

# Expectations of Candidates

Embarras River District Committee on Ordained Ministry

## 1. Certification for Candidacy: FITNESS

Those coming to be certified by the DOCM must show signs of “fitness” for ordained/licensed ministry. That fitness in the United Methodist Church is usually indicated by the following three:

- **GRACE:** The personal relationship with Christ which provides the context for:
  - a) An ability to articulate a call to licensed/ordained ministry
  - b) An ease and peace with people, compassion, and a desire to be community with the UMC connectional structure, with clergy colleagues, with laity, and with the neighbor and stranger, regardless of nationality, race, age, color, or creed
  - c) An ability to work with others as a team
  - d) An ongoing ability and willingness to grow and learn; to be spiritually, intellectually, and physically formed; to be perfected in love.
  - e) A willingness to be held accountable by supervisors and peers.
  - f) An ability to give and receive forgiveness
  - g) The spiritual energy for taking initiative
  - h) The courage for taking responsibility
  - i) A freedom from the law, yet a respect for rules and laws as pointing to grace
  - j) An ability to trust
  - k) An awareness of boundaries between self and others; an ability to self-differentiate
  - l) An ability to call for help, to know when the burden requires additional minds, hearts, and hands
  - m) Honesty and authenticity; willingness to be “an open book”, to be accountable to God, covenant community, and supervisors for thoughts, actions, and motives (the word “candidate” and “candor” are related)
  - n) Wesley’s question to candidates was: *“Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire nothing but God? Are they holy in all manner of conversation?”* (§310, 2004 BOD)
- **GIFTS:** the talents and promise for leadership which a candidate brings. Those on the Elder track need to show promise for preaching the Gospel, administering sacraments, and giving oversight to the life of the church. Those on the Deacon track need to show promise for service in the area to which God is calling them.  
Wesley’s question to candidates was: *“Have they a clear, sound understanding; a right judgment in the things of God; a just conception of salvation by faith? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?”* (§310, 2004 BOD)
- **FRUIT:** the God-like qualities that blossom in each Christian who abides in Christ. (Galatians 5:22-26: “By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.”)  
Wesley’s question to candidates was: *“Have they fruit? Have any been truly convinced of sin and converted to God, and are believers edified by their service?”* (§310, 2004 BOD)

## 2. Probationary Membership (Deacon/Elder): READINESS

Those requesting the dCOM for a recommendation for Probationary Membership must be “Board-ready.” This means that they will pass examination in regard to their “readiness” for ordained ministry. (Note: “fitness” is assumed at this level. Fitness issues at this point are serious red flags.) Attention in “readiness” interviews is given to the candidate’s academic background, theological statement, and reports on field education experiences or internships; all should indicate growth (not perfection) in all skills required for the particular ordained ministry to which one is called. Under the **1992/96 Disciplines**, those applying for Associate Membership will demonstrate this same fitness.

## 3. Full Membership (Deacon/Elder): EFFECTIVENESS

While the dCOM does not deal with candidates on this level, it’s important to be aware that “effectiveness” becomes the focus of this level. If at this point there are problems, it is often due to unresolved questions around a candidate’s fitness or readiness.