

**Possible Questions for Effectiveness Interviews
Basic Understandings and Commitments**

**The Board of Ordained Ministry
The Great Plains Conference**

Candidates for a fourth (or additional) year of assignment by a district superintendent or as a certified lay ministry, a fourth (or additional) year as a licensed local pastor, approval for appointment as a member of another denomination, continuation of provisional membership, associate membership and full membership will be asked questions related to effectiveness in ministry. “Effectiveness” has to do with the ability to produce results in the practice of ministry.

1. Personal characteristics and abilities

- What natural abilities contribute to your effectiveness in ministry?
- How do you compensate for the lack of certain abilities?
- Paul talks about coming to a ‘sober estimate’ of ourselves. (Romans 12:3) What is your ‘sober estimate’ of your gifts and growing edges?
- Have you been surprised, in any way, by the demands of ministry? ...by your effectiveness in ministry?

2. Call to ministry

- How has your understanding of your call to ministry changed as you have begun the practice of ministry?
- Describe where you are in the process of being a candidate for full membership and ordination (or continued license or associate membership) in the UMC. What steps do you have yet to take to reach your goals?
- In what ways have you experienced the covenant community of Kansas East Conference? What efforts do you make to support the fellowship of local pastors or the order of deacon or elder?

3. Theology

- How does your understanding of God help you address the question of suffering?
- Select a favorite passage of scripture. In a sermon, what affirmations would you make about God based on that text?
- What understandings of God have been most helpful to you in the practice of ministry?
- Contrast at least two theories of atonement. Which makes most sense to you? How would you talk about these ideas in a sermon without using the word ‘atonement?’
- How would you summarize the teachings of Jesus?
- What affirmations do you make about Jesus when preaching a funeral sermon?
- How did you describe the Good News of Jesus Christ in your last Easter sermon?
- Where do you see the Holy Spirit at work in your life and ministry?

- What gifts has the Holy Spirit given you?
- Describe your work as a teacher of the scriptures. What studies have you led? What principles do you adhere to in leading a study of the scriptures?
- What has been the most challenging question posed by a parishioner with respect to the Bible? How did you respond?
- What ecumenical and/or interfaith conversations have you had as a minister of the United Methodist Church?
- By now you know that the church is far from perfect. How has that reality changed your understanding of the church?
- Describe your ethic for ministry? What virtues are most important for you? In addition to the Bible, what “sources of authority” do you use to guide your ministry? How does your ethic for ministry reflect your understanding of who God is?
- One of the most egregious forms of unethical behavior by ministers is inappropriate sexual relationships with parishioners or colleagues. Studies by the Faith Trust Institute indicate that frequently ministers who are caught in unethical relationships did not consciously decide to enter into that relationship. Instead, the relationship evolved through a series of small decisions that weren’t thought through very carefully. As a minister, how can you remain vigilant about upholding your ethical standards regarding appropriate relationships?
- A parishioner asks to speak with you confidentially. What would be important ethical reasons for breaking confidentiality and sharing the conversation with others? Who would be appropriate persons to share confidential information with?
- A new visitor comes to your church one Sunday. His name is “John” and he explains that he has recently moved into your area. John begins attending your Sunday services on a regular basis. He mentions that he had previously “had trouble with the law and done time,” but that he has asked God for forgiveness. He believes that God has forgiven him and he now seeks to live a faithful life of Christian discipleship. You affirm that our God is a loving and forgiving God and you encourage John to continue attending church, which he does. Then, one Sunday afternoon you are confronted by your Sunday-school Superintendent, the Counselors from your Youth Group and Youth Choir, as well as a number of church parents. They have discovered that John is a registered sex offender. They want you ask John to stop attending your church because he is not trusted. They are also afraid that having a registered sex offender will drive many of your church’s members away. How would you as the pastor respond to this ethical challenge? Walk us through your ethical process.

4. Relationships

- How has your spouse (child) experienced your appointment to ministry in the United Methodist Church?
- What ways have you found to keep family relationships strong?
- What support systems have you put in place for yourself?

- Who acts as a mentor for you?
- Things are always clearer in theory than in reality. Talk about the importance of observing appropriate boundaries. Where have you found boundary keeping difficult or confusing?
- Describe a person you have found difficult. How have you responded to that person?
- Who are the people who have some authority in your ministry? How have you experienced their direction or input?

5. Commitment to the United Methodist Church

- What percentage of their apportionments has the congregation you serve paid in the last year? How did you support the commitment to pay apportionments?
- What has your experience been of itineracy? Do you have any tethers limiting the congregations to which you might be appointed?
- Which of the resources provided by the general church have you found to be helpful? What are you using your ministry setting?
- What is the 'covenant connection'? How have you experienced that reality?

6. Discipline of self

- How do you balance the needs of the church with your own needs for rest and renewal?
- How have you modeled the importance of the spiritual disciplines in your ministry setting?
- How do you model self-care in your ministry setting?
- What conflicts have you experienced in your ministry setting? In what ways did you participate in the conflict and in what ways did you contribute to resolution of the conflict?

7. Academic work

- Have you completed your academic work?
- What continuing education did you pursue this year?
- What continuing education are you planning for next year?
- What are you reading right now?
- Where have you found connections between the content of your studies and the practice of ministry?
- What areas of study do/did you find most challenging? Most helpful?

**Possible Questions for Effectiveness Interviews
Practice of Ministry for Deacons**

**The Board of Ordained Ministry
The Kansas East Conference**

1a. Service

- What does being ordained to service mean to you?

- How does your work exemplify servant ministry?
- Describe your ministry in the gathered community. What parts of your ministry in the church give you the most joy? What parts do you find most difficult?
- How and where do you serve God in the world? What parts of that ministry give you the most joy? What parts do you find most difficult?
- In what ways are you in ministry to/with the poor? How do you encourage laity to be in ministry with the poor? What ideas do you have about how we might change the pattern of generational poverty?

1b. Word

- What does it mean to be ordained to Word?
- How do you live out in your ministry of the Word?
- What does the phrase, “Preach often, use words when necessary.” mean to you?
- What opportunities do you have to proclaim the word?
- Describe a setting in which you have been a teacher. How did you choose or develop curriculum? What values guide your decisions?
- If you do children’s sermons, what do you try to do in a children’s sermon?
- If you preach, how do you prepare? What resources do you use? How do you choose a text? How would you describe your ‘preaching style?’
- How do you prepare to lead worship? If you plan worship, what values guide your choice of prayers and hymns? What have you learned about being effective in leading worship?
- If you have pastoral care responsibilities, what do you try to communicate in visiting the sick?the dying?the bereaved?
- The Book of Discipline says you may assist an elder in the administration of the sacraments. In what ways have you fulfilled this responsibility? What is your understanding of Baptism? of Communion?
- Why do United Methodists baptize infants?
- What is the distinction between baptism and confirmation? If you have responsibility for preparing individuals for baptism and confirmation, describe your efforts in that responsibility.
- Does not being free to administer the sacraments limit your ministry? If so, how?

1c. Relating the gathered community to the world

- How do you represent the church in the world? How do you help laity to understanding their ministries in the world?
- What does the phrase, “One foot in the church and one foot outside the church.” mean to you?
- In what ways do you model bridging the church and the world?
- Where are you directly involved in the church? In the world? What percentage of time is spent in each setting? Are you comfortable with the balance between and the claims of both the church and the world?

1d. Leadership

- What is your leadership style? Is it working in the setting to which you are appointed?
- How do you keep from being the 'lone ranger'?
- Describe a team with which you have worked? In what ways have you contributed to the strength of that team? If it was a team which you brought together, what guided your efforts in building the team?
- Describe your relationship with laity. How do you encourage and support them in their ministry?
- How do you introduce a program or an idea to a committee or to colleagues?
- How have you helped the people in your ministry setting plan for their work?
- Describe a time when you have found yourself in conflict with another. How did you contribute to the problem? to the solution? How do you manage when you can not resolve a conflict?
- What is your administrative style? Are you able to delegate responsibility to others? Are you able to tend to details?
- In what ecumenical ministries are you involved?is your congregation involved?

1e. Understanding of ministry of an Elder

- What is the ministry of an elder?
- How does the ministry of an elder differ from the ministry of a deacon?
- How do you see elders and deacons working together?

**Possible Questions for Effectiveness Interviews
Practice of Ministry for Elders
(Associate members, experienced Local Pastors,
Certified Lay Ministers, those assigned by
a District Superintendent, and members of other
denominations)**

**The Board of Ordained Ministry
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2a. Service

- Describe your walk with a family from the point that they learn a loved one is dying through the funeral and following. How do you work with a family to prepare for the funeral? What do you try to say in the funeral sermon?
- How have you invited laity to join you in the work of caring for the sick, the homebound, the grieving?
- What do you try to say in a prayer at the bed side of a parishioner who is hospitalized?
- Do you understand yourself to be a counselor? How have you prepared for such work?

- Have you participated in a mission trip?or volunteered in a service organization?
Describe such an experience.
- In what ways are you in ministry to/with the poor? How do you encourage, enable laity to be in ministry with the poor?
- What ideas do you have about how we might change the pattern of generational poverty?

2b. Word

- How do you prepare to preach? How do you choose a text? What resources do you use?
How do you know that folk are 'with' you?
- How do you prepare to lead worship? What values guide your choice of prayers and hymns?
What have you learned about being effective in leading worship?
- Describe a setting in which you have been a teacher. How did you choose or develop curriculum? What values guide your decisions?
- What do you try to do in a children's sermon?
- Confirmation studies are a responsibility of the pastor. How have you planned for and involved others in planning for confirmation?
- What would you want to say to a family and the congregation in the funeral for a child who died of cancer?
- What plans have you developed in your congregation to enter into relationship with those who are guests in worship?
- What is evangelism? How have you helped your congregation plan for the ministry of evangelism?

2c. Sacrament

- Describe how you observe the sacrament of baptism?
- How do you prepare the parents of an infant for the baptism of their child?
- How do you prepare a youth for baptism and confirmation?
- How do you distinguish between baptism and confirmation?
- How do you understand the difference between being a baptized member and being a professing member of the United Methodist Church?
- Describe how your congregation celebrates holy communion?
- What do you understand to happen in communion? What is its meaning in the congregation?
- How do you communicate that the United Methodist Church has an 'open table'?

2d. Order

- What is your leadership style? Is it working in the setting to which you are appointed?
- How do you introduce a program or an idea to a committee?
- How have you helped the people in your ministry setting plan for their work?
- What stewardship education has happened in the congregation you serve?.
- What are the essential elements in a commitment campaign or a capital campaign?

- Distinguish between stewardship and fund raising.
- What percentage of the apportionments did your congregation pay in the last conference year? How do you talk about apportionments in the Committee on Finance and in services of worship?
- Describe a time when you have found yourself in conflict with a parishioner. How did you contribute to the problem? to the solution? How do you manage when you can not resolve a conflict?
- What is your administrative style? Are you able to delegate responsibility to others? Are you able to tend to details?
- In what ecumenical ministries are you involved?is your congregation involved?
- What do you understand to be the purpose of the statistical tables? How do you go about completing that task?

2e. Understanding of ministry of a deacon

- What is the ministry of a deacon?
- How does the ministry of a deacon differ from the ministry of an elder?
- How do you see deacons and elders working together?