

**WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CONFERENCE
STEPS INTO ORDAINED MINISTRY
DEACON and ELDER**

**Training Covered by the BOM Candidacy Registrar
Revised January 2007**

“Ordained ministers are called by God to a lifetime of servant leadership in specialized ministries among the people of God. Ordained ministers are called to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns and hopes of the world, and the promise of God for creation. Within these specialized ministries, deacons are called to ministries of Word and Service, and elders are called to ministries of Service, Word, Sacrament and Order” (paragraph 137, Book of Discipline: 2004).

Candidacy for ordained ministry is the first formal step toward annual conference membership and ordination as a deacon or elder in full connection with the United Methodist Church.

STEP 1: THE INQUIRING CANDIDATE (311.1)

I. Christian As Minister

- a. The Inquiring Candidate contacts the pastor in a local church or a deacon in full connection or the District Superintendent to inquire about the process of candidacy. The individual will obtain and read the book The Christian As Minister and discuss it with the pastor of the local church, deacon, another elder or guide. “The District Superintendent shall oversee the total ministry of the clergy...by nominating persons to serve as guides for the ministry inquiry process.” (419.d). The guide can be any committed Christian – lay, diaconal, local pastor, deacon in full connection or elder – who has already experienced God’s call and responded by seeking guidance and discernment in his or her own life through this or another similar program.
- b. The Candidate works through the Christian As Minister purchased at Cokesbury or supplied by the local church.
- c. Upon completion of this book, the Candidate should be able to articulate a basic understanding of the following concepts within the context of United Methodism:
 1. Call: Deacon, Elder, Local Pastor or Lay Ministry
 2. Vocation: Emphasis on types of various ministries in the United Methodist Church structure

3. Areas of Ministry: Word, Order Sacrament and Service
- d. Average time of completion would be 3 sessions with a recommended time of 1 ½ hr/session.
 - e. Upon completion of the Christian As Minister, the Inquiring Candidate who wishes to continue exploration of ordained ministry works through the Ministry Inquiry Process (MIP).

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II. Ministry Inquiry Process (MIP)

- a. A guide/mentor can be assigned by the District Superintendent in consultation with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.
- b. After the completion of the Christian As Minister, the Candidate works through the Ministry Inquiry Process (MIP) with a guide/mentor. The MIP is available at Cokesbury.
- c. Average time of completion should be 6-8 weeks (4-6 sessions with a recommended time of 1 ½ hr/session).
- d. Upon completion of the MIP, the Inquiring Candidate who wishes to further explore licensed or ordained ministry writes a letter to the District Superintendent describing his or her sense of call and request admission into the Candidacy Studies. A copy of this letter should be submitted to the District Committee on Ministry.

Notes:

- If the pastor of the local church where the Candidate holds membership serves as the MIP guide, it is not recommended for that same pastor to continue with the Inquiring Candidate beyond the Ministry Inquiry Process.
- The Inquiring phase is completed prior to meeting with the Pastor Parish Relations Committee, District Committee on Ministry and/or the local Charge Conference.
- Candidates are expected to keep copies of all forms and correspondence throughout the entire candidacy process. Checklist is provided in the "Mentors Training Packet."

STEP 2: THE EXPLORING CANDIDATE with Candidacy Mentor (311.1)

- The Exploring Candidate shall have been a member in good standing of the United Methodist Church for at least two (2) years immediately preceding the application for Candidacy Studies (Form 101). This will include a year of service in some form of congregational leadership, either in the local church

- or one agreed to by the District Committee On Ministry, provided that in the case of an affiliate member, there has been consultation with and approval by the charge conference of the home church.
- The Exploring Candidate must have graduated from an accredited high school or received a certificate of equivalency.
 - The Exploring Candidate is assigned a trained Candidacy Mentor by the District Committee on Ministry in consultation with the District Superintendent.
 - During the early portion of the Exploring Stage (Phase One), it is recommended by the Conference Board of Ministry that the Candidate have an initial, "get-acquainted" interview (non-vote) with the District Committee on Ministry. A spouse and/or the Candidacy Mentor may accompany the Candidate at this time.

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I. Enrollment in Candidacy Process

- A. Effective January 2, 2007, the registration process for the Candidacy Process will be completed online at the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry Website.
- B. The candidate will log onto the following URL (web address): <https://public.gbhem.org/candidacy/default.aspx>. The Candidate will go to the bottom of the page and select "begin the enrollment process." The user I.D. and password at the top of this page is provided to log back into the system (after the candidacy fee has been submitted) should they want to check their status. At the end of the application process they will select their own user I.D. and password.
- C. The Candidate should complete the online "New Candidate Application" form. All required fields must be completed in order for the application process to be completed. There is a 45 minute time-out for the process, so candidates should have all necessary information in advance.
- D. After the Candidate completes the online form (101), he or she will click the "Submit" button. This serves as the Candidate's Electronic Signature.
- E. When the Candidate has submitted the application, the District Superintendent will receive an automated e-mail notification and should navigate

to the site indicated in the e-mail. The District Superintendent will click on "Sign for Candidates" at the left of the Candidacy Online web page to review and give permission to process applications. The District Superintendent will click the link to "Sign" beside the Candidate's name.

F. When the District Superintendent has signed the application, the assigned Mentor will receive an automated e-mail notification and should navigate to the site indicated in the e-mail. The Mentor will click "Sign for Candidates" at the left of the Candidacy Online webpage to review the application. The Mentor will click the link to "Sign" beside the Candidate's name. The Mentor will print a copy of the signed form for the Candidate's file.

G. When all designated persons have signed the online form, GBHEM will send the Candidate an e-mail with instructions to make an Online Payment. **The fee for the candidacy process is \$75.00 (effective 01-02-07).**

H. ONLY in the event that a Candidate does not have access to a computer should Form 101 be completed on the paper version. Payment can be made either electronically or by check or money order.

I. Once the Candidate has enrolled, he or she will complete the **Inventory of Religious Activities and Interests (IRAI)** online.

J. When the candidacy fee has been received, the system triggers a notice that the application process has been completed so that the Guidebook can be ordered and sent to the Candidate.

II. Psychological Assessment

- a. All Candidates are required to complete the Psychological Assessment process as provided by the GBHEM.
- b. If the Candidate was registered in the Candidacy process by the paper Form 101 prior to 01/02/07, the Psychological Assessment process should also be completed through the paper process (Please consult the Candidacy Registrar for needed

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forms). All new Candidates who register online should complete the Psychological Assessment registration online as well.

- c. Once the online candidacy application process has been completed, GBHEM will send an auto-generated e-mail to the Mentor with a link to Form 112 "Request for Psychological Packet." When the form has been completed, a copy should be printed out for the Candidate's file.
- d. When Form 112 has been completed, the following items need to be sent to Rev. Patricia Cleary, the Vice-Chair of the Western PA Board of Ministry, 531 James Street, Turtle Creek, Pa. 15145):

- i. A copy of the completed Form 112.
 - ii. Psychological Assessment Interview Request Form: The Candidate will select either Dr. Keith Rieder (Morgantown, WV) or Dr. Tom Matta (Erie, PA) to have a one-on-one session to interpret the Assessment results. A copy of this form should also be sent to the selected psychologist.
 - iii. A check for \$120 made out to "WPA United Methodist Church." The Conference BOM covers the remaining \$130 of the cost. This cost covers the consultation fee with the psychologist.
 - e. The Candidate will be prompted by an auto-generated e-mail by GBHEM to electronically complete the Personal Data Inventory and the Personal and Professional Reference forms. Candidates should receive permission in advance for all references listed. Each reference will receive a form to complete and send back to GBHEM before the Assessment can be sent out.
 - f. Once the registration process for the Psychological Assessment has been completed, the Mentor will receive the Psychological Assessment Packet to administer to the Candidate. A 'Release of Information' form will be included in the packet in order to give permission to the Ministry Assessment Specialist (MAS) to review the results. The Mentor should arrange an appointment of 3-4 hours with the Candidate to complete the Assessment. One portion of the Assessment will be completed online – the Assessment Packet will include complete instructions for administering the tests as well as a Password and User ID to log onto the online testing site.
 - g. The test results are sent by GBHEM to the selected Conference MAS. The Candidate will participate in a session with the selected psychologist to interpret the results. Both the Mentor and the Candidate's District Committee will receive a copy of the summary results to review. However, these results must be returned to Rev. Patricia Cleary when the candidacy process has been completed.
- III. Other forms to be completed (not to be sent to GBHEM):
- a. **Act 33 Clearance:** criminal record clearance. Obtain at the State Police and submit with a \$10 check or money order. A copy of the returned clearance is forwarded to the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.
 - b. **Act 34 Clearance:** child abuse clearance. Obtain at the Department of Welfare and submit with a \$10 check or money order. A copy of the returned clearance is forwarded to the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.

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- c. **Credit Check:** Candidate submits signed (both Candidate and Mentor) and completed form provided by BOM to the Board Credit Check Agent (Rev. Janet Lord) along with a check for \$7.50 payable to "WPA Conference." Copies of this request form must be kept in both the Candidate's and Mentor's files. The Candidate also receives a copy of "A Summary of Your Rights Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act." A summary of the credit report will be forwarded to the District Committee on Ordained Ministry for discernment in the certification process. The original credit report will remain with the BOM Credit Check Agent for safekeeping and confidentiality.

IV. Candidacy Guidebook Guidelines

- a. The Exploring Candidate works through the Candidacy Guidebook with the Certified Candidacy Mentor in order to examine the call of God to ministry in light of the biblical record, the role and function of United Methodist Clergy, personal gifts and grace, and evidence of leadership. After completing the first two sections of the Candidacy Guidebook (units 1-15), the Exploring Candidate makes a commitment to ministry as a deacon, elder or local pastor or decides to continue in ministry as a lay person.
- b. Average time for completion of the Candidacy Guidebook is 8-10 months (allows time for Psychological Assessment to be completed and other necessary steps.)

STEP 3: THE DECLARED CANDIDATE (311.2)

- A. The Candidate completes Form 104 in preparation for interview with the Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee and the Charge Conference.
- B. The Candidate meets with the Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee of the local church where membership is held. The PPRC questions the Candidate using Wesley's historic questions found in paragraph 310 in Book of Discipline (2004). The PPRC can request to see the completed form 104 prior to making a recommendation to the Charge Conference. The PPRC makes a recommendation to the Charge Conference (yes or no).
- C. The Charge Conference must vote on the candidate regardless of the PPRC recommendation. The Charge Conference vote is 2/3 majority and is conducted by written ballot, provided that in the case of an affiliate member there has been a consultation with and approval by the charge conference of the home church. Upon approval by the Charge Conference, Form 104 is signed by the District Superintendent.

- D. The Declared Candidate continues studies in the Candidacy guidebook with the trained Candidacy Mentor (units 16-18).
- E. Candidacy Mentor prepares a report to summarize candidate's progress and experiences in the candidacy studies. Suggestions for this report are found on page 37 of the Candidacy Mentoring Manual (provided at training sessions). This should be a consensus report between the mentor and the candidate.

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STEP 4: CERTIFIED CANDIDATE (311.3)

- A. The Declared Candidate completes all required paperwork, including Form 104, and submits them to the District Committee on Ministry. The Candidate contacts the Chairperson of the District Committee to determine deadlines for the submission of paperwork.
- B. The Candidate submits to the District Committee on Ministry a written response to the questions located in paragraph 311.3.b in the Book of Discipline: 2004. (Questions also found on the back of Form 104)
- C. The Candidate agrees to maintain the highest ideals of the Christian life as set forth in the Book of Discipline: 2004
- D. Submit a copy of the Candidacy Mentor's written report of introduction of the Candidate. The Candidacy Mentor may attend the meeting with the candidate and share an oral report. Committee cannot question the Mentor during the interview.
- E. Results of the Candidate's psychological assessment process **must** be submitted to the District Committee on Ordained Ministry before the Candidate can be eligible for Certification.
- F. Upon interviewing the Candidate, the District Committee must approve the person as a Certified Candidate by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote by written ballot. **(paragraph 663)**
- G. Upon certification of a Candidate, the District Committee Registrar/Secretary sends the completed Form 113/2004 with appropriate signatures into the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. This form officially registers the person as a Certified Candidate.

STEP 4: CONTINUATION OF CANDIDACY (312)

If a Certified Candidate is appointed to a local church, the Candidate is assigned a Clergy Mentor to continue the process to ordained ministry (refer to the Clergy Mentoring Manual). The assignment of a Clergy Mentor is made by the District

Committee on Ministry in consultation with the District Superintendent. A person may serve as a Candidacy Mentor and A Clergy Mentor with the same person, if trained in both capacities. If a Certified Candidate is not appointed to a local church, the Candidate continues work with a Candidacy Mentor (units 19-30 in Candidacy Guidebook).

A person who continues as a Certified Candidate shall:

1. Receive an annual recommendation by the Charge Conference
2. Have an annual interview and approval by the District Committee on Ministry
3. Provide an annual report of satisfactory progress of educational studies and completion (can use Form 115: Candidacy Renewal as a guide).

On behalf of the District Committee on Ministry, the mentor/candidate relationship is maintained and annual reports are made to BOM and DCOM as to the progress of the candidate (Mentor Report Form provided by our Conference and due annually by December 15).

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Notes:

- The "Steps Into Ordained Ministry" and accompanying checklists shall be updated every new quadrennium after the issuance of an updated Book of Discipline.
- The BOM Candidacy Registrar shall send an updated list of Trained Mentors to the GBHEM in Nashville, the District Committees on Ministry and the District Superintendents following training sessions.
- Needed forms for the process are available from the Conference BOM Candidacy Registrar (Rev. Alyce Weaver Dunn, 2005-2008) or online at www.GBHEM.org (Click the Resource Library link in the upper right corner of the screen)

