

Chapter 15 | Clergy Mentoring

For more information, contact GBHEM's Director of Deacon Ministry, Provisional Membership and Certification at deacons@gbhem.org or (615) 340-7375.

“Mentoring occurs within a relationship where the mentor takes responsibility for creating a safe place for reflection and growth... Mentoring is a part of the preparation and growth for inquirers and candidates for ordained ministry... Mentoring is distinct from the evaluative and supervisory process that is a part of preparation for ministry.” (§348.2)

See more about candidacy mentoring in Chapter 4 of the BOM Handbook.

Clergy Mentoring

- Helps local pastors and provisional members focus on ministry practice and developing effectiveness. This is distinct and different from Candidacy Mentors, who work with candidates to discern their calling and guide them through the candidacy process.
- Provisional deacons, provisional elders and those transferring from other denominations are assigned mentors during their provisional membership period. Local pastors (both part-time and full-time) are assigned mentors while enrolled in Course of Study.
- Begins when a local pastor or provisional member receives an appointment.
- The BOM may assign local pastors and provisional members to a mentor or a mentoring group.

Clergy Mentors

Clergy Mentors are nominated by the Cabinet. The dCOM, in consultation with the District Superintendent, assigns local pastors to a mentor or a mentoring group. The BOM assigns provisional members to a mentor or a group mentoring.

Mentors are not supervisors, experts, counselors or “just friends.” When done well, clergy mentoring helps establish and maintain healthy practices for developing in effectiveness throughout ministry.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND GIFTS OF GOOD MENTORS

- Spiritual maturity
- Calling and commitment to ministry
- Vocational development
- Understand the different roles of mentoring and supervision
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Respect of colleagues

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Meets with the clergy to establish a covenant and schedules for regular and ongoing meetings
- Prays for the clergy

- Maintains negotiated confidentiality in the mentoring relationship, building it on trust
- Makes at least one onsite visit to the workplace of the provisional member or local pastor each year
- Encourages the clergy to reflect on their growth in discernment of vocation

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR LOCAL PASTOR MENTORS

- Becomes familiar with Course of Study and Extension School for local pastors and the educational materials used
- Discusses Course of Study work with the local pastor and consults on matters of pastoral responsibility. Discusses specific assignments from Course of Study instructors
- Offers feedback about coursework
- Knows the resources, contact people and procedures relevant to continuation as a local pastor, including any dCOM deadlines related to the application process for continuation and interviews
- Writes annual mentor reports for the dCOM

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROVISIONAL MEMBER MENTORS

- Learns about the conference's Residency in Ministry (RIM) program and the materials it uses
- Knows the resources, contact people and procedures relevant to the provisional process, including any BOM deadlines related to the application process and interviews
- Writes annual mentor reports to the BOM

Training Clergy Mentors

- The BOM is responsible for training mentors. Chairs of the Orders and Fellowship, the RIM Process Coordinator or others also may participate in the training event. Additional leadership may include District Superintendents or the Annual Conference's staff person who relates to the BOM. On occasion, GBHEM staff may be available to provide leadership.
- All mentors should be trained once every four years (even if they have previously undergone training). This allows them to learn the updated requirements for provisional membership and local pastor credentialing, and the Annual Conference's current mentoring and interviewing procedures.
- The BOM may also want to consider inviting both mentors and clergy entering into mentoring relationships to be trained together. Experienced mentors are valuable resources for training new mentors.
- Clergy mentoring has dual areas of responsibility that include mentoring both provisional members and local pastors; the BOM may want to consider different training for each category of mentor.
- Continuing education credits may be awarded for participation in these training events. Ten contact hours of worship or educational time is equal to one (1) CEU.
- The duration of training may vary from several hours to an overnight retreat, but training should include certain information.
 - Information on reporting, confidentiality and role clarity
 - Differences among supervision, evaluation and mentoring, and the role each of these has in clergy development and assessment

- Information about current licensing and ordination processes, the ongoing approval and interview process for local pastors and provisional members and the mentor’s responsibilities in these tasks

Establishing Accountability

- The BOM is responsible for the continuing quality of the clergy mentoring process and overseeing mentors’ work.
- If any mentors lose interest or appear not to have the skills needed for the work, the BOM should find replacements.
- It is important to maintain a high standard of guidance and mentoring for new clergy so that they will have every opportunity to develop in effectiveness in ministry. The relationships built among clergy and mentors have the potential for positive impact throughout a clergyperson’s ministry. Those who serve as mentors provide a great gift and serve in a much needed area of ministry on behalf of the Annual Conference.

Resources

- *Clergy Mentoring: A Manual for Commissioned Ministers, Local Pastors, and Clergy Mentors*, GBHEM.
- “From Readiness to Effectiveness: The Residency Program for Provisional, Commissioned Members of The United Methodist Church – Principles and Guides for Annual Conferences,” GBHEM.
- “From Readiness to Effectiveness: Preparation for Professional Ministry in The United Methodist Church – Tool Kit for Annual Conference Leaders,” GBHEM.