

Guidelines for Materials Submitted for March 2024 BOM Interviews Required for Change of Status for Provisional Elder Membership (PE) and Commissioning

BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY
SOUTH GEORGIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Introduction

In the following pages, you will find instructions for the materials you will submit to the Board of Ordained Ministry for change of status. **It is important that you read and follow all the instructions.** You must give attention not only to the instructions having to do with your content, but also the instructions having to do with submitting your materials, because they will affect how your content gets to those reviewing your work and how your content will appear. The paper copies you will send in are only for back-up. The work that will be reviewed by the Board is the work that you will send electronically according to the instructions in this document. **This year's deadline for all materials to be submitted is Friday, January 5, 2024.**

The *Plagiarism Policy* is included in this document. Read it, sign it, and send it with the paper copies of your written work according to the instructions at the end of this document.

These instructions include only the written materials required. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure all other documentation is in *your file* by the deadline (including, but not limited to; credit report, transcripts, divorce petition and decree, criminal record check, etc.). These other materials are due Thursday, February 1, 2024. Kate Tyler will review your file and let you know what documents need to be updated in plenty of time to meet the deadline.

If you need any clarification about these instructions, feel free to contact Rev. Dr. Jay Harris, Superintendent for Clergy and District Services (Email: jharris@sgaumc.com, Office: 478-475-9286).

You will submit work for evaluation by three Interview Teams: *Called and Disciplined Life, Theology and Doctrine, and Preaching and Teaching.* Interviews are scheduled for Monday, March 4, and possibly Tuesday, March 5, at the Methodist Children's Home in Macon. Make sure to save both dates on your calendar. Candidates will be informed of their scheduled interview time in February. Plan to spend half the day going through the interview process on your scheduled interview date in March. Each team will take up to 40 minutes with you. After you meet with all three teams, the three teams will gather for their overall evaluation. After this process is complete, the entire Board of Ordained Ministry will gather to hear reports from each of the teams. The entire Board of Ordained Ministry will then vote on your change of status. On occasion, the process takes longer than expected. It would be wise not to make any time sensitive commitments during your interview day.

Written Autobiographical Statement

Every candidate shall prepare an autobiographical statement. Although all the Board of Ordained Ministry members will read your autobiography, your Called and Disciplined Life interview team will use it in their evaluation. **This document should be updated each time you**

appear before the BOM to incorporate your experiences since your last submission of paperwork. If you are returning to the Board after having been deferred, we want you to reflect on your experience of being deferred in a separate statement, and share in your reflection what you have learned, and how you approached any further growth and development.

Instructions:

1. Write a four (4) to five (5) page autobiographical statement, not including cover page, covering:
 - your age and stage of life
 - physical and mental health
 - family interests and formative events
 - education
 - formative Christian experiences
 - your call to ministry
 - your history of appointments or pastoral service and where you are currently serving
 - how you nurture your spiritual life
 - your plans for service in The United Methodist Church
2. Type and double-space the autobiography. The autobiography should conform to the standards of style and grammar.
3. Number the pages, staple them together, and provide a cover sheet that includes:
 - Your name
 - Your email address and mailing address
 - The words “Autobiographical Statement”
 - The words “Candidate for Provisional Elder Membership & Commissioning”
 - The year in which the March interview is occurring
4. Send this in electronic form to the Board of Ministry web site and one printed copy to the Assistant to the Bishop for Ministerial Services (see instructions at the end).

Written Materials for Called and Disciplined Life

Called and Disciplined Life will focus on several major areas: your autobiography, your answers to the Disciplinary Questions related to Vocation and Practice of Ministry, your case study, your psychological profile, your credit background, your criminal background, your call to ministry, your practice of ministry, and other personal development areas. Be prepared to engage the committee about these personal development areas in your interview.

Questions for Called and Disciplined Life: The Called and Disciplined Life interview team will review your answers to the questions related to Vocation and Practice of Ministry found in ¶324.9 of the *2016 Discipline*.

Instructions:

1. As you answer the Disciplinary questions include the questions and underline them in your paperwork.
 - a. 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?
 - b. Describe your understanding of diakonia, the servant ministry of the church, and the servant ministry of the provisional member?
 - c. What is the meaning of ordination in the context of the general ministry of the church?

- d. Describe your understanding of an inclusive church and ministry?
 - e. You have agreed as a candidate for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world, the most effective witness of the gospel, and in consideration of your influence as a minister, to make a complete dedication of yourself to the highest ideals of the Christian life. To this end, you agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, social responsibility and growing in grace and the knowledge and love of God. What is your understanding of this agreement?
 - f. Are you a self-avowed, practicing homosexual?
2. Write enough to express your understanding clearly, yet strive to be concise and cogent.
 3. In the oral interview the committee will assess your ability to express your positions verbally.
 4. Type and double-space your work. The answers to the questions should conform to the standards of style and grammar.
 5. Number the pages, staple them together, and provide a cover sheet that includes:
 - Your name
 - Your email address and mailing address
 - The words “Questions for Called and Disciplined Life”
 - The words “Candidate for Provisional Elder Membership & Commissioning”
 - The year in which the March interview is occurring
 6. Send this in electronic form to the Board of Ministry web site and one printed copy to the Assistant to the Bishop for Ministerial Services (see instructions at the end).

The Case Study: The case study, which will be reviewed by the interview team, is your written account of a pastoral care situation or a specific administrative situation that challenged and broadened your understanding of the Gospel in human relationships. The situation you choose should be substantial enough to raise significant personal and professional questions so that you can reflect upon them both interpersonally and theologically.

Instructions:

1. Write a four to six page case study, not including the cover page, based on a real (actual) situation that occurred within the past two years. If you are returning to a Called and Disciplined Life team after being deferred, you must complete a new case study.
2. Divide the case study into three parts:
 - Part 1: Provide the background of the situation or encounter. Do not use real names of persons involved.
 - Part 2: Provide a description of the situation and how you responded to it.
 - Part 3: Provide an evaluation of insights that you gained through the experience. This should include a reflection on: a) theological insights, b) how it affected you as a person in ministry, and c) how it affected your understanding of the nature of the church.
3. Type and double-space the case study. The case study should conform to the standards of style and grammar.
4. Number the pages, staple them together, and include a cover page that includes:
 - Your name
 - Your email address and mailing address
 - The words “The Case Study”
 - The words “Candidate for Provisional Elder Membership and Commissioning”
 - The year in which the March interview is occurring

5. Send this in electronic form to the Board of Ministry web site and one printed copy to the Assistant to the Bishop for Ministerial Services (see instructions at the end).

Written Materials for Theology and Doctrine

Questions for Theology and Doctrine: The Theology and Doctrine interview team will review the answers to the questions related to theology contained in ¶324.9 of the *2016 Discipline*.

Instructions:

1. Provide detailed responses. Include and underline the questions in your paperwork. State your positions clearly and represent your best theological thinking and judgment as one being called to ordained ministry. Write enough to express your understanding clearly, yet strive to be concise and cogent.
 - a. Describe your personal experience of God and the understanding of God you derive from biblical, theological and historical sources.
 - 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?
 - 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?
 - f. What is your understanding of (1) the kingdom of God, (2) the Resurrection, and (3) eternal life?
 - 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, verified and vivified in personal experience and confirmed by reason. What is your understanding of this theological position of the Church? Demonstrate your understanding by applying the quadrilateral to a doctrine or practice of our church: i.e., infant baptism, the Trinity, sanctification, etc.
 - 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.
 - k. Explain the role and significance of the sacraments in the ministry to which you have been called.
2. **The expectation of probationary members is to show your theological understanding of the core competencies of our faith and denomination.** Your theological formation and education should give clarity to your theological positions and beliefs. You may use outside resources only to defend your understanding of the theological issues. Cite all resources in footnotes as well as provide a bibliography. The Board of Ordained Ministry desires to see your theology revealed through the written work.
3. In the oral interview before the Board of Ordained Ministry, you will summarize and clarify your answers. This is an important part of the process. The committee will assess your ability to express your positions verbally.
4. Type and double-space your work. The answers to the questions should conform to the standards of style and grammar.
5. Number the pages, staple them together, and provide a cover sheet that includes:
 - Your name
 - Your email address and mailing address

- The words “Questions for Theology and Doctrine”
 - The words “Candidate for Provisional Elder Membership & Commissioning”
 - The year in which the March interview is occurring
6. Send this in electronic form to the Board of Ministry web site and one printed copy to the Assistant to the Bishop for Ministerial Services (see instructions at the end).

Written Materials for Preaching and Teaching (and Video for Sermon)

There are two main parts to your evaluation by the Preaching and Teaching interview team: your sermon and your Bible study. The material you will submit includes your written material and a video recording of your sermon.

Part One – The Sermon: The interview team will review a sermon that you prepare, preach, and video record on any lectionary text between August 1 and December 31 during the year you are completing your work. For example, if you are submitting your work in January 2024, your sermon would be on any lectionary text between August 1 and December 31, 2023.

Instructions:

1. Deal fairly and faithfully with the text. The sermon should share the gospel of God that comes from the text.
2. Preach as you normally would. If you preach from a manuscript, use one. If you preach from notes, or an outline, use those. Even if you preach extemporaneously, be sure to tape and transcribe your message to written form for us to read.
3. Present yourself well. We advise you not to attempt anything that is not your standard style.
4. We recommend you preach on a normal Sunday to give the teams an opportunity to see your standard style. Special and unique services may not transmit well in video. You may wish to stay away from Tenebrae, Christmas Eve, and other unique services.
5. Direct the sermon to your congregation and your context. You are not preaching to the Board of Ordained Ministry members.
6. Record your sermon while you are preaching to a congregation. If you do not have a pulpit, please arrange to preach in another congregation.
7. While the Board of Ordained Ministry wishes the smallest distraction possible from live worship, the video does need to show your facial expressions and hand gestures adequately.
8. Prepare a written transcript of your sermon. This document is to be an accurate, written copy of what you preached. It should reflect accurately the content of your sermon, with only small allowances taken to conform to the standards of style and grammar. It should stand on its own as written work. Do not take the written transcript lightly. Think of this written work as your published form of the sermon – what your sermon would look like if you included it in a book.
9. Follow the instructions at the end of this document to upload your sermon online. Include only the sermon not the entire worship service.
10. Send this in electronic form to the Board of Ministry web site and one printed copy to the Assistant to the Bishop for Ministerial Services (see instructions at the end). Include a cover page that states:
 - Your Name
 - Your email address and mailing address
 - The words “Part 1: The Sermon”
 - The words “Candidate for Provisional Elder Membership & Commissioning”
 - The year in which the March interview is occurring

Part 2 – The Bible Study: Each associate, provisional deacon, provisional elder, deacon and elder candidate is asked to prepare a four to seven session Bible study as part of the evaluation process for orders. The Preaching and Teaching interview team uses the Bible Study component as a way of evaluating your content, style, and methodologies of Christian Education. The interview team is interested in seeing your objectives/goals and pedagogical methods. How you teach is evaluated just as much as what you teach.

Instructions:

1. You shall teach at least one session of this study and preferably the entire study prior to appearing before the Board. Sessions should be at least one hour but not more than two hours in length. The study should be of your own composition.
2. You may select from any one (1) book of the Bible you wish to teach. You are NOT required to cover every verse in your chosen book. You may, for example, shape your study around lectionary passages, selected theological themes, or similar literary units (e.g., parables in Luke).
3. Your Bible Study should include the following three sections, each clearly labeled:

Section A – Study Leader’s Preliminary Work:

- A brief discussion of the context in which you will offer this study. How would you describe the learners in terms of race, class, social location, gender? Is your church primarily urban, suburban, rural, etc.? Are there other contextual elements that will need to be addressed, e.g. accessibility?
- Statement of the rationale for the book selected, the overall purpose and goals for the study. Why this study for these learners?

Section B – Brief Outline of the Bible Study Sessions:

- An outline of the individual teaching sessions in the study including goals, themes, and biblical passages to be addressed.
- A brief discussion of the biblical content for each session naming theological themes and/or textual issues you judge most critical for your students. This outline should reflect good exegetical work and theological interpretation in light of your description of learners and their context. Include references to scholarly resources as appropriate.
- Include some means to evaluate the study’s effectiveness. The means of evaluation can be as simple as having participants fill out a form at the end of the study about “the strengths of this Bible study were” and “things I would change about this Bible Study” - or you could visit with a few of the participants who will be honest with you about how you did as a leader of this study.

Section C – Detailed Teaching Plan of One Session:

- A detailed teaching plan for one session is required. (You are NOT required to provide a verbatim or transcript as a part of the detailed teaching plan.)
- This session plan should include: biblical passage(s) to be covered, learning goals for the session, materials required, any handouts to be used, and a detailed schedule and description of the teaching/learning process.
- Imagine the teaching plan as a curricular guide. It should be sufficiently descriptive to enable someone other than yourself to teach the session with proper preparation. The teaching plan should describe the different movements you will make plus the supplies and amount of time required for each movement in the session.

- The teaching plan should include a variety of means of teaching and learning. Possibilities include lecture, creativity with art, journaling, case study, sharing experience, shared practice, or small group discussion. Even though discussion questions are open-ended by design, you should provide examples of the kinds of responses you are seeking to elicit in the discussion questions you pose. Your teaching and learning methods should be consistent with the passage you are studying, your learning goals for the students and the students' context.
 - Indicate your sources in the body of your paper as footnotes or as endnotes.
 - Include the literature and/or handouts that you expect to use with your class members.
4. Type and double-space your Bible Study: It should conform to the standards of style and grammar.
 5. Number the pages, staple them together, and label each of the three sections.
 6. Include a cover page that states:
 - Your name
 - Your email address and mailing address
 - The words "Part 2: The Bible Study"
 - The words, "Candidate for Provisional Elder Membership & Commissioning"
 - The year in which the March interview is occurring
 7. Send this in electronic form to the Board of Ministry web site and one printed copy to the Assistant to the Bishop for Ministerial Services (see instructions at the end).

Example of Teaching Plan Template

This Teaching Plan Template is given only as an example of a plan; there are many possible plans. Some candidates have indicated it would be helpful if they had a better idea what the committee is looking for.

Session X: Title

Biblical Text(s):

Session Learning Goals:

- Learning Goal here....
- Another Learning Goal here... (and so on)

Movement One: Title (e.g., Consider the Meaning of Greetings)

Activity One

Time: 15 minutes

Supplies required: None other than ten participant volunteers

Invite 10 volunteer participants to pair off. Privately assign each pair one of the following gestures of greeting: wave in passing; hand shake; high five or fist bump; chest bump; hug of a returning loved one. Have pairs stand at the front of the group and move into their gestures all at once when you give the signal.

- Ask observing participants what the various gestures have in common. (Forms of greeting)
- Ask observing participants to assess the more specific meanings embedded in the individual
- gestures and the different relationships they imply. (More formal/less formal, acquaintance,
- friendship, intimate, praise, celebration, conquest, etc.)

Activity Two

Time: 10 minutes

Supplies required: Bibles

Ask participants to open their Bibles to Philippians 1:1-11. Invite one student who enjoys reading aloud to read the passage.

Teach verse two to all participants and invite the group to repeat it in unison.

Then ask:

- What sort of greeting is this from Paul to the church at Philippi? (Possible responses in light of exercise above or other)
- Why does Paul begin his letter this way? (Literary convention, reestablishing relationship, deep affection, etc.)
- How does this greeting compare with other of Paul's greetings?

Then continue on with Movement Two, Movement Three (if required), Movement Four (if required).

Instructions & Deadlines for Compiling and Submitting Materials

Compiling Hard Copies: Each candidate will mail in one hard copy of the written material to the following address:

Rev. Dr. Jay Harris
Assistant to the Bishop for Ministerial Services
3040 Riverside Drive
Suite A-2
Macon, GA 31210

The following documents are to be included:

For the Board:

1. Autobiographical Statement
2. Signed copy of the Plagiarism Policy Statement

For Called and Disciplined Life:

3. Questions for Called and Disciplined Life
4. The Case Study

For Theology and Doctrine:

5. Questions for Theology and Doctrine

For Preaching and Teaching:

6. Part 1: The Sermon
7. Part 2: The Bible Study

Emailing Work: Each candidate will email a copy of written materials to **bom@sgaumc.com**. The materials need to be put in a “.pdf” format before emailing. If you do not have this capability, then you need to find someone who does and get them to assist you. For email purposes, please save your documents into four separate files, exactly as listed:

1. Save the Autobiographical Statement as: [Last name] Auto
2. Save the Called and Disciplined Life material as: [Last name] CDL
3. Save the Theology and Doctrine material as: [Last name] TD
4. Save the Preaching and Teaching material as: [Last name] PT

Submitting Sermon Video: Upload your sermon to Vimeo and provide a link to Rev. Dr. Jay Harris (jharris@sgaumc.com) to view the video and then share with the Interview Team members. Consider these steps:

1. Log Into Your Account - The first thing that you should do is visit the Vimeo website (www.vimeo.com). If you already have an account, log into it by clicking the login link. If you don't have an account, then you will need to register. Follow the instructions and enter the necessary information to create your account.
2. Uploading the Video - Click the "Upload Video" button which is located on the home page of the site. You will also be able to find the same link in the navigation bar which is under the Upload heading.

3. The Upload Page - Once you click the upload link, you will be taken to the upload page. This can be confusing at times. You need to read through this and follow the directions. You will need to ensure that you are uploading a video for which you have ownership.
4. Selecting the File - Click the "Choose a File to Upload" button and this will launch an upload dialog box. Choose the file that you want to upload and then click on "Select". As soon as you click the button, the video will start to be uploaded right away. The progress bar should estimate how long the video will take to be uploaded. If you are using a slow Internet connection, then you will find it takes longer to upload. Just be patient and allow the video to be fully uploaded. If there are any problems with the uploaded video, then you will need to repeat the process and upload it a second time.
5. Conversion - As soon as the video is uploaded, the video will then be converted automatically. You can close this page if you want, and Vimeo will handle the conversion automatically. Once the video has finished converting, the service will then email you once the conversion has finished.
6. Check to make sure the video uploaded by viewing it through once.

Deadline: Submit all written work no later than Friday, January 5, 2024. If you ship your materials, the Assistant to the Bishop for Ministerial Services must have them in his office by the deadline. If you hand-deliver your materials, you must call the office of the Assistant to the Bishop for Ministerial Services to ensure that someone will be present to receive them. The Candidate is responsible for ensuring on-time delivery of all materials. There are no extensions. If you are unable to meet the deadline, you may pursue change of status next year.

Policy on Plagiarism and Content Generated by Artificial Intelligence

South Georgia Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (CBOM)

The CBOM is charged with the responsibility of examining candidates for orders of ministry and conference membership. This examination cannot take place when candidates fail to use their own voice and instead submit work that is not their own. Taking someone else's work and passing it off as one's own is plagiarism. It is presenting as new and original an idea derived from an existing source. On one end of the spectrum, the stealing of another's words and the attempt to hide it represents a violation of the ethical standards inherent in a called and disciplined life. On the other end of the spectrum, a writer may demonstrate a desire to give other writers credit for their thoughts, but get careless in the following ways:

- including some but not all of what another person wrote in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- telling a story in a sermon where you mention it being from another person (in the preaching event itself), but failing specifically to cite in the manuscript its author and where you got the story.
- using a game or group exercise in a Bible Study which came from another person and not citing it
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, even if you give credit to the original author

It is often difficult to make the determination between intentional plagiarism and careless citation errors. While one represents a serious ethical violation, the other represents sloppiness. The most common excuse for plagiarism and citation errors is being rushed to complete paperwork before the deadline. In addition to plagiarism, Artificial Intelligence (AI) programs can generate content that is not original to the author. The CBOM views AI generated answers in the same light as plagiarism since the candidate is not using their own voice for their submitted work.

The consequences of outright plagiarism, could include any of the following:

- denial of an opportunity to interview with the CBOM
- being subject to an interview followed by deferral with deficiencies
- deferral with no ability to return to the CBOM
- discontinuance from provisional membership or licensed ministry

The consequences of careless citation errors still could include:

- deferral with deficiencies
- ability to interview with the CBOM, with the requirement to address proper crediting of sources

To help avoid plagiarism, the following suggestions are recommended in an article from the Claremont School of Theology website:

- Use your own voice. Put what you have to say in your own words. Don't hide behind the "experts."
- Never compose essays with source material open. Take notes from source material on note cards and compose from those cards.
- Clearly mark cards to distinguish summaries from quotations.
- Keep quotations brief and few. Use direct quotes as spices in a meal, not as the main dish.
- Use block quotations only when you plan to give extensive analysis of the quoted material.
- Always introduce quotations (e.g. According to Helmer, "...").
- Summarize or paraphrase material using sentence structure that differs significantly from the source. (Changing a few words, but keeping the same basic sentence structure of the original is still plagiarism.)
- Provide a citation for all quoted, paraphrased or summarized material.

We highly recommend candidates using a plagiarism/grammar checker prior to submission of paperwork. (Please note that the CBOM uses a plagiarism checking service to identify cases of plagiarism in the candidates' materials.) Please allow plenty of time to check your work before turning it in.

As a part of submitting your material for Associate, Provisional, or Full Membership, please sign at the bottom of this form indicating your compliance with the following statement: "I have read the statement above and certify that none of the work that I have submitted to the Board of Ordained Ministry is plagiarized or generated by Artificial Intelligence. I understand that the consequences of plagiarism in my paperwork would be deferral with deficiencies or other such action as the Board deems appropriate."

Signed _____ Date _____