



Note: *More details and in-depth information can be found in the Book of Discipline for many of the terms below. Where appropriate, paragraph numbers from the 2016 Book of Discipline are cited.*

Appointment Beyond the Local Church

One category of service for provisional or ordained deacons. Deacons serve in a local church or in an appointment beyond a local church. Appointments may be to a United Methodist-related agency or other service area (i.e. social work, teaching, health ministries, etc.). Deacons serving an appointment beyond the local church also have a secondary appointment to a congregation (§ 331).

Associate Members

Local pastors who have reached age 40, completed at least four years of full-time service as a local pastor, and the Course of Study, and have been approved by the board of ordained ministry and clergy session. They are not ordained, but are available for full-time service and are guaranteed an appointment within the annual conference. Associate members have voice and vote in every matter except constitutional amendments, ordination, and conference relations of clergy (§§ 321–323).

Bishop

Bishops are elected by lay and clergy delegates of a jurisdictional or central conference. Bishops oversee one or more conferences and provide general leadership for The United Methodist Church. They are authorized to “guard the faith, order, liturgy, doctrine and discipline of the church” and to “lead all persons entrusted to their oversight in worship, in the celebration of the sacraments, and in their mission of witness and service in the world.” (§§ 401-403).

Board of Ordained Ministry

Each annual conference has a board of ordained ministry. The board recruits, nurtures, and supports those preparing for ordained, licensed, certified, or assigned ministerial leaderships and evaluates if candidates are ready to serve. The board credentials all clergy in an annual conference, provides continuing formation programs for clergy, collaborates with the cabinet to maintain standards for clergy effectiveness, and recommends changes in clergy conference relationships (§ 635).

Book of Discipline

The United Methodist Church’s book of law. It includes historical information, doctrinal standards, and policies that are set by General Conference. It is updated to reflect decisions made by General Conference.

Book of Resolutions

Reflects The United Methodist Church’s stance on current issues of faith. It is updated to reflect decisions made by General Conference.



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Book of Worship

Contains the order of weekly services, the liturgy for Holy Communion (or Word and Table), Baptism, marriage, funerals, healing, and other types of services for The United Methodist Church.

Cabinet

The bishop and district superintendents when meeting as a body. All conferences have a cabinet.

Candidacy

A discerning and preparatory time. Includes mentoring and an application process for those who wish to serve as local pastors, deacons, or elders. The dCOM evaluates applicants for certified candidacy (§§ 310-314).

Candidacy Mentor

An ordained deacon, elder, associate member, or local pastor who has completed the Course of Study, trained to guide candidates through the candidacy process. They assist candidates in further discerning their call as well as helping them to understand the candidacy, licensing, and ordination process (§ 348).

Candidate

A person enrolled in the candidacy process who wishes to serve as a local pastor, deacon, or elder.

Certified Candidate

A candidate who has been approved by the district committee on ordained ministry to apply for licensing or ordination (§ 310.2).

Chaplain

Clergy who work in specialized ministry settings such as prisons, hospitals, the armed forces, and counseling centers (§ 1421.5).

Charge Conference

A local church meeting that includes members of the governing body (i.e. church council) and the clergy. It meets at least once a year to review goals, elect new leaders, set clergy salaries, and recommend persons for candidacy. It is typically facilitated by the district superintendent (§ 246).

Clergy

Commissioned and ordained deacons and elders, associate members, and local pastors (§ 142).

Clergy Mentor



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General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

An ordained deacon, elder, associate member, or local pastor who has completed the Course of Study, trained to guide provisional deacons or elders as they prepare for ordination (§ 349.1b).

Course of Study

Prescribed ministry classes for local pastors. Part and full-time local pastors attend the Course of Study while serving churches. The course takes at least five years to complete.

Deacon

Deacons are called by God, authorized by the church, and ordained by a bishop to a lifetime ministry of Word, Service, Compassion, and Justice. They serve the community and congregation in a ministry that connects the two. Deacons are called to a lifetime of servant leadership, serving the congregation and the world. A deacon serves all people, particularly the poor, the sick, and the marginalized, and equips and leads the laity in ministries of compassion, justice, and service. The deacon's ministry connects the church's worship with its service in the world (§§ 328-331).

District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM)

Evaluates, certifies, and recommends to the board of ordained ministry all those applying for licensed or ordained ministry. The dCOM oversees all candidates within that district and supervises all matters related to candidacy and licensing. The committee interviews candidates, recommends candidates for provisional membership, and approves all local pastors serving within the district (§ 666).

District Superintendent (D.S.)

Supervises the churches within a district of the annual conference. They serve as extensions of the bishop's authority and supervise clergy within that district (§§ 419).

Elder

Those called by God, authorized by the church, and ordained by a bishop to a lifetime ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service. Like all Christians, elders are committed to a lifetime of service, although this service manifests itself in different ways than deacons or the laity. The elder serves in ministry and servant leadership and gives pastoral leadership to order the life of the congregation. Elders devote themselves to the ministry of the Word, including primary responsibility for preaching and teaching the Word of God (§§ 332-335).

Endorsement

The process to ensure that pastoral counselors and prison, hospital, or military chaplains are qualified and prepared to appropriately represent the Church in their ministry settings (§ 1421.5).

Extension Ministry

Refers to elders or local pastors who are appointed to serve outside of a local church setting. It includes settings such as conference administration, chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, teaching, etc. This appointment happens through consultation with the board of ordained ministry and



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General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

approval by the bishop. The appointment may happen at the elder or bishops request (§§ 343-344).

Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members

Provides mutual support for its members for the sake of the life and mission of the church. All local pastors and associate members participate in the Fellowship (§ 323).

Full Connection/Full Member

An ordained deacon or elder serves as a member in full connection in an annual conference. Their life and work is amenable to the annual conference and they are supported by and accountable to that annual conference. Members in full connection have voice and vote on all matters related to the annual conference, the clergy of that conference, the General conference, and constitutional amendments of The United Methodist Church.

Group Candidacy Mentoring

The opportunity for candidates to meet with a candidacy mentor and a group of other candidates. Many conferences offer this structure to provide candidates opportunities to learn from mentors and each other.

Local Pastor

Someone who is not ordained as an elder or deacon but is appointed to preach, conduct worship, and perform the duties of a pastor in a particular setting. Local pastors attend Course of Study each year and meet with the district committee on ministry annually for continual approval and eligibility.

Ordained Ministry

The ministry of deacons and elders who have been ordained by a bishop to serve in the UMC (§§ 301-304).

Order of Deacons/Order of Elders

A covenant community within the church to mutually support, care for, and hold accountable members for the sake of the life and mission of the church. These orders seek to respond to the spiritual hunger among clergy for a fulfilling sense of vocation, for support among peers, and for a deepening relationship with God. All ordained clergy participate in one of these orders (§ 306).

Ordination

Performed by laying-on of hands by the bishop. Signifies that the church affirms and continues its ministry through the ordained. Persons may be ordained as deacons or elders and commit to living and proclaiming the gospel. Deacons are ordained to the ministries of Word, Service, Compassion, and Justice. Elders are ordained to the ministries of Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service (§§ 301-304).



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General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Orientation to Ministry

Sponsored by the board of ordained ministry and required for all ministry candidates to provide an overview of ministry in the conference. Helps to build collegiality and develop an understanding of deacons', elders', and local pastors' ministry (§ 312).

Pastor

A pastor is a provisional or ordained elder, associate member, or local pastor who serves in charge of a station, circuit, cooperative parish, extension ministry, ecumenical shared ministry, or church of another denomination, or on the staff of such. Deacons, who may serve similar roles as the pastor, should not be called pastors (§ 339).

Provisional Membership

The step in the ordination process between candidacy and ordination when a commissioned deacon or elder serves as a provisional member. Those applying for ordination serve as a provisional member for a minimum of two years, depending on annual conference policy. Provisional membership ends with ordination, or when a decision is made not to proceed toward ordination (§§ 324-327).

Seminary or Theological School

Term for post-graduate school of theology that educates and prepares people for ministry. Candidates for ordination must graduate from a school approved by the University Senate of the UMC.

Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (S/P-PRC)

The committee in each church that assists clergy and staff in setting leadership and service priorities. Evaluates and approves those beginning candidacy for licensed or ordained ministry from that congregation (§ 258.2).

United Methodist Candidate and Record Entry System (UMCARES)

The online system managed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to track candidates for licensed or ordained ministry. District superintendents invite candidates to enroll in the system after they have written to request admission to candidacy (§ 310.1).

University Senate

A body of higher education professionals that determines schools, colleges, universities, and theological schools that meet criteria for United Methodist Church affiliation. Ordination candidates must complete educational requirements at a University Senate-approved institution (§§ 1414-18).

Works Cited

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016. Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2016.