



Exploring God’s Call to a Deeper Ministry

If you feel like God is calling you into ministry and you want to explore options of how God may be calling you, there are two initial steps for discernment into vocational ministry:

- Contact a United Methodist clergyperson to discuss ways to answer a call to ministry
- Read *The Christian as Minister* found at www.cokesbury.com

There are so many ways to follow a deeper call into ministry!

Some are centered around becoming more educated and focused as laity while some are centered around serving the church as clergy by becoming a licensed local pastor or ordained as an elder or deacon.

LAITY

The opportunities to grow and lead as a lay person in your congregation or district are varied.

Lay Servants: Assist the clergy in leading inside your local church

Lay Speakers: Preach in your local church and around your district

Certified Lay Ministers: Assist the District Superintendent in serving wherever district church(es) require assistance. This can be for:

Youth Leaders

Evangelism Teams

Pastoral Care Givers

Community Leaders

Worship Leaders

Small Group Leaders

Lay Supply (*laity leading congregations that do not have an appointed clergyperson*)

CLERGY

Serving as clergy, you can be a **licensed local pastor (LLP)** or be ordained. The two distinct orders of ordained clergy are **elders**, whose primary focus is to oversee the life of the church, and **deacons**, whose primary focus is to be in touch with the hurts of the community and connect the church to those thin places. All clergy have common ground and distinctions.

	Elder	Deacon	Licensed Local Pastor
Common Ministry	Word & Service	Word & Service	Word & Service
Distinctive Ministry	Sacrament Order	Justice Compassion	Witness Mission
Biblical Role	Apostolic	Diakonia	Exhortation
Role in Connecting the Church	Church & Denomination	Church & World	Church & Individual

Responding to God’s Call to a Deeper Ministry

If you believe your call is to deepen your work within your specific church or district, you may be called to continue growing as a lay person. **Lay Servants, Lay Speakers** and **Certified Lay Ministers** are all under the care of the Board of Laity. Talk to your district lay leader.

Visit www.vaumc.org/Districts for more information on how to reach your district lay leader.

If you believe your call is leading you toward becoming **LLP, Deacon** or **Elder**, send an email to your District Superintendent and copy the Chair of your District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOM). Describe your call and your intent toward vocational ministry, asking to be admitted to the candidacy program.

You will receive an invitation into UMCARES, our online candidate portal that provides instructions for next steps on your journey. You will meet with the DCOM to be admitted to the candidacy studies program **before** you meet with your local S/PPRC or charge conference for their recommendation of your candidacy.

Inquiring Candidate: exploring call

“As United Methodists, we believe that when we are baptized we are called into ministry on behalf of Christ.”

The Christian as Minister, page 12

As an inquiring candidate, you will initially be placed on two **“Tracks”** in **UMCARES** to assist you in preparing for your first interview with DCOM:

Inquiring Candidate Track

Write a Call Statement
Complete the Biographical Form
State Background Check (\$\$)
Request an Interview with DCOM
Your DCOM Chair will contact you to schedule an interview time
Interview with DCOM

Candidacy Summit Event Track

Complete Sense of Call
Education, Membership & Engagement
Register for Summit (Events occur in Jan and July of each year) (\$\$)
Complete River of Life Activity
Complete Strength Finders Assessment
Attend Candidacy Summit Event

Each track lists the steps you will complete before you are ready to come before the DCOM for your **Admission Interview**.

Admitted Candidate: deeper exploration

“God’s call takes many forms and people hear God’s call differently; therefore, people find many different ways to respond to God’s call.”

The Christian as Minister, page 23

Once you are an **admitted candidate**, by recommendation of your DCOM during the Admission Interview, you will be placed on two new tracks:

Candidacy Track

Complete Candidacy Application
Pay Administration Fee (\$\$)
Download Guidebook
Complete EM360 Assessment
The remaining steps are passive, use as a record of the date the step was completed.

Becoming a Certified Candidate Track

Register with GBHEM
Meet with S/PPRC Committee
Meet with Charge Conference
Psychological Evaluation (\$\$\$)
Expanded Background Check (\$\$)
Complete Medical Report Form
Complete Disclosure Form

Each track lists the steps you will complete before you are ready to come before the DCOM to share how you believe you are being called to serve. This is your **Certification Interview**.

Certified Candidate: candidates for ministry

“The progress of candidates shall be reviewed annually by the DCOM which shall interview the candidate annually.”

The 2016 Book of Discipline, Paragraph 313

Certification can lead in three directions: Toward ordained deacon, ordained elder or local pastor. Each requires continuing education: seminary for elder/deacon and Course of Study for LLP.

Order of Deacon

“Deacons are expected to bridge the church and community. They have a special responsibility of calling and equipping the church for its mission of the transformation of the world.”

The United Methodist Deacon, 14

Order of Elder

“The servant leadership of the elder is expressed by leading the people of God in worship and prayer, leading people to faith in Jesus Christ, exercising pastoral supervision, and ordering the Church in mission in the world.”

Answering the Call, 76-77

Licensed Local Pastor

“United Methodism has depended on local preachers from the beginning... local preachers played a critical role in the vitality of the movement, especially in rural towns and settlements.”

Polity, Practice, and the Mission of the United Methodist Church, 184

Things to remember for **Certified Candidates**:

- ✓ Certified candidates and LLP's must renew their status with the DCOM annually. This allows the DCOM to see growth and hear about next steps along your journey.
- ✓ Scholarships are available for certified candidates and LLP's attending United Methodist seminaries or University Senate approved seminaries (www.gbhem.org).
- ✓ During the last year of seminary, candidates can apply for Provisional Membership.

LICENSED LOCAL PASTOR

In order to become a **Licensed Local Pastor (LLP)**, you will need to complete additional steps on the Local Pastor Track in **UMCARES**, then interview with the DCOM once this track is complete.

Contact your DCOM Chair to have the Licensing Track added to your UMCARES account. You may work this track simultaneously with the Becoming a Certified Candidate Track; however, you must receive a positive recommendation as a certified candidate before you may be recommended for licensing.

Licensing as a Local Pastor Track

Create a sermon outline and manuscript
Record yourself preaching the sermon
Complete the Written Responses
Interview with DCOM
Attend Licensing School in late May

After completion of the first year under appointment, work must begin toward educational requirements. More information about seminary requirements and Course of Study can be found at www.vaumc.org/LocalPastors

If you are curious to learn more about following your call, contact your clergyperson, your District Superintendent. or your DCOM Chair. Information about DCOM can be found at www.vaumc.org/Candidacy.

You may also contact the Center for Clergy Excellence,
clergyexcellence@vaumc.org