

Provisional Membership Candidates - 2023

Western North Carolina Conference Board of Ordained Ministry

As you complete Provisional Member requirements, your primary task is 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. Read *The 2016 United Methodist Discipline* thoroughly (especially The Ministry of the Ordained, ¶1301ff and ¶¶332-336).

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 your work stating your name, address, contact phone number, email address, date and include “Candidate for Provisional Deacon or Elder– 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 a footer on each page that includes your name and “Provisional Deacon or Elder.”
- Create individual cover pages for each section. Instructions 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.
- 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 your written work except for your footnotes.
- Footnotes (endnotes are 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 do the assignments indicated in your follow-up letter. If you have any questions, contact Kim Ingram or Joy Allen (jallen@wnccumc.org). You will need to meet with the DCOM again in December for approval.

Assignments are due by **Tuesday, January 31, 2023**. You will be notified in the fall to whom you should send your materials. The interviews will be held in Gastonia, NC, on March 14-16, 2023.

Provisional Membership Candidates - 2023 Vocation and Leadership

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 Deacon or Elder – 2023 – Vocation and Leadership.”

1. a. 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 callb. What is your understanding of ordination?
2. Reflect on what it means to be set apart as a provisional deacon/elder in the context of the general ministry of the church. Reflect on the relationship of the two orders of deacons and elders within the ministry of the church. Include the concept of servant ministry.
3. Describe your strengths for ministry and how you perceive yourself, your gifts, and your commitment as a provisional deacon/elder in The United Methodist Church. Elaborate on areas in which you need further maturation.
4. How will our polity affect your life as an ordained minister? What do you anticipate being the risks, sacrifices, and rewards in serving in The United Methodist ordained ministry for you? If you are now working (or expect to be appointed) in a setting beyond the local church or extension ministry setting, please share your understanding of how your setting and ministry relate to the local church and the mission of the church; how you expect to be involved in worship; and, how you will assist others at their workplace to understand and claim their own ministry.
5. Describe how you have personally been influenced by another person who offered fruitful 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/could you have done differently? (You should not give the name of the person. Refer by first name only if needed).

Provisional Membership Candidates - 2023

Disciplined Life and Leadership

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 Deacon or Elder – 2023 – Disciplined Life and Leadership.”

1. 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:
 - 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 (Confidentiality, boundaries, celibacy, fidelity)
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. Describe your understanding of Christian financial stewardship and generous giving. Tell us how your own financial health is shaped by your understanding. Describe the importance of connectional and apportioned giving.
4. Describe your understanding of an inclusive church and ministry. How do you relate to, serve, receive, and be with all persons to develop levels 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?

Provisional Membership Candidates - 2023 Theology 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 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 Deacon or Elder – 2023 – Theology and Leadership."

1. In the context of our Wesleyan tradition, how do you understand:
 - 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 or reign 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. Describe the Wesleyan quadrilateral and illustrate how you would use it to address a current ethical issue/debate in a current ministry experience.
4. Name and discuss a Wesleyan understanding of the way of salvation. How have you experienced it in your own spiritual journey?
5. 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?
6. How would you lead someone to faith in Christ?

Provisional Membership Candidates - 2023 Proclamation and Leadership

For this section, your total answers should be at least 8 but no more than 10 pages (not including the written version of your oral presentation). The video recorded presentation will be submitted using a YouTube account. Create a coverage page for this section stating your name, address, contact phone number, email address, date and “Candidate for Provisional Deacon or Elder – 2023 – Proclamation and Leadership.” Include the link to the YouTube video on the cover page.

ELDERS:

Prepare a sermon and worship service. Plan, design, lead, evaluate, and video record one entire service of worship in a live ministry setting. This service should be preached within the time frame of July 1, 2022, to January 31, 2023.

- 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 to plan the music.
1. List and describe any training, courses, workshops, and practical experience you have had in ~~preaching~~ preaching and worship.
 2. Describe the setting of your service, the nature of the congregation and why you chose the primary theme addressed.
 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. 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 preached. You may preach behind the pulpit, or down among the people, with or without manuscript, if 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, 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.

DEACONS:

Submit an act of proclamation (not limited to a sermon), created and led by you, that reflects your call to servant leadership as a deacon within the context and area of ministry to which you are called. Be creative to demonstrate your ministry and the equipping of others to claim their ministries of love, justice, compassion, and service to connect the church and the world. Do not use a curriculum from another source.

- This act of proclamation must be implemented between the dates of July 1, 2022 and January 31, 2023.
 - Work with at least one layperson in planning an act of proclamation.
1. List and describe any training, workshops, and practical experience that equips you to proclaim the word of God in your context of ministry.
 2. Write an explanation and rationale of your act of proclamation that includes its genesis, scope, outline, and reflections about how it relates to your calling as a deacon in servant leadership in the world.
 3. In one sentence, what is the message you seek to convey?
 4. Describe the setting of your act of proclamation such as the nature of the gathering and participants and why you chose the primary theme addressed.
 5. Include a video recorded presentation (no more than one hour) presenting part or all your proclamation of the word in your ministry setting. This recording will reflect your ability to communicate orally, especially your ability to proclaim the Gospel. If you worked with a manuscript or notes, please include those papers (12 point, double spaced. These pages are not included in the page count for this section).
 6. Include, if appropriate, pictures and/or other supporting documents such as flyers, handouts, and brochures. Submit as pdf. These items do not count toward the 8–10-page limit.
 7. Write a final evaluation. Reflect on the effectiveness of the act of proclamation with the leadership and the participants, including what went well and what you would do differently. Reflect how your act of proclamation helped to shape the discipleship and ministry of the church.