

2023 Associate Membership Examination

Western North Carolina Conference Board of Ordained Ministry

Having fulfilled the requirements for associate membership after serving as a local pastor and completing Course of Study/MDiv, you have gained knowledge and experience for leadership in ministry. A primary task is to be able to integrate your understanding of vocation, theology, and proclamation into the practice of ministry. We encourage you to read the document [Whom Shall I Send?](#) Answer the following questions thoughtfully and carefully. The interview discernment team will use your answers as a starting point in the conversations with you. We encourage you to share ministry stories as you weave together your academic training, ministry experience, and your growth as a fruitful leader. Scripture is the primary source for our reflection and growth as disciples and ministers of the Gospel. Throughout your written work, you are expected to incorporate Scripture in your responses. Review previous educational work and readings. Utilize *The 2016 United Methodist Discipline* thoroughly.

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.

Include:

- A general cover page for all of your work stating your name, address, contact phone number, email address, date and include "Candidate for Associate Membership – 2023."
- 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 footer on each page that includes your name and "Associate Member."
- Create individual cover pages for each section: Vocation, Disciplined Life, Theology, Proclamation. Instructions for each section are included within this document
- A bibliography which is not included in any of the page counts.
- Throughout your paper, restate the entire question before providing your answer.
- Acceptable font types are 12-point Times New Roman or 12-point Cambria with 1-inch margins.
- Double space all your written work except for your footnotes.
- Footnotes (endnotes not accepted) should be in a clear style that clearly identifies 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 Joy Allen (jallen@wnccumc.org) in the Office of Ministerial Services.

Assignments are due by **Tuesday, January 3, 2023**. You will be notified in the fall to whom you should send your materials. The interviews will be held in Gastonia, NC, on February 7-9, 2023.

2023 Associate Membership Examination

Vocation and Leadership

For this section, your total answers should be at least 20 but no more than 25 pages. Create one document for this “Vocation” section with consecutive page numbers. Create a cover page for this section stating your name, address, contact phone number, email address, date, and “Candidate for Associate Membership – 2023 – Vocation and Leadership.”

1. Describe your set-apart call to 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 your strengths for ministry. How do you perceive yourself, your gifts, and your commitment to The United Methodist Church? Elaborate on areas in which you need further maturation.
3. How will our polity affect your life as an Associate Member? What do you anticipate being the risks, sacrifices, and rewards in serving in the United Methodist ministry for you? How has the practice of ministry as a local pastor affected your understanding of the expectations and obligations of the itinerant system? Do you offer yourself without reserve to be appointed and serve as the Bishop may determine?
4. If the fruitful leader recognizes conflict is inevitable and leads through it, discuss how you have experienced conflict in leading the church, what you learned about yourself as a leader, and the outcome of the situation.
5. You are called to dedicate yourself to the highest ideals of the Christian life. Discuss your personal habits and disciplines and how you are being shaped by the following disciplines:
 - Physical health (exercise, diet, physical exams)
 - Intellectual, emotional, and mental health (reading, continuing education, counseling)
 - Social justice
 - Spiritual disciplines and means of grace
 - Integrity in pastoral and personal relationships (Confidentiality, boundaries, celibacy, and fidelity)
6. Describe your personal financial stewardship and how you share your personal ethos on financial stewardship with others. Discuss how you have taught financial stewardship and generous financial giving in your ministry setting. Describe the process by which you are leading in the church budgeting process and encouraging apportionment payments.
7. Discuss how you are setting an example and providing fruitful clergy leadership for connecting your worshipping community with the world through engaging your congregation in servant ministry in your community.
8. Describe your understanding of an inclusive church and ministry. How do you relate to, serve, receive and be with all persons, developing a level of trust that makes change and growth possible? In your ministry leadership experiences, how are you teaching, modeling, and encouraging others to be welcoming and inclusive of all people?

2023 Associate Membership Examination

Theological Understanding and Leadership

For this section, your answers should be of sufficient length to state your position clearly and represent your best theological thinking. Your answers should reflect your academic studies in historical and systematic theology, scripture, your familiarity with United Methodist theology with particular attention paid to ¶105 of *The Book of Discipline*, and your own perspectives. Again, the emphasis should be on your experience in the local church.

The length of this section should be no less than 20 and no more than 25, 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 Associate Membership – 2023 – Theological Understanding and Leadership.”

1. Describe your basic theological ideas including:
 - 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 reign of God, the resurrection, and eternal life
 - The nature of the church and its primary mission and work today
2. How has the practice of ministry shaped your understanding of the following traditional evangelical doctrines?
 - Repentance
 - Justification
 - Regeneration
 - Sanctification
 - Marks of the Christian life
3. Write your reflections on God’s justice and love in the presence of evil in the world.
4. Discuss primary characteristics of United Methodist polity and the theology they reflect.
5. Describe the Wesleyan quadrilateral and illustrate how you would use these to address a current ethical issue/debate in your setting.
6. Name and discuss the United Methodist way of salvation. How have you experienced it in your own spiritual journey?
7. How do you understand your task 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 fruitful clergy leader?
8. How have you led someone to faith in Jesus Christ?
9. How has the practice of ministry informed your understanding of the nature and mission of the church? Reflect theologically on the primary challenges today facing the universal Church and our United Methodist Church? How do you respond to those challenges?

2023 Associate Membership Examination

Leadership in Proclamation

There are many “Practices” that you are expected to master as a leader in the church. The following three requirements are specified in *The United Methodist Book of Discipline – 2016*:

- Proclamation
- Bible Study
- Disciple Making Ministry

Prepare a sermon and worship service. Plan, design, lead, evaluate, and video record one entire service of worship in your ministry setting. This service should be preached in the usual setting in which you preach and should be preached within the time-frame of July 1, 2022 to January 1, 2023.

For this section, your total answers should be at least 10 but no more than 12 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 Associate Membership – 2023 – Leadership in Proclamation.” Include the link to the YouTube video and the password on the cover page. Send the worship bulletin as part of the attachment. The video recorded worship service will be submitted using a YouTube account.

- Choose one Scripture text as your sermon focus. Include a copy of the scripture text.
 - 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. What is the historical context and function of the text and how does it transcend time and space for your current context?
 2. How are you working at improving your proclamation? How are you exercising leadership through proclamation and how does that connect with your church’s vision?
 3. State and explain the central emphasis of the text. How and why did you choose this text?
 4. Describe the context of your service such as the nature of the congregation and why you chose the primary theme addressed.
 5. In one sentence, what is the message you seek to convey in this sermon?
 6. Plan, record, and submit the worship 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. The Board of Ordained Ministry intends to evaluate your worship planning and leadership. It is essential that you plan worship and preach the service that you record. Include a copy of the worship order/bulletin in the pdf. Record the entire worship service.
 7. 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.

2023 Associate Membership Examination

8. 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 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.

9. 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 share the members of the congregation.

2023 Associate Membership Examination

Leadership in Bible Study

Teach an original Bible Study to give evidence of your training to research biblical books and passages and your ability as a teacher of scripture. The focus of the study is the Bible. Create, plan, design, lead, evaluate, and video record a Bible Study in your ministry setting. Evidence of exegesis is expected.

For this section, your total answers should be at least 8 but no more than 10 pages. As possible, scan and include any handouts and other materials. Create a cover page for this section stating your name, address, contact phone number, email address, date and "Candidate for Associate Membership – 2023 – Bible Study." Include the link to the You Tube account and the password on the cover page.

1. Why is Bible study important in the life and leadership of your ministry setting? (1/2 page)
2. Create a Bible study that demonstrates your ability to teach effectively.
3. Describe the setting such as the nature of the congregation and why you chose the primary theme addressed (1 page). If the study is part of a series of lessons, describe the series.
4. In one sentence, what is the understanding you seek to convey in this study?
5. Discuss the various Bible study methods you considered and why you chose a particular method in your teaching. The Bible study must essentially be your own original work (1 page).
6. Prepare the Bible study to be taught and video recorded. We encourage creativity and use of multi-sensory materials. Work with at least one lay person in planning and implementing your Bible study. Include copies of any handouts distributed (not included in the number of pages allowed).
7. Lesson Plan. Include lesson goals, material list, activities, suggested questions, and handouts. If the lesson is part of a series, only include the written lesson plan that coincides with the video recorded lesson (2 pages).
8. Teach. There is no one teaching model to follow. Video record the class. Submit 30 minutes of video including 5 minutes at the beginning, 5 minutes at the end, and 20 consecutive minutes during the study. Submit notes or outline you use (not included in the number of pages allowed).
9. After the Bible study, evaluate the class. Reflect on planning, designing, and leading; how the theme and goals of the study were or were not realized; the experience of other leaders and participants; and how effectively your study helped to shape the members of your congregation or ministry setting (2 pages).

2023 Associate Membership Examination

Disciple Making Ministry

Create and implement a Disciple Making Ministry within your context that demonstrates fruitfulness in carrying out the church's mission of "Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World." This ministry should include growing and nurturing existing disciples, making new disciples for Christ, equipping and empowering lay persons for service, identifying the unique gifts of your congregation and how it can respond significantly to the unique needs of the community.

Design, implement, and submit a ministry (project, event, or experience) created and led by you, that demonstrates your leadership in ministry, as identified above. The ministry should be outward focused as it empowers leaders for service and creates new disciples. Be as creative as necessary. You may utilize resources from another source, but not another complete curriculum.

For this section, your total answers should be at least 10 but no more than 12 pages. Include any accompanying materials as pdfs where possible. Create a cover page for this section stating your name, address, contact phone number, email address, date and "Candidate for Associate Membership Connection – 2023 – Disciple Making Ministry."

- The "Disciple Making Ministry" assignment must be implemented between the dates of January 1 and December 31, 2022.
- Work with at least one lay person in planning and implementing this ministry.
- Include, as appropriate, pictures and other supporting documentation such as flyers, handouts, and brochures. They should not be included in the page count.

1. Implement the "Disciple Making Ministry."

2. Write a detailed explanation and rationale of the ministry that includes its genesis, scope, outline, and reflections. Include:

- The scripture that guided your "Disciple Making Ministry"
- The setting, such as the nature of the congregation, participants, constituents of your ministry
- How you sought to equip and empower disciples, as well as create new disciples; identify the primary theme and why you chose it
- Knowledge and awareness of community demographics, assessment of community resources to identify partnerships, assessment of needs within the community
- How you led the church in connecting to the community or world, equipped, and empowered existing disciples and made disciple(s)
- The process involved in determining your ministry context (ex: who did you consult? what did you learn? what did you learn about your community?); measured outcomes (both quantitative and qualitative)

3. Write a final evaluation of the ministry. Reflect on the effectiveness of the ministry with the leadership and the participants, including what went well and what you would do differently. What did you learn from both successes and failures? What are immediate next steps and ongoing next steps for disciple making ministry in your community; what will you do in ten days, ten months, and ten years?