

Readiness to Effectiveness

Preparation for Professional Ministry in The United Methodist Church

Tool Kit for Annual Conference Leaders

for Equipping
Provisional Clergy and Local Pastors
as Servant Leaders

Readiness to Effectiveness

**Preparation for Professional Ministry in
The United Methodist Church**

**General Board of
Higher Education and Ministry**

Division of Ordained Ministry

The United Methodist Church

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Readiness to Effectiveness

Welcome

The United Methodist Church requires of all clergy in provisional membership to participate in a residency curriculum “that extends theological education by using covenant groups and mentoring to support the practice and work of their ministry as servant leaders, to contemplate the grounding of ordained ministry, and to understand covenant ministry in the life of the conference.”

These first years in appointed ministry give new clergy a chance to apply what they’ve learned in seminary as well as learn some practical, non-academic skills for leadership. It’s a period of “residency” in which clergy learn by trying, succeeding, failing, and reflecting. Their learning is no longer theoretical but experiential.

Whether your conference calls its residency curriculum Residency in Ministry, Leadership Academy, or simply the provisional period, it is the conference’s opportunity to shape, encourage, and test its new clergy.

All residency curricula are to include the following:

- Covenant groups
- Mentoring
- Contemplation on the grounding of ordained ministry
- Introduction to the covenantal relationship of all conference clergy

Further, during this time provisional member clergy are to prepare a project that demonstrates their fruitfulness in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

This book provides guidelines to help your conference develop and refine its residency curriculum.

One of the best tools for improving processes is learning from others in the same situation. We encourage Boards of Ordained Ministry to send their members to General Board of Higher Education and Ministry training events. These are excellent opportunities to network and to hear how other conferences train and credential clergy.

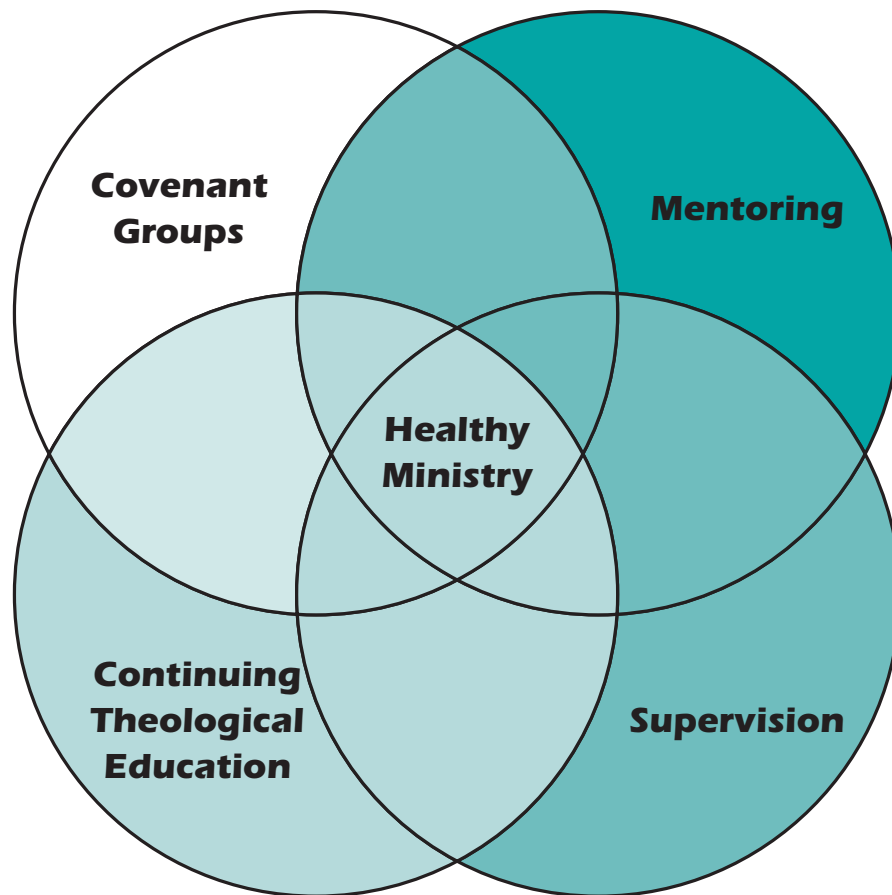
**Division of Ordained Ministry
General Board of Higher Education and Ministry**

Chapter 1: The Professional Ministry Preparation Process—An Overview

Healthy Ministry

Healthy ministry is undergirded by healthy support systems. The professional ministry preparation process for new clergy integrates four components. As the Board of Ordained Ministry considers its responsibility for clergy entering full membership of the annual conference, this combination of support systems should be included.

Here are the elements of the support system:



These elements benefit health ministry not only for people in the preparation process, but also for clergy in full membership.

Commissioned ministers are simultaneously engaged in covenant groups, mentoring, continuing theological education, and supervision. While in the Course of Study, local pastors are also involved in mentoring and supervision. Each annual conference decides how to address each of these elements and how to integrate them into a comprehensive process, always with the goal of facilitating healthy ministry practices or effectiveness in ministry. Success in reaching the goal has to do more with how well the preparation processes are planned and implemented by the Board of Ordained Ministry than with how well a candidate for ordination measures up on some scale of ministerial skills in the profession.

Support Systems for United Methodist Clergy

Denominational Systems

Bishop and superintendents
Board of Ordained Ministry
District Committee on Ordained Ministry
Ministerial Education Funds
Pension and benefits
Constitution and *The Book of Discipline*
Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committee
Candidacy Mentor
Clergy Mentor
Conference-initiated programs

Characteristics of healthy denominational systems

Communication is two-way.

Operating principles are publicly defined.

Accountability systems and feedback procedures are established and routinely used.

The systems and procedures are regularly reviewed and revised.

Personal Systems

Spiritual and physical disciplines
Family and friends
Continuing education programs
Peer groups
Counselors and consultants
Self-chosen mentor for personal/professional growth
Wellness practices

Characteristics of healthy personal systems

Roles and responsibility are affirmed.

Personal and vocational identity is clear.

Feedback systems are maintained and enhanced.

Clergy take initiative to maintain their systems.

Personal/professional growth is celebrated.

The interplay of denominational and personal systems becomes important as the Board of Ordained Ministry carries out its responsibility for clergy support systems.

Church bodies initiate the denominational systems of support with the purpose of enhancing and extending the ministries of clergy. Clergy initiate personal support systems with the purpose of nurturing their own personal and professional health.

The denominational and personal systems are dynamic and interrelated. Every clergy member of an annual conference is both an agent and a recipient of the denominational systems. All clergy have personal support systems to one degree or another. Clergy who have healthy personal systems can represent and receive denominational support systems more openly. Clergy without adequate personal support systems may experience support efforts at the denominational level as repressive and punitive. These clergy, generally, do not represent the denominational systems in positive ways.

Tension exists between support systems controlled by the conference and those managed by individual clergy. This tension creates vibrancy in the structure of the annual conference.

Denominational support systems may be repressive and/or punitive if they don't display the following four characteristics: (1) communication is two-way; (2) operating principles are publicly defined; (3) accountability systems and feedback procedures are established and routinely used; and (4) these systems and procedures are regularly reviewed and revised.

Personal support systems will not offer meaningful support for clergy if they lack the following characteristics: (1) roles and responsibilities are affirmed; (2) vocational and personal identity is clear; (3) feedback systems are maintained and enhanced; (4) clergy take initiative to maintain these systems; and (5) personal/professional growth is celebrated. Clergy burnout, misconduct, health problems, and ineffectiveness often indicate poor personal support systems.

While clergy are responsible for establishing and nurturing their personal support systems, annual conference leaders can model, support, and stimulate the use of such systems. We encourage church leaders to review their personal support systems and to add components that are lacking. Such modeling by leaders becomes the single most important factor in the growth of personal support systems for clergy. Modeling also helps guard against any tendency on the part of leaders to project onto others difficulties unexamined in their own ministries.

Mentoring, Continuing Theological Study, Covenant Groups, and Supervision

In preparing and assessing the Residency in Ministry program in each annual conference, the Board of Ordained Ministry is charged with developing four aspects with a view toward agreed-upon measures of effectiveness toward ordination. Each aspect should provide opportunities to adequately resource and evaluate the commissioned minister in light of the measures of effectiveness specifically articulated and shared by the board. The methods of both formal and informal assessment, evaluation and judgment used by the board and its agencies should be familiar to all parties of the ministry preparation process.

Each conference board should articulate and publish the expectations of the four aspects of the process for itself, the commissioned ministers, partners in the formal preparation process, and the conference community. Support should be provided through the covenant community of clergy to realize these expectations.

The period for commissioning to ordination is focused on *vocational development* from *readiness to effectiveness*. It is assumed that the time of candidacy and the affirmation of commissioning have focused on *fitness* and *readiness* for ministry through intensive mentoring and counsel in *discernment* and *calling*. Although these important aspects of spiritual and vocational formation are not finished, the focus of the residency period shifts to development toward effectiveness in ministry. The elements of the program have been assembled with this purpose in mind.

Part 1: Provisional Membership Process for Commissioned Ministers

The United Methodist Church requires a provisional membership period of two to eight years. This process may begin when half the education requirements have been met. However, it must include two years of appointed service after the completion of educational requirements (§ 326).

During annual conference, the bishop commissions candidates recommended by the board of ordained ministry and approved by the clergy session. This begins the provisional membership period and brings the commissioned minister into the clergy community. These commissioned ministers will serve under appointment by the bishop during the provisional membership years in areas appropriate to their calling.

Residency in Ministry 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 leadership must be characterized by deep and growing Christian faith, a commitment to carry out the church's mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, 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.

This period is part of a continuum in the training/formation of clergy that begins with candidacy and theological education and continues with covenant groups, mentoring, theological education, and supervision during probation—which should continue through the lifetime of service. For those candidates not graduating from a United Methodist seminary, this process should provide a foundation in 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 provisional period. 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 offices of bishop, Cabinet, and Board of Ordained Ministry, will develop a plan particularly suited to its situation and supervise its implementation.

Principles for Residency in Ministry

Mission

The Book of Discipline instructs the Board of Ordained Ministry to develop a residency curriculum for provisional members that **extends theological education** by using **covenant groups** and **mentoring** to support the practice and work of their ministry as servant leaders, to contemplate the grounding of ordained ministry, and to understand covenant ministry in the life of the conference. Effective supervision supports these goals.

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. Residency involves assessment of the commissioned minister 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 this period 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 vocational calling.
3. The process reflects and establishes a sense of our Wesleyan tradition.
4. The processes affirm varying gifts and settings for pastoral and specialized ministries, as well as the ministry of the laity. The involvement of laity in Christ's ministry is affirmed in the process.

Implementation

1. The annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry uses resources provided by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the United Methodist seminaries (and, where appropriate, colleges), and other annual conferences to develop a curriculum and a means of evaluating it.
2. Annual conference leaders (bishop, Board of Ordained Ministry, and Cabinet) and provisional members have mutual responsibility for implementing the plan.
3. The fruitful and effective ministry practices expected of provisional members are the same as the disciplines expected of full-member clergy.
4. Among these practices are spiritual disciplines, theological reflection, human-relations skills, understanding of systems theory, self-definition, mutuality across gender and cultural lines, and continuing formation of ministry skills.
5. Trust and community developed during the provisional membership period are preparatory for membership in the order of elders or order of deacons.

Guidance for Mentoring

Mission

This mission of mentoring is to 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 as clergy mentors for commissioned ministers.
2. The clergy mentor relationships are covenantal. The mentor and provisional member share in spiritual disciplines, in mutual recognition of the presence and leading of God, and in spiritual discernment concerning the provisional member's call, authority, and function, through theological reflection on ministry in their current appointment.
3. The board, clergy mentor, and provisional member seek mutual trust and respect. The board provides a clear definition of confidentiality within the mentoring relationship.
4. The board receives an annual, **non-evaluative** report from the provisional member and mentor describing their mentoring process.
5. Both provisional members and clergy mentors receive an annual letter or memo from the board 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 may take place in one-on-one relationships or groups.

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 resources for continuing theological education. This may include events held on a seminary campus, at a conference location, or through electronic media.

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. Participation in a covenant group 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 Board of Ordained Ministry to a peer group. Within the covenant 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 board's evaluation processes (e.g., participation and attendance)
 - 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 orders
 - spiritual disciplines
 - creation of a formal, written covenant
4. The Board of Ordained Ministry is responsible for seeing that decisions regarding basic expectations are intentionally made, clearly understood, and carried out in each covenant group.

Guidance for Supervision

Mission

Thorough assessment and careful supervision of new leadership in the church 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 the appointive ministry. This includes routine procedures such as clergy meetings, interviews, and annual reports from the provisional member. The Board of Ordained Ministry oversees the processes toward full membership and ordination, sets time for interviews, and develops expectations for effectiveness in ministry.

Expectations

1. The Board of Ordained Ministry expresses clearly its function, authority, and role of supervision of provisional members. In addition, the board understands the difference between its supervision and the supervision of the district superintendent.
2. The Board of Ordained Ministry determines and communicates the expectations for the superintendent's annual report on the provisional member. Meetings, interviews, and reports are projected a year in advance.
3. The Board of Ordained Ministry determines whether the superintendent's report about a provisional member shall also include a recommendation for board action.
4. The Board of Ordained Ministry respects the role of the district superintendent and the desire to have special gatherings or meetings for those in provisional membership. At the same time, conference leaders must respect the demands already placed on the provisional member. Expectations about attendance are clearly stated.
5. Guidelines for supervision of provisional members serving in extension ministries (elders) and ministries beyond the local church (deacons) are set forth in *The 2012 Book of Discipline*, ¶326 and 327. These guidelines should be shared with district superintendents and provisional members appointed to ministries outside local church structures.
6. Supervisory reports of provisional members are one factor used by the Board of Ordained Ministry in making recommendations to the clergy session. District superintendents should disclose to the provisional member the content of their supervisory report. This is an opportunity for transparency and for supervisory guidance.

Part 2: Preparation Process for Local Pastors in the Course of Study

The general church has also established a professional ministry preparation process for local pastors during their participation in the Course of Study. With a few modifications, it follows the pattern provided for commissioned ministers.

Adaptation of the Components of the Preparation Process for Local Pastors

Mentoring

1. Upon receiving an appointment, local pastors are assigned clergy mentors by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry, in consultation with the district superintendent.
2. In addition to the expectations of the mentoring relationship outlined previously, clergy mentors guide local pastors through the Course of Study.

Education

1. The professional ministry preparation process for full-time local pastors occurs during their participation in the basic five-year curriculum of the Course of Study.
2. The length of the process for part-time local pastors will be extended until completion of the basic curriculum.

Covenant Groups

1. Annual conferences may organize covenant groups for local pastors with purposes and expectations similar to those developed for provisional members.

Supervision

1. Both the district superintendent and the District Committee on Ordained Ministry supervise local pastors.
2. Annual certification by the district committee is required for renewal of licensing and appointment. The district committee will consider participation in the professional ministry preparation process as one factor in certification renewal.

Part 3: Preparation Process for Clergy Transferring from Other Denominations

The purpose of the ministry preparation process for clergy transferring from other denominations is to facilitate their entry into the United Methodist clergy covenant. The intention is to prepare them to satisfy the requirement of ¶347.3:

- (a) On recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the clergy members in full connection may recognize the orders of ordained clergy from other denominations and receive them as provisional members or local pastors. They shall present their credentials for examination by the bishop and Board of Ordained Ministry and give assurance of their Christian faith and experience. They shall give evidence of their agreement with and willingness to support and maintain United Methodist doctrine, discipline, and polity . . .
- (b) Ordained elders or ordained clergy from other Christian denominations shall serve as provisional members for at least two years and complete all the requirements of ¶335, including courses in United Methodist history, doctrine, and polity, before being admitted into full conference membership.

Adaptation of the Components of the Preparation Process for Transferring Clergy

Mentoring

1. Transferring clergy are assigned a clergy mentor upon receiving an appointment.
2. In addition to the expectations of the mentoring relationship outlined previously, clergy mentors intentionally focus on transition into United Methodist ethos and identity.
3. Clergy mentors will facilitate reflection upon the required courses in history, doctrine, and polity as transferring clergy appropriate and integrate the content into their practice of ministry.

Education

1. Before completing their provisional membership years, transferring clergy shall meet the educational requirements for conference membership specified in ¶330 or ¶335.

Covenant Groups

1. Annual conferences may organize covenant groups for transferring clergy, or include them in other covenant groups for provisional members and/or local pastors.

Supervision

1. Transferring clergy are supervised by both the district superintendent and the board of ordained ministry.
2. Specific attention is to be given to the ability of transferring clergy to express and give leadership in servant ministry within The United Methodist Church.

Mentoring and Cultural Location

The United Methodist Church is experiencing the gift of people called to ministry from a wide variety of ethnic, cultural, and national backgrounds. Many candidates cross traditional boundaries and bring the rich variety of the universal church to annual conferences and local churches in new, challenging, and enriching ways. The cultural background of the provisional member may be quite different from those with whom they will serve. The mentor and/or the covenant group may present yet another racial, ethnic, national, or cultural encounter. Supervisors may carry expectations of ministry preparation, performance, and understanding that are insufficiently developed or skewed when applied to people from varied cultural, ethnic,

racial, and national backgrounds. In generations past, the dominant culture established the norms and practices for institutional conformity. Theology, morality, language, and behavior were uncritically universalized by the dominant culture. This excluded those not from the dominant culture, forcing them to put their cultural, racial, ethnic, and national gifts “under a bushel” (at best) and adopt the dominant culture uncritically in order to navigate the journey. In recent years, the general church has been intentional about charting a new course.

The vision for the future of the inclusion of people in the covenant of ministry and the connection of congregations in annual conferences embraces the reality of a multicultural, multiethnic, multinational, and multiracial church. Not only is this represented in the meeting of the global United Methodist Church at General Conference, it is also experienced in the covenantal ministry of particular annual conferences. Demographic research and anecdotal reports of experience within annual conferences give evidence to the diversity of culture, race, ethnicity that continues to change and evolve throughout the connection. The faith vision of the church and the reality of its experience require an active commitment to discerning the ways in which culture, economic location, race, nationality, and the like are valuable, yet varied gifts exercised in gospel ministry. It is especially essential that, in an environment where cross-cultural/cross-racial appointments are probable in a life of ministry, a climate of mutual inquiry, learning, and appreciation need to pervade the process of entry into ministry. This is especially true of the mentoring relationship and the gifts brought to that relationship. However, the covenant group and continuing educational experiences are also greatly enriched when the gifts of each are welcomed, understood, and cherished. Sensitive supervision is crucial in these areas. Not only does it nurture the call and vocation of a person in ministry preparation, it also broadens and deepens the faith life of the whole church.

Boards of Ordained Ministry, the supervisory process, local church leaders, and mentors must dedicate themselves to critical reflection upon the gifts, graces, and gospel present in cross-cultural appointments and the rich reflection of the ecumenical, global church inherent in that experience. A climate of learning and appreciation is crucial to empowering future leadership. People involved in the ministry preparation process who seek to move beyond cultural and racial parochialism will also become leaders in fulfilling the vision of *shalom* that is grounded in the gospel of peace, justice, and the healing of Christ.

It is crucial to the development of an effective ministry preparation process that the issues of a multicultural, multinational, multilingual, multiracial church are acknowledged and celebrated by taking seriously the challenges and opportunities inherent in the journey together. This is most focused in the openness, training, and support of mentor/mentee relationships.

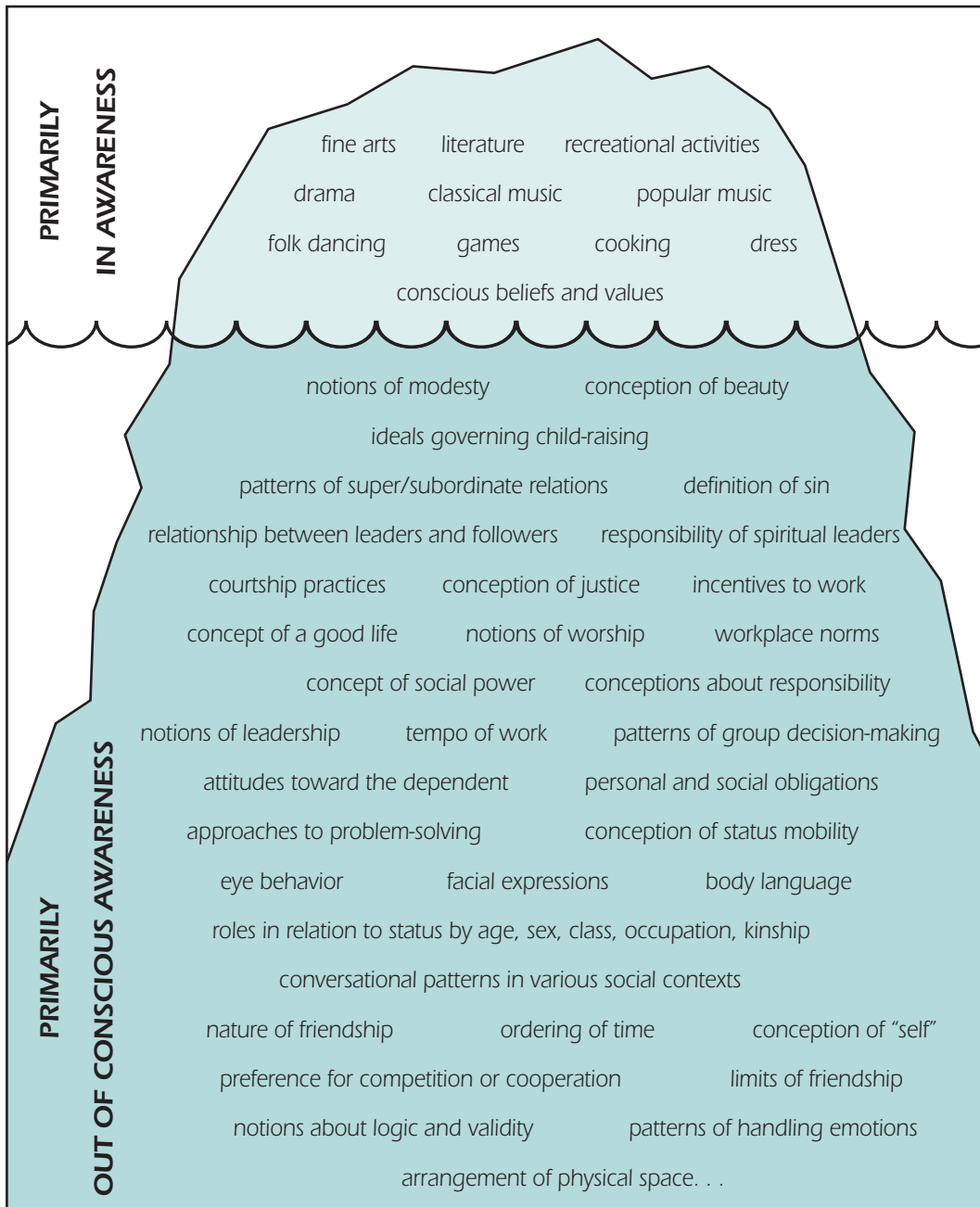
In her book *Meeting God at the Boundaries: Cross-Cultural–Cross-Racial Clergy Appointments* (Nashville: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, The United Methodist Church, 2003), anthropologist and cross-cultural educator Lucia Ann McSpadden lays out the issues that surround making appointments in a cross-cultural context. Her analysis would help Boards of Ordained Ministry to formulate principals, training, and support for the ministry preparation process.

McSpadden gathers a poignant list of Euro-American characteristics that are often the fulcrum of judgment in leadership but are not universal in other cultures. “This culture places high value on *doing* rather than being, on *getting things done* rather than building relationships, on *individual responsibility*, on a sense of *future* as something we can plan for, and on *production and visible results* for which people are expected to be *task oriented* and *achievement focused*” (p. 50).

McSpadden shares an iceberg graphic that illustrates those aspects of cross-cultural awareness that are readily visible and provoke inquiry and preliminary understanding. Those issues that are placed below the surface in the graphic are important to consider in the processes of provisional member development, especially in the mentoring relationship,

supervision, and evaluation. The issues below the surface are deeply held, often unarticulated, and unacknowledged and need to be discussed, understood, and appreciated. This understanding will be crucial in the dynamic of the mentoring relationship, but most critical in the relationship between the ministerial leader and the congregation or appointment site.

Culture as an Iceberg



Just as nine-tenths of an iceberg is out of sight (below the waterline), so nine-tenths of culture is below conscious awareness.

One of the scales used by anthropologists and cross-cultural educators draws distinctions that are helpful indicators of the way in which people understand participation in a group and how leadership is exercised. Brief descriptions are provided here to stimulate the need and beginning conversation/understandings of boards, mentors, and supervisors. Further reading may begin with McSpadden's book.

Collectivist/Communal Culture versus Individualist

Many cultures are *collectivist* in that the immediate and extended family, the clan, or some other group is the primary unit of identity. In contrast, *individualist* cultures focus on the individual. The family, clan, or other group exists for the enhancement of the individual. When problems arise, people in individualist cultures may seek aid outside the group, such as doctors, financial advisors, clergy, and therapists. People in collectivist cultures tend to use professional aid when the professional is a member of their group. Members of collectivist cultures resist sharing problems with strangers beyond the basic group.

Low Context versus High Context

High-context cultures convey meaning with the use of symbols, rituals, position, or role. In high-context cultures people are familiar with the expectations for leaders and members; therefore, members of the culture sometimes do not need to use language to convey meaning.

In *low-context* cultures, language is the primary vehicle for interpreting human interaction. In these cultures, people rely on words—written or oral—to convey what they want and mean. In low-context cultures a written order of worship is essential in church services

High-Power Distance versus Low-Power Distance

In *high-power distance* cultures, says anthropologist Edward Hall in his book *Beyond Culture* (New York, Doubleday, 1976), there is a clear demarcation of the responsibility of leaders and members to guide and care for the members. High-power distance cultures are hierarchical socially, politically, and theologically. People in these cultures will participate in group discussions only when specifically called upon by the leader.

In *low-power distance* cultures, members identify with the leader, because all the leaders come from the group. Low-power distance cultures are egalitarian socially, politically, and theologically. Leadership is exercised from within the group.

Polychronic versus Monochronic

Polychronic cultures receive time as a gift and a given. There is no concept of time as a reality that can be wasted. In polychronic cultures the primary emphasis is on *relationships*. By contrast, in *monochronic* cultures time is a commodity that must be managed and used, never wasted. Monochronic cultures are, therefore, *task* oriented.

In a polychronic culture, the time for a worship service to begin and end depends upon the needs of the worshipers and the way the service unfolds. Oftentimes, unexpected actions occur during the service, influencing the time the worship service will end. In monochronic cultures, by contrast, the worship service begins and ends at an appointed time. An order of worship guides the actions of worship from beginning to end and there is usually no deviation from the order of worship.

Status by Ascription versus Status by Achievement

Status by ascription is bestowed by a culture in terms of who a person is. This comes through roles such as family, age, gender, ordination, etc. Status does not need to be earned and achievements, though important, do not inhere to the status in direct proportion. On the other hand *status by achievement* is usually related in a more direct fashion to performance.

Clearly, the rich diversity of the cultures of the world is consistently gathering in the specific and particular places where ministry is experienced. Especially in the process of ministry preparation, it is imperative to attend to the dynamics and strategies to engage this gift of God's reality effectively, as Christ would envision it. Not only is this imperative for ministry preparation, but also is a model for the conduct of ministry throughout the life of the church.

Below is a tool to help mentors and mentees identify their own cultural location and to begin a conversation about what this means for the mentoring process.

Question: Where do you find yourself on these four continuums of cultural distinction? Find and mark your place in each continuum.

a) High-Power Distance 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6		Low-Power Distance
dis-identify with leaders hierarchical—socially, politically, theologically	identify with leaders egalitarian	
b) High Context 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6		Low Context
meaning conveyed through complex of symbols, rituals, office	meaning conveyed through content of language	
c) Polychronic time 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6		Monochronic Time
accept time as gift; relational orientation	use, manage, don't "waste time"; task orientation	
d) Collectivist culture 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6		Individualist Culture
basic unit: family, clan, group, or extended family	basic unit: individual and/or nuclear family	

Chapter 2: Clergy Mentoring

The Role of the Mentor

Clergy mentors are clergy in full connection, associate members, or full-time local pastors who have completed the Course of Study. They provide ongoing oversight and counsel with local pastors and provisional clergy members. Mentors for provisional members are recommended by the Cabinet and selected, trained, and held accountable by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Local pastors are assigned a clergy mentor by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry in consultation with the district superintendent. Candidacy mentors who have received clergy mentor training may continue with the same person. Clergy transferring from other denominations will also be assigned a clergy mentor.

The mentor takes responsibility for creating a safe place for reflection and growth. An effective mentor has a mature faith, models effective ministry, and possesses the necessary skill to help individuals discern their call in ministry. Mentoring is distinct from the evaluative and supervisory process that is a part of preparation for ministry.

The Board of Ordained Ministry may assign one mentor to work either with one individual or with a group of local pastors and/or probationary members. Mentoring begins when a person receives an appointment as a local pastor or as a commissioned minister.

Models

“Ministry in the Christian church is derived from the ministry of Christ,” *The Book of Discipline* says. Jesus is the formative model of mentoring for Christian ministry. Just as Mary acknowledged Jesus as **rabbi** in the resurrection garden, so we embrace Christ as **rabbi** and model of mentoring others into Christian ministry. Within the mentoring relationship, there is an acknowledgement of being **fellow disciples** of Christ Jesus. In addition, we relate to one another as Christ has welcomed us, “no longer as servants, but **friends**” (John 15:12-15). It is crucial to model the quality of friendship in mentoring relationship that was present in the relationships of the disciples and others for whom Jesus was a mentor. Mentoring relationships are primarily partnerships in ministry. Examples in both Old and New Testaments can be called upon to form the “great cloud of witnesses” to the mentor and mentee who journey together in this relationship.

Many biblical models of mentoring find their roots in the importance the Levites placed on perpetuating the rites and duties that are assumed in the leadership and spiritual well-being of the people of God. The schools that trained the prophets, beginning with Samuel, established a curriculum of theological and devotional knowledge and practices. They also discerned the suitability of the student for specific leadership among the people. Some became prophets, others returned home.

Multitudes of mentoring relationships appear in scripture, church history, and the experience of our lives. Mentors in ministry preparation are encouraged to gather their “cloud of witnesses” and reflect upon them as models and examples. Boards of Ordained Ministry are encouraged to gather these models for continuing education among mentors. Ruth and Naomi, Elijah and Elisha, Paul and Barnabas, Priscilla, and the leaders of the early churches each yield gifts and examples (as well as cautions) for mentoring relationships.

However, the richest resource for a model of mentoring is at the root of Christianity, the ministry of Jesus Christ. Within the context of the covenant they shared, Jesus and the disciples modeled ministry and reflected on ministry in confidential exchanges, public dialogues, and in the practice of ministry. The formative exchanges focused on theological formation for ministry and devotion, spiritual formation, and empowerment to assume a role in Christ’s ministry based on gifts, introspective questioning, guidance, and direction, group discussion. Contextual exegesis of scripture, and rabbinic-style interpretation of scripture formulated a new midrash

and body of authoritative parables. The expansion of Mosaic tradition to new interpretations (“but, I say to you . . .”), set the disciples to particular experiences of ministry.

In addition, Jesus exhibited the essentially human capacity to listen, learn and grow in understanding (the Syro-Phoenecian woman’s interaction with Jesus not only resulted in the healing of her daughter, but a larger vision of Jesus’ mission). Mentors in the Jesus model must always be open to the mentee’s relationship as **fellow learners with the capacity to listen and to learn**. As Jesus exemplified in his leadership, mentors must also adopt, as part of their mentoring ministry, time to withdraw to pray and reflect.

However, the Jesus model of friendship **did not mitigate against evaluation, correction, re-direction, intervention, or confrontation**. The Gospel of Mark often uses starkly vibrant language in Jesus mentoring the disciples in their ministry. Direct, some may call it. Jesus also accepted the failures and shortcomings of the disciples, developing strategies and advocating for them. When the disciples’ culturally influenced aspirations (such as sitting at the right hand or left hand) emerged as driving their ministry, Jesus chastened and corrected them. After a difficult passage of ministry that demoralized and shook the faith, confidence, and call, Jesus inspired a renewed focus on “feeding my sheep” and offered dynamic hope. Jesus was also clear that there are expectations and boundaries for those who are ministers and disciples.

Within the relationship of mentor and mentee in the context of the ministry of the church, there is the hope that each will grow more fully into the call and claim of Christ within the general calling of the church. There is also hope that the congruence between faith, understanding, and practice emerge more fully through this process. It is an intense relationship that invokes the mentoring model of Christ and the refining fire of the Holy Spirit.

Five Touchstones of Mentoring

Five touchstones of relationship exist between God, the commissioned minister, mentors in ministry, and the church.

Call: The elements of the ministry preparation process and the practice of ministry will have an important impact on the sense of call and vocation. As part of the mentoring relationship, renewing and revisioning the call is imperative to keeping it vital in the life of ministry. God’s claim and the community’s response are central to reflecting on the constant need to articulate one’s vocation afresh as it empowers ministry.

Covenant: A personal sense of calling and vocation is gathered up in the covenants that God has made with the community. This aspect of mentoring is both personal and communal. It centers on the way in which the scriptural covenants, the covenants of the tradition and the denomination, as well as the personal sense of covenant with God, church, denomination, family, and friends come together. Reality testing, expectations, responsibility, and conflicting priorities must be worked through at this stage. Integrity in faith and life are focal points. Realized hope and eschatology are areas to reflect upon.

Context: As the process of ministry preparation unfolds, it becomes more and more necessary to understand one’s calling and the covenants in which one is engaged within the immediate context of ministry. In some ways, this is dealing with “Pentecost fire” in that the context refines the call and covenants in particular ways. The key is to help in the process of the refiner’s fire, but without the call or the covenant faith being consumed. This is a time when the safety of the mentoring relationship is crucial, yet the courage of the mentor and the encouragement needed to engage the context with one’s whole self-in-ministry is required.

Credo: It is an important skill to locate the journey of the people of God whom we serve within the biblical and traditional, historical narrative of the church. This empowers dynamic and faith-empowered leadership. Out of an understanding of the narrative, theological imagination and claims are made. With the resources of a theological education and the categories of theological

imagination and systems available, the mentoring team has the ability to engage their own theological reflection in reaction to what is being experienced in context. This aspect of the mentoring relationship empowers the courage of a person in ministry to lead through faith in what God is doing in the here and now. Exercising one's capacity for theological reflection and understanding in a trusted and committed relationship is vital to developing a faithful ministry of leadership.

Connexion*: The vocation is not our own, but is understood within the larger calling and purpose of the Body of Christ, the community of believers. The relationship of mentoring is within a larger context of responsibility to the members of a particular order in the church. Although there are various levels of confidentiality, this relationship is not a secret or personal relationship, but has the confidence of the entire Body to nurture and mature the calling and covenants made by the participants. Further, it has the confidence of the Body to develop the skills and wisdom of contextualization and the acuity, faith and courage of standing upon and leading from the credo that emerges.

Suggested Standards

1. Mentoring is a practice of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. Mentoring exists to provide a relationship of confidentiality in which a mentee can grow in effective leadership as a clergyperson. Early on, the mentee and mentor must read and have a common understanding of the annual conference's policy statement on confidentiality. Adherence to this policy is expected of everyone. Violating or feeling pressured to violate the confidentiality of the mentoring process damages the entire annual conference plan. Clarity about what is to be shared and in what context sharing is to happen is a key building block for the annual conference mentoring ministry. Annual conference policies may specify limitations on confidentiality; for example, clergy misconduct or information required by state law. When the mentor is the subject of possible misconduct, sharing information is risky for the mentee, since it may damage the relationship—and vice versa. In such instances, the mentor and mentee should follow the complaint procedures outlined in ¶362, *2004 Book of Discipline*.
3. Mentoring relationships are covenantal by design and discipline. The mentoring covenant, mutually agreed upon by mentor and mentee, is an expression of the clergy covenant in the annual conference. Positive mentoring occurs when there is clarity in the structure and commitment to the relationship. Gayle Holmes of the MENTTIUM Corporation, an organization specializing in corporate mentoring systems, focuses on mentoring relationships in a wide range of institutional settings.

Chemistry and personality match are irrelevant. Discipline and commitment to the relationship and its goals are what matter . . . People who were part of informal mentoring situations that we observed, no matter how bright and caring, didn't know what to do . . . We initially thought you didn't have to structure these relationships, that all we needed to do was to match people up and get out of the way. We found that planning and goal setting and establishing a protocol for the relationship was very important.

—From "Mentoring Misconceptions," *World Traveler* (September 1997), pp. 38-39

4. The evaluative processes of the district and the conference, as well as the appointive processes of the cabinet, are separate from the mentoring relationship. In fact, mentoring is effective only if the mentoring relationship is not part of the evaluation or screening of a probationary member.

*From *Mentoring Into Vocation* by Mark Fowler. Published by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of The United Methodist Church, copyright © 2006.

5. The mentoring ministry is an effective way to stimulate continued learning and ministry formation in both mentor and mentee.
6. Organizational responsibilities, relationships, and reporting must be clearly defined for mentee, mentor, superintendent, district committee, and conference board.

Forming the Covenant

The formal, written covenant fashioned for the mentoring relationship reflects a sharing of call, vocation, disciplines, and authority. Covenants are three-dimensional, involving the mentor, the mentee, and God's presence. Mentor and mentee reflect together on biblical covenants.

Discussion of the elements of these is helpful as they develop and agree upon their own covenant.

The following questions may help the participants in formulating the elements of the covenant.

1. How can boundaries of trust and respect be established and maintained?
2. If either or both no longer feel safe because their willingness to be vulnerable has been threatened, how can the relationship be ended in a respectful manner?
3. What can be done to make sure that sharing the journey of ministry is more important than fixing specific problems?
4. When necessary, how can the mentor "speak the truth in love" regarding effectiveness in ministry in such a way that the mentee feels empowered to face issues head-on? There may be instances in which it becomes clear that pursuing ordained ministry is not in the mentee's best interest. In such cases, the mentor should carefully encourage the mentee to explore his or her call and gifts again in order to assist the mentee to consider other appropriate expressions of ministry.

While drafting the covenant, participants seek agreement on specific issues. These may include:

- learning goals (for local pastors enrolled in the Course of Study, the curriculum is part of the focus)
- resources to be used (materials, persons, events)
- shared expectations
- meeting frequency, dates, times, and places
- responsibilities for preparation and follow-up.

The covenant should conclude with a commitment statement such as the following:

We, the undersigned, enter into a covenantal relationship and commit ourselves to fulfill the details of the covenant written above. It is our hope and prayer that in this process of sharing and mentoring we will learn from each other. We make this covenant in the name of Jesus Christ.

Signed: _____
Mentor

Signed: _____
Mentee

Date: _____

Who Can Serve as a Mentor?

On what basis should people be invited to consider being a mentor? According to *The Book of Discipline*, it is the task of the cabinet to recommend mentors. The Board of Ordained Ministry selects and trains clergy mentors and holds them accountable. For commissioned clergy, the board of ordained ministry and district superintendent are to consult in the assignment of mentors. For local pastors, the district committee on ministry and district superintendent are to consult in the assignment of mentors.

The following criteria are recommended to the BOM for use in selecting mentors:

A mentor

- has faith in Christ
- relates biblical images and theological understandings to the practice of ministry
- listens actively and hears others
- nurtures others with sensitivity
- communicates compassion and understanding
- exudes self-confidence and self-esteem
- manifests joy, humor, and laughter
- understands the separate roles of supervision and mentoring
- commits time to a continuing covenant relationship
- exercises appropriate boundaries
- models the spiritual disciplines

The protocol for assigning and supporting mentors influences the effectiveness of the mentoring ministry in the annual conference. Some conferences ask mentees to nominate their own mentors. Other conferences assign mentors based on geography or other factors. Conferences may select and train mentors as needed; others may develop a pool of mentors for assignment.

A few conferences provide opportunities for mentors to reflect in a structured way on their experience of the mentoring relationship. Many conferences simply assign a mentor to a mentee and leave it up to them to structure the relationship as they see fit. There is no subsequent reflection on the experience.

A person can begin as a candidacy mentor and then continue as a clergy mentor, following the same candidate through the probationary process or the Course of Study. If the relationship is positive and disciplined, it serves to strengthen the various stages of ministry.

It is not always possible for someone to serve as one person's mentor throughout the process of preparing for ordained ministry. The length of a particular mentoring relationship is determined by several factors.

1. Not every mentoring assignment works out. Sometimes the persons matched are not able to create a covenantal relationship and quality mentoring becomes impossible. Each annual conference must have a clear and simple way in which a mentee or mentor can request reassignment. This should be a routine part of the information about entering the mentoring process.
2. When assigning mentors and mentees, conference leaders should consider cross-gender and cross-cultural matching. Such matching can provide excellent learning opportunities for new clergy. Assigning mentees cross-culturally can enhance their growth beyond their own racial or cultural norms. Cross-racial assignments can be appropriate for mentees from both majority and minority cultures. For clergy from minority population groups, mentoring can be a vital link for acceptance among their cultural peers. Sensitivity to the cultural norms and the needs of new clergy within these cultures becomes an important part of the assignment process. One mold does not fit all.
3. Issues of human sexuality are present in the mentoring relationships, as they are in any other ministry setting.

One of the expectations of mentees is that they will be honest in their meetings with their mentors. One natural outgrowth of honesty in that context is that the mentee will be asking serious questions, confessing failures, and showing vulnerability. Where the person with lesser power shows appropriate vulnerability, the power carrier, in some instances, has perceived and confused the attractiveness of the vulnerability with invitation to sexual intimacy.

–From “Daring to be Intimate: Male Supervisors Working with Female Supervisees in Theological Field Education,” by Martha Gilmore and Emma J. Justes, *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry* 7 (1993), p. 210.

Implementing a Clergy Mentoring Ministry

In addition to the general steps outlined in chapter 2, conference leaders must complete the following steps in the development of clergy mentoring ministry:

- Adopt board policies for clergy mentoring regarding confidentiality and reporting.
- State the role of clergy mentors in contrast to supervisors of new clergy.
- Write goals, standards, and guidelines for clergy mentoring
- Determine the mentoring format (one-on-one or group).
- List qualifications, roles, and tasks of mentors.
- Obtain consensus with the cabinet on the process of recommendation, recruitment, and assignment of clergy mentors.
- Develop and communicate policies and procedures for district committees regarding mentoring for local pastors.
- Articulate the system for accountability and evaluation of the mentoring process.
- Delineate the expectations of commissioned ministers and local pastors regarding mentoring.
- Develop a plan for sustaining the mentoring ministry.

Evaluating the Mentoring Ministry (Annual Assessment Process)

Evaluation is a process of celebration, growth, direction, revision, and reflection. To use evaluation time effectively, it is important to revisit the call, covenant, mission, resources, and expectations shared throughout the system as a plumb line for evaluation. As the board of ordained ministry evaluates the mentoring ministry of the annual conference, it does so within the vision and context of the total ministry of the annual conference and The United Methodist Church. From this perspective, the evaluation will shape and guide the principals that will undergird the evaluation of those within the ministry preparation process, the partners who participate in the process, the work of the board and the effectiveness of the annual conference.

Evaluation is, therefore, organic and systemic. The ministry preparation process cannot be isolated from the larger vision and mission of the church, the effectiveness of the annual conference, the Board of Ordained Ministry, the local church, and the resources and support systems that surround, nurture, evaluate, and judge a commissioned minister on the journey from readiness to effectiveness.

It is incumbent upon Board of Ordained Ministry leaders to engage the key leadership as it undertakes the process of evaluation. It is also important to share the results broadly, with a clear articulation of the gifts and resources, as well as the cutting edges and deficits needing to be addressed.

In this way, the commissioned minister's evaluation can be conducted within the context of self-awareness, shared expectations, a realistic vision, and faithful hope for effective ministry within the covenant ministry of the annual conference.

Use the following items as a checklist for evaluating the mentoring ministry of your annual conference. Every ministry environment includes the items on this list. As the Board of Ordained Ministry, District Committees on Ordained Ministry, and the Cabinet consider the mentoring ministry of the conference, using the components below as guidelines ensures an effective mentoring ministry.

1. Ecology: Shared articulation of expectations for effectiveness in ministry.
 - Articulate as clearly as possible with the board, cabinet and other partners what gifts and grace are expected for effective covenant ministry within the annual conference.
 - Reflect on the visions and hopes of the annual conference in order to realistically assess what will be expected in the short- and long-term leadership of the annual conference.
 - Ascertain the placements of commissioned ministers and assess how this will effect and shape the mentoring process.
 - Work with the cabinet to develop clear and reasonable expectations for clergy mentors, the contributions of settings, the support of colleagues, and the standards of supervision and reporting during the commissioning process.
2. Mentors are crucial gifts to mentees and the hope of the formation of effective leadership.
 - Receive from the cabinet recommendations of possible mentors.
 - Provide mentors training, expectations, accountability, support, and channels of communication.
 - Approve mentors using established criteria of the annual conference, *The Book of Discipline*, and this *Tool Kit*.
 - Reassess annually a person's gifts and resources for mentoring, including time demands and priorities.
 - Affirm that mentoring is not a universal gift of the clergy, but a specific set of gifts, skills, and calling. It is also important to affirm that no one can mentor for an indeterminate period of time.
 - Encourage mentors to have mentors of their own.
 - Assign mentors and mentees, provide for review of the effectiveness of the relationship.
 - Review the mentoring assignment annually.
 - Provide a process for both mentees and mentors to seek reassignment.
3. Standards & principles guiding the annual conference mentoring process.
 - Involve the Board of Ordained Ministry, the District Committee on Ordained Ministry, and the Cabinet (and perhaps the clergy session of the annual conference and/or the order of elders and the order of deacons) in the adoption of definitions and standards for the mentoring ministry of the conference.
 - State the expectations, based on the standards, in terms of which mentors will be assigned and their performance evaluated.
 - Review the standards at least every second year. Feedback from the constituents of the process should be part of this review. Special consideration should be given to the evaluation of the process by the mentees and mentors.
4. Supporting the calling and vocation of mentors: factors that energize those involved in mentoring.
 - Recognize and celebrate mentors in personal (one-to-one) and public ways in the annual conference and local churches.
 - Keep before local churches and annual conference leaders the time and commitment mentoring ministries require, even though the ministries are exercised in ways that are not immediately visible.
 - State clearly the expectations, focus of attention, and outcomes from the mentor/mentee relationship. Be clear about ways in which this will be judged and/or evaluated both formally and informally.

- Provide support groups, perhaps covenant groups, where a mentor can reflect upon their experience and receive group mentoring.
 - Design continuing education and training for mentors to grow and develop in this important ministry.
5. Ethos: the environment in the conference where the mentoring ministry takes place.
 - Clarify with mentors and mentees the conference and board culture as it regards mentors, both formal and informal. Do not assume that either mentors or mentees know the expectations, time commitments, reporting structures, confidentiality assumptions, or rationale for assignment.
 - Define the system and diagram the mentor's relationship and responsibilities to superintendent, board, and district committee. Acknowledge and work through strategies that deal with multiple relationships and roles within the covenant of ministry.
 6. Evaluation: the way in which mentoring is assessed and valued.
 - Establish specific criteria, timetables and methodologies for assessing and valuing mentoring based on the standards adopted earlier.
 - Establish specific criteria, timetables, and methodologies for evaluating particular mentors and their effectiveness based on those standards, especially if the standards shift.
 - At regular intervals, review and revise the assessment process itself, perhaps using an outside consultant. This will be especially important as boards and cabinets change.

Though annual conferences will apply them differently, these six components occur in all mentoring processes—in healthy or unhealthy ways. They are listed in linear fashion, but may be implemented in orders and ways that are effective in the context of the annual conference culture. These guidelines are not intended to establish complex governance systems of the process, but form the practice of the ministry preparation process in effective ways.

The Mentoring Report

The Board of Ordained Ministry is responsible for developing an annual reporting process. The report is used to verify participation in the process. It may be as simple as a signed statement by both mentor and mentee verifying participation in the process. It may be a fuller description of the topics covered, agreements or events than it is descriptive of the relationship. Any judgment rendered, advocacy, opinions, or ratings are evaluative and should be avoided. The supervising aspects of the superintendent and board are meant to be evaluative in terms of the system in this process. Within the confidence of the mentor/mentee relationship there is a consistent valuing, advocating, and discernment transpiring between the parties. However, this is a matter of covenant within the confidence of the relationship and not a mechanism for screening or absolving the supervisory processes from their critical work. A more detailed process for writing the report is found in *The Clergy Mentoring: A Manual for Commissioned Ministers, Local Pastors, and Clergy Mentors*.

Mentoring in Pairs or Groups

The materials in *The Clergy Mentoring Manual* assume that an annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry will provide covenant groups as well as one-to-one clergy mentoring. However, many factors affect how each conference will decide how to provide and sustain quality clergy mentoring, including the budget and the leadership required.

Due to the number of available full-member clergy, associate members, or full-time local pastors who have completed the Course of Study, as well as their ability to be good mentors, mentoring in groups can be a good alternative to one-to-one mentoring. Such groups may be effectively led by one or more facilitators who are trained as clergy mentors and who also are skilled leaders of small groups. Training for this specialized function is essential. Also, having a person present to reflect on and learn from the mentor's leadership in the group is necessary.

Groups for mentoring commissioned ministers may also serve as covenant groups, provided the purpose of each function is clearly articulated and implemented. Theological reflection on call, vocation, and practice of ministry forms the core experience of clergy mentoring in both paired relationships and groups.

Guidelines for Group Mentoring

Group Covenant

As with one-to-one mentoring, groups need structure and direction. Each participant will write a personal covenant statement. The group as a whole will write a common statement. The group covenant articulates in basic terms the disciplines of the group. The group can use questions like the following to construct its disciplines:

- What is the expectation regarding attendance?
- When and how often does the group meet, and how long is each session?
- Are group members expected to prepare for each session or do assignments following the session?
- What will be the focus for the group through the year?
- What is the role of the mentor as group facilitator?

The covenant also contains the definition and expectations about confidentiality regarding matters shared within the group. Reporting will also be understood and done in a way that does not violate the confidentiality of group members. All participants must sign the covenant.

Spiritual Formation in the Group

Spiritual formation in the group begins with members telling about their call, vocation, spiritual disciplines, and authority. A retreat setting may facilitate the first gathering, since it allows participants to share information and get acquainted in a relaxed atmosphere.

The prayer, worship, and ritual practices of the group deserve attention and preparation. The whole group should make the decision about these practices, not just the mentor-facilitator.

Frequency and Length of Meetings

The frequency and length of meetings will vary, depending on geography, ministry settings, and other conditions. For example, in districts or annual conferences where group members have to travel long distances to meetings, the group may decide to meet only two or three times a year, with each meeting lasting two to three days. Between sessions members can communicate via telephone, e-mail, or surface mail. Prayer partners help undergird the group, even when it is dispersed.

In settings where travel is not an issue, the group may choose to gather monthly for two to three hours at a time. In some places the group may even decide to meet every week. Some groups may elect to hold an occasional recreational gathering in which family and special friends can participate.

Groups also must accommodate those clergy whose primary appointment is beyond the local church or in extension ministry.

Group Expectations

From the start members must be clear about the group's expectations of each participant and of the mentor-facilitator.

- What expectations govern leadership, preparation, and participation in the group?
- How is responsibility for preparing sessions assigned?
- Who will design and lead worship times?
- If a session has reading material, do all members have to read the material or only a designated few?
- How do group members become aware of important ministry events?
- If site visits are planned, what sites and people will be included?

- How will the group share responsibility for building relationships?
- How will the group keep one another accountable for observing worship and prayer opportunities and for following the meeting agenda?

When a member reports a ministry event, what (if any) feedback is expected from the rest of the group? Does such reporting happen with the whole group present or is it to be done on an individual basis? Should the group prepare a report about its life together, with evaluative statements about the mentor-facilitator, or is reporting the responsibility of individual members? Is the group newly configured each year, or does a given group have a longer life expectancy?

Meeting Style and Nature of the Group

In determining the style and nature of the group, members should reflect on questions such as the style of meeting the group prefers. For example, will members participate only through group discussion or will role-play and other processes also be used? What will be the schedule for sharing ministry events? In considering these questions, participants should keep in mind that the focus of the group is to be a mentoring group. It is *not* a therapy group or a consulting group. While mutual support is part of the style and nature of the group, a covenant group is not simply a support group.

Each participant uses the group to help reflect on his or her identity, roles, and authority in the clergy office to which he or she is appointed.

Role of the Mentor-Facilitator

A mentor helps to create a safe place for the members of the group to share and explore their call, roles, and vocational office. To have a positive group process, it is vital that the mentor be at ease with group processes and be clear about his or her role in these processes. The mentor-facilitator is not a fix-it person for group members. Nor should she or he be expected to be an expert in issues of ministry. The role of the mentor is to help group members focus on issues of role, authority, and office. Mentors help group members to reflect theologically about their ministries and to talk about the struggles, anxieties, and joys of ministry.

We encourage the annual conference to provide consultative help for the mentors, which they may call upon throughout the year. This support allows mentors to review the group processes they use, to clarify their function in the group, and to gain resources for effective leadership. In the absence of such support, mentor-facilitators may well get into situations that are harmful to themselves and to the group. Support must be shared with the group and the expectation of confidentiality clearly defined.

Mentoring in Extension Ministries (Elders) and Appointments Beyond the Local Church (Deacons)

The Book of Discipline states that probationary members shall be supervised by the district superintendent under whom they are appointed, and shall be assigned a deacon or elder as mentor.

Mentoring relationships for commissioned ministers appointed to extension ministries (elders) or appointments beyond the local church (deacons) within the annual conference may require adaptation in order to address issues arising in each unique situation.

When the commissioned minister is serving in an extension ministry (elders) or an appointment beyond the local church (deacons), the Board of Ordained Ministry may request that the commissioned minister nominate as mentor a qualified person in the location where the commissioned person is serving. However, the Board of Ordained Ministry is encouraged to maintain a connection with persons in extension ministries or appointments beyond the local church. Such contact may include site visits, annual interviews, and regular e-mail correspondence. Provisional members serving in settings beyond their home conference should also take the initiative in sustaining a connection with their home conference.

Chapter 3: Continuing Theological Education

During the provisional period, arrangements shall be offered by the Board of Ordained Ministry for all provisional members to be involved in a residency curriculum that extends theological education by using covenant groups and mentoring to support the practice and work of their ministry as servant leaders, to contemplate the grounding of ordained ministry, and to understand covenant ministry in the life of the conference. (¶326, *2012 Book of Discipline*)

The provisional period is a time for provisional members to live out and practice information gained through the seminary experience. The continuing theological education proposed during this time is an attempt to extend and supplement theological education. The Board of Ordained Ministry may develop a curriculum to be offered to all provisional members, or provide continuing education opportunities that allow the probationers to choose what would be most helpful. The Board of Ordained Ministry may partner with United Methodist seminaries to provide continuing theological education events or online learning opportunities.

Boards of Ordained Ministry, in preparing continuing education, should consider the following:

- Ensure that quality continuing education offered is based on needs identified by the Board of Ordained Ministry and the provisional members.
- Require regular participation of provisional members in continuing theological education throughout the residency period.
- Review the continuing theological education program regularly to avoid duplication of seminary work, placing the emphasis on practical issues that relate to the provisional members' needs in their ministry setting.
- Consult with provisional members and give opportunity for choice of continuing education opportunities.

The residency curriculum in continuing education makes use of the provisional members' ministry experiences and offers training in practical topics not necessarily covered in a graduate theological program. Topics might include the following. Remember to include application to extension ministry or appointments beyond the local church.

- How to develop a budget
- How to run a meeting
- Planning for maintenance of buildings
- Conflict transformation
- Stewardship
- Strategic ministry planning
- Mission field analysis (the church neighborhood or the ministry site)
- Motivating and leading staff
- Preparing grant proposals
- Engaging church members or other volunteers
- Intercultural competency
- The deacon/elder collaboration in congregations and across the conference
- Conference and denominational resources and agencies
- Self-care disciplines
- Workshop on planning "making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" projects

Chapter 4: Covenant Groups

Group Support and Accountability

Jesus created community. “Come and follow me” was his invitation to enter a formational relationship with him in partnership with others who were also seeking to learn and live his way. Discipleship was a group experience in which individuals shared their hopes, questions, experiences, accomplishments, and challenges. They prayed, ate, and learned together. With their peers, the disciples witnessed the amazing transforming power of the gospel. When all appeared lost, they reassembled to seek comfort and strength in their group covenant.

The early church formed around this group identity. Acts of the Apostles describes a period of amazing growth empowered by the Holy Spirit, during which Christians distinguished themselves from the predominant culture by their commitment to love and care for each other. Part of that care included holding each other accountable for belief and practice in order to both follow Christ faithfully and survive in a hostile world.

When John Wesley sought to reform and revitalize his faith culture, he incorporated these principles of support and accountability into the revival. The movement was organized into a system that formed and nurtured relationships on several levels. In the Societies, bands and classes, new converts were welcomed, taught the means of grace, and practiced the disciplines of the covenant community.

The various conferences within The United Methodist Church are a derivative of its Wesleyan roots. As the movement became a denomination, though, the process of institutionalization caused many changes. The principles of support and accountability became less relational and more structural. Entry into pastoral ministry, for example, became a process of credentialing and certification instead of commitment to a shared covenant.

The challenges of ministry in postmodern culture have resulted in a renewal of emphasis on the relational nature of the faith community. Small groups are an important and effective strategy in programmatic and organizational life. The most effective of these groups include forms of support and accountability. Consequently, an intentional experience of covenant group life has been included in the professional ministry preparation process.

Standards

The following guidelines are suggested for development of a formal, written statement to provide structure and direction for covenant groups. Without exception, all participants must sign the covenant.

Clear Focus

Even though the purpose for a group of commissioned clergy is determined by the Board of Ordained Ministry, each group will articulate its own understanding of that purpose in the context of covenant ministry.

Configuration and Lifespan

Annual conferences must decide how covenant groups will be organized and the time parameters of their existence. Will each class of commissioned clergy form a group (or groups) in which they will participate for the entire period of probation? If so, what alternative will be developed for those whose probationary years last beyond others in their class? Conferences may choose to configure new groups each year when there are limited numbers of participants or concerns about distance and travel times.

Assumption of Confidentiality

The definition and expectations are stated concerning confidentiality in regard to matters shared within the group. Reporting will also be understood and done in a way that does not violate the confidentiality of group members.

Spiritual Formation in the Group

Group prayer, prayer partnerships, devotion, worship, and other ritual practices of the group are specified. A facilitator will help the group discuss and determine these practices, not determine them for the group.

Frequency and Length of Meetings

The frequency and length of meetings will vary, depending on geography, ministry settings, and other conditions. In districts or annual conferences where group members have to travel long distances, the group may decide to meet less often for extended time periods. Although face-to-face sessions are preferred, in extreme circumstances groups may design alternative means of communication.

Meeting Style

In determining the style of meetings, members should consider questions such as the following: What style does the group prefer? Will members participate only through group discussion or will role-play and other processes also be used?

Group Expectations

The covenant must clearly state the group's expectations of each participant and of the mentor-facilitator. These may include:

- attendance guidelines
- expectations for leadership, preparation, and participation in the group
- assignment of responsibility for session preparations
- worship design and leadership
- shared responsibility for building relationships
- an accountability process to keep the group on task.

Role of a Facilitator

Conferences may choose to provide a group facilitator, whose primary responsibility is creation of a safe place for the members of the group. In such cases, a positive group process requires that the facilitator/mentor be familiar and comfortable with group processes and be clear about his or her role in these processes. The facilitator does not function as a fixer of problems or as an expert in pastoral ministry.

Annual conferences are encouraged to provide special training for facilitators. Consultative support can also be used to help facilitators monitor their functioning in the group, review their usage of group process, and obtain additional resources for effective leadership. The absence of such support may lead to situations harmful to facilitators and the group. Support arrangements must be shared with the group and the meaning of confidentiality clearly defined in both the support and group relationships.

Evaluation and Reporting

What feedback on process is expected? Without breaking confidentiality concerning content, should the group prepare a report about its life together, or is reporting the responsibility of individual members? In either case, guidelines for content and format should be specified by the board of ordained ministry. Who will evaluate facilitators and how will they be evaluated?

Models

Covenant groups for commissioned clergy may have many forms. Participants may gather for Bible study, support, devotion, prayer, discussion of ministry issues, personal growth or a combination of purposes. Conferences are free to develop any format, keeping in mind that the principles underlying this aspect of professional ministry preparation are support and accountability.

Covenant Discipleship Groups

Boards of Ordained Ministry should seriously consider adapting Covenant Discipleship groups as the model for professional ministry preparation. Covenant Discipleship is a small group process developed by the General Board of Discipleship as an intentional approach to spiritual formation, using support and accountability models firmly rooted in United Methodist tradition.

Two primary resources on Covenant Discipleship Groups published by Discipleship Resources are available from Cokesbury. In *Accountable Discipleship: Living in God's Household* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2000), Steven Manskar presents the biblical and historical context for contemporary expressions of this aspect of our Wesleyan heritage. Gayle Turner Watson's *Guide for Covenant Discipleship Groups* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2000) is a manual for those involved in establishing groups.

Covenant Discipleship Groups are formed by small groups (five to seven is recommended) who develop a covenant intended to deepen their relationship with Christ. The primary guide for the covenant is the General Rule of Discipleship, a summary of John Wesley's General Rules:

- to witness to Jesus Christ in the world, and to follow his teachings
- through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. (Manskar, p. 26)

Participants work through a consensual process to write and agree upon clauses expressing their commitment to regular acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion. In addition, they compose a preamble and conclusion that state the nature and purpose of their covenant, affirm their shared faith in Christ, and declare their dependence upon grace.

After adopting their covenant, group members meet periodically for support and accountability. While the standard practice of covenant disciple groups is to meet weekly for one hour, the model is easily adapted to the professional ministry preparation process. One group member leads in a question/answer process of self-reporting on accomplishment of the clauses since the last meeting. Leadership is rotated among all members of the group. Meetings often begin and/or end with prayer and may include time to share joys and concerns. The focus of the gathering, though, is the covenant.

The Covenant Discipleship model is very appropriate for this purpose for the following reasons:

- It is faithful to the Wesleyan principles of building community through support and accountability.
- It intentionally addresses the practice of spiritual formation.
- The experience of Covenant Discipleship Groups during provisional membership teaches clergy a model they can practice in their ministry settings.
- As more clergy participate in these groups, the dynamics of the community of clergy will change in positive ways. Mutual accountability will replace judgmental evaluation. Spiritual formation will become more of a lifestyle than part of the job description. Connection will become more important than competition. A higher level of trust will evolve.

Covenant Groups for Clergy in Extension Ministries (Elders) and Appointments Beyond the Local Church (Deacons)

Because all provisional members—including elders in extension ministry and deacons appointed beyond the local church—must participate in all aspects of the residency curriculum, Boards of Ordained Ministry must find ways to accommodate their schedules and locations. When possible, deacons and elders should be together in covenant groups and/or mentoring groups, to build collaboration in the clergy community and mutual understanding of The United Methodist Church's two orders of ordained ministry. Varying the scheduling of meetings is one strategy for inclusion. When distance or other factors make this unworkable, the Board of Ordained Ministry can develop other ways to be sure these clergy who are not based in congregations are participating in appropriate ministry formation groups.

Covenant Groups for Local Pastors

Although new local pastors are not required by *The Book of Discipline* to take part in covenant groups, annual conferences may develop or adapt models for them and require their participation. Such groups can be an effective strategy in welcoming and including local pastors into the community of clergy. Indeed, there may be advantages to considering the development of combined groups including local pastors and commissioned clergy, especially in conferences with small numbers of either or both.

When designing covenant groups for local pastors, leaders should consider their wide variety of categories and circumstances.

Chapter 5: Supervision

Wherever they are appointed, the services of provisional members shall be evaluated by the district superintendent and the Board of Ordained Ministry in terms of the provisional member's ability to express and give leadership in servant ministry. (§326, 2012 *The Book of Discipline*)

Eligibility and Rights of Provisional Membership—Provisional members are on trial in preparation for membership in full connection in the annual conference as deacons or elders. They are on probation as to character, servant leadership, and effectiveness in ministry. The annual conference, through the clergy session, has jurisdiction over provisional members. Annually, the Board of Ordained Ministry shall review and evaluate their relationship and make recommendation to the clergy members in full connection regarding their continuance. (§327, 2012 *Book of Discipline*)

Probationary members shall be supervised by the district superintendent under whom they are appointed. (§327.4, 2012 *Book of Discipline*)

All clergy are supervised and held accountable for their conduct, ethical behavior, understanding, and effectiveness in ministry. It is essential that during the ministry preparation process, provisional members and local pastors are clear concerning the criteria for assessment and receive supervision that enables them to develop the skills and habits that will sustain them in ministry.

Supervision of Provisional Members

Supervision of the provisional member is the responsibility of the Board of Ordained Ministry and the district superintendent. In this joint responsibility, it is essential that the Board and the Cabinet establish clear expectations of provisional members. These expectations should be written and given to provisional members in order that everyone has the same understanding of expected behaviors and participation in the provisional process. This document should include the specific criteria for the assessment of the ministry of the provisional member to be used by the Board of Ordained Ministry and the district superintendent. At the conclusion of the provisional period, the district superintendent and Board of Ordained Ministry must determine if the provisional member is effective in ministry. The annual conference definition of effectiveness in ministry should also be given to the provisional member to ensure an understanding of the criteria by which they will be assessed.

The Role of the Board of Ordained Ministry

Boards of Ordained Ministry may consider the following as they carry out supervision of provisional members:

- Develop guidelines outlining the provisional process and expectations of the provisional members, Board of Ordained Ministry and district superintendent. These can then be given to provisional members and district superintendents, who will then have the same information and clear understandings of expected process and outcomes. This could be given in an orientation session for provisional members and district superintendents to ensure that all have a common understanding of the process.
- Set up a supervision program that will enable the Board of Ordained Ministry to have full information of the probationer and their ministry setting.
- An annual review of the provisional members should be part of the process in order to

make a recommendation to the clergy session for continuance in the process. This might include reports from the provisional member, mentor and district superintendent and an interview or check in.

- Develop teams from the Board of Ordained Ministry to conduct visits to the ministry sites of probationers. These might include the lay members of the board of ordained ministry, who could be available to conduct visits to experience the leadership of the provisional members in a worship experience, hear them preach, or when the provisional member is in an extension ministry or appointment beyond the local church, to observe them in their ministry leadership.

The Role of the District Superintendent

The district superintendent can play a vital role in the growth of the provisional member by ensuring they have full knowledge of the provisional member's ministry setting and observing the provisional member's leadership in ministry. Regular meetings with the provisional members in the district will enhance communication and build relationships that will enable leadership development. Supervision entails holding provisional members accountable for participation in the residency curriculum and district events in addition to responsibilities in their ministry setting. Here are some supervisory recommendations:

- Visit provisional members in the district in their ministry setting and observe them in their leadership role. This visit should be in addition to the charge conference in order to gain an understanding of their leadership style and their relationship to those with whom they serve. Hear the provisional member preach or, in the case of those in extension ministry or serving beyond the local church, observe their ministry.
- Meet with the provisional member one-on-one annually for goal setting to assess the past year, and to learn how the goals were met. Hear issues facing the provisional member and make recommendations when necessary. Share what your assessment of their ministry is and what will be in your report to the Board of Ordained Ministry.
- Hold group meetings with the provisional members in the district and take time to train when there are opportunities. Be clear about expectations; i.e., charge conference reports.
- Before making the final report to the Board of Ordained Ministry, meet with the provisional member and be clear about your assessment of their ministry and your recommendation.

Supervision of Local Pastors

A local pastor shall be under the supervision of a district superintendent . . . ,
(¶316.4, *2012 Book of Discipline*)

Upon completing each year's education and other qualifications, a local pastor who is not a provisional member may be recommended for continuance by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry. The clergy members in full connection of the annual conference may approve continuance of a local pastor after reference to and recommendation by their Board of Ordained Ministry. (¶319.2, *2012 Book of Discipline*)

Supervision of local pastors is the responsibility of the district superintendent and the District Committee on Ordained Ministry. The conference Board of Ordained Ministry votes on the continuance of local pastors after receiving the recommendations from the District Committees on Ordained Ministry. Their recommendation is subsequently sent to the clergy session of the annual conference.

District superintendents supervise the local pastors and appoint their mentors.

The district superintendent also holds the local pastors accountable for meeting the requirements as a local pastor.

The Role of the District Superintendent

District superintendents should meet with local pastors one-on-one annually for goal setting and assessment of the past year's goals. This should include a review of Course of Study work during the past year and plans for completion.

- Assign mentors to local pastors for regular meetings.
- Visit the local pastors in their ministry setting observing their leadership role and style. This visit should be in addition to a charge conference visit.
- Hold group meetings with local pastors, addressing issues and being clear on expectations for assessment of their ministry.
- Make recommendation to the District Committee on Ordained Ministry for the continuance of local pastors. Recommendation should be part of the discussion with the local pastor during the one-on-one meeting.

The Role of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry

- Meet with local pastors annually reviewing their progress in the Course of Study.
- Receive recommendation from district superintendent for continuance of local pastor.
- Determine recommendation to the Board of Ordained Ministry for continuance of the local pastor.
- Be clear concerning requirements and expectations for the ministry of the local pastor.

Supervision should be a positive contributor to the development of the probationer and local pastor and studies indicate when there is trust and open communication between the parties involved the relationship has the strongest impact.

Chapter 6: Making Disciples for the Transformation of the World Project

As part of their requirements for ordination, provisional clergy members are to present a project “that demonstrates fruitfulness in carrying out the church’s mission of ‘making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world’” (see ¶¶ 330.4 and 335 in *The Book of Discipline*).

The Book of Discipline does not prescribe specifics for this requirement, so Boards of Ordained Ministry have flexibility in how to implement it. Following are suggested guidelines for Boards of Ordained Ministry as they prepare project requirements and evaluation standards.

Define the Two-part Goal

The United Methodist mission has two distinct but related parts: “making disciples of Jesus Christ” and “transformation of the world.” The board should clarify:

- **Its definition of “making disciples.”** Does this mean inviting people into a faith commitment? Engaging laypeople in faith-formation activities that deepen their relationship with God and God’s people? Both? Other? Develop a clear statement of definition. Include a Bible verse or two that illustrates the definition.
- **Its definition of “transformation of the world.”** Does this mean advocacy for justice for a marginalized community? A community ministry that improves the lives of neighbors by addressing basic needs, education, safety, child welfare, neighbor relations, or other wellness/wholeness need identified by neighbors or ministry constituents? Intentional Christ-like life practices and commitments that inspire others? Other? Develop a clear statement of definition. Include a Bible verse or two that illustrates the definition.
- **How are the two parts of the mission interrelated?** Develop a clear but brief theological statement. Bible verses that might apply: Is. 58:6-12, Luke 1:46-55, Matt. 22:34-40.

Clarity of Purpose and Processes

The processes the provisional member used to identify and pursue the project are essential focuses of the Board of Ordained Ministry’s evaluation—perhaps more than the “success” of the project.

The following are possible required aspects of the provisional member’s planning and the Board of Ordained Ministry’s evaluation. The Board of Ordained Ministry should develop of statement of its evaluative standards.

- The member’s engagement of others, particularly those who will participate in or benefit from the project, in helping to identify a project.
- The relationship of the project to the ministry goals of the congregation, the conference, or the provisional member.
- The relevance and clarity of the project’s purpose. The Lewis Center recommends that the project and its goal(s) can be expressed through a “so-that statement”: “The formula for a ‘so that’ statement is, ‘We will do X so that Y happens.’ For example, ‘beginning a new choir’ in and of itself is an accomplishment but not necessarily a fruitful one. The question is not, ‘Did you begin a choir?’ but rather, ‘Is the new choir accomplishing the outcome for which the choir exists on behalf of the church’s mission?’” Thus an appropriately stated project may be, “Starting a community children’s choir for the neighborhood latch-key children so that they enter into caring relationships with the church members and learn about Jesus.” The goals should relate to making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

- The project's feasibility. The SMART analysis is one way to frame this:
 - > Specific (and strategic): Answers the questions "who" and "what?" Identifies a relationship to the church's or the individual's ministry goals.
 - > Measurable: Answers the question "how?" The success toward meeting the goal can be measured.
 - > Attainable: The project's goal is realistic and can be achieved in a specific amount of time and with the resources (time, people, funding) available.
 - > Relevant: The goals are aligned with current tasks and projects and focus in one defined area. State the expected result.
 - > Time/Term: The project takes place over an identified time frame, including a target or deadline date. The Board of Ordained Ministry should identify an approximate time frame for the project. Include some flexibility; perhaps six to 18 months. (Leave room for preparation and reporting.)

Contextualization

Projects should be prepared and evaluated in a way that is relevant to the provisional member's appointment—be that in the congregation, extension ministry (elders), or beyond the local church (deacons). Provisional elders and deacons who are appointed to congregational settings will likely plan projects that lead a congregational ministry.

Deacons appointed beyond the local church might design projects that bridge the congregation to the needs of the world. Provisional elders in extension ministry might develop a ministry that enhances the ministry already provided in the appointment setting. Examples:

- A provisional deacon appointed to an agency that helps people find employment might plan a project that trains and deploys church members as mentors and supportive companions for clients.
- A provisional elder in hospital chaplaincy might develop a process for helping families manage the social-service system and connect them to faith-based support groups.

Strategy

The provisional member should be able to:

- List the steps taken toward fulfillment of the project and explain why they chose these steps.
- Identify who they enlisted to participate in helping and why.
- Explain the timeline for the project.
- Describe mid-course evaluations, obstacles, and adjustments.

Reporting/Presentation

What: The Board of Ordained Ministry will need to determine and state the questions the provisional members will need to answer about their project. Possibilities:

- Project's purpose and "so-that" statement
- Strategic steps toward putting the project idea into action
- Provisional member's self-evaluation. How did the provisional member measure achievement of the project's goal? Was the goal achieved? How did they solicit feedback from participants? What feedback did they receive? What did the provisional member learn from the experience (whether they achieved the goal or not) and how will they apply those lessons to their future ministry?

How: The Board of Ordained Ministry will need to determine and state how it wishes the provisional members to report on their projects. Some possibilities:

- Narrative description during the ordination interview
- On-site visit (will the BOM want to interview project participants at such visits?)
- Written report in advance of the interviews. (What questions should the report answer? What is the page length? When is the report due? Will the Board of Ordained Ministry require testimonials?)
- Non-written formats, such as a PowerPoint™ presentation, a video, or a web site. (When would these reports be due? How are they provided or distributed? What questions must these reports answer?)

Communication

The Board of Ordained Ministry should draw up a document, to be distributed to provisional members soon after they are commissioned, that explains specifically what the project entails:

- reiteration of the Disciplinary requirement
- the Board of Ordained Ministry's interpretation of the two-part goal and any supportive Bible verses or other theological foundation
- the Board of Ordained Ministry's standards for evaluation (e.g., what factors will the Board of Ordained Ministry be looking for)
- deadlines
- reporting/presentation requirements

This document can be the same as Board of Ordained Ministry members receive as they prepare to evaluate the projects, or be a part of the Board of Ordained Ministry's internal evaluation instrument. For the sake of clear communication, the Board of Ordained Ministry should be transparent about their expectations and evaluative processes standards for this project.

The Board of Ordained Ministry may consider asking provisional members to submit proposals for their projects for Board of Ordained Ministry advance approval. The Board of Ordained Ministry may prepare a template that describes what the proposals should include. This could prevent misunderstandings about the appropriateness of a project late in the process.

Training

This project can be a very practical learning experience for clergy. Boards of Ordained Ministry may consider adding to the residency in ministry curriculum some training, coaching, and reflection on these projects. Possible approaches:

- Training sessions on identifying, organizing, and motivating volunteers; demographic research; project management; etc.
- Presentation/discussion on strategic planning and how to apply it to the project's development and implementation.
- Presentation from a now-ordained clergyperson on their own project.
- Presentations to and responses from peers in the covenant groups.

Our Mission

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry leads and serves The United Methodist Church in the recruitment, preparation, nurture, education, and support of Christian leaders—lay and clergy—for the work of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.



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