

Provisional Elder Membership Candidates - 2020

Western North Carolina Conference Board of Ordained Ministry

Answer all of the following questions thoughtfully and carefully. Be faithful to the Scriptures. Review all previous educational work and readings. Read *The 2016 United Methodist Discipline* thoroughly (especially The Ministry of the Ordained, ¶¶301ff and ¶¶324-327). Review your candidacy guidebook. Explain your answers to give depth to your thoughts, feelings and convictions. The interview discernment team will use your answers as the starting point in your conversations with them.

Written Papers:

- Your entire written submission will be one large file (Word or PDF) submitted electronically to the Chair of the Discernment Team to which you will be assigned in the fall (not Kim Ingram). Include:
- A general cover page for all of your work stating your name, address, contact phone number, email address, date and include "Candidate for Provisional Elder – 2020."
- Number all your pages - either consecutively throughout the document or each section can be numbered individually. The page count for each section does not include the cover page for each section.
- Add a footer on each page that includes your name and "Provisional Elder."
- Create individual cover pages for each section. Instructions for each section are included within. Include: Vocation, Disciplined Life, Theology, Proclamation.
- A bibliography which is not included in any of the page counts.
- Throughout your paper, restate the entire question before providing your answer.
- No question may be answered simply "Yes" or "No."
- Acceptable font types are 12 point Times New Roman or 12 point Cambria with 1-inch margins.
- Double space all of your written work with exception of your footnotes.
- Footnotes (not endnotes) should be in a clear style that clearly provides your sources.
- Candidates submitting late or incomplete papers will not be granted an interview.

If you are returning to the board, you should only do the assignments indicated in your follow-up letter. If you have any questions, contact Kim Ingram or Adri Bullard-Rogers in the Office of Ministerial Services. You will need to meet with the dCOM again in December for approval.

Assignments are due by **Monday, February 3, 2020**. You will be notified in the fall to whom you should send your materials. The interviews will be held in Gastonia, NC on **March 17-19, 2020**.

Provisional Elder Membership Candidates - 2020 Vocation

For this section, your total answers should be at least 12 but no more than 15 pages. Create a cover page for this section stating your name, address, contact phone number, email address, date and “Candidate for Provisional Elder – 2020 – Vocation.”

1. Describe your call into ordained ministry. Include:
 - Experiences as a Christian prior to your call
 - God’s influence and inspiration in how you experienced God’s call
 - Influential relationships that shaped your call
 - Past and present church involvement that affirmed your call

2. Describe the meaning of commissioning as a provisional elder in the context of the general ministry of the church. Reflect on the relationship of the two orders of elders and deacons within the ministry of the church. Include the concept of servant ministry.

3. Describe your strengths for ministry. How do you perceive yourself, your gifts, and your commitment as a provisional elder in The United Methodist Church? What is your understanding of ordination? Elaborate on areas in which you need further maturation.

4. How will our polity affect your life as an ordained minister? Include your understanding of and expectation of the itinerant system for elders. What do you anticipate to be the risks, sacrifices, and rewards in serving in the United Methodist ordained ministry for you?

5. Describe where you have experienced personally another person who offered significant Christian leadership to a congregation, the church, or our culture. Speak with that person to gain their insights. What did you learn from their leadership? What would you have done differently? (You should not give the name of the person. Refer by first name only if needed.)

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Disciplined Life

For this section, your total answers should be at least 6 but no more than 8 pages. Create a cover page for this section stating your name, address, contact phone number, email address, date and "Candidate for Provisional Elder – 2020 – Disciplined Life."

1. You are called to dedicate yourself to the highest ideals of the Christian life. Discuss your personal habits and disciplines to fulfill these highest ideals. Include:
 - a. Physical health (exercise, diet, physical exams)
 - b. Intellectual, emotional, and mental health (reading, continuing education, counseling)
 - c. Social justice
 - d. Spiritual disciplines and means of grace
 - e. Integrity in pastoral and personal relationships
 - i. Confidentiality in counseling
 - ii. Appropriate boundaries in family and work
 - iii. Celibacy in singleness and fidelity in marriage
2. What one success within your disciplined life do you most celebrate? Where are you most challenged? What do these answers reveal about you?
3. Discuss your personal financial stewardship, including your indebtedness, investments, and giving.
4. Describe your understanding of an inclusive church and ministry. How do you relate to and serve all persons without regard to race, color, ethnicity, national origin, social status, gender, sexual orientation, age, economic condition, or disability? How have you in your ministry, taught and encouraged your congregation/ministry setting to be welcoming and inclusive to all people?

Provisional Elder Membership Candidates - 2020 Theology

For this section, your answers should be of sufficient length to state your position clearly and represent your best theological thinking. Your answers reflect your academic studies in historical and systematic theology, scripture, your understanding of *The United Methodist Book of Discipline*, and your own perspectives. Carefully review all sections of *The United Methodist Book of Discipline* that are related to these topics.

The length of this section should be no more than 24 double spaced pages utilizing footnotes appropriately. Create a cover page for this section stating your name, address, contact phone number, email address, date and "Candidate for Provisional Elder – 2020 – Theology."

1. Describe your basic theological ideas regarding:
 - The Triune God
 - Nature of humanity
 - Sin and evil
 - The role of Jesus Christ
 - The activity of the Holy Spirit
 - Grace
 - The means of grace
 - The sacraments
 - The kingdom of God, the resurrection, and eternal life
 - The nature of the church and its primary mission and work today.
2. Reflect on God's justice and love in the presence of evil in the world.
3. Discuss primary characteristics of United Methodist polity and the theology they reflect.
4. Describe the Wesleyan quadrilateral. Illustrate how it may be used to address a current ethical issue/debate.
5. Name and discuss the United Methodist way of salvation. How have you experienced it in your own spiritual journey?
6. How do you understand your tasks to affirm, teach, and apply Part III of *The United Methodist Book of Discipline* (Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task) in your work as a United Methodist minister?

Provisional Elder Membership Candidates - 2020 Proclamation

Prepare a sermon and worship service. Plan, design, lead, evaluate, and video record one entire service of worship in your ministry setting.

For this section, your total answers should be at least 8 but no more than 10 pages (not including your sermon). Create a cover page for this section stating your name, address, contact phone number, email address, date and "Candidate for Provisional Elder – 2020 – Proclamation." The video recorded worship service will be submitted using a YouTube account. Include the link to the YouTube video on the cover page. Send the worship bulletin as part of the attachment.

- Choose one Scripture text as your sermon focus from a given Sunday between the dates of July 1 and December 31, 2019 from the Revised Common Lectionary. You do not need to preach the selected text on the assigned Sunday but you do need to preach the sermon between July 1, 2019 and January 31, 2020. Include a copy of the scripture text, noting its day in the Revised Common Lectionary.
 - Work with at least one non-musical layperson in planning and implementing your worship service.
 - Work with your church musician(s) to plan the music.
1. List and describe any training, courses, workshops, and practical experience you have had in the area of preaching and worship (1/2 page).
 2. Describe the setting of your service such as the nature of the congregation and why you chose the primary theme addressed (1 page).
 3. State and explain the central emphasis of the text.
 4. In one sentence, what is the message you seek to convey in this sermon?
 5. Plan the worship service to the extent of which you are able. (2 pages). Record and submit the entire service. Select and/or write the liturgy: readings, responses, prayers, hymns, songs. You are encouraged to utilize your creativity and to use multi-sensory materials. Include a copy of the worship order/bulletin in the electronic file. Indicate how much you were able to contribute to the planning.
 6. Prepare a 15-30 minute sermon to be delivered and video recorded in your planned worship service. Do not submit a funeral eulogy or communion meditation or short homily for a special day. Share a 'regular' Sunday sermon and order of worship. Include a manuscript OR transcript of your sermon. The manuscript/transcript does not count in the total pagination for this section, but must be 12 point font, double spaced.
 7. Preach. There is no one sermon model. If you preach from a manuscript, include it. If you do not use a full manuscript, include a transcript of what you actually preached. You may preach behind the pulpit, or down among the people, with or without manuscript, as long as it is among a local church congregation during a regular worship service. Deliver the sermon in the way that you normally would on a typical Sunday.

8. After the service, evaluate the worship service (2 pages), providing congregation members a way to give feedback. Reflect on planning, designing, and leading the service; how the theme and goals of the sermon and worship were or were not realized; the experience of the other leaders and participants; and how effectively your worship helped to shape the members of the congregation.