

EXPLAINING THE UNITED METHODIST WAY OF QUALIFYING AND ASSIGNING CLERGY

Some Central Ideas and Procedures

- I. Key Concepts
 - A. Annual Conference Membership of Clergy
 - B. Covenant to Appoint
 1. Every conference member in good standing receives an appointment
 2. Every church receives a pastoral appointment
 - C. Itinerancy
 1. Every conference member covenants to serve where appointed
 2. Every church covenants to accept the Bishop's appointment of a pastor
- II. Assumptions
 - A. The process of qualifying clergy is adequate through the Board of Ordained Ministry
 - B. The Appointive Cabinet has knowledge of the local church profiles/needs, of the gifts and graces of the Annual Conference clergy members, and of Annual Conference needs adequate to make constructive matches
 - C. The Appointive Cabinet works with integrity to meet the requirements of the profiles, following our "Values of Appointment Making"
- III. Process of Qualification of Full Members of the Annual Conference
 - A. Candidacy for Ministry
 1. Local church membership for at least two years, and active in leadership for two years
 2. Recommendation of the local church S/PPRC
 3. Recommendation by the charge conference
 4. Work with a mentoring clergy, including psychological screening, vocational testing and counseling
 5. Approval by the District Committee on Ministry
 - B. Order and Annual Conference Membership
 1. Continuing candidacy for at least two years
 2. Recommendation by the District Committee on Ministry
 3. Application to and approval by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry for Probationary Membership and Commissioning to either Elders or Deacons Orders.
 4. Minimum of three years (maximum of eight) probationary membership under appointment and supervised by a District Superintendent. (During this time the Board of Ordained Ministry often requires additional testing, remedial work, or specific programs of continuing education.)

IV. Ongoing Evaluation and Support

A. Evaluation

In a sense, evaluation is an ongoing process. Some key formal components are:

1. The process of leading to the semi-annual advisory form sent by the local S/PPRC to the District Superintendent
2. The process leading to the annual advisory form sent by the pastor to the District Superintendent

B. Support

There are many structures of support in which the local church and the Annual Conference participate together. Some of these are:

1. Health and Medical Expense Program
2. Pension Program, including various disability and insurance programs
3. Covenant Fund
4. Ministerial Education Fund (Continuing Education)
5. Formal and informal groups for growth and learning
6. Maternity/Paternity leave
7. Leaves of absence
8. Renewal or sabbatical leave

C. Peer-evaluation in a supportive context

In the Rocky Mountain Conference, we have in place a Professional Discernment Process in which clergy have the opportunity to reflect on his/her practice of ministry with peers. Participation is highly encouraged

D. District Superintendents conduct supervisory interviews annually with each appointed leader

V. What determines whether an elder (pastor) stays or moves from an appointment

- A. The advice of the S/PPRC to the Cabinet, including but not limited to the advisory reports.
- B. The advice of the pastor to the Cabinet, which again may include evaluation material beyond the alternative of the form
- C. The evaluation of the pastor by the Appointive Cabinet
- D. The evaluation of the local church by the Appointive Cabinet
- E. Emerging needs or goals of the annual conference which may be served better by an appointment change

VI. What determines whether a deacon stays or moves from an appointment

- A. The discernment of the S/PPRC, in consultation with the Cabinet and deacon
- B. The discernment of the deacon, in consultation with the Cabinet and S/PPRC.