

**The Residency Program for  
Provisional, Commissioned Members  
of The United Methodist Church**

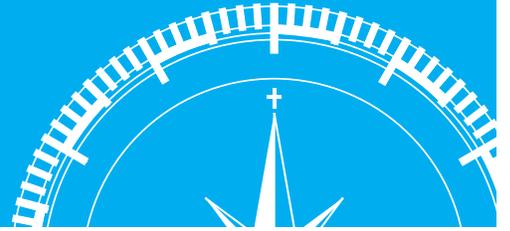
- ✦ **Mentoring**
- ✦ **Continuing Theological Education**
- ✦ **Covenant Groups**
- ✦ **Supervision**



**THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

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## THE RESIDENCY PROGRAM *for* PROVISIONAL, COMMISSIONED MEMBERS



**T**HE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH requires a residency period of two to eight years. This program may begin when half the education requirements have been met, but must include at least two years following the completion of a seminary degree. (¶1326, *Book of Discipline*)

During annual conference, the bishop commissions candidates recommended by the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) and approved by the clergy session. This begins the residency program and brings the commissioned minister into the clergy covenant. These commissioned ministers will serve under appointment by the bishop during the residency program in areas of service appropriate to their calling.

The residency program addresses the clergy's need for continuing integration of formal studies, life experiences, and the evolving challenges of leadership in a church that is at once local and global. Clergy leaders must be characterized by deep and growing Christian faith, a commitment to carry out the church's mission of making disciples for Jesus Christ and, therefore, claim their discipleship and a willingness to equip laity for ministry. This leadership is fostered by continuing disciplined study of scripture, theology, history, and the changing multicultural society.

The residency program is part of a continuum in the training/formation of clergy that begins with candidacy and theological education and culminates with mentoring, continuing theological study, covenant groups, and supervision. For those candidates not graduating from a United Methodist seminary, this residency program will provide a working introduction to the United Methodist ethos and resources of the denomination.

Because ordination is not the private domain of a single annual conference (ordained clergy may serve across the entire connection), the General Conference establishes minimum standards and requirements for the residency program. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry provides guidance to all annual conferences. Within the parameters of these guidelines, each annual conference, through its office of bishop, cabinet, and Board of Ordained Ministry, will develop a plan particularly suited to its situation and supervise implementation of this plan.

# PRINCIPLES *for* THE RESIDENCY PROGRAM FOR PROVISIONAL, COMMISSIONED MEMBERS



**MISSION:** A PERSON'S MINISTRY DURING THE RESIDENCY PROGRAM ESTABLISHES LIFELONG PATTERNS. THUS THIS IS A TIME WHEN EXCELLENCE IN MINISTRY IS MODELED BY CLERGY MENTORS, TEACHERS, AND SUPERVISORS, AS WELL AS NURTURED IN THE PROVISIONAL MEMBER. PATTERNS OF EXCELLENCE FOSTERED THROUGH (1) MENTORING, (2) CONTINUING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION, (3) COVENANT GROUPS, AND (4) SUPERVISION SHOULD YIELD EFFECTIVENESS IN MINISTRY (¶1325, *BOOK OF DISCIPLINE*).

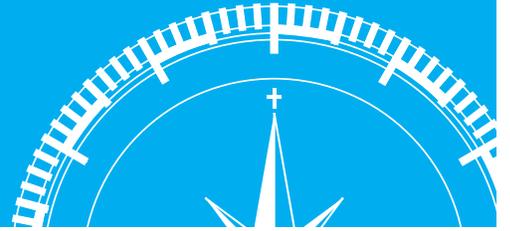
## EXPECTATIONS

1. Commissioned ministers are clergy and serve with and on behalf of all clergy and laity of the conference. They will be supported, assisted, and strengthened for ministry where they are serving.
2. The residency program involves assessment of the commissioned minister's self in relation to the church and the church in relation to the commissioned minister. This transitional period is a time of mutual evaluation of call and commitment within our connectional system of ministry. The integrity of provisional membership is strengthened not only when a call is confirmed and leads to ordination, but also when people are appropriately redirected to other Christian expressions of vocation.
3. The program used reflects and establishes a sense of our Wesleyan tradition.
4. The residency program affirms varying gifts and settings for pastoral and specialized ministries as well as the ministry of laity. The involvement of laity in Christ's ministry is affirmed in the residency program.

## IMPLEMENTATION

1. The annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry uses resources provided by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, United Methodist schools, and other annual conferences to develop a residency program and a means of evaluating the plan.
2. Annual conference leadership (bishop, Board of Ordained Ministry, and cabinet) and provisional members have mutual responsibility for implementing the program.
3. The fruitful and effective ministry practices expected of provisional members are the same as those expected of full-member clergy. Among these practices are spiritual disciplines, theological reflection, human-relation skills, understanding of systems theory, self-definition, mutuality across gender and cultural lines, and continuing formation of ministry skills.
4. Trust and community developed during the residency program are preparatory for membership in the Order of Elders or Order of Deacons.
5. Residency programs will accommodate and prepare those provisional members in extension ministry or appointments beyond the local church.

# GUIDANCE *for* MENTORING

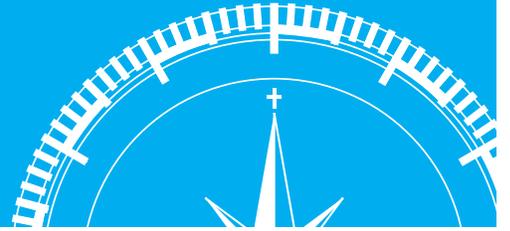


**MISSION:** MENTORING SHOULD PROMOTE VOCATIONAL IDENTITY AND EFFECTIVE MINISTRY THROUGH A RELATIONSHIP THAT PROVIDES SUPPORT, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND GROWTH IN CHRISTIAN MATURITY.

## EXPECTATIONS

1. The Board of Ordained Ministry selects, trains, and assigns clergy in full connection to serve as clergy mentors for commissioned ministers. Provisional members are expected to participate in the training sessions with their mentors.
2. The clergy-mentor relationships have a covenantal nature. The mentor and provisional member share in spiritual disciplines, mutual recognition of the presence and leading of God, and spiritual discernment concerning the provisional member's call, authority, and function through theological reflection on ministry in their current appointment.
3. The BOM, clergy mentor, and provisional member seek mutual trust and respect. The board provides a clear definition of confidentiality within the mentoring relationship.
4. The BOM receives an annual nonevaluative report from the provisional member and mentor describing the mentoring process.
5. Both provisional members and clergy mentors receive an annual letter or memo from the BOM regarding timelines for reporting and to whom the report is to be sent.
6. The mentor and provisional member identify the various issues related to vocational identity to be explored in the mentoring relationship.
7. Clergy mentoring will take place in one-on-one relationships except in cases where the BOM determines that group mentoring is a more effective model.

# GUIDANCE *for* CONTINUING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

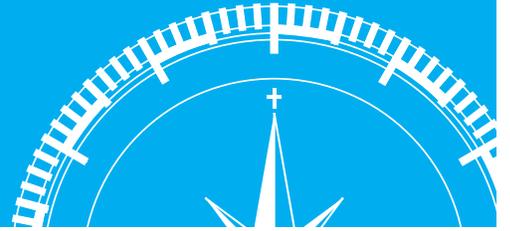


**MISSION:** AN EMPHASIS ON LEARNING HAS BEEN CHARACTERISTIC OF THE METHODIST MOVEMENT FROM ITS BEGINNING AND CONTINUES TO BE VITAL FOR EFFECTIVE MINISTRY. THE YEARS OF PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP ARE INTENDED TO FOSTER HABITS, ATTITUDES, AND PRACTICES OF THEOLOGICAL STUDY THAT WILL INFLUENCE ONE'S ENTIRE MINISTRY.

## EXPECTATIONS

1. The Board of Ordained Ministry ensures that opportunities are provided by the local church or employer for commissioned ministers to integrate disciplines for Christian identity and ministry. The disciplines include theological, historical, and biblical studies within the context of ministerial practices.
2. The Board of Ordained Ministry provides for disciplined reflection on Christian identity and ministry through study that includes:
  - study groups led by ordained elders and/or deacons
  - study groups or disciplined study led by peers
  - congregational study led by the commissioned minister
  - self-directed study.
3. The Board of Ordained Ministry develops an evaluative process through which the provisional member identifies special needs for further studies in particular areas involving leadership skills, reflection on ministerial settings, spiritual development, and disciplined habits of responsible study of scripture, theology, and history.
4. The Board of Ordained Ministry may partner with United Methodist seminaries to provide continuing theological education.

# GUIDANCE *for* COVENANT GROUPS

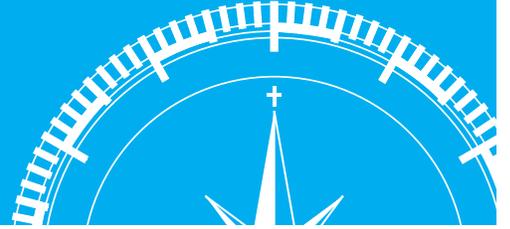


**MISSION:** IN COVENANT GROUPS, COMMISSIONED MINISTERS RECEIVE ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE PRACTICE AND WORK OF MINISTRY AS SERVANT LEADERS. THEY REFLECT ON THE GROUNDING OF ORDAINED MINISTRY AND CONSIDER COVENANT MINISTRY IN THE LIFE OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE (§1326, *BOOK OF DISCIPLINE*). PARTICIPATION IN A COVENANT GROUP DURING THE RESIDENCY PROGRAM IS PART OF THE PROCESS OF VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT. FOR THOSE WHO PROCEED INTO ORDAINED MINISTRY, IT FORMS HABITS AND PRACTICES OF ACCOUNTABLE COVENANT MINISTRY THAT WILL CONTINUE THROUGH THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE ORDER OF DEACONS OR THE ORDER OF ELDERS.

## EXPECTATIONS

1. Covenant groups of commissioned ministers may be organized in different ways.
2. Each commissioned minister is assigned by the BOM to a covenant group. Within the groups, intentional decisions are made regarding logistics. These may include:
  - size and membership of covenant groups
  - frequency of meetings and expectations regarding attendance
  - confidentiality within the covenant group
  - the relationship of the covenant group to the BOM's evaluation processes
  - roles and patterns of leadership for the covenant group, including the role and authority of an assigned facilitator
  - length of a covenant group's life and processes for forming and concluding the group
  - processes for including new members in the group and providing closure for those who leave it.
3. The Board of Ordained Ministry establishes basic expectations for all covenant groups of commissioned ministers in the annual conference. The board establishes specific topics, areas of concern, or assignments, that may include:
  - vocational discernment with critical reflection on use of authority
  - reflection on continuing theological education curriculum
  - differentiating the mentoring program from the covenant group
  - the meaning and purpose of the Order
  - spiritual disciplines
  - creation of a formal, written covenant for groups.
4. The Board of Ordained Ministry is responsible for seeing that decisions regarding basic expectations are intentionally made and clearly understood and carried out in each covenant group.

## GUIDANCE *for* SUPERVISION



**MISSION:** THOROUGH ASSESSMENT AND CAREFUL SUPERVISION OF NEW LEADERSHIP IS CRITICAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EFFECTIVENESS AND A TRULY HEALTHY CHURCH. PROVISIONAL MEMBERS ARE SUPERVISED BY BOTH THE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT AND THE CONFERENCE BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY. THE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT OVERSEES ALL COMMISSIONED MINISTERS IN THEIR APPOINTMENTS. THIS INCLUDES ROUTINE PROCEDURES SUCH AS CLERGY MEETINGS, INTERVIEWS, AND ANNUAL REPORTS. THE BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY OVERSEES THE PROCESSES TOWARD FULL MEMBERSHIP AND ORDINATION, SETS TIMES FOR INTERVIEWS, AND DEVELOPS STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVENESS IN MINISTRY.

### EXPECTATIONS

1. The BOM is clear about its function, authority, and role in supervising provisional members. In addition, the board understands the difference between its supervision and that of the district superintendent.
2. The BOM determines and communicates the expectations for provisional member annual reports from the superintendent. Meetings, interviews, and reports are projected a year in advance.
3. The BOM determines whether the superintendent's report about a provisional member shall also include a recommendation for BOM action.
4. The BOM respects the role of the district superintendent and the desire to have special gatherings or meetings for provisional members. Expectations about attendance are clearly stated.
5. Guidelines for supervision of provisional members serving in ministries outside local church structures are set forth in ¶326 and ¶327 in the *Book of Discipline*. These guidelines should be shared with provisional members appointed to ministries outside local church structures.
6. Supervisory reports of provisional members are one factor used by the BOM in making recommendations to the clergy session.