

## **Instructions for Provisional Member Written Responses to the Book of Discipline**

### **Due September 10, 2026 by 5:00 pm**

**Your written examination responses must be submitted through the form indicated on the Provisional Member Checklist by the due date.** Please use the template provided on the [Provisional Member webpage](#) and pay close attention to the following formatting requirements:

- The document should be in PDF format.
- Your responses should be in 12 point type and Times New Roman font.
- Margins should be one inch.
- Each page must be numbered at the bottom right, and the text must be double spaced.
- Type your name on the top right-hand corner of each page.
- Type the text of each question at the top of the page.
- Begin each question on a new page.
- Limit your response to no more than 3 pages per question.

We acknowledge the growing use of AI tools such as ChatGPT. These tools may be helpful for research; however, they should not be used to generate your responses. Your work should reflect your own knowledge, understanding, experience, and faith. As with all research sources, any information obtained through AI tools must be properly documented and cited. The Board of Ordained Ministry follows the plagiarism policy established by GBHEM and expects all candidates to do the same.

***Failure to follow these formatting requirements may impact the review of your submission.***

A template for the written responses and the grading rubric are available for download on the [Provisional Member webpage](#). All citations refer to the 2020/2024 Book of Discipline.

### **I. Call and Ordination (§324.7 (k), (o))**

(k.) Explain your understanding of the distinctive vocations of the Order of Elders and the Order of Deacons. How do you perceive yourself, your gifts, your motives, your role, and your commitment as a provisional deacon or provisional elder in the United Methodist Church?

(o.) You have agreed as a candidate for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness of the gospel, and in consideration of their influence as ministers, to make a complete dedication of yourself to the highest ideals of the Christian life, and to this end agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, social responsibility, faithful sexual intimacy expressed through fidelity, monogamy, commitment, mutual affection and respect, careful and honest communication, and growth in grace and knowledge and love of God. What is your understanding of this agreement?

**PLUS this additional question (answer only a or b):**

- Q1a For candidates on the Elder Track only: As a commissioned minister seeking ordination as an Elder, will you go where you are sent? Are you willing to serve that charge to the best of your ability? How will you accommodate family needs if necessary?
- Q1b For Candidates on the Deacon Track only: In your specific ministry, how are you connecting, or how do you expect to connect, the world and the church and the church and the world?

**II. Leadership (¶324.7 (g) (h) (l))**

(g) How do you intend to affirm, teach, and apply Part III of the Discipline (Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task) in your work in the ministry to which you have been called?

(h) The United Methodist Church holds that the living core of the Christian faith was revealed in Scripture, illumined by tradition, vivified in personal experience, and confirmed by reason. What is your understanding of this theological position of the church?

(l) Describe your understanding of diakonia, the servant ministry of the church, and the servant ministry of the provisional member.

**PLUS these 4 additional questions:**

- Q2. Clergy must establish and honor boundaries in their interactions with people in their congregation. Discuss your understanding of these boundaries and why they are important. How will you establish boundaries while still fulfilling your calling in ministry?
- Q3. Give an example of a conflict you've had to address. Describe how you handled it; what the outcome was; and what you learned from it (e.g. what did you do right, what would you do differently, etc.).
- Q4. Describe an occasion when you helped someone with a spiritual issue, helped them grow in faith, or shared with them the gospel of Jesus Christ in a way that was life-changing for them.
- Q5. What role do The Social Principles have in the UMC and in your understanding and behavior as a candidate for ordained ministry in the UMC? What will you do if your own position on an issue differs from what is found in the Social Principles?

**III. Polity of the Church (¶324.9 (i) (j) (m) (n))**

(i) Describe the nature and mission of the Church. What are its primary tasks today?

(j) Discuss your understanding of the primary characteristics of United Methodist Polity.

(m) What is the meaning of ordination in the context of the general ministry of the church?

(n) Describe your understanding of an inclusive church and ministry.

**PLUS these two additional questions**

- Q6. How are Deacons and Elders deployed by the United Methodist Church?
- Q7. The Baltimore-Washington Conference has policies related to pastoral transitions, i.e., moving from one appointment to another. Where do you find these policies? Summarize in your own words the key points. What are the potential repercussions for the congregation, the new pastor and the previous pastor?

if these policies are violated?

**IV. THEOLOGY OF GRACE (§324.9 (b) (c) (f) (p))**

(b) What is your understanding of evil as it exists in the world?

(c) What is your understanding of humanity, and the human need for divine grace?

(f) What is your understanding of the kingdom of God; the Resurrection; eternal life?

(p) Explain the role and significance of the sacraments in the ministry to which you have been called.

**V. THEOLOGY OF GOD (§324.9 (a) (d) (e))**

(a) Describe your personal experience of God and the understanding of God you derive from biblical, theological, and historical sources.

(d) How do you interpret the statement Jesus Christ is Lord?

(e) What is your conception of the activity of the Holy Spirit in personal faith, in the community of believers, and in responsible living in the world?