



## 2016 *Book of Discipline*, ¶ 635 – Board of Ordained Ministry

¶ 635. *Conference Board of Ordained Ministry*— 1. Each annual conference at the first session following the General Conference, shall elect for a term of four years a Board of Ordained Ministry. At least six ordained elders and deacons in full connection and, when possible, at least two associate members or ~~full-time~~ local pastors who have completed the Course of Study shall be included as members of the board with voice and vote. Each annual conference shall elect at least one-fifth laypersons, which may include diaconal ministers, and may at its discretion elect further lay members, up to one-third of the membership of the board. All laypersons shall be professing members of local churches in the annual conference. The board membership shall include women and ethnic persons, at least one ordained clergyperson in the retired relationship, at least one ordained clergyperson in extension ministry, and when possible at least one young adult clergyperson in full connection age 35 or younger, and a district superintendent named by the bishop to represent the cabinet. **No District Superintendent or extended cabinet member shall be the chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry.** Two-thirds of the members who are elders shall be graduates of seminaries listed by the University Senate.

a) Members shall be nominated by the presiding bishop after consultation with the chairperson of the board, the executive committee, or a committee elected by the board of the previous quadrennium, and with the cabinet. To ensure adequate board membership, consultation shall include an evaluation of the workload of the board in meeting disciplinary and annual conference responsibilities. Vacancies shall be filled by the bishop after consultation with the chairperson of the board. An elected board member may serve a maximum of three consecutive four-year terms. The chair of the Order of Deacons, the chair of the Order of Elders, and the chair of the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members shall be members of the Board of Ordained Ministry (§ 1c) and its executive committee.

b) This board shall be directly amenable to the annual conference, notwithstanding its organizational relationship within any other program or administrative unit of the annual conference. The annual conference council on finance and administration shall recommend adequate administrative funds for the board and its staff in light of its workload.

c) The board shall organize by electing from its membership a chairperson, registrars, and such other officers as it may deem necessary. A vocational discernment coordinator may be named to coordinate the candidacy mentoring process. The board shall designate its executive committee, which shall include elders, deacons, and laity. The board shall organize in such manner as to care for its responsibilities, including the needs of certified persons, diaconal ministers, local pastors, deacons, and elders. The organization of the board shall include a committee to fulfill the governance responsibilities for diaconal ministers (see *The Book of Discipline*, 1992, ¶¶ 301-317 and 734) and shall provide for certification in specialized ministry careers under the guidelines of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (see ¶ 1421). The board may include in its organization a division of deacons and a division of elders.



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- d) Each annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry shall establish a Conference Relations Committee of at least three persons to hear requests for discontinuance of provisional members, involuntary leave of absence, administrative location, involuntary retirement, or other such matters as may be referred to them by the board of ordained ministry. District superintendents shall not serve on the Conference Relations Committee.
- e) To ensure maximum contact with and support of persons in appointments beyond the local church, the board shall maintain relationships with all general agencies that have responsibility for persons in such appointments.
- f) The board shall meet at least once prior to its meeting at the time of the annual conference session and may set a deadline prior to annual conference for transacting its business.
- g) The board shall select from its own membership an official representative to serve as a member of each district committee on ordained ministry, which shall function as subcommittees of the board.
- h) The board shall provide orientation for new members, including distribution of any available written guidelines.

### 2. The duties of the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry shall be:

- a) To assume the primary responsibility for the enlistment and recruitment of ~~ordained clergy~~ **ministerial leadership for our churches and other ministry settings** by working in consultation with the cabinet and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to study and interpret the ~~clergy ordained, licensed, certified, and assigned ministerial leadership~~ needs and resources of the annual conference, with due regard to the inclusive nature of the Church. It shall, with the assistance of the local church committee on pastor-parish relations, conference agencies, and every ordained, **licensed, certified, and assigned leader** of the conference, enlist women and men of all races and ethnic origins for ~~the ordained~~ **ministry as a vocation** and guide those persons in the process of education, training, and ~~ordination~~ **discernment of the most appropriate path for their ministry, recommending colleges and schools of theology listed by the University Senate, licensing school, and other approved educational opportunities**. Persons recruited should have an understanding of and appreciation for persons of different racial and ethnic heritages.
- b) To renew a culture of call in the church by giving strategic leadership to annual conferences, districts, congregations, campus ministries, camps, and other appropriate ministries, especially among youth and young adults
- c) To seek from a school of theology information about the personal and professional qualities of an applicant for provisional membership or of a provisional member; provided, however, that the applicant or member consent to the provision of such information.
- d) To receive annual reports on the progress made by each ministerial student enrolled in a theological school and to record credit for work satisfactorily completed.



- e) It shall require a transcript of credits from each applicant before recognizing any of the applicant's educational claims. In case of doubt, the board may submit a transcript to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry for evaluation.
- f) The board shall annually appoint and train a sufficient number of mentors in each district in consultation with the district superintendent.
- g) To guide the candidate for ordained ministry who is not enrolled in a theological school and who is pursuing the Course of Study as adopted by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.
- h) To examine all applicants as to their fitness for the ordained ministry and make full inquiry as to the fitness of the candidate for: (1) annual election as local pastor; (2) election to associate membership; (3) election to provisional membership; and (4) election to full conference membership.
- i) To provide all candidates for ordained ministry a written statement on the disciplinary and annual conference requirements for the local pastor, provisional, and full membership.
- j) To interview and report recommendation concerning: (1) student local pastors; (2) certified candidates for ordination as deacons; and (3) certified candidates for ordination as elders.
- k) To assign a board member to serve as liaison to retired clergy in the conference.
- l) To interview applicants and make recommendation concerning: (1) changes from the effective relation to a leave of absence or retirement; (2) return to the effective relation from other relations; (3) honorable location; (4) readmission of located persons and persons discontinued from provisional membership; (5) sabbatical leave; (6) medical leave; (7) appointment as a student; (8) termination; and (9) changes to or from less than full-time ministry. The board shall keep a record of these changes and the reason behind them and place a copy in the permanent records of the annual conference maintained by the secretary of the conference.
- m) To ensure confidentiality in relation to the interview and reporting process. The personal data and private information provided through the examinations of and by the Board of Ordained Ministry will not be available for distribution and publication. There are occasions when the Board of Ordained Ministry would not report privileged information, which in the judgment of the board, if revealed in the executive session of clergy members in full connection with the annual conference, would be an undue invasion of privacy without adding measurably to the conference's information about the person's qualifications for ordained ministry. However, it is the right of the executive session of the clergy members in full connection with an annual conference to receive all pertinent information, confidential or otherwise, related to the qualifications and/ or character of any candidate or clergy member of the conference.



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- n) To be in consultation with the bishop through the chairperson or the executive committee regarding transfers. This consultation is to be at the bishop's initiative and, where possible, to take place prior to transfers into the annual conference.
- o) To provide support services for ~~the ordained minister's~~ **all those in ministerial leadership, including ordained, licensed, certified, and assigned, to provide** career development, including personal and career counseling, continuing education, formation in servant leadership and continuing spiritual growth in Christ, assistance in preparation for retirement, and all matters pertaining to clergy morale. In providing such support, the board, in cooperation with the cabinet, shall give training and guidance to each local committee on pastor-parish relations regarding its work and role.
- p) To work with and support the Order of Deacon, ~~and~~ the Order of Elder, **and the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members (see ¶ 323)**, including receiving reports, offering financial support, and coordinating ~~the Orders'~~ **these groups' activities** with the continuing formation offerings of the board. The board may delegate continuing formation responsibility to the ~~Orders~~ **groups** by mutual agreement, with final approval, evaluation, and budgeting remaining with the board.
- ~~q) To work with and support the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members (see ¶ 323), including receiving reports, offering financial support, and coordinating their continuing formation.~~
- q) ~~¶~~ To provide a means of evaluating the effectiveness of ~~ordained ministers~~ ministerial leaders in the annual conference (¶ ¶ 604.4, 350). Suggested guidelines will be provided by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Division of Ordained Ministry. In cooperation with the cabinet, the board shall develop standards of effectiveness for ~~clergy~~ **ministerial leaders, whether ordained, licensed, certified, or assigned**, serving as pastors of congregations in that annual conference.
- r) ~~§~~ To interpret the high ethical standards of ordained ministry set forth in the Discipline and to study matters pertaining to character (¶ 605.7).
- s) ~~§~~ To recommend to the full members of the annual conference for validation special ministries for which members seek appointment. The appointment to such ministries is the prerogative of the bishop and the cabinet.
- t) ~~¶~~ to provide continuing support and management of consecrated diaconal ministers using the policies described in ¶ ¶ 301-317 of the 1992 Book of Discipline.
- u) ~~¶~~ To care for the administration of professional certification established by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry through (1) enlisting and recruiting clergy and laity to become certified in Christian education, music, youth, evangelism, and other areas established by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; (2) determining whether applicants meet the standards established by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; (3) to recommend



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to the annual conference board and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; (4) to renew or discontinue professional certification biannually based on a review of their ministry; and (5) to report annually to the annual conference for publication in the conference journal a roster of all persons certified in professional careers for which they have received certification, including places of service address.

v) ~~w)~~ To report annually to the annual conference for publication in the conference journal a roster of all persons certified as Lay Ministers.

w) ~~x)~~ To administer the portion of the Ministerial Education Fund for use by the annual conference in its programs of enlistment, basic professional educational aid, continuing formation, ethnic ministry and language training, and professional growth of ordained ministers. Priority shall be given to scholarships for seminary students preparing for ordination.

x) ~~y)~~ To cooperate with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and assist in: (1) the interpretation of current legislation concerning ordained ministry; (2) the interpretation and promotion of the Ministerial Education Fund; (3) the promotion and observance of Ministry Sunday; and (4) the supplying of a record of all information, recommendations, and action on each candidate for ordained ministry after each session of the annual conference; (5) the promotion and addition of standards required for certification in specialized ministry careers.

y) ~~z)~~ To promote in the annual conference and/ or jurisdictional conference a system of financial aid to ministerial students. A conference transferring a person with less than three years of active service into another conference may require reimbursement either from the person or from the receiving conference for outstanding obligations for theological education financed through conference funds.

z) ~~aa)~~ To report in a timely manner any change in the conference relationship of a clergy member of the conference to the conference board of pensions.

3. The board shall elect a registrar and such associate registrars as it may determine; one such associate registrar to be given responsibility for candidacy, including giving leadership to the training and guidance of mentors in each district. A staff executive may be named by the board to fulfill the functions of registrar.

a) The registrar shall keep full personnel records for all candidates for ordained ministry under the care of the board, including essential biographical data, transcripts of academic credit, instruments of evaluation, and, where it applies, psychological and medical test records, sermons, theological statements, and other pertinent data.

b) Pertinent information and recommendations concerning each candidate shall be certified to the annual conference in duplicate; one copy of this record shall be kept by the registrar and one copy shall be mailed after each conference session to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. The registrar shall forward an acknowledgment of transfer to the pastor of the local church where each newly elected provisional and associate member held membership.



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- c) The registrar shall keep a record of the standing of the students in the Course of Study and report to the conference when required. This record shall include the credits allowed students for work done in accredited schools of theology, in approved Course of Study schools, or Course of Study correspondence.
  - d) The registrar shall file in the bishop's office for permanent record a copy of circumstances involving the discontinuance of provisional membership or termination of the local pastor status.
  - e) The records and files of the Board of Ordained Ministry are kept on behalf of the annual conference and shall be maintained under guidelines provided by the General Council on Finance and Administration in consultation with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the General Board of Pensions.
4. Administrative costs of the Board of Ordained Ministry shall be a claim on the conference operating budget. The Board of Ordained Ministry shall have direct access to the conference council on finance and administration in support of its program.