



HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

MINISTRY OF DEACONS



The Rev. Kim Houff

Ordained to Word, Service, Compassion, and Justice

Deacons are ordained clergy who lead the people of God through ministries of Word, Service, Compassion, and Justice. Some deacons serve congregations in specialized ministry roles while some serve in a variety of extension ministry settings such as chaplaincy, social-service organizations, schools, and legal services. Deacons assist in administering the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion or may preside at the celebration of the sacraments when contextually appropriate.

Service

Ordained ministry is rooted in servant leadership that sets apart clergy in ministries to represent God's love. Ordination is a lifetime covenant that includes mutual care and accountability and is founded in the sacrament of baptism, through which all Christians are called into service. Deacons are ordained into this lifetime relationship.

The office of the deacon dates to New Testament times. The word "deacon" means "servant" and "messenger." Deacons lead ministries of compassion and justice and lead the faithful in these ministries. United Methodist deacons are appointed to their places of ministry, often finding their place of service and requesting appointment from the bishop. Wherever they serve, deacons carry their vows of Word, Service, Compassion, and Justice as ordained representatives of Christ's church.

In the Congregation

Deacons lead worship and assist the pastor with baptism and Holy Communion and may preside at sacraments when contextually appropriate (§328). Deacons also preach and teach; raise the congregation's awareness of the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world; lead outreach ministries; and conduct funerals and weddings. Their ministry in a church includes sending the faithful to carry the love and hope of Christ to the world.

In the World

Beyond the local congregation, deacons may serve in social service agencies, church-related schools, institutions, agencies, and other settings where people are hungry to know a loving God. While lay people may also carry out many of these ministries, ordained deacons are distinct in their accountable relationship with the Church, their representative ministry, serving the church in world and the world in the church, their leadership, and their lifelong commitment to this relationship.

First Steps – Deacon

- Read and discuss *The Christian as Minister* with a clergyperson or candidacy mentor. This book is available at Cokesbury.com.
- Contact the pastor of your church, another elder or deacon, or the district superintendent to inquire about admission and invitation into the candidacy process.

- Participate in a candidacy mentoring group or meet with a candidacy mentor (as assigned by the annual conference) to study [Answering the Call: Candidacy Guidebook](#) and refine your call to ministry.

Becoming a Certified Candidate – Deacon (¶310)

- Be a member of the UMC or active in a United Methodist ministry setting for at least one year.
- Follow your annual conference’s process for enrolling as a certified candidate.
- Complete all required steps to become a certified candidate as listed in ¶¶310-314 and determined by the annual conference.

Educational Requirements and Academic Qualifications – Deacon (¶324.3 (undergrad), ¶324.4.b, (graduate), ¶330.3 overview))

- High school diploma or equivalent
- Bachelor’s degree from an approved institution (some exceptions apply)
- Graduate degree options include:
 - Master of Divinity degree, or other master’s theological degree from a University Senate-approved school of theology, or
 - Master’s degree in an area of specialization and completion of Basic Graduate Theological Studies
- Alternative education is available for candidates who hold a bachelor’s degree, Certification in Professional Ministry, have completed four years of full-time service in this area of specialization, and have completed the Basic Graduate Theological Studies.



The Rev. DeAndre Johnson



The Rev. Dr. Erika Stalcup

Continuing Steps – Deacon

- Demonstrate gifts for ministries of service and leadership to the satisfaction of the district committee on ordained ministry (dCOM).
- Complete all application requirements including health certificate, background checks, written theological exam, and autobiographical statement.
- Interview with the dCOM and Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) and receive recommendation for commissioning.
- Receive Clergy Session approval for election to provisional membership and be commissioned by a bishop.
- After completing the requirements of provisional membership, seek recommendation by the BOM and approval by the Clergy Executive Session for ordination and full membership.
- Be ordained by a bishop.

The candidacy process is listed in ¶¶310-314 in [The Book of Discipline](#). The ministry of the Deacon is described in ¶¶328-331 in [The Book of Discipline](#).