



LEADERSHIP

UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

Local Pastor Licensing School 2026

Resourcing & Homework

Assignments are subject to change – you will be notified ASAP if anything changes.

Welcome Evening and Breakthrough Preaching Format

Prior to Tuesday, January 27th meeting on Zoom:

- Review The Breakthrough Worship Series called [“I See You”](#)
 - Pay careful attention to the “I See You Preaching Resource”, which is available in Word and PDF format on the above link
- Review a sample sermon outline found in the [2020 Breakthrough Guide](#) on page 19

Introduction to Worship

Prior to Tuesday, February 3rd meeting on Zoom:

- Purchase and read [Worshiping with United Methodists Revised Edition](#) by Hoyt L. Hickman
- Purchase and read chapters 2 and 3 of [Worship for the Whole People of God](#) by Ruth Duck
 - [PDF of the reading assignment available here](#) if you prefer not to purchase the book
- Bring a United Methodist Book of Worship and The United Methodist Hymnal to class. You may choose to borrow these from your local church.

Preaching Instruction

Following the Saturday, February 7th meeting in person at the Mission and Resource Center:

By February 20th: Submit sermon and bulletin to Megan McKay via email at mmckay@epagnj.org

- Sermon Instructions:
 - Title your document “Sermon by *First and Last Name. Sermon Title*”
 - Manuscript should be typed in Times New Roman, 12 pt font, double spaced with your name on each page.
 - The sermon should be a 10-15 minute original sermon that you are prepared to preach on in class on February 28th based on ONE of the identified scriptures from the *Breakthrough* series “I See You”.
 - Consider using the preaching feedback form to receive feedback on your sermon from someone before submission. The form will help guide our preaching sermon feedback session on March 1st.
- Bulletin Instructions
 - Please create a Worship Bulletin based on your Scripture and Sermon
 - Please title your document “Bulletin by *First and Last Name*”
 - Basic patterns for worship can be found in the United Methodist Hymnal pages 2-5
 - Feel free to use bulletins from your church as a reference

Journey of Hope: Antiracism and Discipleship

Prior to Tuesday, February 24th meeting on Zoom:

- Homework for each participant:
 - Pre-class preparation, Brainstorming Questions:
 - How does your own cultural identity shape your perspective? Reflect on specific ways it influences your thoughts and actions.
 - What is one unique aspect of your parents' culture that they have passed on to you? How has it impacted your life?
 - Have you ever experienced racism? If so, how did it affect you?
 - What experiences have you had with diversity and inclusion in your church or community?
 - In what ways do you feel called to engage in anti-racism ministry?
 - Reading and Video Recommendations:
 - Articles:
 - [What Does the United Methodist Church Say About Racism?](#)
 - [In God's Image: Pastoral Letter on Racism](#)
 - [Why Diversity in the Church Matters](#)
 - [United Methodist Social Principles](#)
 - Read "Preface" (pg 5) and "Preamble" (pg 6)
 - Videos:
 - [Everybody's a Little Bit Racist](#)
 - [What is systemic racism in America?](#)
 - Podcast:
 - The God of Difference by Professor Erin Raffety

Preaching the Sermon and Breakthrough Small Groups

Prior to Saturday, February 28th meeting in person at the Mission and Resource Center

- Prior to class, review [Breakthrough "I See You" Small Group Resources](#)
- Bring a copy of your sermon and bulletin to class to be ready to preach

Overview of UMC Theology

Prior to Tuesday, March 10th meeting on Zoom

Read ¶102 "Section 1 – Our Doctrinal Heritage" in the 2016 *Book of Discipline*. Write a one-page single-spaced paper reflecting on the following:

- What are the key ideas and how are they of interest to you? (e.g. What excited you? What challenged you? What questions did this raise for you? Is there something you want to explore more deeply?)
- How would you describe what is distinctive about United Methodist theology?
- How might you use this information in your own personal spiritual life, and in your ministry with others?

Congregational Care & Funerals and Finance, Shared Ministry, & Stewardship

Prior to Saturday, March 14th meeting in person at the Mission and Resource Center

Congregational Care and Funerals

- Review [Right Listening by Mark Brady](#). Select at least one of the practices that will impact your listening skills. Use that practice for at least one week before class. Make note of the impact the practice has on your listening skills
- Review in the UMC Book of Worship: Services of Death and Resurrection, pages 139-169

- Review the [sample of a Funeral Sermon](#)
- By April 15th: Funeral Sermon Assignment:
 - Select an obituary of someone that you do not know. Write a funeral sermon based on the obituary. Include the printed obituary and scripture before the sermon.
 - Sermons should be double-spaced in 12-point font of Times New Roman. Make sure your first and last name is on each page. Submit the sermon in a file titled "Your Name_Funeral Sermon" to Megan McKay (mmckay@epagnj.org) by April 15th.
 - This is a written assignment, meaning the sermon will not be preached in class.

Finance, Shared Ministry, & Stewardship

- Review [this link](#) and read the job descriptions of the following leadership positions: Finance Chairperson, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary
- Peruse the following links:
 - [The Lewis Center for Church Leadership](#)
 - [Horizons](#), please sign up for Giving365
 - [Discipleship Ministries](#)
- Read the article ["The Spirituality of Fundraising"](#)
- Bring a copy of your 2026 Church Budget

Overview of UMC Polity

Prior to Tuesday, March 24th meeting on Zoom

- Purchase and read sections of [Polity, Practice, and the Mission of the United Methodist Church](#) by Thomas Edward Frank
 - Chapters 3, 6, 10, and 11

Discipleship Pathways & MissionInsite

Prior to Tuesday, April 14th meeting on Zoom

- To prepare for your upcoming session on MissionInsite, please follow these steps:
 - Use the instructions found here to set up a MissionInsite account:
<https://www.gnjumc.org/resource/how-to-registration-and-getting-started/>
- For this session, we will focus on the Mission Insite for Neptune, NJ. The following reports will be handed out at the first in-person gathering, but you should familiarize yourself with them for the Zoom meeting:
 - QuickInsite Report
 - Religious Priorities Report
 - These reports are based on a two-mile radius around the GNJ Conference Center in Neptune.

Self Care/Mutual Care and Weddings & Sacraments

Prior to Saturday, April 18th meeting in person at the Mission & Resource Center

Please bring a Book of Worship to class

- Read about the Three Types of Grace: [A Wesleyan understanding of grace](#)
 - In 250 words, explain the three types of grace and how you have experienced God's grace for yourself or in the community with others.
- Download and Read: ["By Water and the Spirit"](#)
- Download and Read: ["This Holy Mystery"](#)

- Talk with three individuals from your church or community about their understanding or experience of one or more of the sacraments. Then write in 500 words about your experience with and understanding of the sacraments: baptism and communion.
 - Submit written work to Megan McKay at mmckay@epagnj.org by **April 28th**. Work should be typed in Times New Romans, font 12, double-spaced with your name on each page. File should be titled "Your Name_Sacraments and Grace".

Safe Sanctuaries

Prior to Tuesday, April 21st meeting on Zoom

To be Safe Sanctuary Certified there is a 1-hour online training that will need to be completed called *Sexual Abuse Prevention Training*. This 1-hour training class will need to be completed online between April 21st, 2025 and April 28th, 2026. Information will be provided during the April 21st class.

Please read and write out responses to the following questions. Responses should be submitted via email to gnisafesanctuaries@epagnj.org by April 20, 2026. ***Note this is a different email than the other homework submissions. Please be sure you send your work to the correct email address.***

- Why do you think a local church needs a Safe Sanctuary Policy?
- How would you use the Wesleyan Quadrilateral (Scripture, Reason, Tradition, and Experience) to explain to your congregation why having a plan/policy/procedure to protect youth, children, and vulnerable adults is necessary and of biblical importance?
- What kinds of ministries do you have currently at your church or that you might want to one day have that would require you to think through safe sanctuaries?
- If your church were adamant against a Safe Sanctuaries policy, how would you help them to see its importance and how, even if you are in a small church, you might be able to be creative enough to make it happen?

Self-Assessment:

Please type your responses to each question below in up to 200 words. Please ensure that your name is on each page of your work. Responses should be emailed to Megan McKay at mmckay@epagnj.org no later than **April 28th**.

1. From your experience in class and in ministry, what are your ministry strengths? Be specific. How will you continue to grow in your strengths?
2. What topics of ministry would you identify as your areas of growth? What opportunities or resources can help you develop your skills?