

Order of Elders: Ordained Elders in The United Methodist Church

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Elders within The UMC

Elders are ordained to a lifetime ministry of **Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service** (Four-fold ministry).

¶332: The servant leadership of the elder, [in both parish and extension ministries](#), is expressed by leading the people of God in worship and prayer, by leading persons to faith in Jesus Christ, by exercising pastoral supervision in the congregation, and by [ordering the Church in](#) mission in the world.

By the authority given in their ordination, they are authorized to: (¶332, ¶340)

- **Preach and teach** the Word of God
- Provide **pastoral care and counsel**
- **Administer the sacraments** of baptism and Holy Communion
- **Order the life of the Church** for service in mission and ministry

Accountability (¶333)

- Elders are bound in special covenant with **the Order of Elders** in the annual conference
- They accept and subject themselves to the process of **clergy discipline** (investigation, trial courts ..)
- Elders in full connection shall have **the right to vote** in all matters in the annual conference (except lay delegates)
- **Eligible to hold offices** in the annual conference and be elected as delegates to the General, Jurisdictional and Central conferences.

Professional Responsibilities (§334.2)

- Open to appointment, **itinerancy**: “All ordained elders shall accept and abide by these appointments” (§338) pastoral charges and extension ministries
- Annual participation in a process of **evaluation with SPRC and the DS**
- Growth in professional competence and effectiveness through **continuing education and formation**
- Willingness to assume **supervisory and mentoring responsibilities** within the connection.

The Order of Elders

- **Purpose:** To respond to the spiritual hunger among clergy for a fulfilling sense of vocation, for support among peer ... and for a deepening relationship with God (paragraph 306)
- **Function**
 1. Provide regular gatherings
 2. Assist in plans for individual study and retreat experiences
 3. Develop a bond of unity and common commitment to the mission and ministry of The UMC and the annual conference
 4. Mutual support and trust
 5. Hold accountable all members of the Order in the fulfilling of these purposes

Areas of Responsibility

Board of Ordained Ministry

- Interpretation & Recruitment
- Candidacy Process
- Provisional Process
- Equipping (academic requirements)
- Annual Reports
- Evaluation of Provisional Appointments
- Conference Relations
- Funding for Orders

Order of Elders

- Identity
- Vocation – Call
- Spiritual Formation
- Covenant
- Mutual Accountability and support
- Continuing Education
- Advocacy
- Pastoral Care

The Critical Issues around Elders within The UMC

Elder's Effectiveness

Paragraph 334.3 BOD

When an elder's effectiveness is in question, the bishop shall complete the following procedure:

1. Identify the concerns based on professional responsibilities (¶340)
2. Hold supervisory conversations to create a corrective plan of action
3. Evaluate the plan of action
4. Appointment may be forfeited and the provisions of **paragraph 363** may be invoked: **Administrative Fair Process (¶362)** leading to **Administrative Location (¶360)** and managed by the **Board of Ordained Ministry** a fair process hearing (**Conference Relations Committee, ¶362 BOD**).
5. **Bishop Shall inform BOM chair**
6. **BOM affirms or reverses decision of CRC (¶364)**

Administrative Location (Paragraph 360)

- Permanent status
- No longer member of the annual conference
 - Retain ordination credentials
 - Surrender membership credentials
- Ministerial service limited to charge conference membership, with written consent of pastor and DS, and with approval of bishop, S/PRC
- Interim appointment not allowed
- Bishop and cabinet can recommend that the BOM place the clergy on Administrative Location without clergy consent

Less Than Full-Time Appointment (Paragraph 338)

- Paragraph 338.2

“At the **initiative of the bishop and cabinet** or at his or her request, an elder, provisional elder, or associate member may receive a less than full-time appointment.”

- Paragraph 338.2b

“The clergyperson shall be notified at least **90 days prior** to the annual conference at which the appointment shall be made.”

- Retain membership rights
- Requires annual 2/3 approval by clergy session
- After 8 years, requires $\frac{3}{4}$ approval by clergy session
- Pension Program-annual conference decision!

Covenant, Mutual Accountability, Support, advocacy

- How can the community of Order of Elders be accountable for clergy effectiveness with each other?
- How can the community of Order of Elders support fellow clergy who is going through Administrative Fare Process?
- How can the community of Order of Elders be advocacy against discrimination on the basis of gender, race, or individual retribution?