

**EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
**BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY**

***RE: Psychological Assessment of Clergy Candidates***

***(Revised 7/2020)***

The psychological assessment process of the Board of Ordained Ministry is intended to serve as a positive step in helping candidates look at the gifts and graces they bring to ordained/licensed ministry, as well as identify areas of weakness that need to be addressed in order for them to be successful in ministry. Psychological assessment at the candidacy level is focused on "fitness" criteria. Fitness criteria involves determining whether or not a person possesses the personality characteristics that "fit" the requirements for both licensed and ordained ministry in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church. The psychological assessment process must be completed and the District Committee on Ministry (DCOM) must receive an assessment report before the candidate appears before the DCOM to request approval as a certified candidate for ordained/licensed ministry. Therefore, ***candidates should begin this process at least six months in advance of the anticipated date of the certification interview.***

The Ministerial Assessment Specialist for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference is Dr. Frank J. Richardson, Jr.

**THE PROCESS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT IS AS FOLLOWS:**

1. The candidate must have met the prerequisites for testing as noted on the checklist provided by the DCOM. (This includes completing the Candidacy Application Form in UMCARES [United Methodist Candidate and Record Entry System], obtaining signatures of district superintendent and mentor, and requesting the candidacy guidebook with payment of the appropriate fee.)
2. The DCOM or the District Superintendent informs the candidate and the candidate's church of the psychological assessment process, its purpose, and cost. If the candidate has received a prior psychological evaluation and/or an evaluation from having participated in clinical pastoral education, the candidate is expected to inform the registrar about these evaluations and how to access them. If an action report has previously been filed, this should be made known as well.
3. The candidate submits payment as follows: \$300 from the candidate and \$275 from the candidate's sponsoring church. Checks totaling \$575, made payable to **EPA/UMC** should be sent to The Rev. Tawny Bernhardt, Psychological Assessment Registrar, 1020 S. Valley Forge Rd. Lansdale, PA 19446. The remaining cost of \$325 will be paid by the EPA Board of Ordained Ministry.
4. Once payment has been received and the above pre-requisites have been met, the candidate will be notified by the registrar that admission to testing has been granted.
5. The candidate will identify four references, as noted below. These references are in very specific roles in relationship to the candidate. These persons should be contacted by the candidate for the purpose of getting their permission to use them as references. Rev. Bernhardt will send them reference forms by either email or U.S. mail. For each person who prefers a hard copy of the reference forms, please send Rev. Bernhardt a stamped envelope addressed to that reference along with a stamped envelope addressed to The Rev. Tawny Bernhardt, Psychological Assessment Registrar, 1020 S. Valley Forge Rd. Lansdale, PA 19446. For references who prefer email, please send email addresses to Rev. Bernhardt at [tawny.bernhardt@cumclansdale.org](mailto:tawny.bernhardt@cumclansdale.org).

*References:*

- a) *Candidate's most recent local church pastor. If the candidate is serving a church and does not have a pastor, this should be a former pastor, preferably the one who knows the candidate best and can best comment on his or her gifts and graces for ministry. If the most recent local pastor is a parent or close relative, candidate must list another pastor who knows him or her well.*
- b) *SPRC Chairperson of the candidate's local church.*
- c) *A professor, if the candidate is in college or seminary. If the candidate is not in college or seminary, list most recent employer.*
- d) *A church member who has served with the candidate in ministry and can comment on his or her potential for service as a member of the licensed or ordained clergy.*

PLEASE NOTE: The candidate should inform the references that they have two weeks from the time they receive the evaluation forms to return them to Rev. Bernhardt. Failure of the references to return their evaluations in a timely fashion may delay the candidate's interview.

6. Once the above is completed, a form referred to as *The Personal Data Inventory* will be sent to the candidate via email. This form should be completed in its entirety and preferably with typed responses rather than printed or written. A *Consent form* and *Release of Reports and Materials* will also be sent to the candidate to review and sign. Once *The Personal Data Inventory* is completed and the *Consent form* and *Release of Reports and Materials* are signed by the candidate, then please return each to Jan Sawicki, preferably by email.
7. Dr. Richardson will contact the candidate at this point to explain the process involved in the psychological assessment. Given the recent mandate of sheltering-in and social distancing, the testing will be administered remotely. The candidate should be familiar with using the platform known as zoom and be familiar with video conferencing. Dr. Richardson will explain that there are two parts to the assessment process which include the testing component, which can take between three to five hours, and the follow-up interview, which can take anywhere from two to four hours. Each is done on a different day and will be arranged when the candidate talks with Dr. Richardson.
8. Following the testing and the interview, Dr. Richardson will send the psychological assessment to the candidate's DCOM chairperson with a brief summary of that assessment sent to the candidate. The report will take two to four weeks after the interview to complete, so the candidate and DCOM should plan accordingly.

**IF YOU HAVE PREVIOUSLY HAD A PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT:**

**It is Board of Ordained Ministry policy that if a previous assessment is more than five years old, then a candidate will be expected to undergo a second assessment at the total cost of \$900. Cost shall be split between the candidate and the Board of Ordained Ministry. Exceptions can be made if the candidate's previous assessment did not raise any concerns and there is sufficient evidence to support a candidate's psychological readiness. The Board of Ordained Ministry, along with the Ministerial Assessment Specialist, will make the determination as to what will be expected from the candidate. The candidate or the DCOM may contact the Psychological Assessment Registrar to begin this process.**

**Rev. Bernhardt may be contacted at 717-371-1663 or [tawny.bernhardt@cumclansdale.org](mailto:tawny.bernhardt@cumclansdale.org).**