

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

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

Candidates for continued assignment by the district superintendent, continued certification as a lay minister, the second and third year as a licensed local pastor and provisional membership will be asked questions related to readiness for ministry. “Readiness” has to do with the knowledge and preparation needed for ministry.

**1. Personal characteristics and abilities**

- What gifts and abilities do you bring to ministry in the UMC?
- What have you learned about yourself (through your studies and in your ministry setting) that will be important in your ministry in the UMC?
- Have you discovered new gifts and/or developed new skills in your experiences as a candidate?
- How have your gifts and abilities developed in the last year?
- In what ways does your personality, interests, abilities match the profile of an effective pastor?
- In what ways will you have to compensate for the lack of certain abilities in order to be effective?
- What are your growing edges?
- What habits or vulnerabilities make your ministry more difficult or your efforts less effective?

**2. Call to ministry**

- In what ways has your experience in study and in ministry confirmed or questioned your sense of being called to licensed or ordained 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?
- Distinguish between the ministry of all Christians and the set-apart ministry of an Elder or a Deacon. What are the distinctive marks of the Order of Deacon and the Order of Elder?
- What will it mean to you to be a member of the Kansas East Conference?

**3. Theology**

- How has your experience of God changed/ deepened during your preparation for ministry?
- What activities would you include in a confirmation class to help young people think about God and their experiences of God?
- How will you respond to the question, “Why did God let my child die?”
- If you could keep only four stories about Jesus, which would you choose? Why?
- Which of the four gospels do you turn to for private devotions? Why?
- In what ways have you grown in your understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ?

- What would you include in a sermon for Pentecost? Trinity Sunday?
- How has your reading (understanding) of the scriptures changed because of your studies?
- How will you respond to a parishioner who insists on the literal accuracy of the Bible?
- How has your understanding of the church changed through your studies?
- If you were to establish a new congregation, how would you describe its mission or purpose?
- What types of ethical challenges have you experienced during your time in ministry?
- What do you think are the 3 most important virtues for ministry? Why did you choose these 3 virtues? What are you doing in your ministry to nourish and cultivate these 3 virtues? (Note: Examples of virtues would include love, compassion, patience, courage, etc.)
- When confronted with an ethical challenge in ministry, what “sources of authority” do you rely upon to help you decide how to respond? For example, scripture is an obvious “source of authority” for all of us in ministry. But, besides scripture, what other “sources of authority” would you use?
- One of your favorite families is the Applewhites. You really resonate with them and always enjoy being with them. One day Johnny Applewhite drops by your home. He reminds you that the Applewhite family has a one-week time-share in Orlando on the second week of every January. Johnny invites you to join his family for their week in Orlando this year. He tells you that everyone in his family is really excited about you joining them in Orlando, and that they will pay for all of your expenses, including travel, food, and admission to different parks and activities. As Johnny said, “All you have to do is pack your toothbrush and pajamas. We’ll pay for everything else.” You’ve really wanted to go to Orlando for several years now, and you can’t believe your good fortune. Is it ethical to take this free vacation? Why or why not?

#### **4. Relationships**

- Is your family ready for you to begin ministry in the United Methodist Church?
- What relationships have been most important as you have prepared for ministry?
- How will you find the support you need from colleagues?
- What boundaries are important in working with parishioners and others whom you will serve?
- How do you understand the authority of the Bishop and the District Superintendent in your ministry?

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

- Why does the UMC expect local congregations to support financially the connectional ministries of the church?
- Has your understanding of itineracy changed or deepened because of your studies? Are you ready to make yourself available to the itinerate ministry?

**6. Discipline of self**

- How do you stay in love with God?
- How and when do you keep a sabbath?
- Have you begun to observe any new spiritual disciplines in the period of your candidacy?
- What health challenges do you face? How do you manage them?
- What have you learned about responding to conflict in the local church?
- What have you learned about yourself and your part in conflicted situations?

**7. Academic work**

- Which of the classes you have had in preparation for ministry have been most engaging for you? ...most helpful for you?
- Have you made adequate progress in your studies? What work do you have remaining?
- 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? Why?