

California-Pacific Conference
Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM)

PAPER A

WRITTEN RESPONSE QUESTIONS
FOR RECOMMENDATION FOR
ASSOCIATE OR PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP
In the California-Pacific Conference

Deadline: July 15, 2026, ON OR BEFORE 2:00 p.m. (Pacific Time)

Part 1 – Call and Discernment – 10-page limit

Part 2 – DCOM Theology Questions – 10-page limit

Before beginning your work, please read the detailed instructions for completing Paper A included at the end of this document

PLEASE NOTE:

- Maximum word counts listed after each question. Any text beyond that limit may be ignored by readers. You are required to indicate the word count at the end of each response.
- United Methodist Book of Discipline citations are noted using the format (¶ ###). All citations are from *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2020/2024*.
- All candidates for Associate or Provisional Membership — whether on the Deacon or Elder Track — must complete all questions in Parts 1 and 2. Papers missing any responses will be considered incomplete.
- Guidelines for formatting the paper and directions for submission are found at the end of this document.
- You must properly indicate and cite your sources using footnotes.

PART 1 – CALL AND DISCERNMENT

1. Write about your call to ministry. Include information about family background and present family situation, church participation and Christian experiences, educational history, and work experience (§324.11). (750 words)
2. Describe your personal goals and vision for your future in ordained ministry. (250 words)
3. Reflect on your strengths for ordained ministry and on areas in which you need more training and experience. In your response, provide a frank self-assessment on your administrative and organizational skills. In addition, tell us how you have responded to BOM and/or DCOM recommendations if applicable. (350 words)
4. Summarize your participation in church and church-related activities during the last five years, beginning with details of your current involvement and then listing participation in prior years (§324.11). (250 words)
5. Explain your understanding of both the distinctive vocations of the Order of Elders and the Order of Deacons. How do you perceive yourself, your gifts, your motives, your role, and your commitment as a provisional deacon or provisional elder in The United Methodist Church? (§324.7.k). (250 words)
6. What is the meaning of ordination in the context of the general ministry of the Church? Include your understanding of the roles of both laity and clergy (§324.7.m). (250 words)

FOR DEACON APPLICANTS ONLY:

- 7a. Deacons are not in the itinerant system and do not have guaranteed appointment. (250 words)
- a. What are the potential assets and liabilities of being outside of the itinerant system?
 - b. How does this affect individual and family considerations?

FOR ELDER APPLICANTS ONLY:

- 7a. Elders are part of the itinerant system and have guaranteed appointments. (250 words)
- a. What is your understanding of the expectations and obligations of the itinerant system?
 - b. What are the potential assets and liabilities of such a system?
 - c. Do you feel confident that you can offer yourself without reservation to be appointed to serve as the appointive authority may determine?
 - d. What are the individual and family considerations that need to be made within the itinerant system?

PART 2 – DCOM THEOLOGY QUESTIONS

Present your understanding of the following theological concepts. Provide specific, concrete examples where possible.

1. What is the Wesleyan understanding of grace? (200 words)
2. Describe the nature and mission of the Church. What are its primary tasks today? (§324.7.i). (200 words)
3. The United Methodist Church holds that the living core of the Christian faith was revealed in Scripture, illumined by tradition, vivified in personal experience, and confirmed by reason. (§324.7.h) (550 words)
 - a. How do you define and understand each of these four elements? (250 words)
 - b. Demonstrate their application in at least one current issue facing the Church. (150 words)
 - c. Discuss how you would address faithful Christians who arrive at different conclusions? (150 words)
4. What is your understanding of the basic pattern of worship found on pg. 3 of The United Methodist Hymnal? (250 words)
5. Describe your understanding of an inclusive church and ministry (§324.7.n). (250 words)
6. The role and significance of the Sacraments (§324.7.p) (650 words)
 - a. How do you understand the sacrament of baptism from a theological perspective? What role does it play in the community you serve? (250 words)
 - b. How do you understand the United Methodist commitment to and practice of infant baptism? (150 words)
 - c. How do you understand the sacrament of Holy Communion from a theological perspective? What role does it play in the community you serve? (250 words)

PART 3 – FOR THOSE WHO APPLIED PREVIOUSLY AND WERE NOT RECOMMENDED

1. Describe your understanding of why you were not recommended — whether by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOM) or returned by the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM). (125 words)
2. How have you responded to the concerns raised, and what growth or changes have taken place since then? (125 words)

General Instructions for Papers A, B and C

- Make sure you have the current year’s exam questions for all papers.
- **FONT:** Use **Times New Roman - 12-point font**. [Papers MAY NOT be handwritten]
- **MARGINS:** Set margins for one (1”) inch on all sides.
- **GENERAL FORMATTING:** Unless otherwise indicated:
 - Type the entire question **single spaced** and in **bold**, including the word limit.
 - Your response should immediately follow the question.
 - Responses must be **double-spaced**.
 - Indicate your word-count at the end of each response.

EXAMPLE:

1. Write about your call to ministry. Include information about family background and present family situation, church participation and Christian experiences, educational history, and work experience (¶324.13). (750 words)

[Sample response — for formatting purposes only] Growing up in a small

United Methodist congregation in rural Ohio, faith was woven into the fabric of our family life, and it was there I first sensed a pull toward ministry. After completing a degree in Social Work and spending several... **(694 words)**

- **WORD & PAGE LIMITS:** DO NOT go over the word limit for each question or the page limit for each paper. If your responses exceed the word limit, interview team readers will not read beyond the limit. **Exceeding the word limit will not exclude you from an interview but will provide the readers with an incomplete presentation of your response.* Please note, questions that have sub-questions (e.g. 1.a, 1.b, 1.c, etc.) may have additional word limits for each sub-question.
- **FOOTNOTES:** If you quote or cite another’s work, please footnote it properly. This includes quotations from the United Methodist Book of Discipline or other UMC resources.
- **NAME & PAGE NUMBERS:** Include your name, the letter of the paper, and the page number in the upper right corner (i.e. The Header) of every page (e.g., “Susanna Wesley, B, 1 of 30”).
- **PROOFREADING:** Proofread your papers so that they are free of misspellings and grammatical errors. We cannot stress this enough. You may use grammar tools such as Grammarly to check your work. As all applicants have completed graduate level

coursework, we expect the papers to match or exceed that quality of work. Carelessness in your writing will influence the readers' perception of the overall quality of your work.

- **ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS:** Be sure to answer **ALL** questions and sub-questions. If you fail to fully respond to a question, your paper may be considered incomplete, and your process will be stopped.

PAPER SUBMISSION

- Papers can only be accepted in a PDF format. Save your paper using the following file name format.
 - Date (year-month/day) followed by the paper letter, and your full name.

EXAMPLE:

For a paper submitted on November 1, 2026, the file name should be

2026-1101 Paper B Susanna Wesley.pdf

- Most software will allow you to “Save As” a .PDF.
- All paper submissions must be in a single PDF. Specifically:
 - Paper A** – Combine Parts 1 and 2 into one PDF document.
 - Paper B** – Combine Parts 1, 2, Appendices A and B, and/or APP into one PDF document.

A WORD ABOUT PLAGIARISM

The Board of Ordained Ministry takes plagiarism seriously, and your process may be stopped if you present another person's work as your own.

You are encouraged to read our Plagiarism Policy at www.calpacumc.org on the Board of Ordained Ministry page under the policy section. We encourage you to check for plagiarism by using a detection program such as Turnitin (turnitin.com) before you submit your papers. This will help to ensure your exam papers are free of content misuse.

Please be aware that your papers will be checked for plagiarism and usage of AI (Artificial Intelligence) using the **iThenticate** system.

iThenticate screens your papers against past Board of Ordained Ministry submissions from any Conference. Copying or closely echoing another applicant's language — knowingly or not — may result in your process being halted.

Submit only your own work and ideas.