

## Section 4 • Clergy and Set-Apart Ministries

### CHAPTER 12

## Diaconal Ministry

For more information contact GBHEM's director of Provisional Membership, Deacon Support, and Certification in Specialized Ministries, [deacons@gbhem.org](mailto:deacons@gbhem.org) or 615-340-7375.

The BOM provides continuing support and management of consecrated diaconal ministers using the policies described in ¶¶301-¶317 of the 1992 *Book of Discipline* (¶635.1c).

Diaconal ministers are lay persons who received a call to serve in ministries of specialized service in and on behalf of the church. They serve within congregations, charges or cooperative parishes, Church-related agencies, ecumenical agencies, or ministries that extend the witness and service of Christ's love and justice in the world.

Although it is no longer possible to become a diaconal minister, there are approximately 240 active diaconal ministers and 270 who are retired. The BOM relates to diaconal ministers, and provides support, encouragement, accountability, and management of status and changes in status.

### Support

The BOM should ensure time for their continuing education and professional growth (¶¶315-317, 1992 *Book of Discipline*). Diaconal ministers file an annual report with the charge conference, district superintendent, and BOM. This includes information about how the person has fulfilled his/her call to diaconal ministry, continuing education accomplished in that year, and any plans for continuing education and spiritual formation in the upcoming year.

### Relationship to the Annual Conference

- Diaconal ministers have both voice and vote as lay members in the annual conference where their church membership is held.
- They may serve as a lay person on boards, commissions, or committees of the annual conference, and may hold office.
- They are eligible for election as lay delegates to General or Jurisdictional Conference.
- The bishop, representatives of the cabinet, and BOM shall provide an opportunity to meet annually with the diaconal ministers of the conference (¶ 309, 1992 *Book of Discipline*).

### Transfer of Conference Relationship (¶312, 1992 *Book of Discipline*)

- Transfers in and out must be reported by the bishop and the secretary of the annual conferences involved on the official transfer form. The forms are available from the office of the presiding bishop of the annual conference.
- The diaconal minister consults with the bishop and appropriate district superintendent in both conferences before accepting a new position.

- The diaconal minister then writes to the receiving bishop requesting transfer, and sends copies of the request to the two BOMs and the sending bishop.
- The receiving BOM sends a recommendation of transfer to the receiving bishop.
- If the transfer and the service appointment are approved by the receiving bishop, s/he sends the Official Notice of Transfer to the sending bishop, who responds with the request for transfer of the diaconal files.

## Changes in Conference Relationships

- Diaconal ministers seeking a change in conference relationship shall make a written request to the BOM.
- The BOM may approve leaves according to ¶313, 1992 *Book of Discipline*.
- Diaconal ministers may enter retired relationship with the annual conference by their own request or by action of the members of the annual conference upon recommendation of the BOM.
- Retired relationship may be taken upon reaching the age of 62, or after 20 years of service. Every diaconal minister who reaches the age of 72 by July 1 shall automatically be retired from active relationship at the annual conference session after that date.

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