

# Requirements for Associate Membership

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## **Contact Information:**

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## **Checklist, Deadlines, Quality of work you need to complete**

### You need to upload to UMCARES:

1. Clergy application form
2. College transcripts and a copy of your FINAL Course of Study transcript
3. Updated autobiographical statement
4. Update your "Personal Information" page on UMCARES, including a recent photo and list your full baptized name (first, middle and last names)
5. Medical form (both the Personal Self-Disclosure Medical form and the Physician's Medical form)
6. A current signed and notarized disclosure statement
7. Submit five (5) Recommendations (using one of the forms listed in the Assist Files in UMCARES)
  - a. Any district superintendents you have had in the past 12 months
  - b. Any clergy mentors you have had in the past 12 months
  - c. Current chair of your Staff-Parish Relations Committee
  - d. A lay person who holds an official position in your church
  - e. An active United Methodist pastor from IGRC

### Papers and projects you need to turn in:

1. Doctrinal Answers
2. Bible Study
3. Sermon

## **Deadlines for all work: Midnight the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday in September**

### **Quality:**

All work must meet graduate level standards: grammar, spelling, punctuation, and clarity of thought (if you have questions you can refer to the most recent edition of the MLA – [MLAFormat.org](http://MLAFormat.org)). Common rules for referencing and plagiarism are applicable. Your work is expected to show sensitivity to cultural diversity.

## **Oral Interviews and Board of Ministry decisions:**

You will be interviewed in (or near) Springfield, IL on the **third Thursday of October**. The exact location will be announced closer to the meeting time. Either the Board Registrar or the chairperson of the Ministerial Effectiveness Review Team (**MERT**) 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 9:00 a.m. and stay until 2:30 p.m. Four teams of Board of Ministry members will interview you. Each interview session will be approximately one hour. The interview teams are as follows:

- Psychological tests, references, transcripts, medical forms
- Bible study
- Doctrinal paper
- Sermon Project

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 make one of following actions:

- Approve you for associate membership
- Ask you to rewrite and resubmit some of your work, by January 15<sup>th</sup>. You may or may be asked to re-interview with one or more of the teams. A final decision will be made at the February Board of Ministry meeting whether or not to accept your rewrite and to approve you for associate membership at the next scheduled annual conference.
- Delay your membership with specifics about what remedial work must be completed prior to re-interviewing the following year or beyond.
- Deny your request.
- Discontinue you from ministry.

If you are delayed, or if you are asked to resubmit some work, or re-do an interview, you will be given specific 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 message will be followed up by a written notice of the Board's actions, including specifics on any additional or remedial work you may need to complete within ten (10) days.

## **Mentors, Supervisors, Private Mentors**

### **Clergy Mentors**

Your clergy mentor is the pastor assigned to you by your District Committee on Ministry and/or your District Superintendent. You will continue to work with that mentor until you are elected as an associate member. Use this person as a resource person and have them actively review the work you intend to submit to the Board.

Once commissioned, and as you begin your time in the Residence in Ministry (RIM) program of the Board, you will be assigned a new mentor by the Board of Ministry who is member of the Board. This RIM mentor will walk along side of you until you are admitted into Full Membership and ordained.

### **Personal Mentors**

Of course, you may elicit help from any person. Though, it is important for you to select mentors, coaches, counselors, and/or spiritual guides who are **NOT** current members of the Board of Ordained Ministry. This will allow you to enjoy the rights of confidentiality that a mentor/guide of your own choosing can afford you. These persons selected by you will NOT report to the Board of Ordained Ministry. Neither will the Board ask them for input.

Anyone associated with Illinois Great Rivers 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 consultation.

The only exceptions to these rules of confidentiality are as follows:

- the psychological assessment report prepared for the board when you began your candidacy
- additional psychological tests and report requested prior to your interview with the board
- any additional psychological tests and reports that you *may* be specifically requested by the board to take during the associate membership process

## Requirements for the Doctrinal Answers

(¶324.9, 2012 Book of Discipline)

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

- 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 the kingdom of God; the resurrection; 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, vivified in personal experience, and confirmed by reason. What is your understanding of this theological position of the Church?
- 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. How do you perceive yourself, your gifts, your motives, your role, and your commitment as an associate member in the United Methodist Church?
- l. Describe your understanding of the *diakonia*, the servant ministry of the church, and the servant ministry of the associate member.
- m. Describe your understanding of an inclusive church and ministry to all persons regardless of: race, ethnicity, national origin, social status, gender, sexual orientation, age, economic condition, or disability
- n. 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?
- o. Explain the role and significance of the sacraments in the ministry to which you have been called.

### **ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES:**

- As you write your doctrinal answers, include the number/letter of each question, the question itself and THEN present your answer. Answer the questions in the order they are presented above.

- Footnotes, when needed, may be presented as either footnotes or endnotes. Follow appropriate academic guidelines for these notations ([MLAFormat.org](https://mlaformat.org)).
- Provide a bibliography at the end of the paper of books, articles, and presentations (hard copies and electronic) that have directly influenced your thoughts on these specific topics.
- Be prepared to comment about how your selected resources have impacted your thinking and personal development at your oral interview.

## Requirements for the Bible Study

In The Book of Discipline, 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*. 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. **For your Associate Membership interview, the Bible Study you create MUST BE taught prior to submitting your final materials for review.** Create an "original" Bible Study based on passages from ***Paul's letter to the Ephesians***.

### 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 this will include some use of 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.
  
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. **REMEMBER: You are required to teach this study.** Please describe the participants and note any pre-conceived assumptions you are making about them (assumed age group, setting, education level, familiarity with Scripture and the faith)
  - C. Briefly describe how you will assess the learning of participants
  - D. Prepare a syllabus for the students, including individual weekly assignments
  - E. 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.

- F. List the learning activities you use throughout your study; variety is good
3. Submit a **detailed lesson plan** for one of your six 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 a scholarly exegetical 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**)
  5. Submit a reflection paper outlining some of your observations of the study (what worked?, what didn't work?, were there concepts participants could not understand?, etc). (**Approximately 500 words**)

## **Exegesis Requirements (Bible Study and Sermon)**

You will need to prepare an exegesis paper for both your Bible Study and 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: initial observations, questions, disturbances, things you never noticed (or can't remember) from previous reads of this text.
2. **Language notes:** Your own translation/paraphrase of the passage, including scholarly evidence for the accuracy of your translation 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 or section of scripture 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? Is that message relevant today? Why or Why not?
8. **Wrestling with the message:** If there is material in the text that seems incompatible with other biblical teachings, how do you organize, 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? What could be a "springboard" to preaching 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 associate members 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 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 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 or click on the nearest literary link and simply quote a smart scholar.

But the fact that the Board of Ordained Ministry requires candidates for associate membership 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 associate members 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,
  - 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 place in the historical world
    - i. Anthropology (origin, nature and destiny of human beings)
    - ii. History
    - iii. Sociology
    - iv. Economics
    - v. Religion
  - c. The spirit of the text
    - i. Questions, observations, and objections evoked personally from a first reading of the text
    - ii. Other passages of scripture that relate to the particular passage and how those other passages clarify the meaning of the text or add to the meaning
    - 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 Differences:** 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 understanding 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 (denying a preceding event, condition or cause), affirming the consequent (failure to observe logical sequence), ignoring or overlooking an underlining question in the text, false assumptions, substituting for the force of reason, reductionism (simplifying the complex), misclassification, the inability to disprove does not prove, the false dilemma, post ergo propter hoc (because an event occurred first, it must have caused this later event), 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.

## **Requirements for the Sermon**

1. Prepare and preach to a congregation a new (12-25 minute) sermon based on **ANY** biblical text you chose.
2. Make a digital mpg copy to be shared with the committee of the **ENTIRE** worship service (from beginning to end) in which you are preaching the sermon. Upload the mpg file into UMCARES. If you have trouble, contact the Board Registrar.
3. Upload a written manuscript of your sermon to UMCARES. This should be nearly a verbatim rendering of your spoken message.
4. Upload (into UMCARES) a preface for the sermon (**Approximately 200-400 words**) describing the congregation you are addressing:
  - a. Who they are (demographics)
  - b. Their needs as you perceive them
  - c. Why you selected this passage and what your desired message to the hearers will be (what is the Good News for this day?)
  - d. Is there a specific “outcome” for which you are hoping?
5. Upload an exegesis of the scripture you are using for your sermon (refer to the information provide in the *Exegesis Section* of the Bible Study section).