



Candidacy Summit Handbook

TABLE OF CONTENTS

United Methodist Glossary of Terms	04
Missouri Annual Conference Candidacy Guide	12
Candidate's Introduction to the Psychological Evaluation Process Rationale	18
The Appointment Process	20
Seminary Contact Info	21
Resources For Discerning Candidates	22
Missouri Conference Reading List	24
The Pastor's Responsibility for Their Own Pastoral Care	26
The Church's Responsibility for Pastoral Care	27
My Covenant For Balancing Ministry, Family and Friendships	28
Residency in Ministry	29
3 Simple Rules for Social Media	30
Guidelines for the Responsible Use of Social Media for Missouri Conference Clergy	31
Everyone Who Enters Ministry ...	34

A UNITED METHODIST GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Note: More details and in-depth information can be found in The Book of Discipline for many of the terms below. Where appropriate, paragraph numbers from The 2012 Book of Discipline are noted.

Annual Conference

A geographical area and organizational term. Defines a region that includes all United Methodist churches and ministries in that area. Members meet annually to approve business, set budget, and promote ministry programs. The annual conference commissions provisional clergy members, ordains deacons and elders, and licenses local pastors for ministry. The bishop appointed to that conference presides over the annual meeting and all matters affecting that conference's ministry (§11, 601-57).

Appointment Beyond the Local Church

One category of service for provisional or ordained deacons. Deacons serve in a local church or in an appointment beyond a local church. Appointments may be to a United Methodist-related agency or other service area (i.e. social work, teaching, health ministries, etc.). Deacons serving an appointment beyond the local church also have a secondary appointment to a congregation (§331).

Apportionments

A portion of local church offerings that churches contribute to their district and conference to support the annual conference and general church ministries.

Associate Members

Local pastors who have reached age 40, completed at least four years of full-time service as a local pastor, and the five year Course of Study, and have been approved by the board of ordained ministry and clergy session. They are not ordained, but are available for full-time service and are guaranteed an appointment within the annual conference. Associate members have voice and vote in every matter except constitutional amendments, ordination, and conference relations of clergy (§321-323).

Bishop

Bishops are elected by lay and clergy delegates of the jurisdictional conference. Bishops oversee one or more conferences and lead The United Methodist Church. They are authorized to "guard the faith, order, liturgy, doctrine and discipline of the church" and to "lead all persons entrusted to their oversight in worship, in the celebration of the sacraments, and in their mission of witness and service in the world." (§401-403).

Board of Ordained Ministry

Each annual conference has a board of ordained ministry. The board recruits, nurtures, and supports those preparing for licensed or ordained ministry, and evaluates whether or not candidates have the gifts for ministry and are ready to serve. The board is the credentialing body for clergy in an annual conference and is responsible for continuing formation programs for clergy and for matters relating to changing conference relationships and clergy conduct (§635).

Book of Discipline

The United Methodist Church's book of law. It includes historical information, doctrinal standards, and policies that can only be changed by General Conference. It is updated and reprinted to reflect decisions made by the General Conference.

Book of Resolutions

Reflects The United Methodist Church's stance on current issues of faith. General Conference delegates decide what the resolutions will be based on petitions received.

Book of Worship

Contains the order of weekly services, the liturgy for Holy Communion (or Word and Table), Baptism, marriage, funerals, healing, and other types of services for The United Methodist Church.

Cabinet

The bishop and district superintendents when meeting as a body. All conferences have a cabinet.

Call, Call Story, or Calling

An experience or set of decisions, circumstances, or encouragements that lead an individual to believe God has asked them serve in a certain ministry. Many clergy refer to being "called" to preach or serve. During the candidacy process, candidates will be asked to write and talk about how they have discerned God's calling in their lives and how and where they believe God is calling them to serve.

Campus Minister or University Chaplain

Campus ministers and university chaplains serve on college campuses throughout the world. Some work in United Methodist campus ministries, while some work in ecumenical settings. Others are chaplains at United Methodist-related colleges and universities. Ministry with students is central, but these ministers are also concerned with faculty, staff, and administration—in other words, they work with the whole campus. Some campus ministers and chaplains are ordained deacons and elders. Others are laypeople who have received training for ministry on campus.

Candidacy

A discerning and preparatory period of time and the process by which those wishing to serve as local pastors, deacons, or elders apply, and are evaluated, by their annual conference to serve on behalf of The United Methodist Church (§§310-314).

Candidacy Mentor

An ordained deacon, elder, associate member, or local pastor who has completed the Course of Study, trained to provide guidance to candidates. They are assigned a candidate by the district committee on ordained ministry and assist the candidate in understanding the process and further discerning their call as they become certified and licensed or provisional members (§§349).

Candidacy Process

Another way of talking about candidacy (§§310-314).

Candidate

A person enrolled in the candidacy process who wishes to serve as a local pastor, deacon, or elder.

Central Conference

Central Conferences are the conferences for areas outside the United States. The church has seven central conferences in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines (§§540ff.).

Certified Candidate

A candidate who has been approved by their local ministry setting and the district committee on ordained ministry to continue the process of moving toward licensing or ordination (§§310.2).

Chaplain

Elders or deacons working in specialized ministry settings. Endorsed chaplains and pastoral counselors work in settings such as prisons, hospitals, the armed forces, and counseling centers (§§1421.5).

Charge Conference

A local church meeting that includes members of the governing body (i.e. church council) and the clergy. It meets at least once a year to review goals, elect new leaders, set clergy salaries, and recommend persons for candidacy. It is typically facilitated by the district superintendent (§§246).

Clergy

Commissioned and ordained deacons and elders; associate members, and local pastors serving under the full or part-time appointment of a bishop (§§142).

Clergy Mentor

An ordained deacon, elder, associate member, or full-time local pastor who has completed the Course of Study, trained to guide provisional deacons or elders as they prepare for ordination (§§349.1b).

Course of Study

Prescribed ministry classes for local pastors. Part and full-time local pastors attend the Course of Study while serving churches. The course takes at least five years to complete.

Deacon

Deacons are called by God, authorized by the church, and ordained by a bishop to a lifetime ministry of Word, Service, Compassion, and Justice. They serve the community and congregation in a ministry that connects the two. Deacons are called to a lifetime of servant leadership, serving the congregation and the world. A deacon serves all people, particularly the poor, the sick, and the marginalized, and equips and leads the laity in ministries of compassion, justice, and service. The deacon's role connects the church's worship with its service in the world (§§328-331).

Deaconess and Home Missioner

Deaconesses (laywomen) and home missionaries (laymen) are professionally trained and devote their lives to service through the Church's. They are approved by the General Board of Global Ministries and commissioned by a bishop. They may serve with any United Methodist agency or program or in agencies outside The United Methodist Church, provided that approval is given by the board in consultation with the bishop of the receiving area (§1314).

Discern

Synonymous with decide. Carries an underlying assumption that the decision is made with considerable thought, prayer, study, and attention to God's call in one's life.

District

One of several geographic areas in a conference. Each church is part of a district and an annual conference. Typically 60 – 80 churches are in a district. Districts are supervised by a district superintendent. The number of districts in a conference varies depending on the conferences' size.

District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM)

Evaluates, certifies, and recommends to the board of ordained ministry all those applying for licensed or ordained ministry. The dCOM oversees all candidates within that district and supervises all matters related to candidacy and licensing. The committee interviews candidates, recommends candidates for provisional membership, and approves all local pastors serving within the district (§ 666).

District Superintendent (DS)

Supervises the churches within a district of the annual conference. They serve as extensions of the bishop's authority and supervise clergy within that district (§419).

Elder

Those called by God, authorized by the church, and ordained by a bishop to a lifetime ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service. Like all Christians, elders are committed to a lifetime of service, although this service manifests itself in different ways than deacons or the laity. The elder serves in ministry and servant leadership and gives pastoral leadership to order the life of the congregation. Elders devote themselves to the ministry of the Word, including primary responsibility for preaching and teaching the Word of God (§332-335).

Endorsement

The process to ensure that pastoral counselors and prison, hospital, or military chaplains are qualified and prepared to appropriately represent the Church in their ministry settings (§1421.5).

Episcopal

Refers to something relating to a bishop. For instance, an Episcopal area is the area under the supervision of a particular bishop.

Extension Ministry

Refers to elders who serve in ministry outside of a local church setting. It includes settings such as conference administration, chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, teaching, etc. The bishop appoints the elder to that position. This appointment may happen at the elder's request and through consultation with the bishop (§§343-344).

Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members

Provides mutual support for its members for the sake of the life and mission of the church. All local pastors and associate members shall be members of and participate in the Fellowship (§§323).

Full Connection

An ordained deacon or elder serves as a member in full connection to an annual conference. Their life and work is amenable to the annual conference and they are supported by and accountable to that annual conference. Except for the election of lay delegates, members in full connection have voice and vote in all matters related to the annual conference, to the clergy of that conference, to the general conference, and constitutional amendments of The United Methodist Church.

Full Member (similar to Full Connection)

Refers to an ordained elder or deacon in good standing with an annual conference.

General Agencies

The United Methodist Church has thirteen general boards and agencies that work in different ways on behalf of local churches, annual conferences and the denomination.

1. General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) - www.umc-gbcs.org
2. General Board of Discipleship (GBOD) – www.gbod.org
3. General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) - www.gbgm-umc.org
4. General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) – www.gbhem.org
5. General Board of Pension and Health Benefits - www.gbophb.org
6. General Commission on Archives and History - www.gcah.org
7. General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (GCCUIC) - www.gccuic-umc.org/
8. General Commission on Communication (United Methodist Communications - UMCCom) - www.umcom.org
9. General Commission on Religion and Race (G CORR) - www.gcorr.org
10. General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW) - www.gcsr.org
11. General Commission on United Methodist Men - www.gcumm.org
12. General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA)- www.gcfa.org
13. United Methodist Publishing House – www.umph.org

General Conference

The international gathering and business meeting of The United Methodist Church that occurs every four years with about 1,000 delegates who are clergy and laity from each annual and central conference. This body decides on petitions to change the Book of Discipline and Book of Resolutions and is the only body authorized to speak on behalf of The United Methodist Church (§§8, 501-511).

Group Candidacy Mentoring

The opportunity for candidates to meet with a candidacy mentor and a group of other candidates. Many conferences offer this structure to provide candidates opportunities to learn from mentors and each other.

Home Missioner

See deaconess (§1314).

Itinerate

Indicates an elder, associate member, or local pastor agrees to serve where the bishop appoints. This system is called itineracy. Often “itineracy”, “guaranteed appointment” or “security of appointment” are discussed as parts of this system that is the basis of the commitment between the church and clergy who serve.

Jurisdiction

A group of annual conferences within a geographical region in the United States. There are five jurisdictions (North Central, Northeast, South Central, Southeast, and Western). The Jurisdictional Conference meets every four years after General Conference and consists of delegates from each annual conference in that region. The conference elects bishops for their jurisdiction (§512-537).

Layperson

A member of a local church.

Licensed Local Pastor

Someone who is not ordained as an elder or deacon but is appointed to preach, conduct worship, and perform the duties of a pastor in a particular setting. That person must complete licensing school, Orientation to Ministry, and receive an appointment to serve. Local pastors attend Course of Study school each year and meet with the district committee on ministry annually for continual approval and eligibility. Local pastors are not required to earn a Master’s of Divinity, or to itinerate, are not guaranteed an appointment, and usually serve smaller congregations (§315-320).

Online Candidacy Application System (OCAS)

The online system managed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to track candidates for licensed or ordained ministry. District superintendents invite candidates to enroll in the system after they have written to request admission to candidacy (§310.1).

Ordained Ministry

The ministry of deacons and elders who have been ordained by a bishop to serve in The United Methodist Church (§301-304).

Order of Deacons/Order of Elders

A covenant community within the church to mutually support, care for, and hold accountable members for the sake of the life and mission of the church. These orders seek to respond to the spiritual hunger among clergy for a fulfilling sense of vocation, for support among peers, and for a deepening relationship with God. All ordained persons upon election to full membership in the annual conference shall be members of and participate in an order appropriate to their election (§§306).

Ordination

Performed by laying-on of hands by the bishop. Signifies that the church affirms and continues its ministry through these persons. Persons may be ordained as deacons or elders and commit to living and proclaiming the gospel. Deacons are ordained to the ministries of Word, Service, Compassion, and Justice. Elders are ordained to the ministries of Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service (§§301-304).

Orientation to Ministry

Sponsored by the board of ordained ministry and required for all ministry candidates. Helps to build collegiality and develop an understanding of deacons', elders', and local pastors' ministry (§§312).

Pastor

A pastor is an elder, associate member, or local pastor appointed to serve in charge of a station, circuit, cooperative parish, extension ministry, ecumenical shared ministry, or church of another denomination, or on the staff of such. Deacons, who may serve similar roles as the pastor, should not be called pastors (§§339).

Polity

Refers to the rules and traditions of The United Methodist Church. It includes the Book of Discipline, history, practices, and beliefs of the denomination.

Professional Certification

Recognition that someone has met academic standards, experience, and continuing study to achieve and maintain professional excellence. Visit gbhem.org/certification for a listing of current certifications.

Professional Ministry

To make one's living by serving in full-time in ministry. Can apply to laity or clergy.

Provisional Membership

The step in the ordination process between candidacy and ordination when a commissioned deacon or elder serves as a provisional member. Those applying for ordination serve as a provisional member for a minimum of two years, depending on annual conference policy. Provisional membership ends with ordination, or when a decision is made not to proceed toward ordination (§§324-327).

Seminary or Theological School

Term for post-graduate school of theology that educates and prepares people for ministry. Candidates for ordination must graduate from a school approved by the University Senate of The United Methodist Church.

Social Principles

A prayerful and thoughtful effort of the General Conference to speak to contemporary issues from a sound biblical and theological foundation. The Social Principles are a call to all members of The United Methodist Church to a prayerful, studied dialogue of faith and practice (§160-166).

Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (S/P-PRC)

The committee in each church that assists clergy and staff in setting leadership and service priorities. Evaluates and approves those beginning candidacy for licensed or ordained ministry from that congregation. (§258.2).

University Senate

A body of higher education professionals that determines schools, colleges, universities, and theological schools that meet criteria for United Methodist Church affiliation. Ordination candidates must complete educational requirements at a University Senate-approved institution (§1414-18).

Vocation

1. a particular occupation, business, or profession; calling.
2. a strong impulse or inclination to follow a particular activity or career.
3. a divine call to God's service or to the Christian life.
4. a function or station in life to which one is called by God: the religious vocation; the vocation of marriage.

Works Cited *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2012*. Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2012.

" vocation definition | Dictionary.com ." Dictionary.com. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/vocation> (accessed March 5, 2013).

MISSOURI ANNUAL CONFERENCE CANDIDACY GUIDE

Candidate's name: _____

STEP 1. BEGINNING CANDIDACY: APPLY AND ENROLL

2016 Book of Discipline ¶310.1, a-c

For Candidates

- Perceive call to ministry.
- Contact your United Methodist pastor, another deacon or elder, or the District Superintendent.
- Read the *The Christian as Minister* (recommended) and/or visit thecalltoministry.org
- Be a member of the United Methodist Church or baptized participant of a recognized United Methodist campus ministry or other United Methodist ministry for one year.
- Apply to DS in writing for admission to candidacy program and be assigned a candidacy mentor. Include your statement of call (half-page, ¶310.1.b) with your application.
- Attend interview with DS and receive access to online Candidacy Summit application.
- Interview Date: ____/____

For Districts - After you are contacted about a candidate

- Confirm that the person is a district 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.
- The District Superintendent may assign the candidate a district liaison. A district liaison is chosen and trained by the dCOM to orient a person in the candidacy process.
- Part of the orientation might include the reading of *The Christian as Minister* (recommended, not required) or other resources found on www.thecalltoministry.org.
- Candidate applies to DS in writing for admission to candidacy program. Application includes statement of call.
- Interview with candidate. DS shares Candidacy Summit registration information.
- The district liaison/dCOM/DS orients the candidate with the candidacy checklist.
- District prepares the Candidate to attend the summer or winter Candidacy Summit.
- Candidate completes Candidacy Summit registration (found at www.moumethodist.org/leadershipexcellence) and sends \$125 check payment made out to "Missouri Conference" if payment isn't made online.
- The DS will enter the Candidate's name into the UMCARES website. When entering a candidate for the first time, please enter David Scott as the mentor. This is the official candidacy mentor. David Scott will assign mentors for the Candidacy Summit.
- The candidate will receive an email inviting them to the UMCARES website where they will complete an application/registration and submit \$75.00 registration fee to UMCARES.
- After the Candidate is enrolled in UMCARES and paid the fee, they will receive *Answering the Call*. They begin work through this workbook at the Candidacy Summit with their mentor and peer group.

STEP 2. CANDIDACY SUMMIT REGISTRATION

For Candidates

An email from the General Board of Higher Education with a link to enroll as a candidate with The United Methodist Church through the UMCARES Candidacy system will be sent after your District Superintendent enters you into the UMCARES system. Read the email immediately and pay \$75 application fee. Once the fee is received, you can download or receive by mail the Candidacy Guidebook.

- Read *Answering the Call* and journal your thoughts.** Bring both to Candidacy Summit.
- Complete Release of Information step on UMCARES.org website** (under psychological assessment track).
- Submit reference requests for the psychological assessment process** through the UMCARES.org website (psychological assessment track).
- Complete Candidacy Summit online application** (www.moumethodist.org/leadershipexcellence) or **send in application to the Conference office along with \$125 registration fee** (Let Jenny Gragg know if you don't need a hotel room.)
- Complete DISC profile or Strength Finders** (link will be emailed you from Jenny Gragg, jgragg@moumethodist.org) You must bring the results to the retreat.

STEP 3. CANDIDACY SUMMIT ATTENDANCE (SUMMER OR WINTER)

For Candidates

- Get picture taken during check-in.**
- Take psychological assessment.** Reference requests submitted through UMCARES prior to Summit (see Step 2). Three references are to be received before a report can be written. Four references or more are needed in order to have a dCOM certification.
- Attend mentor meetings.**
- Attend forums and receive answers to questions.**

For Districts

- Candidate is assigned a mentor and peer group and attends three meetings at the Summit.
- Complete their psychological assessment.**
Reference requests should be submitted through UMCARES prior to Summit. Three references are to be received before a report can be written. Four references or more are needed in order to have a dCOM certification.
- Review DISC profile or Strength Finders.** Candidate will be emailed link to DISC or mailed Strength Finders book before the Summit by the Conference Office.
- Worship and have discernment time**

If there are questions about someone attending the Candidacy Summit, contact the Director of Leadership Excellence.

STEP 4. POST-CANDIDACY SUMMIT

For Candidates

- Attend mentoring meetings.**
 - Complete peer group work.** After the peer group work is complete, the Candidate returns to the full care of dCOM (and district liaison).
 - Meet with psychologist in either St. Louis, Columbia, Springfield or Kansas City.**
 - Complete required documents for district file:**
 - o Medical Form 103
 - o Biographical Form 102
 - o Candidate's Disclosure Form 114
 - o Waiver of Access to file
 - o Missouri Conference Safe Sanctuary Letter
 - o Missouri Conference BOM screening packet
- Keep copies of all forms completed and work submitted.*
- Attend all meetings.** Mentor marks task as complete in UMCARES after all meetings attended.
 - Purchase and read United Methodist Beliefs: A Brief Introduction by William H. Willimon prior to your dCOM meeting.**
 - Candidates should be prepared to discuss:
 - o God's grace
 - o Understanding of the United Methodist practice of the sacraments of Holy Communion and Holy Baptism

For Districts

The mentor groups will work together for three months completing Answering the Call. After the mentor group work is complete, the Candidate returns to the full care of dCOM and district liaison.

- The district liaison will assist the Candidate with the completion of their Candidacy Forms.** The forms can be found on the Conference website, www.moumethodist.org, under the Resources tab, Forms; at www.thecallto ministry.org or at <http://www.bomlibrary.org/home-screen/> (See Section D, Resources). Originals should be submitted by the Candidates to the District Office:
 - o Medical Form 103
 - o Biographical Form 102
 - o Candidate's Disclosure Form 114
 - o Waiver to access to personal file
 - o Missouri Conference Safe Sanctuary Letter
 - o Missouri Conference BOM screening packet and Highest Ideals
- Mentor marks tasks as complete in UMCARES after mentor meetings attended.**
- Candidate will purchase and read United Methodist Beliefs: A Brief Introduction by William H. Willimon prior to their dCom meeting. Candidate should be prepared to discuss:
 - o God's grace
 - o Understanding of the United Methodist practice of the sacraments of Holy Communion and Holy Baptism

STEP 5. DECLARING CANDIDACY

2016 Book of Discipline ¶310.1d, e

For Candidates

- Consult with pastor or equivalent in ministry setting and request recommendation from S/P-PRC or equivalent.** Candidate must have graduated from an accredited high school or certificate of equivalency.
- Submit transcript or copy of diploma providing proof of graduation or equivalent.**
- Submit responses to Wesley's historic questions in The Book of Discipline ¶310; agreement to make a complete dedication of yourself to the highest ideals of the Christian life; and interview by Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee or equivalent.**

P/SPRC Interview Date: ____/____

- Recommended
- Not Recommended

- Charge Conference recommendation received.

Interview Date: ____/____

- Recommended
- Not Recommended

For Districts

- Candidate shall meet with a Charge Conference to recommend the candidate to the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.**
- The candidate shall have graduated from an accredited high school or have certificate of equivalency.
- The Candidate completes a written response to ministry questions in ¶310, The 2016 Book of Discipline, and agrees to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life.

STEP 6. dCOM INTERVIEW

For Candidates

- After interview, meet with dCOM chair to discuss next steps. *Continue ministry as laity.***

For Districts

- Conduct the dCOM interview and determine one of the following:**
 - Certify*
 - Delayed (not yet; specific focus areas may be assigned)
 - Discontinue

**Once a Candidate is approved for certification, please let Jenny Gragg at the Conference Office know so that Form 113 can be completed.*

PROVISIONAL MEMBER: STEP 7. CONTINUING CANDIDACY

2016 Book of Discipline ¶313

For Candidates

- Complete annual recommendation by Charge Conference.
- Complete annual interview and approval by dCOM.
- Submit annual report of satisfactory progress of studies and copy of transcripts from university or school of theology.

LOCAL PASTOR: STEP 7. CONTINUING CANDIDACY

- Complete candidacy certification and licensing. Receives clergy mentor assignment ¶311.
- Complete annual recommendation by Charge Conference.
- Complete annual interview and approval by dCOM.
- Submit annual report of satisfactory progress of studies and copy of transcripts from Course of Study.

Complete Licensing School.

All newly certified candidates (or those who will be certified prior to the school) who will be appointed to serve as a local pastor during the next conference year must attend Licensing School. The only exception is for those people who have completed one-third of their seminary course work by Annual Conference. Successful completion leads to licensing of candidate with an appointment for ministry

- Complete application for Licensing School. It can be found at www.moumethodist.org/pastoralexcellence. The cost is \$450. \$200 is covered by the Conference BOM. The remaining balance is covered by the participant, the District or the local church.
- License issued by District Superintendent.

Course of Study

Full-time local pastors shall complete the five-year Course of Study curriculum within eight years; part-time local pastors shall complete the Course of Study curriculum within 12 years, unless family or other circumstances preclude the local pastor's ability to meet these requirements.

Reminders:

- Get class applications signed by District Superintendent and the Local Pastor registrar.
- You can be reimbursed by the BOM at \$225/course with a passing grade.
- 20 courses make up the Course of Study curriculum.

PML: A two-year fast track program covering the 10 basic courses for part-time local pastors in Missouri following Licensing School 2017. Learn more on page 93.

Advanced Course of Study

The purpose of the Advanced Course of Study for Ordained Ministry is to provide a curriculum which will enable a local pastor to meet the educational requirements for provisional membership.

Clergy Mentoring

All local pastors shall be assigned a clergy mentor by their District Committee on Ordained Ministry and District Superintendent until they have completed the five-year Course of Study or Master of Divinity. Clergy mentors may be local pastors who have completed the five-year Course of Study, associate members or elders.

PROVISIONAL MEMBER: STEP 8. PREPARATION FOR PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP (COMMISSIONING)

2016 Book of Discipline ¶313

- Be a certified candidate for minimum of one year, maximum 12 years.**
- Spend one year in service ministry.**
- Complete of $\frac{1}{2}$ the basic graduate theological studies to be eligible for commissioning.**
- Obtain health certificate completed by medical doctor.**
- Submit written and oral doctrinal exam and written autobiographical statement.**
- Interview and recommendation by $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of dCOM.
- Submit notarized statement certifying that the candidate has neither been accused in writing nor convicted of a felony, misdemeanor or any incident of sexual misconduct of child abuse.**
- Interview and recommendation by the BOM.
- Election to provisional membership by clergy session.

CANDIDATES' INTRODUCTION TO THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION PROCESS RATIONALE

Every conference is charged with conducting psychological evaluations for ministerial candidates. Some are mandated and some are specific to the conference. The Missouri Annual Conference (MOAC) uses a specific test protocol developed through the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) Pastoral Evaluation Committee's consultations with professional psychologists who have experience in ministry. The rationale for the evaluations is twofold: First, the MOAC/BOM has a responsibility to insure that a candidate's engagement in ministry will not be harmful to the candidate, the churches served or the parishioners; second, the evaluation reports can be used by supervisors, mentors, District Superintendents, etc. in making wise placement decisions and giving guidance to the candidate that will enhance his/her ministry.

The MOAC has candidates evaluated at several levels and/or points during their ministerial careers. The same test protocol is used on each of one or two evaluations to insure consistency and measure growth or identify problems that may have developed over time. Generally, applicants for candidacy certification, lay ministry, local pastor's licenses, and individuals who are seeking transfer of their credentials from another conference or denomination are evaluated early in their ministerial journey with the MOAC. Lay ministers, locally licensed pastors and transfer applicants are typically tested only once unless psychological problems appear to be impairing their ability to perform well in ministry. Candidates seeking full-connection with the United Methodist Church are evaluated twice, once before candidacy certification or commissioning as deacon or elder and again before ordination.

Evaluation Protocol Candidates will complete a Release of Information and Personal/Professional Reference request through the UMCARES website before the Candidacy Summit. At the Candidacy Summit the candidate will complete the MMPI-2, 16PF (16 Personality Factors) and Incomplete Sentences Assessment. Candidates will complete the Ministerial Assessment Questionnaire in the week following the Candidacy Summit.

The MMPI-2 test identifies personality factors that may represent particular strengths that a candidate could use to enhance ministry and/or areas of growth that could be addressed. These factors include: emotional adjustment, integrity/control, intellectual efficiency and interpersonal relations.

The 16PF is an instrument that identifies personality factors that assist with career development.

The Ministerial Assessment Questionnaire collects data related to efficient and safe functioning in ministry. Areas explored with the MAQ include: employment history, educational history, religious history, marital history, family of origin history and personal history, including current and past physical and psychological health, financial history and current status, arrest record, involvement in civil litigation, involvement in domestic violence or sexual harassment (victim or perpetrator), etc.

The Incomplete Sentences Blank assessment is a projective technique that asks the candidate to complete sentence stems. It gives the candidate an opportunity to provide open-ended narrative information for discussion with the Ministerial Assessment Specialist or psychologist.

The test administration takes candidates three to four hours to complete. We will allow breaks throughout that time.

In order for a Ministerial Assessment Specialist to schedule an interview with you, your UMCARES file needs three references. Four references are required before certification of candidacy.

The Ministerial Assessment Specialist will have access to your test results through UMCARES and review your results. Then an interview time and location will be set up with the candidate and MAS. The reports are usually completed within 60 days of the testing.

Evaluation Outcomes

One of five recommendations is made as follows:

1. Excellent candidate – This recommendation is made in only about one percent of the cases. It usually comes with zero or very few recommendations for enhancing the candidate's ministry.
2. Above average candidate – This recommendation implies a very strong candidate and comes with few recommendations for ministerial enhancement.
3. Acceptable candidate – This recommendation is received by most candidates and often includes suggestions for personal, professional or educational growth along with any precautionary concerns such as employment, interpersonal or financial instability, etc.
4. Acceptable but less than average candidate – This is a precautionary recommendation and usually reflects serious concerns about the candidate's ability to function successfully in ministry. Recommendations are made with regard to psychological counseling, close supervision, balancing one's life with different vocationally themed activities and educational enhancements, etc.
5. Unacceptable candidate – This recommendation comes when there is deemed to be psychopathology that would seriously impair a candidate's ability to function in ministry or that would put the candidate, parishioners and/or the church at risk of harm. Recommendations are made regarding care and support of the candidate (psychological counseling, evaluation for psychiatric medications, etc.).

Candidates will sign a waiver of release of report at the interview. The candidate does not receive a copy of the report. Reports are sent to the Board of Ordained Ministry for review and revision if necessary. They are then forwarded to the MOAC where they are disseminated to District Superintendents, a dCOM and/or a BOM member for review and decision-making. However, supervisors, psychotherapists/Ministerial Assessment Specialist, dCom and District Superintendents may use the report in consultation with the candidate to enhance ministerial performance and/or personal well-being.

THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS

In 11 abbreviated steps

1. The Mission of the Church comes first.
2. The appointment process deserves our honesty, a view for the good of the whole connection. All of us own all the challenges and problems we face together. A "I'm glad the hole is in your end of the boat" mentality doesn't make any sense.
3. We consciously reward excellence, creativity effectiveness and fruitfulness in the mission field and not just within the congregation. The appointment process is data-supported.
4. Four years is the minimum service in an area for effectiveness, and we will not consider shorter appointment periods unless circumstances merit it.
5. Appointments with worship attendance under 200, serve four years; 200-500, serve six years; 500+, serve eight years.
6. We will not move pastors during their provisional period except in extraordinary circumstances. A move precipitated by their actions restarts the provisional clock. We place provisional members in churches when possible rather than in extension ministries.
7. We actively plan intentional leadership development for high-potential, gifted pastors or the long-term good of the mission of the conference. Gifted, high-potential pastors receive intentional consideration.
8. We begin with strategic congregations rather than with highest salaries.
9. We work firmly and graciously to encourage ineffective pastors to exit rather than to appoint them to places where we have no confidence they can succeed.
10. We complete all appointments by mid-May to avoid last-minute pre-conference changes.
11. We attend to systems that restrain our missions, such as disproportionately few female clergy in leadership in large churches, resistance to cross-cultural appointments, shortage of young elders, etc. Such conversations focus on the mission.

SEMINARY CONTACT INFORMATION

Boston University School of Theology	www.bu.edu/sth
Candler School of Theology (Emory)	www.candler.emory.edu
Claremont School of Theology	www.cst.edu
Drew University, The Theological School	www.drew.edu/theo
Duke University, The Divinity School	www.divinty.duke.edu
Gammon Theological Seminary	www.gammonseminary.org
Garrett Evangelical Seminary	www.garrett.edu
Iliff School of Theology	www.iliff.edu
Methodist Theological School in Ohio	www.mtso.edu
Perkins School of Theology	www.smu.edu/theology
Saint Paul School of Theology	www.spst.edu
United Theological Seminary	www.united.edu
Wesley Theological Seminary	www.wesleyseminary.edu
Eden Theological Seminary	www.eden.edu
Asbury Theological Seminary	www.asburyseminary.edu

Complete list may be found at www.gbhem.org/education/university-senate/list-approved-schools

RESOURCES FOR DISCERNING CANDIDATES

Helpful books related to general call and discernment

Bass, Dorothy C. & Mark R. Schwehn, eds. *Leading Lives That Matter: What We Should Do and Who We Should Be*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Campbell, Dennis M. *The Yoke of Obedience: The Meaning of Ordination in Methodism*. Nashville: Abingdon.

Clapper, Greg. *Living Your Heart's Desire: God's Call and Your Vocation*. Nashville: Upper Room.

Holderness, Ginny Ward. *Career and Calling: A Guide for Counselors, Youth and Young Adults*. Louisville, KY: Geneva Press.

Leider, Richard. *The Power of Purpose: Creating Meaning in Your Life and Work*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Mahan, Brian. *Forgetting Ourselves on Purpose: Vocation and the Ethics of Ambition*. San Francisco: Josey-Bass.

Neafsey, John. *A Sacred Voice is Calling: Personal Vocation and Social Conscience*. New York: Orbis.

Palmer, Parker J. *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Parks, Sharon Daloz. *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adult in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose and Faith*. San Francisco: Josey-Bass.

Placher, William C., ed. *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Smith, Christian. *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Svennungsen, Ann & Melissa Wiginton, eds. *Awakened to a Calling: Reflections on the Vocation of Ministry*. Nashville: Abingdon.

Other Books Related to United Methodism and Clergy Roles

The General Board of Higher Education, Board of Higher Education & Ministry. *The Christian as Minister*.

Berry, Jo. *Making Your Life a Ministry*. Zondervan.

Cetuk, Virginia Samuel. *What to Expect in Seminary: Theological Education as Spiritual Formation*. Nashville: Abingdon.

Cullinan, Alice R. *Sorting It Out: Discerning God's Call to Ministry*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press

Guiness, Os. *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life*. Nashville: Word Publishing.

Hamilton, Adam. *Leading Beyond the Walls: Developing Congregations with a Heart for the Unchurched*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Hoge, Dean R. & Jacqueline E. Wenger. *Pastors in Transition: Why Clergy Leave Local Church Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Hybels, Bill. *Character: Who You are When No One's Looking*. InterVarsity Press.

Maxwell, John C. *Developing the Leader Within You*. Thomas Nelson.

Pagitt, Doug and the Solomon's Porch Community. *Reimagining Spiritual Formation: A Week in the Life of an Experimental Church*, Zondervan.

Parker, Ronald E. *Do I Belong in Seminary?* The Alban Institute, Inc.

Yaconelli, Michael. *Messy Spirituality*. Zondervan.

Websites

Missouri Call www.thecalltoministry.org

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry www.gbhem.org

SoulConnections www.mosoulconnections.org

Forum for Theological Exploration www.exploreministry.org

Lewis Center for Church Leadership www.churchleadership.com

Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation www.ptev.org

United Methodist Student Movement www.gbhem.org/education/collegiate-ministry/resources/students

MISSOURI CONFERENCE READING LIST

Books on congregational fruitfulness, change, church leadership

- A Door Set Open: Grounding Change in Mission and Hope by Peter L. Steinke
- Bearing Fruit: Ministry with Real Results by Lovett Weems and Thomas M. Berlin.
- Direct Hit by Paul Borden
- Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations by Robert Schnase
- Get Their Names by Bob Farr, Doug Anderson and Kay Kotan
- Leading Beyond the Walls: Developing Congregations with a Heart for the Unchurched by Adam Hamilton
- Legacy Churches by Stephen Gray and Franklin Dumond
- Make or Break Your Church in 365 Days by Paul Borden
- Remember the Future: Praying for the Church and Change by Robert Schnase
- Renovate or Die by Bob Farr and Kay Kotan
- Simple Church by Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger
- The Externally Focused Church by Rick Rusaw and Eric Swanson
- The Race to Reach Out by Doug Anderson and Michael Coyner
- Visioneering by Andy Stanley

Books on reaching the next generation

- Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church by Kenda Creasy Dean
- Deep and Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend by Andy Stanley
- Lost and Found: The Younger Unchurched and the Churches That Reach Them by Ed Stetzer
- Reaching People Under 40 While Keeping People Over 60 by E. Hammett and J Pierce
- Slow Fade by Reggie Joiner
- Tribal Church: Ministering to the Missing Generation by Carol Howard Merritt
- UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity by David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons
- Worlds Apart: Understanding the Mindset and Values of 18-25 year olds by Chuck Bomar

Books on organizational dynamics and change

- Good to Great by Jim Collins
- Good to Great and the Social Sectors: A Monograph to Accompany Good to Great by Jim Collins
- Leading Change by John Kotter
- Leadership on the Line by Ronald Heifetz
- Managing Transitions by William Bridges
- Orbiting the Giant Hairball by Gordon MacKenzie
- Results That Last by Quint Studer
- The Advantage by Patrick Lencioni
- The World is Flat by Thomas Friedman

Books on discipleship

- Finding Our Way Again: The Return of the Ancient Practices by Brian McLaren
- Five Practices of Fruitful Living by Robert Schnase
- Unbinding the Gospel by Martha Grace Reese

Books that describe UM context for mission and change:

- American Saint: Francis Asbury and the Methodists by John H. Wigger
- Back to Zero: The Search to Rediscover the Methodist Movement by Gil Rendle
- Focus: The Real Challenges That Face the United Methodist Church by Lovett Weems
- Journey in the Wilderness: New Life for Mainline Churches by Gil Rendle
- Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help (And How to Reverse It) by Robert D. Lupton

Books used in PLD 1

- Communicating for a Change by Andy Stanley and Lane Jones
- Direct Hit by Paul Borden
- Recreating the Church: Leadership for the Postmodern Age by Richard Hamm
- Renovate or Die by Bob Farr and Kay Kotan
- Shaped by God's Heart by Milfred Minatrea
- Simple Church by Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger
- The Externally Focused Church by Rick Rusaw and Eric Swanson
- Unbinding the Gospel by Martha Grace Reese

Books used in PLD 2

- Beyond the First Visit by Gary L. McIntosh
- Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community by Ed Stetzer and David Putman
- Not Your Parents Offering Plate: A New Vision for Financial Stewardship by J. Clif Christopher
- Taking Flight with Creativity: Worship Design Teams That Work by Len Wilson and Jason Moore
- Time Management for Peak Performance: Practical Plans for Practical People by Ken Willard
- Unleashing the Word by Adam Hamilton
- Visioneering by Andy Stanley

Books used in PLD Next

- A Door Set Open by Steinke
- Almost Christian by Kenda Creasy Dean
- Bearing Fruit by Lovett Weems
- Communicating for a Change: Seven Keys to Irresistible Communication by Andy Stanley and Lane Jones
- Extravagant Generosity by Robert Schnase, Michael Reeves and Jennifer Tyler
- Just Walk Across the Room: Simple Steps Pointing People of Faith by Bill Hybels
- Managing Transitions by William Bridges
- Preaching for Transformation by William M. Easum
- Renovate or Die by Bob Farr and Kay Kotan
- Spiritual Direction by Henri Nouwen
- Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership by Ruth Haley Barton
- The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World by Ronald A. Heifetz, Marty Linsky and Alexander Grashow
- Unleashing the Word: Preaching with Relevance, Purpose and Passion by Adam Hamilton

THE PASTOR'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN PASTORAL CARE

The plan begins with the pastor (Acts 20:28):

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Our greatest success is to finish the work God has called us to do. But every pastor has to realize his or her own vulnerability. Stress and burnout are not phantom conditions. They are very real risks that come with the rigors of pastoral ministry, and unless specific disciplines are practiced and preventative safeguards are in place, there can be serious consequences for the pastor's health, family and ministry. Here are a few suggestions that can help a pastor reduce the risk:

- **Spend adequate time alone with the Lord in prayer, meditation and personal Bible reading (not just for sermon preparation).** It is also helpful to express thoughts, feelings or prayers in a personal journal. The psalms reveal how David understood the value of releasing the distresses of his mind through the pen in his hand.
- **Avoid isolation.** Every pastor needs friends, even within the church, with whom she/he can have fun. It is also important to have at least one close friend whom he/she can share innermost struggles and feelings. This needs to be a person who understands you, who will not judge you, and especially one who will keep private matters confidential. David had Jonathan; Ruth had Naomi. Even Jesus had an inner circle of three.
- **Have a hobby.** Pastors need a diversion, an activity that removes their minds and bodies from the pressures of ministry for a time in order to relieve the mental and emotional stress.
- **Manage time well.** Pastors have the luxury of keeping a relatively fluid schedule, but they can also put undue pressure on themselves if they aren't disciplined with their time. It becomes necessary to prioritize pastoral responsibilities according to essentials. This helps avoid getting stressed out by trying to accomplish more than time allows. But be certain to reserve adequate and undisturbed hours of study and sermon preparation.
- **Set realistic life goals, and work toward them.** God does not want followers and servant leaders to become bogged down in the mundane, distracted by the petty, or worn out by mere busyness. God wants shepherds to accomplish something of kingdom significance (Acts 20:24, 1Cor, 1:1-9).

THE CHURCH'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR PASTORAL CARE

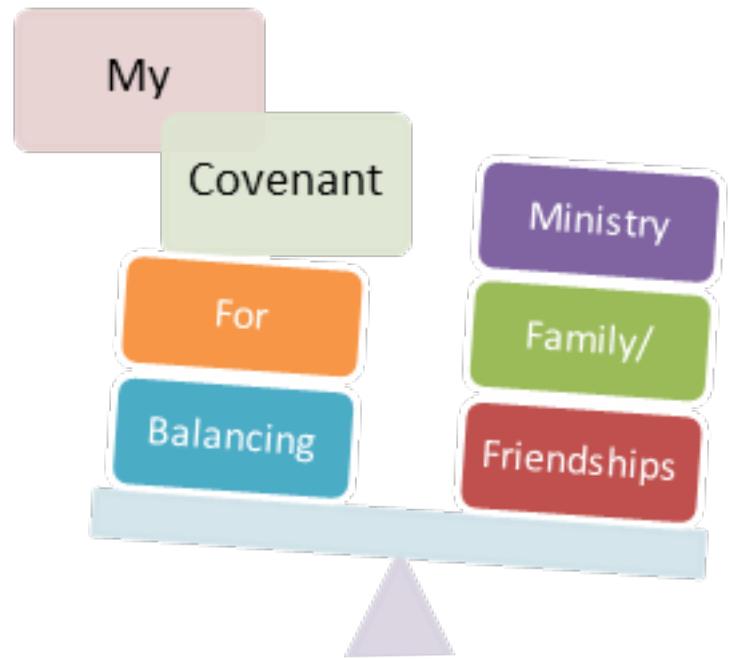
The local church, beginning with the board, needs to recognize their own responsibility in protecting the mental, emotional and spiritual health of their pastor.

- **The budget should include provision for him/her to attend one or two conferences or retreats each year** where the pastor can find refreshment and renewal. This should be in addition to regular vacation time, not part of it.
- **Respect the pastor's study time.** Apart from an emergency, she/he should be allowed to have undisturbed blocks of time to prepare for preaching and teaching. If the pastor is weak in preaching, the whole church will suffer.
- **Don't demand more from the pastor than she/he can give.** Pastors are human and imperfect. Pastors need your prayers and encouragement as much as you need theirs. Understand that she/he can't please everyone, and sometimes the person the pastor won't please will be you!
- **Consider granting the pastor a sabbatical.** Every seven to 10 years the pastor should be offered a paid leave of 10 to 12 weeks (not including regular vacation time) to seek spiritual and mental refreshment, do research or writing, travel, or pursue other activities that will disconnect them for a time from the routine demands of ministry and provide a time for renewal. Even Jesus realized the importance of stepping away from the ministry for a time.

“Encourage one another and build up each other... Be at peace among yourselves... be patient with all... always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

1 Thessalonians, Chapter 5

1. I will reserve time each day for personal devotions and exercise.
2. I will have regular family meetings or discussion with significant friends about the ongoing transitions in our daily life.
3. I will identify helpful resources and spiritual counseling needed for dealing with personal issues and stresses on the journey.
4. I will schedule a time for rest and renewal with loved ones, both planned and unplanned.
5. I will develop clear expectations with my ministry setting about what I need as a single person or married person for good self-care.
6. I will remember that my family and friends are not appointed to the church: I will plan sacred times for myself and others. If I have a spouse/children, I will plan key times to be attentive to them. I will be aware of what seasons will require more of my time.
7. I will build and surround myself with healthy friendships that help me to reflect “best practices.”
8. I will laugh a lot with those dear to me, and enjoy silent moments. I will not lose sight of opportunities with them, even with limited finances, and seek to grow spiritually together inwardly and outwardly.
9. I will be the first to say “I am sorry” and “forgive me” when I have laid all my stuff on someone else because I am mad at the church or the system.
10. I will reclaim continually my call to serve with visions and dreams and to respond to the needs of loved ones and the church with excellence.



RESIDENCY IN MINISTRY

“During the provisional period, arrangements shall be offered by the Board of Ordained Ministry for all provisional members to be involved in a residency curriculum that extends theological education by using covenant groups and mentoring to support the practice and work of their ministry as servant leaders, to contemplate the grounding of ordained ministry, and to understand covenant ministry in the life of the conference.” The Book of Discipline, ¶326

Components

1. Provisional members (residents) are a part of the Residency in Ministry program for a minimum of two years. Persons are to serve the equivalent of two consecutive years in the same full-time appointment before recommendation for ordination/full-connection.
2. Residents are supervised by both the district superintendent and the conference Board of Ordained Ministry.
3. All residents will fulfill Re community expectations — including retreats, days apart and small groups. Unexcused absences will not meet the requirements of this paragraph and may extend the provisional process.
4. Residents will meet regularly with a mentor in a covenant of mutual accountability for the duration of residency. In January of each year, the resident and mentor will submit a report describing their work together for the year.
5. First-year residents may select a “coach” for six sessions in their first nine months. The Center for Leadership Excellence and the Board of Ministry provide the resources to secure coaches for this time period. See Coaches and Biographies listed on the conference website for coach suggestions (www.moumethodist.org/pldcoachbios). A person may secure a coach outside this list for a limited grant.

Benchmarks of the Residents in Ministry Program

The RIM process aims to equip its residents with experience, resources, training and mentoring in the following ways:

1. The ability to articulate the gospel clearly and a lifestyle that demonstrates such.
2. Exploration of disciplines in spiritual, emotional, relational, intellectual, and physical health and growth.
3. Participation in a covenant group where the resident is held accountable for the development and implementation of comprehensive personal and ministry (operational, administrative and financial) development plans.
4. The demonstration of radical hospitality personally and within the life of the church.
5. Passionate worship displayed in worship design, preaching and sacramental ministry.
6. Intentional faith development: implementation of a holistic discipleship system
7. Risk-taking mission and service: personal and corporate mission/evangelism/outreach development and implementation
8. Extravagant generosity: personal stewardship plan as well as the ability to lead a successful stewardship program
9. Demonstrate ability to identify and equip strong lay leaders and to develop and implement a major visioning and strategic planning process.

3 Simple Rules for Social Media

Social Media Guidelines for the Indiana United Methodists



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 are careful to 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 remember: 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.

TO THINK ABOUT: 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 using the post as an outlet to vent, is there a more productive, less public way to do so?

DO GOOD

Social media is one of the most effective methods of church networking and communicating today. When used properly, it can have a significant encouraging influence on our readers and become a powerful tool for delivering the Gospel message to a large audience that extends beyond our contact list. It is a great tool for networking and providing the world with news about our church and ministry. It also is a very useful tool for obtaining feedback and ideas from our audience and can be used to gain insight for sermons, Bible study topics, worship times, needs of the community, etc. The “good” and positive uses of social media are endless.

TO THINK ABOUT: 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?

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 participating in meaningful Bible study, devotional times, worship 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.

TO THINK ABOUT: How is/can 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?

REMEMBER

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

GUIDELINES FOR THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR MISSOURI CONFERENCE CLERGY

Preface

Social media is changing the way we work, communicate the Gospel, witness and even worship. We believe social media has the potential to build stronger, more successful faith relationships. And it's a way for you to take part in, literally, global conversations and action related to faith. The question becomes how does the Christian community adapt new communication tools to the mission of the church that ensures safety and exemplifies Christian discipleship?

The following are guidelines, not rules or regulations, created in an effort to educate the Christian community about appropriate behavior online. These guidelines are not about limiting what we can do through social media. Rather, we hope these guidelines help you better answer: as a member of the Reign of God, what is the best use of social media for Christian community and outreach?

Social Media Guidelines

Discern what the purpose of the social media is for you.

- Is social media a tool for ministry or your private domain? If private only, what are your plans for keeping it private?
- Figure out how you want to use social media by developing a set of guidelines for your personal usage (e.g., I choose to post about faith, family and fun).
- You can have different boundary plans for each communication medium (e.g., If I get a FB message on Messenger about "church business," I kindly state my boundary and ask that the person email me. Or I keep my Instagram account private and only accept friend requests from friends and family.)
- The key is communicating your personal guidelines and usage to your local church.

Assess and manage your online reputation.

- As a pastor, you are a public figure.
- In an online world, your potential public is amplified.
- Alienating someone or a group online is potentially limiting the ability to minister to a congregation.
- Your online persona is connected to your real life reputation.
- Do you have any "clean up" necessary on your social media accounts? (Are there any old photos that you wouldn't want your congregation to have access to?)
- Do you need to establish new ground rules moving forward (e.g., permissions, security, privacy measures)?

Think before you post something, always remembering that social media is a public forum and nothing ever truly disappears once posted.

- Weigh whether a particular posting puts your effectiveness as a pastor or Christian at risk.
- Remember the Internet is instant communication, anything can be forwarded to literally millions and saved.

- Refrain from commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary or libelous. Exercise caution with regards to exaggeration, colorful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions and derogatory remarks or characterizations.
- Post only what you want the world to see. Once you post something it may be available even after it is removed from the site.
- Do not discuss pastoral concerns or coworkers or publicly criticize conference personnel or colleagues.
- Be wary of posting too much information related to prayer concerns (for yourself, family or others).
- Know what is overtly inappropriate (e.g., profanity, sexual jokes or innuendo, offensive, prejudicial/racist comments/ language, "underwear" selfies, etc.).
- Know what is subtly inappropriate (e.g., too many selfies, jokes at your family or friends' expense).
- Language is key: tongue-in-cheek comments are often misinterpreted (i.e., there is no sarcasm font available).
- Be aware of your emotional state when communicating and resist oversharing. Remember the appropriate places to vent for professionals is within a small group of trusted colleagues.

Know and follow the Book of Discipline and biblical understandings of community.

- Be cognizant of your association with the United Methodist Church in online social networks.
- If you are United Methodist Clergy or laity, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself as a member of the Christian community.

Think through your social media communication with previous parishioners.

- For clergy, if a "friend" is not a member of your current congregation, remember you are friends, not their pastor. Observe appropriate professional boundaries and exercise care to ensure you are not a hindrance for the pastor currently appointed to that congregation and the ministry needs of that congregation.
- Remember that people classified as "friends" have the ability to download and share your information with others. Be discerning on who you friend. Do not initiate one-on-one friending with minors and, if a minor initiates such friending with you, carefully weigh the potential risks of such an online relationship. It is highly recommended that online "friendships" (following/friending) with minors happen with parent/guardian permission and that you are friends/follow the parent/guardian as well so they can witness any online engagement between both parties. Consider the potential risks of personal messaging with minors on social media platforms.

When considering social media for yourself or a social media strategy for the congregation, ask

- What does social media mean for a faith community?
- What is appropriate for the Facebook wall of the church?
- What does the local church community want on social media?
- Who is allowed to post on the wall of the church?
- Who has permission to post on behalf of the church?
- Who monitors social media?
- How do you deal with negativity on your social media accounts (e.g., negative "reviews", trolling, obscenities or insults in comments, etc.)?

Regularly monitor your use of social media to ensure that an inordinate amount of time and energy is not spent interacting on social media to the detriment of your effectiveness as a clergy person or religious professional.

Security

- Due to security risks, be cautious when installing the external applications that work with the social networking site. Examples of these sites are calendar programs and games, some which can post on your behalf.
- Run updated malware protection to avoid infections of spyware and adware that social networking sites might place on your computer.
- Be careful not to fall for phishing scams that arrive via email or on your wall. Examples include a link for you to click, leading to a fake login page, or tagging you in a post inviting you to click a link for a too-good-to-be-true sale.
- Make sure privacy settings are set to allow only the online content you want visible to show up on your profile.
- Remember that using location check-in constantly on social media allows people to track your movements.
- Visit your profile's security and privacy settings on a regular basis (social media networks change their privacy settings often, sometimes without notifying users). At a minimum, consider making all privacy settings to "only friends." "Friends of friends" and "Networks and Friends" open your content to a large group of unknown people. Your privacy and that of your family may be at risk. People you do not know may be looking at you, your home, your family and your lives.
- Consider making sure your privacy settings require you to review tags before they post with your name in them. This allows you to better manage the appropriateness of social media content with your name attached.
- Check the privacy of your post before you hit the submit button. Next to the post button, there's a dropdown with options. Consider who should see your post.

Social Media Mistakes

- Deleting does not always make the problem go away. Own your mistake and ask for forgiveness. Model for your congregation when you have miss-stepped. Be quick with your correction and upfront when it was needed. If you choose to modify an earlier post—make it clear that you have done so.
- Social media bad behavior by church staff and lay leadership needs to be addressed promptly.

Managing your online reputation is your responsibility. Keep in mind that failure to abide by healthy professional boundaries and appropriateness could put your ministry career at risk. Guidelines will evolve as new social networking tools emerge. If you are ever hesitant or unsure about your social media engagement or usage, please contact Rev. Karen Hayden, Director of Leadership Excellence.

Approved 3/10/2017 by the Missouri Conference Board of Ordained Ministry

EVERYONE WHO ENTERS MINISTRY...

“Everyone who enters ordained ministry will, at some time, be called upon to do powerful and terrible things - like these that I mention for illustration:

- To celebrate marriages and deal with divorces
- To be with a family as they bring an infant into the household or to bury a dead infant into the ground.
- To visit the people as they move into a new home or when they find themselves newly homeless
- To pray for those who are dying that they may be restored to life and to pray for those who are dying that they might peacefully die, so they could be raised to New Life
- To counsel with persons who want to live in reconciliation with those from whom they have become estranged
- To counsel with persons who are ready to take their own lives and end the wreckage of their wretched existence
- To work with people of other religious traditions on addressing neighborhood problems
- To discover chasms of mistrust that deeply divide religious communities as they search, almost in vain, to discover common ground
- To order the Church by leading prayers of confession and offering forgiveness, and to order the Church by exercising discipline over those other ordained ministers who have abused the office by misconduct
- To preach sermons that thousands will hear and to preach sermons that no one will hear because the prophetic edge of the message was unwelcomed by those exposed to it
- To deliver the bread and the cup from the Lord’s table to people who hope that it will help bring change to their lives
- To deliver the bread and the cup to those who are adept at resisting every venture of change that the grace of God might bring
- To be energized by the Spirit that dwells in the Church and to enervated by the political strife that dwells in the Church
- To pray for people who labor for peace and to pray for people who are sent in war
- To wait in a courtroom with someone who has been victimized by a grievous act, and hope for justice
- To sit a prison cell with someone who had been the perpetrator of a grievous act, and hope for mercy
- To help anyone, including in the end, oneself, who is struggling at the boundaries of unbelief

There are other professions that achieve justice, like the practice of law. Other professions provide healing, like the practice of medicine. Other professions instruct or encourage or build, like those held by teachers and counselors or construction engineers. Other professions engage in great art, like music, painting and poetry.

But there is nothing, nothing, nothing like the [ordained] ministry.”

— *Dean William Lawrence*