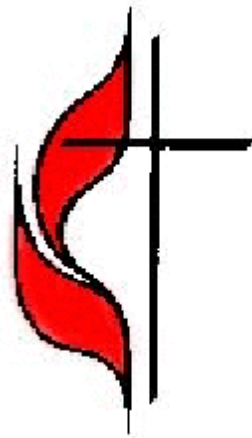


**United Methodist**  
**Handbook on**  
**Ministry Interpretation**  
**2009-2012**  
***Quadrennium***



**Division of Ordained Ministry**  
**General Board of Higher Education and Ministry**  
**The United Methodist Church**

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## Introduction

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The purpose of organizing the life of the church is to provide an instrument through which ministry can be more effective. We refer to that organizing as “ordering”. When persons are enabled to live out their beliefs and commitments, and work is shared, ministry happens. Therefore, *order* is the servant of ministry.

The United Methodist Church, more than most Christian traditions, has focused on the needs of the people for direction in ordering ministry. Through baptism we are all called to ministry on behalf of Jesus Christ. The offices and orders exist to support and enable the ministry of all Christians. Therefore, it is a *servant* leadership role to which elders and deacons are called and ordained, supervised by the bishop, yet each has distinctive roles. Servant leadership is integral to all ordained ministry just as ordained ministry is an integral part of the ministry of all Christians.

**Deacons** are called by God, authorized by the church, and ordained by a bishop to a lifetime ministry of word and service which is to be lived out in the congregation and the community and helps to connect both congregation and community. Deacons are to be models of Christian discipleship. They are to also lead others to enter into discipleship. In the world, a deacon seeks to express compassion and justice, assisting lay persons to claim their own ministry. In the congregation, the deacon’s ministry is to teach and form disciples, and to lead worship together with other ordained and lay persons.

The ministry of the deacon builds a bridge between the needs in the world and the gifts of the congregation. Some deacons are employed in their places of service while others are volunteers. Deacons serve in schools, colleges, theological schools, or in church-related health and welfare agencies. Deacons also work as educators in the church or in the community. Some bring the Gospel to persons who are not served by the usual ministry of the church while others serve in contexts with no religious affiliation. If the deacon’s primary appointment is within a local church, the relationship of worship and the world must be demonstrated. Wherever the primary place of service, there is a relationship to a local church in which they take responsibility for leading other Christians into ministries of service.

**Elders** in The United Methodist Church are persons called by God, authorized by the church, and ordained by the bishop into a lifetime, itinerant ministry of Word, Service, Sacrament and Order. Elders lead persons into mission and ministry in the world by proclaiming God’s work, building up the Christian community, administering the sacraments and serving persons through acts of compassion and justice. Elders also oversee the ministry of the church as district superintendents and bishops, and they may hold a variety of other appointments which extend God’s mission and ministry of all Christians beyond the local church.

The ministry of the elder has demonstrated the very close relationship of ordained ministry with the congregation since the time of the early church. The elder has always taught, guided and served, especially presiding at Holy Communion.

So, the ordering of ministry is the essential servant which creates opportunities for ministry in which personal commitment can be lived and work can be shared. All Christians along with the ordained, consecrated, and licensed persons participate in equipping others for ministry. As they order their lives as faithful disciples, they share with others the ministry to which God has called them in the world. It is a ministry of hope for our time and healing of the world, and calls for new commitment to discipleship lived out in our homes, communities and in the world. The “reason for being” of clergy (deacons, elders and local pastors) and diaconal ministers is to help laity claim their own calling to ministry. The ordering of ministry also compels those who have a ministry of oversight **to guide and evaluate clergy leadership in ministry by their effectiveness in enabling the ministry of all Christians.** God’s call to serve still comes to all! The ordering of the church’s life exists to be servant to God’s call to serve all God’s people and the world.

The first edition of *Ministry Interpretation Handbook* was developed in 1997 by the Joint Committee on Ministry Interpretation: Bishops William Oden, William W. Dew, Jr., Robert E. Fannin, Neil Irons, David J. Lawson, Roy I. Sano, Ann Brookshire Sherer, Woodie W. White and Assistant General Secretaries Jimmy Carr and John E. Harnish.

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**CLERGY SESSION**

## The Annual Conference - ¶369

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1. The annual conference is the basic body of The United Methodist Church. The clergy membership of an annual conference shall consist of deacons and elders in full connection {¶329, ¶333}, provisional members {¶327}, associate members, affiliate members {¶344.4}, ¶586.4), and local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment to a pastoral charge {¶318}. All clergy are amenable to the annual conference in the performance of their duties in the positions to which they are appointed
2. Both men and women are included in all provisions of the Discipline that refer to the ordained ministry.
3. In all cases where district committees on ordained ministry, boards of ordained, or clergy in executive session vote on granting any status regarding license, ordination, or conference membership, it is understood that the requirements set forth herein are minimum requirements only. Each person voting is expected to vote prayerfully based on his or her personal judgment of the applicant's gifts, evidence of God's grace, and promise of future usefulness for the mission of the church.
4. All clergy members mentioned in ¶369.1 shall receive written communication about decisions made regarding their relationship with the annual conference.
5. There shall be an annual meeting of this covenant body, in executive session of clergy members in full connection with the annual conference, including both deacons and elders, at the site of the regular session of the annual conference or an alternative time and location determined by the bishop after consultation with the cabinet and the executive committee of the board of ordained ministry to consider questions relating to matters of ordination, character, and conference relations (¶¶605.6, 636).
6. A special session of the annual conference may be held at such time and at such place as the bishop shall determine, after consultation with the cabinet and the executive committee of the board of ordained ministry. A special clergy session shall have only such powers as stated in the call. {¶369.6}

# The Ordained Deacon in Full Connection

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*“Those who respond to God’s call to lead in service and to equip others for this ministry through teaching, proclamation, and worship, and who assist elders in the administration of the sacraments are ordained deacons.” (§303.2)*

## 1. Ordained to Word and Service

Deacons are persons called by God, authorized by the church, and ordained by a bishop to a lifetime ministry of Word and Service to both the community and the congregation in a ministry that connects the two. Deacons exemplify Christian discipleship and create opportunities for others to enter into discipleship, and connect the needs and hurts of the people with the church: in the world, where the deacon seeks to express a ministry of compassion and justice and assists laypersons as they claim their own ministry; and in the congregation where the ministry of the deacon is to teach and to form disciples, and to lead worship together with other ordained and lay persons (connecting the needs and hurts of the people with the church). (§329)

Deacons give leadership in the church’s life: in the teaching and proclamation of the word; in contributing to worship, and in assisting the elders in administering the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper; in forming and nurturing disciples; in conducting marriages and burying the dead; in embodying the church’s mission to the world; and in leading congregations in interpreting the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. For the sake of extending the mission and ministry of the church, a pastor-in-charge or district superintendent may request that the bishop grant local sacramental authority to the deacon to administer the sacraments in the absence of an elder, within a deacon’s primary appointment. It is the deacon, in both person and function, whose distinctive ministry is to embody, articulate, and lead the whole person of God in its servant ministry. (§328).

## 2. Called and Set Apart for a Ministry of Service

From the earliest days of the church, deacons were called and set apart for the ministry of love, justice, and service; and of connecting the church with the needy, neglected and marginalized among the children of God. This ministry grows out of the Wesleyan passion for social holiness and ministry among the poor. The ministry of the deacon is a faithful response of the mission of the church meeting the emerging needs of the future. Deacons are accountable to the annual conference and the bishop for the fulfillment of their call to servant leadership (§328).

## 3. Appointment

Deacons may be appointed through agencies and settings beyond the local church including ecumenical agencies that extend the witness and service of Christ in the world; through The United Methodist Church related agencies, schools, colleges, theological schools, and ecumenical agencies; and within a local congregation, charge or cooperative parish (§331.1) and will be non-itinerate. If a deacon is appointed beyond the local church he/she will also have a secondary appointment to a local church (§331.4).

Deacons in full connection are clergy members and shall have voice and vote in the clergy session and the annual conference where membership is held. (§329.2)

## 4. Deacons serving a local church without the presence of an elder.

This should only in exceptional circumstances for missional purposes and for a particular time. If the deacon is required to administer the sacraments authority should be given by the Bishop. (§328)

## The Ordained Elder in Full Connection

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*“Those whose leadership in service includes preaching and teaching the Word of God, administration of the sacraments, ordering the church for its mission and service, and administration of the Discipline of the church are ordained Elders.” (§303.2)*

### 1. Ordained to Word, Sacrament, Order and Service

The elder shares with the deacon responsibility for “Word”, the apostolic task of the faithful transmission of the faith and proclamation of the Word of God. For the elder, this includes primary responsibility for the preaching ministry, though preaching in Methodism has always included the lay preacher as well as the ordained. The unique focus of the Elder is the responsibility for administration of the sacraments and the ordering of the ministry of the church. For most elders, this will be lived out as the pastor in charge of a local congregation, but the elder’s ministry is not restricted to the parish. They may be appointed to “Extension Ministries” (§343), serving in a variety of settings. Because elders have been ordained to ordering the ministry of the church and administering the *Discipline*, Bishops and district superintendents are chosen from the ordained elders. Elders share with the bishop the responsibility for this ministry and serve as pastors in charge in the congregation.

### 2. Ordained to Service

With the deacon, the elder is ordained to service. The addition of the word “service” to the elder’s ordination (added in 1996) is important, since all ordained ministry is rooted in servant leadership. Because the Elder will no longer be ordained deacon, this makes clear that there is a diaconal aspect to the ministry of the elder, lest elders be narrowly defined as parish priests within the congregation. For Wesley this meant refusing the constraints of parish boundaries and claiming the world as his parish. For us it means that elders as well as deacons are responsible for leading the church in service in the world. The elder is specifically ordained to “order the church for its mission and service.”

### 3. Itinerant clergy

The Elder continues to be itinerant, offering him/her self “without reserve to be appointed” and to serve where needed for the sake of the mission of the church (§333). The traveling elder commits him/herself to full-time service in the connection under the authority of the bishop. All elders who are in good standing shall be continued under appointment unless they are on leave and are assured equitable compensation for their ministry (§342.1).

### 4. Elder as Pastor-in-charge

As pastor of a local congregation, the elder assumes responsibility to “oversee the total ministry of the local church in its nurturing ministries and in fulfilling its mission of witness and service in the world.” These responsibilities are outlined in. §340-341.

# The Local Pastor Licensed for Pastoral Ministry

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*¶315. License for Pastoral Ministry – All persons not ordained as elders who are appointed to preach and conduct divine worship and perform the duties of a pastor shall have a license for pastoral ministry The Board of Ordained Ministry (¶635.2g) ,may recommend to the executive session of the annual conference the licensing of those persons.” .*

## 1. The essential ministry of the local pastor

Essential to the ministry of early Methodism was the lay preacher, the exhorter, the class leader. These persons, though not ordained, provided primary forms of ministry and leadership in the frontier church. That ministry is continued through the Local Pastor. Though not ordained, the Local Pastor is authorized to provide pastoral leadership to the local church, including sacramental administration and the responsibility to order the mission and ministry of the congregation. Full-time and part-time local pastors have vote as clergy members of the annual conference and have voice but not vote in the clergy session.

## 2. Categories of Local Pastors (¶318)

### ➤ *Full-time local pastors (¶318.1)*

Full-time local pastors devote their entire time to the charge to which they are appointed and its outreach in ministry and mission to the community. They must complete the course of study program and have their license renewed annually.

### ➤ *Part-Time local pastors (¶318.2)*

Persons who have met the provisions of the *Discipline* and do not devote their entire time to the charge may be appointed as part-time local pastors. They must complete at least two courses per year in the course of study and have their license renewed annually/

### ➤ *Student local pastors (¶318.3)*

Those enrolled in colleges, universities or schools of theology and who are making progress in their education may be licensed and appointed as part-time or full-time local pastors. Their licens must be renewed annually.

### ➤ *Associate Members (¶321)*

Local pastors may be elected to associate membership by vote of the clergy members in full connection upon recommendation of the board of ordained ministry, when they have (1) reached age forty (2) served four years as full-time local pastors; (3) completed the five year course of study for ordained ministry; (4) completed a minimum of sixty semester hours of a college degree and met all other requirements listed in ¶322.

## 3. Local pastor as pastor-in-charge

As pastor of a local church, the local pastor assumes the full responsibilities of the pastor {¶340}. He/she is licensed to serve in that appointment under the direct supervision of the district superintendent.

# The Ordained Deacon, Elder, Associate member, and those licensed for pastoral ministry in Appointments Extending the Ministry of Christ

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*Elders in effective relationship may be appointed to serve in ministry settings beyond the local United Methodist Church in the witness and service of Christ's love and justice {¶343}.*

*Deacons in full connection may be appointed to serve in various ministries beyond the local church {¶331}*

*Associate members may be appointed to extension ministries. (¶344)*

*Those licensed for pastoral ministry may be appointed to extension ministries. (¶316.1; 344.1)*

## 1. Extending the ministry of Christ

Basic to our understanding of ministry is that all persons have the right to receive the full ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Ministry is the responsibility of every Christian and extends to every place and to all persons through acts of love and service that convey God's love and the love of God's people. The full ministry of Christ extends beyond the congregation to persons in special situations or with special needs which require an inter-faith outreach or ministry by persons with both a calling and specific qualifications for work in specialized settings. Both the ordained elder, associate member, and deacon extend the ministry in particular ways.

## 2. The elder in extension ministries {¶343-345}

Extension Ministries, formerly called appointments beyond the local church, normally take place outside the boundaries of a local congregation. Extension ministries are initiated in missional response to the needs of persons in special circumstances and unique situations and may be time-limited as needs and situations change. Endorsement for some extension ministries, such as military chaplaincy, is carried out by the United Methodist Endorsing Agency of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry {¶1421.5c}.

*Elders may be appointed to extension ministries in the following categories:*

- a. Within the connectional structures of United Methodism
- b. Endorsed ministry settings
- c. Under the General Board of Global Ministries
- d. Ecumenical settings and ministries that are not usually provided for by the local church.

## 3. The deacon in various ministries {¶331}

By its very nature and vision, the deacon in full connection extends the ministry of Christ into the community. Whether a deacon's primary appointment is to a local congregation, denominational, ecumenical agency, or settings that extend the witness and service of Christ, they are compelled to serve the needs and hurts of the world as well as equip and call out members of the congregation to serve Christ in the world. All deacons are appointed to a local church regardless of their service setting and charged to interrelate the altar table and the marketplace.

Ministry settings that require endorsement may be filled by the deacon in full connection if sacramental authority is not required or unless sacramental authority has been granted by the Bishop. Endorsement will be done by the United Methodist Endorsing Agency, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry {¶1421.5c}.

## 4. Fulfilling the ministry of Christ

These ministers represent God's new thing in a new time. John Wesley was a practitioner of "holy pragmatism," and made use of whatever strategies and structures that were useful to fulfill the mission for which God had raised up "the people called Methodist."

This kind of pragmatism has been characteristic of our Methodist tradition which has always been more mission oriented than churchly. Appointments that extend the ministry of Christ enable The United Methodist Church to demonstrate in concrete ways that the world is, indeed, our parish.

**ORDERS**

## The Order of Deacons and the Order of Elders

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*“There shall be in every Annual Conference an Order of Deacons and an Order of Elders . . . A covenant community . . . to mutually support, care for, and hold accountable its members for the sake of the life and mission of the church {¶306}.*

The Orders are structures through which the vocation and covenant for elders and deacons in full conference membership can be affirmed. We have an opportunity for, indeed a calling into, covenant relationships with our colleagues. The order will “seek to respond to the spiritual hunger among clergy for a fulfilling sense of vocation, for support among peers, and for a deepening relationship with God” {¶306}. Each annual conference will have an Order of Elders and an Order of Deacons. The purpose is multi-dimensional, yet will include:

1. Providing regular gatherings for continuing formation in relationship to Jesus Christ through study of the Bible, church and societal issues, and theological exploration of vocation;
2. Assisting clergy in plans for individual study and retreat;
3. Developing a bond of commitment to mission and ministry of the UMC;
4. Fostering relationships of mutual accountability and trust; and,
5. Holding each other accountable in fulfilling these purposes {¶307}.

The Order of Elder and the Order of Deacon has its purpose in conversation, exploration, prayer, and relationship. Each annual conference will need to engage in a process that makes the Order indigenous to the annual conference, to the identity of its members, and to welcome the full participation of clergy members.

The Order of Deacons and the Order of Elders may meet separately or together. The Orders are to be convened by the Bishop. The chairperson is nominated by the board of ordained ministry and is elected by the full membership of the Order. Clergy are members of the Order by ordination and full membership in the annual conference.

Persons become members of the Order upon their ordination and election to full clergy membership in the annual conference.

## **Basic Discipline Paragraphs**

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### **Paragraph 306 Order of Deacons and Order of Elders**

There shall be in each Annual Conference an Order of Deacons and an Order of Elders. All persons ordained as clergy in The United Methodist Church upon election to full membership in the annual conference shall be members of and participate in an Order appropriate to their election. An Order is a covenant community within the church to mutually support, care for, and hold accountable its members for the sake of the life and mission of the church. These orders, separately or together, seek to respond to the spiritual hunger among clergy for a fulfilling sense of vocation, for support among peers during this stressful time of change in the church, and for a deepening relationship with God.

### **Paragraph 307 Purpose for an Order**

The specific and limited function of each Order is to

- (1) provide for regular gatherings of ordained deacons and ordained elders for continuing formation in relationship to Jesus Christ through such experiences as Bible study, study of issues facing the church and society, and theological exploration in vocational identity and leadership;
- (2) assist in plans for individual study and retreat experiences;
- (3) develop a bond of unity and common commitment to the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church and the annual conference;
- (4) enable the creation of relationships that allow mutual support and trust; and
- (5) hold accountable all members of the Order in the fulfilling of these purposes. All of the functions of the Order(s) shall be fulfilled in cooperation and coordination with the Board of Ordained Ministry and do not replace the normal supervisory processes, the processes of evaluation for ordained ministers, or the responsibilities of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the cabinet, or the Clergy Session.

### **Paragraph 308 Organization of an Order**

The Bishop shall convene and provide continuing spiritual leadership for the order, with the support and assistance of the Board of Ordained Ministry. Necessary financial support shall be provided by the annual conference through the budget of the board. The board may also use other appropriate funding sources for this purpose. The board shall nominate from within the order's membership and the order shall elect quadrennially a chairperson of the order who, in cooperation with and under the guidance of the bishop, will provide continuing leadership for the order. The chairperson will be responsible for implementation of plans and activities of the order and will represent the order to the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. The chairperson will serve as a member of the board's executive committee. Activities of the order and proposals for funding shall be regularly reported to the board.

### **Paragraph 309 Membership in an Order**

Persons shall become members of the Order of Deacons or Order of Elders following their election to full membership in the annual conference. Acceptance of the status of full membership will constitute a commitment to regular participation in the life of the Order.

# **Basic Guidelines for the Order of Deacons and Order of Elders**

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## **Organization of Orders**

### **The Purpose:**

#### **Purpose of an Order - The specific and limited function of each Order is to:**

1. Provide for regular gatherings of ordained deacons and ordained elders for continuing formation in relationship to Jesus Christ through such experiences as Bible study, study of issues facing the church and society, and theological exploration in vocational identity and leadership;
2. Assist in plans for individual study and retreat experiences;
3. Develop a bond of unity and common commitment to the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church and the annual conference;
4. Enable the creation of relationships that allow mutual support and trust; and
5. Hold accountable all members of the Order in the fulfilling of these purposes.

### **Bishop**

The Bishop shall convene the Order initially and provide continuing spiritual leadership with the support and assistance of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

### **Role of Board of Ordained Ministry**

The Board of Ordained Ministry shall nominate the Chairperson of the Order, shall provide funding through the current budget or other appropriate funding sources, and shall receive regular reports of the activities and funding of the Order through the Chairperson of the Order. The membership of the Executive Committee of the Board will include the Chairperson of the Order of Deacon and Order of Elder.

### **Organization**

The Chairperson of the Order is nominated by the Board of Ordained Ministry from the membership of the Order. The Order then elects quadrennially the Chairperson of the Order. In cooperation with and under the guidance of the Bishop, the chairperson shall provide continuing leadership for the Order. The Chairperson will be a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry and will represent the Order to the Conference Board and will carry proposals for funding to the Board.

### **Members**

All persons ordained as clergy in the UMC upon election to full membership in the annual conference shall be members of and participate in an Order appropriate to their election.

### **Financial Support**

The Conference Board of Ordained Ministry budget shall provide the necessary financial support, although the Board may use other appropriate funding sources.

### **Convening the Order**

Bishops may convene the Order in cooperation with the Board of Ordained Ministry. They may choose to organize their structure and activities according to the needs of the conference. Orders are encouraged to give time for prayer and discernment to allow for the Order to evolve from within the community.

## **Suggested Questions for Reflection on Clergy Orders**

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### **Naming the Nature and Value of the Order**

- What are the ongoing and underlying values of the purpose and activities of your annual conference order?
- Do the clergy in your conference feel an obligation or a calling as a member of the Order? How are the Orders in your annual conference experienced as a relationship among the connectional people called clergy, rather than simply an organization?

### **Claiming our Identity and Ministry**

- Why is it important to have an Order of Elders or an Order of Deacons when all persons are called into relationship with Jesus Christ and into fellowship within the Church through our common baptism?
- What are the characteristics that make the Orders distinct and what is the need?
- What are the differing and what are the unifying characteristics between the Order of Deacons and the Order of Elders?
- To whom are the Orders amenable?

### **Forming the Community**

- What is the larger purpose in the Order of Elders and the Order of Deacons in your annual conference? Or was it created in order to fulfill the obligation of the *Discipline* or to fulfill the mandate of the Bishop or the Board of Ordained Ministry?
- How are the Order of Elders and the Order of Deacons related to each other? To the annual conference? To the mission and ministry of the United Methodist Church? To the living out of our call as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ within the world?
- Do the Orders exist only as clergy gather? Or, do they exist as clergy are dispersed? What is the nature of dispersed community?

### **Journeying with/in the Community**

*Author Jean Vanier, in Community and Growth, “speaks of the ‘four great crises of community life; that affect personal formation. The first is the initial arrival, when we have to release our hold on old values. The second is the discovery that the community is not perfect. The third is the inevitable feeling of being misunderstood or rejected because we do not receive everything we wanted. And the fourth is disappointment in ourselves as we discover, through life in community, the less-than-perfect condition of our inner self.” (1)*

- How are each of these crises in community life portrayed in the Order of Deacons or Order of Elders? What are some possibilities for turning these crises into opportunities for growth in the community?
- How is the interweaving of solitude and community experienced in the Orders?

## **Living the Community Life**

*In early monastic orders and in the holy clubs led by Wesley in university settings, spiritual growth and community were best achieved by residential living. In our culture and in the milieu of the United Methodist Church, we are itinerant and live far distances from one another.*

- How is “community” experienced in our dispersed living?
- How are clergy who are in extension ministries relate to the Order, especially those appointed beyond the boundaries of the conference?
- How is it that “community” is known and experienced?
- How do pastors in immigrant congregations relate to the Orders?
- What does an Order do? What is the agenda?
- How are the Orders funded?
- Where and when will the Orders meet?
- How do the life of the Orders relate to programs of continuing education and formation?

## **Expressing our Support and Care**

*The Orders speak of mutual sharing and accountability, of the need for respect and trust among the clergy colleagues. It is important for these to be present if community is to be formed, if relationships are to be the web of the Order. Yet, the practicality of respect, trust, sharing, support, care, concern, and “speaking your truth in love” (Ephesians) have a variety of expressions.*

- How do we live out the sharing of burdens and joys of the fellowship?
- How can the life of the Order be expressed in the annual clergy session at annual conference?

## **Dancing with Support and Accountability**

*“Support without accountability promotes moral weakness; accountability without support is a form of cruelty” states the 2008 Book of Discipline. General Rules & Social Principles, page 49.*

- How is support and accountability both present in the formation and the ongoing life of the Order of Deacons and the Order of Elders? What accountability and support for clergy do the Orders provide?
- What processes or relationships need to be present in order for clergy to experience both support and accountability and thereby continue to grow in covenantal relationship with Jesus Christ, with others, and within their ministry?
- What is the nature of mutual accountability within the Orders?

## **Leading with Soul in the Order**

- How is leadership exercised within the Order so that the souls of all clergy are “exercised” - are challenged, evoked, called to care, to justice and prophecy?

## **Birthing Reverence and Awe**

- Does the leadership for the Order embody reverence and awe? And how do the activities of the Order invite reverence and awe by the clergy within the Order?
- Do others outside the Order know, through experience with members of the Order, that reverence and awe are foundational to the life and relationships of persons within the Order?

(1) Vanier, Jean. Community and Growth. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989. (Quoted in *Weavings*, July/Aug.1990)

# **Basic Guidelines for the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members**

## **¶323**

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### **Bishop**

The Bishop shall convene the Fellowship and provide continuing spiritual leadership with the support and assistance of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

### **Role of Board of Ordained Ministry**

They shall provide funding through the current budget or other appropriate funding sources, and shall receive regular reports of the activities and funding through the Fellowship Chairperson.

### **Chairperson**

The Fellowship will elect a chairperson from its membership quadrennially who will provide leadership for the Fellowship. The bishop may nominate at least two associate members or local pastors who have completed the Course of Study for membership on the Board of Ordained Ministry with voice and vote. (¶635).

### **Members**

All local pastors licensed for pastoral ministry and associate members may be members of the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members.

### **Financial Support**

The Conference Board of Ordained Ministry budget shall provide the necessary financial support, although the Board may use other appropriate funding sources.

### **Purpose of the Fellowship**

The specific and limited function of the Fellowship parallels the purpose of an Order. It is to:

- 1) provide for regular gatherings of local pastors and associate members for continuing formation in relationship to Jesus Christ through such experiences as Bible study, study of issues facing the church and society, and theological exploration in vocation identity and leadership;
- 2) encourage local pastors in continued study beyond the Course of Study;
- 3) develop a bond of unity and common commitment to the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church and the annual conference; and
- 4) enable the creation of relationships that allow mutual support and trust.

**DEACON**

## **Appointment of Deacon in Full Connection and Provisional (Probationary) Deacons**

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### Settings of ministry of the deacon

Deacons in full connection may be appointed to serve as their primary field of service:

- Through agencies and settings beyond the local church, including ecumenical agencies, that extend the witness and service of Christ's love and justice in the world and connect the church with the most needy, neglected and marginalized, by equipping all Christians to fulfill their own calls to Christian service; or
- Through United Methodist church related agencies, schools, colleges, theological schools, and within the connectional structures of The United Methodist Church; or
- Within a local congregation, charge, or cooperative parish . . . . . leading in the congregation's mission to the world and equipping all Christians to fulfill their own calls to Christian service.

Deacons are responsible for finding their own employment BUT it can be initiated by the District Superintendent or Bishop. The Bishop makes the appointment after reviewing its suitability for the ministry of the deacon. (§331.6)

### The Appointment Form

The official form developed by the General Council on Finance and Administration that can be used as models to assist bishops and cabinets in the appointment of deacons in full connection includes:

- "Appointment, Deacon in Full Connection Serving in Setting Beyond Local Church," ¶331.1a, b
- "Appointment for Deacon in Full Connection, Local Church Appointment," ¶331.1c
- "Report about the ways in which the Deacon has lived out the call of the ministry of the deacon connecting the congregation with the needs of the world"

**The United Methodist Church  
 APPOINTMENT OF DEACON IN FULL CONNECTION and  
 PROVISIONAL MEMBERS IN THE DEACON TRACK**

**PART I**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

FAX \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

HOME ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

*PREFERRED ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES AND FOR INCLUSION IN JOURNAL*

- HOME  BUSINESS  
 FULL MEMBER  PROVISIONAL MEMBER

OF \_\_\_\_\_ ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
 CHARGE CONFERENCE MEMBERSHIP \_\_\_\_\_ DISTRICT \_\_\_\_\_

**PART II**

1. If you are serving in a setting extending the witness and service of Christ in the world {331.1a}, give the name and address of the institution or agency.

According to ¶331.4, deacons in full connection serving in an agency or setting beyond the local church shall relate to a local congregation. Give the name and address (including district and conference) of the local church to which you relate and serve as your second appointment.

2. If your primary field of service is in the local church, give the name and address of the local church, district, and conference.

3. If you are under appointment outside the conference of which you are a member, please complete the following:

Conference where you serve \_\_\_\_\_ Bishop \_\_\_\_\_

District \_\_\_\_\_ District Superintendent \_\_\_\_\_

For affiliate charge conference membership, give the name and address (including district and conference) of the local church to which you relate.

TITLE/POSITION \_\_\_\_\_

AGENCY/INSTITUTION \_\_\_\_\_

BASE COMPENSATION (YEAR \_\_\_\_\_) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

UTILITIES AND OTHER HOUSING RELATED ALLOWANCES \_\_\_\_\_

TRAVEL ALLOWANCE \_\_\_\_\_ OTHER CASH ALLOWANCES \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR APPOINTMENT CATEGORY {331.1}, (2004 Discipline)

- a. Agency or setting beyond the local church  
 b. United Methodist Church-related agency, school, college, theological school, or ecumenical agency  
 c. Local congregation, charge, or cooperative parish  
 d. Endorsed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry  
 e. In service with General Board of Global Ministries

### **PART III**

Area of your certification, specialization, or field of service:

Have you mailed your request for annual review and renewal of certification, specialization to the appropriate agency?

Yes  No

On Leave:  First Year  Second Year  Third Year  Fourth Year  Fifth Year {¶353-361}

### **PART IV -- REPORT OF THE DEACON**

Read ¶328 and ¶329 of *The 2004 Book of Discipline*. Reflect and write about the ways in which you have lived out your call to the ministry of the deacon connecting the congregation with the needs of the world.

Describe in what new ways you envision connecting the church with the needs in the world.

According to ¶421.5 the district superintendent shall receive a report of each clergy person on his or her program of continuing education and spiritual growth. According to ¶351 list the ways you have fulfilled your plans for your continuing personal formation during the past year, including spiritual enrichment, service, missional, and continuing education opportunities.

According to ¶351 describe your plans for your continuing formation during the year ahead.

(Attach additional pages if necessary)

Signature of the Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### **SEND COPIES TO:**

1. The Bishop
2. District Superintendent
3. Board of Ordained Ministry
4. Bishop of the area in which you serve, if other than area of which you are a member.
5. Conference Secretary
6. Charge Conference

Copies of this report may also be used to inform the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

No. 0-687-092876

THE UNITED METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE

# Deacons Serving Beyond the Local Church

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## ¶331.1 Primary and Secondary Appointments of a Deacon Serving Beyond the Local Church

When **primary appointments** are through agencies and settings beyond the local church that extend the witness and service of Christ's love and justice in the world or through United Methodist Church-related agencies, schools, colleges, theological schools, ecumenical agencies;

¶331.4 The **secondary appointment** is to a local church.

When deacons in full connection serve in an agency or setting beyond the local church, the bishop, after consultation with the deacon and the pastor in charge, shall appoint the deacon to a local congregation where they will take missional responsibility for leading other Christians into ministries of service.

The deacon is accountable to the pastor in charge, the charge conference, and other bodies that coordinate the ministry of the local church.

### ¶331.10

Deacons in full connection who are serving outside the bounds of their annual conference will receive an appointment to a local congregation in the area in which their primary appointment is located.

This arrangement will be made in consultation between the two bishops. The deacons will be under the supervision of an appropriate district superintendent who will provide a written report to the deacon's bishop.

### ¶331.11

Deacons shall be amenable to the annual conference in which they hold membership for the continuation of their ordination rights.

## **Recommended questions in determining the advisability and appropriateness of an appointment:**

- a. Is the proposed ministry one in which the vows of ordination to word and service can be fulfilled?
- b. Does the proposed setting of ministry provide opportunity to maintain a relationship and accountability with the order and the structure of the church?
- c. Is the proposed ministry congruent with the church's missional commitment in and to the world?
- d. Does the person possess the specific/special gifts, training, education, work experience, and experiences of grace required for the proposed ministry?

## ¶331.5 **Goals, Evaluation, and Accountability**

When deacons serve in an agency or setting beyond the local church, 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.

### **Recommendation**

When a setting does *not* provide evaluation or accountability (example: self-employed), a board or advisory committee may be required by the bishop, cabinet, and board of ordained ministry.

### **¶1421.5c Endorsement of a deacon in full connection**

When a setting requires ecclesiastical endorsement, the deacon in full connection will apply as does the elder to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Endorsing Agency.

### **A process for secondary appointment of deacon**

*A possible process* for Deacons serving beyond the local church as they also receive a secondary local church appointment

1. The bishop and/or district superintendent may contact the deacon to have conversations about an appointment to a local church. Or, the deacons writes the bishop and the district superintendent in the episcopal area and district where an appointment is desired requesting an appointment to a local church. (If the appointment is outside the boundary of the deacon's home conference, the home conference's bishop is copied.)
2. The bishop in the episcopal area where the deacon is to be appointed shares the process used in the annual conference. The following process may be helpful:
  - a) The bishop, district superintendent, local church pastor or deacon initiates conversation to determine whether the deacon's gifts could be used to "take missional responsibility" {¶331.4} in the local church, how much time the deacon could give, how the deacon will be used in the worship and study life of the congregation, and the lines of accountability in the local church for the deacon. A consultation with the pastor/staff-parish relations committee is appropriate.
  - b) A letter is sent from the pastor in charge to the bishop stating willingness to have the deacon appointed to the local church and the role of the deacon in that congregation (the district superintendent in the district where the local church is located is copied; if the deacon is from another conference, the home bishop is also copied).
  - c) A letter is sent from the deacon to the bishop in the conference where the local church is located, requesting the site of the secondary appointment stating how it fulfills the servant role of the deacon {¶331.4}. A copy of the letter is also sent to the relating district superintendent.
  - d) The bishop has a conversation with the deacon and local church pastor as needed.
3. The bishop makes the appointment. (If the deacon is a member of another conference, the bishop communicates with the bishop of the deacon's home conference.)
4. If the deacon is a member of another annual conference, the bishop completes the "Official Record of Appointment of an Ordained Minister from Another Annual Conference" (#0-687-099757 UMPH), signs and forwards to the bishop in the home conference for a signature from the bishop.

## **Non-Salaried, Less than Full-Time, and Across Conference to Other Denominations**

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¶331.6d

### **Non-Salaried appointment**

“Deacons in full connection at their request or with their consent may be appointed to a non-salaried position. Such missional appointments will serve to express the Church’s concern for social holiness, for ministry among the poor, and for advancing emerging needs of the future. In such cases, the bishop will carefully review plans for expressing this appointed ministry and will consult with the deacon about the well-being and financial security of his or her family.”

**It is understood that these “missional appointments . . .” can be as broad as the bishop determines.**

¶331.7

### **Less than full-time appointment**

“At the request of the deacon in full connection and with the consent of the bishop and cabinet where conference membership is held, the deacon may receive a less than full-time appointment under the following conditions:

1. The deacon in full connection shall present a written request to the bishop and the conference board of ordained ministry, giving a rationale for the request at least ninety (90) days prior to the annual conference at which the appointment is to be made.
2. Reappointment to less than full-time service shall be requested annually of the bishop by the deacon in full connection.
3. The bishop may make an interim appointment of less than full-time service upon request of a deacon in full connection, with the recommendation of the executive committee of the conference board of ordained ministry.

¶331.8

### **Appointments across conferences and to other denominations**

With approval and consent of the bishops or other judicatory authorities involved, deacons in full connection from other annual conferences, other Methodist churches, or other denominations may receive appointments in the annual conference while retaining their home conference membership or denominational affiliation. Appointments are to be made by the bishop of the conference in which the deacon in full connection is to serve. Upon the recommendation of the board of ordained ministry, clergy in such appointments may be granted voice but not vote in the annual conference to which they are appointed. Their membership on conference boards and agencies is restricted to the conference of which they are a member. Such appointments are renewable annually.

¶331.9

Deacons in full connection with the approval of their bishop and the judicatory authorities of the other denomination may receive an appointment to another denomination while retaining their home conference membership. The appointment may be made in response to exceptional missional needs.

## **Salary and Benefits for Deacons in Full Connection and Provisional Members (Probationary Deacons)**

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¶331.14

Support for deacons under appointment of a bishop.  
Support for Provisional Member deacons (326.1)

a) Deacons shall receive their support under the policies and agreements of the setting of their primary field of service.

b) When the deacon's primary field of service is within a local congregation, charge, or cooperative parish, the deacon shall receive a salary from the local church, charge, or cooperative parish (¶625.2) not less than the minimum established by the equitable compensation policy of the annual conference for full-time and part-time pastors and shall participate in the denominational pension and benefit plans, programs, and-in the health benefit and supplement programs of his or her annual conference subject to the provisions and standards of those programs as established by the annual conference where health coverage is not provided by another source.

c) The above (§ 14 [a-b]) does not apply to a deacon appointed by a bishop to a non-salaried position (§ 6 [d]).

d) In The United Methodist Church and other employing agencies there shall be an annual review of the deacon's performance no later than ninety days prior to annual conferences.

### **Termination Procedures**

e) Since deacons are not guaranteed a place of employment in the Church, special attention shall be given to termination procedures that allow time for seeking another service appointment. Notification of dismissal shall provide a ninety-day period to final termination of employment unless the contract specifies otherwise or except for causes listed in ¶2702. No deacon shall be dismissed from a local church appointment without the deacon's prior consultation with and full knowledge of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, the overseeing district superintendent and the presiding bishop.

**Salary**

The Judicial Council decision #807 affirmed the principle that deacons in full connection are to be granted the same minimum salary as an elder in full connection when their primary appointment is within a local church.

If a church is unable to pay the minimum salary and the deacon in full connection desires, the deacon may request less than full-time increments of quarter time, (three fourths, one half, one fourth.). If the appointment is for missional reasons, application can be made to the annual conference equitable salary commission. ¶625.4

**Pension & Benefits**

Deacons are clergy and should be a part of the Ministerial Clergy Program. Annual conference health programs must be open for participation of the deacon in full connection.

Bishops and district superintendents are encouraged to ensure that pension and health benefits are provided for Provisional and full member deacons.

## **Termination and Support for Deacons in Full Connection and Provisional Member Deacons**

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¶331.14e Since deacons are not guaranteed a place of employment in the Church, special attention shall be given to termination procedures that allow time for seeking another service appointment. Notification of dismissal shall provide a ninety-day period to final termination of employment unless the contract specifies otherwise or except for causes as listed in ¶2702. No deacon shall be dismissed from a local church appointment without the deacon's prior consultation with and full knowledge of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, the overseeing district superintendent and the presiding bishop.

**Bishops should remind their district superintendents that they have two major areas of responsibility when a deacon is terminated:**

### **Care and Support:**

1. To intentionally care and provide support for the deacon in full connection (¶420).

### **Appointment Status:**

2. To counsel about possible appointment {¶331.6a} and the appointment status of the person {¶353 and ¶354}

**¶354.2c Transitional Leave** – A leave granted for up to twelve months with approval of the bishop and the Board of Ordained Ministry Executive Committee to provisional and associate members and full clergy members in good standing who are temporarily between appointments.

A transitional leave of absence may be granted for the following reasons:

1. A provisional or full member deacon needs to seek and secure an appointable primary position – compensated or nonsalaried.
2. A provisional member, associate member, or full member elder needs to transition from an extension ministry to another appointment

During transitional leave, the clergyperson shall provide quarterly substantiation of his or her effort to obtain such an appointable position to the bishop and to the Board of Ordained Ministry Executive Committee.

## License for Provisional Members Preparing to Become Deacons in Full Connection

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According to ¶326.1 of the *2008 Book of Discipline*, a provisional member who has been commissioned shall receive a license “for the practice of the ministry of the deacon” as described in ¶328 of the *Book of Discipline*.

The provisional deacon’s license is distinct from the license “for pastoral ministry” described in ¶315 and ¶316 of the *2008 Book of Discipline*, given to Provisional Elders and Local Pastors which includes “to perform the duties of a pastor” including sacramental authority under the supervision of the district superintendent.

Candidates for ordained deacon who have completed all the requirements for commissioning, have been elected as provisional members, commissioned, and licensed will be able to give leadership in the church’s life in worship, in assisting the elders in the administration of the sacraments, and in conducting marriages and burying the dead {¶328}, under the supervision of the district superintendent and the board of ordained ministry, during this provisional time {¶326.1}.

Therefore, it is strongly recommended by the Division of Ordained Ministry that persons in candidacy preparing to be provisional members and licensed for the ministry of the Deacon, participate in a formation/discernment event designed by the Division of Ordained Ministry in order to assist candidates with issues such as:

- the privileges and responsibilities of license for provisional members preparing to become deacons in full connection,
- identity of the Deacon,
- the meaning of community,
- accountability,
- the liturgical role of the Deacon,
- the connecting role of the Deacon between the congregation and the needs of the community and
- the partnership of ministry with the elder, the laity and the deacon.

Provisional members preparing to become Deacons in Full Connection can be appointed to serve in an approved setting of specialized ministry under the supervision of the district superintendent and the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry in accordance with ¶326 and ¶331 and shall complete the appropriate form (prepared by the UMPH) for appointment of provisional members in the Deacon track.

It is strongly recommended by the Division of Ordained Ministry that provisional members attend a retreat designed by the Division of Ordained Ministry in order to be with other provisional members seeking ordination as deacons and deal with issues such as:

- the Role of the Deacon
- Partnership with Elders and Laity in Ministry
- Relationship to Annual Conferences
- Accountability
- Missional priorities
- Ordination
- Continuing formation

## Deacons Serving as Sole Pastor of a Church

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The order of deacon is distinct from the ministry of the elder and of the licensed local pastor. The unique ministry of the deacon is to “embody, articulate, and lead the whole people of God in its servant ministry . . . of connecting the church with the most needy, neglected, and marginalized among the children of God.” (2008 *Book of Discipline*, ¶328). According to the *Discipline*, the deacons “give leadership in the church’s life in the teaching and proclamation of the Word, in worship, in assisting the elders in the administration of the sacraments, and in conducting marriages and burying the dead” {¶328}.

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry appreciates the very real dilemma facing bishops, cabinets, and boards of ordained ministry in providing churches with qualified, ordained clergy authorized to administer the sacraments in missional settings where the gifts of a deacon may be needed.

If a deacon is appointed to a church where there is no elder serving, it is recommended the deacon be given sacramental authority. ¶328 or serve for missional purposes without sacramental authority.

- The practice of licensing deacons for pastoral ministry diminishes the integrity of the church’s ordered ministry and thus weakens the distinctive identities of deacons, elders, and local pastors. By performing “the duties of a pastor” {¶315}, the deacon is called upon to assume responsibilities (Order and Sacrament) for which he or she has not been duly authorized through ordination. Indeed, the distinctions in ordination are clouded by this action. Ordained ministry functions as a normative “focus” or “sign” of the ministry of Christ and thus represents to the church the indispensable aspects of its divine calling in the world. One of these aspects of the church’s mission is service (*diakonia*), represented by the deacon’s distinctive calling to Service. Through his or her representative ministry, the deacon empowers the church (and holds it accountable) to carry out its diaconal calling in the world on behalf of Christ. Appointing deacons as local pastors diminishes the church’s awareness of its call to servant ministry, for which the deacon is the focal image in the life of the church.
- The practice impairs the integrity of the connectional covenant in the annual conference — a covenant characterized by relationships of collegiality, mutual respect, and accountability. Local pastors and deacons are both clergy but have different relationships to the annual conference. As members in full connection, deacons are full members of the clergy session. Local pastors have limited vote in the annual conference and in the clergy session. Licensing deacons for pastoral ministry seriously impairs the integrity of these relationships and weakens the integrity of the connectional bond.

X The argument that follows draws heavily on the work of Robert Hannaford and Daniel T. Benedict, Jr. See Hannaford’s “Towards a Theology of the Diaconate”, “ in *The Deacon’s Ministry*, ed. by Christine Hall (Gracewing, 1992), 25-44; and Benedict’s “Elders and Deacons: Renewed Orders and Partnerships in Leading Worship,” *Quarterly Review* 19/4 (Winter 1999-2000) : 387-403.

## Deacons and the Sacraments

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### ¶328. *The Ministry of a Deacon*

*From among the baptized, deacons are called by God to a lifetime of servant leadership, authorized by the Church, and ordained by a bishop. Deacons fulfill servant ministry in the world and lead the Church in relating the gathered life of Christians to their ministries in the world, interrelating worship in the gathered community with service to God in the world. Deacons give leadership in the Church's life: in teaching and proclaiming the Word; in contributing to worship, and in assisting the elders in the administering the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper; in forming and nurturing disciples; in conducting marriages and burying the dead; in embodying the church's mission to the world; and in leading the congregation in interpreting the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. **For the sake of extending the mission and ministry of the church, a pastor-in-charge or district superintendent may request that the bishop grant local sacramental authority to the deacon to administer the sacraments in the absence of an elder, within a deacon's primary appointment.** It is the deacons, in both person and function, whose distinctive ministry is to embody, articulate, and lead the whole people of God in its servant ministry.... From the earliest days of the church, deacons were called and set apart for the ministry of love, justice, and service; of connecting the church with the most needy, neglected, and marginalized among the children of God. This ministry grows out of the Wesleyan passion for social holiness and ministry among the poor."*

The church is the sacrament of Christ's ministry in the world.\* As sacrament, the church both *manifests* God's work of salvation in the world and functions as an *instrument* of the divine mission. Thus, as sacrament of Christ's ministry, the church incarnates the divine mission both in its self-image — its identity — and in its work — its *ministry*. In Baptism, persons are initiated into a distinctive community, the body of Christ, while in the celebration of the Eucharist the church rehearses its identity as the body of Christ and commits itself to live out that identity in ministry to the world.

For Jesus, faithfulness to God's mission involves giving ourselves in sacrificial service to others, particularly to the "most needy, neglected, and marginalized among the children of God" {¶328}. It is in such Christlike service (*diakonia*) that signs of God's coming kingdom erupt in the world. The calling of the deacon is to be a "focal image" or "sign" of the church's summons to be a sacrament of Christ's ministry in the world. In what he or she *is* and *does* in the church and in the world, the deacon represents the church's identification with the servant ministry of Jesus. The distinct ministry of the deacon, then, is to work with and empower both laity and elders to claim their servant ministry and to be with them as they seek to be faithful to God's mission in the myriad places in which they find themselves. The phrase "from altar to marketplace" — and the reverse, "from marketplace to altar" — is an apt description of the deacon's work.

As an ordained minister of the church, the deacon assists the elder in the administration of the sacraments. As an example of the deacon's assisting role, consider the liturgy of Holy Communion. Gathered around the Table, disciples rehearse their identity as sacrament of God's mission and receive the sustenance they need to be ministers of God's grace in the world. In this, the deacon's work in the Eucharistic liturgy is both distinct and utterly indispensable. Through such acts as lifting up the prayers of the people, reading the gospel for the people, receiving the elements and setting the Table in order after everyone has received, and sending the people forth in ministry, the deacon *links* and *extends* the worshiping community's life in service to the world, particularly to the poor and the marginalized.

- It is thus crucial that the distinctive liturgical roles of elders and deacons in the celebration of Holy Communion not be confused or minimized.
- Through ordination, the elder primarily represents the identity and ministry of Christ as *priest*, while the deacon primarily represents the identity and ministry of Christ as *servant*.
- These are two distinct, mutually complementary, and equal orders with distinct and indispensable leadership roles in the liturgy of the Eucharist.
- When the priestly *and* servant dimensions of Christ's ministry receive appropriate emphasis in the celebration of the sacrament, the church begins to understand and practice the *full scope* of its calling in the world.
- Thus, the elder presides at the Eucharist to "sacramentalize" ("focus" or "mirror") Christ's royal priesthood, while deacons assist to "sacramentalize" ("focus" or "mirror") Christ's ministry of sacrificial service.
- Both of these dimensions of the church's identity and mission must find expression in the liturgy, for it is precisely as members of Christ's royal priesthood that disciples understand their ministry as costly, self-emptying service in the world.
- It is only when *both* deacons and elders carry out their distinctive representative roles as priest and servant in the eucharistic liturgy that the body of Christ will understand and practice faithfully the *wholeness* of God's redemptive mission in the world.

It is for these reasons that deacons should be called upon to assist in rather than to administer the sacrament of Holy Communion. When deacons administer the sacrament, their distinctive identity and ministry become unclear. As a result, the integrity of the deacon's calling to lead the worshipping assembly in emulating Christ's ministry of self-sacrificing service in their daily lives is compromised. The fullness of Christ's ministry to which the church is called receives full expression when the deacon performs those leadership functions in the liturgy that exemplify and focus the *diakonia* of Christ for the congregation.

There are circumstances, such as sickness or disability, which prevent some parishioners from celebrating Holy Communion with the congregation. In such situations, it is most appropriate for the deacon to train and lead laity in taking the eucharistic elements to those who are unable to attend the service. A poignant symbolic way to do this is for the deacon to lead a procession of persons from the Table, with the deacon carrying the bread and wine. It should be made very clear that this liturgical act does not imply that the deacon is administering the sacraments to the absent persons. Rather, the deacon leads in "extending the Table," thus exemplifying his or her calling to "interrelat(e) worship in the gathered community with service to God in the world."

The 2008 General Conference granted the giving of sacramental authority to the deacon by the Bishop when needed to extend the mission and ministry of the church in the absence of an elder. ¶328

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X This section is indebted to the following resources: Daniel T. Benedict, Jr., "Elders and Deacons: Renewed Orders and Partnerships in Leading Worship," *Quarterly Review* 19/4 (Winter 1999-2000) : 387-403; Robert Hannaford, "Towards a Theology of the Diaconate," in *The Deacon's Ministry*, ed. by Christine Hall (Gracewing, 1992), 25-44; Margaret Ann Crain and Jack L. Seymour, *A Deacon's Heart: The New United Methodist Diaconate* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001); and John E. Harnish, *The Orders of the Ministry in the United Methodist Church* (Nashville : Abingdon, 2000).

Deacons and the Administration of the Sacraments  
Guidelines for Paragraph 328

The 2008 General Conference approved an additional sentence describing the circumstances in which Deacons may preside over the Sacrament of Holy Communion. **“For the sake of extending the mission and ministry of the church, a pastor-in-charge or district superintendent may request that the bishop grant local sacramental authority to the deacon to administer the sacraments in the absence of an elder, within a deacon’s primary appointment.”** After exploring the legislative intent and its practical application, the Council of Bishops provides the following guidelines.

- The new language does not fundamentally change the sacramental privileges of the Order of Deacon, but attempts to describe the extraordinary missional reasons that justify exceptions to general practice. The church provides for administration of the sacraments through the ordinary sacramental authority invested in ordained elders, licensed provisional clergy, and licensed local pastors, and the new language gives guidance for the extraordinary circumstances that require the provision of the sacraments by Deacons.
- “Local sacramental authority” refers to the primary field of service of the Deacon, meaning the immediate community of faith for a congregational appointment or the primary service setting and community for Deacons serving beyond a local church.
- The “absence of an elder” refers to the complete unavailability of an elder in the congregation, ministry setting or community. This exception is not intended merely for the convenience of church staffs or to fill gaps during vacation, but to assist in the extraordinary circumstance where no elder can be present.
- In all cases, the Discipline gives the bishop the final discretionary authority to decide which circumstances justify the extraordinary exceptions to general practice.

**CONFERENCE RELATIONS/TRANSITIONS**

**Leaves and Changes in Conference Relations**  
**(All requests must be in writing)**

**Voluntary Leaves of Absence ¶351-360**

<b><u>Discipline ¶</u></b>	<b><u>Purpose</u></b>	<b><u>Initiation</u></b>	<b><u>Time Line</u></b>	<b><u>Limits</u></b>	<b><u>Required Approval</u></b>	<b><u>Return</u></b>
351.3 Formational and Spiritual Growth Leave	Voluntary for formational and spiritual growth	Clergy person	Clergy person must have 6 years in full-time appointment	Up to 6 months	Pastor –Parish Relations, church council, district superintendent	As approved
352 Sabbatical Leave	Voluntary for a program of study or travel	Clergy person with 6 years in app.	Request 6 months before annual conference	Up to 1 year	BOM. Bishop vote of annual conference	Appointment by Bishop
354.2.a) Personal Leave	Voluntary leave of absence “unable or unwilling to continue in a ministry appointment”	Clergy person	Request 90 days prior to annual conference	Max. 5 years except by 2/3 vote of clergy session	Annually by BOM and clergy session	Request 6 months prior to annual conference BOM Between sessions approval Bishop, cabinet by executive committee BOM subject to clergy session approval
354.2.b) Family Leave	Voluntary leave “immediate family member’s need for full-time care”	Clergy Person	Request 90 days prior to annual conference	Max. 5 years except by 2/3 vote of clergy session	Annually by BOM and clergy session	Request 6 months prior to annual conference BOM
354.2c) Transitional Leave	Leave for “full clergy members in good standing who are temporarily between appointments”	Clergy Person	Granted by Bishop and BOM executive committee	12 months with quarterly reports	Quarterly by Bishop and BOM executive committee	Upon appointment by the Bishop
358 Retirement Voluntary 30 years of service or age 62 40 years of service or age 65	Clergy person seeking retirement and meeting the requirements	Clergy person makes official request	Written request to Bishop, cabinet, BOM at least 100 days before date of retirement, unless waived by the Bishop and cabinet	Must meet requirements	Bishop, cabinet, BOM clergy session	May receive an appointment in retired status Return to effective relationship if retired under 358.2 by request to BOM, Bishop, cabinet vote of clergy session

Voluntary Leaves continued.....

Discipline ¶	Purpose	Initiation	Time Line	Limits	Required Approval	Return
356 Maternity or Paternity Leave	For the birth or arrival of a child into the home for purposes of adoption	Clergy person	Request 90 days prior to start to Pastor-Parish, DS	Up to ¼ of a year Compensation for no less than first 8 weeks	Bishop, cabinet, executive committee of BOM	As approved. Not considered leave for Pension purposes
359 Honorable Location	“Only to one who intends to discontinue service in the itinerant ministry”	Clergy person	Shall surrender certification of conference membership to conference secretary	Must be in good standing; permitted to exercise ministerial functions only with written permission of the pastor in charge.	Recommended by BOM; approved by clergy session; certified by Bishop.	Recommendation of district committee, BOM, cabinet, vote of clergy session, May require 1 year as local pastor before membership
360 1 Withdrawal to Unite with Another Denomination	Ordained members in good standing to unite with another denomination	Ordained clergy person	Written request and certification of conference membership to Conference Secretary	Must be in good standing		Recommendation of district committee, BOM, cabinet. 2 years as local pastor before restoration of membership, vote of clergy session
360.2 Withdrawal from the Ordained Ministerial Office	Ordained members in good standing who desire to leave their ministerial office and withdraw from the conference	Ordained clergy person	Written request and certifications of ordination and membership given to DS for conference secretary	Must be in good standing and desire to leave	Annual conference	Recommendation of district committee, BOM, cabinet. 2 years as local pastor before restoration of membership, vote of clergy session

**Changes in Conference Relations**  
(All requests must be in writing)

**Leaves that may be voluntary or involuntary ¶353-361**

<u><i>Discipline ¶</i></u>	<u><i>Purpose</i></u>	<u><i>Initiation</i></u>	<u><i>Time Line</i></u>	<u><i>Limits</i></u>	<u><i>Required Approval</i></u>	<u><i>Return</i></u>
354.2c) Transitional Leave	Clergy without an appointment, who are in good standing, may request this leave or be forced to request it if their position is terminated.	Clergy Person must make the official request	Granted by Bishop and BOM executive committee	12 months with quarterly reports	Quarterly by Bishop and BOM executive committee	Upon appointment by the Bishop
357 Incapacity Leave Resulting from Health Matters and Disabling Conditions.	Clergy unable to perform their ministerial work because of incapacity due to health matters and disabling conditions.	Clergy person or cabinet without the consent of the clergy member through the BOM	Granted by BOM, conference board of pensions, majority vote of executive session of annual conference.  Between conferences by Bishop in consultation with DS, BOM executive and Pensions.	Annually with Joint Committee on Incapacity Report	Joint Committee on Incapacity investigation and recommendation. Annual conference clergy session.	Medical evidence of recovery and appointment by the Bishop.
358 Mandatory Retirement	358.1 at age of 72 on or before July 1	Automatic			Vote of clergy session	No

# CHANGES IN CONFERENCE RELATIONS.

# INVOLUNTARY

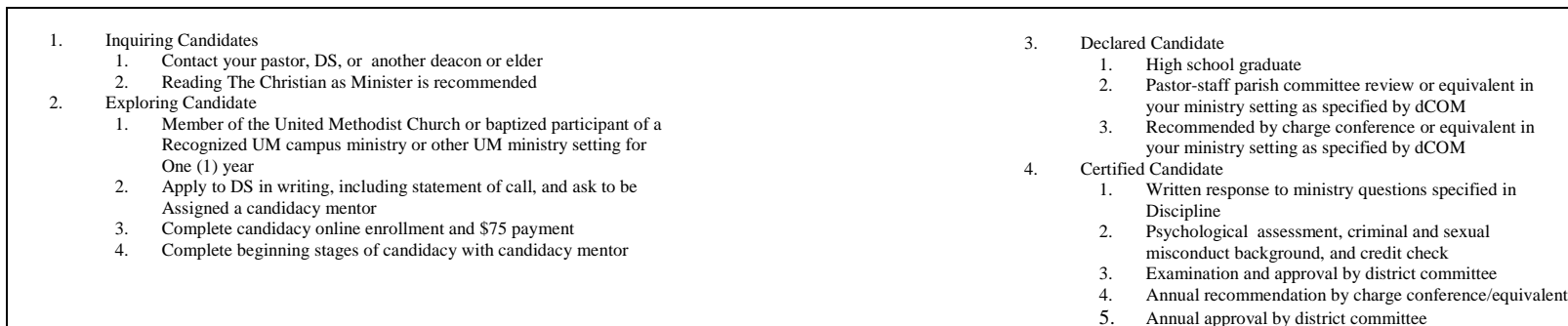
# 351-360

<u>Discipline ¶</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Initiation</u>	<u>Time Line</u>	<u>Limits</u>	<u>Required Approval</u>	<u>Return</u>
358 Involuntary retirement	Any clergy member	Clergy or BOM, cabinet	BOM gives written notice 180 days prior to AC to clergy member and Administrative Review Committee.	Administrative Review Committee report to clergy session; entitled to pension for number of years of approved service.	BOM, cabinet, 2/3 vote of clergy session.	368 Request to BOM review by BOM, cabinet Recommendation from them to clergy session. 2 years as local pastor required. Reinstatement.
327.6 Discontinuance from Provisional Membership	Provisional member discontinues relationship	Recommendation of BOM	Can request hearing by ex.comm. of BOM, Fair process by administrative review	Surrender of credentials	Executive committee of BOM, BOM, action of annual conference	May be approved as local pastors  May be readmitted in annual conference left by recommendation of district committee, BOM, cabinet, vote of clergy session.
355 Involuntary Leave of Absence	Any clergy member	Bishop and district superintendents with written reasons to clergy person and BOM  Fair process for administrative hearings shall be followed 362.2	Requested 90 days before annual conference session	Annual approval Maximum of 3 years	Bishop, cabinet , BOM, clergy session Annually up to 3 years.	Request 6 months prior to annual conference Reviewed by BOM, After 3 years if person not to receive appointment Bishop and cabinet notify BOM and clergy person 6 months before AC, Clergy person may request change in relationship or termination.
361.1c Suspension	“to protect the well-being of the complainant, congregation, annual conference, and/or clergy”	Bishop Recommendation of ex.comm. of BOM		Up to 90 days	Bishop, ex. Comm.. BOM	Return or complaint process.

<b><u>Discipline</u></b>	<b><u>Purpose</u></b>	<b><u>Initiation</u></b>	<b><u>Time Line</u></b>	<b><u>Limits</u></b>	<b><u>Required Approval</u></b>	<b><u>Return</u></b>
360.3 Withdrawal Under Complaints or Charges	When clergy person named in a complaint or charge	Clergyperson requests to withdraw	If happens between annual conference sessions, credentials given to Bishop or DS with letter of withdrawal. Action reported to BOM and clergy session.	Written request and credentials deposited with AC secretary	Under provisions of 2719.2	
363.3 Administrative Location	When clergy person unable effectively and competently to perform duties.	BOM Bishop, cabinet	BOM notifies clergy member, Bishop, DS, chair of administrative review comm.. 60 days before AC	Right to hearing before BOM ex.com.	BOM Clergy session	365 District COM BOM, cabinet. Clergy session' May require 1 year as local pastor.

**The Foundation of Ministry: Baptism**

The ministry of all Christians, the mission and ministry of the United Methodist Church, the ministry of the Ordained



**Requirements for /Provisional Members and Commissioning Toward Deacon's Orders, ¶324**

**Qualifications**  
 Certified Candidate for 1 year, maximum 12 years  
 Demonstrated service leadership to satisfaction of dCOM

**Education**  
 Bachelor's degree  
 Master's in specialized ministry (one-half of the studies)

- completed ½ of basic graduate theological studies (minimum 24 hours)
- health certificate
- doctrinal examination/biographical statement
- interview and recommendation of district committee
- interview and recommendation of conference board

**Alternative education for deacon in full connection, ¶324.5**

- thirty-five years of age
- bachelor's degree
- certification or license in area of service (minimum of eight graduate hours)
- basic graduate theological studies (minimum 24 hours)

**Requirements for Provisional Members and Commissioning Toward Elder's Orders, ¶324**

**Qualifications**  
 Certified Candidate for 1 year, maximum 12 years  
 Demonstrated service leadership to satisfaction of dCOM

**Education**  
 Bachelor's degree  
 M.Div (one-half of the studies)

- including ½ of the basic graduate theological studies (minimum 24 hours)
- health certificate
- doctrinal examination/biographical statement
- interview and recommendation of district committee
- interview and recommendation of conference board

**Alternative Education for Elder, ¶324.6**

- Forty years of age
- Bachelor's degree
- five years Course of Study
- 32 hours of graduate theological studies

**The Local Pastors, ¶315**

**Qualifications**  
 Certified Candidate

**Education**  
 Studies for license as a local pastor or 1/3 the work for M.Div degree

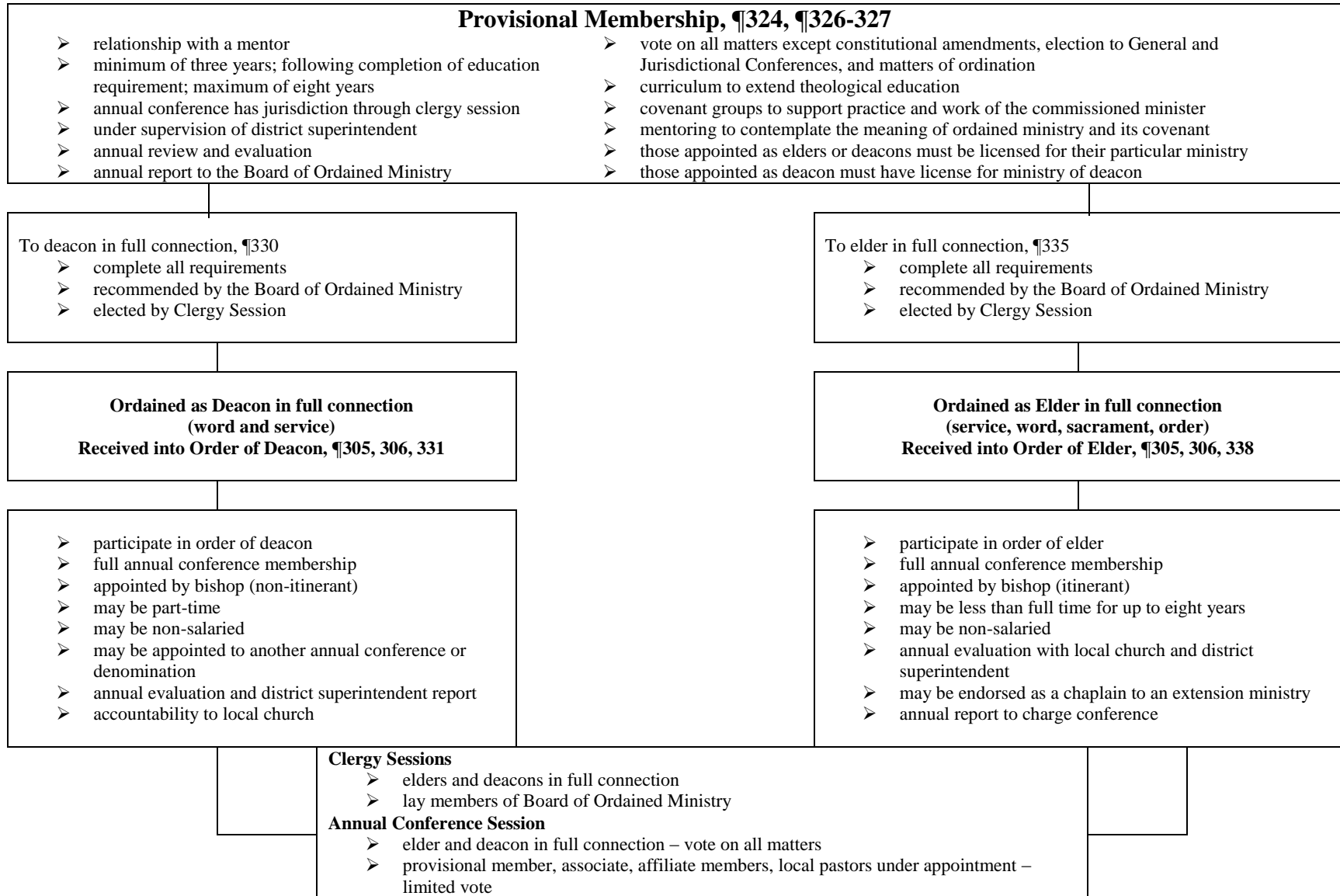
- health certificate
- examination and recommendation of dCOM
- approval of conference board

**Continuation**  
 Satisfactory progress in Course of Study

**Associate Member**

- 60 semester hours undergraduate study
- five year Course of Study
- four years of full-time service

**One half of all formal education completed  
Recommended by the Board of Ordained Ministry  
Elected to Provisional Member by Clergy Session  
Commissioned to Specialized Ministry**



## **Recommendations to Annual Conference Boards of Ordained Ministry for Persons Moving from One Order to Another Order**

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In all times, we are called to be open to the movement and call of God in our vocation as ordained ministers in the Church. We seek to respond to the inner call (our personal response to God's presence in our life) and the outer call (the Church's experience of God's movement and the confirmation of a person's inner call). In the United Methodist Church we recognize that God calls people continually in their life in different ways for different tasks.

There may be a time when an ordained minister seeks to respond to the call to another form of ordained ministry. The ordained ministry of both deacons and elders may be expressed in a variety of settings including the local church and in extension ministry {¶331 and ¶343}. It is in both identity and function that a person responds and embodies their call to ministry, rather than the setting for ministry determining the order for ministry. The Church offers the following possibilities:

¶309.2. Outlines the process for clergy members to change Orders.

### **From Ordained Elder to the Ordained Deacon in Full Connection**

Elders seeking to be open to God's call in their life may discern a vocation to continue in ordained ministry with an emphasis on the embodiment of love, justice, and service and "connecting the church with the most needy, neglected, and marginalized among the children of God." {¶328}

"This ministry grows out of the Wesleyan passion for social holiness and ministry among the poor."

Deacons fulfill servant ministry in the world and lead the church in relating the community with service to God in the world." {¶328}

Elders responding to this call of ministry will contact the BOM and request to move toward a Deacon in full connection and to participate as a member in the Order of Deacons.

### **From Ordained Deacon in Full Connection to Ordained Elder in Full Connection**

Deacons in full connection, ordained to ministries of Word and Service, may discern a call to sacramental ministry and may explore ordained ministry as an Elder in full connection. Do they feel called to "preach and teach the Word of God, to administer the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, and to order the life of the church for mission and ministry" {¶332} and therefore be ordained as Elder?

Deacons in full connection responding to this call of ordained ministry will contact the Board of Ordained Ministry and request to move toward full connection as an ordained elder and participate as a member in the Order of Elders.

The following guidelines are recommended to annual conference Boards of Ordained Ministry as they establish policies for the needs of ministry and mission through The United Methodist Church.

## **For Ordained Elders Who Seek to be Received as Ordained Deacon in Full Connection**

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The following steps are *required* for ordained elders who seek to be received as deacons in full connection: ¶309.2, *2008 Book of Discipline*

1. Ordained elders in good standing seeking to become deacons in full connection shall apply in writing to the Board of Ordained Ministry and inform the district superintendent and bishop of their intention.
2. The Board of Ordained Ministry will interview such persons, inviting them to articulate their call and focus of ministry and how their ministry fulfills the ministry of the deacon in full connection as outlined in ¶328 and ¶329 of the *2008 Book of Discipline*.
3. The Board of Ordained Ministry will determine if such persons have completed all academic and other requirements for the order of deacon in full connection according to ¶324 and ¶330 of the *2004 Book of Discipline*.
4. The Board of Ordained Ministry will also determine if such persons have completed at least two years of the appropriate formation time licensed for a specialized ministry related to the ministry of the deacon according to ¶326 and ¶328.
5. Upon the recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry and vote of the clergy session, such persons may be received into the Order of Deacons and annual conference as deacons in full connection. They will be recognized in the ordination service and asked to respond to their willingness to participate in the Order of Deacons. If they have not been previously ordained a deacon, they will be ordained.
6. Following satisfactory completion of the listed requirements, such persons shall deposit their credentials as an elder with the bishop and will no longer function as an elder and credentials as deacon in full connection will then be issued by the bishop.

## **For Ordained Deacons in Full Connection Who Wish to be Ordained Elder in Full Connection**

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The following steps are recommended for ordained deacons who wish to be received as elders in full connection: ¶309.2 *2008 Book of Discipline*

1. Ordained deacons in full connection who are in good standing and seek to be ordained as elders in full connection shall apply in writing to the Board of Ordained Ministry and inform the district superintendent and bishop of their intention.
2. The Board of Ordained Ministry will interview such persons, inviting them to articulate their call and their understanding of the ministry of the elder as outlined in the *2008 Book of Discipline*. ¶332.
3. The Board of Ordained Ministry will determine if such persons have completed all academic and other requirements for the order of elder according to the *2008 Book of Discipline*. ¶335
4. The Board of Ordained Ministry may require additional education to assure that their education is equivalent to the M.Div. degree.
5. The Board of Ordained Ministry will determine if the person has completed an appropriate formation time in the functions of the ministry of the elder. These persons shall be licensed for pastoral ministry and serve for at least two years prior to their ordination as an elder.
6. Upon the recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry and vote of the clergy session, such persons may be ordained elder and received into the order of elders.
7. Following satisfactory completion of the listed requirements, such persons shall deposit their credentials as a deacon with the bishop and will no longer function as a deacon or participate in the order of deacons. Credentials as an elder will then be issued by the bishop.

## **For Ordained Deacons in Provisional Membership (1992 Discipline) Who Seek to be Received as Ordained Deacon in Full Connection**

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The following steps are *recommended* for provisional members who have been ordained deacon according to the 1992 *Book of Discipline* and seek to be received as deacon in full connection:

1. A deacon in provisional membership in good standing who seeks to become a deacon in full connection shall apply in writing to the Board of Ordained Ministry and inform the district superintendent and bishop of their intention.
2. The Board of Ordained Ministry will interview such persons, inviting them to articulate their call and the focus of ministry and how their ministry fulfills the ministry of deacon in full connection as outlined in ¶328-329 of the 2008 *Book of Discipline*.
3. The Board of Ordained Ministry will decide if the person has completed at least two years of appropriate formation time in a specialized ministry related to the ministry of the deacon during the provisional period according to ¶328-329 & ¶309. The provisional period may be extended to provide for appropriate time of formation and service in the work of a deacon.
4. The Board of Ordained Ministry may require additional education for service as a deacon according to ¶328, ¶329.
5. Upon the recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry and by vote of the clergy session, the person may be received into the Annual Conference as deacon in full connection.
6. These persons would not be ordained but would be recognized in the ordination service and respond to their willingness to participate in the Order of Deacons and to respond to the questions in ¶330.4 of the 2008 *Book of Discipline*.

## **For Commissioned Provisional Member in the Elder Track Who Seek to be Ordained Deacon in Full Connection**

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The following steps are *recommended* for commissioned provisional members in the elder track who seek to be ordained as deacon in full connection: ¶309.2

1. A commissioned provisional member in the elder track in good standing who seeks to become a deacon in full connection shall write to the Board of Ordained Ministry and inform the district superintendent and bishop of their intention.
2. The Board of Ordained Ministry will interview such persons, inviting them to articulate their call and their understanding of the ministry of the deacon and how their ministry fulfills the ministry of deacon in full connection as outlined ¶328-329 of the *2008 Book of Discipline*.
3. The Board of Ordained Ministry will decide if the person has completed all the academic requirements and at least two years of appropriate formation time in a specialized ministry related to the ministry of the deacon during the provisional period according to ¶326, ¶328 and ¶329}. The provisional period may be extended to provide for appropriate time of formation and service in the work of a deacon.
4. Upon the recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry and by vote of the clergy session, the person may be received into the Annual Conference as deacon in full connection.
5. These persons would be ordained as deacon in full connection in the ordination service and participate as members in the Order of Deacons.

## **For Commissioned Provisional Member in the Deacon Track Who Seek to be Ordained Elder in Full Connection**

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The following steps are *recommended* for commissioned provisional members in the deacon track who seek to be ordained as elders in full connection: ¶309.2 *2008 Book of Discipline*

1. A commissioned provisional member in the deacon track in good standing who seeks to become a elder in full connection shall write to the Board of Ordained Ministry and inform the district superintendent and bishop of their intention.
2. The Board of Ordained Ministry will interview such persons, inviting them to articulate their call and their understanding of the ministry of the elder and how their ministry fulfills the ministry of elder in full connection as outlined ¶332, ¶333 of the *2004 Book of Discipline*.
3. The Board of Ordained Ministry will decide if the person has completed all the academic requirements and at least two years of appropriate formation time in a specialized ministry related to the ministry of the elder during the provisional period according to ¶326, ¶332, and ¶333. The provisional period may be extended to provide for appropriate time of formation and service in the work of a elder.
4. Upon the recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry and by vote of the clergy session, the person may be received into the Annual Conference as elder in full connection.
5. These persons would be ordained as elders in full connection in the ordination service and participate as members in the Order of Elders.

## Transitional Provisions from the 2000 Book of Discipline

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### ¶369- Transitional Provisions

1. All persons having begun candidacy for diaconal ministry, deacon's and elder's ordination and conference membership, or full time local pastors prior to January 1, 1997, will be allowed to proceed under the provisions of the *1992 Book of Discipline* (¶305-306; ¶419-421). These continuing procedures must be completed under the provisions set forth in the *1992 Book of Discipline prior to December 31, 2008, after which date the provisions of the current Book of Discipline will govern the process by which persons enter ministry.*
  2. Diaconal ministers who are in good standing with the annual conference and have completed a minimum of three years in an approved service appointment may become ordained deacons in full connection provided the following requirements are completed:
    - a. Applied in writing to the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry for the transfer of their credentials to ordained deacon in full connection;
    - b. Completed a continuing formation and education program developed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. This program shall include an understanding of the meaning of appointment by a bishop, ordination, and the interrelatedness of worship and the world;
    - c. Demonstrated an understanding of the call to the order of deacon, and whose ministry fulfills and exemplifies the definition and description of the ordained deacon {¶328, ¶329}. *2008 Book of Discipline* and who has either met the educational requirements of the diaconate {¶324} or whose competence and experience is determined to be equivalent by the Board of Ordained Ministry through the Division of Deacons, if constituted; and,
    - d. Received a two-thirds positive vote of the clergy session.
- The bishop shall ordain these persons by the laying on of hands at the service of ordination of the annual conference and shall provide deacon's credentials to these deacons in full connection.*
- Diaconal Ministers who seek to become ordained deacons in full connection shall apply before December 31, 2004.***
3. The work of the former conference boards of diaconal ministry will be cared for by the conference boards of ordained ministry effective January 1, 1997.

**EXTENSION MINISTRIES**

## Extension Ministries

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Paragraph 326.3		Commissioned ministers in extension ministries
Paragraph 327.5		Provisional members in appointments beyond the local church
Paragraph 344.1	<u>a</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. DS's Conference Staff</li><li>2. General Agency</li><li>3. To a UM Institution</li><li>4. Ecumenical Agency</li></ol>
Paragraph 344.1	<u>b</u>	Under Endorsement
Paragraph 344.1	<u>c</u>	With GBGM
Paragraph 344.1	<u>d</u>	Beyond the usual ministry extended
Paragraph 344.2	<u>a</u>	Accountability to the Annual Conference
Paragraph 316.1		2008 Discipline allows for Local Pastors to serve in extension ministries when approved by the Bishop and the Board of Ordained Ministry.
Paragraph 1421.5		List of settings that require ecclesiastical endorsement

## Elders in Extension Ministry Appointments

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### Elders {¶344}

#### Appointments may be made to a variety of settings ¶344.1

##### A. Appointment and Accountability

Elders in effective relationships may be appointed to a variety of settings under the provisions of ¶344.1

1. Appointments within the connectional structures of United Methodism.
2. Appointments to extension ministries of elders in full connection under endorsement by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM). (Also refer to Endorsement tab.)

#### *Categories of Appointment*

3. Elders in service under the World Division of the General Board of Global Ministries may be appointed to the ministries as in 1 and 2 above.

They may be assigned to service either in annual conferences or central conferences, or with affiliated autonomous churches, independent churches, churches resulting from the union of Methodist churches and other communions, or in other denominational or ecumenical ministries.

4. Elders may receive appointments beyond the ministry usually extended through the local United Methodist church and other institutions listed above in 1 and 2 when considered by the bishop and the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry to be a true extension of the Christian ministry of the church. They may be appointed to pastoral ministry in other Christian denominations, at the request of appropriate judicatory officers of the denomination. These ministries shall be initiated in missional response to the needs of persons in special circumstances and unique situations and shall reflect the commitment of the clergy to intentional fulfillment of their ordination vows to Service, Word, Sacrament, and Order.

##### B. Accountability and Support

1. In addition to the accountability structure within the extension ministry setting itself, clergy in such appointments are expected to have a charge conference relationship in their home annual conference.

{¶344.3b} If persons are appointed outside the bounds of their home conference, they are also expected to hold affiliate charge conference relationships in a United Methodist church in the area where they are living.

2. Clergy in extension ministry appointments must provide an annual report to the bishop, district superintendent, charge conference, and the Board of Ordained Ministry. Those appointed outside the bounds of their annual conference must also submit a copy of this report to their affiliate charge conference and the bishop in the area where they are serving. A standardized report form (#2170) is available for use by annual conferences. It is to be supplemented by a narrative report of ministry, along with information regarding continuing education and evaluation.

### ***Annual Meeting***

3. *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}

### ***Annual Visit***

4. *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}

## **Resources Available**

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- XX. Manual on Endorsement - information on requirements and process.
- YY. Resources and Relationships - information you need as a member of the Endorsed Community.
- ZZ. Chaplains in the Armed Forces Guard/Reserve Program - in question/answer format, especially helpful for cabinets and Staff Parish Relations Committees.
- AAA. Ecclesiastical Approval for the Chaplain Candidate Program.

## **Deacons in Full Connection Serving Beyond the Local Church**

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Deacons in full connection serving beyond the local church are amenable to the annual conference of which they are members and insofar as possible should maintain close working relationship with effective participation in the work of the annual conference.

These deacons shall submit annually to the bishops and district superintendents (DS) a written report on the official form #0-687-092876 (from Bishop's office). A copy of the report shall also go to the conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

This report shall include a copy of the evaluation by the institution in which the deacon serves. The report and evaluation shall serve as the basis for the evaluation of these 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}

The bishop shall appoint deacons in full connection serving beyond the local church to a local congregation where they will take missional responsibility for leading other Christians into ministries of service, following consultation with the deacons in full connection 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 to a local church shall be made in consultation with the bishop of that area.

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. {¶331.5}

Deacons in full connection who are serving outside the bounds of their annual conference will receive an appointment to a local congregation in the area in which their primary appointment is located. These arrangements will be made in consultation between the two bishops. The deacon will be under the supervision of an appropriate district superintendent who will provide a written report to the deacon's bishop. {¶331.11}

**ENDORSEMENT**

## **Ecclesiastical Endorsement, Approval, Affirmation**

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### **A. Ecclesiastical Endorsement**

1. The United Methodist Endorsing Agency (UMEA) of the Division of Ordained Ministry, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry is the official endorsing agency for The United Methodist Church. The agency provides the ecclesiastical endorsement for elders and deacons in full connection, which is required of United Methodist clergy who desire to serve as pastoral counselors or chaplains in a variety of settings. {¶1421.5}
2. Applicants must complete a process that includes an application, written materials, status and reference checks, and an interview. Persons seeking endorsement for ministry in non-military settings are expected to relate with the appropriate professional pastoral care organization and receive professional certification from that association. The initial step in this process is a letter to the bishop requesting agreement to appoint if the individual is endorsed. **If the bishop is not willing to appoint, the endorsement process is terminated at this point.**
3. UMEA informs the bishop, the Board of Ordained Ministry chairperson, and the district superintendent when endorsement is either granted or denied. In addition, should endorsement be withdrawn for any reason, the bishop is notified immediately. Annually, the section sends a list to each bishop of those persons endorsed from his/her annual conference and requests their reappointment. {¶1421.5}
4. In order to maintain endorsement, persons must continue under appointment. Changes in status such as leave of absence or location should be reported to UMEA.

### **B. Ecclesiastical Approval**

UMEA also provides ecclesiastical approval for seminarians in the Chaplain Candidate programs of the Armed Forces and intermittent chaplaincy service with the Department of Veterans Affairs and The Civil Air Patrol. Affirmation is provided for volunteer chaplaincy in police and other community chaplaincies.

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### **Resources Available**

- A. Manual on Endorsement - information on requirements and process.
- B. Resources and Relationships - information you need as a member of the endorsed community.
- C. Chaplains in the Armed Forces Guard/Reserve Program - in question/answer format, especially helpful for cabinets and staff parish relations committees.
- D. Ecclesiastical Approval for the Chaplain Candidate Program.

**CERTIFICATION IN SPECIALIZED MINISTRY AREAS**

## ***CERTIFICATION IN SPECIALIZED MINISTRY AREAS FOR ELDERS, DEACONS, LOCAL PASTORS, AND LAITY***

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***CERTIFICATION OF QUALIFIED PEOPLE IN SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES*** in The United Methodist Church demonstrates a level of competency and standards set by the denomination. These standards include faith formation, academic training, and experience, membership in The United Methodist Church, and continuing study in the area of specialization. The church's need for individuals who can serve to the best of their ability makes certification in specialized ministry areas by The United Methodist Church increasingly important.

There are three tracks for Certification in The United Methodist Church: Professional, Undergraduate, and Paraprofessional. Each track is available in eight areas of specialized ministry: camp/retreat ministry; children's ministry, Christian education, evangelism, music ministry, older adult ministry, spiritual formation, and youth ministry.

### **PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION**

Professional certification is the United Methodist Church's recognition that an individual has been called, made a commitment to serve and has fulfilled the required standards for academic training, experience, and continuing study to serve with excellence in an area of specialized ministry. The church certification in specialized ministry offered by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) was born of the desire of individuals to serve the church with excellence and more effectively.

Professional certification provides biblical and theological training, knowledge of The United Methodist Church structure and resources, skill development, support, and accountability.

Professional certification is available to lay persons, ordained deacons and elders, diaconal ministers, and local pastors who have an undergraduate degree and take certification courses at graduate level credit and meet the GBHEM's.

### **UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATION**

Undergraduate certification is available by taking an undergraduate degree at one of the United Methodist-related colleges whose programs have been approved by GBHEM and then completing two years employment in the area of specialized ministry. After two years of employment and at least two years membership in The United Methodist Church, application should be made to the GBHEM on *Form 323790, Application for Professional Certification* that can be downloaded from [www.gbhem.org/certification](http://www.gbhem.org/certification). A copy should be sent to the certification registrar of the applicant's annual conference BOM. In both instances copies of transcripts should be sent with the application.

To request additional information on United Methodist-related colleges with approved undergraduate programs, send an email to [certification@gbhem.org](mailto:certification@gbhem.org) or go to the GBHEM web site at [www.gbhem.org/certification](http://www.gbhem.org/certification).

The process for application for certification and renewal are the same as the Professional certification.

### **PARAPROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION**

Paraprofessional certification is available to persons who may not have an undergraduate degree and are working in areas of specialized ministry. Not all paraprofessional certification courses carry academic credit. This certification is designed for those seeking training in a specialized ministry as a worker or volunteer. Those seeking paraprofessional certification should complete a program approved by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. These programs are available through some jurisdictions, annual conferences, colleges and seminaries. See [www.gbhem.org/certification](http://www.gbhem.org/certification) for approved programs.

### **ENROLLMENT**

“Enrollment for the Professional (HE4064) and Paraprofessional (para4065) certification studies in Ministry Careers” is, found on web site at [www.gbhem.org/certification](http://www.gbhem.org/certification) and must be completed and sent to the student’s annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) and the Division of Ordained Ministry at GBHEM. The annual conference may want to meet with the student before they begin their studies.

### **CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

1. Recognized Christian character, personal competence, integrity, and commitment to the church’s total ministry and mission.
2. Ability to relate to people, to work with volunteers and staff, and to function with emotional maturity and sound judgment.
3. Demonstrated leadership, ability to integrate theory and practice, an understanding of, and commitment to the church’s ministry.
4. A member of The United Methodist Church for at least one (1) year before enrolling in the certification process. Courtesy certification may be granted to panmethodist members at the approval of GBHEM.
5. Knowledge of The United Methodist Church’s structure, polity, resources, program, and mission.
6. Psychological assessment and background check is required prior to certification
7. Four years of supervised experience in the specialized area of ministry is required at the time of certification. Supervised experience must be approved by the annual conference BOM and shall be defined as a contractual agreement with supervision, accountability, evaluation, continuing education.
8. Educational Requirements
  - A graduate degree (a master’s degree, doctor of ministry, doctorate in theological studies, master of divinity, master of theological studies).The degree must include a concentration in the area of specialization and a course in United Methodist studies (a minimum of 15 semester hours or equivalent quarter hours). The degree must also be from a University Senate approved seminary or a graduate degree from a United

Methodist-related college or university where the DOM has approved the graduate program for certification.

OR

- *A Bachelor's Degree and Graduate Course* – a bachelor's degree plus five (5) graduate certification courses in the area of specialization including United Methodist studies. Courses must be taken at a UM Senate approved seminary or from a UM-related college or university where DOM has approved the graduate degree for the fulfillment of the requirements for certification.
9. There should be an expressed commitment to continuing education that includes a planned program to enrich both personal and professional growth. Such a program shall include: 1) reading; 2) study – individual and group learning events; 3) participation in professional, community, denominational, and ecumenical groups; 4) renewal of spiritual life; and 5) evaluation by the immediate supervisor.
  10. Be a member of a group or association related to the area of specialization.

#### **APPLICATION PROCESS CERTIFICATION**

When all the course work is completed, an *"Application" for Professional Certification (form 323790) or Paraprofessional Certification (form para4066)* must be sent to the annual conference BOM and a copy of the application with a copy of transcripts to the Certification/Education Team, Division of Ordained Ministry, GBHEM, P. O. Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203-0007.

Upon receipt of your application,

1. The Education team of GBHEM will
  - Verify that the educational requirements have been met,
  - Examine transcripts,
  - Verify employment experience and
  - Church membership.
2. Your annual conference BOM will
  - Contact the three references given in the application, asking for their evaluation on the form HE4012 prepared by the GBHEM,
  - Administer a psychological assessment and background check,
  - Schedule an interview,
  - Verify your local church membership, abilities, skills, experience, and leadership position in chosen field;
  - Make a recommendation to the annual conference BOM concerning certification.
3. If the application is approved by the annual conference BOM, a certificate will be sent by GBHEM to the annual conference BOM for presentation during the next annual conference session.

The annual conference BOM will keep a record of all certified persons and the areas of certification and publish names annually in the conference journal. When certified people transfer from one annual conference to another, his/her records are forwarded to the new annual conference BOM.

The continuing validity of certification is dependent upon a biennial review and renewal by the certified person. Form *HE4004 Biennial Review and Renewal for Professional/Paraprofessional Certification* prepared by the GBHEM available from the annual conference BOM or on [www.gbhem.org/certification](http://www.gbhem.org/certification).

#### **BIENNIAL REVIEW AND RENEWAL**

1. Form *HE4004, "Request for Review and Renewal of Professional/Paraprofessional Certification"* must be completed every other year (even years) regardless of the year of entrance and sent to the annual conference BOM.
2. The annual conference BOM will make renewal status recommendations to the annual conference and inform GBHEM.
3. Evaluation of certified people should be completed by their supervisor.
4. Renewal of certification is permissible for certified persons currently not serving in a United Methodist setting, or unemployed, but who wish to keep their certification valid. To maintain certification, the person is expected to actively participate in his/her area of ministry.
5. Certification is valid for as long as the individual wishes, provided all requirements are fulfilled and the biennial review is updated.
6. The annual conference BOM may withhold certification renewal for a valid cause, subject to the right of the individual to appeal to the annual conference.
7. Certified people may give up their status upon written notification to the annual conference BOM. If through oversight or neglect, the conference fails to act in the matter of biennial renewal of certification, the status of the person should not be jeopardized, and the conference should act quickly to correct the deficiency.
8. If certification is allowed to lapse by failure of the certified person, the person must then meet the current standards in force to be recertified.

#### **Conference Transfer**

When a person certified in specialized ministry moves to another annual conference, their certification records are transferred to the new annual conference. The transferring person shall write to the new conference BOM requesting a transfer of his/her certification status from the former conference and shall send a copy of the request to the former conference. The new conference BOM shall review the request and upon approval, shall notify the former conference board that will send the certified person's accumulated file to the new conference

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*Preparing a New Generation of Christian Leaders*