Education and Clergy Development

Guide to Exploring The Call

2025 Edition

Education & Clergy Development
The Wesleyan Church
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Ordination Track in The Wesleyan Church

1

- Become a member in a local Wesleyan Church.
- Respond to a Call to Ministry.
- Seek recommendation by local church and pastor to be a ministerial student. This recommendation is made to the District Board of Ministerial Development (DBMD). One year must be completed in the category of Ministerial Student before the district will consider licensing you as a minister.

2

- Submit DBMD form #1 and #2 to DBMD.
- Complete initial interview with the DBMD.

and

Enroll online and submit official transcripts of all previous college studies to the Education and Clergy Development Division at the World Headquarters of the Wesleyan Church. (www.wesleyan.org/ecd)

3

Ordination coursework may be completed through the following programs:

Bachelor of Arts programs:
(Campus or online)

Houghton University
Indiana Wesleyan Univ.
Kingswood Univ.
Oklahoma Wesleyan Univ.
Southern Wesleyan Univ.

and/or

Masters Degree programs:

Wesley Seminary (IWU)
Asbury Theological Seminary (campus or online)
7 other approved seminaries

and/or

Adult Education:

Kingswood Extended (KU)
Cross Training (OKWU)
District MTP classes

4

- Complete 6 licensing courses and be appointed to local church ministry by district. Be issued a district license.
- Complete yearly interviews with the DBMD. Submit DBMD form #3 each year. Complete 2 years
- of service as an appointed minister in a Wesleyan Church.

5

- Be certified by the Education and Clergy Development Division for ordination after completion of academic requirements.
- Submit DBMD form #5 and successfully complete ordination interview with DBMD.
- Be ordained in a service of ordination by the district.

*Your DBMD may have additional requirements for this process.

Understanding Your Call

Next to accepting Christ as your Savior, committing yourself to follow God's call vocationally will be the most important and exciting decision of your life. If you have received a call into ministry, or are wondering if God might be calling you, we want to join your pastor and trusted Christian friends in helping to confirm your call. You might be asking some of the following questions:

How Does God Call People?

The Bible teaches us that while every Christian is called to be God's servant and to use his or her vocation to minister to others, God calls some to specialized ministries on behalf of the Church. People do not choose to become ministers, missionaries, or some other form of credentialed minister in the Church; they are called by the Lord.

God calls women and men to commit themselves to vocations of specialized Christian service, and He calls them in many ways.

Some people are called in dramatic ways, but most people experience their "call" as a growing conviction or compulsion resulting from a time of commitment to the will of God in their lives. This often occurs at youth camps, camp meetings, missionary conventions, or revival meetings.

How Can I Be Sure I Am Called?

How you are called is not as important as being certain you **are** called. If God has called you, He will make that call very clear to you. God calls people from within the Body of Christ to minister to that Body and to assist it in incorporating others into fellowship. And He uses the Body of Christ to recognize and nurture those who are called to vocations of specialized ministry. God can use your local church and close Christian friends to help make your call clear and to help prepare you for ministry.

Those who are called should be able to pass five "tests" regarding the genuineness of their call. These five tests are:

1. The test of "**grace**." Have you been saved and experienced the Holy Spirit's transformation of your heart? Is the fruit of the Spirit evident in your life?
2. The test of "**gifts**." Are you able to understand, reason, communicate, and provide loving care and leadership to God's people? Listen to the counsel of your pastor and trusted Christian friends as they guide you in discovering and developing your gifts for ministry.
3. The test of "**fruit**." Are people being helped by your Christian influence? Are you actively sharing your faith? Have you brought anyone closer to the Lord by your witness?
4. The test of "**an abiding sense of a divine call**." Do you have an inner awareness of God's leading? Is this awareness dependent upon a highly charged environment to stay alive, or is it an unshakeable part of your daily life? Are you ready to give yourself wholly to the demands of preparation and service that are a part of this call?
5. The test of "**open doors**." Does the Lord open doors for your preparation for ministry? Are there open doors of opportunity for you to use your talents and test your gifts? The enemy will fight against you, but the Lord will also use open doors of opportunity to validate your call.

Now That I'm Called, What Should I Do?

COUNSEL WITH YOUR PASTOR. You need the support and direction your pastor can give you. Your pastor may want you to meet with the Local Board of Administration and be recommended for license as a ministerial student.

GET INVOLVED. You cannot ignore present opportunities to witness, to work in the Church, and to help people and think God will use you later. Use every present opportunity to be faithful to those things which will later occupy your efforts more fully. Offer yourself to your pastor to be used in whatever way he/she considers best and then listen to your pastor's counsel as you are involved in church-life.

LEARN BY WATCHING AND LISTENING. Watch what your pastor does and how it is done. Ask questions. Listen to what is going on around you. Learn how the Church works and what is necessary in order for people to work together. Ask your pastor if you can attend some board or committee meetings.

DEVELOP YOUR PEOPLE SKILLS. More people run into problems in the ministry because of interpersonal relationship problems than anything else. Develop your ability to get along with others – to be reasonable and rational when others are upset and irrational – to be understanding when that is needed – to hold firm to a principle without being obstinate and "bull-headed" – and to help people resolve their differences without causing division.

CULTIVATE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES. Many people are more concerned about how big their ministry will be rather than how deep their ministry will be. Make holiness your aspiration. Learn to pray. Spend time in God's Word. Concentrate more on being spiritual than successful. You take care of the depth of your ministry, and God will take care of the breadth of your ministry.

DETERMINE YOU ARE GOING TO BE ADEQUATELY PREPARED. God needs people who are ready to be the best they can be. For most, this will mean a ministerial training program which may involve college and seminary. Not everyone is able to follow this track into ministry, but don't ever shortchange the preparation portion of your calling. Don't keep the boundaries of your usefulness too narrow by failure to prepare adequately. Youthful enthusiasm might cause you to feel that the quicker you can get out there and do your thing, the better, but a few more years of training may be your contribution to the cause of Christ far greater because you are more equipped to do **His** thing rather than **yours**.

THE GOALS - What Are the Tracks of Ministry in TWC?

Credentialed Ministry in The Wesleyan Church falls into two main categories:
Vocational Ministry and Lay Ministry.

VOCATIONAL MINISTRY

Vocational Ministry includes those whom God has called to full-time vocational ministry, and their calling, gifts, and usefulness have been recognized by their local church and their district. Some examples of individuals who serve in this capacity include Senior Pastors, Solo Pastors, Associate Pastors, Assistant Pastors, Missionaries, and Chaplains. The Wesleyan Church recognizes three forms of credentialing in this area of Vocational Ministry:

Ordained Minister – This is the highest credential given by The Wesleyan Church to an individual who meets all the academic, spiritual, and governmental standards of the church. They have the authority to preach, administer baptism, serve the Lord's Supper, perform weddings, transfer from one district to another, and serve in any position in district government for which they qualify and to vote in district conference sessions.

Commissioned Minister –This credential is a high-level credential within The Wesleyan Church, but it is only an option for certain people. It was established for those with limitations due to advanced age, health issues, or learning disabilities. People in this category do not have all the same rights and privileges as an ordained minister. Only a DBMD can enter a person in this category. Commissioned Ministers are voting members of district conference, but they may not serve in positions of district government.

Licensed Minister – This category has two options. Anyone wishing to be ordained will serve as a licensed minister while completing service and academic requirements for ordination. Additionally, districts can allow individuals to remain licensed ministers if they do not feel called to ordained ministry but wish to be credentialed and appointed to a local church. If the district adopts this option, the DBMD works with the individual regarding the academic requirements. For both options, a Licensed Minister has the authority to administer the sacraments and perform the duties of a pastor of a local Wesleyan church. Some licensed ministers are voting members of district conference, but they may not serve in positions of district government.

LAY MINISTRY

Lay Ministry includes lay people whom God has called to special service in their local church and/or district. The Wesleyan Church recognizes two forms of credentialing in this area of Lay Ministry:

Special Worker – God has called certain lay people to specific ministries, such as director of small groups, lay evangelist, youth director, children's worker, director of music, lay missionary, lay counselor, etc. Special Workers serve under the guidance of their pastor and/or the district/general church. They are nonvoting members of the district conference. This license is held by the district and is voted upon by district conference.

Lay Minister – These are lay people whose local church has licensed them to preach and serve under their pastor's direction as opportunity affords. Lay ministers have no plans for ministry except in connection with their local church. This license is held by the local church and voted upon by the LBA and/or LCC.

**PLEASE NOTE: A more detailed definition of these categories of ministry can be found in "The Manual of Ministerial Preparation" which may be viewed and downloaded from https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd/ordination-and-credentialing/pursue.

THE PROCESS - How Do I Pursue Ministerial Credentials?

The Local Church Level

MEET WITH YOUR PASTOR - Discuss your call to the ministry. Go over the different tracks of ministry in the Wesleyan Church.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP - Check with your pastor to make sure that your membership in your local Wesleyan Church is current.

RECEIVE A RECOMMENDATION – Interview with your pastor and/or the LBA of your local church. Suggested interview questions and information for the pastor are included in the back of this booklet.

- *Ordination, Licensed Minister, or Special Worker* – the LBA must complete an "LBA Recommendation Form" to become a Ministerial Student and send it to the District Board of Ministerial Development. The "Local Board of Administration Recommendation Form" may be downloaded from https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd/ordination-and-credentialing/pursue

- *Lay Minister* – the LBA and/or LCC must vote for you to become a licensed Lay Minister. No report should be sent to the district.

The General Church Level

ENROLL - Enroll with ECD (Education and Clergy Development Division) – Enrollment with ECD creates your official candidate record, which is used to track your academic progress toward your intended credential. No ministerial credentials will be issued until enrollment is complete. To enroll, visit here.

TRANSCRIPTS - Send ***official*** transcripts to education@wesleyan.org or mail to
Education and Clergy Development
13300 Olio Rd
Fishers, IN 46037

MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY – upon enrollment with ECD, you have access to your profile and credential transcript information. An invitation email with instructions for first-time login will be sent to the email used for enrollment.

The District Level – Vocational Ministry Only

INTERVIEW - After receiving the LBA Recommendation Form, the DBMD (District Board of Ministerial Development) will contact you to schedule an interview.

- *If you do not receive communication from the DBMD, it is appropriate to reach out to the district office as a follow-up.*

COMPLETED FORMS - Complete all paperwork sent from the DBMD.

The Academic Level

Each credential track has academic requirements to prepare the individual for the many different tasks and opportunities of day-to-day ministry. ECD updates your candidate record in the Ministerial Development Community. Upon completion of your academic requirements, ECD will mark your record as "Certified." There are several options for completing the academic requirements for ministry credentials in The Wesleyan Church.

**Remember, the district is the entity that has the actual authority to ordain, commission, or license (except for Lay Ministers who are licensed by their local churches). On the following pages, you will find an outline of the academic requirements for each of the ministerial tracks*

***For those pursuing ordination, you must take a minimum of 2 classes per year to retain your license.*

****A grade of "C-" or above is required for all courses.*

Wesleyan Colleges/Universities or Approved Seminaries

Undergraduate - The preferred track of ministerial training in The Wesleyan Church is an undergraduate degree in ministerial from one of our five Wesleyan schools, followed by completion of a Masters of Divinity program at one of our approved seminaries. The Wesleyan Church has five excellent schools with undergraduate programs which offer all of the courses required for credentials in The Wesleyan Church.

- Houghton University
- Indiana Wesleyan University
- Kingswood University
- Oklahoma Wesleyan University
- Southern Wesleyan University

Seminary - You may also take many (or all) of the ordination requirements at one of our nine approved seminaries through their MDiv program.

- Wesley Seminary at IWU
- Asbury Theological Seminary
- Azusa Pacific
- Evangelical Seminary
- Portland Seminary
- Nazarene Theological Seminary
- Northeastern Seminary
- Tyndale School of Theology
- Wesley Biblical Seminary

**Several of the approved educational pathways require a student to take specific electives for Wesleyan ordination that are not part of the core degree requirement. To ensure degree completion will align with ordination requirements, check with a school advisor or visit https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd/ordination-and-credentialing/pursue.

Other Options:

Cross-Training courses are offered by Oklahoma Wesleyan University as an option for adult students who are unable to attend college or seminary. These online courses are taught by qualified instructors and fulfill the academic requirements for ordination in The Wesleyan Church. More information is available at https://www.okwu.edu/adult/crosstraining/.

Kingswood Extended and Kingswood Learn courses are offered by Kingswood University in Canada and are taught by qualified instructors through an online platform. Although not all Kingswood Learn courses are accepted for credit, certain courses can be applied to credentialing credit for a monetary fee. More information is available at https://www.kingswood.edu/academic-excellence/ordination-studies

Lantern courses are offered from Wesley Seminary at Indiana Wesleyan University. These self-paced online courses utilize video content. Assessment is completed with a course instructor. For more information, visit https://www.wesley.indwes.edu.

FLAMA Fraternidad Latinoamericana de Adiestramiento Ministerial Alternativo - Como el nombre indica, es un programa academico en Español para estudiantes ministeriales Hispanos para la licencia ministerial para la ordenación en La Iglesia Wesleyana. https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd/flama.

Ministry Training Programs - Education and Clergy Development sanctions districts and local churches to hold classes at certain times during the year to train their ministers. Contact your district office to inquire about courses offered in your area.

Credit by Portfolio – If an individual has mastered a particular area of the academic training standards through extensive experience or a combination of related courses, seminars, extensive research and/or reading, they may apply for credit via the Credit by Portfolio packet. Contact your DBMD for more information.

FINANCIAL AID

The Wesleyan Church provides loan/grant assistance for some ministerial students. To qualify, a student must:

- Be a junior or senior at a Wesleyan college/university, or be enrolled for graduate theological training at one of our approved seminaries/universities
- Be a member of a local Wesleyan church in North America
- Be seeking ordination, if not already ordained
- Be approved by their District Board of Ministerial Development
- Indicate intention to serve as a minister of The Wesleyan Church under district appointment
- Maintain a GPA of at least 2.0

More information and application forms can be obtained by visiting our website **Loan Grant** or through the college/university's financial aid office.

THE wesleyan CHURCH
Education & Clergy Development

Required Courses of The Wesleyan Church

Category/Class	Class Number	Ordained	Commissioned	Lay Special Worker	Lay Minister
General Ed					
Sociology or Cultural Anthropology	C21	Required			
Psychology	C22	Required			
Philosophy/Ethics	C31	Required			
Bible					Δ - Choose **one** from C03, C04 or C14
***Old Testament Intro**	C03	Required	Required	Required	Δ
***New Testament Intro**	C04	Required	Required	Required	Δ
***Methods of Bible Study**	C14	Required	Required	Required	Δ
Old Testament Elective	OT1	Required			
New Testament Elective	NT1	Required			
History					
General Church History	C25	Required	Required		
***Wesleyan History/Discipline**	C35	Required	Required	Required	Required
Theology					
***Intro to Theology**	C05	Required	Required	Required	Required
Advanced Theology	C32	Required			
***Doctrine of Holiness** *(effective 1/1/25)*	C42	Required	Required	Required	
Practical Ministries					Δ - Choose **two** from among C23, C28, C29 C33, C34, C36, C38, or C44
Christian Education	C23	Required	Required	Required	Δ
Spiritual Formation	C26	Required	Required		
Evangelism/Church Health	C28	Required	Required	Required	Δ
Global and Intercultural Ministries	C29	Required			Δ
Intro to Homiletics	C33	Required	Required		Δ
Pastoral Ministries	C34	Required	Required		Δ
Worship	C36	Required			Δ
***Church Leadership/Management**	C38	Required	Required		Δ
Expository Preaching	C43	Required			
Pastoral Counseling	C44	Required	Required		Δ
Elective in Specialty				Required	
Elective in Specialty				Required	
Supervised Ministry					
Supervised Ministry	C55	Required	Required		

** These are the courses required to become a licensed minister, which is the first step toward ordination or commissioning. Please note: To retain a district license an individual must complete two classes per year. Ministerial license is not a permanent situation.*

*See the following page for **Licensed Minister (Permanent Status)** requirements.*

THE wesleyan CHURCH
Education & Clergy Development

Required Courses of The Wesleyan Church

For Licensed Minister (Permanent Status)

Category/Class	Class Number	Licensed Minister (Permanent Status)
General Ed		
Sociology or Cultural Anthropology	C21	
Psychology	C22	
Philosophy/Ethics	C31	
Bible		
***Old Testament Intro**	C03	**Required**
***New Testament Intro**	C04	**Required**
***Methods of Bible Study**	C14	**Required**
Old Testament Elective	OT1	Elective Option
New Testament Elective	NT1	Elective Option
History		
General Church History	C25	Elective Option
***Wesleyan History/Discipline**	C35	**Required**
Theology		
***Intro to Theology**	C05	**Required**
Advanced Theology	C32	Elective Option
***Doctrine of Holiness**	C42	**Required**
Practical Ministries		
Christian Education	C23	Elective Option
Spiritual Formation	C26	Elective Option
Evangelism/Church Health	C28	Elective Option
Global and Intercultural Ministries	C29	Elective Option
Intro to Homiletics	C33	Elective Option
Pastoral Ministries	C34	Elective Option
Worship	C36	Elective Option
***Church Leadership/Management**	C38	**Required**
Expository Preaching	C43	Elective Option
Pastoral Counseling	C44	Elective Option
Supervised Ministry		
Supervised Ministry	C55	Elective Option

** These are the seven courses required to become a Licensed Minister with Permanent Status. In addition, five Electives must be chosen in consultation with the DBMD.*

RECOMMENDATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR PASTOR AND LBA

The pastor and Local Board of Administration have a serious responsibility relative to the recommendation of a lay special worker or of a minister-in-preparation to the district for ministry studies. The pastor and board should evaluate carefully and prayerfully the candidate's Christian experience, reputation, conduct, and spiritual stability. While a recommendation for a license to study should not be given lightly, neither should a candidate be rejected without sound reason. Use the separate LBA Recommendation Form after meeting with the applicant. It is available here: https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd/ordination-and-credentialing/pursue.

Each pastor should have a copy of the Manual of Ministerial Preparation in order to give guidance to those seeking to fulfill their call to ministry. A copy can be obtained from the Education and Clergy Development Division by emailing education@wesleyan.org or visiting https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd/ordination-and-credentialing/pursue.

A ministerial student is a person who is convinced of a call, which he or she expects to lead to ordination, and is engaged in studies either full or part-time. A ministerial student must be examined and recommended to the District Conference and prepare for ordination under the supervision of the District Board of Ministerial Development. A ministerial student must also enroll with Education and Clergy Development (www.wesleyan.org/ecd/enroll).

There are three types of lay ministry which are credentialed by The Wesleyan Church: lay minister, special worker, and lay missionary. The Lay Minister and Special Worker require an LBA recommendation.

1. Normally, the lay minister has no plans for ministry except in connection with the local church. The lay minister is to assist the pastor, as the pastor shall direct. The lay minister's license is valid for only one year. There is no district involvement in the licensing of a lay minister. Once the layperson has been licensed as a lay minister, he or she is to enroll immediately with Education and Clergy Development (www.wesleyan.org/ecd/enroll) and pursue the Lay Minister's Course of Study.

2. A special worker is a lay person who believes that he or she is divinely led to serve the Church as a director of music, director of Christian education, youth director, song evangelist, chalk artist, children's worker, spouse in ministry, lay evangelist, social worker or in some other special capacity, and who has been authorized to carry on such work by a District Conference. Upon recommendation by the Local Church to the DBMD, the special worker candidate should enroll with Education and Clergy Development (www.wesleyan.org/ecd/enroll) and pursue the Special Worker's Course of Study.

Suggested Interview Questions for Pastor and/or LBA

1. What level of ministerial credentialing are you seeking?
   _____Ministerial Student (Ordination track)
   _____Lay Special Worker
   _____Lay Minister

2. If you are seeking recognition as a Lay Minister, in what areas of local church life do you feel you could minister most effectively?

3. If you feel that you are called to full-time ministry in the church (ministerial student-ordination track), explain how you came to that belief.

4. What gifts do you feel you possess that qualify you for specialized ministry?

5. How and when were you converted?

6. Have you been entirely sanctified? _____ What is your understanding of this grace?

7. In what ways are you presently serving the Lord in the church?

8. What are your plans for preparing yourself for ministry?

9. Are there special areas of ministry to which you feel particularly called?

10. Does your spouse support your call to ministry? _____Explain any resistance

11. Is it your desire to minister within The Wesleyan Church?

12. Read the "Guides and Helps to Holy Living" in *The Discipline of the Wesleyan Church*, paragraph 260. Do these principles characterize the way you live? _____
    Can you wholly support and practice them? _____ Explain any hesitancy.