

I think God may be calling me to become a licensed or ordained minister in the West Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church.

How do I begin?

- ✓ Talk to your pastor, campus minister, District Superintendent or another ordained or licensed local pastor about what you're experiencing. Ask for help in reading *The Christian as Minister* to clarify your calling and your understanding of the United Methodist Church. This book is available through www.cokesbury.com.
- ✓ Write a letter to your **District Superintendent (DS)**, to introduce yourself and say how you believe God is calling you. Your DS will meet with you and help figure out next steps.
- ✓ The DS will enroll you in the United Methodist online candidacy system (UMCARES).
- ✓ The **Vocational Discernment Coordinator** (Rev. Suzanne Ellis) will send you a "New Candidate Packet" to explain the candidacy process and invite you to participate in a retreat designed to help connect you with others exploring ministry.
- ✓ You'll complete some introductory steps through UMCARES and register for the **Candidacy Retreat**. When you attend the Candidacy Retreat, you will meet with your candidacy group and complete the required psychological assessment and credit/background check.
- ✓ **You'll meet with your candidacy group for up to 4 additional discernment sessions**, scheduled at the group's discretion, during the months following the retreat. Some groups decide to complete these sessions all at once; some spread them out over time.
- ✓ Meet with the **Ministry Assessment Specialist (a psychologist)** to review the results of your psychological assessment, to highlight your strengths and challenges for ministry.
- ✓ Meet with your **Pastor/Staff Parish Committee (S/PPRC)*** to talk about whether you want to pursue candidacy. If so, you'll seek approval for candidacy from your Charge Conference.* Your pastor or campus minister will guide you through these steps.
- ✓ Meet with the **District Committee on Ministry** about becoming a certified candidate and next steps for ministry. If you are approved as a Certified Candidate, your next steps will involve Pastoral Ministry Licensing School or planning for seminary. The DCOM can point you to resources for educational options and financial support as you plan your next steps.

Costs associated with the candidacy period total \$150: \$75 for online registration and \$75 for candidate's portion of psychological assessment. All other costs are covered by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Financial concerns should not prevent you from proceeding; please talk with your pastor or DS if these costs are prohibitive.