



# **Guide to Exploring The Call 2023 Edition**

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# God Called, You Answered. Now What?

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 idea of being "called" to a vocation may be foreign to you. Most individuals choose what they want to do to earn a living. 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 in behalf of the Church. People do not choose to become ministers, missionaries or some other form of ordained or commissioned minister in the Church; they are called by the Lord.

God calls a lot of different kinds of people to commit themselves to vocations of specialized Christian service and He calls them in a lot of different 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. Often this takes place at youth camp, camp meeting, missionary convention or revival meeting. But don't worry if your call didn't come this way – there is no one way that God calls people.

## 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 can 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. It seems logical then that He would use 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 entirely sanctified? Do you live a holy life? Is the fruit of the Spirit evident in your life?
2. The test of "**gifts.**" Do you have a reasonable amount of ability 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 open about 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 pay the price to give yourself wholly to the demands of preparation and service which 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.

## What If I Don't Think I'm Qualified?

Don't panic if you think God has called you but you feel inadequate. The biblical record of those God called indicates many of His called-ones felt inadequate, unworthy and unprepared. Better to feel inadequate and trust in his adequacy than to think you can do it all without preparation, experience, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

If you have made some pretty foolish mistakes already in your life, will they disqualify you for ministry in the church? God's forgiveness is a wonderful thing. It is wonderful to know that regardless of the foolish mistakes you may have made, Christ can make you clean. God only uses clean vessels – clean because they have been washed by the blood of Christ, not because they have never been soiled by sin. Be sure you are clean and then if you feel God has called you, offer yourself to Him to be used. There are times when we carry the consequences of our sins with us throughout our lives and they forever shape what we are able to do. However, concentrate on being usable and available. Then, as God provides opportunities for you to minister to others, seize them and forever marvel at His wonderful grace that He should choose to use a person like you. God's ministers have not been called because they never have committed sin, but because they have been forgiven and are willing, in their humility and brokenness, to be used.

## 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. Don't be a "milk-toast" type person but 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**.

# Preparing for Ministry through Evaluation & Self Discovery

While all believers are called to serve in ministry as followers of Christ, we are each given unique gifts, passions, abilities and opportunities that when aligned as God planned can empower us to serve at a maximum level of effectiveness. Use the following resources in helping to discern your gifts, personality and strengths for service. Then set up a time to speak with your pastor or Christian friend to discover some of the ways that God may desire to use you in ministry.

A good place to begin is in discovering your **Spiritual Gifts**. Spiritual gifts are Holy Spirit empowered gifts that produce spiritual fruit. While there are many spiritual gifts tests available, one of the best is “The 3 Colors of Ministry” by Christian Schwartz. It can be purchased at [wphonline.com](http://wphonline.com) or ordered through [www.churchsmart.com](http://www.churchsmart.com). Many people in ministry soon discover that **dealing with different personalities** can be both a source of joy and frustration. A helpful step for those who serve in ministry is to understand how your own personality works with other personalities. While there are many different personality profiles available we recommend that you take the DiSC profile. The DiSC profile can be ordered from [www.churchsmart.com](http://www.churchsmart.com), as well.

A third tool that is highly recommended for **understanding your strengths** in leadership and ministry is the “Strengthsfinder 2.0” by Tom Rath. You can order the book through [wphonline.com](http://wphonline.com) or pick one up at your local bookstore. It will include a code for an online Strengthfinders test that will help you to discover your area of strengths for life and ministry.

Once you have completed the following inventories, then use the “Strengths” Coaching guide with your pastor or a Christian friend to discover some of the potential areas of ministry where God may be leading you.

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

Credentialed Ministry in The Wesleyan Church falls into two main categories:

### *A. Vocational Ministry*

### *B. Lay Ministry*

**A. 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 includes Senior Pastors, Solo Pastors, Associate Pastors, Assistant Pastors, as well as Missionaries, Chaplains, etc. 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 authority to preach, administer baptism, serve the sacraments, perform weddings, transfer from one district to another, and serve in any position in district government that they qualify for and to vote in district conference sessions.

**Commissioned Minister** – This category is not open to most 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.

**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 have the option to 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.

**B. 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 ministries such as director of Christian Education, 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.

**Lay Minister** – These are lay people whom their local church has licensed to preach and serve under their pastor’s direction and as opportunity affords. Normally lay ministers have no plans for ministry except in connection with their local church.

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/ministerial-preparation>.

## **THE PROCESS - How Do I Pursue Ministerial Credentials?**

1. **THE LOCAL CHURCH LEVEL** - Meet with your pastor and discuss your call to the ministry. Go over the different tracks of ministry in the Wesleyan Church (See Section one for details on the tracks of ministry). Check with your pastor to make sure that your membership in your local Wesleyan Church is current. Fill out the application for recommendation and give it to your pastor for your interview with the Local Board of Administration of your church. If you are pursuing Ordination, Licensed Minister, or Special Worker status you must receive a recommendation from your Local Church Conference (or Local Board if so authorized) to your district for licensing as a ministerial student. Local Board of Administration Recommendation Form may be found at <https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd/ministerial-preparation>. If you are a Lay Minister then you need the vote of the LBA to become a licensed Lay Minister and you do not need to report to the district.
2. **THE DISTRICT LEVEL** – Meet with your District Board of Ministerial Development (DBMD - Ordination, Commissioning, Licensed Minister, or Special Worker). They will interview you and counsel you on the best course of action to take in your academic training for ministry. Contact your DBMD chairman to set up an interview date.
3. **THE GENERAL CHURCH LEVEL** – Enroll with the Education and Clergy Development Division. To enroll, go [Here](#). This enrollment is crucial to your ministerial preparation process. You must have a file established in our office so that a report can be given to your district to be ordained, commissioned, or licensed in The Wesleyan Church, your district must have certification from our office of your progress toward your intended credential goal. We will keep a transcript of all your completed classes and you will be able to access your transcript and other information through your Student Portal account after enrollment.
4. **THE ACADEMIC LEVEL** – The tracks of ministry defined in Section one each have a set of academic standards. All tracks have a set of specific required training courses that will help to prepare the individual for the many different tasks and opportunities of day-to-day ministry. When those academic requirements have been satisfied, the individual is then certified as having completed the academic requirements for that particular track of ministry. The certification report is also forwarded on to your district. The district 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.

# **THE PREPARATION - Academic Training Requirements**

## **General Education**

Sociology  
Psychology  
Philosophy/Ethics

## **Bible**

*\*Methods of Bible Study (after 9/1/23)*  
*\*Introduction to Old Testament*  
*\*Introduction to New Testament*  
Old Testament Bible Elective  
New Testament Bible Elective

## **History**

General Church History  
*\*Wesleyan History/Discipline*

## **Theology**

*\*Introduction to Theology*  
Advanced Theology  
Doctrine of Holiness

## **Practical Ministries**

Christian Education  
Spiritual Formation  
Evangelism/Church Health  
Global and Intercultural Ministries  
*\*Introduction to Homiletics (until 8/31/23)*  
Pastoral Ministries  
Worship  
*\*Church Leadership/Management*  
Expository Preaching  
Pastoral Counseling

## **Practicum/Internships**

Supervised Ministry

*\* These are the six courses required to become a licensed minister, which is the first step toward ordination.*

# Academic Requirements for Other Credentials

## Licensed Minister

Methods of Bible Study  
Introduction to Old Testament  
Introduction to New Testament  
General Church History  
Wesleyan History/Discipline  
Introduction to Theology  
Doctrine of Holiness  
Christian Education  
Spiritual Formation  
Evangelism/Church Health  
Introduction to Homiletics  
Pastoral Ministries  
Church Leadership/Management  
Pastoral Counseling  
Supervised Ministry

## Lay Special Worker

Methods of Bible Study  
Introduction to Old Testament  
Introduction to New Testament  
Wesleyan History/Discipline  
Introduction to Theology  
Doctrine of Holiness  
Christian Education  
Evangelism/Church Health  
(2) Elective classes in specialty area

## Lay Minister

Wesleyan History/Discipline  
Introduction to Theology

*Choose **one** from these three:*

Methods of Bible Study  
Introduction to Old Testament  
Introduction to New Testament

*Choose **two** from these eight:*

Christian Education Evangelism/  
Church Health  
Global and Intercultural Ministries  
Introduction to Homiletics Pastoral  
Ministries  
Worship  
Church Leadership/Management  
Pastoral Counseling

## THE TOOLS - Completing the Academic Requirements

Now that you've had a chance to see "**the goals**", (the tracks of ministry in the Wesleyan Church) "**the process**", (how to get to the level of credentials that you seek), and "**the preparation**", (the academic standards for ministerial training); let's now turn our attention to "**the tools**" (the options available for you to complete the academic training standards). Several options are available.

1. **Wesleyan Colleges/Universities or Approved Seminaries** - The preferred track of ministerial training in The Wesleyan Church is a 4 year degree in ministerial or pre-ministerial studies from one of our five Wesleyan schools followed by completion of a Masters of Divinity program at one of our eight approved seminaries. The Wesleyan Church has five excellent schools, which offer all of the courses required for credentials in The Wesleyan Church. **Our schools are Houghton College, Houghton, New York; Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion, Indiana; Kingswood University, Sussex, New Brunswick, Canada; Oklahoma Wesleyan University, Bartlesville, Oklahoma; and Southern Wesleyan University, Central, South Carolina.** You may also take many (or all) of the ordination requirements at one of our nine approved seminaries: **Wesley Seminary at IWU, Marion, Indiana; Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky; Azusa Pacific Seminary at Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, California; Evangelical Seminary, Myerstown, Pennsylvania; Portland Seminary, Portland, Oregon; Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri; Northeastern Seminary, Rochester, New York; Tyndale School of Theology, North York, Ontario, Canada; Wesley Biblical Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi.**

To obtain more information on classes, costs, faculties, and admission, go to the Education and Clergy Development web site at <https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd/approved-seminaries>.

**\*\*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/pathways-to-ministry-2>.**

## 2. **Other Options:**

1. **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. There is tuition plus the cost of textbooks. More information is available at <https://www.okwu.edu/adult/crosstraining/>
2. **Flexible Ministry Education** courses are offered by Kingswood Extended of Kingswood University in Canada, are taught by qualified instructors. There is tuition plus the cost of textbooks. Many of these courses use Zoom video conference technology to bring together the convenience of online education with the benefits of live classroom interaction. Kingswood Extended also offers **Self-Paced Courses**. Students have up to three months to complete each course. More information is available at <https://www.kingswood.edu/academic-excellence/ordination-studies>
3. **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. [www.wesleyan.org/ecd/en-espanol](http://www.wesleyan.org/ecd/en-espanol).
4. **College or District Extension Classes** Wesleyan higher education institutions may hold special extension or online classes. Also, Education and Clergy Development sanctions districts to hold classes at certain times during the year to train their ministers.
5. **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 available for download from the Ministerial Development Portal (Resources) after enrollment as a ministerial student.

## **Financial Aid**

**College/Seminary:** 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 ([www.wesleyan.org/loangrant](http://www.wesleyan.org/loangrant)), or through the college/university's financial aid office.



## **Suggested order for completing courses for Ordination**

(Adult Education Students only)

**PLEASE NOTE: Students should attempt to take Methods of Bible Study as early in their studies as possible. This course will be a tremendous help in Bible elective classes as well as in the preaching classes.**

The classes for District Licensed Minister should be completed as much as is possible before moving on to more advanced courses. These courses are:

Prior to August 31, 2023

1. Old Testament Intro
2. New Testament Intro
3. Wesleyan History/Discipline
4. Intro to Theology
5. Intro to Homiletics
6. Church Leadership/Management

After September 1, 2023

1. Old Testament Intro
2. New Testament Intro
3. Wesleyan History/Discipline
4. Intro to Theology
5. Methods of Bible Study
6. Church Leadership/Management

The following courses must be taken in this order:

1. Intro to Homiletics before Expository Preaching
2. Intro to Theology before Advanced Theology

Supervised Ministry may be taken at any time during the student's course of study.

**PLEASE NOTE: For those pursuing ordination, you must take a minimum of 2 classes per year after district licensing to retain your license.**

For more information go to our web site: [www.wesleyan.org/ecd](http://www.wesleyan.org/ecd).

For answers to questions call 317-774-3912, e-mail us at [education@wesleyan.org](mailto:education@wesleyan.org), or fax us at 317-774-3915.

## RECOMMENDATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR PASTOR AND APPLICANT

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 recommendation for 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/ministerial-preparation>.

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](mailto:education@wesleyan.org) or visiting <https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd/ministerial-preparation>.

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](http://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.

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](http://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](http://www.wesleyan.org/ecd/enroll)) and pursue the Special Worker's Course of Study.

# Student Application for Recommendation

**Applicant:** Fill out the questionnaire and return it to your pastor preceding the time scheduled for your interview with the Local Board of Administration. If you need more space, please use separate sheets of paper.

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_ **BIRTH DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATE** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-Mail** \_\_\_\_\_

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.

# 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](http://www.wesleyan.org/ecd))

Ordination coursework may be completed through the following programs:

3

**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.