

Selection Criteria for Ordained Ministry in the Methodist Church 2012

These criteria below were agreed by the Methodist Conference of 2003 and the text, originally in six sections, is now placed in seven to reflect the headings of the publication *Is God Calling You?*

All candidates should be able to speak of a sense of call to discipleship and to lead the people of God to share in that calling in worship and mission: and of a personal focus of that calling in diaconal ministry and membership of a religious order, or presbyteral ministry, within the discipline of the Methodist connexion.

1. Rooted in faith

The starting point is the calling of all God's people to share in the continuing ministry of the Body of Christ, expressed in worship, mission and service before God and in the world. All God's people are called to servant ministry: service to God in service to the Church and the world. The ministries of presbyters and deacons are representative: each distinctively focussing, expressing and enabling the servant ministry of the whole people of God.

So when we think of candidating we are looking for people who are sufficiently mature in faith and self-awareness to demonstrate:

- Commitment to a disciplined spiritual life of individual and corporate prayer and worship.
- A disciplined spiritual life involving individual and corporate prayer and worship.
- A spiritual life which should be such as to sustain and encourage them in their daily lives; and everyday experiences should influence their spiritual life and practice.
- Regular engagement with the means of grace (sacraments, prayer and meditation on life in the context of God's word) and show the evidence of the effects of that engagement upon them.
- Stability and well-being which are able to sustain the demands upon them of being a representative person in ministry.

2. Called by God

Candidates should be able to speak of the extent to which others have confirmed their call to ordained ministry. The sense of call should be obedient, realistic and informed.

Those whom the Church affirms are called to ordained ministry:

- Should show awareness that to be in ordained ministry is to be in a representative role.
- Are called to represent God-in-Christ and the community of the Church in the world, and the world and the community of the Church in Christ before God.
- Should be aware that they are also, by ordination, called out to be representative to the Church.
- Will embrace a public function in a plural, culturally diverse society.
- Represent to the Church the demands of the gospel embodying the quest for holiness, the call to the unity of humankind and the universal nature of that Gospel - by which every Christian is commissioned, through baptism, to ministry and service.

Candidates for diaconal ministry should in particular show:

- Understanding of the servant nature of Christ's ministry.
- Evidence of the capacity to become a representative of Christ and the Church particularly through.
 - A ministry of service: in pastoral care, in reconciliation and healing, in acts of mercy and of justice and being or acting as a prophetic sign.
 - A ministry of word: in evangelism, apologetics, theological and prophetic interpretation, teaching, the articulation of faith and human experience and in leading worship, which may include preaching (for those duly accredited).
 - Willingness to accept a commitment to membership of a religious order involving the following of a rule of life and exercising mutual accountability and responsibility

Candidates for presbyteral ministry should show:

- Understanding of the prophetic, reconciling and healing nature of Christ's ministry.
- Evidence of the capacity to become a representative of Christ and the Church, particularly through
 - The ministry of word (preaching, evangelism, apologetics, theological and prophetic teaching and the articulation of faith and human experience).
 - The ministry of sacrament (in acts of celebration and devotion, especially in baptism and eucharist) and
 - The ministry of pastoral responsibility (oversight, direction, discipline, order and pastoral care).

3. Relating to others

All candidates should be sufficiently mature in faith and self-awareness to demonstrate that their relationships with self, others and God are characterised by integrity and authenticity.

These will be people who:

- Demonstrate a valuing of self and others that is grounded in God's loving acceptance.
- Have the capacity to develop open and healthy personal, professional and pastoral relationships as presbyters and deacons. This capacity for developing relationships will show both in public behaviour and in private relationships.
- Respect the understanding of the Church on matters of morality.
- Are able to relate naturally and easily alongside a wide variety of people, from different socio-cultural backgrounds and different mental, emotional, spiritual characteristics.
- Provide evidence of the capacity to relate to the same people in a number of different roles (e.g. as friend, counsellor, mentor, leader) without confusion.
- Show the ability to respect others, being aware of levels of closeness and distance in their relationships, being the stranger or visitor in the community of faith, being at home in the wider world.

Candidates for presbyteral ministry should be able to offer appropriate direction, guidance and counsel to people and communities, each according to their particular need.

Candidates for diaconal ministry should demonstrate an ability to identify with those who are marginalized and disadvantaged both within and outside the Church. They should show evidence that they have the capacity to sustain spiritual, pastoral and practical disciplines in relationship with peers in a way which will enable them to be members of the Methodist Diaconal Order as a religious order.

4. Engaged in God's world

Candidates should be able to articulate a vision of the Church in mission and worship; be prepared to act in personal and prophetic ways of witness which may involve risk and vulnerability, enabling the Church to respond to the needs of the world.

We are looking for people who are able to:

- Work with other churches and Christian traditions, and have a capacity to relate to those of other faiths or none.
- To show an understanding of the world of work and to be able to make connections.
- Acknowledge that Methodism is part of a pluriform and multicultural society and be prepared to work beyond and across boundaries.
- Demonstrate in their behaviour and attitudes their commitment to opposing discrimination and injustice which are encountered as barriers in issues such as those of race, religion, gender, poverty, disability, and sexual orientation.
- Ready to challenge the world with the gift of the gospel and be committed to support the Church in its calling to make followers of Jesus.

Candidates for diaconal ministry should demonstrate commitment to pastoral work at the inter-face of church and society, communicating love and faith through action and word. Their lives should indicate a bias towards working for justice both in individual and corporate dimensions. They should show a consistent orientation to work creatively at and beyond the boundaries of the Church and an ability to deal with situations of ambiguity, uncertainty and conflict both within and outside the Church. They should demonstrate the capacity both to acquire the skills that are necessary for developing communities and also to initiate pioneering mission projects. They should be aware of the sacramental nature of life and be alert to possibilities for worship, especially in situations outside the Church.

Candidates for presbyteral ministry should show the ability to make connections between the community of faith and the community at large. They should show the capacity to act sacramentally in ministry, looking for opportunities for rituals, sacraments and rites of passage in the lives of individuals and the local community.

5. Show leadership potential

Candidates should show the capacity to be a representative leader of the church in worship, mission and service. This includes the capacity to:

- Exercise leadership in the Church community and to some extent in the wider community.
- Offer an example of faith and discipleship and to collaborate effectively with others as well as to guide the life of the Church community as it shares in God's mission to the world.
- Demonstrate a willingness and ability to work cooperatively as a member of a team, inspiring, enabling and empowering others.
- Work under direction and with supervision; to work with peers; to direct and supervise others, and to develop the necessary management and administrative skills.
- Accept responsibility and exercise appropriate authority
- Face in a flexible and balanced way the change, conflict, pressures, ambiguity and, sometimes, loneliness which are entailed in being set apart in ordination.

Candidates for presbyteral ministry should show an understanding of 'pastoral responsibility'. They should demonstrate the capacity to oversee the management and direction of the work of the

Church and to be responsible for drawing together visions and ensuring that plans are made and decisions co-ordinated and executed.

Candidates for diaconal ministry will show an understanding of what leadership and authority mean in terms of servant ministry. They must demonstrate an ability to work collaboratively and a propensity to act as an encourager and enabler of others' development in servant ministry. They should show a disposition toward teamwork and a capacity for operating in multi-disciplinary, inter-agency contexts.

6. Eager to learn

All candidates should have the necessary quality of mind and intellectual capacity to undertake satisfactorily a course of preparation for ministry, including theological study, and to be able to cope with the demands of ministry.

Therefore candidates should:

- Appreciate the significance of theology to the Church.
- Demonstrate a commitment to on-going personal and professional development, having intellectual curiosity and being open to new ideas.
- Be aware of a variety of approaches to theology, mission, ministry and practice within the Methodist Church and expect to work with these different traditions and approaches.
- Awareness of, and interest in, knowledge should extend beyond formal, narrowly religious fields.

7. Able to communicate

All candidates should demonstrate the ability to express faith naturally and effectively in ways that are appropriate, accessible and sensitive to the situation.

This means:

- Showing evidence of being able to use biblical and theological understanding in discussion of people's questions about the world.
- Being aware of the variety of approaches to mission and evangelism.
- Showing evidence of the ability to select the most appropriate media and approach for a broad range of teaching/nurturing situations and for specific groups.
- Using language in oral and written communication and in worship that is sensitive and non-discriminatory.
- Understanding symbols and gestures and how to make proper use of space.
- Being able to articulate Christian faith in everyday situations and to help others to communicate effectively.

Candidates for presbyteral ministry must demonstrate an ability to lead worship and preach in a variety of settings. They should also show evidence of competence in helping communities and congregations use information effectively.

Candidates for diaconal ministry must show evidence of ability to articulate Christian faith in everyday situations; to help groups to communicate effectively, both within the group and in relation to others; and to appreciate how to act as a facilitator in creating opportunities for worship (especially in unconventional situations), encouraging everyone to use their distinctive gifts.