

Requirements for Full Member Elder and Deacon

Effective Class of 2022

Table of contents:

1	Table of Contents
2	Checklist, deadlines, and quality of work you need to complete
3	Oral Interviews and Board of Ministry decisions
4	Official Mentors, Supervisors, Private Mentors
5	Requirements for the Fruitfulness Project
9	Commentary on the Fruitfulness Project
11	Requirements for Doctrinal Answers
13	Requirements for Bible Study
15	Requirement for Exegesis Papers (Bible Study and Sermon)
16	Commentary on Doing Exegesis
19	Requirements for Preaching and Worship Project

Contact Information:

John Salzman: bfender@igrc.org (BOM registrar)

Checklist, Deadlines, Quality of work you need to complete

You need to upload into PassageUMC:

1. Clergy application form
2. Biographical information sheet
3. Disclosure statement
4. Recent photograph (upload it into PassageUMC)

You need to arrange for the following recommendations to be sent to John Salzman

1. Any district superintendents you have had in the past 12 months
2. Your RIM mentor
3. Chair of your Staff-Parish Relations Committee
4. A lay person who holds an official position in your church
5. An active United Methodist pastor from IGRC

Papers and projects you need to turn in:

1. Fruitfulness project
2. Doctrinal Answers
3. Bible Study
4. Sermon/Worship service(Elder); Proclamation of the Word/setting video (Deacon)
5. Sermon with background notes and exegesis

Deadlines for all work: Second Friday in January

Quality:

All work must meet graduate level standards: grammar, spelling, punctuation, and clarity of thought. Common rules for referencing and plagiarism are applicable. Your work is expected to show sensitivity to cultural diversity.

File Uploads:

When upload files, name them as follows: (name of requirement)_(your first name initial and last name). Here's an example of a file name for the doctrinal questions:

Doctrinal_BFender.

Oral Interviews and Board of Ministry decisions:

You will be interviewed in (or near) Springfield, IL on the third Thursday of February. The exact location will be announced closer to the meeting time. Both the registrar (John Salzman) and the chairperson of the Ministerial Effectiveness Review Team **MERT** (J. Michael Smith) will be in touch with you several weeks beforehand to let you know the details of your interview.

Plan to be at the interview site by 9 a.m. and stay until 2:30 p.m. Four teams of Board of Ministry members will interview you. Each interview will be approximately one hour, to discuss the following topics:

- Fruitfulness project
- Bible study
- Doctrinal paper
- Sermon and Worship service (for Deacon: Proclamation of the Word and Setting)

After your interviews are completed, you may leave. The full board will then hear the recommendations from the interviews teams before making their final decision.

The full board will take one of three actions:

- Approve you for full membership and ordination
- Ask you to rewrite and resubmit some or all of your work, by April 1st. They may or may not ask one or more of your teams to re-interview you. A decision will be made at the April Board of Ministry meeting of whether or not to approve you for full membership and ordination at the next scheduled annual conference.
- Delay your ordination with specifics about what remedial work must be completed prior to re-interviewing the following year or beyond.
- Deny your request.

If you are delayed, or if you are asked to resubmit some work, or re-do an interview, you will be given specific instructions about the concerns and expectations so that you will know exactly what the board expects from you before gaining approval.

At the end of the interview day, you will be notified by phone (by the Board Registrar) regarding the board's decisions. The phone contact will be followed up by a written letter or email of the Board's actions from Board Registrar, including specifics on any additional or remedial work you may need to complete.

Official Mentors, Supervisors, Private Mentors

Official Mentors

We will do team mentoring during your provisional membership period. The members of the RIM(Residence in Ministry) team will be your *official* mentors. The chair of RIM (Grant Armstrong) will assign one of the RIM members for you to list on any reports you must submit. That person will also be responsible for filling out your “mentor recommendation form.”

Supervisors

Other members of the Board of Ordained Ministry may be assigned to help you prepare (or revise) your specific papers or projects. The chair of MERT (J. Michael Smith) will assign these supervisors. You are welcome to call him and discuss your work in advance...and to request additional supervision at any time in the process. Take advantage of the help offered.

Private Mentors

It is important for you to select mentors, coaches, counselors, and spiritual guides who are NOT with the Board of Ordained Ministry so that you can enjoy the rights of confidentiality that a mentor of your own choosing can afford you. These mentors will NOT report to the Board of Ordained Ministry. Neither will the Board ask them for input. Take your own initiative to seek out those individuals who might help you with your own spiritual life, your church, your struggles with the system, or your family.

Anyone associated with IGRC's Pastoral Care and Counseling (or any other counselor you engage) is ABSOLUTELY required to keep your visits and conversations and records confidential from the Board of Ordained Ministry. We will never approach them for information or an evaluation.

The only exceptions to these rules of confidentiality are 1) the psychological assessment report prepared for the board when you began your candidacy, and 2) additional psychological tests and interviews that you *may* be specifically requested by the board.

Requirements of the Fruitfulness Project

2016 Discipline ¶330.4.4: Those seeking ordination will need to present “**a project that demonstrates fruitfulness in carrying out the church’s mission of making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.**”

The IGRC Board of Ministry requires that your fruitfulness project be a program of your original design that brings change to individuals, your congregation**, or your community. Those changes shall be relevant to the UMC mission statement.

*** (Deacon candidates may replace the word “church” or “congregation” in this document with the word “institution” or other appropriate term.)*

This paper shall have five parts:

1. **Title and Introduction** to the project
2. **A Progress Map** that visualizes the changes you expect to see in either a) individuals, b) the congregation, and/or c) the community
3. **Your Strategy** that states your mission, lays out your objectives, and anticipates the work that is ahead
4. **Diary of the Execution** recording how the project unfolded chronologically, including successes, surprises, and failures
5. **A Reflection paper indicating** what you learned about fruitfulness in ministry

(The project may still be ongoing at the time you meet with the Board, but it should have a sufficient history to allow the Board of Ordained Ministry to see some significant fruitfulness.)

1. Title and Introduction (300 words maximum)

Your fruitfulness project will consist of designing and executing a strategy for affecting change. Fruitful pastors and deacons affect change in individuals, congregations (or other institutions,) and neighborhoods (or regions.)

Your title should state the name of your project.

In your introduction, first state your focus constituency: are you trying to change individuals, a congregation, a neighborhood, or something else?

Second, name specifically what you aim to accomplish with the constituency you have chosen. We are not looking for busy work or program success. We are looking for a demonstration of actual improvement in peoples’ lives, or needed change in a congregation, or betterment of a neighborhood.

Third, explain how your project is relevant to the mission of the United Methodist Church.

And fourth, give us some background about the people, congregation, or neighborhood you aim to change. Be descriptive. Then briefly envision what “success” will look like.

2. A Progress Map (2-3 pages)

This section of your paper will ask you to be creative and design a map...helping us visualize the changes you see taking place in your project.

The Kingdom of God is about change: individuals, churches, and communities. God tends to work with individuals and systems along paths and continua. All Christians, for example, are ‘works in progress,’ on the road toward perfection. There is always a ‘next destination on the map.’ The same is true for churches, institutions, and neighborhoods.

Maps give us a sense of direction. They also reveal whether we are moving forward or going backward, standing still or going in circles. We can map our goals and visualize the mile markers along our journey.

The ability to map out the journey ahead requires knowledge and experience in practical theology. A “road map” can help reveal our understanding of how individuals, congregations, and neighborhoods change. It accentuates *ends* rather than *means*. It focuses on a *rational process* rather than an *ambitious quantum gamble*.

If you are mapping changes for individuals, help us visualize the paths they take to become (or mature) as disciples of Jesus Christ. What is their starting point? Where do you want them to be? What are the incremental milestones of progress along a continuum for them? Draw a map and give a brief commentary.

If you are mapping changes for a specific congregation, show us where that congregation is now? Where do you want them to be? What problems stand in the way? What is an effective sequence (or continuum) for solving those problems? Map that change and give us a brief commentary.

If you are thinking of your community or neighborhood, show us where they are currently on the (so called) economic, political, or social map. UMC social principles are one way to observe the advancement of God’s Kingdom into a locality. Pick one social principle that applies to the community surrounding or adjoining your church. What are the conditions of that community now, as defined by that social principle? What changes do you want to see in that community, regarding that social principle? Map the change. Give a brief commentary.

Your map (this section of your paper) and your strategy (the next section of your paper) should reflect your psychological, theological, sociological, political, and economic understandings of how people and systems change.

3. Your Strategy (about 10-15 pages)

The following elements of strategy must be present in your paper:

1. *Write a mission statement for your project:* your mission statement should name or imply a visceral threat that virtually everyone in the church feels.
2. *A plan for developing relationships and teams:* Effectiveness in ministry does NOT mean lone ranger heroics. Pastors and deacons are expected to develop and direct teams. How do you plan to develop relationships...and from those relationships establish teams that can help you achieve success in your project? Plot out your coalitions.
3. *State your objectives and arrange them in sequence:* Objectives must be specific and measurable. Each project will include a handful of objectives. Too many objectives, however, will confuse and burden the project. Be sure the various objectives are relevant to each other and move you toward fulfilling your mission.
4. *Inspire:* Expand your mission statement into a narrative, an image, and an argument.
5. *Establish lines of communication:* You will need effective venues for communicating with all your collaborators. What types of messages do you anticipate will need to be communicated?
6. *Propose a timeline:* List the various things that have to get done in order to meet each of your objectives. Place each item on a timeline, with specific calendar deadlines for completing the tasks.
7. *Establish your rules:* What will you NOT do in order to meet your objectives? Which crucial values will guide everyone on your team whenever a difficult decision must be made?
8. *Select, train, and assign personnel to critical roles in your campaign:* What key jobs need filled? Who will fill them? How will they be trained, supported, and evaluated?
9. *Assessing skills and knowledge needed:* What do you NOT know that you NEED to know in order to successfully achieve your project? Where will you get your answers? What skills will be necessary for completing each task? Who has those skills? Who can be trained? What are the plans for getting the skills and knowledge you need?
10. *Lining up resources:* What materials will you need to achieve success? What groups will you need to involve? How will you maintain the "supply train" when you are in the middle of the project?
11. *Anticipating problems:* What could possibly go wrong? Who might object? What erroneous estimates might derail the project? What other activities might distract your people or compete with your project? What weaknesses do *you* have that might cause your project to fail? What anxieties or conflicts exist among your participants that might interfere? What is most likely to throw off the sequence or deadlines? How will you handle each of these problems if they arise?

12. *Delegating the planning to your team:* Planning consists of scheduling, arrangements, and adjustments. It involves pre-arrangements and procedures for people, places, activities, and resources. This is where the project gets highly practical. (In your paper, we do not want to know all the details of the planning. But we do want to know how you delegate.)
13. *Feedback loops:* Your objectives must be measurable. What measurements will you utilize? Your maps need to instruct and reveal whether you are reaching your goals? How will you get an objective assessment of 'where you are?' Your sequence and deadlines must be met. People need to change in their thinking and activities. Institutions and communities must be transformed in measurable ways. What measurements will you use to give some objectivity to your evaluations? Attach the measurements tools and results in an appendix to the paper.
14. *How will you use the feedback to alter the plans?*
 - a. adjust for environmental changes
 - b. secure alternate resources
 - c. change personnel
 - d. make new rules
 - e. alter the objectives
 - f. revise the mission

4. Diary of the Execution (minimum of 5 pages)

As you execute the project, keep a diary. Narrate the story of what is happening. Also include appropriate metrics that will help you in evaluating the project.

5. Reflection Paper (1-2 page)

Prepare a reflection paper of what you have learned in developing and executing this project. What thinking was reinforced? What assumptions were confirmed, which ones proved to be wrong? Where was the strategy strong, where was modification needed. What would you do differently the next time? Was the training adequate? If not, how should it be altered?

Commentary on the Fruitfulness Project

“Fruitfulness” in any organization involves three different skill sets:

1. An ability to picture the changes which must take place in order for the organization’s mission statement to be fulfilled.
2. An ability to create a strategy in order to bring about some desired change
3. An ability to plan and execute programs in order to carry out the strategy

United Methodists aim to reform the individual, the church, and the society. Your fruitfulness project will focus on one of those.

We do not expect you to completely reform individuals, the church, or the world in your project. But we do expect you to demonstrate that you know how to carry out the UMC mission statement in terms of objectives, strategies, and programs.

We expect to see sophistication in your understanding of the continuum involved in making disciples for Jesus Christ. We expect to see sophistication in your understanding of how congregations and institutions must progressively change in order to be effective agents of the UMC mission statement. And we expect to see sophistication in your understanding of how neighborhoods, communities, and systems are transformed to reflect God’s will.

Pastors and deacons participate in the ministry of Jesus. The gospels indicate that Jesus’ ministry involves three fundamental activities: preaching, teaching, and performing. All these activities reveal God’s emerging Kingdom.

The candidate for ordination is thus asked by the Board of Ministry to demonstrate each of these respective activities: by preaching a sermon, by creating an original Bible study, and by executing a fruitfulness project.

The goal of the *fruitfulness project* is to show that the candidate can perform signs of God’s power through shepherding changes in individuals, congregations, systems, or societal entity.

Fruitfulness in ministry consists of the following:

- Shepherding individuals by making real what it means to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior
- Shepherding congregations by leading them through healthy changes
- Shepherding neighborhoods by achieving reform (cf. UMC Social Principles)

The *Fruitfulness Project* shall require results. Plans, intentions, activities, meetings, and efforts are insufficient in themselves. We expect to see end results, not just means-to-an-end.

Definition of Terms

For purposes of this project, a disciple is an individual who has accepted Jesus Christ to be Lord and Savior of her or his life. While the individual's *acceptance* is critical to the making of a disciple, so are the phases prior to acceptance...and afterward. The phases before and after *acceptance* include experiences of mercy, story-telling, Bible study, faith sharing, dialogue, discernment, community, spiritual formation, reflection, spiritual disciplines, and doubts.

For purposes of this project, "the world" is the specific community around the local church. It may also be some specific system that is germane to the region: such as a local prison, a local hospital, or a local school.

The local church is the agent which coordinates people and resources in fulfilling the UMC mission.

- ✓ The local church nurtures individuals along the continuum of maturing discipleship
- ✓ The local church organizes and collaborates to make the neighborhood more just and hospitable.
- ✓ The local church relates to both insiders and outsiders through neighborliness, invitation, hospitality, apologetics, spiritual formation, equipping, guidance, counsel, affirmation of God's callings, programming, and deployment.

The goal of pastoral fruitfulness is complex: simultaneously engaging individuals, congregations, and neighborhoods. But that complexity is part of the United Methodist tradition. John Wesley had three aims: reform the individual, reform the church, and reform the society.

- Individuals are reformed as they progress along pathways of discipleship
- Congregations or institutions are reformed as they progress along pathways of healing, sustainability, relevance, strength, and growth
- Neighborhoods or systems are reformed as they progress along pathways toward achieving United Methodist Social Principles

Requirements for the Doctrinal Answers

You shall write a **6000-8500 word** paper answering the following questions:

A) Theology

- a) Give examples of how the practice of ministry has affected your experience and understanding of:
 - i. God
 - ii. Humanity
 - iii. The need for divine grace
 - iv. The Lordship of Jesus Christ
 - v. The work of the Holy Spirit
 - vi. The meaning and significance of the sacraments
 - vii. The Kingdom of God
 - viii. Resurrection and eternal life
- b) How do you understand the following traditional, evangelical doctrines:
 - i. Repentance
 - ii. Justification
 - iii. Regeneration
 - iv. Sanctification
 - v. The marks of the Christian life
- c) How has the practice of ministry informed our understanding of the nature and mission of the Church? What primary challenges face the church today?
- d) The UMC holds that Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason are sources and norms for belief and practice, but that the Bible is primary among them. What is your understanding of this theological position of the UMC? How has your practice of ministry been affected by this understanding?
- e) How has the practice of ministry enriched your understanding of the meaning and significance of the sacraments?

B) Vocation

- a) How has the experience of ministry shaped your understanding of the vocation of an ordained elder?
- b) How has it shaped your understanding of the vocation of an ordained deacon?
- c) Describe the unique importance of elders, deacons, lay pastors, and certified lay ministers. How do you see these various callings interacting collaboratively with each other in our conference?

C) Practice of Ministry

- a) *If you are applying for elder's orders:* How has the practice of ministry affected your understanding of the expectations and obligations of the itinerant system? Do you offer yourself without reserve to be appointed and to serve as the appointive authority may determine?
If you are applying for deacon's orders: How has the practice of ministry affected your understanding of what it means for a deacon to be appointed by the bishop to a service ministry?

- b) Describe and evaluate your personal gifts for ministry and how they have resulted in fruitful ministry. What would be your areas of strength and areas in which you need to be strengthened in order to be more fruitful in ministry?
- c) For the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness to the Christian gospel and in consideration of your influence as an ordained minister, how will you make a complete dedication of yourself to the highest ideals of the Christian life? How will you exercise responsible self-control? How will you maintain habits conducive to physical health, intellectual development, sexual holiness, integrity in personal relationships, financial responsibility, citizenship, love of neighbor, experience of grace, and love of God?
- d) Provide evidence of your willingness to relate yourself in ministry to all persons regardless of
 - i. race,
 - ii. ethnicity,
 - iii. national origin,
 - iv. social status,
 - v. gender,
 - vi. sexual orientation,
 - vii. age,
 - viii. economic condition, and
 - ix. disability.
- e) What is your understanding of the confessional nature of pastoral conversations?
- f) Provide evidence of your experience with
 - i. Doing justice
 - ii. Making peace

As you write your doctrinal answers, begin each response with a restating of the question before addressing the issue. Answer the questions in the order they are given above. Lengthy questions do not need to be restated in their entirety. You may summarize those questions in your paper.

Provide a bibliography at the end of the paper of books, articles, online information (limit the number of these resources), and presentations that have directly influenced your thoughts on these specific topics. Be prepared to talk about those resources at your oral interview.

Requirements for the Bible Study

In The Book of Discipline, both elders and deacons are ordained to ministries of “the Word.” Pastors are required to “read and teach scripture.” Membership vows in the United Methodist Church include the following: “To receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.” In the liturgy of ordination, both deacons and elders are asked to affirm “the scriptures...are the unique and authoritative standard for the Church’s faith and life.” Our theological guidelines say this about scripture: *United Methodists share with other Christians the conviction that Scripture is the primary source and criterion for Christian doctrine. Through Scripture the living Christ meets us in the experience of redeeming grace.*

The Bible Study you create and present to us should reflect your commitment to scripture as primary in the life of both the individual Christian and the church. Full member candidates will create **and lead** a Bible Study based on passages from a synoptic gospel (Matthew in liturgical year A, Mark in year B, Luke in year C.)

Outline of the work to be turned in:

1. Prepare a handout entitled: **Why we study the Bible (Maximum 1000 words)**. Address the following issues in that handout:
 - A. Briefly describe your theological understanding of the Bible. There is an expectation that you will use theological sources, appropriately noted.
 - B. Explain your understanding of the role of Scripture in the life of the individual believer and the Church.
 - C. Share why the Bible is important to you personally.
 - D. Reflect briefly on how your experience of ministry has affected your understanding of the Bible and its role in your life, that of the church, and those of your congregants.

2. Submit a **course plan** for teaching six lessons on the assigned Biblical book **(approximately 1200 words)**.
 - A. State your objectives for the overall course. This is intentionally left open ended so that you may develop the study in whatever way is authentic to you and your setting. Some may develop a thematic study, some may attempt a chapter by chapter method...as long as it covers the assigned book in an effective way, you are welcome to develop a study as you see fit.
 - B. Describe the overall ministry setting (church/ministry agency and community)
 - C. Describe the participating students and note assumptions you are making about them
 - D. Briefly describe how you will assess the learning of participants

- E. Prepare a syllabus for the students, including assignments you will be giving them
 - F. List a repertoire of learning activities you plan to use through this particular course
 - G. List an annotated bibliography of books and other resources you are using to prepare the course. The board is looking for good scholarship here, and good use of resources. We caution you though not to rely too heavily on any one particular resource. In the interview process we are looking for *your* words, not someone else's.
 - H. Since you are required to teach this study, provide a brief self-evaluation. What would you do differently next time? What worked well? What surprised you?
3. Submit a **detailed lesson plan** for **ONE** of the lessons (**approximately 700 words**). Your submitted lesson should be in its final, presentation-ready, form. It should stand alone and need no further explanation from the candidate, or put another way, a skilled teacher should be able to take these pages and teach this one detailed lesson themselves.
- A. Identify which lesson from the syllabus you will be detailing
 - B. List the objectives for that particular lesson
 - C. Outline an agenda (detailed lesson plan) for the session, including time allotments for each activity
 - D. List materials needed
 - E. Describe your lead-in, which may include reviewing previous lessons, asking leading questions for the new lesson, providing a resource, or telling a story that piques interest
 - F. Prepare two feedback questions (opportunities for participant to embrace and incorporate the theme of the lesson) to be answered by each student at the conclusion of the session.
 - G. Attach any lecture notes
 - H. If you use other media, make those presentations available online
4. Provide an exegesis of your selected passage(s) (and assigned book) of your Bible Study. This should be scholarly overview of the assigned book (original audience, assumed author and date, internal structure, connection to other biblical books, major themes, etc.). Include a scholarly bibliography of works used for this section and all of the Bible Study. (**Approximately 600 words**)

Requirements for Exegesis Papers (Bible Study and Sermon)

You will need to prepare an exegesis paper for both your Bible Study and ~~for~~ your sermon.

When you prepare an exegetical paper, select a text (of five or more verses), examine it, and include the following items as you relate how you have wrestled with it:

1. **Initial impressions:** Indicate your thoughts and feelings upon an initial read through of the text, before you began your scholarly sleuthing: observations, questions, disturbances, things you never noticed (or can't remember) from previous reads of this text.
2. **Language notes:** Your own paraphrase of the passage, including scholarly evidence for the accuracy of your paraphrase when you deviate from either the NRSV or NIV.
3. **Review of context:** A briefing for the reader on what has been happening (or argued) up to the point your passage begins. In other words, regarding the book of the Bible upon which you are drawing, bring us up to date.
4. **Related texts:** Provide an annotated list of scriptures which provide background on your text and which elucidate its meaning.
5. **Historical setting:** Provide historical and cultural background information that gives us a sense of the text's meaning for its original readers. Cite your sources.
6. **Literary analysis:** Analyze and catalogue your literary observations about the text. Comment about its structure, style, word choices and pairings, mood, and narrative elements (characters, conflict, plot, theme) if applicable.
7. **God's message:** What key messages do you think this text conveyed to its original audience? How did it change them?
8. **Wrestling with the message:** If there is material in the text that seems incompatible with other biblical teachings, how do you organize and sort through and prioritize that contradictory material?
9. **Application:** What messages (see #7 above) overlap with needs and situations today? How might you teach or preach this text?
10. **Bibliography:** Provide a bibliography of what you used, hard copy material and online material.

You may cover these ten items in any order you wish.

You may also be creative in your exegetical presentation. (But creativity cannot be a substitute for doing the foundational work of exegesis.)

When you apply the text to today, be sure your teaching and preaching is solidly connected to your exegetical work.

Your exegetical paper should be 1500+ words.

Commentary on Doing Exegesis

When we *exegete* a passage of scripture, we explore the language, culture, and spirit of that particular text. In the midst of such study and exploration, we begin to discover the *meaning* of the text, both for the past and for the present.

The set of principles that guide our exegesis of scripture is called “hermeneutics.” In other words, if we were to teach a course on how to do a Bible Study, *hermeneutics* would be the lecture part of the course; *exegesis* would be the lab. Through seminaries, courses of study, and multiple books, we have access to numerous experts who can lead us through the concepts of hermeneutics. We expect our pastors and deacons (and candidates for such) to avail themselves of this expertise.

A more intriguing question is this: *who should do the exegesis...week after week...sermon after sermon...Bible Study after Bible Study...life application after life application?* More specifically: will the exegesis be done ‘in house,’ by pastors and deacons who are known by their congregants and neighbors? Or is exegesis best done when out-sourced: gleaned from commentaries and famous preachers and distant academics?

Exegesis done from afar boasts a sort of efficiency. After all, what busy pastor or deacon has 2-5 hours each week for reworking an ancient language, traveling back in time to play detective, or decoding the literary characteristics of a text? It takes far less time to pull a commentary off a shelf and simply quote a smart scholar.

But the fact that the Board of Ordained Ministry requires candidates for elder and deacon to prepare and present an exegesis hints at a different answer: we think that people are best served when someone who knows both *them* AND *the Bible* does the exegesis. And these are some reasons behind our thinking:

The Bible is not an inert archive. It is an organic text, used by the living God to communicate with maturing individuals who live in an ever-changing world. Exegesis is an ongoing and essential task of each local Christian community. Whenever local and contemporary scholars do exegesis, people are blessed with a *specific, timely, and living* word of God for them. For *God’s sake* we want our elders and deacons doing on-going exegesis.

Any person who engages in the deep study of the Bible usually gets drawn into deeper questions: the role of the Bible in the overall work of the pastor and deacon, the importance of the Bible in the life of the church, the authority of the Bible in the life of the Christian, the use and abuse of the Bible in argument, the treatment of the Bible in preaching, the biblical literacy of both the public and the ‘person in the pew,’ the dismissal of the Bible by many modernists, the idolizing of the Bible by many fundamentalists, the unexamined logical fallacies committed when applying biblical content to contemporary life. In order to maintain integrity as we venture our way through this thicket of issues, it is necessary for us to do solid exegesis with more passages, more frequently, more skillfully.

Essential Tasks of Exegesis

1. Explore and examine:
 - a. The language of the text
 - i. Key words from Greek or Hebrew text
 - ii. Variations on how key words might be translated into English
 - iii. Attention to how the words are arranged in structure
 - iv. Attention to how the words are arranged with style
 - v. Note how particular words are used in a particular way by a particular writer
 - b. The culture of the text, honoring its antiquity
 - i. Anthropology
 - ii. History
 - iii. Sociology
 - iv. Economics
 - v. Religion
 - c. The spirit of the text
 - i. The personal impact of a text by evoking questions, observations, and objections in a first reading
 - ii. Other passages of scripture that relate to the particular passage and how those other passages clarify the meaning of the text
 - iii. The text's place in the context of a wider biblical narrative
 - iv. The relevance of the text to germane theological themes
 - v. The message of the text then and now

Primary Mistakes in Exegesis

1. **Proof-Texting:** refusing to do or acknowledge any scholarly study on a text because a position has already been decided and the text is merely there to prove the point.
2. **Neglecting Cultural Inequivalence:** assuming that customs and definitions are the same in all cultures, when in fact, some of them are quite different. Therefore, when a biblical passage speaks to a specific custom, the exegete must demonstrate sufficient cultural equivalence in order to apply those biblical teachings to the customs of our own society.
3. **Ignoring clashing texts:** failing to wrestle through the conflicts caused by scriptural texts that seem to contradict each other, scripture passages that neglect our experiences, scripture passages that defy reason or doctrine or ethics, or scripture passages that are inconsistent with church tradition.
4. **Spiritualizing a text:** ignoring the wider narrative or historical realities of a text and immediately transposing its message to a spiritual generality that can be applied at will to contemporary situations.
5. **Psychologizing a text:** imputing intent, emotion, or experience to a biblical character that will likely confine or bend interpretation of the text to the point we want to make, or to a very individualistic application of the text.
6. **Failing to let the Bible be its own commentary:** neglecting other biblical texts that shed light on the meaning of a passage.
7. **Committing Logical Fallacies:** introducing irrational logic into how a text should be interpreted and applied. Examples of illogical thinking include: denying the antecedent, affirming the consequent, begging the question, false assumptions, substituting for the force of reason, reductionism, misclassification, the inability to disprove does not prove, the false dilemma, post ergo propter hoc, the fallacy of expediency, and the red herring.
8. **Proposing Rogue Translations:** straying too far from the obvious meaning of the original text, or being too rigid in translating a text, thus leaving out legitimate words and concepts that might faithfully transmit the depth and nuance of a text.
9. **Disregarding the context:** not reading the whole biblical book which contains the text, not seeing the text in the context of that whole, not connecting a text with the passage that come both before and after, not seeing how a text integrates into the whole document.
10. **Stopping Short at Analysis:** taking apart a text with academic tools but not using academic tools to put it back together again so that it might bless the reader.

Elder Requirements for Preaching and Worship Project

1. Prepare and preach to a congregation a new **(12-25 minute)** sermon based on a text that you have been working on during your time in the Residence in Ministry.
2. Make a digital mpg copy to be shared with the committee of the **ENTIRE** worship service in which you are preaching the sermon. Upload the mpg file into PASSAGEUMC.
3. Upload a written manuscript of your sermon.
4. Upload a preface for the sermon describing the group you are addressing, their needs, and why you decided to speak to them as you have. **(200-400 words)**
5. Upload an exegesis of the scripture you are using for your sermon.

Deacon Requirements for Proclamation of the Word

1. Prepare and present to an assembly (or any gathering appropriate to your ministry setting) a new **(12-25 minute)** a Proclamation of the Word based on a text that you have been working on during your time in the Residence in Ministry.
2. Make a digital mpg copy to be shared with the committee of your “Proclamation of the Word”. If it is part of a worship service, it should include the **ENTIRE** worship service. Upload the mpg file to YouTube and provide URL address in your PassageUMC. If it is present in another setting, the digital copy should include the hour surrounding your proclamation.
3. Upload a written manuscript of your “Proclamation of the Word.”
4. Upload a preface for your “Proclamation of the Word” describing the group you are addressing, their needs, and why you decided to speak to them as you have. **(200-400 words)**
5. Upload an exegesis of the scripture you are using for your “Proclamation of the Word.”