



## Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church

### Candidacy Process

(Many of the booklets and resources listed in this document are available on the Minnesota Annual Conference Website: <https://www.minnesotaumc.org/feel-called-to-ministry>)

Although the United Methodist Church has some universal requirements for those seeking to be a clergy member, each conference goes about the process in a slightly different way, especially for certification. For Minnesota, here's what the process looks like to get to certification:

#### 1. Begin with your local congregation.

- Meet with your pastor and let them know you are interested in pursuing a career in ministry.
- Optional: Read, *The Christian as Minister*, which will help you explore whether this is a good path for you, and it will explain some of the terms as well as requirements in the United Methodist Church. [The book can be ordered from Cokesbury.](#)

#### 2. Contact your District Superintendent

**PREREQUISITE:** You have been a member of The United Methodist Church or baptized participant of a recognized United Methodist campus ministry or other United Methodist ministry setting for one year.

- Let your District Superintendent know you are interested in exploring candidacy for ministry.
- Your DS will give your name to the Conference Registrar, Janet Beard. Feel free to contact the registrar with any questions or concerns at any time. ([janet.beard@minnesotaumc.org](mailto:janet.beard@minnesotaumc.org) / 612-230-6156)
- At any point after this you can complete two online forms: [Candidate Application for Clergy Relationship](#) and [Biographical Information](#)
- At some point during this stage, the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOM) will contact you for an introductory interview. This is a “get to know you” meeting, and you don't have to have any paperwork filed prior to the meeting, other than the two online forms the Registrar has sent you. This introductory interview may be conducted electronically, if location is challenging.
- Your DS will assign you a mentor if you are ready to take the next steps. This may occur before or after your DCOM introductory meeting. Your mentor will guide you through the process to certification and will go through the Candidacy Guidebook with you.
- The registrar will help you register with UMCARES, which is an important step in getting you connected to the General Board of Higher Education & Ministry (GBHEM). UMCARES will provide the Candidacy Guidebook, “Answering the Call”, following registration and fee payment.
- Becoming familiar with the requirements in the Book of Discipline is another important step. Your pastor or mentor can help you find paragraph 310 so that you can become familiar with it. Be aware that the Discipline can change every 4 years; if you have any questions, please ask the Registrar or your DS.
- Read two booklets related to United Methodist beliefs and practices. (“By Water and the Spirit” and “This Holy Mystery”) Although these are not required, reading these is highly encouraged in the beginning of your call discernment process.
- Read “Who We Are as United Methodists” and “Competency Model”. These are two documents unique to Minnesota and will be important for you to understand throughout the process.
- As soon as possible, attend the ‘Orientation to Ministry’ workshop offered before Annual Conference Session each year.

### 3. Back to the Local Church

PREREQUISITE: High school degree or equivalent is required.

- Complete a written Statement of Call (Instruction sheet attached: 'Statement of Call – Historic Questions 1')
- You must meet with your Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) and they will interview you and discern your calling. The Book of Discipline has some questions for them to consider, and which they probably will ask you in some format (paragraph 310.1.d). They then need to vote to approve you. Once the vote has been taken, the SPRC chair should submit the [SPRC Recommendation for Candidacy](#) form.
- Once you have SPRC approval, your congregation needs to vote on you as well at a regular Church or Charge Conference. The first vote they take must be with a written ballot (see the Book of Discipline for requirements), and then a voice or hand vote must be taken every year after that. Your pastor needs to submit a [Form 3](#) renewing your interest every year.
- Submit your official HS transcript to the Conference Registrar. (Unless you are a college graduate, in which case you submit college transcript later in the process.)

### 4. Certified Candidate

Your DCOM certifies your candidacy whether you are interested in becoming a Licensed Local Pastor, a Deacon, or an Elder. (Note: those on the Elder/Deacon track will be required to have completed a four year college degree and half of a seminary or Masters degree before requesting provisional membership.)

- Once you have finished your meetings with your mentor, he/she will need to submit the [Candidate Mentor Report](#) indicating you have completed your meetings and have reviewed the guidebook and the competency model with you.
- DCOM will then either call you for an additional meeting or approve you for a psychological assessment with LeaderWise. There are two online forms: one for DCOM to complete, [Candidate Psychological Assessment Request](#) and one for you to complete, [Candidate Psychological Assessment Information](#) along with a \$650 fee you will need to submit to cover a portion of the assessment. (Instructions for payment are given on the form.) If this is a financial hardship, you can ask your local church to help subsidize this cost. Be aware that the assessment can take from one-three months from beginning to end, and it is valid for only six months. Plan your assessment to be completed less than six months before you will have your certification (and licensing, if applicable) interview with DCOM.

The Conference Registrar can help guide you to these requirements:

- Background check (completed through Safe Gatherings, instruction sheet on website)
- Your written updated Statement of Call and Historic Questions paper. (Instruction sheet on website: 'Statement of Call – Historic Questions 2')
- Official college transcripts (if you have them)
- The results from your psychological evaluation. Reminder: these must be less than 6 months old.

If you are ready to be certified, contact the chair of your DCOM to let them know you are ready for your final interview. At least **five days** before you meet with them for certification, please make sure all of the above requirements are submitted.

## 5. Licensed Local Pastor

Depending on your situation, you may be interviewed for approval for both certified candidacy and licensing as a local pastor at the same time. The interview will be conducted differently, depending on your situation. These two last requirements also need to be completed. Contact the registrar for info.

- [Employer references](#) (The registrar will request employer information and will contact them to complete an online reference form.)
- Medical summary forms ([Candidate Health Statement](#) to be completed by you, and Physician's Medical Summary to be completed by your doctor – so you may need to schedule a physical. The form is on the website.)

## 6. Following Certification – Financial Health Education

Your personal financial well-being is critical to effectively lead the church. While a formal assessment of financial health is not required to become a certified candidate, it is strongly recommended that certified candidates obtain personal financial education during the candidacy process. Free personal financial educational materials plus other helpful resources are available to the certified candidates to support the journey to financial well-being. [Learn more about these resources available for the certified candidate](#)—educational materials, future granting opportunities, workshops, webinars, and publications—which are gathered into a program called EarnSaveGive.

Requirements in list form:

To Become an Exploring Candidate:

1. Application for Clergy Relationship form
2. Biographical Information form
3. DCOM introductory meeting
4. Meetings with mentor
5. Orientation to Ministry workshop at annual conference session
6. Written statement of call – paper 1
7. SPRC and Charge Conference approval – form submitted by your pastor
8. High school transcripts submitted
9. Optional resources to study: 'The Christian as Minister', 'By Water and the Spirit' 'This Holy Mystery'

To become a Certified Candidate – all of the above plus:

1. Mentor letter indicating completion of 'Answering the Call' guidebook
2. DCOM approval for psychological assessment
3. Background Check
4. Updated written statement of call – historic questions paper 2
5. Psychological Assessment report from LeaderWise
6. College transcripts submitted (if you have them)

To become a Licensed Local Pastor – all of the above plus:

1. Employer references
2. Medical summary forms

## Next Steps

Explore [financial health education and other financial resources](#) available to you as a candidate in the Minnesota Conference.

Continuing as a Certified Candidate yearly requirements:

- Application for Clergy Relationship form
- Biographical Information form – please update with changes
- Continued progress on educational goals
- Meet with mentor at least once
- Approval by your local church – hand or voice vote taken at charge conference, pastor to submit form
- Interview with and approval from DCOM (If you are seeking commissioning, please let DCOM know before your interview.)
- 12 year maximum

Continuing as a Licensed Local Pastor yearly requirements:

- Application for Clergy Relationship form
- Biographical Information form – please update with changes
- Continued progress on educational goals
  - Elder/Deacon track – seminary, graduate school studies
  - LLPs – Licensing school and yearly progress in Course of Study
- Mentor meetings – individual or in groups
- Interview with and approval from DCOM (If you are seeking commissioning, please let DCOM know before your interview.)

If seeking commissioning/provisional membership, please indicate that on your Application for Clergy Relationship form, and the Conference Registrar will help guide you through the process. This process will involve the Board of Ordained Ministry, and once commissioned, you will no longer meet yearly with DCOM.

### Contact information:

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