

# LETTER TO PPRC FROM dCOM CHAIR AND DS

Dear members of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee,

Thank you for participating in this significant step in the life of this candidate for ministry. Christ calls all people, lay and clergy, to ministry. Christ calls some to be set apart for leadership in the church in a pastoral role. You know this candidate for ministry better than any other voice in this process at this point, and both the candidate and the church are best served by your honest response. In scripture and in practice in the United Methodist Church, the church is asked to examine and confirm the call of God in someone's life.

At this stage we are looking for the **potential and promise for future, effective ministry** from the candidate. Your basic role at this step in the candidate's journey is to discern whether or not this candidate has a call from God in light of the following three criteria:

## **Has the candidate shown evidence of God's grace in their life?**

- What transformation(s) have you seen in this person's life due to God's grace?
- How does this person extend God's love and grace to others?
- Is this person patient, and do they respond to others with grace and respect?

## **Does the candidate possess the gifts required for effective ministry?**

- How does this candidate communicate God's message with clarity and effectiveness to groups through preaching or teaching?
- Describe this candidate's desire to share the love of God with the community beyond the church walls.
- Describe how you think this candidate will do with basic pastoral responsibilities like administration, worship planning/leading/preaching, visitation and congregational care, sharing God's vision and leading the congregation to follow it.

## **Has the candidate demonstrated the ability to lead others in a fruitful ministry in your congregation?**

- Describe your experience of the candidate leading or organizing ministry. What are the visible fruits from those ministries?
- In what ministry settings will this person be most fruitful?

It's always a joy to celebrate God's call to licensed or ordained ministry, and we hope the candidate you meet with soon has such clarity of call from God AND easily recognizable gifts for ministry that your decision to approve their candidacy is easy. In such cases, we hope that your church would plan to publicly recognize and celebrate their call.

There are times, however, that it's not so easy. Your team is called to share the truth in love, even if that truth is that clarity of call and gifts for leadership are lacking. We understand that delivering such messages to someone in your own church could be a very difficult task. If we were to take the long view, we could see that sometimes a well placed "no" leads to a candidate saying "yes" to the right call. A negative response at this point may help to redirect the candidate toward fruitful lay leadership in the church or it may mean "not yet" and could redirect the candidate to work toward gathering more experience or clarity about their call.

The United Methodist Church, the Missouri Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the District Committee on Ordained Ministry are grateful for your partnership in this process!