

Keystone Conference Ministerial Development Process Guide

Local Ministerial Candidate (LMC) – Stage 1

The primary focus of the first stage of discerning a ministry call is the heart: exploring healthy patterns of relationships, falling in love with the call and the church, and addressing the big questions about life, identity, vocation, and balance. Those in this stage will be exposed to a variety of experiences to help them understand who they are and how God has gifted them.

The local pastor (or a designee) plays a crucial role throughout this stage as a mentor for the potential candidate, while the local conference Ministerial Education & Guidance Board's role is focused on guiding and encouraging.

The following is a step-by-step guide to Stage 1 in the ministerial credentialing process of a potential candidate to help them become a Local Ministerial Candidate (LMC) in the Free Methodist church.

1. Be an active member of a local Free Methodist Church
2. Work through the first pages of the "Is God Calling You into the Ministry?" booklet.
3. Speak with the local church pastor about a possible call to vocational ministry. Together identify an appropriate credentialed clergyperson as a mentor who can walk alongside and meet regularly during this discernment process. The mentor needs to be involved and offer opportunities to gain ministry experience.
4. Go to <https://freemethodist.wufoo.com/forms/qwlvvqj0p5myu9/> and complete the application to open your portfolio with the FMCUSA
5. Assemble a prayer team to provide support throughout this process and beyond. **This step must not be skipped** as the prayers of this team are essential during this process.
6. Using the "Head/Heart/Hands" template, create with your mentor a "Personal Formation Plan" built around the "Heart" column. Meet at least monthly to review progress on these outcomes.
7. Share with the local church Board of Administration your spiritual journey and sense of ministry calling. These are to be considered along with the evidences of gifts and graces for ministry thus far (max 2 pgs. written or a 5-10-minute video).
8. In response the Local BOA may:
 - a. Give approval to continue in the discernment process, and give a Local Ministerial Candidate License – preferably presented in a congregational gathering, or
 - b. Offer redirection along with appropriate feedback and recommendations for continued growth and health.
9. Notify the Keystone Conference Office (office@keystonefmc.org) upon approval as an LMC including the date of approval.