

## **Welcome to the Candidacy Process!**

On behalf of the Board of Ordained Ministry, I am pleased that you are discerning how to live out God's call in your life. In my experience, God's call may be anything from a gentle nudging to a bold "Go!" Each must hear and respond to God's call in his or her own way.

There are many ways of serving God – as lay persons in local churches and communities, there are many opportunities to minister in the name of Jesus Christ. There are Lay Speakers, Certified Lay Servants, and Certified Lay Ministers. There are those who specialize in specific areas and are certified in Music Ministry, Youth Ministry and others.

In pastoral ministry, there are Local Pastors, Associate Members, Elders and Deacons. There are Armed Forces Chaplains and those who are chaplains of hospitals, nursing homes or prisons.

There are many options and the challenge is to discern the ministry to which God is calling and equipping each one of us! It can be a confusing process at times and it can seem like a long process...be patient with yourself, and with God! A person was asked "How do you eat an elephant?" The reply came "One bite at a time". Follow the process and discover the adventure God has in store for you.

In this packet are some documents that will help you to understand the "next steps" in the process. You will be assigned to a Candidacy Mentor to help guide you through this process. If you have questions, you can turn to your District Superintendent or your District Committee on Ordained Ministry. I'd love to say "ask your pastor" but your pastor may not be up to date on the process. Requirements have changed over the years, so be sure to check with someone who is current.

You may find helpful information at [www.GBHEM.org](http://www.GBHEM.org) by clicking on the Ministry tab and looking through the candidacy resources. A word of caution, however, the individual conferences may design a candidacy process that varies a bit from what you will find on this website. Use the information you have received from the District Office as authoritative when you see a difference in process.

From the conference website, [www.susumc.org](http://www.susumc.org), you can access the Board of Ordained Ministry website which will also have helpful information.

Some folks are certain of the call to ministry and "rush" the process – sometimes enrolling in Seminary prior to entering the candidacy process. A word of caution – acceptance in Seminary is not a guarantee of acceptance as a candidate for ministry in the United Methodist Church. Generally speaking, it takes at least 6 months to a year to complete the candidacy process and be certified. Some people will spend several years discerning – not only God's call but also God's timing.

Please know that the Board upholds you in prayer as you enter into this process. And if I may be of help to you, I would be happy to be of service.

***Rev. Chuck Sprenkle, Chair, Susquehanna Conference Board of Ordained Ministry***

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