

**FLOURISHING CLERGY PROJECT**  
**IOWA CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
**EIGHT YEAR ASSESSMENT**

**Polity Directive**

**2016 Book of Discipline**

**349.3**

Every clergy person shall also engage in a six-month process of personal and professional assessment and development every eight years. The process will be designed and implemented by the Cabinet and Board of Ordained Ministry for each annual conference in consultation with the Chairs of the Orders of Deacons and Elders and Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members. The process shall include both a formal review and an in-depth renewal opportunity, such as a retreat or series of coaching and mentoring sessions.

- a) The formal review shall include a self-evaluation, metrics appropriate to the ministry settings to which clergy are appointed, observations or trends from the previous eight years, and reviews or interview with people close to the ministry of the clergy being reviewed.
- b) The in-depth renewal opportunity shall be designed by the cabinet and Board of Ordained Ministry in a form appropriate to the conference. The renewal opportunities shall include a combination of elements, such as: time apart for prayer and reflection, reflection with a covenant group, meetings with a coach, celebration of ministry milestones, and discernment of future ministry challenges and opportunities. When deemed important to help in the evaluation process, psychological assessments may be requested by the cabinet or Board of Ordained Ministry.
- c) The district superintendent shall review the portfolio and provide the initial report of the eighth year review of effectiveness. When recommended by the district superintendent, a meeting with the bishop and members of the cabinet may be held.
- d) Each annual conference shall develop and initial plan for such assessment by January 1, 2020.

**Purpose**

The Flourishing Clergy Project recognizes the connectional, as well as, individual qualities and characteristics of all clergy under appointment in the Iowa Conference of the United Methodist Church. The Flourishing Clergy Project provides an individualized process for personal and professional development for all clergy in the Iowa Conference to become better equipped as fruitful leaders who “inspire, equip, and connect communities of faith to cultivate world-changing disciples of Jesus Christ.”

## **Process**

Clergy are invited to participate in an eight-month process of personal and professional through assessment, reflection, development and renewal. This process will cultivate flourishing clergy in a culture of faith, fruit and fire honoring both our call into ministry and our commitment to ongoing formation.

## **Steps**

### 1. Invitation

- The Bishop will write a letter of personal invitation to each cohort into this 8-month process.
- Clergy will determine if there are compelling reasons to opt in or out of the flourishing clergy project at this time.

### 2. Orientation - Month 1

There will be a two-day retreat that will include time to:

- Reflect on your previous eight years of ministry - including, but not limited to: reviews, continuing education units, trainings and certifications
- Reconnecting with you - your personality traits, goals, core values, etc.
- Remembrance and Renewal of Call (if on file, we will share the call statement that was part of your entry into ministry)
- Exploration and Personalization of Project options
- Engagement of 6 focus areas
- Develop a covenant on how you as a cohort will work with and support one another through a process of encouragement, reflection and accountability. (Covenant examples will be provided by your 8YA team, Cabinet and BOOM Exec.)

After the retreat, you will work with your cohort (as was outlined in your covenant) to develop your Flourishing Plan.

Within 30 days, you will present your 6 month plan to your Director of Clergy and Leadership Excellence or designee for review.

### 3. Working the Plan - Months 2-7

### 4. Flourishing Retreat - Month 8

- A one-day retreat with your cohort to celebrate your portfolio (what you did, where you went, what you learned, how you are going to continue living into your project.)
- At a set apart time with your Conference Superintendent, you will review your portfolio
- At each Annual Conference, there will be affirmation and recognition of those who have complete the Flourishing Clergy Project.

5. Many will choose to take 4 weeks of continuing education or spiritual growth leave as outlines in Paragraph 350.3 of the BOD 2016.

## **APPROACH**

**Incarnational Approach:** In John 1.4, we read these words: “What came into being through the Word was life, and the life was the light for all people.” (CEB) While these words speak specifically about Jesus as Word made flesh, they also can be used to inform an incarnational approach to the Flourishing Clergy Project.

A working definition of an *incarnational approach* for the Eight Year Assessment is where the process itself asks the question - “In what ways can this process meet the clergy person where they are?” This will be more about aligning a plan to the needs and goals identified by the person going through the process so that the process itself can meet the clergyperson where they self-identify.

### **Past-Present-Future Orientation:**

In Revelation 1.8, we read these words: “I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

As we journey alongside the clergyperson, we recognize we want to guide a process that is informed by one’s past 8 years in ministry as a comprehensive look at how they and others see our ministry. Where we have been informs how we are living/leading in the present; as this is assessed through a 360 lens, these observations can ultimately guide the clergyperson to identify their preferred future so that those overseeing the process can provide necessary resources to reinforce the clergy person's 8YA goals.

### **Values-Based/Strengths-Based/Spiritually-Driven/Wesleyan Ethos :**

In Micah 6:6-8, it is written: “With what should I approach the LORD and bow down before God on high? Should I come before him with entirely burned offerings, with year-old calves? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with many torrents of oil? Should I give my oldest child for my crime; the fruit of my body for the sin of my spirit? He has told you, human one, what is good and what the LORD requires from you: to do justice, embrace faithful love, and walk humbly with your God.”

At the end of the day, the goal of the Flourishing Clergy Project is to come alongside each clergyperson in a holy and holistic way so that we become the very best we we can be. This means, our approach is about being true to who you are (your core values, your call - your purpose, your identity - your order, and your personhood - as a beloved child of God), how you best thrive (strengths, gifts, passions), and how you stay connected to God (Compassion, Formation, Challenging, Liberator, Loving)

## Areas of Assessment

- I. Work/Play - Vocation/Recreation
  - A. Vocation and Call
  - B. Play: Adding Rest, Recreation and Sabbath to our theology of work.
- II. Physical/Wellness
  - A. Personal Care - Share your practices related to personal health and self-care (physical, spiritual, emotional, financial)
  - B. Annual Exam and Evaluation - what is needed for those entering different ages and stages; partnering with Wespeth
- III. Spiritual/Theological
  - A. Spiritual Formation: Reflection on our devotional life - How do your spiritual disciplines guide your ministry?
  - B. In the local church setting, you are responsible for preaching and teaching. Consider how your sermons make Christian teaching relevant to people's daily live and reflect thorough preparation.
  - C. Preaching - In what ways are you developing your preaching style so that you can be priestly, prophetic, pastoral or partner.
  - D. Passionate Worship -
  - E. Leading others in extravagant generosity
- IV. Learning/Mindfulness
  - A. Lifelong learning is part of the Wesleyan heritage. As clergy, not only do we seek to be lifelong learners, but our goal is to also raise up education/learning in our discipleship ministry.
    1. In what ways have you selected educational opportunities and ministry practices that you are actively teaching a Christian/Wesleyan perspective?
    2. In what ways do you expand and share your knowledge of the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church?
    3. How effective are you in your written and verbal communications?
- V. Social/Communal
  - A. How do you maintain a balance between your personal/family time and ministry demands?
  - B. Share your involvement in any peer or covenant groups and their value to your ministry.
  - C. In what ways are you connected outside of the church in a "third" place in community (other than home and church).
- VI. Connectional/Network (Missional)
  - A. Spiritual Gifts
  - B. Leadership Development

- C. Service/Outreach locally, nationally and globally
- D. How do you engage UM outreach ministries such as UVIM, GHGM, UMCOR, GBCS
- E. In what ways do you reach out the the unchurched, nominally church, once churchd in your community?
- F. Are you comfortable discipling others? Who is discipling you? Are you able to raise up disciples to disciple others? (intentional faith sharing ministries)
- G. In what ways do you maintain a collegial relationship with other clergy? (connectional, ecumenical, interfaith)

