

Is God calling you?

Perhaps your pastor, a friend at church, or a family member said, “You know, you’d make a great pastor.” Or maybe you’ve been active in your church for a long time, you are ready to make a career decision, and working in a church full-time just sounds “right” for you. Maybe you’ve had a clear feeling that God wants you to be a pastor or minister for many years. Perhaps you’ve just been wondering if God could use you to lead other Christians.

God may be calling you to consider preparing for full-time ministry in the United Methodist Church. So, what now?

That’s the question this information is designed to answer.

Check out these files:

What do I do now?

In this section, you’ll find a list of suggestions, explanations, and concrete steps that could take you into “candidacy”--a period of “discernment” to help you decide if God is calling you to licensed or ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church.

- This is a new idea for me.**

How can I think more about it before I do anything?

- I’m ready to talk with my pastor about this.**

What will happen next?

What’s all this?

If you decide to consider candidacy, you may feel as if you’ve entered another culture where people speak a different language! In this section, you’ll find a mini course in United Methodist Polity (how your church is connected with The United Methodist Church), along with a glossary defining some of those foreign terms and acronyms.

- I go to a church.**

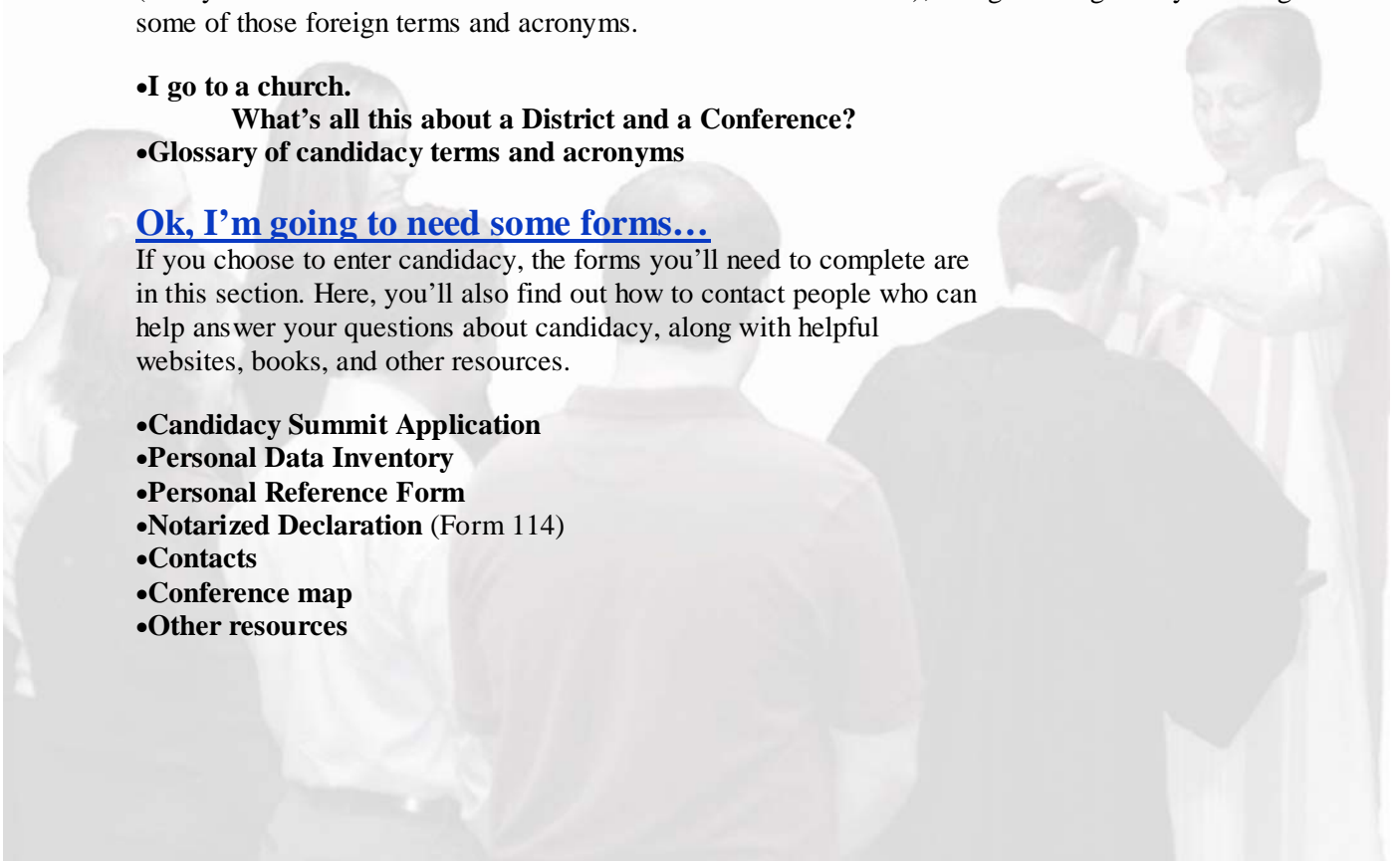
What’s all this about a District and a Conference?

- Glossary of candidacy terms and acronyms**

Ok, I’m going to need some forms...

If you choose to enter candidacy, the forms you’ll need to complete are in this section. Here, you’ll also find out how to contact people who can help answer your questions about candidacy, along with helpful websites, books, and other resources.

- Candidacy Summit Application**
- Personal Data Inventory**
- Personal Reference Form**
- Notarized Declaration (Form 114)**
- Contacts**
- Conference map**
- Other resources**



What do I do now?

This document has suggestions, explanations, and concrete steps that could take you into “candidacy”--a period of “discernment” to help you decide if God is calling you to licensed or ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church...if you’re ready.

This is a new idea for me.

How can I think more about it before I do anything?

A few words of advice –


If you haven’t already, we recommend that you **resist the urge to share this possibility publicly** until you’ve had time to be sure God is calling you to prepare for licensed or ordained ministry.

Share your feelings with trusted friends, a youth counselor, a Sunday School teacher, and/or your pastor, and ask them to pray with you about this possibility.

Prayerfully read **Bible stories about other people God called** for special purposes.

Bible Stories about God’s Call to Individuals

The Bible contains many reports of God’s call to individuals and many different responses to that call. As you examine the responses of these persons to God’s call to them, reflect on how you might have responded if you had been in their situation. Then compare the ways, if any, that your own experience is similar to these experiences.



| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Abraham and Sarah | Genesis 12:1-9; 17:1-21 |
| Jacob | Genesis 32:22-23 |
| Moses | Exodus 3:1 - 4:20 |
| Joshua | Joshua 1 |
| Deborah | Judges 4:4-22 |
| Gideon | Judges 6:11-18 |
| Hannah and Samuel | 1 Samuel 1:1 – 4:1 |
| Elijah | 1 Kings 17:1 – 19:21 |
| Naomi and Ruth | Ruth 1:1-18 |
| Isaiah | Isaiah 6 |
| Jeremiah | Jeremiah 1:4-19 |
| Ezekiel | Ezekiel 1 – 3 |
| Hosea | Hosea 1:1-11 |
| Amos | Amos 1:1-2; 7:7-17 |
| Jonah | Jonah 1 – 4 |
| Zechariah | Zechariah 7 |
| Zechariah and Elizabeth | Luke 1 |
| Mary | Luke 1 |
| Joseph | Matthew 1 |
| John the Baptist | Luke 3:1-20 |
| Jesus | Matthew 3 – 4; Mark 1:9-12; Luke 3:21 – 4:21 |
| Peter | Luke 5:1-11 |
| Matthew | Matthew 9:9-13 |
| Paul | Acts 9; Romans 1:1-6; 1 Cor. 1:1; Galatians 1 |
| Timothy | 2 Timothy 3:10 – 4:5 |
| Titus | Titus 2 |
| A ruler | Luke 18:18-30 |
| Zacchaeus | Luke 19:1-10 |
| Nicodemus | John 3:1-16 |

You may find it helpful to use a good Bible commentary for greater understanding of the passages you are reading. You may want to choose two or three passages which speak to you and your calling, and answer these questions about those passages:

- How does God's call come to the persons involved?
- How does each person respond?
- To what extent is each person confident, hesitant, willing, or uncertain?
- To what task is each called?
- In what ways does God or Christ offer reassurance to the person called?

Spend time with God in prayer.

Check out these resources –

Websites www.explorecalling.org

Books *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*
by Parker J. Palmer

Answering God's Call for Your Life: A Look at Christian Calls and Church Vocations
by Robert Roth

The Christian as Minister
which can be purchased from any Cokesbury Bookstore
1.800.672.1789 or www.cokesbury.com



I'm ready to talk with my pastor about this. What will happen next?

All Christians are called to minister or to serve others. We're called in many different ways and at different times throughout our lives. However,

- If you think God might be calling you to prepare for professional ministry—full-time service as a minister;
- and
- If you have been a member of a United Methodist Church, campus ministry, new church start or mission for one year,

It's time to call or visit your pastor or another United Methodist clergy person.

With your pastor or another United Methodist clergy or lay guide, you will need to read through and discuss one of these books:

The Christian as Minister , Ministry Inquiry Process, or Answering God's Call For Your Life
which can be purchased from any Cokesbury Bookstore
1.800.672.1789 or www.cokesbury.com

Then, if you still believe God might be calling you to licensed or ordained ministry, **contact your District Superintendent (DS)**. The following three things need to happen, but they don't need to happen in this order:

Write a letter to your DS, officially requesting to enter "candidacy," the UM process of discerning whether God is calling you to licensed or ordained ministry.

In the letter, share that you have already read and discussed one of the books above, and that you've been a member of a UM church or campus ministry for at least a year.

Ask your pastor or church to send a letter to your DS officially stating that you have been a member there for at least one year. If your pastor writes this letter, ask her or him to tell the DS that you two have read and discussed one of the books above.

You will need to schedule an **"interview" with your DS**. Your District Superintendent may choose to schedule this interview with you in person one-to-one; in person with a group of people like you who are considering ministry; in person with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry; or via phone.

Once your DS has interviewed you and agrees that you are ready to begin "candidacy," it's time to ...

Register for the next Candidacy Summit

What's a Candidacy Summit? The Candidacy Summit is a multi-day event during which everyone entering candidacy in the Texas Annual Conference receives accurate information about the entire candidacy process; begins meeting together in small groups with trained Mentors; and has opportunities to worship, share their call stories, meet District Superintendents and other supporters, and take required psychological tests.

When and where? Summits are scheduled once each year, in late July or early August. The next Summit is scheduled for July 29-31, 2010, at Camp Allen near Navasota, Texas (about an hour and a half from Houston).

How do I register? Your District office can give you a Candidacy Summit Application Form, or one is included in this file. Complete the form; ask your DS to sign it, and then mail it to the Candidacy Manager Shanda Levingston at the address on the form with a check for \$100. To be registered for the Summit, your signed application form and check must be received by June 1. [After that date, applicants will be registered for next year's Summit.](#)

Why \$100? The Summit itself is free—all lodging, meals, and resources are a gift to you from the Texas Annual Conference. However, you will need to provide your own transportation to and from the Summit, and you will have to pay \$100, which is only a portion of the cost for the psychological assessment which is required for all people entering candidacy for licensed or ordained ministry. If you need help paying the \$100, please let your pastor, church, or District office know. They may be able to help you.

Register in Dove

What's Dove? Dove is a web-based system of record for all candidates for ministry in the Texas Annual Conference. Dove helps candidates, mentors, District and Conference ordained ministry committees, and District offices track candidates, candidacy requirements, and other data. Candidates need to be able to log on, and respond to “alerts” (requests for your attention or action), and upload files.

How do I register? Candidacy Manager Shanda Levingston will set you up in the system with a user name and password. You should receive a “welcome” e-mail from Dove soon after. Just follow the prompts and pay attention to “alerts” to keep track of your candidacy.

What if I need help with Dove later? To log on, go to <https://dove.ytscorp.com>. Help is available on-line. Still have questions? Contact your mentor, District office, Texas Annual Conference Dove Consultant, or Candidacy Manager. A Dove help session is also part of the Candidacy Summit.

Register in GBHEM

What's GBHEM? GBHEM is an acronym for the “General Board of Higher Education & Ministry,” the general (or international) United Methodist Church agency in Nashville, Tennessee, which relates to United Methodist colleges, universities, and seminaries; and trains, supports, and tracks candidates and ordained ministers. In addition to our Conference tracking in Dove, GBHEM also tracks candidates.

Through this website, you'll only need to accomplish two things:

- Pay the \$75 candidacy fee
- Receive your Candidacy Guidebook: *Fulfilling God's Call*

How do I register? Candidacy Manager Shanda Levingston will set you up in the system. You should receive a “welcome” e-mail from GBHEM soon after, inviting you to pay the \$75 on-line.

Why do I have to pay \$75? This “candidacy fee” pays for the Candidacy Guidebook *Fulfilling God's Call* you will receive in the mail or via download, and helps pay for all GBHEM candidacy support and tracking. If you need help paying the \$75, please let your pastor, church, or District office know. They may be able to help you.

What if I need help with GBHEM later? Contact Candidacy Manager Shanda Levingston. (See “Contacts” in this packet for names, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers.) Help is also available via phone or e-mail directly from GBHEM. Go to their website www.gbhem.org for a list of current candidacy staff persons who can help.

Time for a mentor?

Inquiring Mentor. You may be assigned an “inquiring mentor” soon after you complete and mail your Candidacy Summit application. Inquiring Mentors encourage and connect candidates prior to the Candidacy Summit.

What if I never get an inquiring mentor? If you register for the Candidacy Summit immediately before June 1, you will only be in this “inquiring” stage of candidacy for a month or two. In this case, you may not receive an inquiring mentor. That’s ok. If you have questions or concerns prior to the Summit, contact your District office or the Candidacy Manager. (See “Contacts” in this packet for names, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers.)

Exploring Mentor. You will meet your candidacy mentor (or “exploring mentor,” as we call these experienced clergy guides in our Conference) at the Candidacy Summit. This mentor will guide you and a group of your peers through the Candidacy Guidebook you will receive from GBHEM.

Do some homework!

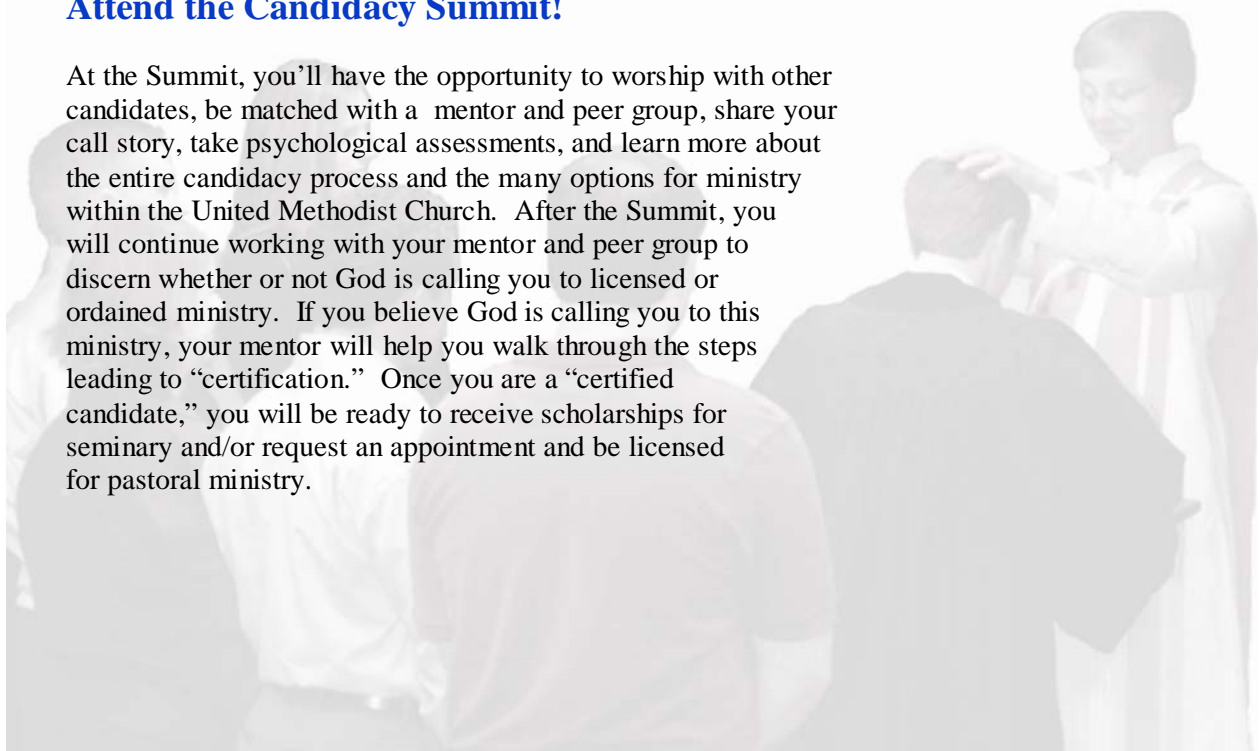
Prior to the Candidacy Summit, you will receive e-mails from the Candidacy Manager. Read these e-mails carefully and follow instructions. Plan now to reserve 6 to 8 hours in your schedule in the weeks just prior to the Summit to complete these tasks.

You’ll be asked to **read and work through a portion of the Candidacy Guidebook** you received from GBHEM prior to the Summit.

You’ll also be asked to **complete some** forms and bring them with you to the Summit. Three of those forms-- the personal reference form, personal data inventory, notarized declaration--are included in this document. See the “Ok, I’m going to need some forms...” link for more info.

Attend the Candidacy Summit!

At the Summit, you’ll have the opportunity to worship with other candidates, be matched with a mentor and peer group, share your call story, take psychological assessments, and learn more about the entire candidacy process and the many options for ministry within the United Methodist Church. After the Summit, you will continue working with your mentor and peer group to discern whether or not God is calling you to licensed or ordained ministry. If you believe God is calling you to this ministry, your mentor will help you walk through the steps leading to “certification.” Once you are a “certified candidate,” you will be ready to receive scholarships for seminary and/or request an appointment and be licensed for pastoral ministry.



What's all this?

If you're new to the United Methodist Church – or just new to the candidacy process - you may feel as if you've entered another culture where people speak a different language! A mini course in how your church is connected with The United Methodist Church, along with a glossary defining some of those foreign terms and acronyms follows.

I go to a church.

What's all this about a District and a Conference?

In the (international) United Methodist Church, almost 10 million people all over the world are members of local churches like yours. Here in the United States, churches are organized into geographic groups called **Districts**, and Districts are part of larger geographic groups called **Conferences** or **Annual Conferences**. (Those two terms are often used interchangeably.)

Your church is part of the **Texas Annual Conference**, which is one of six United Methodist conferences or areas in the state of Texas. (A Conference map is included in this packet.) There is also a Northwest Texas, North Texas, Central Texas, and Southwest Texas Conference; El Paso is part of the New Mexico Conference; and some churches are part of the non-geographic Spanish-language Rio Grande Conference.

The Texas Annual Conference includes over 700 UM churches in southeast Texas—104 large churches with average weekly worship attendance of over 250; dozens of thriving metropolitan, suburban and county seat “First” churches; hundreds of inner city, small town, and rural churches; plus The Methodist Hospital, colleges, and campus ministries. 1243 clergypersons are part of the Texas Annual Conference. 727 serve churches; 102 serve in extension ministries, leading in chaplaincy, teaching, missions, and administration in Texas and around the world; 106 are age 40 or younger; 44 are age 35 or younger; 23% are women; 14% belong to a racial or ethnic minority; and our clergypersons include 28 married clergy couples. The Texas Annual Conference is large and diverse, with lots of different opportunities for people like you—people called to licensed and ordained ministry!

Each Conference is led spiritually and administratively by a UM Bishop. The Texas Annual Conference is currently led by **Bishop Janice Riggle Huie**.

The Texas Annual Conference is divided into nine areas called **Districts**—North District (Longview and Texarkana area); Northwest District (Tyler area); East District (Lufkin area); Southeast District (Beaumont area); West District (Bryan/College Station area); Central North District (Conroe area); Southwest District (Sugar Land area); Central South District (Houston area); and South District (southeast Houston and Galveston area).

Each District is led spiritually and administratively by a **District Superintendent**.

The nine District Superintendents and the Bishop meet together as a **Cabinet** to appoint pastors to churches and oversee the ministry of the Conference.

The **Extended Cabinet** also includes five other Conference leaders: the Assistant to the Bishop, and the Directors of the four Conference Centers of Excellence—Centers for Clergy, Congregational, and Missional Excellence; and a Center for Connectional Resources.

The Bishop, Center Directors, and other Conference staff work out of offices in the Texas Annual Conference **United Methodist Service Center**, in the museum district in Houston.

So...

*The (international) United Methodist Church
(represented by a “General Conference,” which meets once every four years)
is connected to the
Texas Annual Conference
is connected to nine
Districts
which are connected to over 700
Local Churches, including yours!*

Ok, to be completely accurate here, there is actually a Jurisdictional Conference between the General and Annual, but we’ll save that for the advanced course. Moving on...)

Your District Superintendent is your pastor’s supervisor; and, if you choose to enter “candidacy,” **your District Superintendent will be your supervisor in that process.** However, others will also be available to help you through this process, including:

your **Pastor(s)**, who will be available to you throughout the process;

your church’s **Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee** (sort of a “personnel” or “HR” committee for your church), which will eventually be asked to support your decision, should you choose to pursue ministry;

your church’s **Charge Conference** (every voting member of your church’s council or voting body), which will eventually be asked to support your decision, should you choose to pursue ministry;

your **District Administrative Assistant**, who can answer most of your questions about forms and processes, and connect you with your District Superintendent;

the **Candidacy Manager**, who can answer your questions about the Candidacy Summit (an event which begins the “exploring phase” of candidacy) or direct you to someone who can answer your questions;

your **District Committee on Ordained Ministry** (dCOM), with which you will interview if you choose to pursue ministry;

clergy **Mentors** assigned to help you navigate various phases of the journey; and

the Conference **Board of Ordained Ministry** (BOM), with which you will interview as you complete your seminary education, if you choose to enter ordained ministry.

In a nutshell, help is available!



Candidacy Glossary

As a gift to our brothers and sisters beginning this unique and sometimes strange journey named “candidacy,” we offer this glossary of terms and acronyms specific to candidacy in the Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Although these definitions are not exhaustive or authorized, it is our hope and prayer they will give new travelers at least enough candidacy language to ask for directions along the way!

Annual Conference –A meeting or conference scheduled once each year, as you might have guessed. In this case, however, the term “annual conference” is used to refer both to an annual meeting and the group which meets annually. Specifically, the term “annual conference” refers to the annual meeting of delegates from United Methodist churches in a geographic area and to the United Methodist clergy and churches in that geographic area. Our annual conference (or “Conference,” as it is often called) includes all UM clergy and churches in southeast Texas. The next annual four day meeting of the Texas Annual Conference will begin the Sunday before Memorial Day 2010, at The Woodlands United Methodist Church in The Woodlands, Texas. See “Texas Annual Conference” below or go to www.txcumc.org for more info.

Apportionments – The money local churches donate to their District and Conference to support District, Conference, and General church (international) United Methodist missions and ministry. Sometimes called “benevolences,” they are usually called “apportionments” because each church is “apportioned” or assigned a specific dollar amount each year according to a formula, which is that church’s “share” of the missions and ministry support.

Bishops – Bishops are elders elected by clergy and lay delegates and consecrated by bishops for general oversight of the United Methodist Church. Bishops are usually appointed to oversee and supervise the UM clergy and churches in a geographic “Episcopal” area, which is usually an “annual conference” or two. Bishops lead laity and clergy in mission and ministry; and consecrate, commission, ordain, and appoint licensed and ordained ministers to serve the church and the world. Bishops are elected for life, and may be assigned to lead an Episcopal area for up to three four-year terms.

BOM (Conference) Board of Ordained Ministry

Board of Ordained Ministry –The Conference committee responsible for many aspects of ordained ministry, including recruiting candidates for ordained ministry and guiding them through a process of education, training, and ordination. Candidates for ordained ministry meet with the Board during triads and interviews prior to commissioning and ordination.

BOD (The) *Book of Discipline*

The Book of Discipline – A book of law for The United Methodist Church. The product of 200 years of Christians working together, this UM reference book lays out processes which help Methodists govern themselves.

It also includes copies of historical documents and doctrinal standards.

The laws contained in the book (including policies affecting candidacy) may only be changed by the General Conference—a group of representative United Methodist clergy and lay delegates which meets once every four years.

This book is updated and reprinted every four years after General Conference, and is organized not by page number or chapter, but by “paragraph number.”

This United Methodist Publishing House resource is available at www.cokesbury.com.

BOW (The United Methodist) *Book of Worship*

(The United Methodist) Book of Worship – A key UM reference book including basic patterns for worship; services of word and table (Communion or the Lord’s Supper); Baptism; marriage; death and resurrection; healing; and other worship services, blessings, prayers, and resources. Order at www.cokesbury.com.

Cabinet – The Bishop, 9 District Superintendents, 4 Center Directors, and the Assistant to the Bishop comprise the Cabinet of the Texas Annual Conference. The Cabinet’s primary responsibility is the appointment of clergy. They typically meet several days each month, often at the Conference Service Center.

Calling – Traditionally “calling” is used to name the specific ministry or ministries to which God “calls” us. Both lay and clergy are “called” to serve God. However, sometimes licensed and ordained ministers use the term “calling” to name the specific experiences which led them to pursue licensed or ordained ministry.

Candidacy – The process of discernment during which a candidate considers licensed or ordained ministry, and may become approved and equipped for that ministry. “Candidacy” is a specific part of a lifelong spiritual journey of discerning God’s callings in our lives.

Candidacy Road Map – See “Road Map.”

Candidacy Summit – A multi-day event during which all Texas Annual Conference candidates entering the Exploring Phase of candidacy receive accurate information about the entire candidacy process; begin meeting together in small groups with trained Mentors; and have opportunities to worship, share their call stories, meet District Superintendents and other supporters, and take required psychological tests.

Candidate – A person considering licensed or ordained ministry. See also “candidacy.”

Center for Clergy Excellence – One of four areas of Texas Annual Conference Conference-level ministries, Center ministries include clergy accountability, clergy development and spiritual formation, clergy recruitment, clergy pension and group health benefits, and the Board of Ordained Ministry. The other three Conference Centers: The Centers for Congregational Excellence, Missional Excellence, and Connectional Resources (fiscal, communications, and technology ministries.) The Directors and staff of the four Centers office in the Conference Service Center, along with the Bishop, Assistant to the Bishop, and United Methodist Foundation staff.

Clergy – A licensed or ordained minister. Through our baptism, we are all called as “lay” ministers. However, clergy ministers have been called and equipped for the specific ministries of Service, Word, Sacrament and/or Order. See also “deacon,” “elder,” and “licensed local pastor.”

Conference – See “annual conference” and “Texas Annual Conference.”

Conference Service Center – The Conference “headquarters” building, housing the offices of the Bishop, Center Directors and staff, and United Methodist Foundation offices, and is located in Houston’s museum district at 5215 Main Street, Houston 77002, 713.521.9383 www.txcumc.org.

CLT Core Leadership Team

Core Leadership Team – Much like a “church council” for the whole Conference, this Conference committee acts on behalf of the annual conference in between annual conference sessions.

Charge Conference – A local church charge conference includes every member of the governing body (usually a church council) of a United Methodist Church plus its appointed clergy. This group must meet once each year to review church goals and objectives, elect church leaders, and set clergy salaries. However, charge conference meetings may also be called when needed by a Pastor and/or District Superintendent. Candidates seeking certification will need approval of their congregation’s charge conference during the Exploring phase of candidacy.

(The) Christian As Minister – Reading through this “red book” (as it was fondly called, until it was recently reprinted with a multi-colored cover!) with a clergy or lay guide is required by our Conference during the Inquiring phase of ministry. This GBHEM resource may be ordered at www.cokesbury.com

Deacons – Ordained ministers called to the ministries of Word and Service. A Deacon in full connection is called to connect the local congregation and the community as a minister who “sends forth” the congregation into the world. Their call is to interpret the concerns and hurts of the world through issues of justice and compassion. Deacons are servant leaders who preach and teach the Word of God, and conduct weddings and funerals; however they do not administer the sacraments (Baptism and Holy Communion) or order (lead administratively) the church. Deacons are usually appointed as associate pastors at larger churches, usually as administrators, musicians, or educators. However, deacons may also be appointed to serve “beyond the local church” in “extension ministries.” Deacons do not “itinerate” (agree to move or be appointed by the Bishop where needed), but they do serve under appointment. Instead of being appointed by the Cabinet as elders, or local pastors, deacons “find their own” place of service and then request Episcopal appointment.

DCM Developing Connectional Ministries

Developing Connectional Ministries – Mentor-supervised clergy peer groups, retreats, and experiences required for all provisional members. The DCM experience is designed to connect incoming new ministers with colleagues and mentors, and with the resources and expectations of the Conference and the general church. After candidates are commissioned, they become provisional members of the annual conference. After commissioned members complete their educational requirements, they participate in DCM for the two to three year provisional membership period prior to ordination as deacons or elders and full membership in the Texas Annual Conference.

District – One of several smaller geographic areas within a UM annual conference. In the Texas Annual Conference, there are 9 Districts, named Central North, Central South, East, North, Northwest, South, Southeast, Southwest, and West. Districts are supervised by District Superintendents, who usually work out of an office in a church or office building within the District, along with one or more District Administrative Assistant(s.)

dCOM District Committee on Ministry

District Committee on Ministry – Committee responsible for all candidates for licensed and ordained ministry in one District or geographic area. Some dCOMs have “get to know you” meetings with candidates prior to the Candidacy Summit. Candidates who choose to seek certification may meet with their dCOM for a certification interview. Certified candidates must be re-certified by dCOM annually. Candidates ready for commissioning are recommended by dCOMs to the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) for additional interviews. District Committees on Ministry also license and re-license all the local pastors serving in the District.

DS District Superintendent

District Superintendent – An elder appointed by the Bishop to the Cabinet, and assigned to oversee the ministry of all clergy and churches in one District or geographic area of the Conference, usually for a term of six to eight years. District Superintendents serve as the key supervisor for all candidates and clergy. Most candidates meet their District Superintendent prior to the Candidacy Summit. Contact info for all DSs follows the road map in your binder.

DAA District Administrative Assistant

District Administrative Assistant (DAA) – Because she or he is the Administrative Assistant to the District Superintendent and often works hand in hand with dCOM chairpersons and registrars, DAAs usually play a key informational role in candidacy. Most candidates meet their DAA prior to the Summit. DAAs usually enter candidates’ names into the DOVE and GBHEM systems, and help candidates process Candidacy Summit registration forms. Contact info for all DAAs follows the road map in your binder.

DOVE – Web-based system of record for all candidates for ministry in the Texas Annual Conference, DOVE helps candidates, mentors, District and Conference ordained ministry committees, and District offices track candidates, candidacy requirements, and other data. Candidates need to be able to log on and respond to “alerts” (requests for your attention or action). To log on, go to <https://dove.ytscorp.com>. Questions? Contact your mentor, District office, or Texas Annual Conference Dove Consultant, Stephanie Whitaker, at swhitaker@txcumc.org. An optional DOVE help session is scheduled during the Candidacy Summit.

Elders – Ordained ministers called to the ministries of Service, Word, Sacrament, and Order. Elders are servant leaders who preach and teach the Word of God, administer the sacraments (Baptism and Holy Communion), and order (lead administratively) the church. Elders are usually appointed as pastors or associate pastors of churches, but may also be appointed to serve “beyond the local church” in “extension ministries”, usually as chaplains, administrators, or educators. Elders agree to “itinerate” (move and be appointed by the Bishop where needed.) District Superintendents are appointed and Bishops are elected from the ranks of elders.

Episcopal – Of or relating to a bishop. So, an “Episcopal area” is an area under the supervision of a Bishop. Bishop Janice Riggle Huie is assigned to the “Houston area,” an Episcopal area that includes the Texas Annual Conference.

FAQ Frequently Asked Questions

GBHEM General Board of Higher Education & Ministry

General Board of Higher Education & Ministry – The general (or international) United Methodist Church agency in Nashville, Tennessee, which relates to United Methodist colleges, universities, and seminaries; and trains, supports, and tracks candidates and ordained ministers.

General Conference – This legislative body of the (international) United Methodist Church is comprised of clergy and lay delegates from all over the world and meets once every four years.

Journal – A record of the minutes of the preceding annual conference, including a clergy and lay leadership directory and church statistics (membership, apportionments paid, etc.) Available on-line at www.txcumc.org.

Lay – A church member who is not a licensed or ordained minister is a “layperson.” (Through our baptism, we are all called as ministers. However, lay ministers have not been called and equipped for the specific ministries of Word, Order, Sacrament and/or Service.)

Licensed Local Pastors – Certified candidates, who receive a pastoral appointment attend a two-week licensing school, agree to begin Course of Study (which requires two to four weeks of study at a seminary every year for at least five years) and return every year to their dCOM for approval and re-licensing. Local pastors may be licensed to perform all the duties of a pastor in the particular church or churches to which they are appointed, including Baptism, Communion, marriage, burial, confirmation, and receiving members. Licensed local pastors are not required to earn a Master of Divinity degree or itinerate (move outside a local geographic area;) are not guaranteed appointment; and usually serve as sole pastors of smaller congregations.

Mentor – A mentor is a clergyperson who guides a candidate or group of candidates through a particular phase of the candidacy process. There are five types of mentors, a “Mentor Chair” for each type, and a “Dean of the College of Mentors” over all. The **Dean of the College of Mentors** is Rev. Josh Hale.

Inquiring Mentors encourage and connect candidates prior to the Candidacy Summit.
Mentor Chair: Rev. Alicia Coltzer

Exploring (or “Candidacy”) Mentors lead candidates to discern callings and complete selected portions of the Candidacy Guidebook from Candidacy Summit through certification (at least 6 months.)

Mentor Chair: Rev. Eric Ryburn

Certified Mentors encourage and connect candidates from certification through commissioning (deacons and elders) or appointment (local pastors); help candidates prepare for commissioning interviews; and encourage and connect certified local pastor candidates not currently under appointment.

Mentor Chair: Rev. Mary Tumulty

Developing Connectional Ministries Mentors lead candidates to effectiveness from commissioning through ordination; and help candidates prepare for ordination interviews.

Mentor Chair: Rev. Mike Proctor

Clergy Mentors supervise and encourage local pastors from appointment until completion of basic Course of Study.

Mentor Chair: Dr. Janice Gilbert

MIP *Ministry Inquiry Process*

Ministry Inquiry Process – Reading through this “purple book” (as it is often fondly called) with a clergy or lay guide is required by our Conference during the inquiring phase of ministry. This GBHEM resource is updated every four years, and can be ordered at www.cokesbury.com.

P/SPRC Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee

Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee – Committee in every United Methodist Church which is responsible for all candidates for ordained ministry. This committee also assists pastor(s) and church staff members as they assess their gifts and set priorities for leadership and service. Candidates seeking certification will need to meet with their congregation’s P/SPRC Committee during the Exploring phase of candidacy.

Road Map – The Texas Annual Conference Candidacy “road map” is one electronic file (printed in your Candidacy Summit binder) which includes a chronological list of everything that should happen during candidacy and who is responsible. This file has been approved by BOM and Cabinet; will be updated annually; and is available on our Conference website www.txcumc.org.

TAC Texas Annual Conference

Texas Annual Conference – “Annual conference” or “Conference” refers to all the United Methodist clergy and churches in one geographic area. The “Texas Annual Conference” is one of about 6 UM Conferences in the state of Texas. It includes all of southeast Texas—Houston, Galveston, Texarkana, Longview, Tyler, Beaumont, College Station, Bryan, and everything in between—9 Districts; over 700 congregations; over 1,200 clergypersons. Our Episcopal leader: Bishop Janice Riggle Huie. Conference “headquarters” is the Conference Service Center, 5215 Main Street, Houston 77002, 713.521.9383; www.txcumc.org

Triad – Simply refers to a meeting of three Board of Ordained Ministry members with a candidate preparing for BOM commissioning or ordination interviews. BOM “triad” volunteers give their time and expertise to help candidates prepare for successful interviews.

UMH *(The) United Methodist Hymnal*

The United Methodist Hymnal – Available at www.cokesbury.com along with a hymnal supplement “The Faith We Sing,” this key UM resource includes traditional hymns, songs, musical responses, Psalters (Psalms,) prayers, and other worship resources.

*To suggest glossary corrections or additions,
please contact the Center for Clergy Excellence.*

Ok, I'm going to need some forms...

If you choose to enter candidacy, the forms you'll need to complete are in this file. Here, you'll also find out how to contact people who can help answer your questions about candidacy, along with helpful websites, books, and other resources.

Candidacy Summit Application form

After your interview with your District Superintendent (see "What do I do now" file), complete this Candidacy Summit Application form and ask your DS to sign it. After your DS signs it, make a copy of it for your records (start a "candidacy" file right now, and keep copies of everything, just in case). Mail it to the BOM Candidacy Manager, 5215 Main Street, Houston, Texas 77002, along with a \$100 check, written to the Texas Annual Conference. The check pays for a portion of the required psychological testing you will receive at the Summit.

When this form is received by the BOM Candidacy Manager, you will be officially registered for the next "Candidacy Summit" which is an annual event for people beginning the "exploring phase" of candidacy. The Candidacy Summit is usually scheduled in late July or early August. However, the Center must receive your signed registration form with check by June 1 to register you for that year's event. **Registration forms received after June 1 will be registered for the Summit the following year.**

Personal Data Inventory (Form 102)

This Personal Data Inventory form is also found in the front of the Candidacy Guidebook you will receive from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) (See "What do I do now" document). Complete this form, make a copy of it for your records, and bring it with you to the Candidacy Summit.

Personal Reference Form

Complete the Personal Reference Form, make a copy of it for your records, and bring it with you to the Candidacy Summit. When it's time for psychological testing, bring this form with you to the testing room. After the Summit, your psychological testing professional will send a form to each of the people you list on the form, asking them whether they would recommend that you be considered as a candidate for licensed or ordained ministry.

Notarized Declaration (Form 114)

This form--affectionately known as "the felony form"--must be signed in the presence of a notary and notarized. Most District Administrative Assistants (DAA) are notaries and can help you with this form. If you do not live or work near your District office or if their office hours are inconvenient for you, complete the form, have it notarized by any Notary Public, make a copy for your records, and mail it to your District office. Your DAA can scan it into your Dove file.

Contacts

This document includes the names, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers for people who are excited you are interested in ministry, and can help answer your questions along the road from lay to licensed or ordained ministry.

Conference map

Open this document to see the boundaries of the Texas Annual Conference and its nine Districts.

Other resources

This document includes a few websites and books you might find helpful as you consider whether or not God is calling you to ministry in the United Methodist Church.



**The United Methodist Church
Texas Annual Conference
Candidacy Summit Application**

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Student Y N College or University Attending: _____
(Circle one)

Gender M F (Circle One) Expected Graduation Date: _____

Preferred Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Preferred Contact info: _____ First Language _____

Phone _____ - _____ - _____ E-Mail Address _____
(Note: All correspondence will be sent to this email address)

Home Church _____ District _____

At the Candidacy Summit you will be taking a Psychological Assessment.

Please enclose a \$100 check payable to Texas Annual Conference for the evaluation with this application.

Between September and March you will need to meet with a coach in either Houston/Clear Lake or College Station to discuss the Psychological Assessment. **Please circle the meeting location you prefer:**

Houston/Clear Lake College Station

Signature of District Superintendent (must be signed by DS) Date

- Please mail the completed application
- with the District Superintendent's Signature
- and \$100 check payable to "Texas Annual Conference"

to

*Shanda Levingston
BOM Candidacy Manager
Texas Annual Conference,
5215 Main Street, Houston, Texas 77002*

*Questions? Contact your District Office, Inquiring Mentor
or Shanda Levingston at slevingston@txcumc.org or 713.521.9383, Ext. 306*

Dependents in addition to your spouse and children:

| Name of child | Date of Birth | Sex | Education |
|---------------|---------------|-------|-----------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Describe your community involvement and volunteer work, such as participation in community organizations, social clubs, service agencies, and other non-church-related volunteer service:

Your childhood family and other significant relatives:

| Name | Relation | Age | Sex | Education | Marital Status | Occupation |
|-------|---------------|-------|-------|-----------|----------------|------------|
| _____ | <u>Father</u> | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | <u>Mother</u> | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Your work experience, such as current employment, previous employment, and military experience, if any.

Have you served as a local pastor, diaconal minister, deacon or elder in The United Methodist Church? Yes ___ No ___

If Yes, what Conference? _____

| Conference Relationship | Indicate Date | Indicate Date |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Consecrated Diaconal Minister | _____ | Probationary Member _____ |
| License as a Local Pastor | _____ | Deacon in Full Connection _____ |
| Associate Member | _____ | Elder in Full Connection _____ |

Have you had a change in clergy relationship with a conference of The United Methodist Church? Yes ___ No ___

If Yes, what Conference? _____

| Change in Conference Relationship | Indicate Date | Indicate Date |
|--|---------------|------------------|
| Discontinuance | _____ | Location _____ |
| Leave of Absence | _____ | Retirement _____ |
| Disability Leave | _____ | Withdrawal _____ |
| Termination by action of the annual conference | _____ | |

*** **Note** *** If additional space is needed, please use a separate sheet of paper and attach to this form.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES LIST

Name of Candidate _____ Date _____

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES: Please obtain the full address of each reference – street, city, state, and zip code. Please do not list as a reference anyone outside of the Continental United States. List at least three references. If names and addresses are incomplete, including zip codes, it may be necessary for the office to phone you collect in order to obtain any missing information.

MOST RECENT LOCAL CHURCH PASTOR: If you are serving a church yourself and do not have a pastor, please list a former pastor, preferably the one who knows you best and could best comment on your potential for service as a member of the ordained clergy. If your most recent local pastor is your parent, please list a pastor who knows you well other than your parent or close relative.

Name: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

If you are now serving or have recently served a church, name a parishioner who knows your work well:

Name: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

List the address of one colleague who knows you well:

Name: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

List at least one additional reference of your own choosing:

Name: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Any explanatory comment you would care to give about any of the above persons and their relationship to you would be welcomed. However, none is required.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE APPLICANT:

It is your responsibility to contact the persons you have named above as REFERENCES advising them that they will be receiving a RECOMMENDATION FORM from the Samaritan Center for Counseling and Education and should return the completed form immediately.

Follow up with your REFERENCES after two weeks to confirm that they have received the form, have completed the form, and have returned it in the postage paid envelope provided.

The RECOMMENDATION FORMS are a necessary part of the assessment process and your file cannot be processed until these completed forms have been returned. It is the candidate's responsibility to see that the recommendation forms are returned to the Samaritan Center for Counseling and Education.

**THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
CANDIDATE'S DISCLOSURE FORM
¶324.12**

Please complete this form, sign and date it, have your signature notarized, and return it to

Have you ever been:

1. convicted of a felony? _____ No _____ Yes
2. convicted of a misdemeanor? _____ No _____ Yes
3. accused in writing of sexual misconduct or child abuse? _____ No _____ Yes

If you answered *yes* to any of these questions, please explain.

If you are required by this disclosure form to disclose any written accusations or convictions for felony, misdemeanor or any incident of sexual misconduct that you dispute or believe should be explained in any way, you have an opportunity at this time to include any additional information that you believe might be helpful or important regarding the disclosure. Any relevant additional information should be provided in a response statement attached to the form. (Note: It would be preferable if this response statement could be included right on the disclosure statement, however, we realize there are space limitations on forms and thus you might need to request that the statement be attached. Please indicate if pages are attached.)

I hereby certify that the information provided on this form is true and accurate.

Print Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Subscribed and Sworn this _____ day of _____ 200__

Notary Public _____



Other resources

A few websites and books you might find helpful as you consider whether or not God is calling you to ministry in the United Methodist Church:

Books

Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation
by Parker J. Palmer

Answering God's Call for Your Life: A Look at Christian Calls and Church Vocations
by Robert Roth

The Christian as Minister
which can be purchased from any Cokesbury Bookstore
1.800.672.1789 or www.cokesbury.com