

# TOP 10 WAYS

## for Local Churches to Support Candidates for Ordained Ministry







# INTRODUCTION

When someone from your local church decides to attend seminary and enter ordained ministry, your church has reason to celebrate. You have nurtured and supported this person as he or she discerned a call to ministry.

One of the greatest things you can do is to continue to support students while they are at seminary. They need to know they are still a part of the life of your congregation. Here are 10 ways local churches can support their candidates throughout their journey.



# 1



**Include seminary students on the prayer list and send notes periodically to let them know that you are praying for them! If your church has a prayer shawl ministry, consider giving one to the student.**





# 2

Photo Credit: Thomas A. Bradley

**Send care packages and cards on birthdays, around the holidays and toward the end of the semester. It is important to let your seminarians know that you are thinking about them!**





# 3

**Support the United Methodist Student Day offering by taking a special offering every year! Students in the annual conference and around the world appreciate the scholarships, loans and grants that are made possible by faithful giving practices of our connectional church and the generous support of your congregation!**



# 4



Check with your student, district superintendent or annual conference board of ordained ministry to inquire about ways you can offer financial support. Some costs associated with the candidacy process are not covered by funds allotted from United Methodist Student Day or other scholarships. If you are a small charge or have multiple candidates from your church, consider doing a joint fundraising event to support them each year.





# 5

**Consider buying your seminarian some of the essentials for ministry: a robe or stole, *The Book of Discipline*, *The Book of Worship* and/or *The United Methodist Hymnal*.**



# 6



**Be present to recertify the candidates during your annual charge conference. This is not just an annual formality or obligatory paperwork, but also a time for communal learning and sharing, as you can talk with the seminary student about his or her past year. Consider using Skype during the meeting so you can video chat even if the candidate isn't able to attend.**





# 7

**Host a luncheon or reunion-type event for seminary and college students during Thanksgiving or Christmas break or another vacation time. There is joy in fellowship and strength in solidarity!**



# 8



Photo Credit: Duke Photography

**Invite seminarians to preach or serve as a liturgist when they are present in worship. It is nice to give seminarians opportunities to minister to their own congregations. Some may say no, but all will appreciate being asked.**





# 9

**Send your seminarian as one of the lay representatives from your church to annual conference. Consider nominating him or her to serve as a delegate to General Conference every four years.**



# 10



Clergy, educate yourself and your staff about how to encourage potential candidates in discerning their call. Provide assistance in initiating the candidacy process and offer resources to help them explore seminary education. Please be sure to approach the candidacy process as a valuable discernment opportunity, consider signing up for mentor training events and always have a copy of the most recent edition of *Understanding God's Call: A Ministry Inquiry Process* and *Christian as Minister* on your bookshelf.



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- **Programs that encourage men and women to respond to the call to ordained ministry**
- **Continuing-education opportunities for pastors across the connection**
- **Course-of-study education for local pastors**

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Photo Credit: Guy Rogers

- **BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, BOSTON, MA**
- **CANDLER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, EMORY UNIVERSITY, ATLANTA, GA**
- **CLAREMONT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, CLAREMONT, CA**
- **DREW THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL, MADISON, NJ**
- **DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL, DURHAM, NC**
- **GAMMON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, ATLANTA, GA**
- **GARRETT-EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, EVANSTON, IL**
- **ILIFF SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, DENVER, CO**
- **METHODIST THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL IN OHIO, DELAWARE, OH**
- **PERKINS SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY, DALLAS, TX**
- **SAINT PAUL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, KANSAS CITY, MO**
- **UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, DAYTON, OH**
- **WESLEY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, WASHINGTON, DC**

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