



Personal Growth Guidelines

Full Connection Deacon/Elder, Provisional Deacon/Elder, Associate Members, Local Pastor, Transfer Applications

It is our desire to create a process that will set you up for success in ministry. The Personal Growth section of this application is designed to help you grow in your self-awareness and develop healthy physical, mental, emotional, financial, and spiritual practices that will lead to a successful ministry. The information gathered in this section is to help in the evaluation of your readiness and fitness for ministry. Disabilities cannot be used to prevent you from service in ministry, if you are able to perform the duties of an ordained clergy:

As a part of the ministry application process, The United Methodist Church requires each candidate to “present a satisfactory certificate of good health” by a physician on the prescribed form. Disabilities are not to be construed as unfavorable health factors when a person with disability is capable of meeting the professional standards and is able to render effective service.... (The Book of Discipline, ¶¶ 315.6c, 324.8, 347.3, 357.7, 355.3, 368.5).

If you need accommodations for success in your process, please complete the Disability Accommodations Form.

Your responses should follow the BOM Writing Guidelines and the following page requirements.

- Minimum of 10 pages.
- Maximum of 15 pages.
- Your bibliography is NOT included in this page count.

If you have received a previous recommendation of your Personal Growth section as indicated in your BOM Letter and are resubmitting your application within two years of that recommendation, please provide a one-to-two-page summary of how you have grown in self-awareness, your financial situation, developing healthy boundaries and your growing understanding of the work of anti-racism in the past year.

1. The Board understands personal growth to mean you are aware of your strengths and weaknesses, especially with regard to your emotional and spiritual growth and self-understanding.

a. What is your current understanding of your strengths and weaknesses?

Such as:

- Confidence and humility
- Vulnerability

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- Authenticity
- Self-awareness

b. How are you growing emotionally? Share a specific story to illustrate a learning experience in personal growth from your life and/or ministry.

We are looking for:

- Name and describe your emotions
- Self-reflection on what you learned
- Evidence of growth
- Intentionality of growth – what actions you took to grow

c. What personal challenges are you currently facing in your personal life and in your ministry and how are you dealing with them? How do the two interact, if at all?

- Looking for same things as in 2 a and b
- Significant challenges
- Specifics of how you dealt with challenge

d. What means do you use to maintain Sabbath, spiritual disciplines, and care of mind-body-spirit?

We are looking for your:

- Understanding of the Sabbath
- Evidence of practicing spiritual disciplines
- Significant and ongoing spiritual disciplines
- Evidence of self-care – (such as exercise, healthy eating, **overall care of health, boundaries**, meditation, accountability groups, technology, etc.)

2. Based on your understanding of Wesley's rule of "do no harm," please answer the following questions:

a. The Florida Conference is committed to creating a culture of respectful and healthy personal, interpersonal, and sexual boundaries. What systems do you have in place to avoid violating those boundaries? Give specific examples.

- Specific boundaries and accountability systems

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- Relevant and specific examples

b. The Florida Conference is committed to anti-racism as a work of discipleship. How do you understand your responsibility as a clergy person in this work? How do you plan to further the work of anti-racism in your life and your ministry?

- Definition of anti-racism and its impact on discipleship
- Steps to work anti-racism into life and ministry

3. What is your theological view of stewardship and how it is reflected in your personal finances?

We are looking for your:

- Biblical, theological language
- Tithing
- Understanding of stewardship and how financial stewardship fits into the broader view of all forms of stewardship
- Stewardship includes time, resources, earth care, finances, etc.

a. Our experience has shown that to live a healthy lifestyle in a ministry starting at or near minimum salary, unsecured debt (including, but not limited to, credit card debt, personal loans, signature loans, 90 days same as cash, etc.) should not exceed \$5000, regardless of whether you are single or married, and educational debt should not exceed \$30,000 (if single) or \$60,000 (if married to a spouse who also has educational debt). Please complete the chart below.

Time Frame	Credit Card Debt	Education Debt
Current Debt		
One Year Ago		
Two Years Ago		

b. If you have debt, what is your debt reduction plan and how long have you been working on it?

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- Looking for a realistic and detailed plan
- Evidence of working the plan

c. Elaborate on any extenuating circumstances or changes regarding your financial situation of which the Board should be aware.

- Such as new appointment with reduced salary, death in family, natural disasters, job loss, unexpected medical expenses

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