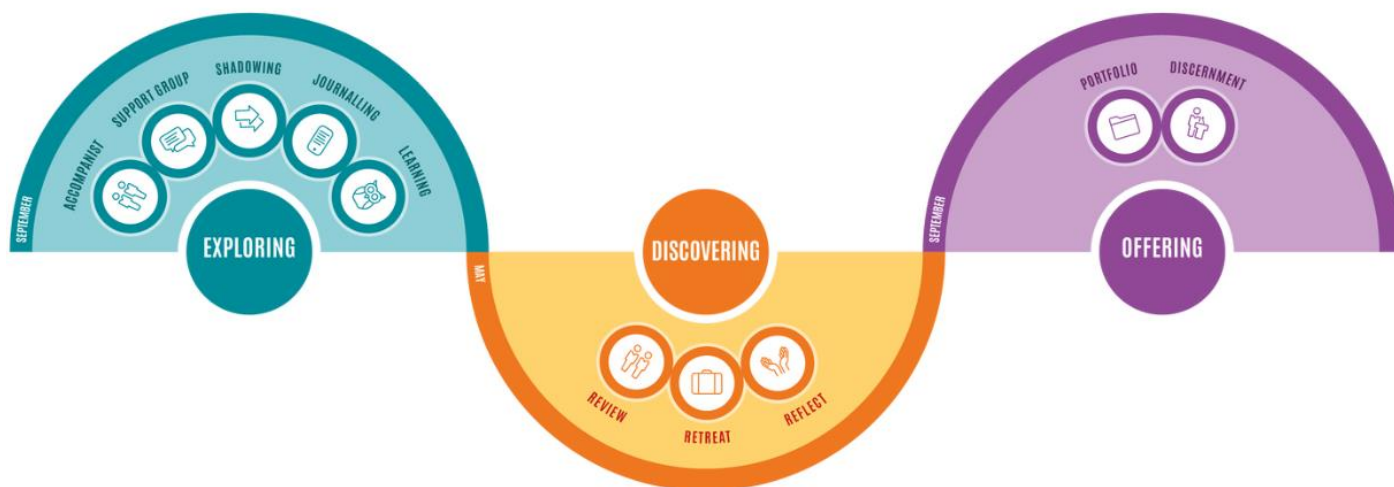


# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS –

## THE DISCERNING VOCATION AND CANDIDATING PROCESS



QUESTION	ANSWER
<b>Questions about the process</b>	
What is Explore?	Explore is a discernment programme to resource Methodists articulate their vocation <a href="http://methodist.org.uk">Explore (methodist.org.uk)</a>
What is DOV1?	In Discerning Ordained Vocation 1 (DOV1) the church provides resources so that you can discern deeply to help you <b>discover</b> if God is calling you specifically to ordained ministry. See web page <a href="http://methodist.org.uk">Candidating process (methodist.org.uk)</a>
What is DOV2?	Discerning Ordained Vocation 2 (DOV2) is the <b>offering</b> phase in which you offer yourself to the church as a candidate for ordained ministry and where the church discerns if it too sees your offer as one for ordained ministry. See <a href="http://methodist.org.uk">Candidating process (methodist.org.uk)</a>
<b>Questions about Explore</b>	
Who is Explore for?	Anyone who is interested in exploring any form of vocation within church life be those lay vocations or ordained.
How long is Explore?	Explorers commit to a nine month covenanted process, but they can be involved in exploration activities for a number of months or years before and after that course.
Does everyone who candidates have to do Explore?	No. Anyone who has church leadership experience or previous theological study or who has already discerned a clear call to ordained ministry may choose not to be part of Explore instead start at the DOV1 stage. But for anyone who wants to have longer to shadow church leaders in their roles, or take the time for reflection, the Explore is offered. Some people on Explore will be discerning lay ministries and some will be discerning ordained ministries.
<b>Questions about DOV1</b>	
Do all candidates have to do the DOV1 process even if they are sure	Yes all candidates will need to do the DOV1 process. It is a gift from the church to enable serious spiritual discernment so that when you candidate, you feel much clearer about your call. If the discernment

they want to candidate?	leads you not to candidate but into another form of ministry, then that is to be celebrated because you have responded to God's calling.
When should you start journaling and what do you put in a journal?	It is never too early to start noting down your experiences, the things that have inspired you, people you have met and conversations that have inspired you. Note not only the events or courses you've been involved with, but also how you felt about them, and what they showed you about discipleship and calling. It is worth noting major things as well as the smallest things. Your journal will form the basis of your reflections for your portfolio. Explore will provide advice about journaling.
<b>Questions about DOV2</b>	
What does this process involve?	More detail can be found here, <a href="https://www.methodist.org.uk/discerning-ordained-ministry-offering">Discerning Ordained Ministry - offering (methodist.org.uk)</a> And full details of key dates here, <a href="https://www.methodist.org.uk/guidance-for-candidating-2023-24">Guidance for candidating (2023-24) (methodist.org.uk)</a> and form G.9
How do you structure your candidating portfolio?	Guidance will be provided regarding the length and areas to cover but ultimately the portfolio is the candidate's individual opportunity to present their call and their reflection on it. There will therefore be a certain amount of flexibility, and it can be presented in a variety of different ways. See document C7 for 'guidance on the portfolio'
How will the retreat be inclusive for people who have limited experience of retreats or spiritual discernment?	The retreat is a vital element in the journey of discernment for ordained ministry. Please regard it as a gift of time and space to allow you to pay attention to God's calling. It will be led by a team of experienced leaders from different forms of ministry, and they will have time to spend with you individually during the retreat. It does not matter if you have never been on a retreat before because you will be guided. What matters is that you approach it with an open heart and mind and that you are willing to discern deeply during this time.
Is it possible to candidate for a local or specific context rather than being itinerant? Who decides?	Yes this is now available. You may feel you need to remain in one locality for family or health reasons or because you feel called to serve there. You may also feel called to be ordained and to carry that ministry out in a specific context such as pioneering or chaplaincy or through secular employment. You will need to have discerned this by the time you apply to candidate (DOV2). In the DOV1 phase your Accompanist will have asked you if you want to candidate for a specific or local context, and will enable your reflections. When you submit your candidating paperwork (DOV2) at that point you will complete an additional local/specific context application form in conjunction with your circuit and district. The Ministerial Candidates and Probationers' Oversight Committee (MCPOC) will assess all of these applications and interview candidates if need be. MCPOC will inform candidates if they may continue with the local or specific context application by the December in their candidating year. If they are not permitted to continue, they can either withdraw at that point or proceed with candidating for itinerant ministry.

<p>What support is there for people who are not recommended?</p>	<p>As this whole process has an emphasis on accompanied and guided self-discernment, we expect that some people will discern for themselves if candidating is not the right way to proceed even part way through the candidating path. There will also be some whom the DOV 2 Connexional Committee do not feel can be recommended. These people are offered a retreat specifically for those who are not recommended. This runs over 3 days, helping people to acknowledge the pain of the disappointment, and then move on to consider how God might be calling them in different directions.</p> <p>These candidates will also receive support locally from their minister and others who will have offered support during the process</p>
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### Questions about Accompanists

<p>Who allocates the accompanists to the explorer / candidate?</p>	<p>Accompanists complete a profile when they take up the role that outlines their experience and identity. Explorers and Candidates also complete a form outlining the sort of accompanist that they would want to work with. The matching of accompanist to each explorer and applicant is done by members of the Connexional Team and care is taken over this process.</p>
<p>What happens if I don't get on well with the accompanist?</p>	<p>A covenant agreement is agreed by the explorer / applicant and the accompanist. This includes the possibility for the arrangement to come to an end and a new accompanist to be allocated.</p>
<p>Who can become an accompanist?</p>	<p>You can be lay or ordained and of any age or experience or background. The key qualities needed for this role are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skilled in helping others reflect on their experience;</li> <li>• Familiar with the wide range of ministries in the church, including ordained ministries;</li> <li>• Sensitive to the variety of people and cultures within the current Methodist church;</li> <li>• Have time to spend with explorers on their journey.</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://methodist.org.uk">Become an accompanist (methodist.org.uk)</a></p>
<p>How are accompanists trained and resourced?</p>	<p>Training will be provided for new accompanists and then they will be required to attend a training session each year. Members of the Connexional Team will be available to offer support and answer queries. To speak to one of the Connexional Team about this role please contact <a href="mailto:explore@methodistchurch.org.uk">explore@methodistchurch.org.uk</a></p> <p><a href="http://methodist.org.uk">Become an accompanist (methodist.org.uk)</a></p>

### Questions about circuit

<p>How is the circuit involved in the candidating process?</p>	<p>Circuits, local churches, Fellowship groups, Chaplaincy, or New Places for New People, are where an explorer or candidate may be known best. These will then be the people who provide informal local support for candidates proceeding through the process.</p> <p>Superintendents are asked to write a letter of support at the outset. Circuit Leadership Teams are asked to write a report at the candidating stage, which becomes part of the candidates' paperwork .</p> <p>Superintendents will meet candidates at the point of their application to ask them to assent to the commitments as required in the Standing</p>
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	<p>Orders of the Methodist Church. So it will be important for that relationship with the circuit to be strong and supportive.</p> <p>It is hoped that now some of the functional roles circuit previously had, and no longer do, means that individuals within churches and circuits feel free to offer personal support and encouragement to candidates from their context</p>
What support is there for candidates?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local informal support from church communities.</li> <li>• Church leader</li> <li>• Superintendent minister</li> <li>• Informal support from the District</li> <li>• The accompanist.</li> <li>• The Connexional Candidates office</li> <li>• Learning Network offer portfolio support sessions</li> <li>• The DOV1 process is key support providing full information and space for discernment.</li> </ul>
<b>Questions about orders of ministry</b>	
How do you decide which order of ministry is the one you are called to?	<p>Some people feel called to be ordained but then struggle to discern whether that is to presbyteral or diaconal ministry, whereas others are really clear at the outset. It is important to understand the orders of ministry not in terms of 'what you do' but more in terms of your identity and which you feel called to inhabit. Being a deacon means being part of a religious order as well as an order of ministry.</p> <p>During the exploration year there will be opportunities for you to shadow presbyters and deacons. They will speak to you about how they felt called to that particular order of ministry and may put you in touch with others too.</p> <p>There is also information about the orders of ministry available on the candidating pages of the Methodist Church website.</p> <p>There are Exploring Ordained Ministry events every year, one of which focuses particularly on Diaconal ministry and we encourage all who think they might candidate, to attend this to help inform their discernment.</p> <p>The accompanist will intentionally ask you questions and support you to explore your own response to this question.</p> <p>This might be a question you bring to the Retreat and pay a great deal of attention to.</p>
What happens if you offer for one order of ministry but then want to change to the other part way through candidating or part way through training?	<p>At the moment you have to restart the process, but this is being reviewed currently. More information will be shared once this review is complete.</p>
<b>Questions about the changes generally</b>	
Now that candidates only need to be a member of the	<p>We expect that many people who candidate will have been members for a lot longer than a year because it is often through significant</p>

<p>Methodist Church for one year, how will they come to appreciate the charisms of Methodism and how will they demonstrate commitment to the Methodist Church?</p>	<p>involvement in a church that someone comes to realise they are being called to ministry.          But it is important that those who have not held formal membership for very long are not prevented from responding to a call.          If you have not been a member of a church and have limited experience of Methodism, you are advised to learn all you can about the Methodist Church so that you are completely sure that this matches your own spirituality, theology and ethos. 'Explore' will help with this and the Methodist website also provides a great deal of information about Methodism. You are also advised to speak to local ministers you meet and ask them to help you to learn more.</p>
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**Questions about preaching**

<p>If candidates no longer have to be local preachers or worship leaders before they candidate, then when are these things learned / taught?</p>	<p>The changes to the Candidating process mean that it is not necessary to have completed Worship: Leading and Preaching before completing the Candidating process. However, Presbyters still must be preachers, and must demonstrate a call to Word and Sacrament, and Deacons to proclaim the Good News.</p> <p>When someone who is not already a local preacher, or worship leader, indicates to their superintendent that they intend to candidate for ordained ministry, they will be allocated a mentor and will take as many opportunities as possible to preach or lead worship in a range of contexts.</p> <p>One of the changes to the candidating process is that candidates will have 7 months from hearing if they have been recommended to be a student minister, until they start their formation training at Queen's Foundation. In that time each candidate will be asked to use that time to begin to grow their understanding of ministry. For someone who does not have a range of preaching experience then they will be asked to preach and lead worship very regularly and, in that time they will engage with the Worship Foundations training.</p> <p>Whilst training for ordained ministry, students are allocated to a link church where they will preach and lead worship, and they preach and lead worship regularly in college, as well as being trained by Queen's Foundation both formally in preaching and in the wider curriculum of theological education and formation.</p> <p>We are looking at adjusting probationer appointments for any presbyter probationer who was not an accredited preacher before they started ministerial training, so that they will be enabled to widen their preaching , preparation and worship leading experience.</p> <p>In essence a Candidates' call to ministry is tested in the candidating process, they are trained as preachers (and in many other aspects of ministry) at Queen's and then their preaching is further formed and shaped in probation before being accepted into Full Connexion with the Conference. All of this is seen as part of the discernment process.</p>
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