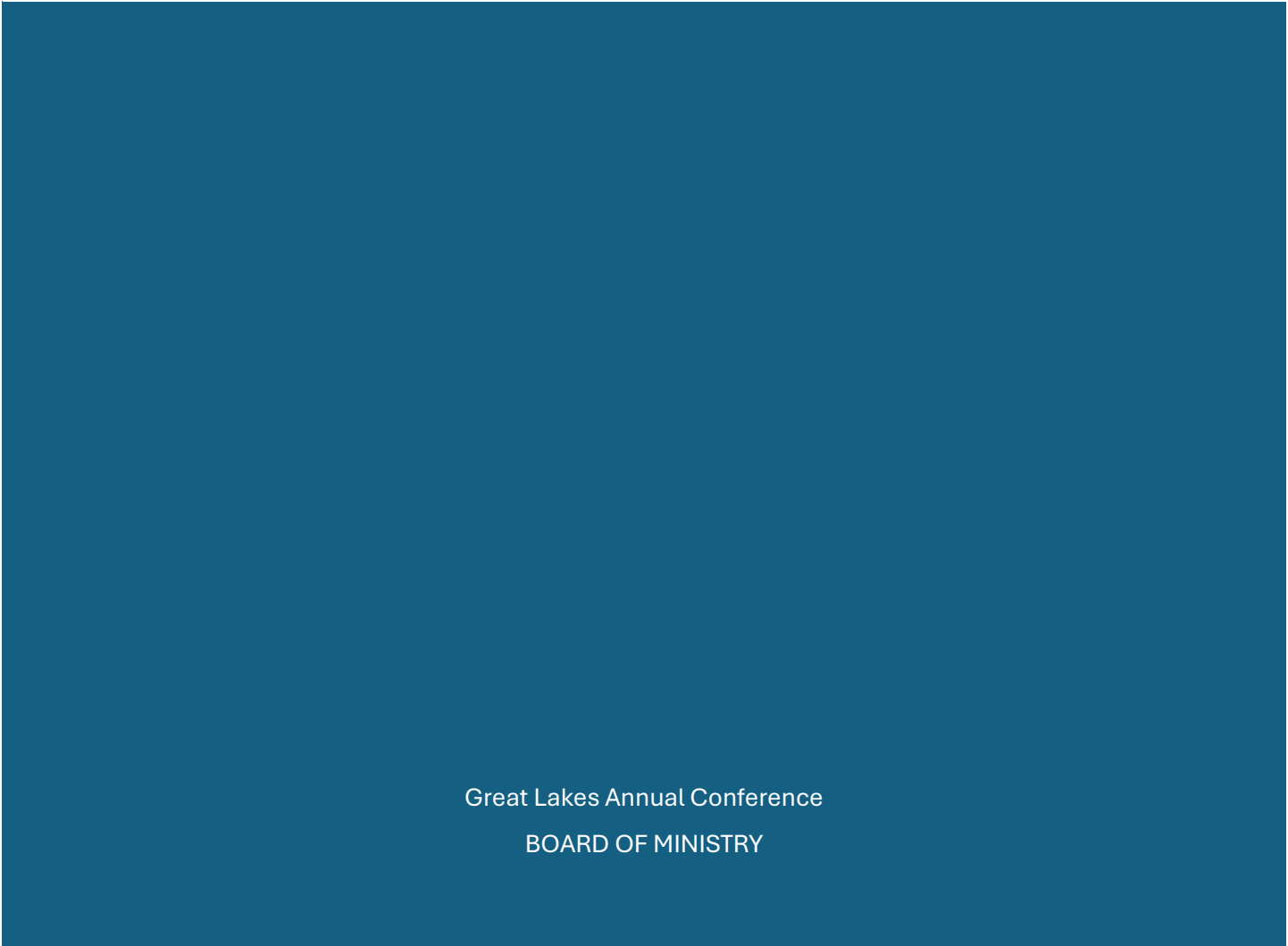




# GLAC CREDENTIALING HANDBOOK 2026-2027



Great Lakes Annual Conference  
BOARD OF MINISTRY

# Great Lakes Annual Conference Credentialing Handbook

“Entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others also.”

— 2 Timothy 2:2

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## Introduction

The Great Lakes Annual Conference seeks to identify, equip, form, examine, and credential faithful leaders who demonstrate a clear call from God, Christlike character, theological competence, and fruitful ministry.

Credentialing is not merely an academic process. It is a process of discernment and formation designed to help candidates grow as disciples of Jesus Christ and effective leaders within the Global Methodist Church.

The Board of Ministry (BOM) evaluates candidates according to four primary areas:

- Christian character
- Spiritual maturity
- Theological competency
- Effectiveness in ministry

The goal is not simply to credential ministers, but to cultivate healthy, holy, and effective pastors who will make disciples of Jesus Christ and spread scriptural holiness throughout the world.

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## Philosophy of Credentialing

The credentialing process is progressive.

Candidates demonstrate increasing levels of:

- Personal discipleship
- Leadership effectiveness
- Theological understanding
- Wesleyan identity
- Ministerial competence

At each stage the Board of Ministry seeks evidence of:

- A genuine call from God
  - Confirmation by the Church
  - Growth in grace
  - Faithfulness in ministry
  - Commitment to the doctrines and discipline of the Global Methodist Church
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## Overview of the Credentialing Process

### Stage 1: Applicant

- Discuss call with local pastor
- Approval by local SPRC
- Approval by Charge Conference
- Complete Clergy Application
- Complete Background Check
- Submit spiritual autobiography
- Sign statement of faith
- Mentor assigned
- Interview with Regional Board of Ministry Team

## Stage 2: Certified Candidate

- Approved by BOM interview
- Begin formal theological education
- Participates in Channels to Ministry
- Assigned to Covenant Group
- Eligible for appointment

## Stage 3: Supply Pastor or Transitional Local Pastor

- Serves under appointment
- Continues educational requirements
- Participates in Channels to Ministry
- Participates in annual reviews and formation
- Five-year term limit for SP
- Four-year term limit for TLP

## Stage 4: Deacon

- Completes required coursework
- Demonstrates readiness for ordained ministry
- Demonstrates theological competency
- Participates in Channels to Ministry
- Psychological evaluation
- Credit check
- Completes all assignments
- Submits recommendations from his/her presiding elder, mentor, and one church member
- Successfully completes Board of Ministry examination

## Stage 5: Elder

- Completes additional coursework
  - Demonstrates theological competency
  - Demonstrates fruitfulness in ministry
  - Completes all assignments
  - Submits recommendations from his/her presiding elder, mentor, and one church member
  - Successfully completes Board of Ministry examination
  - Approved for ordination by Annual Conference
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# Beginning the Credentialing Journey

## Initial Discernment

Individuals sensing a call to ministry should first discuss that call with their local pastor.

The local church serves as the primary place where a call to ministry is discerned and confirmed.

## Required Steps

Candidates must:

1. Discuss call with local pastor.
2. Receive approval from Staff-Parish Relations Committee.
3. Receive approval from Charge Conference.
4. Write a letter of introduction to the Presiding Elder.
5. Complete the clergy application and background check.

Upon completion of the application process, the individual becomes an Applicant.

## Required Documentation

Applicants must submit:

- Proof of high school graduation (or equivalent)
- Postsecondary transcripts (if applicable)
- Signed Statement of faith
- Spiritual autobiography

## Mentor Assignment

Each applicant must find (or be assigned) a mentor who will:

- Guide the candidate through the process
- Review the Candidacy Handbook
- Assist in vocational discernment
- Encourage spiritual formation

## Regional Interview

Applicants interview with a Regional Board of Ministry Team.

The purpose of this interview is to evaluate:

- Christian faith
- Personal character

- Evidence of calling
- Gifts for ministry

Theological expertise is not expected at this stage.

Upon approval, the applicant becomes a Certified Candidate.

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## Certified Candidacy

Certified Candidacy marks the formal beginning of ministerial formation.

Certified Candidates should:

- Begin seminary or Course of Study
- Participate in Channels to Ministry
- Meet regularly with mentor
- Continue developing spiritual disciplines

## Covenant Groups

At the next Annual Conference, Certified Candidates will be assigned to a Covenant Group.

These groups provide:

- Accountability
- Encouragement
- Peer learning
- Ongoing formation

## Appointment Eligibility

Certified Candidates are not clergy.

However, they may be appointed to serve a congregation.

When appointed, they serve as Supply Pastors.

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## Supply and Transitional Local Pastors

The Board of Ministry's focus during this phase is continued formation while candidates pursue ordination.

## Annual Requirements

### Academic Progress

Submit unofficial transcripts annually.

### Ministry Evaluation

Annual BOM conversation

Submission of other documentation as requested by BOM

### Formation

Participation in Channels for Ministry is mandatory.

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## Ordination as a Deacon

Candidates seeking ordination as a Deacon must demonstrate readiness for ordained ministry through theological education, ministry effectiveness, and personal character.

### Required Documentation

- Official transcript
- Written theological responses
- Parishioner recommendation
- Presiding Elder recommendation
- Mentor recommendation
- Background check
- Psychological evaluation
- Credit report
- Recorded sermon
- Corresponding order of worship

### Required Coursework

- Introduction to Old Testament
- Introduction to New Testament
- Systematic Theology
- Wesleyan Theology and Doctrine
- Methodist History and Polity of the Global Methodist Church
- Basics of Preaching

- Pastoral Care
  - Evangelism and Mission
  - Wesleyan Understanding of the Sacraments and Worship
  - Inductive Bible Study or Hermeneutics
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## Ordination as an Elder

Ordination as an Elder requires additional theological formation and demonstrated effectiveness in pastoral ministry.

### Required Documentation

- Official transcript
- Written theological responses
- Written responses to Wesley's historic questions
- Parishioner recommendation
- Presiding Elder recommendation
- Mentor recommendation
- Background check
- Psychological evaluation
- Credit report
- Recorded sermon
- Corresponding order of worship
- Membership class outline

### Additional Required Coursework

#### Church History

- Christianity through the Reformation
- Christianity from the Reformation to the Present

#### Theology and Ministry

- Apologetics
- Wesleyan Discipleship and Spiritual Formation
- Christian Leadership and Conflict Resolution
- Ministry of the Holy Spirit

#### Biblical Studies

- Additional Old Testament course

- Additional New Testament course

## Electives

Candidates may choose electives from approved areas including:

- Church Renewal
  - Cross-Cultural Ministry
  - Advanced Preaching
  - Biblical Languages
  - Pastoral Counseling
  - Church Administration
  - Clinical Pastoral Education
  - Philosophy of Religion
  - Theology
  - Worship
  - Children and Youth Ministry
  - Justice Ministries
  - Media and Technology
  - Internship or Independent Study
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## Instructions for Required Written Materials

### Spiritual Autobiography

Length: 1,500–2,000 words

Candidates should address:

- Conversion and faith journey
- Discipleship and ministry involvement
- Call to ministry
- Confirmation of call by the Church
- Spiritual gifts
- Leadership experience

### Parishioner Recommendation Letter

Letters should include:

- Name

- Email
- Phone Number

The letter should address:

- Fruit of the Spirit
- Ministry strengths
- Conflict management
- Discipleship effectiveness
- Areas of growth
- Character concerns (if any)

## Written Theological Questions

Candidates for Deacon and Elder must complete the required theological essays outlined by the Board of Ministry.

Responses should demonstrate:

- Biblical literacy
- Wesleyan theological understanding
- Personal reflection
- Ministerial application

## Theological Questions for Diaconal Candidates

Prior to the interview, diaconal candidates must respond in writing to the following questions. Answers should be submitted in a Word document using 12-point font, 1.5 spacing, with one-inch margins. Each page should include the page number and last name of the candidate. As a professional document that will be reviewed by clergy peers and laity, ensure all biblical references and other materials are properly cited in footnotes (15-20 pages).

- What is your personal experience of God?
- What is your understanding of evil?
- What is your understanding of grace?
- How do you understand the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers and in the Church?
- What is your understanding of the Kingdom of God?
- What significance do you believe that the resurrection holds?
- What is your understanding of the nature and authority of Scripture?
- What is your understanding of the nature and mission of the Church?

- What gifts and graces do you bring to the work of ministry?
- What is the meaning of ordination?
- What is the role and significance of the sacraments?
- Have you studied our form of church discipline and polity and will you support and maintain it?
- For the sake of the church's witness, are you willing to dedicate yourself to the highest ideals of the Christian life, exercising self-control in your personal habits, integrity in all of your relationships and if married, fidelity in your covenant with your spouse, or if single, chastity in your personal conduct?
- What is your understanding of Wesley's societies, classes and bands and the purpose they served?
- How will you structure your ministry to support discipleship
- Who is the last person you led to salvation in Jesus? Who are you currently discipling?

## Theological Questions for Candidates for Elders

Prior to ordination as elder, candidates shall provide the board of ministry with written answers to the following questions historically asked by bishops since the time of John Wesley. The questions below should be submitted in a Word document using 12-point font, 1.5 spacing, with one-inch margins. Each page should include the page number and last name of the candidate. As a professional document that will be reviewed by clergy peers and laity, ensure all biblical references and other materials are properly cited in footnotes. These questions should be answered with more than a "Yes" or "No" response. Please dedicate 100-300 words per answer (8-10 pages).

- Have you faith in Christ?
- Are you going on to perfection?
- Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?
- Are you earnestly striving after perfection in love?
- Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and to God's work?
- Do you know the General Rules of our Church?
- Will you keep the General Rules of our Church?
- Have you studied the doctrines of the Global Methodist Church?
- After full examination do you believe that our doctrines are in harmony with the Holy Scriptures?
- Will you preach and maintain them?
- Have you studied our form of church discipline and polity?
- Do you approve our church government and polity?

- Will you support and maintain them?
- Will you exercise the ministry of compassion?
- Will you diligently instruct the children in every place?
- Will you visit from house to house?
- Will you recommend fasting or abstinence, both by precept and example?
- Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God?
- Are you in debt so as to embarrass you in your work?
- Will you observe the following directions? (1) Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed. Never trifle away time; neither spend any more time at any one place than is strictly necessary. (2) Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. (3) And do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath, but for conscience' sake."

Elder Candidates must also address the following topics. Responses should be submitted in a Word document using 12-point font, 1.5 spacing, with one-inch margins. Each page should include the page number and last name of the candidate. As a professional document that will be reviewed by clergy peers and laity, ensure all biblical references and other materials are properly cited in footnotes.

#### SECTION 1: *Theology (Doctrine)*

Identify and explain your beliefs about the following (10-12 pages)

- God (The Trinity)
- Lordship of Jesus Christ
- The Holy Spirit
- Human Nature
- Nature and Results of Sin
- Divine Grace:
- Doctrines of salvation: a) *repentance*, b) *justification*, c) *regeneration*, d) *sanctification*
- Doctrines of eschatology: a) *physical death*, b) *the resurrection*, c) *eternal life*
- Authority and role of Scripture
- Meaning and significance of the Sacraments
- Nature, unity, and mission of the Church
- Nature and purpose of the gospel and the Kingdom of God

#### SECTION II: *Call to Ministry (Vocation)*

Explain the following in relation to your vocational call to ministry (3-5 pages)

- Describe your call to vocational ministry.
- Describe your spiritual gifts and how they will aid your ministry (if possible, also explain how they have already contributed to effective ministry).

- Describe your areas of personal and professional weakness that need to be strengthened for greater effectiveness in ministry.

### SECTION III: *Practice of Ministry (Praxis)*

Explain the following in relation to the practice of fruitful ministry (4-6 pages)

- Describe the pastoral duties of an ordained elder in relation to the ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Order
  - Describe how our Social Principles will impact and/or influence your ministry with a particular focus on the following areas:
    - law and justice,
    - human dignity and sexuality,
    - marriage and family, and
    - wealth, poverty, and labor.
  - Describe your beliefs about and experiences in helping fulfill our Lord's Great Commission
    - edifying believers,
    - evangelizing non-believers.
  - Do you understand and agree with the polity of the Global Methodist Church? Identify all areas of disagreement, uncertainty, or confusion.
- 3.6.

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## Interview Process

Interviews are intended to be conversations rather than interrogations.

The Board seeks to evaluate:

### Personal Discipleship

- Spiritual disciplines
- Accountability relationships
- Soul care
- Personal holiness
- Spiritual maturity

### Wesleyan Theology

- Understanding of grace

- Sanctification
- Wesleyan distinctives
- Church doctrine
- Biblical authority

### Practice of Ministry

- Leadership
- Conflict management
- Pastoral care
- Evangelism
- Disciple-making
- Fruitfulness in ministry

Questions may be tailored to each candidate's experience and written materials.

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## Board of Ministry Expectations

The Board of Ministry reserves the right to:

- Screen all written work for plagiarism and AI
- Request additional documentation
- Require rewritten theological papers
- Recommend additional coursework
- Recommend mentoring
- Recommend counseling or therapy
- Request updated evaluations

Previously submitted background checks, psychological evaluations, and credit reports may be reused if current and if no concerns have emerged.

The Board may require updated evaluations whenever circumstances warrant additional review.

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## Annual Requirements and Continuing Formation

Throughout the credentialing process, candidates are expected to demonstrate:

- Faithful participation in the life of the Church
- Ongoing spiritual growth

- Academic progress
- Fruitful ministry
- Teachability
- Accountability
- Commitment to the doctrines and discipline of the Global Methodist Church
- Participation in Channels to Ministry
- Participation in assigned covenant group

Credentialing is not merely about completing requirements but about becoming the kind of leader through whom Christ can effectively shepherd His Church.

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## Appendix

### Required Forms

- Clergy Application
- Candidate Checklist
- Background Check Authorization
- Psychological Evaluation Authorization
- Credit Check Authorization
- Written Work as Assigned

### Additional Resources

- Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church
- Candidacy Handbook
- Channels to Ministry Materials
- Covenant Group Resources

May God use this process to form faithful, fruitful, and holy leaders for the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ and spreading scriptural holiness throughout the world.