

## Chapter 11 | Licensed Ministry

For more information, contact the Local Pastor/Course of Study Office at [localpastors@gbhem.org](mailto:localpastors@gbhem.org) or 615-340-7388. See also [www.gbhem.org/localpastors](http://www.gbhem.org/localpastors).

*“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.” (§315)*

### Licensed Ministry

Licensed pastors may perform all the duties of a pastor listed in §340, including the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, as well as the service of marriage (where state laws allow), burial, confirmation and membership reception, while appointed to a particular charge. A charge is defined as “people within or related to the community or ministry setting being served” and not simply the members of a local church.

#### PROVISIONAL ELDERS (§315.1, §326.2)

- Commissioned and receive a license for pastoral ministry
- Appointed by a bishop (§326)
- Serve a minimum of two years following the completion of the educational requirements for full connection before ordination
- Have pastoral authority that limited to their appointment setting
- May vote on all matters except constitutional amendments and matters of ordination, character and conference relations of clergy
- May serve on any board, commission or committee of the Annual Conference, except the BOM (§327.3)
- Eligible to vote to elect delegates to General, jurisdictional or central conferences if they have completed all educational requirements and have been elected to provisional membership (§35)
- Ineligible for election as delegates to the General, central or jurisdictional conferences
- Supervised by the District Superintendent where they are appointed
- Receive an annual report to the BOM from the District Superintendent of their appointment setting
- Assigned a Clergy Mentor by the BOM (see Chapter 12 of the BOM Handbook) and participate in the Residency in Ministry process established by their Annual Conference
- If serving in extension ministries, relate to the District Superintendent in the area where appointed

#### LOCAL PASTORS (§315.2, §318)

- May serve in full-time or part-time appointments
- May be appointed as student local pastors while attending school outside of their home Annual Conference
- Under the supervision of a District Superintendent, and shall be assigned a clergy mentor while in the Course of Study or seminary (§316.4, §348.1b)
- Shall attend Annual Conference sessions

- Are clergy members of the Annual Conference and may vote on all matters except constitutional amendments and matters of ordination, character and conference relations of clergy
- Are eligible to vote to elect delegates to General, jurisdictional or central conferences if they have completed all educational requirements and have served a minimum of two consecutive years immediately preceding the election (§35)
- Retirement
  - Local pastors who have completed the Course of Study and are retiring may request a license annually from the dCOM and the bishop to serve in the local church where they hold membership in order to baptize and serve Holy Communion at the request of the appointed pastor (§316.8).
  - A local pastor who has made satisfactory progress in the Course of Study may be recognized as a retired local pastor (§320.5), and may be appointed and licensed by the bishop upon recommendation by the dCOM.
- Licensing requirements
  - Become a certified candidate (§310)
  - Complete the licensing studies prescribed by the Division of Ordained Ministry, or one-third of their work for a Master of Divinity degree at a school of theology listed by the University Senate
  - Participate in the Orientation to Ministry
  - Undergo examination and recommendation by the dCOM
- Categories of local pastor
  - Full-time local pastors (§318.1) – Work full time in the charge to which they are appointed and receive a salary equal to or more than the minimum base compensation established for full-time local pastors. While enrolled in Course of Study, they must complete four courses per year and shall complete the Course of Study curriculum within eight years (§319.3). They are subject to annual review by the dCOM, Cabinet and BOM, and must be approved annually for continuation of their license.
  - Part-time local pastors (§318.2) – Work part time for the charge to which they are appointed and are not guaranteed the minimum base salary established for full-time local pastors. While enrolled in Course of Study, they must complete two courses per year and shall complete the Course of Study curriculum within 12 years (§319.3). They are subject to annual review by the dCOM, Cabinet and BOM, and must be approved annually for continuation of their license.
  - Student local pastor (§318.3) – Enrolled as a pre-theological or theological student in a college, university or school of theology listed by the University Senate and are appointed to serve in an Annual Conference other than the conference where listed as a certified candidate. They must make appropriate educational progress and may be appointed to full-time or part-time settings. They are responsible to the dCOM where they serve for continuation of their license and shall be responsible to the dCOM in the conference where they are certified for continuation of their candidacy.

#### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS (§315.3, §321)

- Itinerant members of an Annual Conference
  - Have a permanent license for pastoral ministry that is not restricted to a charge nor dependent upon an appointment by the bishop
  - May retire under the provisions of §358 and retain their license for pastoral ministry for service in the local church and their relationship as retired clergy members of the Annual Conference (§322.3)
  - Are available for appointment on a continuing basis and to serve in the itinerant system
  - Are granted the same security of appointment as elders
  - Are eligible to vote on all matters except constitutional amendments and matters of ordination, character and conference relations of clergy (§321.1)

- May serve on any board, commission or committee of the Annual Conference (§321.2)
- Are eligible to vote to elect delegates to the General, central or jurisdictional conferences (§35)
- Cannot be elected as delegates to the General, central or jurisdictional conferences
- Are subject to the provisions governing sabbatical leave, leaves of absence, location, retirement, minimum salary and pension (§321.3)

#### **DEACONS IN FULL CONNECTION WHO ARE CHANGING ORDERS (§315.4, ¶309.2e)**

- Continue as full clergy members of the Annual Conference and are not subject to the limitations placed on other licensed clergy
- Surrender their ordination certificate as a deacon to the Conference Secretary when they are ordained as an elder
- Shall be licensed for pastoral ministry for at least two years after having:
  - Informed the bishop and DS of their intention
  - Applied in writing to the BOM
  - Articulated their call to the BOM and Annual Conference into the ministry of the elder
  - Completed all academic and other requirements for admission to the Order of Elder

#### **CLERGY FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS WHO HAVE TRANSFERRED, BUT DO NOT MEET THE EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP (§315.5, ¶347)**

- When an ordained minister is transferring membership into the UMC, the Clergy Session may, upon recommendation of the BOM, receive them as provisional members or local pastors. When the educational requirements for provisional membership (§324) are not met, an Annual Conference may grant clergy being transferred from another denomination the license for pastoral ministry until they qualify for provisional membership.
- If an ordained minister from another denomination is serving within an Annual Conference but is not seeking to transfer membership, that person serves under the provisions of §346.2.
- The accountability of clergy transferring into conference membership as local pastors may be under the dCOM or the BOM.
- Serves by virtue of a license with pastoral authority limited to within the particular charge where they are appointed
- Shall have the right to vote on all matters except constitutional amendments, election of delegates to the General, central or jurisdictional conferences, and all matters of ordination, character and conference relations of clergy

#### **RECORD KEEPING**

- The dCOM recommends and records local pastors who have been approved for a license each year.
- Approvals from the dCOM are recommended to the BOM and included in the report approved by the Clergy Session
- Licenses that have been approved based on provisional membership or transferring into the Annual Conference are recorded by the BOM Registrar and presented for approval each year to the Clergy Session.