

Candidacy Mentoring in the VAUMC

The Mentoring program in the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church identifies mentors as those who “shepherd future shepherds.” The Mentor Committee, a subcommittee of the Committee on Call and Candidacy, has worked to cultivate resources and materials for mentors that they may be equipped in their roles.

The Role of Mentors

The Clergy Mentoring Manual offers the following when describing the role and characteristics of a mentor:

“Mentoring occurs within a relationship where the mentor takes responsibility for creating a safe place for reflection and growth. An effective mentor has a mature faith, models effective ministry, and possesses the necessary skill to help individuals discern their call in ministry. Mentoring is a part of the preparation and growth for inquirers and candidates for ordained ministry, local pastors, and provisional members of an annual conference. Mentoring is distinct from the evaluative and supervisory process that is a part of preparation for ministry.”

An overview of the mentoring structure in the VAUMC can be found [here](#).

Expectations for the mentors in their roles can be found [here](#).

Candidacy Mentoring in the United Methodist Church

Candidates who travel through the candidacy process of the United Methodist Church are required to have a mentor. The Clergy Mentoring Manual produced by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry includes the following:

- 1. Mentors shall be recommended by the cabinet, selected, trained, and held accountable by the Board of Ordained Ministry.
a. Candidacy mentors are clergy in full connection, associate members, or full time local pastors who have completed the Course of Study trained to provide counsel and guidance related to the candidacy process. Candidates will be assigned a candidacy mentor by the district Committee on Ordained Ministry in consultation with the district superintendent (§311.1b).*

Candidacy mentors will work with the candidate until that candidate begins serving in an appointive ministry as a local pastor or a commissioned minister.

The full Candidacy Mentoring Manual can be found here:

<https://doc.vaumc.org/MinServices/CANDIDACY%20MENTORING%20MANUAL.pdf>

Timeline for Mentors

Candidacy Mentors are assigned by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM) at the time a candidate is approved to be “admitted into the Candidacy Studies program of the United Methodist Church.” Mentors are **expected to meet monthly** with their candidates. The Board of Ordained Ministry recognizes this is not always possible. The goal here is to walk with the candidate in such a way as to assure them of your support and presence in this process.

In the VAUMC, the Center for Clergy Excellence in collaboration with District Mentor Coordinators is piloting a program to assign Lay Supply entering the field a mentor who could potentially journey with them from the time of their initial assignment to the time of being recommended for licensing as a local pastor or the time they transitioned into a cohort for certified lay ministers.

The process of mentoring a candidate - regardless of how they enter the candidacy process - usually takes one to two years.

Timeline for Candidates

Candidates may remain in this status for 12 years provided they meet with their dCOM annually to renew their certification. Candidates can be called to renew their status at any point throughout the interview year cycle. The application for Candidacy Renewal can be found here: www.vaumc.org/clergyexcellence-candidacyforms

Candidates remain with the mentors until they receive an appointment as a licensed local pastor, or until they enter into the provisional process and are assigned to a covenant group.

Requirements for Mentors Assigned to journey with Candidates during Phase II (Admitted Candidate to Certified Candidate) Only

Process Knowledge

Mentors should be fairly familiar with the steps for Phase II (Admitted Candidate to Certified Candidate) and Phase III certification (Certified Candidate toward being Recommended for Licensing)- in part because these two phases can be worked o simultaneously.

For a complete list of requirements for Phases I-III see the Master Checklist [here](#).

Report Form

In Phase II, when candidates are moving from Admitted Candidate status to Certified Candidate status, Mentors are required to fill out a report form, which is then sent to the dCOM as part of the candidates application for certification. The link to the report form by district can be found here: <https://vaumc.org/candidacymentorresources/>

Read *Answering the Call*

Candidates who are in the Inquiring process work through the *Christian as Minister*. However, candidates who are applying for certification should read *Answering the Call* and discuss it with their mentor. Clergy Excellence may have hard copies of *Answering the Call* available. Please contact LynHarding@vaumc.org to find out. Mentors can also download a copy here: https://doc.vaumc.org/MinServices/Answering_The_Call_2016.pdf

Read *Blessed Wrestling*

All Candidates must attend the Candidacy Summit as part of their discernment process. *Blessed Wrestling* was written as a resource for candidates using stories from ministers serving in a variety of capacities across the Virginia Conference. Candidates will be required to read *Blessed Wrestling* as part of their preparation for Candidacy Summit. We recommend that Mentors read *Blessed Wrestling* and discuss it with their Mentee prior to the Candidacy Summit.

Proctor Psych Assessment

While not required, it is *recommended* that the Mentor be the proctor for the psych assessment. Candidates request the psychological assessment directly through the Virginia Institute for Pastoral Care (VICARE) and follow a series of prompts until such time as they need a proctor.

Become Familiar with the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI)

In Spring of 2023, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry retired the EM360 assessment. Rather than providing a replacement, GBHEM encouraged conferences to find and utilize their own. The VAUMC determined to use the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI) which gathers data from nine raters selected by the candidate. Ultimately, the ESCI offers a chart which illustrates how a candidate rated themselves in comparison to how others rated them. If a candidate is rated below a 3 in any one area, that would be a point for reflection in helping the candidate prepare for their dCOM interview. Given the level of discrepancy between the candidates rating and the chosen raters, those might be places for conversation as well. Mentors do not receive a copy of the report, but candidates do. Please review the results with your candidate to deepen their self-understanding. Candidates are assessed in the following areas:

Emotional Self-Awareness: Recognizing one's emotions and their effects

Emotional Self-Control: Keeping disruptive emotions and impulses in check

Adaptability: Flexibility in handling change

Achievement Orientation: Striving to improve or meeting a standard of excellence

Positive Outlook: Persistence in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks

Empathy: Sensing others' feelings and perspectives, and taking an active interest in their concerns

Organizational Awareness: Reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships

Coach and Mentor: Sensing others' development needs and bolstering their abilities

Inspirational Leadership: Inspiring and guiding individuals and groups

Influence: Wielding effective tactics for persuasion

Conflict Management: Negotiating and resolving disagreements

Teamwork: Working with others toward shared goals. Creating group synergy in pursuing collective goals.

Requirements for Mentors Assigned to Lay Supply to journey with them from Phase I- Phase III

The details for those who have been assigned as Mentors to Lay Supply remain largely the same. Given that these Mentors are journeying with candidates from the outset, they will need to familiarize themselves with the requirements for Phase I as well. Often the candidate will read *Christian as Minister* with their pastor as part of Phase I. However, the Mentor may read *Christian as Minister* with the candidate and discuss any reflections.