

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.