

### CHAPTER 6

# Orientation to Ministry

For more information contact GBHEM's director of Candidacy, Mentoring, and Conference Relations, [candidacy@gbhem.org](mailto:candidacy@gbhem.org) or 615-340-7374.

*An orientation to ministry is required for all candidates for licensed and ordained ministry. Attendance at the orientation and becoming a certified candidate may be sequential or concurrent. This common ministry preparation experience is for the purpose of building collegiality and understanding among the varieties of set-apart ministry (deacons, elders, local pastors).*

- 1. The orientation shall be held in each annual conference and is the responsibility of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry.*
- 2. Collegiality in ministry and commonalities and distinctions among the categories of ministry (deacon, elder, local pastor) will be emphasized to facilitate understanding and appreciation of the gifts contributed through team ministry, and the practice of set-apart ministry within the United Methodist connection will be articulated.*
- 3. Guidelines will be made available from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.*

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## Introduction

One of the new requirements for candidates established by the 2012 General Conference is the responsibility for BOMs to provide an Orientation to Ministry to all candidates for licensed or ordained ministry. This event, attendance at which is required for all candidates, is to be held early in the candidacy process. It will offer a place where those discerning a call can receive a clear explanation of the orders of ministry, both elder and deacon, as well as the licensed ministry of the local pastor.

Those attending will have the opportunity to meet other clergy, ask questions, and begin to understand the diversity of ministry, along with building relationships with others seeking to enter ministry. Commonalities and differences among the work and responsibilities of those serving in the different varieties of ministry should also be emphasized. The Study of Ministry Commission was intentional in writing this legislation to provide basic guidelines for the orientation, but was also clear that annual conferences should implement the program in the way that best fits the context and needs of that area. BOMs and annual conferences are encouraged to think creatively about ways to engage candidates as they learn about the uniqueness of ministry in a particular annual conference.

## Goals

- To build collegiality among the various forms of ministry.
- To help candidates understand and appreciate each other's roles.
- To learn more about the ministry to which one is called.
- To build relationships with colleagues in ministry.
- To be able to clearly verbalize the roles of set-apart ministries in the UMC.
- To be able to verbalize how one's call fits into one of the roles.

## Timing

Orientation to Ministry may be completed either before or after certification, depending on the decision of the BOM. However, in addition to completing certification and other educational requirements, all candidates must complete Orientation to Ministry before receiving their first appointments as local pastors or provisional members (§ 315).

There are varieties of places and times the orientation may be offered. Suggestions include:

- During candidacy at a candidacy retreat or as a part of Group Candidacy Mentoring.
- At the beginning of Licensing School, or built into the Licensing School curriculum if all candidates in the annual conference are required to attend Licensing School.
- At a separate retreat for all active candidates.
- During a series of meetings across a few months and in different districts.
- During a series of meetings over four to six weeks, some in person, some web-based.

BOMs are encouraged to be creative in responding to the needs of candidates, to the structure of candidacy in their annual conference, and to make the orientation both easily available, and lively in format.

## Conclusion

As annual conferences develop and implement an Orientation to Ministry, GBHEM invites you to share what you are doing to meet this need. We look forward to learning from the creative ways that annual conferences will share with new candidates about the varieties of set-apart ministry available in the UMC; the responsibilities carried by deacons, elders, and local pastors; and the many ways each type of ministry contributes to the Church's mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Please send any information you may wish to share to [candidacy@gbhem.org](mailto:candidacy@gbhem.org). As we gather input about how different annual conferences are implementing an orientation we will be able to share that information with colleagues across the connection.

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## Resources

Beginning Candidacy – [www.gbhem.org/candidacy](http://www.gbhem.org/candidacy).

*Beyond the Burning Bush: Hearing and Answering God's Call* (ISBN# 9780938162810).

BOM Training Resources Web page – [www.gbhem.org/bomtraining](http://www.gbhem.org/bomtraining).

*The Christian as Minister: An Exploration in the Meaning of God's Call* (ISBN# 9780938162834).

[Chuck Knows Church](#) – A fun and informative weekly series about stuff in church.

*A Deacon's Heart: The New United Methodist Diaconate* by Margaret Ann Crain & Jack L. Seymour (ISBN# 9780687090327).

*Fulfilling God's Call: Guidelines for Candidacy*—particularly Section 2. The annual conference Candidacy Registrar may order the guidebook from GBHEM at [candidacy@gbhem.org](mailto:candidacy@gbhem.org).

#### [Glossary of Candidacy Terms](#)

The Ministry of [Deacons](#) (Item# X536622), [Elders](#) (Item# X536647), [Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors](#) (Item# X536658), and [Local Pastors](#) (Item# X536610) brochures.

*Ordained Ministry in The United Methodist Church* by William B. Lawrence (ISBN# 9780938162698).

[Ordained Ministry in The United Methodist Church DVD](#) (Item# X534642).

[Ordained Ministry in The United Methodist Church](#) – web clips.

Process for Candidacy, Licensing, Provisional Membership, and Ordination 2012—PowerPoint located at [www.gbhem.org/bomtraining](http://www.gbhem.org/bomtraining).

*Understanding God's Call: A Ministry Inquiry Process* ([English](#), ISBN# 9780938162827 or [Spanish](#), ISBN# 9780938162704)—particularly Session 9.

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