Chapter 10 | Diaconal Ministry

For more information, contact GBHEM’s Director of Deacon Ministry, Provisional Membership and Certification at deacons@gbhem.org or (615) 340-7375.

Diaconal Ministers

- Lay people called to serve in ministries of specialized service in and on behalf of the Church
- Serve within congregations, charges or cooperative parishes, church-related agencies, ecumenical agencies or ministries that extend the witness and service of Christ's love and justice in the world
- The United Methodist Church no longer consecrates new diaconal ministers; about 200 diaconal ministers still serve under appointment. The BOM provides support, encouragement, accountability and management of status and changes in status for diaconal ministers.
- The BOM provides continuing support and assistance for consecrated diaconal ministers using the policies described in ¶301-317 of the 1992 edition of The Book of Discipline). (¶635.2t)

Diaconal Ministers and the BOM

- The BOM should ensure time for the continuing education and professional growth of diaconal ministers (¶315-317, 1992 The Book of Discipline)).
- Diaconal ministers file an annual report with the charge conference, District Superintendent and BOM that includes:
  - Information about how the diaconal minister has fulfilled his/her call to diaconal ministry
  - Continuing education accomplished in that year
  - Plans for continuing education and spiritual formation in the upcoming year

Diaconal Ministers and the Annual Conference

- Have both voice and vote as lay members in the Annual Conference where their church membership is held
- May serve as a lay person on boards, commissions or committees of the Annual Conference and may hold office
- Eligible for election as lay delegates to General, jurisdictional or central conferences.
- Shall have an annual opportunity provided by the BOM to meet with the bishop and representatives of the Cabinet (¶309, 1992 The Book of Discipline)

Transfer of Conference Relationship (¶312, 1992 The Book of Discipline)

- Transfers between conferences must be reported by the bishop and the secretary of the Annual Conferences involved on the official transfer form that is available from the bishop's office.
• The diaconal minister consults with the bishop and appropriate district superintendent in both conferences before accepting a new position.

• The diaconal minister then writes to the receiving bishop requesting transfer and sends copies of the request to the two conferences’ BOMs and the sending bishop.

• The receiving BOM sends a recommendation of transfer to the receiving bishop.

• If the transfer and the service appointment are approved by the receiving bishop, he/she sends the Official Notice of Transfer to the sending bishop, who responds with the request for transfer of the diaconal files.

Changes in Conference Relationships

• Diaconal ministers seeking a change in conference relationship shall make a written request to the BOM

• The BOM may approve leaves according to ¶313, 1992 edition of The Book of Discipline

• Diaconal ministers may enter retired relationship by their own request or by action of the members of the Annual Conference upon the BOM’s recommendation

• Retired relationship may be taken upon reaching the age of 62, or after 20 years of service. Every diaconal minister who reaches the age of 72 by July 1 shall automatically be retired at the Annual Conference session after that date.