study at The Center for Ministry at Millsaps College.

- **Part Time Local Pastor Continued Service**

- Part time local pastors may continue to serve after age 72 provided that they remain part time, continue course of study work, and agree to pay all of their education expenses personally.

This age waiver does not apply to full time local pastors, associate members, or those in full connection.

- **Student Local Pastors**

Those enrolled in seminary are required to take a minimum of 15 hours a year. In order to qualify for Ministerial Education Funds, a minimum of 9 hours a semester are required.

- **Local/Student Pastor Educational Probation**

Should a Local/Student Pastor fail to complete the required COS/ACOS classes within the year, the DCOM can place them on Probation the following year, detailing in the DCOM Roster and Action Report that they must complete the required COS/ACOS classes the next year. Failure a second year leads to discontinuance. In extenuating circumstances, DCOMs, in consultation with the Office of Spiritual Leadership, may develop alternative plans.

- **Local/Student Pastor Educational Discontinuance and Reapplication**

- Should a Local Pastor be discontinued for failure to comply with educational requirements, they are only eligible to reapply through the same district of their discontinuance. The candidate, DCOM Chairperson, District Superintendent and Director of the MSAC Course of Study shall develop a written covenant outlining a number of COS/ACOS classes that must be

completed prior to consideration for reinstatement. **The COS candidate will then be enrolled as a “Special Student” by the COS Director for enrollment in the required classes.** Following successful completion (C or higher) of the classes in the agreed time frame, the candidate may reapply for License upon the recommendation by the church Charge Conference and meeting with the DCOM. DCOMs will then take action to recommend them for Licensing.

- Should a **Student Pastor be discontinued** for failure to comply with educational requirements, they are only eligible to reapply through the same district of their discontinuance. The candidate, DCOM Chairperson, District Superintendent and Director of Spiritual Leadership shall develop a written covenant outlining a number of hours that must be completed prior to consideration for reinstatement. Following successful completion (C or higher) of the classes in the agreed time frame, the candidate may reapply for License upon the recommendation by the church Charge Conference and meeting with the DCOM. DCOMs will then take action to recommend them for Licensing.

- **Candidates who Transfer from Another Denomination WITHOUT ORDINATION** will be required to become certified candidates and then receive a license. They must also submit transcripts of all biblical and master’s level education to be audited by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Following this audit, the Office of Spiritual Leadership will meet with the candidate to develop a plan for the appropriate Course of Study classes that must be taken.
- **Candidates who Transfer from Another Denomination WHO ARE ORDAINED** will be required to become certified candidates and then receive a license. They must also submit transcripts of all biblical and master’s level education to be audited by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Following this audit, the Office of Spiritual Leadership will meet with the candidate to develop a plan for the appropriate Course of Study and Advanced Course of Study classes that must be taken to apply for Provisional Membership. Then following successful completion of the Residency in Ministry program, they may apply to have their order recognized by the MSAC.
- **Associate Members, Provisional Elders, Provisional Deacons, Full Elders, Full Deacons, and Local Pastors who have completed COS** are required to participate in **Continuing Education**. Full-time Pastors are required to complete 2 CEUs a year and Part-time Pastors are required to complete 1 CEU a year. A max of 2 CEUs can carryover. Advanced Course of Study classes are accepted. Advanced degrees, such as Master’s and Doctoral degrees, are valued at 6 CEUs and can serve to meet the requirement for 3 calendar years. Contact the office of Spiritual Leadership with questions or submissions.

B. MSAC “JUMP START” FOR MINISTRY

Initial Training for Supply Pastors in the Mississippi Annual Conference

Out of concern raised around placing “unformed” Supply Pastors in our pulpits, the Office of Spiritual Leadership and the Center for Ministry created in 2020 a process to provide some initial spiritual formation and a clear process for “fast tracking” these leaders into the our process and our United Methodist ethos.

1. Initial Interview with CMS to discern personal discipleship and leadership potential. We encourage you to use the MSAC Clergy Excellence definition to help in this discernment.
 - a. Provide and Collect the forms for Biographical information, Candidate Disclosure, Credit Check and Background Check. Contact the Office of Spiritual Leadership to set up a psychological evaluation
 - b. Obtain the Candidacy Checklist and next steps for beginning the process as soon as they are able.
 - c. Provide information to complete the Jump Start program
 - d. Provide information about the online ethics training
2. ***JUMP START is an online program with 8-10 Modules that will have both online and written portions. This will be executed by the CFM and “Supervised” by the Office of Spiritual Leadership. A report of completion will be presented to the CMS. Modules may include***
 1. ***Welcome to Supply Ministry: Dos and Don’ts***
 2. ***United Methodist Sacraments***
 3. ***Wesleyan Theology of Grace***
 4. ***Wesleyan Theology for Sin, Salvation, Christian Perfection***
 5. ***Local Church Polity: Committees, Structures, Lay Leadership***
 6. ***Annual Conference Connection***
 7. ***Connectional Giving and Generosity***
 8. ***Do No Harm -Pastoral Care 101***
 9. ***Creating Safe Spaces: Safe Sanctuaries and Social Media***
 10. ***Keeping Track: Charge Conference, Statistical and Fund Balance Reports***
3. FOLLOW-UP Interview with the CMS to review the Psychological Report, Credit and Background Checks, Ethics Completion, and the Jump Start Report. This is ideally the EARLIEST point for assignment as Supply Pastor.
4. Complete the Early Admission Application for Licensing School for those who are immediately entering the pulpit. CONTINUE WITH THE DCOM AND CANDIDACY PROCESS.

Policy for Local Pastors Taking College Classes

The Book of Discipline (BOD) states that a (LP) should be enrolled in (COS) or correspondence course or pre-theological courses. This means that a LP attending undergrad classes with the intention of continuing on to seminary (or working towards an undergrad degree for associate membership) is not required by BOD to take COS classes. However, they are still under the time limit set by the BOD (A Full Time LP (FTLP) has 8 years, a Part Time LP (PTLP) has 12 years to finish their educational requirements – the time starts once they are a certified candidate.

The Mississippi Annual Conference Board of Ordained Ministry sets the following as our minimum requirements:

FTLP Dually Enrolled Minimum:

12 semester hours of academic college credit per semester and two COS summer courses at Emory. Thus, finishing undergraduate degree and 1/2 COS requirements in five years. Will leave three years to finish the other ten COS courses.

PTLP Dually Enrolled Minimum:

12 semester hours of academic college credit per semester and one COS class during the summer. Thus, finishing undergraduate degree and 1/4 COS requirements in five years. Will leave three years to finish the other 15 COS courses.

*** There is some concern about this minimum being too much to ask of our local pastors. Can they take 12 hours, serve a church full time (or part-time and have another job) and have a family? However, we feel it would be doing the churches a disservice to allow a LP to serve without continuing their theological education. To that end, we are lowering the expectation of 4 COS classes for FTLP to 2 and 2 COS classes for PTLP to 1 and suggest taking the COS classes during the summer sessions.*

C. BASIC COURSE OF STUDY

- Students must begin with COS 121 and 122. If you have specific questions about the Basic Course of Study (COS) Curriculum, you can contact either Rev. Paige Swaim-Presley, Director of the Center for Ministry at Millsaps College, at swaimpk@millsaps.edu.
- NO MORE THAN 10 of the 20 Classes may be taken online, including hybrid classes.
- Students are expected to provide annual transcripts during their DCOM interviews for their files.

Year One	Date of Completion
COS 121: Bible I: Introduction	
COS 122: Theological Heritage I: Introduction	
COS 123: Formation and Discipleship	
COS 124: Transformative Leadership	
Year Two	Date of Completion
COS 221: Bible II: Torah and Israel's History	
COS 222: Theological Heritage II: Early Church	
COS 223: Worship and Sacraments	
COS 224: Administration and Polity	
Year Three	Date of Completion
COS 321: Bible III: Gospels	
COS 322: Theological Heritage III: Medieval/Reformation	
COS 323: Congregational Care	
COS 324: Preaching	
Year Four	Date of Completion
COS 421: Bible IV: Prophets, Psalms, and Wisdom	
COS 422: Theological Heritage IV: Wesleyan Movement	
COS 423: Mission	
COS 424: Ethics	
Year Five	Date of Completion
COS 521: Bible V: Acts, Epistles, and Revelation	
COS 522: Theology in the Contemporary Church	
COS 523: Evangelism	
COS 524: Theological Reflections: Practice of Ministry	

D. COURSE OF STUDY (COS) SCHOLARSHIP

Persons licensed as licensed pastors who are not provisional members shall continue in college, in a program of theological education at an approved seminary, or course of study (§ 318, Book of Discipline).

What is the purpose of a COS Scholarship?

The purpose of the COS scholarship is to enable the Church to unify and expand its program of financial support for the recruitment and education of licensed local pastors and associate members.

Who is eligible for a COS Scholarship?

- A licensed part-time local pastor who is approved to take classes outside of Mississippi
- A licensed full-time local pastor

How much does the COS scholarship cover?

The Mississippi COS scholarship offer \$410 per course; \$820 for two courses, \$1,230 for three, and \$1,640 for four courses. A stipend of \$110 per course is awarded out of the scholarship to assist on travel and books.

What are the requirements for COS recipients?

The application procedure for scholarships has the following three requirements:

- Full-time local pastor shall complete the COS curriculum within eight years, unless a situation or other circumstances precludes the local pastor's opportunity to meet the requirement.
- Part-time local pastor shall complete the COS curriculum within twelve years unless situation or other circumstances precludes the local pastor's opportunity to meet the requirement.

What is "the catch"?

A recipient of the COS scholarship must maintain at least a passing grade of C in all courses of study. In instances when a grade of D or F is received, the pastor shall reimburse the Mississippi Methodist Conference for the course/courses failed. When a student withdraws from a course, one half of the course cost shall be reimbursed to the conference. Make the check or money order payable to The Mississippi Methodist Conference and mail the payment to Dorothy Ellis| Conference Registrar | 320 D Briarwood Drive| Jackson, Mississippi 39206.

Failure to reimburse for the failed course/courses will result in termination of scholarship.

When and how do I apply for COS scholarship allocation?

COS application is accessible on the Conference website (*www.mississippi-umc.org*). An application must be submitted EACH session that you desire to receive an allocation. Note: Application is included.

When can I expect to receive my COS scholarship allocation?

COS checks are mailed directly to the school each session after enrollment verification of the student. The allowance for the student will be mailed directly to the student at this time as well.

E. ADVANCED COURSE OF STUDY SUGGESTED COURSES

32 hours minimum and no more than 12 hours online

- **Old Testament** (2-3 Hours)
- **New Testament** (2-3 Hours)
- **Church History** (2-3 Hours)
(If UM Classes are taken as 9 hours, Wesleyan History fulfills this requirement)
- **Theology** (2-3 Hours)
(If UM Classes are taken as 9 hours, Wesleyan Theology fulfills this requirement)
- **Mission of the Church in the World** (2-3 Hours)
- **Worship/Liturgy** (2-3 Hours)
- **Evangelism** (2-3 Hours)
- **Preaching Class** (2-3 Hours)
- **United Methodist History, Doctrine, & Polity** (6/9 semester hours total*)
(If taken as 9 hours, this fulfills additional History or Theology Requirement)
(Might also be given as credit for Basic Course of Study)

MEMPHIS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

- CH/TH 03212 Early Methodism: History, Doctrine, and Polity
- CH/P 03212 American Methodism: History, Doctrine, and Polity

ASBURY SEMINARY

- TH605 United Methodist Doctrine and Polity
- TH601 Theology of John Wesley

CANDLER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY (9 Hours*)

- DS511 History of Methodism United Methodist Doctrine
- DS512 Theology of Wesley and Methodism
- DS513 Polity of The United Methodist Church

DUKE DIVINITY (the ACOS Program at Duke has alternates to these Seminary classes)

- 777 Wesleyan Foundations for Mission, Practice, and Belief
- 778 United Methodism: Mission, Practice, Belief

GAMMON THEOLOGICAL (9 Hours*)

- ITEH 608 Wesleyan Theology
- ITEH 658 United Methodist History
- ITEH 826 United Methodist Polity

- **Courses in Practice of Ministry** (6 semester hours total)
 1. Pastoral Care **OR**
 2. You may take 1 unit of CPE through Baptist Hospital Jackson

F. THE MINISTERIAL EDUCATION FUND (MEF)

What is the Ministerial Education Fund?

MEF is a service loan offered to candidates for ordination who pursuing a Masters level theological degree. MEF is funded through the generosity of United Methodist people across Mississippi and around the world through mission shares and special offerings.

Who is eligible for Ministerial Education Fund?

- Certified candidate for ordained ministry in the Mississippi Conference; AND
- Enrolled in a University Senate approved seminary; AND
- Full-time student (as defined by seminary – minimum of 9 semester hours, may be more for some seminaries).

Note: Nine hours is considered full time, with the exception of summer, J-terms, and ExL programs. If a person fails a course, they will be responsible for paying to take the course again.

How much does Ministerial Education Fund cover?

Mississippi MEF allocations are 50% of tuition each semester.

What are the requirements for MEF for candidates in seminary?

The application procedure for scholarships has the following three requirements:

1. Certified Candidates in seminary must submit an application requesting a loan each semester (fall, winter, spring, or summer) indicating current student

classification, their seminary, their District Superintendent, their date of certification as a candidate and their current mailing address.

2. Certified Candidates in seminary must request their District Superintendent's confirmation of their status as a certified candidate for ministry (see *The Book of Discipline 2012*, ¶304-305) be reported immediately after their initial certification as a candidate during the conference year and annually, thereafter, by September 1.
3. Certified Candidates in seminary must request their accredited seminary's registrar office to certify and report the number of hours for which they are registered each semester (fall, winter, spring, and summer) after the add/drop date. Make certain this report indicates the number of registered hours.

These three items should be sent to the Mississippi Conference Office of Spiritual Leadership, 320 D Briarwood Drive, Jackson, Mississippi 39206.

What is “the catch?”

MEF is a “service loan.” The loan is repaid with service to the Annual Conference. In receiving the service loan, you agree to serve under appointment in the United Methodist Church for four years following the completion of your theological education. Each semester you will sign a service loan agreement when you receive your allocation.

When and how do I apply for Ministerial Education Fund allocation?

MEF application is accessible on the Conference website (www.mississippi-umc.org), in the Financial Aid office at your school. An application must be submitted EACH semester that you desire to receive an allocation. Applications should be received from the school you are attending in the Office of Spiritual Leadership no later than **September 15** for Summer and Fall allocation and **February 15** for J-Term and Spring allocation.

When can I expect to receive my Ministerial Education Fund allocation?

MEF checks are mailed directly to the seminary each semester. Summer and Fall semester allocations are mailed between **October 1 and 15**. J-Term and Spring semester allocations are mailed between **March 1 and 15**. *Checks will not be mailed to seminaries until after the “add/drop” date each semester.

What if I receive Ministerial Education Fund allocations but decide not to be appointed in Mississippi?

MEF is a service loan. If you choose not to serve under appointment in the Mississippi Conference, you are responsible to provide evidence of appointment in the UMC (another conference) or it becomes a low-interest (4%) loan repayable of date of severance of Conference membership.

G. BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY REQUIRED COURSES (SEMINARY)

- **Old Testament** (3 Hours)
- **New Testament** (3 Hours)
- **Church History** (3 Hours)
- **Theology** (3 Hours)
- **Mission of the Church in the World** (3 Hours)
- **Worship/Liturgy** (3 Hours)
- **Evangelism** (3 Hours)
- **Preaching** (3 Hours) ****This is NOT required for those on Deacon track****
- **United Methodist History, Doctrine, & Polity** (6/9 semester hours total*)
(If taken as 9 hours, this fulfills additional History Requirement)

MEMPHIS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

- CH/TH 03212 Early Methodism: History, Doctrine, and Polity
- CH/P 03212 American Methodism: History, Doctrine, and Polity

ASBURY SEMINARY

- TH605 United Methodist Doctrine and Polity
- TH601 Theology of John Wesley

CANDLER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY (9 Hours*)

- DS511 History of Methodism United Methodist Doctrine
- DS512 Theology of Wesley and Methodism
- DS513 Polity of The United Methodist Church

DUKE DIVINITY

- Parish 777 Wesleyan Foundations for Mission, Practice, and Belief
- Parish 778 United Methodism: Mission, Practice, Belief

GAMMON THEOLOGICAL (9 Hours*)

- ITEH 608 Wesleyan Theology
- ITEH 658 United Methodist History
- ITEH 826 United Methodist Polity

- **Courses in Practice of Ministry** (6 semester hours total)
 1. Pastoral Care **OR**
 2. You may take 1 unit of CPE

H. EDUCATION ROUTES FOR DEACONS

Basic Graduate Theological Studies

All deacons and elders are required to complete the Basic Graduate Theological Studies in the Christian faith (minimum of 27 semester hours). These may be completed as part of a theological degree or in addition to a master's degree and/or professional certification in specialized ministry.

Students must take at least one course in each of these Basic Graduate Theological Studies categories:

- Evangelism
- New Testament
- Old Testament
- Church history
- Theology
- Mission of the church in the world
- Worship/liturgy
- United Methodist doctrine
- United Methodist polity
- United Methodist history
- **Courses in Practice of Ministry** (6 semester hours total) **Required by MSAC*
 1. Pastoral Care **OR**
 2. You may take 1 unit of CPE

Three Educational Routes

Route One:

- Bachelor's degree
- Master of divinity (or equivalent) or other theological master's degree. The degree must be earned at a school approved by the University Senate. Studies must include the Basic Graduate Theological Studies courses listed above)

Route Two:

- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree in an appropriate area of ministry specialization

- Completion of Basic Graduate Theological Studies courses listed above (from approved school)

Route Three (and option for people beginning candidacy at age 35 or older):

- Bachelor's degree
- Professional or ministry certification (church or secular professional certification in an area of ministry, including a minimum of eight semester hours of graduate academic credit)
- Completion of Basic Graduate Theological Studies courses listed above (from approved school)

Certification

What's Certification?

Many clergy and laypeople are employed to lead the church in specialized areas like Christian education, youth ministry, spiritual formation, ministry with people with disabilities, or other. Certification is The United Methodist Church's recognition that an individual has been called, made a commitment to serve, and has fulfilled the required standards for academic training, experience, and continuing study to serve with excellence in an area of specialized ministry.

Why Certification?

Those who've earned United Methodist specialized ministry certification demonstrate that they are committed to excellence and to continuing to improve their skills and knowledge. They are explicitly prepared to lead others in United Methodist churches and contexts. Deacons who lead in a specialized ministry area can earn specialization as part of their required education.

Professional certification entails training in Bible, theology, United Methodist studies, and skill development; professional experience; a community of support; and accountability to the annual conference. Follow the links on the left to learn the specific requirements and procedures on how to earn professional, undergraduate, or paraprofessional certification.

Three Tracks for Certification in The United Methodist Church

- Professional (for lay, licensed, or ordained leaders who have an undergraduate degree and take graduate level courses)
- Undergraduate (for undergraduate students)
- Paraprofessional (for those who do not have a college degree and are working or volunteering in a specialized ministry)

Each track is available in twelve areas of specialized ministry: camp/retreat ministry; children's ministry, Christian education, collegiate ministry, evangelism, ministry with the poor, ministry with people with disabilities, music ministry, ministry with older adults, spiritual formation, urban ministry, and youth ministry.

Certification Requirements

1. Recognized Christian character, personal competence, integrity, and commitment to the church's total ministry and mission
2. Ability to relate to people, to work with volunteers and staff, to function in the role with emotional maturity and sound judgment
3. Demonstrated leadership, ability to integrate theory and practice, an understanding of and commitment to the church's ministry
4. A member of The United Methodist Church for at least one year before enrolling in the certification process (affiliate or full member)
5. Knowledge of The United Methodist Church's structure, polity, resources, program, and mission
6. Completion of education and work experience required by the specific certification program
7. Evaluation by the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry
8. Participation in a professional organization related to the area of specialization

For More Information on Certification: <https://www.gbhem.org/education/certification>

I. RESIDENCY IN MINISTRY (RIM)

Year One: Clergy Excellence

Facilitators: Rev. Rickey James/Rev. Brad Corban

June is RIM Orientation. July is off. Group will begin in August and runs through May.

The focus will be an “unpacking” and “personal ministry and context processing” of the updated MSAC definition of Clergy Excellence. The August meeting will also include a “Day Away with Conference Staff” at the MSAC headquarters in Jackson, learning all about the connection, the staff, and the resources we offer to ministry in the local church. The Cabinet has done a lot of work building upon the great work of the BOOM with regards to Clergy Excellence. This definition will be the basis of all future Consultations, Evaluations, and Leadership Training. Our goal is that within the next year Clergy Excellence will permeate all work related to Clergy in the MSAC.

Year Two: Fruitfulness In Ministry

Facilitators: Rev. Erin Hicks and Rev. Frank Newell

June is RIM Dinner. July is off. Group will run August through February.

This year will focus fruitfulness in ministry. They will hear from the Conference Lay Leader about how to involve laity in church ministry. They will listen to different ministers about self-care and creativity in ministry. In March they will begin their work on ordination papers, their sermon and Bible study.

Year Three: Ordination Submissions

Facilitators: Rev. Trey Harper/Rev. Pamela Cameron

Group begins in March and ends in February prior BOOM Interviews. March is Interviews, April is Day Away @ AC Office, May is Ordination Retreat

We will begin with Sermon and Bible Study Submissions and the move into working through the written Theological Questions for Ordination and mock interviews. Within the group process, we will vet and critique everyone’s work prior to submission. Our intent is to alleviate some of the “guesswork” as to what is expected by the BOOM Interview teams, to curtail the risks of plagiarism, to build collegial relationships, and to encourage a lens of personal growth and ministry perspective with the engagement of the Theological Questions for this final submission. Therefore the mandated Theological Questions serve as bookends to the process. Their initial submission, done prior to Commissioning, will be a true reflection and discernment of sound theological understanding. The final submission, although the same questions, will reflect the candidates growth and ability to apply that theological grounding to the practice of ministry. Finally, as non-voting members of BOOM, Pamela and I will be in the room during the BOOM plenary discussions to speak to the engagement of the candidates for

Ordination. Finally, it will insure that we have done everything possible to prepare and equip them to succeed, as well as emphasized the importance of having colleagues to support and hold us accountable in future ministry.

Commissioned Candidate (Board Deferred): Competence in paper work, self growth, or growth in ministry

Facilitators: DCOM and Mentors

If the candidate has been deferred by the Board of Ordained Ministry as they were coming forward for Commissioning they would then be sent back to their District Board of Ordained Ministry. There will be a letter sent to their District Superintendent and the candidate explaining the Board of Ordained Ministries decision and what they need to do in order to reapply. They need DCOM's recommendation to reapply for commissioning. We will also be sending a member of the Board of Ordained Ministry to meet with the candidate and the district superintendent to explain the decision by the Board in person and to explain next steps.

Capstone Year (Board Deferred): Competence OR Capstone Year (Self-Deferred)

Facilitators: Office of Spiritual Leadership

This year will actually begin in March and end in February prior BOOM Interviews.

Those who are deferred by the Board of Ordained Ministry for reasons involving submissions or interview competence, or those who choose not to apply for Ordination will repeat the Third Year. The facilitators will work with each candidate based on the recommendations of the Board of Ordained Ministry with regards to reapplication.

Capstone Year (Board Deferred): Personal Growth

Facilitators: Office of Spiritual Leadership

These years will run from August to February.

As we are doing this year, if the BOOM determines that a 3rd Year RIM student requires more time and reflection prior to Ordination, the Office of Spiritual Leadership will meet with that candidate individually and design a Peer Group of Full Connection Clergy to walk with them for a season to do the work identified by the BOOM. Quarterly reports will be received by Spiritual Leadership from the Peer Group leader, as well as any additional work required, and used to create the file that will come back to the BOOM at Interview time. This will allow the deferred candidate to focus on their personal growth in a safe setting, without the appearance of "failure or remediation" that could come from simply requiring that they repeat the third year with the new class of Ordinands.

They will also engage in the RIM Retreat, but in a “assistant leadership” capacity; allowing them to receive the training, but also allowing them the opportunity to further engage in leadership under the direction of those leading the retreat.

RIM Retreats:

- Year One: Self-Awareness (DiSC profile or other tool and reflection)
- Year Two: Self-Disciplines (focus on personal spiritual disciplines)
- Year Three: Self-Control (coaching around non-anxious presence)

RIM Mentors:

- The Group Facilitators, within the context of group meetings, will have a dedicated time for sharing and “check-in” each month.
- Peer Accountability Partner: Each participant will have a peer from the group (or two) who they will check in with weekly to build personal connections and peer accountability.

Out of Context:

The Out of Context Continuing Education must be approved by the Office of Spiritual Leadership. It can be completed at any point in the RIM Process.

IV. Committee Forms and Templates



Mississippi Conference
of The United Methodist Church

Living Out
ThePOWER of We

A. Candidate Forms

Candidacy Checklist

Candidate, Mentor and DCOM should keep a copy

Name _____

Date _____ Email _____

Address _____

Cell Phone _____

FIRST STEPS

Requirements: Baptized member of UM church/ministry for 1 year; Have high school diploma or equivalency

- Contact a UMC clergy person
- Read and discuss *Christian as Minister* book by Meg Lassait with clergy person or pastor. The book can be ordered from Amazon.
- Ask to shadow your pastor or director
- Applicant writes to District Superintendent (DS) about call and desiring to enter candidacy including autobiographical information
- Contact the DS to arrange a meeting. **(Remember as you are scheduling your meeting to allow at least 2 weeks so you can complete your information packet and your medical form (physical from doctor.)**
Date of meeting: ____ / ____ / ____
- DS will email you packet to fill out and this will be returned at meeting with DS

INITIAL MEETING

At initial meeting with DS return information package including:

- Biographical Information Form (Form #2)
- Divorce decree if applicable
- Candidate Disclosure Form (Form #4) ****Must be notarized***
- Medical Report Form (Form #5)
- Affirmation of membership to UMC church or equivalent
- Register for Background Check through the Office of Spiritual Leadership
- Written Call Statement (Form #7)
- Complete the online Biblical DiSC™ profile (\$25 registration fee required)

Candidacy Checklist

- Register to attend a “Hearing Your Call” event
- Register for a Psychological Assessment through the Office of Spiritual Leadership
- Educational transcripts (high school or high school equivalent or college)
- DS will assign you a mentor to walk you through the process at this time, we encourage you to pray with your mentor through your journey

CANDIDACY MENTOR

- Contact mentor to arrange for first meeting Mentor’s Name: _____
- Give mentor copy of checklist
- Share with your mentor your call story
- Work through *Answering the Call* book which you will receive digitally from your district office
- Work with your mentor to develop your answers to John Wesley’s historical questions and have them written to present to DCOM before certification
 1. Do they know God as a 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’s grace, for the work? Have they a clear, sound understanding; a right judgement in the things of God; a just conception of salvation by faith? Do they speak justly, readily, and clearly?
 3. Have they fruit? Have any been truly convinced of sin and converted to God, as are believers edified by their service?
- Revise your written call statement with special attention to how your call will be lived out in the United Methodist Church (i.e. ordained elder/deacon, licensed local pastor, lay servant)
- Attend a “Hearing Your Call” event and process the experience with your mentor **OR**
- Complete the Alternative Ministry Track Interviews, reflect on them with your mentor and submit them to the DCOM for your file.

STAFF/PASTOR PARISH RELATIONS MEETING Date of meeting: ____ / ____ / ____

Following your meeting with DS and the submission of all your information meet with your S/PPRC for their recommendation

- Share your call story with them
- Ask pastor/director to share with the cost of becoming a candidate financially and spiritually
 - \$25 Biblical DiSC Registration
 - \$55 Background check
 - \$500 psychological assessment

****As you progress (candidacy, course of Study, seminary, licensing, and ordination) the United Methodist Conference will invest thousands of dollars toward your ministerial formation.**

[2 of 4]

Candidacy Checklist

CHARGE CONFERENCE

- Contact pastor/director to schedule a Charge Conference to receive their recommendation**
Date of Charge Conference: ____ / ____ / ____ Vote Count: ____ YES ____ NO
- Share your calling and how you hope to live it within the United Methodist Church
- Share what your journey has been like so far
- Thank them for their support and ask for their continued support

DISTRICT COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY 1 Date of meeting: ____ / ____ / ____

Meet with DCOM. The DCOM will...

- Listen to the candidate verbalize their call
- Discuss their involvement in the local church (and beyond)
- Discuss the background/credit check
- Discuss Minimum Financial Standards
 - A status of good credit above 75%
 - No more than \$50,000 in debt, excluding mortgages
 - No more than \$10,000 in credit card or unsecured loan debt in addition to debt in 2b
 - No bankruptcies, collections, tax liens or judgements within 10 years
- Confirm everything is in the file (educational transcripts, medical, biographical, background, credit check and membership form)
- Complete and update candidacy checklist and put it in their file
- DCOM Registrar invites the candidate to UMCARES

The Candidate will...

- Register in UMCARES
- Contact the Office of Spiritual Leadership to set up the psychological evaluation

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

- Psychological assessment completed and results forwarded to candidate file and the Office of Spiritual Leadership.
-

Candidacy Checklist

BIBLICAL DiSC™ PROFILE

- The Biblical DiSC™ assessment, provided by the Office of Faith Community Formation, provides insights and ideas to help us better understand our unique strengths and challenges as a leader. It also reveals comparisons to Biblical Leaders who demonstrated similar behavioral characteristics, including Jesus who modeled every behavioral trait to perfection. The Biblical DiSC™ is based on the popular and practical DiSC model of human behavior. DiSC is the most widely used behavioral model in the world, and has helped millions of people improve communication, productivity, team building and leadership, as well as their relationships within the workplace and home.
-

INTERVIEW FOR CERTIFICATION Date of meeting: ____ / ____ / ____

- Meet with DCOM
- Share your call and how you hope to live it out within the UMC
- Discuss your written answers to Wesley's historical questions
- Discuss what happens after the certified phase (licensing or seminary).
- Completed Candidacy Mentor Report in file (Form #6)
- Psychological evaluation is completed and is in your file

CERTIFIED CANDIDATE

- District Registrar closes out UMCARES
- Meet with DCOM and Charge Conference on a yearly basis for renewal
- Start ministerial education (Seminary or Licensing school/course of study)
- Meet with DCOM annually

The United Methodist Church Biographical Information Form

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____
Street City State Zip

Home Phone _____ School or Office Phone _____

Birth date _____ Sex: M F

E-mail _____

Ethnic Origin: Asian African American/Black Hispanic Other Native American
 Pacific Islander White

Local Church _____ City/State _____

Conference _____ District _____

Briefly describe your involvement in your local church, such as your leadership positions, groups you enjoy, church activities, etc.

Describe your church involvement in activities beyond your local church, such as district or annual conference work, church camps, workshops, outreach, etc.

The United Methodist Church Biographical Information Form

Your Educational Background *Dates Attended* *Degree or Credit Hours*

High school _____

College _____

Graduate School _____

Theological Seminary _____

Course of Study for Ordained Ministry Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 Year 4 Year 5

Advanced Course of Study: _____ Semester Hours Credit _____

Marital Status: Single, Never Married Married, in first marriage Married, in second or more
 Widowed Separated Divorced (If divorced, attach court order or decree)

If married, spouse's name _____ Birth date _____

Date of Marriage _____ Spouse's occupation _____

Your children, if any:

<i>Name of child</i>	<i>Date of Birth</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Education</i>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Dependents in addition to your spouse and children:

<i>Name of child</i>	<i>Date of Birth</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Education</i>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Describe your community involvement and volunteer work, such as participation in community organizations, social clubs, service agencies, and other non-church-related volunteer service:

The United Methodist Church Biographical Information Form

Your childhood family and other significant relatives:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Relation</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Occupation</i>
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Your work experience, such as current employment, previous employment, and military experience, if any.

Have you served as a local pastor, diaconal minister, deacon or elder in The United Methodist Church?

Yes No

If Yes, what Conference?

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consecrated Diaconal Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> Probationary Member | <input type="checkbox"/> License as a Local Pastor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deacon in Full Connection | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Elder in Full Connection |

FORM 2

The United Methodist Church Biographical Information Form

Have you had a change in clergy relationship with a conference of The United Methodist Church?

Yes No

If Yes, what Conference?

<i>Conference Relationship</i>	<i>Indicate Date</i>	<i>Indicate Date</i>
--------------------------------	----------------------	----------------------

Discontinuance _____

Location _____

Leave of Absence _____

Retirement _____

Disability Leave _____

Withdrawal _____

Termination by action of the annual conference _____

FORM 2

Database Contact Information Update Worksheet

We want to make sure that you receive the latest news, invitations to events, updates on all of our benefits and services, and more. Help us keep our records current – please update us with your most recent contact information by completing the form below and returning it to the person who sent it to you. Thank you!

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Preferred First Name: _____

Email Address: _____ Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Business Phone: _____

Emergency Contact (Name and Phone Number): _____

Mailing Address _____

Street

City

State

Zip

Home Address _____

Street

City

State

Zip

Home Church & District:

Home Church and City _____

Home District _____

(If retired or retiring, please select the district to which you want to be affiliated.)

Marriage & Family Information:

Gender: _____ Marital Status: _____

Spouse Name (If applicable): _____

Spouse Phone: _____ Spouse Email: _____

Spouse Address (If different from above): _____

Are you a Clergy Spouse? Yes No

Office Use Only

Date Received _____ Date Updated BR _____

(1 of 1)

The United Methodist Church Candidate Disclosure Form

Please complete this form, sign and date it, have your signature notarized, and return it to:
Office of Spiritual Leadership, 320 D Briarwood Drive, Jackson, Mississippi 39206

Have you ever been:

1. Convicted of a felony? Yes No
2. Convicted of a misdemeanor? Yes No
3. Accused in writing of sexual misconduct or child abuse? Yes No

If you answered yes to any of these questions, please explain.

If you are required by this disclosure form to disclose any written accusations or convictions for felony, misdemeanor or any incident of sexual misconduct that you dispute or believe should be explained in any way, you have an opportunity at this time to include any additional information that you believe might be helpful or important regarding the disclosure. Any relevant additional information should be provided in a response statement attached to the form. (Note: It would be preferable if this response statement could be included right on the disclosure statement; however, we realize there are space limitations on forms and thus you might need to request that the statement be attached. Please indicate if pages are attached.)

I hereby certify that the information provided on this form is true and accurate.

Signature and Date

Printed Name and Date

SEAL

Subscribed and sworn this _____ day of _____ 20____

Notary Public _____

The United Methodist Church Medical Report of Ministerial Candidate Form

Mail completed form (Part I and Part II) to: Office of Spiritual Leadership, 320D Briarwood Drive, Jackson, Mississippi 39206.

PART I: MEDICAL HISTORY REPORT (To be completed by the candidate)

Name _____

Address _____

Street

City

State

Zip

Home Phone _____ School or Office Phone _____

Birth date _____ Sex: M F

E-mail _____

Marital Status: Single, Never Married Married, in first marriage Married, in second or more
 Widowed Separated Divorced

Number of children _____

1. Check if you have ever had:

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arthritis | <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes | <input type="checkbox"/> High blood pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> Poliomyelitis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asthma | <input type="checkbox"/> Epilepsy | <input type="checkbox"/> Kidney trouble | <input type="checkbox"/> Rheumatic fever |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cancer | <input type="checkbox"/> Heart trouble | <input type="checkbox"/> Peptic ulcer | <input type="checkbox"/> Tuberculosis |

2. Check if any member of your family ever had:

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arthritis | <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes | <input type="checkbox"/> High blood pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> Poliomyelitis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asthma | <input type="checkbox"/> Epilepsy | <input type="checkbox"/> Kidney trouble | <input type="checkbox"/> Rheumatic fever |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cancer | <input type="checkbox"/> Heart trouble | <input type="checkbox"/> Peptic ulcer | <input type="checkbox"/> Tuberculosis |

If yes to any of the above, please explain: _____

The United Methodist Church Medical Report of Ministerial Candidate Form

3. What vaccinations or inoculations have you had? Give dates. _____

4. Have you ever had an electrocardiogram? Yes No If yes, give date an attending physician:

5. Have you ever had a serious accident or operation? Yes No If Yes, please explain.

6. Have you any impairment of sight? Yes No Hearing? Yes No

7. If your weight has changed in the past two years, state approximate loss/gain. _____

8. Have your ever been rejected for life insurance? Yes No

9. Have your ever received treatment for alcohol or drug habit? Yes No If Yes, please explain.

10. Do you smoke? Yes No If Yes, how long? _____ How much? _____

11. Have you ever been under observation or treatment in any hospital or sanitarium for a physical or nervous condition? Yes No If Yes, please explain.

The above statements are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature and Date

Printed Name and Date

{2 of 4}

The United Methodist Church Medical Report of Ministerial Candidate Form

PART II: MEDICAL EXAMINER'S REPORT (To be completed by the physician)

1. General Appearance _____
2. Personal Hygiene _____
3. Height _____ Weight _____
4. Temperature _____ Pulse _____ Blood pressure _____ (Reading before exercise)
Temperature _____ Pulse _____ Blood pressure _____ (Reading after exercise)
5. Vision _____
6. Hearing _____
7. Condition of mouth and throat _____
Pharynx _____ Tonsils _____
Mucous Membranes _____ Teeth _____
Tongue _____ Gums _____
8. Evidence of goiter, enlarged glands, or other tumors _____
9. Evidence of goiter, enlarged glands, or other tumors _____
10. Evidence of varicosity _____
Heart _____
Lungs _____
Thorax _____
Spine _____
Genitalia _____
11. Evaluate nervous and mental condition _____

Laboratory Tests (Required)

- Pap Smear (for all women) _____ Mammogram (for women over 40) _____
PSA (for men over 50) _____ Cholesterol _____
Fasting Blood Sugar _____

**The United Methodist Church
Medical Report of Ministerial Candidate Form**

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS *(To be completed by the physician)*

Name of physician *(Type or print)* _____

Address _____
Street City State Zip

Signature of Physician _____

FORM 5

Candidacy Mentor's Report Form

Candidate _____ Mentor _____

Using the form below, please complete your report by answering each question in detail.

1. What are this person's gifts, grace, and promise of potential effectiveness in the licensed or ordained ministry? This could include: 1. passion for studying and sharing God's Word and work; 2. academic and education potential; 3. interpersonal skills bonded in compassion and kindness; 4. leadership skills and potential.

2. Can this person articulate their experience of the Holy Spirit? Explain.

3. Does this person feel a call from God into the ordained or licensed ministry? Explain.

4. How has this person responded to information about the calling and work of ordained or licensed ministry in the United Methodist Church?

Candidacy Mentor's Report Form

5. What is this person's self-understanding in relation to a possible career in ministry?

6. How does this person respond to and use feedback from others?

7. What Spiritual Disciplines does this person utilize in their daily/continuing journey with God?

8. What personal considerations (family, local church, work, or other) are important for this person to the licensed or ordained ministry?

9. What issues do the candidate and DCOM need to explore together in the meeting?

10. What are your thoughts about welcoming this person into a connectional system?

[2 of 3]

Candidacy Mentor's Report Form

11. What other factors, comments, or suggestions about this individual can you offer that are important for the district committee's consideration of this person?

I have read the report of my candidacy mentor and authorize its release to the District Committee and the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Candidacy Call Statement Template

All Candidates for Ministry within The United Methodist Church are asked to provide a rich, detailed description of his or her story of being called to ordained ministry. A sufficiently rich call story should contain many of the following details:

- a. **Ordained Ministry.** The story should address a calling to ordained ministry. Stories that address general ministry provide an opportunity to explore whether ordained ministry is the best path to meet God's Call.
- b. **Beginnings.** The call story should address the origin of the experienced call such as: who the candidate was as a person when he or she began discernment, what was the context, what event(s) initiated the discernment, how the candidate responded and why, and from a theological perspective where was God moving.
- c. **Transitions.** The candidate should describe changes in his or her context that have occurred between then and now, whether the response has been consistent over time or if the candidate has responded in different ways over time, and where God was moving.
- d. **Now and Next.** What is the candidate's current context? How is the candidate currently responding to the Call? Where do they perceive God is leading them into the future? What is being learned about God and the candidate's relationship with God?
- e. **Affirmations.** The candidate should provide examples of how he or she is being affirmed by God (vertical affirmations – prayer, scripture, meditation, contemplation) and examples of how are you being affirmed by others (horizontal affirmations: family, friends, peers, students, church members)?

Mentor's Report Form Related to Part-time and Full-time Local Pastors

Local Pastor's Name _____ Mentor Name _____

Using the form below, please complete your report by answering each question in detail.

1. What are this person's gifts, grace, and promise of potential effectiveness in local pastor ministry?

2. A passion for studying and sharing God's Word and work; are they attending to their education? (for full time local pastor 4 classes within the year at regional Course of Study School Emory) (for part time local pastor 2 classes within the year at Millsaps College Course of Study)

3. How are their interpersonal skills bonded in compassion and kindness; leadership skills and potential?

4. Can this person articulate their call to ministry?

Mentor's Report Form Related to Part-time and Full-time Local Pastors

5. How has this person responded to information about the calling and work of licensed ministry in the United Methodist Church?

6. What is this person's self-understanding in relation to a possible career in ministry?

7. How does this person respond to and use feedback from others?

8. What spiritual disciplines does this person use in the daily journey with God?

9. What personal considerations (family, local church, work, or other) are important for this person to the licensed or ordained ministry?

(2 of 3)

FORM 8

Mentor's Report Form Related to Part-time and Full-time Local Pastors

10. What issues do the candidate and DCOM need to explore together in the meeting?

11. What other factors, comments, or suggestions about this individual can you offer that are important for the district committee's consideration of this person?

Mentor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Application for Service Loan The Ministerial Education Fund - Southeastern Jurisdiction

Instructions to Applicant: PLEASE READ THE APPLICATION FORM IN FULL BEFORE COMPLETING

The purpose of the Service Loan is to assist in providing exceptionally trained and educated ministers for the Church. The Mississippi Conference Board of Ordained Ministry proposes to aid in this effort by providing one-half of the tuition cost for all Mississippi seminary students. In exchange, candidates sign to provide a minimum of 4 years of appointed service to the Mississippi Annual Conference.

1. Applications must be completed each new school semester and disbursements will be made on a semester basis after the add/drop date has passed and the school verifies the hours of each applicant. **MEF is available only to students registered for at least nine hours for spring or fall semesters, or for ExL at Asbury, nine hours is considered full-time. Consideration is also given for summer school and January terms. Only Certified Candidates for ministry are eligible.**
2. After completion of application, sign the pledge and present it to the Student Aid Officer of your school. The application must be authorized by the officer. Failure to do so will delay action on the application.
3. The Student Aid Officer should mail authorized application to: **Dorothy L. Ellis, Conference Registrar | Mississippi Conference of United Methodist Conference | 320-D Briarwood Drive | Jackson, MS 39206**

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ MI: _____

Address (while at school): _____

Address (Summer): _____

Email Address: _____ Phone: _____

Birth Date: _____ Gender: _____ Title: _____

1. Are you a full-time student? Yes No

If yes, what semester? 1st 2nd J-Term Spring Summer Number of hours _____

2. Seminary Attending _____ Classification _____

3. When you anticipate graduation? _____

4. Have you been certified as a candidate for ministry? _____

Which District in Mississippi? _____ Date _____

District Superintendent _____

FORM 9

Application for Service Loan

The Ministerial Education Fund - Southeastern Jurisdiction

5. Do you expect to become an ordained and full member of the Mississippi conference?

Yes No If yes: Deacon Elder

6. What is the total tuition cost for attending this seminary? _____

Pledge of Applicant:

If this service loan or any portion of it is granted, I will use it only toward educational expenses. It is my understanding that I am to serve a minimum of four years as indicated in the Service Loan Agreement after completion of the M Div for conference membership in The United Methodist Church. Should I fail to do so, the service loan shall become due and payable immediately upon the terms specified in the Service Loan Agreement.

Date _____ Signature of Applicant _____

Authorization of Seminary

I, _____ certify that _____

Is registered for _____ hours at _____ Seminary

for the _____ semester of 20____ at a tuition cost of \$_____ per hour; and total semester tuition cost of a total semester cost of \$_____.

Seal or Stamp of school

Signature _____ Title _____

Email _____ Telephone _____

Mailing Address _____

Application for Service Loan Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church Course of Study Scholarship

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ MI: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____ Phone: _____

1. How many courses are you taking? _____
2. How many years attended? _____
3. School Attending: _____
4. How many courses completed? _____
5. When you anticipate graduation? _____
6. District Name: _____

District Superintendent Signature: _____

(Must be signed by the District Superintendent only)

7. What is your current status? Part Time Local Pastor Full Time Local Pastor
8. Do you expect to become an ordained and full member of the Mississippi Conference?
 Yes No If yes: Deacon Elder
9. What is the total tuition cost for attending this school? _____

**Application for Service Loan
Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church
Course of Study Scholarship**

Pledge of Applicant:

If this service loan or any portion of it is granted, I will use it only toward educational expenses. Should I fail to do so, the service loan shall become due and payable immediately upon the terms specified in the Service Loan Agreement. It is my understanding that I am to serve a minimum of 4 years as indicated in the Service Loan Agreement in the Mississippi Annual Conference. I also understand that failure to attain a "C" or better grade in any class will require my refund of these funds for that class to the MSAC. A complete refund must be credited before I am eligible to register for future classes.

Date _____ Signature of Applicant _____

Oath of Applicant

I, _____ have registered for _____ hours at school for the _____ semester of 20____ at a tuition cost of \$_____ course and total tuition cost of a total semester cost of \$ _____.

Signature _____

Witness _____

Date _____

Date _____

Note: Should you have any questions, please contact Dorothy Ellis at 601-354-0515 ext.7031, or 769-243-7024, and or dellis@mississippi-umc.org.

B. Changes in Conference Relationship Forms

Licensing and Course of Study Process in the Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church

Local Pastor, DCOM and BOOM should keep a copy

Name _____

Date _____ Email _____

Address _____

Cell Phone _____

LICENSING SCHOOL (see appendix)

- Approval as a certified candidate Date: ____ / ____ / ____
- Successful completion of Licensing School or 1/3 of M.Div. degree. Make sure a copy of the transcript is in the file.
- Be recommended by DCOM for initial license. Date: ____ / ____ / ____
- Receive appointment from the Bishop with your License. Copy of License in file.
- Receive Local Pastor Mentor from the District Superintendent
- Begin BASIC Course of Study Work Date: ____ / ____ / ____
- Annual reporting to and approval by the DCOM

COURSE OF STUDY

Local Pastor Mentor's Name: _____

- Regular progress through the BASIC Course of Study. (see appendix)

- 4 classes a year – Full-time (8 years max)
- 2 classes a year – Part-time (12 years max)

(*) Failure to comply with COS can lead to loss of license. It is the responsibility of the DCOM to hold Local Pastors accountable. License is automatically suspended when maximum allowed years are reached.

(**) Every year an updated transcript of progress should be reported to the DCOM and placed in the File.

- Completion of the BASIC Course of Study. Certificate of Completion in file.

Licensing and Course of Study Process in the Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

- Minimum forty years of age.
- Four years' service as a full-time local pastor or equivalent.
- Completion of BASIC Course of Study Date: ____ / ____ / ____
- Recommendation of the DCOM. Date: ____ / ____ / ____
- Under fulltime continuing appointment.
- Submission of Application and required Doctrinal Paperwork to the BOOM.
- Successful Interview by the BOOM Date: ____ / ____ / ____
- Recommendation by the BOOM. Date: ____ / ____ / ____
- Receive Clergy Session approval Date: ____ / ____ / ____
- Recognition at Annual Conference Copy of the Certificate in File.
- Continuation with Annual Continuing Education Requirements **unless entering ACOS**
 - 2 CEUs: Full time
 - 1 CEU: Part time(max 2 CEUs carryover from previous year)
- 60 hours of an undergraduate degree

ADVANCED COURSE OF STUDY IF CONTINUING TOWARD ORDINATION

- Regular progress through an ADVANCED Course of Study through a University Senate-approved seminary (*see appendix*)
 - 4 classes a year – Full time (5 years max)
 - 2 classes a year – Part time (10 years max)

It is the responsibility of the DCOM to hold those pursuing ordination accountable. License is automatically suspended when maximum allowed years are reached unless working as an Associate Member.

(**)Every year an updated transcript of progress should be reported to the DCOM and placed in the File.

- Completion of an Advanced Course of Study. Final Transcript in file.

Licensing and Course of Study Process in the Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

- Your district registrar will work with the Office of Spiritual Leadership to determine the need for updated psychological evaluation.
-

PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP FROM ADVANCED COURSE OF STUDY

- Complete four years of full-time service or the equivalent.
- Completion of Advanced Course of Study.
- Recommendation by the DCOM Date: ____ / ____ / ____
- Application and Submission of doctrinal paperwork and requirements.
- Be interviewed by BOM and recommended to clergy session. Date: ____ / ____ / ____
- Receive clergy session approval. Date: ____ / ____ / ____
- Commissioned at Annual Conference Date: ____ / ____ / ____

RESIDENCY IN MINISTRY (see appendix)

Completion of 3 Years in the RIM Process accountable to the Board of Ordained Ministry

- Completion of the Requirements for Year 1: Clergy Excellence
- Completion of the Requirements for Year 2: Fruitfulness in Ministry
- Completion of the Requirements for Year 3: Ordination Submissions
- Capstone Years: Date: ____ / ____ / ____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____ (if necessary)

ORDINATION AND FULL CONNECTION

- Been previously elected as a provisional member. Date: ____ / ____ / ____
- Served under appointment for at least two full annual conference years.
- Complete education requirements: M.Div. (deacon or elder); or master's degree in specialized field, plus the Basic Graduate Theological Studies (deacon).
- Application and Submission of doctrinal paperwork and requirements.
- Be interviewed by BOM and recommended to clergy session. Date: ____ / ____ / ____
- Receive clergy session approval. Date: ____ / ____ / ____
- Ordained at Annual Conference Date: ____ / ____ / ____
- Continuation with Annual Continuing Education Requirements
 - 2 CEUs: Fulltime
 - 1 CEU: Parttime(max 2 CEUs carryover from previous year)

[3 of 3]

Seminary Process in the Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church

Local Pastor, DCOM and BOOM should keep a copy

Name _____

Date _____ Email _____

Address _____

Cell Phone _____

Seminary _____ Expected Graduation _____

Mississippi Conference Candidates who are pursuing seminary education are strongly encouraged to study at a University Senate-approved seminary. The need to transfer courses and audit transcripts will create a delay in the process toward ordained ministry. Students are also encouraged to be mindful of the Courses REQUIRED by the MSAC Board of Ordained Ministry. (see appendix)

TO BECOME A PROVISIONAL MEMBER (§ 324)

- Certified candidate for at least one year, maximum 12 years (§ 324.1).
- Complete ½ of M.Div. (deacon or elder), or ½ of master's degree in specialized field plus ½ of Basic Graduate Theological Studies (deacon).
- Demonstrate gifts for ministry of service and leadership to the DCOM's satisfaction (§ 324.2).
- Recommendation by the DCOM Date: ____/____/____

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

- Your district registrar will work with the Office of Spiritual Leadership to determine the need for updated psychological evaluation.

-
- Application and Submission of doctrinal paperwork and requirements.
 - Be interviewed by BOM and recommended to clergy session. Date: ____/____/____
 - Receive clergy session approval. Date: ____/____/____
 - Commissioned at Annual Conference Date: ____/____/____

Seminary Process in the Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church

RESIDENCY IN MINISTRY (see appendix)

- Completion of the Requirements for Year 1: Clergy Excellence
- Completion of the Requirements for Year 2: Fruitfulness in Ministry
- Completion of the Requirements for Year 3: Ordination Submissions
- Capstone Years: Date: ____ / ____ / ____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____ (if necessary)

ORDINATION AND FULL CONNECTION

- Been previously elected as a provisional member. Date: ____ / ____ / ____
- Served under appointment for at least two full annual conference years.
- Complete education requirements: M.Div. (deacon or elder); or master's degree in specialized field, plus the Basic Graduate Theological Studies (deacon).
- Application and Submission of doctrinal paperwork and requirements.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

- Your district registrar will work with the Office of Spiritual Leadership to setup your psychological evaluation.

-
- Be interviewed by BOM and recommended to clergy session Date: ____ / ____ / ____
 - Receive clergy session approval. Date: ____ / ____ / ____
 - Ordained at Annual Conference Date: ____ / ____ / ____
 - Continuation with Annual Continuing Education Requirements
 - 2 CEUs: Fulltime
 - 1 CEU: Partime(max 2 CEUs carryover from previous year)

Process of Transfer from Other Denominations to the Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church

Pastor, District and BOOM should keep a copy

Name _____

Date _____ Email _____

Address _____

Cell Phone _____

- Member of a United Methodist Church for 2 years
- Written letter requesting entrance from another Denomination and a copy of ordination certificate or other pastoral credential, if applicable. These are submitted to approval by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.
- Transcripts from previous seminary education and any additional education including High School, Undergraduate, and graduate education for an audit by GBHEM.
- Written letter of "Good Standing" from the previous denomination or governing body
- Written letter of consent of Previous Bishop or "Sending" Authority
- Approved interviews by the Board of Ordained Ministry Transfer Team and the appointive cabinet
- Up to date (less than 5 years) Psychological Evaluation
- Up to date (less than 5 years) Criminal and Credit Background Check
- Up to date (less than 5 years) Physical Exam
- Meet with DCOM for approval as a Local Pastor for licensing.
- Appointment by the Mississippi Resident Bishop and Cabinet within the bounds of the Annual Conference
- Completion of Required courses as determined by the BOD, GBHEM and the Mississippi Annual Conference BOOM
- Meet with DCOM for recommendation for Provisional Membership prior to August 15th.
- Completion of 3 years of Residence in Ministry
- Approval of the Board of Ordained Ministry for Ordination or Recognition of Orders
- Approval of the Clergy Session of the Mississippi Annual Conference

Process of Transfer from Another United Methodist Annual Conference to the Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church

Pastor, District and BOOM should keep a copy

Name _____

Date _____ Email _____

Address _____

Cell Phone _____

CERTIFIED CANDIDATE

All documentation should be kept in the District file of the receiving District.

- Written request for transfer from the Candidate explaining the desire to serve in the Mississippi Annual Conference
- Initial Interview by the District Superintendent and members of DCOM
- Written request of the “appointing” District Superintendent, requesting the DCOM file and documentation of Certified Candidacy from the “sending” District Superintendent
- Approved interviews by the Board of Ordained Ministry Transfer Team and the appointive cabinet
- Up to date (less than 5 years) Psychological Evaluation
- Up to date (less than 5 years) Criminal and Credit Background Check
- Written letter of “Good Standing” from the current DCOM Chair or District Superintendent
- Transcripts and any additional education including High School, Undergraduate, and graduate education.

LICENSED LOCAL PASTOR

Technically we do not transfer Local Pastor’s License from Conference to Conference. There are transferred as Certified Candidates.

- Written request for transfer from the Candidate explaining the desire to serve in the Mississippi Annual Conference including a copy of current pastoral license.
- Initial Interview by the District Superintendent and members of DCOM
- Appointment by the MS Resident Bishop and Cabinet with the bounds of the Annual Conference
- Written request of the “appointing” District Superintendent, requesting the DCOM file and documentation of Certified Candidacy from the “sending” District Superintendent
- Up to date (less than 5 years) Psychological Evaluation

(1 of 2)

Process of Transfer from Another United Methodist Annual Conference to the Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church

LICENSED LOCAL PASTOR *(continued)*

- Up to date (less than 5 years) Criminal and Credit Background Check
- Written letter of “Good Standing” from the current DCOM Chair or District Superintendent
- Transcripts from previous Licensing School, and any additional education including High School, Undergraduate, and graduate education. In addition, transcripts of any work through the Course of Study.
- Interview with the DCOM for approval as a Local Pastor
- Written request by the District Superintendent for a Mississippi Pastor License

ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Since we do not transfer Local Pastor’s Licenses from Conference to Conference, this continues for Associate Members. Associate Members need to include a copy of their certificate of Associate Membership in their initial inquiry.

- Interview with the DCOM for recommendation as an Associate Member.
- Interview with the BOOM for approval as an Associate Member.
- Approval of the Executive Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry
- Approval of the Clergy Session of the MS Annual Conference

PROVISIONAL OR ORDAINED CLERGY *(separate process)*

- Written request for transfer from the Clergy explaining the desire to serve in the Mississippi Annual Conference, including a copy of their Membership and Commissioning/Ordination certificate.
- Provisional members need to submit a letter of recommendation from their Residency leader that includes an outline of the RIM work they have done.
- Initial Interview by the Office of Spiritual Leadership and members of the Cabinet to discern possibility of appointment.
- Up to date (less than 5 years) Psychological Evaluation
- Up to date (less than 5 years) Criminal and Credit Background Check
- Consultation with the Resident Bishop and Transfer Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry
- Appointment by the MS Resident Bishop and Cabinet within the bounds of the Annual Conference
- Written request of MS Resident Bishop to the Resident Bishop of the “sending” Annual Conference
- Written Approval by the Bishop of the “sending” Annual Conference
- Approval of the Executive Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry
- Approval of the Clergy Session of the MS Annual Conference

Process of Transfer from Other Methodist Denominations to the Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church

Pastor, District and BOOM should keep a copy

Name _____

Date _____ Email _____

Address _____

Cell Phone _____

- Written letter requesting entrance from another Methodist Denomination and a copy of ordination certificate or other pastoral credential, if applicable. These are submitted to approval by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.
- Transcripts from previous seminary education and any additional education including High School, Undergraduate, and graduate education for an audit by GBHEM.
- Written letter of "Good Standing" from the previous denomination or governing body
- Written letter of consent of Previous Bishop or "Sending" Authority
- Approved interviews by the Board of Ordained Ministry Transfer Team and the appointive cabinet
- Up to date (less than 5 years) Psychological Evaluation
- Up to date (less than 5 years) Criminal and Credit Background Check
- Meet with DCOM for approval as a Local Pastor for licensing.
- Appointment by the Mississippi Resident Bishop and Cabinet within the bounds of the Annual Conference
- Completion of Required courses as determined by the BOD, GBHEM and the Mississippi Annual Conference BOOM
- Meet with DCOM for recommendation for Provisional Membership prior to August 15th.
- Completion of 3 years of Residence in Ministry
- Approval of the Board of Ordained Ministry for Ordination or Recognition of Orders
- Approval of the Clergy Session of the Mississippi Annual Conference

Mississippi Methodist Conference Leave of Absence - Annual Report

*This report is confidential and is to be sent to:
320 D Briarwood Drive, Jackson, MS 39206
Attention: Dorothy Ellis, Conference Registrar*

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name: _____ Date: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

I report to the _____ Charge Conference
in the _____ District of The United Methodist Church

Clergy Status: *(check one)*

- PD - Provisional Deacon PE - Provisional Elder FD - Deacon in Full Connection
 FE - Elder in Full Connection AM - Associate Member

Type of Leave: *(check one)*

- Personal Leave Family Leave Transitional Leave Formation and Spiritual Leave
 Medical Leave Maternity/Paternity Leave Sabbatical Leave

Date Leave of Absence Started: _____ Date of Last Psychological Exam: _____

(After the five-year maximum for a leave, the Board of Ordained Ministry requires a psychological exam before ending leave.)

Request for Next Annual Conference: *(check one)*

- Begin Leave End Leave* *(See number 1 under Voluntary Leave of Absence Process and Requirements)*

Mississippi Methodist Conference Leave of Absence - Annual Report

ATTACHMENTS

- Please attach a copy of your original written request for a leave.
- Please attach a copy of your last Annual Report to your Charge Conference.
- Please attach your responses to the questions below.
- If you are requesting to end leave, include a formal written request outlining how you fulfilled the goals of your leave and your plan for healthy and effective clergy leadership for the future. You should also send a copy of this form and all attachments to your District Superintendent.

QUESTIONS

What is the purpose and reasons for your leave? _____

What goals do you have during your leave? _____

When do you expect to realize your goals and return to active ministry? _____

Are you currently employed? If so, where and in what role? _____

What else do you feel the Board of Ordained Ministry needs to know about you and your life and ministry? _____

How may the B.O.M. support you? _____

Mississippi Methodist Conference Limited Itineracy Request

The itinerate system is the accepted method of the United Methodist Church by which ordained elders, provisional elders, and associate members are appointed by the bishop to fields of labor. All ordained elders, provisional elders, and associate members shall accept and abide by these appointments. Bishops and cabinets shall commit to and support open itineracy and the protection of the prophetic pulpit and diversity. Persons appointed to multiple staff ministries, either in a single parish or in a cluster or larger parish, shall have personal and professional access to the bishop and cabinet, the committee on pastor-parish relations, as well as to the pastor in charge. (§338, *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016*)

Open itineracy means appointments are made without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, color, disability, marital status, or age, except for the provisions of mandatory retirement. The concept of itineracy is important, and sensitive attention should be given in appointing clergy with physical challenges to responsibilities and duties that meet their gifts and graces. (§425, *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016*)

We do realize that in the complexities of human life, it is sometimes necessary that the other covenants we have made (marriage, parenting, elder care, etc.) must take priority for a season over the commitment to itinerate. We understand these important covenantal priorities and seek to accommodate them whenever possible.

LIMITED ITINERACY (*This request will become a part of the clergy file and be shared with the BOOM*)

Check all that apply:

- Family - Marriage Considerations Elder - Care Considerations Medical Considerations
 Educational Considerations Geography Other

Explanation of each item selected: _____

FORM 17

Mississippi Methodist Conference Limited Itinerary Request

Explanation of each item selected, continued: _____

Note: Limited Itinerary may have unavoidable consequences, such as:

1. Salary Decrease
2. Serve less than full time
3. No appointment resulting in leave of absence or transitional leave

I understand fully that clergy shall be appointed by the bishop, who is empowered to make and fix all appointments in the episcopal area of which the annual conference is a part. Appointments are to be made with consideration of the gifts and evidence of God's grace of those appointed, to the needs, characteristics, and opportunities of congregations and institutions, and with faithfulness to the commitment to an open itinerary. (Refer to the *Book of Discipline* ¶425)

I understand that this request for Limited Itinerary, while required to be resubmitted annually, will remain in effect until I request to re-enter the Open Itinerate System.

I understand that there may be consequences to my request for Limited Itinerary that could include, but are not limited to, loss or decreased salary, loss of full-time appointment, and/or the need to request voluntary leave in the absence of an appointment.

I understand an annual request for Limited Itinerary will be submitted along with my charge conference report.

Requests to be removed from Limited Itinerary are due to the District Superintendent along with the submission of the annual advisory form.

Clergy Signature

Date

District Superintendent Signature

Date

Mississippi Methodist Conference Less Than Full-Time Service Request

¶ 338.2. Less Than Full-Time Service—On occasion, less than full-time service is requested by or required of an elder, provisional elder, or associate member. A clergy member may be appointed in one-quarter, one-half, or three-quarter time increments by the bishop to less than full-time service without loss of essential rights or membership in the annual conference. Division of Ordained Ministry-endorsed appointments beyond the local church may be for less than full-time service.

Appointment to less than full-time service is not a guarantee, but this request is made under the following circumstances: (¶338.2 a) Please check one of the following that most appropriately matches your situation.

Limited Itineracy – I have already made written request for limited itineracy.

Self-Initiated – Due to personal circumstances, I am requesting less than full-time service. I understand that this request should be submitted at least 90 days prior to the annual conference session at which the appointment is made. Exceptions to the 90-day deadline must be approved by the cabinet and the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Bishop-Initiated – For missional purposes, the bishop may appoint an elder, provisional elder, or an associate member to less than full-time service. The clergyperson shall be notified at least 90 days prior to final termination of the current appointment. Special attention shall be given to ensure that the values of open itineracy are preserved. A statement of the “missional purpose” for this move will be attached to this form.

TIME PROVISION

Reappointment to less than full-time service shall be approved annually by the bishop and cabinet and shall not be granted for more than a total of eight years, except by a three-fourths vote of the clergy members in full connection of the annual conference.

_____ Number of years under limited service prior to this request

I understand that this request for less than Full-Time Service, while required to be resubmitted annually, will remain in effect until I request to re-enter the Open Itinerate System.

Mississippi Methodist Conference Less Than Full-Time Service Request

I understand an annual request for less than Full-Time Service will be submitted along with my charge conference report.

Requests to be removed from less than Full-Time Service are due to the District Superintendent along with the submission of the advisory form.

Clergy Signature

Date

Printed Name

District Superintendent Signature

Date

Printed Name

REQUEST TO RETURN TO FULLTIME SERVICE: Elders, provisional elders, and associate members who receive appointment at less than full-time service remain within the itineracy and, as such, remain available, upon consultation with the bishop and cabinet, for appointment to full-time service. A written request to return to full-time appointment shall be made to the bishop and cabinet at least six months prior to the annual conference session at which the appointment is to be made.

Under the direction of ¶338.3b(3), I would like to officially request to return to full-time appointment in the _____ Appointive Year. This request will be forwarded to the Bishop, Cabinet, and Board of Ordained Ministry.

Clergy Signature

Date

Printed Name

District Superintendent Signature

Date

Printed Name

Mississippi Methodist Conference Itineracy Compliance Agreement

The itinerate system is the accepted method of the United Methodist Church by which ordained elders, provisional elders, and associate members are appointed by the bishop to fields of labor. All ordained elders, provisional elders, and associate members shall accept and abide by these appointments. Bishops and cabinets shall commit to and support open itineracy and the protection of the prophetic pulpit and diversity. Persons appointed to multiple staff ministries, either in a single parish or in a cluster or larger parish, shall have personal and professional access to the bishop and cabinet, the committee on pastor-parish relations, as well as to the pastor in charge. (§338, *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016*)

Open itineracy means appointments are made without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, color, disability, marital status, or age, except for the provisions of mandatory retirement. The concept of itineracy is important, and sensitive attention should be given in appointing clergy with physical challenges to responsibilities and duties that meet their gifts and graces. (§425, *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016*)

I understand fully that clergy shall be appointed by the bishop, who is empowered to make and fix all appointments in the episcopal area of which the annual conference is a part. Appointments are to be made with consideration of the gifts and evidence of God's grace of those appointed, to the needs, characteristics, and opportunities of congregations and institutions, and with faithfulness to the commitment to an open itineracy. (Refer to the *Book of Discipline* §425)

I understand and agree to fully comply with my commitment to be a part of the Open Itineracy process within the Mississippi Annual Conference.

I understand that this agreement to participate fully in Open Itineracy will be submitted to my District Superintendent along with the submission of any necessary paperwork as part of the annual advisory process.

I understand that any failure to follow the process to submit in a timely manner, may delay or prohibit my appointment.

Mississippi Methodist Conference Itinerary Compliance Agreement

I understand that should an appointment be delayed or unavailable because of my failure to comply with any part of the process, I shall be required to move to Transitional or personal leave. This change in status will be negotiated with my District Superintendent and the Director of Spiritual Leadership.

Clergy Signature

Date

Printed Name

District Superintendent Signature

Date

Printed Name

Licensing School Early Admission Application

To be completed by the student:

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ MI: _____

District: _____

Church of Membership: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Other: _____

Email Address: _____

Birth Date: _____ Gender: _____ Title: _____

Educational Experience: _____ Date Completed: _____

Educational Experience: _____ Date Completed: _____

Are you ordained in another tradition? _____ If so, which? _____ Year: _____

Are you currently serving a UM congregation/charge? _____ If so, which? _____

Are you in the United Methodist candidacy process? Yes No

Please explain:

To be completed by the District Superintendent:

For what reason(s) do you recommend this individual for early admission into Licensing School?

Do you anticipate them becoming a certified candidate in this Conference year? Yes No If no, why:

Licensing School Early Admission Application

Do you anticipate assigning/appointing this individual to a charge/church next Conference year?

Yes No

DS Signature: _____ Date: _____

DCOM Chair Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY:

Approved by the Office of Spiritual Leadership

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Approved by the MSAC Licensing School Director

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Out-of-State Licensing School Approval Application

Which Licensing School are you requesting approval to attend?

Emory (North/South Georgia)

North Alabama

Louisiana

Other _____

Alabama-West Florida

Dates: _____

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ MI: _____

District: _____

Church of Membership: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Other: _____

Email Address: _____

Birth Date: _____ Gender: _____ Title: _____

Educational Experience: _____ Date Completed: _____

Educational Experience: _____ Date Completed: _____

Educational Experience: _____ Date Completed: _____

Are you ordained in another tradition? _____ If so, which? _____ Year: _____

Are you currently serving a UM congregation/charge? _____ If so, which? _____

Are you in the United Methodist candidacy process? Yes No

Please explain: _____

Out-of-State Licensing School Approval Application

For what reason(s) are you requesting approval to attend an out-of-state Licensing School?

DS Signature: _____ Date: _____

DCOM Chair Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY:

Approved by the Office of Spiritual Leadership

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Approved by the MSAC Licensing School Director

Signature: _____ Date: _____

FORM 21



Living Out
The **POWER** *of* We