



United Methodist Endorsing Agency

General Board of Higher Education & Ministry Division of Ordained Ministry

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Relationships, Resources, and Responsibilities of the Endorsed Community of the UMC

Our Shared Charter

All persons have the right to receive the full ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The church is aware of its responsibility to provide adequate professional ministry to persons in settings beyond the local church, which calls for an ecumenical ministry to persons of different denominations and faith groups.

In order to assure high standards of competence and keep faith with ecumenical agreements concerning uniform standards for ministry in specialized settings, the United

Methodist Endorsing Agency is responsible for enlisting, endorsing, and supporting ordained clergy serving in ministries of pastoral care in specialized settings.

What are the expectations of The United Methodist Church of clergy persons who serve in extension ministries or ABLC ?

What support systems are available to those who are in ministry in such settings?

Here in capsule form is information you may find helpful as you serve in your specialized ministry setting.

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Endorsed Elders in Extension Ministry Appointments

The Annual Conference

“*Provisions for Appointment to Extension Ministries*—Elders and associate members in appointments extending the ministry of the local United Methodist church are full participants in the itinerant system. Therefore, a conference member in an appointment beyond the local United Methodist Church . . .”

2008 Book of Discipline, ¶344)

Resources

Many conference Boards of Ordained Ministry have established a committee or identified a liaison person for those in extension ministry. This can be a vital link for you, especially if you are located outside the bounds of your annual conference. In many cases, you may serve on committees or work with the liaison person to enhance the relationship between your conference and extension ministries.

The Book of Discipline calls for an annual meeting between the bishop and those in an appointment to extension ministry, “. . . to gain understanding of one another's role and function in ministry; to report to other ordained ministers appointed to extension ministries and to discuss with them matters concerning the overall approach to ministry in the episcopal area; to interpret the role and function of extension ministries to the larger church through the offices of the bishop and his or her representatives; to nurture the development of various ministries as significant in assisting the mission of the Church; and to discuss specific programs and services that the bishop and his or her representatives may initiate, in which the various ordained ministers serving in appointments beyond the local church may be qualified as consultants and supervisors. . . .” (¶344.2b)

The Book of Discipline further requires that all bishops “. . . shall provide for an annual visit to the ministry setting of all persons under appointment in extension ministries assigned within the geographical bounds of the annual conference and shall provide a report of the visit to the bishop of persons from other annual conferences.” (¶344.2b)

This mandatory visit, ordered by the 1988 General Conference, provides a remarkable opportunity for each of us to showcase our institution and ministry. It also

allows an opportunity to create understanding within the annual conference of the nature and urgency of the ministry we provide.

Responsibilities

Annual reports are required from each person in an appointment to an extension ministry.

Most annual conferences use a standardized form they mail to you. This form asks for basic information. In addition please include:

- a brief narrative of your ministry activities for the year;
- an indication of your continuing education;
- a copy of the evaluation you received in your setting.

If you do not normally receive an extension ministry report form, send a paragraph summary of your part-time (military reserve, national guard, volunteer chaplaincy, etc.) ministry. Please include a copy of your evaluation.

These reports are important because they help to interpret your ministry to the conference and the local church, and they provide a track record of your ministry. Please note that your annual conference does NOT forward a copy of your annual report to us. You are responsible for submitting a copy of this report to UMEA.

A photocopy of your report is sufficient. This is reviewed by staff, added to your file, and used as reference material when annually, we are called upon to make career decisions about your continuation under endorsement.

Continuing education

The development and maintenance of an ongoing continuing education program is required of all United Methodist clergy persons. Each annual conference establishes its own acceptable standards. It is an individual's responsibility to plan for continuing education, to meet or exceed annual conference requirements, and to report all continuing education activities on the annual report. You will want to consult with your annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry on its standards for continuing education. You may earn continuing education units by attending DOM/SAN retreats.

Annual conference attendance

The Book of Discipline is clear that attendance at annual conference is required of all conference members. If attendance at a particular session of your annual conference may not be possible for a legitimate reason, it is your responsibility to request in writing and in advance of the conference permission from your annual conference secretary or bishop to be absent.

Retirement from the annual conference

If you retire from your annual conference, you should be appointed to your extension ministry under retired status to continue your endorsement. Contact UMEA to initiate this process.

Endorsed Deacons in Full Connection Serving Beyond The Local Church (ABLC)

Deacons in full connection (FD) serving beyond the local church are accountable to the annual conference of which they are members. When possible, deacons will maintain a close working relationship with and effective participation in the work of the annual conference.

Deacons shall submit annually to the bishops and district superintendents (DS) an annual report on the official form #934722. The report includes:

- a brief narrative of your ministry activities for the year;
- an indication of your continuing education;
- a copy of the evaluation you received in your setting.

The reports and evaluation shall serve as the basis for the evaluation of deacons in light of the missional needs of the church and the fulfillment of their ordination to ministries of Word and Service. Deacons serving in appointments outside the conference in which they hold membership shall also furnish a copy of their report to the bishop of the area in which they reside and work. (§331.3)

Please note that your annual conference does NOT forward a copy of your annual report to us. You are responsible for submitting a copy of this report to the Division of Ordained Ministry, United Methodist Endorsing Agency.

If you have insufficient copies of the official form, please send us a readable photocopy. This is reviewed by staff, added to your file, and used as reference material when, annually, we are called upon to make career decisions about your continuation under endorsement.

Deacons serving beyond the local church will receive a secondary appointment to a local congregation where they will take missional responsibility for leading

other Christians into ministries of service, following consultation with the FD and the pastor in charge. These deacons are accountable to the pastor in charge and the charge conference. Where the appointment is in another Episcopal area, the appointment will be made in consultation between the two bishops.

The appointment shall be in a setting that allows one to fulfill the call to specialized ministry and where supervision is provided with goals, evaluation, and accountability acceptable to the bishop, cabinet and the board of ordained ministry. (§331.4, 5)

Deacons will be under the supervision of an appropriate district superintendent who will provide a written report to the deacon's bishop. (§331.10)

Retirement from the annual conference

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Continuing education

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It is an individual's responsibility to plan for continuing education, to meet annual conference requirements, and to report all continuing education activities on the annual report. Consult with your annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry on standards for continuing education. You can earn continuing education units by attending retreats.

Annual conference attendance

The Book of Discipline is clear that attendance at annual conference is required of all conference members. If attendance at a particular session of your

annual conference may not be possible for a legitimate reason, it is your responsibility to request in writing and in advance of the conference permission from your annual conference secretary or bishop to be absent.

The Division of Ordained Ministry (DOM), United Methodist Endorsing Agency (UMEA), Support, Accountability, and Nurture (SAN) Resources

Retreats

One critical factor in personal and spiritual formation is time away from all distractions for rest, reflection, prayer, and study. Such time will not just happen. We each have a responsibility to make it happen. DOM/SAN provides and finances retreats on a regular schedule for all non-retired members of the endorsed community and their spouses.

You must furnish your own transportation. Specific information on retreats is found on our Web site, www.gbhem.org/chaplains. Continuing education units for attendance at a retreat are available.

Interpreting your ministry

A variety of interpretation materials are available from UMEA. These will help you interpret your ministry to persons in your setting and the local church and annual conference. You will receive e-newsletters to keep you up-to-date on events and issues that affect you.

Advocacy/personal contact

UMEA staff participate in interfaith and professional associations which work with persons in the pastoral care, counseling, and education movements. At the annual meeting of these organizations, someone from the staff will normally be present to meet with UM

chaplains and pastoral counselors. Often staff members travel to specific geographical areas and may arrange cluster visits and visits with you in your setting. UMEA staff persons are available to support you as needed.

UMEA serves as an advocate for persons under endorsement in a variety of ways—representing their interests within the institutional systems in which you serve, representing your interests within the United Methodist connectional system, and helping to facilitate transition into and out of extension ministry or ABLC.

Annual verification

Annually UMEA verifies to bishops and Boards of Ordained Ministry those clergy under its endorsement and requests their reappointment. This is essential for your continued appointment in your appointment to extension ministry setting or ABLC.

Chaplain pension grant fund

A pension fund has been established to provide coverage in cases where an endorsed chaplain or pastoral counselor is not eligible for other pension coverage (not including Social Security). Further information is available from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church (800-851-2201).

Your Responsibilities

Annual reports

As indicated earlier, a copy of your annual report to include a copy of your annual evaluation must be sent to UMEA.

For updating your information

Keep UMEA informed of any changes in address, job, or annual conference status! Make changes at: https://public.gbhem.org/pastoral_acts/login.aspx. To view and update your information will require a

password from UMEA; you may contact the office if you haven't received yours or if you have forgotten your password. It is imperative that we have correct information on our database.

Military Reserve or National Guard

You must be familiar with the information in "Guidance for Bishops and Cabinets, Military Reserve Component Chaplains," www.gbhem.org/chaplains, "Guide to Military Chaplaincy."

In personal stressful situations

All of us are susceptible to stress brought on by unusual demands in our jobs, family, health problems, relationships, institutional changes, moral/ethical concerns, changes in employment or geographic location, etc. Most of us are able to identify the resources we need to manage these stresses.

There are times when we need the help of a professional counselor, the intervention of the denomination in our behalf, or assistance in identifying both options and sources of help. The UMEA professional staff is always available to counsel with you and assist you in every possible way during a stressful situation. We also have a network of professional helpers for referrals. You do not have to face a stressful situation alone.

In times of family stress

Extension ministries for the elder and appointments beyond the local church for the deacon can create special stresses for family members that can damage relationships and threaten marriages. We encourage you to be sensitive to stress in your family, to maintain open communication with your spouse and children, and to seek help early in any situation that is potentially damaging to your marriage and/or your family.

While our denomination recognizes that situations occur in which the maintenance of a marriage is impossible, it also recognizes the centrality of the family and the damage to all family members in a divorce. The interest of the denomination in the health and welfare of clergy marriages continues when members of an annual conference enter a ministry outside normal denominational patterns of oversight.

Persons under our endorsement who are experiencing high levels of marital stress should seek all possible help in the healing of relationships and the maintenance of a marriage. We all continue to be accountable to our annual conference and must report in advance to our bishop any legal action we anticipate or are considering that will change our marital status. Because UMEA is charged with ongoing oversight of all persons under our endorsement, you also must keep us aware of such matters. It is our concern that all family members receive appropriate support during any stressful situation.

Concerning inappropriate sexual behavior

The standards for the sexual conduct of clergy persons are clear within The United Methodist Church. The phrase repeated again and again in *The Book of Discipline* is “. . . fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness . . .” This is a universal expectation for all United Methodist clergy persons in every situation.

While any breach of this standard is unacceptable, involvement with a counselee, because it involves taking advantage of a situation of trust, cannot be tolerated.

UMEA highly recommends all endorsed persons receive training in sexual harassment awareness.

Concerning confidentiality

“All clergy of The United Methodist Church are charged to maintain all confidences inviolate, including confessional confidences.” (§341.5)

This standard may place the chaplain or counselor at variance with the laws of the state or the rules and regulations of the institutions in which ministry is performed. It is, our denominational position.

If you intend to operate out of any other standard, you are responsible to alert your counsees to that fact prior to the sharing of any trust. Once you receive a confidence, you are bound to maintain that confidence.

Concerning professional relationships

Persons endorsed by UMEA work almost entirely in ecumenical or interfaith environments and normally have responsibility for the spiritual care and welfare of all persons in their institutions. They also share that responsibility with clergy from a wide variety of faith communities.

We accept the ministerial qualifications of all persons properly credentialed by a religious endorsing body and, when applicable, an appropriate professional certifying organization.

Concerning bearing and use of arms

Chaplains are commissioned, appointed, or sworn to perform the duties of a clergy person in a specific setting. We are the body of Christ present to minister to human need in high stress and often life threatening situations.

The endorsing committee has determined that armed forces, and prison chaplains may neither bear nor

use firearms in the performance of their duties. Because the theology and logic of this prohibition applies equally to clergy in all ministry settings, the same rule applies to everyone under UMEA endorsement.

Weapons will not be worn, carried, trained with, or used in the conduct of one's ministerial responsibilities, either officially or unofficially. Violation of this policy will be cause for recommendation for loss of endorsement. In any matter concerning possible loss of endorsement, the chaplain's right of appeal will be clearly safeguarded.

Concerning the baptism of infants

There may be times when a United Methodist clergy person may choose not to baptize an infant or small child because it is clear the family requesting the baptism, having received appropriate instruction, does not understand or accept the nature of the sacrament and/or has no intention of fulfilling the responsibilities required of the parents or sponsors of the child.

A United Methodist clergy person may not refuse

to perform such baptisms as a matter of course or because of a theological position that no longer allows acceptance of the doctrine and practices of The United Methodist Church.

Clergy are required to instruct parents and/or sponsors before baptism concerning the significance of the sacrament and the responsibilities that they accept in reference to the child being baptized. When parents and/or sponsors are unwilling to accept their responsibilities, the baptism should be deferred.

The pastor may wish to recommend an alternative method of recognition such as a service of thanksgiving for the birth of a child. This allows celebration of the birth within the church environment without defeating the intention of baptism. A service of dedication might also be used, not to avoid baptism, but as a step towards baptism. A service of dedication reflects that dedication to the commitments of baptism is forthcoming.

Support Systems

Professional

It is expected that chaplains and pastoral counselors endorsed by the UMEA will maintain a relationship with a professional organization of pastoral caregivers. Generally this will involve membership and participation in an association related to the setting in which you serve. These organizations are found on the UMEA Web site, www.gbhem.org/chaplains.

Local church

The *2004 Book of Discipline*, ¶344.3a, states "All clergy appointed in extension ministries shall establish membership in a charge conference in their home annual conference in consultation with the pastor in charge and with approval of the district superintendent and the bishop. . . ." While levels of participation may vary from person to person based on the requirements of their institutional ministry role, this requirement underscores the urgency of our being active participants in the worship, work, and community of a United Methodist church.

We are participants in Christian ministry, demonstrated by our committed involvement in the life of a

local congregation our common life of gratitude and devotion, witness, service, celebration and discipleship.

We are all to be participants in the life and ministry of the Church, reaching out to human needs wherever love and service may convey God's love and ours. We are called both to give and to receive ministry. The local congregation can be for us our primary support system

Personal

We all have need of a person or group with whom we regularly and intentionally share our lives--our joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, areas of growth and areas of need, new affirmation and growing doubts.

A significant part of spiritual maturity is recognizing our inter-dependence and participating in structures that help us to remain vulnerable to the understanding, care, and support of others. We may choose to become part of a structured support group. We may choose to create an ongoing relationship with a trusted spiritual director.

Whatever shape we adopt, we begin with the understanding that our personal, emotional, and spiritual health is too significant to leave to happenstance.