

**Possible Questions for Fitness Interviews: Basic Understandings and Commitments**

Candidates for assignment by the District Superintendent, certification as a lay minister, certification, continuation of certification and license as a local pastor will be asked questions related to fitness for ministry. “Fitness” has to do with basic intelligence, emotional and physical health, spirituality, personality.

**1. Personal characteristics and abilities**

- What gifts and abilities do you bring to ministry in the UMC?
- What personality traits will hinder your ministry?
- What adjectives do you use to describe yourself?
- What will be most difficult or challenging for you in licensed or ordained ministry?
- Describe a project or event in which you demonstrated creativity.

**2. Call to Ministry**

- How have you come to understand yourself as one called to licensed or ordained ministry?
- Why does the church set apart some for ordained ministry when all Christians are called to be ministers?
- Share your understanding of the process you need to follow in order to make progress toward licensing or ordination.
- What is the difference between licensing and ordination?

**3. Theology**

- How have you experienced God? How has God been working in you/in your life?
- How did you picture or understand God as a child? How has your understanding of God changed as you have matured?

- How would you talk about God with a non-Christian?
- What hymn most closely matches your understanding of God?
- How would you summarize the teaching of Jesus?
- Share a favorite story from the life of Jesus? What does that story tell us about Jesus?
- Why was Jesus crucified?
- What meaning does the resurrection have for your life?
- Where do you see evidence of the Holy Spirit in the congregation in which you are a member?
- Name the persons of the Trinity. What work do you understand each to do?
- What, according to Paul, are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?
- How do you understand the Bible came to be?
- What is a favorite passage of the Bible? Why?
- Think about the story of creation found in Genesis 1:1-2:4a. What does that story tell us about God?
- The church is sometimes known as the ‘body of Christ.’ What does that mean to you?
- What has been your experience in a congregation of the UMC?
- What, in your experience, are the joys and challenges of the local church?
- Why do we talk of ‘the holy catholic church’ in the Apostles’ Creed?
- What are the sacraments of the United Methodist Church?
- What types of ethical challenges do you see confronting persons in the licensed or ordained ministry?
- Many persons believe that Christian ministers are called to a higher ethical standard. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- Joe and Amanda Smith had been married for two years, when Amanda was diagnosed with a serious medical condition. Although Amanda’s condition is potentially fatal, it can be controlled with a new drug. Unfortunately, this drug is very expensive and is not fully covered on the Smith’s health plan. Joe and Amanda become very financially conservative,

saving as much as they can for her pharmaceutical bills. However, after six months, Amanda needs another refill and they do not have money to pay for the drug. When they explain their situation to the pharmacist, he refuses to cut the price or allow them to make payments over time. Just as their conversation ends, the pharmacist is paged to another part of the store and he inadvertently leaves the drug on the counter in front of the Smiths. Is it ethical for them to steal the drug? Please explain how you ethically reasoned to a solution for this ethical question.

- Describe your personal ethic as a disciple of Christ.

#### **4. Relationships**

- Describe your family. How has your experience of family contributed to your understanding of God?
- How has your family supported your decision to be a candidate for ordained ministry? What questions have family members raised about your decision?
- Tell us about a time when your work was supervised by another. What was helpful in that supervision? What was hurtful?
- Describe a time when you had authority over another? What principles guided your work?

#### **5. Commitment to the United Methodist Church**

- What has been your experience in the United Methodist Church?
- What are apportionments?
- What does the church mean by the word 'itinerancy?'
- Contrast the United Methodist practice of appointing a pastor to a congregation with the practice of a congregation calling a pastor.
- When we say that God intends that the church be inclusive, what issues are we addressing?

#### **6. Discipline of Self**

- How do you renew your spirit (refuel, refill your bucket)?

- What health challenges do you face? How do you manage them?
- What recent experiences have caused you stress? How did you manage that stress?
- Describe a recent experience of conflict? In what ways did you contribute to the conflict? How did you contribute to its resolution?
- How do you ordinarily respond to conflict?
- Describe your life of prayer.
- What disciplines/practices bring you into God's presence?

## **7. Academic Work**

- Do you like school?
- What diplomas, degrees have you earned?
- What areas of study have you found to be most engaging?
- If you have had college work, what was your major or your emphasis?
- What academic word will you need to complete in order to be licensed or ordained?
- Do you enjoy reading? ....conversation about current events? ...Bible study? ....puzzles of any sort?
- Describe your learning style.
- What languages do you speak? Is English your first language? What is your level of proficiency in the languages you speak?