



United Methodist Endorsing Agency

General Board of Higher Education & Ministry | Division of Ordained Ministry

www.gbhem.org/chaplains • umea@gbhem.org • 615-340-7411

Transitions

Transition—voluntary or otherwise—is never easy. However, transition also offers you the opportunity to reflect on your calling and to listen for the ways in which God continues to lead you into new places for ministry. The following are some reflections and resources which are offered to you at this time of change.

Considerations

Whether you intend to move into a local church appointment, an appointment to another extension ministry, the retired status, or a leave status, be sure to keep both your conference and the United Methodist Endorsing Agency (UMEA) informed of your plans. Appointment making is the work of your bishop and cabinet. Collegial and collaborative contact is critical during times of transition.

The military chaplaincy is carried out within a “total community.” Do not underestimate the impact of moving into the civilian environment. There will be an impact not only on you, but also on your family. There is a ready-made community for you within the military; friendships and relationships develop quickly around the commonality of experience.

This may not always be the case within the civilian community, where relationships tend to develop more slowly. Also you may be accustomed to moving into a position where you are harvesting the fruit of your predecessor and planting for your successor, all within a relatively short period of time. Again, this may not be the case in the civilian world, where pastorates may be of much longer duration and where some chaplains serve an entire career in a single institution.

You may find yourself moving from a “collective Protestant” environment to a denomination-specific environment for ministry, in which collaboration across denomination and faith group lines is honored, but not always active. When moving into a local church appointment, you become again a “parsonage family,” which has other implications.

Some people have chosen to make the transition by spending some time in a training program, such as a CPE or academic program. One advantage of this choice is that you and your family have time to make the adjustments and consider your options. It is possible to be appointed either to training or an academic program. Retirement: If you choose to take the retired status from your annual conference and continue to work part time in your present setting, you will need to request an endorsement for retired status work. Some advise not to move into retired status with the annual conference until one conference year after leaving a position. This gives you the opportunity to transfer retirement funds to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, if you desire to do so. For information check their Web site: www.gbophb.org.

Returning to the local church

Assuming that you have maintained an active relationship with your annual conference during your extension ministry, the transition to a local church may be easier. Active relationship means providing an annual report to the conference and your charge conference, attending the sessions of your annual conference, etc. The reports and your involvement are the most effective way to help your conference know you, your experiences, and gifts for ministry.

As you approach the time of transition, it is essential that you keep your district superintendent and bishop informed of your plans. You are appointed by the annual conference, regardless of the location of your appointment.

The Book of Discipline requires that you contact your conference at least six months prior to the annual conference if you intend to request a new appointment. Keep in mind that the cabinet begins working on appointments early in the calendar year, and you need to be in touch with them in a timely fashion. If you can give them more than six months' notice, all the better.

Many people fear that they will return to a local church appointment at the "entry level" and argue that this means that all those years of extension ministry and all the skills developed are not taken seriously. This is not always the case. No matter how small or large the congregation, your experiences have equipped you in unique ways for effectiveness.

Other extension ministry settings

Go to the UMEA Web site for the list of pastoral-care organizations found in Information, www.gbhem.org/chaplains.

UMEA e-bulletins post positions when they are available.

Missionary service—The General Board of Global Ministries is a source of information on short-term missionary positions: General Board of Global Ministries, www.umcmision.org.

Newscope and The United Methodist Reporter are two good sources of information about positions at general agency and church positions.

Contact Newscope, www.umph.com, or The United Methodist Reporter, unitedmethodistreporter.com.

The United Methodist Web site has job listings, www.umc.org.

Endorsement in transition

Endorsement is to a particular setting. When you move from one setting to another setting which requires endorsement, you must request a change in endorsement from UMEA. Depending on the requirements for the position, a new application and interview may be required.

Contact information:

umea@gbhem.org www.gbhem.org/chaplains United Methodist Endorsing Agency (UMEA) Division of Ordained Ministry General Board of Higher Education and Ministry PO Box 340007 Nashville, TN 37203-0007 Voice: 615-340-7411