



**Education and
Clergy Development**

Guide to Exploring the Call

2026 Edition

Education & Clergy Development

The Wesleyan Church

13300 Olio Rd, Fishers IN 46037

317-774-3911

education@wesleyan.org

www.wesleyan.org/ecd

PATH TO ORDINATION IN THE WESLEYAN CHURCH

A step-by-step overview from calling to ordination

01

Discern a Call (Local Church)

- Sense a call to ordained ministry
- Talk with your Wesleyan pastor
 - Local church evaluates grace, gifts, fruit, and calling
 - Local Church recommends you to district

This is where your journey begins.



02

Ministerial Student (District License)

- Enroll with Education & Clergy Development (ECD)
- Interview with DBMD
- District Conference votes
- Licensed as a Ministerial Student

Minimum: 1 year



03

Formation & Education (Simultaneous)

- Meet annually with DBMD
- Serve at your local church
 - Complete education requirements, minimum of 2 courses per year

Education & ministry happen together

04

Licensed Minister (District Appointment)

- Complete licensing education
- Examined by DBMD
- District Conference votes
- Appointed to ministry by the district leadership

Active in ministry under supervision



05

Service Requirement

- Serve under district appointment
- 1 year (MDiv graduates)
- 2 years (all other pathways)
- At least one year in the ordaining district



06

Ordination

- Education certified by ECD
- Final examination by DBMD
- District Conference votes
- Public ordination service

Ordained Minister of The Wesleyan Church

Understanding Your Call to Ministry

If you sense that God may be calling you into ministry—or if you are seeking clarity about that call—you do not walk this journey alone. Alongside your pastor and trusted Christian leaders, The Wesleyan Church desires to help you discern, confirm, and nurture God's calling on your life.

How Does God Call People?

Scripture teaches that every Christian is called to serve God, yet God calls some to specialized ministries on behalf of the Church. Ministry is not something a person chooses as a career; it is a calling from the Lord.

God calls women and men in many ways. While some experience a dramatic moment of calling, most discover their call as a growing, persistent conviction—often during seasons of worship, ministry involvement, or seeking God's will. This awareness is commonly shaped through experiences such as youth camps, revival services, or times of focused prayer and discernment.

How Can I Be Sure I Am Called?

The way you are called matters less than knowing you are called. God calls people from within the Body of Christ, and He uses the Church to recognize, affirm, and prepare those He calls.

A genuine call to ministry will be evident through five key confirmations:

1. **Grace** — Have you experienced salvation and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit? Is spiritual fruit evident in your life?
2. **Gifts** — Do you display abilities for understanding, communication, leadership, and care for others? Trusted leaders can help you discern and develop these gifts.
3. **Fruit** — Is God using you to impact others? Are people being drawn closer to Christ through your witness?
4. **An Abiding Sense of Call** — Do you carry a steady inner conviction of God's leading that endures beyond emotional moments?
5. **Open Doors** — Is God providing opportunities to grow, serve, and prepare for ministry? While challenges may arise, God also confirms His call through opened doors.

If You Know You're Called—What's Next?

- Counsel with Your Pastor** — Begin with prayerful conversation. Your pastor can provide guidance, encouragement, and next steps, including possible recommendation as a ministerial student.
- Get Involved Now** — Faithfulness today prepares you for tomorrow. Serve in the church,

share your faith, and respond to opportunities God places before you.

- Learn from Others** — Observe experienced leaders. Ask questions, listen well, and learn how the Church works by participating in ministry and leadership settings.
- Cultivate Spiritual Depth** — Prioritize holiness, prayer, and time in God's Word. Depth of character matters more than size of platform—God will take care of the results.
- Commit to Preparation** — God calls prepared people. Ministry training—often through college, seminary, or approved programs—is a vital part of answering God's call. Thorough preparation expands your usefulness for Christ and strengthens your lifelong ministry.

Ministry Credential Tracks in TWC

Credentialed ministry in The Wesleyan Church is for individuals whom God has called to full-time vocational ministry and whose calling, gifts, and effectiveness have been affirmed by both their local church and district. Those serving in credentialed ministry may include senior pastors, solo pastors, assistant pastors, missionaries, and chaplains.

The Wesleyan Church recognizes three primary credential tracks for vocational ministry:

Ordained Minister

Ordination is the highest credential granted by The Wesleyan Church. Ordained ministers have completed all academic, spiritual, and administrative requirements and are affirmed for lifelong ministry. They are authorized to preach, administer baptism and the Lord's Supper, perform weddings, transfer between districts, serve in district leadership positions, and vote at district conference.

Commissioned Minister

Commissioning is a high-level credential available in limited circumstances. It is intended for individuals who face constraints related to age, health, or learning challenges that prevent completion of ordination requirements. Commissioned ministers may vote at district conference but may not serve in district leadership positions. Entry into this track is determined by the District Board of Ministerial Development (DBMD).

Licensed Minister

Licensure serves two purposes. Individuals preparing for ordination serve as licensed ministers while completing academic and service requirements. In addition, districts may recognize **Permanent Licensed Ministers**—those who do not sense a call to ordination but desire to serve under appointment in a local church. Licensed ministers are authorized to perform pastoral duties, including administering the sacraments. Some licensed ministers may vote at district conference but may not hold district offices.

Ordained vs. Permanent Licensed Ministry

Permanent Licensed Ministers typically serve under appointment for a specific role, time, or setting, most often within a local church. Ordained ministers are set apart for lifelong vocational ministry and may serve in a wide variety of ministry contexts throughout their ministry career.

A more detailed explanation of these credential categories is available in the Manual of Ministerial Preparation at: www.wesleyan.org/ecd/ordination-and-credentialing/pursue

Pursuing Ministerial Credentials: An Overview

Local Church Connection

Meet with Your Pastor

Begin by discussing your sense of call and exploring the different ministry tracks within The Wesleyan Church.

Confirm Church Membership

Ensure your membership in a local Wesleyan church is current.

Receive a Local Church Recommendation

You will interview with your pastor and/or the Local Board of Administration (LBA). The LBA submits a recommendation form to the District Board of Ministerial Development to begin your journey as a ministerial student.

General Church Connection

Enroll with Education and Clergy Development (ECD)

Enrollment creates your official candidacy record and allows your academic progress to be tracked. No credentials may be issued until enrollment is complete.

www.wesleyan.org/ecd

Submit Transcripts

Official transcripts should be sent directly to Education and Clergy Development.

Access the Ministerial Development Community

Once enrolled, you will receive access to your online profile and credential records.

District Connection

Interview with the DBMD

After receiving your local church recommendation, the District Board of Ministerial Development will schedule an interview to continue the discernment process.

Complete Required Paperwork

All forms and materials provided by the DBMD must be completed as directed.

Notes for Candidates

- Progress occurs in partnership with your local church, district, and the General Church.
- Each step builds on the previous one—faithfulness and communication are essential.

Timelines vary based on calling, preparation track, and district requirements.

Academic Requirements

Each ministerial credential track includes academic requirements designed to prepare candidates for the responsibilities and opportunities of everyday ministry. Education and Clergy Development (ECD) maintains your candidate record in the Ministerial Development Community and will designate your status as "Certified" once all academic requirements are completed. The Wesleyan Church offers multiple approved pathways to fulfill these academic requirements.

Please note:

- The district holds the authority to license, commission, or ordain.
- The following pages outline the academic requirements for each ministerial track.
- A minimum of two courses per year is required to maintain a ministerial license.
- All courses must be completed with a grade of C- or higher.

Preferred Preparation

The Wesleyan Church's recommended academic path to ordination includes:

- Undergraduate degree in ministerial studies from a Wesleyan college or university
- Followed by a Master of Divinity (MDiv) from an approved seminary

Ministerial Education Pathways

Wesleyan Undergraduate Schools	Approved Seminaries (MDiv)
Houghton University	Wesley Seminary at Indiana Wesleyan University
Indiana Wesleyan University	Asbury Theological Seminary
Kingswood University	Evangelical Seminary
Oklahoma Wesleyan University	Nazarene Theological Seminary
Southern Wesleyan University	Northeastern Seminary
—	Portland Seminary
—	Tyndale School of Theology
—	Wesley Biblical Seminary

Some programs require specific Wesleyan ordination electives. Always consult an advisor or visit: www.wesleyan.org/ecd/ordination-and-credentialing/pursue

Alternative Education Options

- **Cross-Training (OKWU):** Online courses for adult learners
- **Kingswood Extended / Wesleyan Learn:** Online courses (some apply toward credentials)
- **Lantern Courses (Wesley Seminary):** Self-paced, video-based courses
- **FLAMA:** Spanish-language ministerial training program
- **Ministry Training Programs:** District or local church-based courses
- **Credit by Portfolio:** Credit for prior learning and ministry experience

Financial Aid Available

Grant assistance is available for eligible students who:

- Attend a Wesleyan University or approved seminary (credit hour requirements apply)
- Are members of a Wesleyan church
- Obtain a credential with TWC
- Are approved by their District Board of Ministerial Development
- Maintain a 2.0 GPA or higher

More information and applications can be found through the Grant program;

<https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd/ordination-and-credentialing/finance/wesleyan-ministerial-education-grant>.

Frequently Asked Questions

A companion guide for those exploring a call to ordained ministry

What does it mean to be an ordained minister in The Wesleyan Church?

Ordination is the Church's recognition of a person called by God to a lifelong ministry of leadership, preaching, teaching, and pastoral care within The Wesleyan Church.

Where does the ordination process begin?

The process always begins in the local church. Prospective candidates talk with their pastor and local church leaders, who help discern calling, character, and readiness. For those ready to enter the process, a completed LBA Recommendation Form should be sent to the District Board of Ministerial Development (DBMD).

What is a Ministerial Student?

A Ministerial Student is someone who has been licensed by their district to formally explore and prepare for ordained ministry through education, mentoring, and supervised experience.

What is the difference between a Permanent Licensed Minister and an Ordained

Minister?

Permanent Licensed Ministers are those who feel called to serve under district appointment for a particular place, time, or position. Ordained Ministers are those who feel called to a lifetime of vocational ministry, not related to any specific setting or position, and have been permanently set apart for ministry by the Church.

How long does the ordination process usually take?

The timeline varies. Most candidates spend several years completing required education and at least 2 years serving in appointed ministry before ordination.

What kind of education is required?

Candidates complete theological and ministry education through approved Wesleyan universities, seminaries, or ministry training programs, coordinated through Education and Clergy Development (ECD).

Who oversees and supports candidates during the process?

Each candidate is supported and evaluated by their local Wesleyan church, the DBMD, district leaders, and Education and Clergy Development.

Does ordination guarantee a job or church appointment?

Ordination affirms readiness for lifelong ministry, but appointments are made by district leadership based on the needs of the Church and discernment of fit.

What if I'm not sure ordination is the right path for me?

The Wesleyan Church recognizes multiple ministry pathways, including commissioned and lay ministry roles. Discernment conversations with your local pastor and DBMD help identify the best fit.

What should I do next if I'm sensing a call?

Begin by talking with your local Wesleyan pastor. He/She can help you explore next steps and connect you with district leaders.

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					
<i>*Old Testament Intro</i>	C03	Required	Required	Required	Δ
<i>*New Testament Intro</i>	C04	Required	Required	Required	Δ
<i>*Methods of Bible Study</i>	C14	Required	Required	Required	Δ
Old Testament Elective	OT1	Required			
New Testament Elective	NT1	Required			
History					
General Church History	C25	Required	Required		
<i>*Wesleyan History/Discipline</i>	C35	Required	Required	Required	Required
Theology					
<i>*Intro to Theology</i>	C05	Required	Required	Required	Required
Advanced Theology	C32	Required			
<i>*Doctrine of Holiness</i>	C42	Required	Required	Required	
Practical Ministries					
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
<i>*Church Leadership/Management</i>	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.*

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		
<i>*Old Testament Intro</i>	C03	Required
<i>*New Testament Intro</i>	C04	Required
<i>*Methods of Bible Study</i>	C14	Required
Old Testament Elective	OT1	Elective Option
New Testament Elective	NT1	Elective Option
History		
General Church History	C25	Elective Option
<i>*Wesleyan History/Discipline</i>	C35	Required
Theology		
<i>*Intro to Theology</i>	C05	Required
Advanced Theology	C32	Elective Option
<i>*Doctrine of Holiness</i>	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
<i>*Church Leadership/Management</i>	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.*

LBA Recommendation for New Ministerial Student/Licensed Special Worker

Name of Candidate being recommended:

Sex: Male Female Marital Status: Married Single Divorced

Address: City:

State: Zip: Phone:

Email:

Has candidate had lay ministers license in the local church? Yes No If Yes, for how many years?

Is candidate enrolled with The Wesleyan Church Department of Education and Clergy Development?

Yes No

What level of recognition are you recommending candidate for?

Ministerial Student (to become a licensed, commissioned or ordained minister)

Licensed Special Worker (to become a commissioned special worker)

If Licensed Special Worker, what is the specific area of ministry? (Check one): *Director of Music*

Director of Christian Education Youth Director Song Evangelist Children's Worker

Lay Evangelist Social Worker Spouse in Ministry Other:

1. Is there evidence of a clear, consistent walk with Christ?

Mature Christian Growing Christian New Christian

Remarks:

2. Does the candidate testify to a definite heart-felt call from God to full-time Christian service?

What is the nature of the call?

3. Has he/she articulated this call for members of the LBA?

4. Does the LBA detect potential areas of giftedness that would support such a call?

5. Has the candidate proven faithful to the local church? (support through tithe, time, talents, etc.)

6. Does the candidate possess a teachable spirit?

7. Is the candidate a member of your Wesleyan church? Yes No

Name of Church

Name of Recommending Pastor

Date

Name of LBA Vice-chairperson

Date