

**A Guide to the Candidacy Process**  
**Based on**  
***The United Methodist Book of Discipline 2016***  
***The Susquehanna Conference of the United Methodist Church***

The Candidacy Process

**Many helpful links and forms can be found on the Board of Ordained Ministry website which may be accessed through the Ministries/SUSUMC Ministries tab on the Susquehanna UM Conference website: [www.susumc.org](http://www.susumc.org) or by going directly to the Board website: [www.scboom.org](http://www.scboom.org)**

**A. Beginning**

- Be a member of The United Methodist Church (or other UM ministry) for one year. This can occur concurrently with the studies but the membership requirement must be fulfilled before Certification as a Candidate for Ministry.
- Meet with a clergy person in local church, another clergy or the District Superintendent
- Read through *The Christian As Minister* or *Beyond The Burning Bush* (optional)
- Write to District Superintendent requesting admission to the candidacy process, include a statement of call and request registration with GBHEM for Candidacy Studies (UMCares online candidacy system)
- Complete Bio Form 102 and submit to the District Office.
- A mentor will be assigned; complete registration for UMCares (\$75 fee, paid by applicant)
- Work on Candidacy studies with an assigned candidacy mentor
- Meet as requested with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry so they may get to know you – the committee will continue to meet with you at least annually unless you withdraw from the process
- DO NOT request the psychological packet through the UMCares system! Instead, when it is time to take the psychological assessment, contact your District Superintendent, who will provide the necessary information. ~~Susquehanna Conference uses a different assessment packet. Your DCOM will determine when you should begin the testing process and will initiate that process through the district office.~~ The psychological assessment must be completed prior to certification as a candidate.
- The Beginning Process is confidential until you seek charge conference approval – your name will not be published nor will your interest in pastoral ministry be made public by the District Superintendent, your mentor, your pastor or the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (to protect current employment, etc) unless you choose to make it known.
- *Attend a God's Call event. This may be done at any time in the process but must be completed before certification.* This fulfills the Orientation to Ministry requirement.
- Complete the Candidacy Guidebook with your Candidacy Mentor
- When you have discerned that God is calling you into some form of pastoral ministry, continue with the steps below.
- Get a written recommendation from your charge Pastor
- Have a High School diploma or equivalent

- Write a statement of call and be interviewed in light of Wesley's historic questions in ¶310 by your church's Committee on Staff Parish Relations (or an equivalent group in a ministry setting defined by DCOM). The SPRC must vote to recommend you.
- Write a letter of Intention to District Superintendent requesting your Church/Charge Conference's approval as a candidate
- Church/Charge Conference Vote (2/3 approval needed, must be written ballot)
- At the Charge Conference, your candidacy is public knowledge
- Fill out the Declaration of Candidacy Report (Form #104/2009) and file with DCOM
- Written report by Candidacy Mentor to District Committee
- Candidate's written statements: Call and written responses to ¶ 311.2 a) (i) (ii) (iii) (iv) (v) (vi)
- Complete and release required psychological, medical, criminal and credit checks – all clearances must be within three years
  - Medical Report of Ministerial Candidate (form 103/2009) and Medical Report Part II
- Clearances must be obtained prior to serving a charge.
  - Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance (Paid by applicant)
  - PA Criminal Record Check (Paid by applicant)
  - **Special Trak-1 with Credit Check** – a form will be provided from the District Office to authorize this check, a Trak-1 clearance from a local church is NOT the same and does NOT fulfill this requirement
  - FBI Fingerprint (paid by applicant)
  - Notarized statements required by ¶ 311.2 b) (1) (2) Can use form 114/2009
- Meet with District Committee and be approved by 3/4 majority in written ballot
- Read and agree to standards of Christian life as set forth in ¶102-104, 160-166; see ¶ 311.2 d)

#### D. CONTINUATION OF CANDIDACY

- Continue to show evidence of gifts, fruits, and God's grace for the work of ministry
- Annual recommendation by Church/Charge Conference
- Annual evaluation and approval by District Committee
- Annual report of satisfactory progress of studies and copy of transcript from university or school of theology (attendance at a UM seminary is encouraged)
- Certified candidate at least one year and no more than 12 years prior to commissioning for those seeking to become Deacons and Elders

#### **\*\* Special Note \*\***

**Safe Sanctuaries Training and Sexual Ethics Boundaries (“Boundaries”) training is required for all persons serving as pastoral leaders. This may be complete anywhere in the process but must be completed within six months of beginning to serve a church. Basic Boundaries training is part of Susquehanna Conference's Local Pastor Licensing School.**

#### E. Certified Candidate to Local Pastor or Ordination

- A CLERGY mentor is assigned to the certified candidate

- Once you are a certified candidate, you have several options
  - Attend college and/or seminary to complete the educational requirements for ordination without serving part or full time in a church
  - Attend Licensing School to become a local pastor and serve a charge part or full time while attending college and/or seminary and progress towards ordination (1/3 of M. Div. credits completed is acceptable for a License)
  - Attend Licensing School to become a local pastor and attend Course of Study to remain a Licensed Local Pastor
- You must be a certified candidate a minimum of 2 years before applying for commissioning
- You may be a certified candidate a maximum of 12 years

#### F. Licensing School

- Must be a certified candidate
- Check with the District Superintendent or Local Pastor registrar for information about cost, times and dates
- Attend and pass classes
- Be examined and recommended by DCOM
- Be appointed to a charge by the Bishop
  - License is only valid while under appointment
- Be assigned a Clergy Mentor

#### G. Licensed Local Pastors

- After completing Licensing School and being appointed, all LP's must continue their education
  - Attend Seminary for a Master of Divinity degree
  - Attend Course of Study until the 5 year (20 classes) course is complete.
    - It is expected that Full time local pastors will take 4 classes per year.
    - Part time must take a minimum of 2 classes per year.
    - Exceptions to the number of classes taken must be approved by the DCOM and the Local Pastor & Associate Member Registrar must be informed.
    - *Full time local pastors must complete COS within 8 years; part time within 12 years.*
    - currently each course will be reimbursed in the amount of \$200 per class after completion with a grade of C or higher
    - Persons not making appropriate progress in COS are subject to loss of License

#### H. Certified Candidates attending College and/or seminary to seek Ordination

- Discern if God's call is to ordination as Elder or Deacon
- Follow the Book of Discipline's requirements for undergraduate and graduate requirements appropriate for Elder or Deacon and additional requirements set by the Susquehanna Conference Board of Ordained Ministry
- Continue to meet annually with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry

- Year of graduation or any year after graduation, contact the Elder's or Deacon's registrar to apply for commissioning and attend meeting with registrars to receive the application packet of materials
- Complete the Service Requirement (per SUS policy - 100 hours)
- Get recommendation of the District Committee for commissioning (3/4 written ballot)