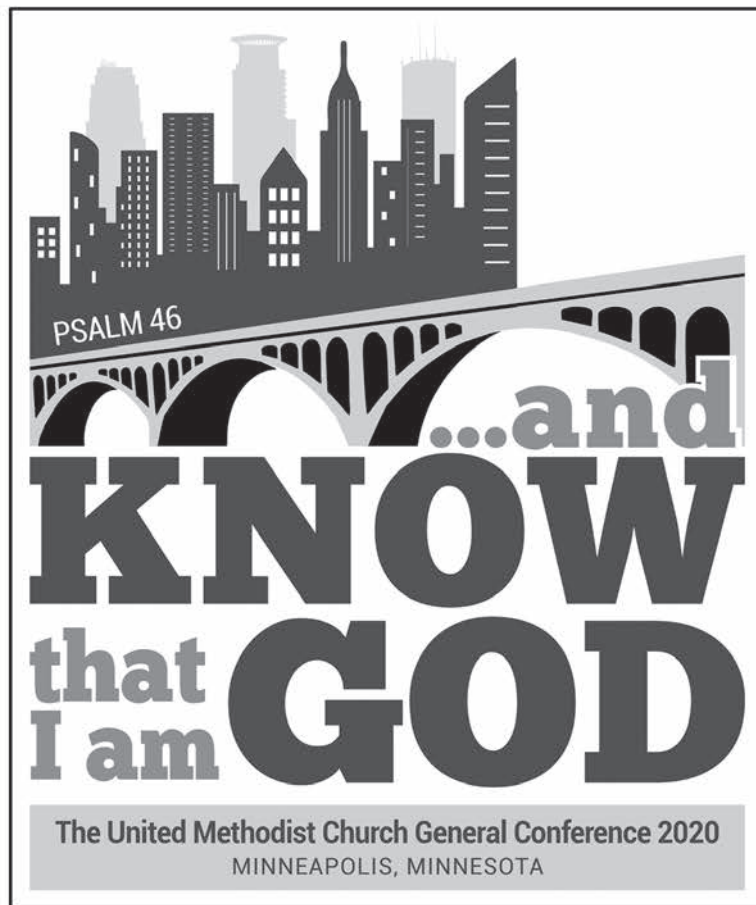


Daily Christian Advocate



Volume 2, Section 2 Reports and Proposed Legislation

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Ordained Ministry

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Volume 2

Nashville, Tennessee

Report of the 2017-2020 Study of Ministry Commission Report

The Charge to the 2017-2020 Study of Ministry Commission

The 2016 General Conference authorized the 2017-2020 Study of Ministry Commission to undertake its work based on the charge stated in Petition 60506-MH-NonDis, which proposed the following issues for further exploration by the commission:

1. Articulate a theology of ordained ministry for The United Methodist Church in consultation with the Committee on Faith and Order;
 2. Explore and clarify the relationship between the ministry structures in the 2016 *Book of Discipline* and a possible *General Book of Discipline*. The commission should provide guidance and language in the development of text for the *General Book of Discipline*, Chapter Two—“The Ministry of the Ordained”—and Chapter Three—“The Superintendency.” Members of the commission shall be on the writing committee for the *General Book of Discipline*;
 3. Further examine the formation and education of clergy, working toward a systemic model that embraces both Master of Divinity and Course of Study work and continues into provisional membership and the early years of ministry. The commission should also reflect on the possibility of allowing annual conference Boards of Ordained Ministry to consider persons for ordination who have completed advanced degrees (beyond the bachelor’s degree) in fields related to ministry when those degrees are integrated with basic graduate theological studies at an approved seminary;
 4. Examine funding sources and patterns for theological and ministry education and formation;
 5. Explore student debt accumulated by United Methodist seminary graduates and ways to reduce costs.
- a. The commission, in consultation with the Committee on Faith and Order, submits the study document entitled *A Sacred Trust: A Theological Framework for Ordained Ministry in The United Methodist Church*. This document is included below in this report.
 - b. Previous commissions and General Conferences have determined that our current approach to licensing, ordination, and conference membership does not align well with our history, polity, and theology of ordained ministry—and as a result, our sacred work was hindered.
 - c. In answering this call, through this offering, the commission intends the following:
 - Dialogue—initiate a churchwide conversation about the meaning of ordination;
 - Educate—Explore the deep historical and theological texture embedded in our tradition and our current practice of ministry;
 - Lead—Offer a pathway forward by wrestling with present and past conceptions of ordained and licensed ministry and present legislation to the 2024 General Conference that will bring the church’s polity related to licensed and ordained clergy into alignment with the church’s understanding of a theology of ordained ministry.
 - d. By carefully examining and courageously expressing the scriptural, ecclesial, practical, and theological groundings of ordained ministry, the church claims and celebrates the best of our Wesleyan tradition.
2. Explore and clarify the relationship between the ministry structures in the 2016 *Book of Discipline* and a possible *General Book of Discipline*. The commission should provide guidance and language in the development of text for the *General Book of Discipline*, Chapter Two—“The Ministry of the Ordained”—and Chapter Three—“The Superintendency.” Members of the commission shall be on the writing committee for the *General Book of Discipline*.
 - a. At its first two meetings, the commission provided input for chapters two and three.

Organized by the 2016 resolution and pursuing this charge, the commission is pleased to offer this report.

Observations and Analysis

1. Articulate a theology of ordained ministry for The United Methodist Church in consultation with the Committee on Faith and Order.

- b. A team representing the commission attended working sessions preceding each meeting of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters (SCCCM) in collaboration with the Committee on Faith and Order to continue the work on drafting the *General Book of Discipline* as mandated by General Conference.
 - c. Through consultation with and concurrence by the commission, the SCCCMM recommends to General Conference to defer until 2024 to present a draft of the *General Book of Discipline*.
 - d. Legislation submitted by the SCCCMM for 2020 includes the commission as a part of the *General Book of Discipline* work for the 2021-2024 quadrennium. Future intent is to continue this partnership and consultation with the SCCCMM. Both the SCCCMM and the commission are submitting legislation to continue the commission's consultation to the *General Book of Discipline*, should the commission be approved for the 2021-2024 quadrennium.
3. Further examine the formation and education of clergy, working toward a systemic model that embraces both Master of Divinity and Course of Study work and continues into provisional membership and the early years of ministry. The commission should also reflect on the possibility of allowing annual conference Boards of Ordained Ministry to consider persons for ordination who have completed advanced degrees (beyond the bachelor's degree) in fields relevant to ministry when those degrees are integrated with basic graduate theological studies at an approved seminary.
 - a. The commission's work on articulating a theology of ordained ministry must precede decisions about what the church requires for the education of clergy. The commission's further examination of the formation and education of clergy is inherent in the *A Sacred Trust* document, which is part of the commission's full report.
 4. Examine funding sources and patterns for theological and ministry education and formation.
 - a. The commission recommends adoption of petition #20206 (ADCA p. 514), which states: "All United Methodist annual conferences receiving Ministerial Education Fund allocations shall submit annual reports to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry detailing how the Ministerial Education Fund allocations were spent."
 5. Explore student debt accumulated by United Methodist seminary graduates and ways to reduce cost.
 - a. Through a partnership and grant funded by the Lilly Endowment, Inc., the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and Wespeth Benefits and Investments are doing extensive work on financial literacy and clergy debt. A grant team has been created to monitor the levels of financial literacy for clergy and the level of clergy debt that impacts clergy on a regular basis. Through this grant, numerous projects and educational opportunities have been developed to assist clergy in strengthening their skills in the area of financial leadership and alleviating clergy debt.
 - b. One project developed through this grant that has had great impact is the Excellence in Clergy Leadership Scholarship. Five hundred twenty-one students have been awarded funds over the last three years. Students who received scholarships in the first year reported collectively avoiding \$760,338 in additional debt.
 - c. Because of the extensive work this grant team is doing, the commission chose to focus their efforts on other issues that were more in line with the capacity and expertise of commission members. The grant team is covering the question of clergy financial literacy and debt using far more resources and expertise than are available to the commission for this area of work.
 - d. For a more complete report of this project, please see the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry's report.
 - b. This directive should continue to be considered by the 2021-2024 commission as the theology of ministry document continues to develop.

Conclusion and Request for Further Study

Focused and sustained conversation throughout The United Methodist Church will be needed in the next quadrennium as the church responds to the study document for *A Sacred Trust: A Theological Framework for Ordained Ministry in The United Methodist Church*. This document immediately follows below after the commission's recommendation for further study.

The 2017-2020 commission requests renewal for the 2021-2024 quadrennium. The resolution to renew the commission includes details related to the charge to the commission, the scope of its task, and its funding (see ADCA p. 1061, Petition # 20661, Ordained Ministry – Non-Disciplinary Resolution).

A Sacred Trust

A Theological Framework for Ordained Ministry in The United Methodist Church

Study of Ministry Commission, July 2019

Summary

Tasked by the 2016 General Conference “to articulate a theology of ordained ministry for The United Methodist Church,” the 2017-2020 Study of Ministry Commission (SMC) seeks to stimulate a conversation that deepens the church’s theological self-understanding in realizing God’s mission for a transformed world. Previous commissions and General Conferences have determined that our current approach to licensing, ordination, and conference membership does not align well with our history, polity, and theology of ordained ministry—and as a result, our sacred work is hindered. As resurrection people, we yearn for revival of the Wesleyan movement, and we offer this articulation in prayerful hope for the renewal of the church amidst the current denominational crisis.

The Study of Ministry Commission affirms the sacramental, incarnational, and prophetic nature of ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church. Rooted in a Wesleyan understanding of grace and holiness, we view ordained ministry as an embodied posture of service and an enfolded participation in the sublime movement of Spirit—in pursuit of a transformed world. The SMC has defined *ordination* as follows:

Ordination is a visible and outward sign of the sacred trust of clergy leadership. It is a gift of God, given to Christ’s church through the power of the Holy Spirit. Ordination is a holy act of the church universal that empowers clergy, who manifest an inward and spiritual grace, to represent the divine initiative at work in the community through the life of apostolic ministry. As a sacramental offering, rooted in our common baptism and one Table, ordination bears witness to the mission of God at work in the world.

In this light, we offer three key claims for dialogue, analysis, and implementation: (1) Ordination initiates elders and deacons into a posture of service and rule of life known as “order”; (2) Because of the sacramental nature of ordination, both deacons and elders bear responsibility for nurturing and leading the sacramental life of the church; (3) By ordaining rather than licensing clergy, the church reclaims its historical and theological position in relation to the ecumenical church.

We recognize that none of these represent the current practice of ministry in The United Methodist Church. The church’s mission will be well-served by the decoupling of ordination and conference membership and recovering the distinctive ministry of “traveling” and “local” ordained ministers (deacons and elders). We are convinced that, through deep theological engagement with one another, we can discover a new future together filled with the hope and promise of the apostolic tradition that we have inherited. At the end of this paper, we will offer questions that can guide the church’s conversation to discover together how our history and theology can push us into an imaginative rethinking of our posture and practice of ministry in relationship to the missional exigencies of the world in which we live today.

Preface

We inherit a beautiful and complicated tradition, gracefully broken and always experiencing renewal. Birthed in a lay-driven movement, The United Methodist Church constantly seeks the Spirit’s refreshing to become more relevant, vibrant, and dynamic. While we do not always exhibit the best of who we yearn to be; through conferencing, councils, and commissions, the church strives to be the people of God, a baptized community, the body of Christ. In pursuit of this vision, Study of Ministry Commissions have been charged by General Conferences to wrestle with our Wesleyan way of ordained, licensed, and lay ministry. For decades, these commissions have prayerfully examined the identity, shape, and scope of United Methodist ministry in order to more faithfully steward God’s mission for the church. Through constant reflection, the church strives for Christian perfection.

For the sake of renewed mission and ministry, the 2016 General Conference has directed this commission “to articulate a theology of ordained ministry for The United Methodist Church.” We have been called to make more deliberate and visible the embedded and hidden principles presently at work. Over the centuries, the practice of ordained ministry in Methodism has changed, morphed, and evolved in an organic manner that does not always systematically integrate our rich theology, history, and polity. However well-reasoned these changes have been—many times emerging from urgent missional necessity—they

have not been altogether cohesive, coordinated, and comprehensive; sometimes they have had unanticipated downstream consequences.

For example, the expansion of *licensing* has fundamentally altered the meaning of the sacraments and the sacramental nature of ordination, conference membership, and the orders. Licensing local pastors, who are not ordained, once was an exception to ensure that sacraments are available to all Christians. Over time, as congregations have increasingly expected clergy leadership to minister to the membership of the local parish rather than the mission field of a circuit, and as the cost of providing adequate compensation to elders has increased, this exception has increasingly become the norm. In effect, licensing has become a functional response to a missional challenge. This response, however, is not the only available option: For instance, elders could travel in circuits with responsibility for sacramental administration for a cluster of congregations. Such a practice, which has historical precedent, addresses a missional need while honoring more fully an apostolic understanding of the sacraments. In recent years, instead of deploying elders, the church has licensed pastors.

As one reads *A Sacred Trust: A Theological Framework for Ordained Ministry in The United Methodist Church*, one will observe the absence of theological discussion of licensing. This omission is not accidental. We maintain that licensing does not emerge from the theological and historical texture of our Wesleyan heritage. It is our intent here, in pursuit of traditioned innovation, to further the mission of The United Methodist Church that emerges from our historic commitment to advanced theological education and mutual accountability.

With that being said, local pastors are gifts to the church who offer the “means of grace.” We celebrate the faithful ministry that local pastors offer to the church every day. They are called and bear fruit. In fact, in some conferences, local pastors are *not* truly “local”; they are included in the pool of itinerant ministers (without the guarantee of an appointment) that the cabinet considers when making appointments through the conference. Moreover, we particularly honor the ministry of local pastors in racial/ethnic congregations and rural churches, who have driven transformational ministry in the face of extraordinary odds.

Observing the misalignment between our history, polity, and theology of ordained ministry, the General Conference called for an intervention to correct this misalignment. In answering this call, through this offering, this Study of Ministry Commission intends to:

1. **Dialogue**—initiate a theological conversation about the meaning of ordination;
2. **Educate**—explore the deep historical and theological texture embedded in our tradition and our current practice of ministry;
3. **Lead**—offer a pathway forward by wrestling with present and past conceptions of ordained and licensed ministry.

By carefully examining and courageously expressing the scriptural, ecclesial, practical, and theological groundings of ordained ministry, we claim and celebrate the best of our Wesleyan tradition.

True to both our spiritual and intellectual heritage, it is our prayerful hope that this document, *A Sacred Trust: A Theological Framework for Ordained Ministry in The United Methodist Church* (2019), will evolve and eventually come alongside *By Water and the Spirit: A United Methodist Understanding of Baptism* (2008) and *This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion* (2004) as teaching resources for deeper formation. To some extent, it completes the threefold model set out in the pivotal ecumenical text, *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* (Faith and Order Paper 111, 1982).

A Sacred Trust emerges from decades of Study of Ministry commissions and countless conversations, meetings, dialogues, and papers. Although our work here is descriptive, critical, and constructive, we are neither *creating* a theology of ordination nor revamping the ordination process. In articulating a theology of ordained ministry, we seek to give voice to what is already happening in our midst as we participate in the *Missio Dei* (mission of God). Toward this end, in this conversational document, we will engage the following questions:

- What is ordination and how do we define it?
- What is our theology of ordination? And why does it matter?
- What are the major historical insights that contribute to theological affirmations?
- What do we observe as the key challenges to our theology and practice of ordination?
- How might we proceed and offer constructive proposals for change?

Believing that transformational Christian leaders play a key role in the church’s renewal, here we flesh out historical and contemporary implications of Methodism’s theological orientation to ordained Christian leadership.

First, by way of introduction, we provide a *definition* of ordination in the Wesleyan way. In the second section, we unpack this definition and probe “The Meaning of

Ordination.” Next, in the third section, we explore “The Action of Ordination” and what it accomplishes in the life of the ordinand and the life of the church. Then, in the fourth section, we examine “The Nature of Ordained Ministry” as a process of calling, equipping, forming, and sending. The fifth section harkens back to our past in view of what lies ahead, considering “How Our History Informs Our Theology and Future Polity.” Finally, in section six, we offer some concluding remarks and pose some questions that might further advance the conversation.

To be sure, as we articulate a theology of ordination for The United Methodist Church—through the Wesleyan lens of Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason—new practical considerations with ecclesiastical and organizational implications will emerge. While noting that theology and practice are “always already” intertwined, it is not our intent to settle the organizational implications with immediate legislative changes. Instead, through an iterative and collaborative process, we hope the ensuing conversation will point toward a clear pathway for the 2024 General Conference.

Theology enlivens the church by providing language to the sublime mystery of God that we experience in Christian community. When we give voice to Spirit work, we issue a summons to participate in this divine gift. Because ordination is an extension of baptism, ordained ministry deepens the Christian call to world-transforming mission. In this vein, the theology of ordained ministry articulated herein expresses our hope for a church that has a clear self-understanding, and that is both well-positioned and actively engaged in relevant, significant mission. The church entrusts ordained ministers, who live in a clergy covenant of trust and mutual accountability, to lead this task—indeed it is a “sacred trust.”

I. Introduction

Ordination is a visible and outward sign of the sacred trust of clergy leadership. It is a gift of God, given to Christ’s church through the power of the Holy Spirit. Ordination is a holy act of the church universal that empowers clergy, who manifest an inward and spiritual grace, to represent the divine initiative at work in the community through the life of apostolic ministry. As a sacramental offering, rooted in our common baptism and one Table, ordination bears witness to the mission of God at work in the world.

When United Methodists gather for *revival* at annual conference, the service of ordination inspires the church. A fresh wind of Spirit blows, and God breathes life upon the communion of saints during divine worship. The joyous festival of song, dance, examination, and Word all

point toward that moment when the presiding bishop utters the collective prayer of the people: “Almighty God, pour out your Holy Spirit.” Profound hope resides in this simple petition. Through words that remember the baptismal and Communion invocations, as the gathered assembly of laity and clergy empowers its ordinands for the office and work of deacons and elders, the church creates itself anew.

The church yearns for transformation. Christians in the Wesleyan tradition seek always to experience a change of heart and life that ushers both the church and world more into the likeness of God. Ordained clergy offer unique leadership that stewards this transformation. During the annual conference, the service of ordination ritually marks the importance of this work, and the trust and expectations the church places in its clergy. As such, ordination is a defining moment in this worship service, the life of the church, and the life of the ordinand—mysterious, sacred, sublime—and still, very ordinary. Yes, it is in the everyday, the quotidian, that this mystery is inhabited. The Spirit comes close and unites the called, the community, and the holy One who calls each of us by name.

The church participates boldly and humbly in God’s mission in the world. This mission is not ours to create. Rather, we are called into the gift and the work, and our prayer is sung: “Finish, then, thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be” (Charles Wesley, “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling,” 1747). Our task is to serve as means of grace—even to mirror the grace of Jesus Christ—so that the entire creation might know itself as beloved of God. All Christians are sent, as the other Wesley preached, “to spread scriptural holiness over the land” (John Wesley, “Scriptural Christianity,” 1744). On the job, in our families, and throughout the world, followers of Christ bear witness to the extravagant love of God.

“The people” constitute the church as the community of the baptized. Every Christian is called to ministry by virtue of baptism. (The word *laity* is derived from *laos*, meaning “the people.”) *By Water and the Spirit* explains: “This ministry, in which we participate both individually and corporately, is the activity of discipleship . . . grounded upon the awareness that we have been called into a new relationship not only with God, but also with the world. . . . This is the universal priesthood of all believers” (§56). This community of the baptized is regularly renewed and nourished at the Table as it seeks to fulfill God’s mission in the world.

The church exists for the sake of the world’s transformation, and as such does not stand apart from the world. Laity, in particular, live in this intersection of the world and church, and in so doing they lead and participate in ministry through the church’s “common life of

gratitude and devotion, witness and service, celebration and discipleship” (2016 *Book of Discipline* [BOD], ¶ 126). Their “Christ-like examples of everyday living as well as the sharing of their own faith experiences of the gospel” demonstrate how “all Christians are called to minister wherever Christ would have them serve and witness” (¶¶ 127, 128). As such, the “people called Methodists” have maintained that the church cannot exist without the ministry of the laity. The rapid growth of the Methodist movement, at its origins and in the present day, occurs in large part because the church is lay-driven and Christ-inspired.

From the laity, some are called to ordained ministry as clergy. While laity and clergy alike participate in the church’s ministry, ordained ministers are called to a new relationship to the church and a new manifestation of lifelong leadership. Ordained clergy are baptized Christians who surrender themselves to a “rule of life,” known as an order, which frames their service to the church. In fact, the word *ordination* itself comes from the root word for “order” (*ordo*). At its best, this service imitates the humility and downward mobility modeled in the ancient Christian hymn recorded in Philippians 2:6-11. Shaped by the church, ordained clergy help to shape the church’s contemporary mission and ministry. Initiated into this rule of life and a mode of accountability known as conference membership, the ordained serve God by engaging in an ongoing process of spiritual formation as they steward the renewal of the church through the ministries of Word, Sacrament, Order, Love, and Justice.¹

Complicated Concepts and Terminology

In The United Methodist Church, although both deacons and elders are ordained into orders, elders uniquely bear responsibility for the ministry of order, which is often reduced to the administration of a congregation’s life. This duplication of terms, in some ways, muddles a concept that carries layers of meaning, and unwittingly conflates identity and function.

Historically, the “order” emerged in the monastic traditions of the first millennium of the church. Those persons who belonged to a particular order followed a unique organization of their lives in an intentional community that defined an essential purpose for its existence in a unique way; defense of the faith, solidarity with the poor, evangelism, and education are examples. The orders provided distinctive lenses through which its members understood their relationship to the church and the world; preached the gospel of Jesus; and ensured, sustained, and extended the apostolic mission and sacraments through-

out the world as “servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries” (1 Corinthians 4:1 ESV).

To be ordained into an order today connects elders and deacons with an ancient tradition that extends into contemporary communities that share a common lens and way of life. While elders shepherd the temporal and spiritual life of a local church, both deacons and elders—as initiands in a rule of life grounded in the apostolic tradition—order the ministry of the denomination. Through their unique identities, both elders and deacons order the *whole* life of the church to ensure that the work of the Holy Spirit animates the life of the church and that Jesus Christ is presented over and over again through its work within and beyond its doors. This understanding of order, therefore, cuts across all parts of ministry.

Not only is the term *order* charged with mixed meanings, but also the concept of *clergy* has evolved over time and in different contexts—and now carries sometimes confusing and even contradictory historical traces. For example, during the decades between 1940 and 1968, The Methodist Church eliminated the positions of “local elder” and “local deacon.” These persons had completed their education and were ordained, but because they did not “travel,” their membership was held in the quarterly or district conference. After 1968, the status of “lay pastor” was established, only to be quickly replaced by the “licensed local pastor”: nonordained persons who have the responsibility to celebrate sacraments in their appointments and have conference membership (with only a very few specific limitations), even when their first year of education in the Course of Study has not yet been completed.

To compound our confusion even further, the term *pastor* has morphed from a historic *role* that was carried out by both clergy and laypersons who led churches into an official *clergy status* in the annual conference. Historically, the ordained were called “preachers” and “ministers,” not “pastors.” Exhorters preached in local settings, and stewards cared for congregations, while preachers itinerated, celebrated sacraments, and performed weddings. It is into this rich, and even winding, tradition that this paper intervenes. The conversation continues—hopefully with added clarity and insight.

In deciphering our rich past, we call attention to two historical focal points: the eighteenth-century separation of the Methodist movement in the Americas from the Church of England, and twentieth-century mergers that have given rise to the present-day United Methodist Church. We trace the complex relationship of *licensing*, which originated as a function of the nation-state, to *ordi-*

1. The 2016 *Book of Discipline* includes “Service” as a function of both elders’ and deacons’ ministries. We believe *service* is a posture of ministry rather than a function of it (see below).

nation, which has always been an ecclesial act. As Methodism has evolved from a frontier movement to a conglomerated denomination, our understandings of *clergy*, *traveling*, and *local* have reshaped the practice of ministry.

However malleable and obscured our theological articulation has been, today **we affirm the sacramental, incarnational, and prophetic nature of ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church.** Rooted in a Wesleyan understanding of grace and holiness, we confirm that ordained ministry is an embodied and enfleshed participation in the sacred and sublime movement of Spirit in pursuit of a transformed world. Just as God brought order to chaos in Creation, through ordination, God's Spirit orders the church, invites the baptized community into renewed and relevant ministry, initiates ministers into a "rule of life," and propels us all into the new creation. Out of the significance of this gift of Spirit, we make three constructive theological assertions:

1. Ordination initiates elders and deacons into a posture of service and rule of life known as "order";
2. Because of the sacramental nature of ordination, both deacons and elders bear responsibility for nurturing and leading the sacramental life of the church;
3. By ordaining rather than licensing clergy, the church reclaims its historical and theological position in relation to the ecumenical church.

Ordination matters because, through clergy leadership, the church strives for transformation as a sacramental community. Deeply rooted in its ancient and apostolic nature, the church has established ordination as essential to its identity as a community grounded in Word and Sacrament. As Christians, we envision a new day that is already dawning but not yet fully among us. Ordained clergy, through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, guide the church in living into this future.

II. The Meaning of Ordination

Ordination Is a Visible and Outward Sign of Sacred Trust

John Wesley, following his Anglican heritage, believed that the sacraments are an "outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace" (*The Book of Common Prayer*). In the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, the outward signs of water, bread, and wine, signify (or point to) another spiritual reality that is manifested through their celebration among the assembly of the faithful. Ordination, though not a sacrament for United Methodists, is sacramental. It is an outward sign that points to a new, spiritual reality. Ordination is an effective

sign of the Holy Spirit's action empowering the ordained for an office and work of ministry in the church. Said another way, ordination is a means of grace. Because God is faithful and responds to the prayer of the church that has surrounded, supported, and formed a candidate over time, ordination confers the grace it signifies.

Ordination establishes a sacred trust between the holy Trinity, the church, and the ordained. The church entrusts the ordained to be stewards of the Word, of the sacraments, and of the apostolic tradition. The act of ordaining confers on the one being ordained this sacred trust, initiated by the Holy Spirit through call and confirmed by the church through a thorough formational process. The call to ordained ministry is a call to a particular kind of life, given over to the ways of God lived out through the ministries of the church. Ordination establishes a new identity and way of being in which the ordained assumes a new posture among the baptized, a posture of service that is shaped by the order into which one is ordained.

The sacred trust of ordination is shaped throughout the process leading up to ordination, formed through the historic examination of candidates before the annual conference, and established by the covenant between the ordained and the church in the general examination of the ordination liturgy. After the candidates for ordination are presented, the assembled people of God declare their assent and pledge on behalf of the whole church to "uphold them in their ministry" (*2017-2020 Ordinal*, 19).

The ordained are identified as "coworkers with all the people of God" and reminded that they are "called to serve rather than to be served." They are asked to affirm faith in the triune God and confidence in the holy Scriptures. They are charged to be faithful in prayer and in the spiritual disciplines as a way of patterning their lives after the teachings of Christ and leading the people of God to "seek peace, justice, and freedom for all people." They are asked to pledge loyalty to The United Methodist Church, "accepting and upholding its order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline," and submitting to mutual accountability with peers and supervisors alike, with the reciprocal expectation that they will be sustained and built up "in prayer, study, worship and service under the rule of life" of the order into which they are ordained (*Ordinal*, 19-20).

The laity and the ordained are thus bound to one another in this covenant of sacred trust; in the prayer of ordination, God blesses and affirms that covenant as the bishop, on behalf of the whole people of God, asks the Almighty to "pour upon the *candidate* the Holy Spirit for the office and work of a deacon [or elder] in Christ's holy church" (*Ordinal*, 25, 28).

Ordination Is a Gift of God to Christ's Holy Church Through the Power of the Holy Spirit

As a church, we believe that God hears our prayers and responds. In every age and time, the people of God need faithful leadership to navigate the tension between the reign of God announced by Christ and the petty fiefdoms of this world in which human will and desire still hold sway. The church in every age prays to ask God for leadership in such a time as this. God provides this leadership by calling forth candidates for ordained ministry, who are then formed, equipped, ordained, and sent to lead the church in bearing witness to the reign of God in the midst of a world so desperately needing to experience Christ's saving grace. In the ordination service, the people of God recognize and receive this gift. The prayer of ordination is the people's prayer, led by the bishop, who lays hands on the head of the ordained and calls upon the power of the Holy Spirit. While the sign-act of ordination is led by the bishop, the action of ordaining is God's work, the fulfillment of a call prayerfully discerned by both candidate and church over time (*Ordinal*, 6).

Ordination makes known some of the many ways the Holy Spirit has already been acting and continues to act in an ongoing way through the life of both the ordained and the church, signifying, not only our utter dependence upon God for the outcome of the church's prayer, but also our trust that the Holy Spirit can and will do things "far more abundantly than all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20 ESV). Ordination represents an outpouring of the trinitarian life through the church to the ordained who are equipped to lead and guide the church in the shared apostolic ministry of being taken, blessed, broken, and given for the life of the world.

Ordination Is a Holy Act of the Church Universal

As United Methodists, we believe that the grace of God is at work in us long before we become aware. By God's initiative, revealed most fully through Christ, grace frees us from the power of sin and leads us to live a life ever more fully reflective of God's loving intention. Because ordination is an outward and visible sign, it signifies an inward and spiritual grace. This grace is exhibited through a divine call, discerned mutually by both an individual and the church, and manifested through ministries that bear the fruit of the Spirit as the ordained continue to grow into a fuller expression of God's loving intention, being "made perfect in love" (2016 *BOD*, Wesley's Historic Questions, ¶ 336.3). Through grace, the ordained are formed in the ways of God to live a disciplined spiritual life in communion with all the faithful, and in ordi-

nation are sent to bear the fruit of the vine in which they abide (John 15:5).

As part of the church universal, The United Methodist Church shares a sacramental life with other communions and expressions of Christ's body, mutually recognizing God's work in baptism and Christ's presence in Holy Communion through one another's ministries. Similarly, the orders of ministry in The United Methodist Church are ecumenically recognizable, with distinctive roles for deacons, elders, and bishops, which is an important value in our ecumenical relationships and mutual ministry agreements, including those that honor and recognize that we are in full communion. Ecumenically, the ordained serve as ambassadors who represent "the divine initiative and expresses the connection of the local community with other local communities of the universal Church" (*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry [BEM]*, "Eucharist," §29). What ties us together ecumenically also unites us in the global mission and witness of the church whose expressions may vary, but whose sacramental life is unified by the Spirit at work through our common apostolic ministry.

Ordination Empowers Clergy to Represent the Divine Initiative at Work in the Community Through the Life of Apostolic Ministry

To be apostolic is to be connected by faith and history with the witness of the apostles. The apostolic witness of the church stands in continuity with the good news of God revealed in the person and presence of Jesus the Christ (Mark 1:15) and made known by the power of the Holy Spirit at work through those whom Christ formed, equipped, and sent to be his witnesses "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8 NIV). Following the trajectory of the apostles' ministries, the church's apostolic witness is relentlessly missional. The church itself is a sent community on the move, called to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 120). As *Sent in Love (SIL)* states it:

Maintaining the apostolicity of the church requires that a concern for continuity in the essentials of faith and practice be matched by an equal concern for an outward reaching missional perspective. From this perspective we are mindful that encountering the world with the gospel calls the church to ongoing reform and renewal of its life, a "traditioned innovation" that allows the church to express the life-giving truth of the gospel in fresh ways as the faithful encounter new people in new places (¶ 56).

Led by the Holy Spirit, the ordained help the church articulate and embody the apostolic witness of the present availability of the kingdom of God, which Jesus announced through incarnational, life-changing relationships and prophetic, world-shaping missional engagement.

Just as the church is called out of the world (the Greek word for church is *ekklesia*, meaning “to be called out”) to be formed in Christlike living, so the ordained are called out of the church to be formed with a unique identity among the people of God. In order to represent the good news of the Kingdom that Jesus proclaimed at work in the world, the ordained serve as a sign representing Christ’s persistent presence and promise both in the church, and through the church in the world. To re-present is to present Jesus Christ again in the world in all aspects of one’s work and life.

The work of laity and clergy together is a mutually shared expression of Christ’s ministry for the life of the world. The spiritual gifts identified in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4 are clearly named as being given to the church “for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12 NRSV). They are given to be formational, to draw the church into a unity of faith and knowledge, to spur it into a greater maturity expressed as “the measure of the full stature of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13 NRSV). From the scriptural witness, it is clear that the spiritual gifts, including proclamation, evangelism, prophecy, teaching, exhortation, generosity, and leadership are given to the laity, the people of God. Any member of the body may, therefore, share in preaching, teaching, leadership, and ordering the life of the church; and every member has a share in the sacramental life of the church. While the tasks of ministry are shared and are not exercised exclusively by the ordained, ordained clergy lead these ministries in a representative way.

From within this general ministry of all believers, God calls, and the Church authorizes some persons for the task of representative ministry. . . . The vocation of those in representative ministry includes focusing, modeling, supervising, shepherding, enabling, and empowering the general ministry of the Church. Their ordination . . . is grounded in the same baptism that commissions the general priesthood of all believers (*By Water and the Spirit*, ¶ 57).

Just as an individual disciple may represent Christ through everyday life and witness, so the ordained also are given a distinctive representative ministry by God’s loving initiative. The ordained humbly offer themselves to serve as a focal point through whom Christ chooses to represent himself in ways that reveal his grace at work

in the life of the baptized and that transform the assembly into his body, empowered to represent his ministry in the world. This sense of representation is deeply consonant with our theology of the Table in *This Holy Mystery* (THM), “It [Holy Communion] is a re-presentation, not a repetition, of the sacrifice of Christ. . . . Nourished by sacramental grace, we strive to be formed into the image of Christ and to be made instruments for transformation in the world” (THM, 8-9).

After the Resurrection, Jesus told his disciples, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you,” then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:21-22 NRSV). Apostolic authority comes from our participation in the mission of Christ, to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19 NRSV). The ordained are given authority by the church to represent Christ at Table and Font, to help the church see and know Christ who presides over every baptism and eucharistic feast, and who relentlessly leads the church out through ministries of compassion and justice in the world. The authority conferred by the church to administer the sacraments and to lead the church in its ministries is not to be understood as power over anyone or anything, but rather as the holy privilege of one carrying out the apostolic ministry of leading the people of God in becoming who they are by the grace of God.

As a Sacramental Offering, Rooted in Our Common Baptism and One Table, Ordination Bears Witness to the Mission of God at Work in the World

Together with all the people of God, the ordained are formed by the life of Christ made known at the Table. It is there that we “offer ourselves with praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice in union with Christ’s offering for us,” and there we pray that the Holy Spirit may be poured down upon us, and upon the gifts of bread and wine. “Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood” (UMH, 10). Every time the assembly gathers to celebrate the Eucharist, we offer ourselves to God with Christ and pray for the Holy Spirit to make us Christ’s body, an offering to the world in which we live (THM, 9). When ordained elders and deacons lead the peoples’ prayer together at the Table, they represent this dual movement of offering ourselves to God, who then offers us back to the world, the transformed ones who become agents of transformation. Together, the two orders appropriately and helpfully lead the people in the eucharistic movement of turning toward God in worship and turning toward the world in service.

The church, transformed by the life of Christ made known in the sacraments, itself becomes the bearer of the mission of God at work in the world. We believe that, “the life of the church is a sharing in the love of the triune God. The mission of the church is to communicate that possibility to a world ravaged by sin and in need of salvation” (*SIL* 17, ¶ 40).

It is God’s mission in the world, that both calls the church into being and makes it into a transformed instrument of transformation. The laity and the clergy together are the priesthood of the faithful who embody this mission, each with distinctive roles in carrying out the mission of the church. Reflecting on the marks of the church affirmed by the second ecumenical council in the fourth century CE, *Sent in Love* (¶ 16) identifies four convictions regarding God’s saving love that give life to our United Methodist sense of what it means to be God’s holy church in the world.

1. The saving love of God empowers a missional community (called to be apostolic).
2. The saving love of God is meant for all people (called to be catholic).
3. The saving love of God is transformative (called to be holy).
4. The saving love of God creates community (called to be one).

This fourfold movement helps us see the mission of God through the church’s confession and suggests that the work of the clergy and laity together can be seen in its trajectory. So, we can say that: United Methodist clergy are called to be sent, to lead the church to embody its apostolic witness to the reign of God breaking forth in the world. United Methodist clergy are called to be inclusive, leading the church to welcome all people into a loving, life-changing relationship with the living God. United Methodist clergy are called to a life of personal and social holiness, pilgrims on a grace-filled journey to be made perfect in love in order to lead the church in becoming a grace-filled agent of transformation in the world. United Methodist clergy are called as part of a community of love and forgiveness to lead the church to embody Jesus’ prayer that “they may be one, as we are one” so that the world may come to believe (John 17:21-22 NRSV).

Ordination bears witness to the mission of God at work in the world. The two orders of clergy offer complementary and distinctive gifts that can help the church embody the mission of Christ for the life of the world in ways that enable the church to be transformed even as it is serving as an agent of transformation in the world.

The authority given to deacons and elders should never be exercised as “power over” anyone or anything. It is always held in common with the church. Throughout his ministry, and expressly at his Last Supper, Jesus adopted the posture of one who serves (Luke 22:27), washing his disciples’ feet and setting an example (John 13:15) of service for them and for us. At ordination, deacons and elders are given a yoke of obedience, represented by the stole, that identifies their ministries as ministries of service. Service, while a posture assumed by all disciples of Jesus Christ, is expressed distinctively by the ordained according to the rule of life that orders their ministries as elders or deacons. Service, therefore, cannot be a function of either order of ministry but is rather the posture by which the ordained exercise their leadership in relationship with the *laos*, the people of God, empowering the church to serve the mission of Christ in the world.

III. The Action of Ordination

The goal of discipleship is the formation of a Christ-like character, using all of one’s energy and power to serve God’s will and to be about Christ’s mission on earth. By practicing the spiritual disciplines and being shaped by the means of grace, the baptized learn to trust in God’s ways. This formation in the ways of God is critical for those called to ordination, who willingly give themselves over to the work of God in and through the church.

Through ordination, the Holy Spirit empowers, and the church authorizes. These complementary movements are embodied in the liturgy. There are two sign-acts that accompany ordination. In the first, the bishop lays hands on the ordinand’s head and prays, “Almighty God, pour upon *Name* the Holy Spirit for the office and work of [a deacon/an elder] in Christ’s holy church” (*Ordinal*, 25, 28). By this action and through these words, we trust that the Holy Spirit who has formed, shaped, and equipped the candidate, now acts through the bishop in the company of the faithful. By laying hands on the head of the ordinand, the bishop is participating in the apostolic tradition passed down through the generations of church leadership (2 Timothy 1:6). The practice of laying hands on the head of the ordained is an ancient witness that is understood to bear a gift that empowers the ordained. It is, therefore, an essential part of the act of prayer in ordination (*Ordinal*, 9).

The second sign-act in the ordination service is the laying of the bishop’s hands upon the hands of the ordinand. In this second sign-act, the church authorizes the newly ordained to “take authority” as a deacon or elder. Whereas the first sign-act (the laying of the bishop’s hands upon the head) points to the work of the Holy Spirit in or-

daing, the second sign-act, the laying of hands upon the hands of the ordained, is an act of the church, authorizing the newly ordained to carry out his or her work among the people (*Ordinal*, 8). As such, ordination

confers a new role in the life of the church as well as authority for leadership in specific forms of ministry. The new role . . . is claimed in relation to Christ and his call to leadership and service among the baptized for the life of the world. The authority given is exercised in stewardship of the mysteries of the gospel and of the church's mission to the world. (*Ordinal*, 7)

Ordination Initiates a Person into an Order

As the ordained are given a new role in the life of the church, they are also initiated into a specific way of being, shared by an accountable community known as the "order" into which they are ordained.

The sign of ordination . . . like baptism, should be understood not as a graduation, but as an *initiation* into the way of life of the order into which the candidates are being ordained. That way of life is governed by the vows attending each ordained office. These vows, in turn, specify how these set-apart ministers, together with sisters and brothers in their order, are called and held accountable to live out their baptismal vocation within the life of the church for the sake of the world. (*Ordinal*, 6-7)

The *Ordinal* describes the ministries of deacons and elders as a "rule of life and work." This rule of life serves as a lens that frames the way those ordained to each order see and approach ministry in the church and in the world.

Once initiated into a particular life of ministry, "those who are ordained make a commitment to conscious living of the whole gospel and to the proclamation of that gospel to the end that the world may be saved" (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 303.1). Thus, ordination to the same or equivalent order is not repeatable (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 303.5), and "those who enter into it dedicate their whole lives to the personal and spiritual disciplines it requires" (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 303.3). To be ordained is to be formed in a new identity, giving one's whole life over to serve Christ and his kingdom through a particular relationship with the church recognized through the orders of ministry. The orders of deacons and elders, therefore, have a significant responsibility for both ongoing formation and mutual accountability.

The Order of Deacons

At ordination, deacons are given authority by the church "to proclaim the Word of God and to lead God's people in ministries of compassion and justice" (*Ordinal*, 25). Deacons' ministries serve as a bridge linking the church to the world and the world to the church. The office and work of a deacon is described this way in the bishop's examination of candidates for ordination:

A deacon is called to share in Christ's ministry of servanthood, to relate the life of the community to its service in the world, to lead others into Christian discipleship, to nurture disciples for witness and service, to lead in worship, to teach and proclaim God's Word, to assist elders and appointed local pastors at Holy Baptism and Holy Communion,² to interpret to the church the world's hurts and hopes, to serve all people, particularly the poor, the sick, and the oppressed, and to lead Christ's people in ministries of compassion and justice, liberation and reconciliation, especially in the face of hardship and personal sacrifice. This is the rule of life and work of a deacon. (*Ordinal*, 23-24)

Biblically, the order of deacons arose in Acts chapter 6 to address an expressed need for ministries of compassion and justice, caring for those in need and helping the marginalized encounter the full embrace of Christian community. Seven people were identified and called out, including Stephen. They were said to be "of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (Acts 6:3 NRSV). They came before the apostles, "who prayed and laid their hands on them" (Acts 6:6 NRSV), thus ordaining them to the office and work of a deacon. In Acts 7, Stephen bore witness to the Holy Spirit's work outside of expected channels, modeling the role of the deacon standing on the edge of the community of faith and, through faithful searching of the Scriptures, calling it to find its larger witness in relationship with the world around. His faithful witness represented the love of Christ in word and deed and stands as a reminder of the vulnerability of those who are called to serve.

Deacons are ordained to a ministry of Word, Compassion, and Justice. Shared in common with elders, the ministry of the Word includes the faithful proclamation and teaching of the Word in a way that enables the church to engage the world with a heart of compassion and a prophetic longing for God's justice to prevail. With a Wesleyan passion for social holiness, deacons help the

2. Given the stated theology of this document and the recommendation we make to return to the Wesleyan and ecumenical standard that pairs sacramental authority with ordination, we believe that the *Ordinal* would require revision. Our theology, as noted below, also makes space for deacons to share full sacramental authority with elders.

church love the world with the compassionate heart of Jesus and confront the powers of the world in a way that brings “good news to the poor, . . . release to the captives, . . . recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free” (Luke 4:18 NRSV; see Isaiah 61:1). Deacons represent Christ’s work among the marginalized and lead the church in ministries that cultivate the life of the Kingdom.

In Greek, *diakonos* indicates the role of a table servant, one who both sets the table and makes room around it for all. The role of deacon is, therefore, sacramental, though distinct from the role of the elder. The current practice of deacons assisting elders in the administration of the sacraments includes extending the church’s sacramental life, making space for all, especially the poor and the marginalized, including those who present themselves in contexts other than the church’s regular assembly. Our theological understanding creates space for deacons, by virtue of their ordination, to administer the sacraments.

The Order of Elders

At ordination, elders are given authority “to preach the Word of God, to administer the Holy Sacraments and to order the life of the Church” (*Ordinal*, 28). The ministry of the elder stands in continuity with the apostolic tradition. The office and work of an elder is described this way in the bishop’s examination of candidates for ordination:

An elder is called to share in the ministry of Christ and of the whole church: to preach and teach the Word of God and faithfully administer the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion; to lead the people of God in worship and prayer; to lead persons to faith in Jesus Christ; to exercise pastoral supervision, to order the life of the congregation and the connection, to counsel the troubled, and declare the forgiveness of sin; to lead the people of God in obedience to Christ’s mission in the world; to seek justice, peace, and freedom for all people; and to take a responsible place in the government of the Church and in service in and to the community. This is the rule of life and work of an elder. (*Ordinal*, 26)

From the very beginning, Jesus called, equipped, and sent disciples to bear witness to the Kingdom life he proclaimed (Matthew 10:1-8). As witnesses of the Lord’s life and resurrection (Acts 1:21-26), the apostles (Greek: those who are sent) led the early believers into a particular kind of shared life devoted to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread together, and prayer (Acts 2:42).

As part of his apostolic ministry, Paul established churches everywhere he went and appointed elders

(Greek: *presbyters*) to continue the apostolic ministries of the churches in his absence (Acts 14:23). As pastors with hearts and lives formed after the heart and life of Jesus Christ, the good shepherd (John 10:11), elders assemble, guide, equip, and send the people of God to embody the Kingdom life “on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10 NRSV). The ministry of the elder is to lead the church in becoming more Christlike for the sake of the world he came and died to save.

Elders are ordained to Word, Sacrament, and Order. Shared in common with deacons, the ministry of the Word has historically been understood as a preaching ministry, proclaiming the reality and the presence of the kingdom of God available through Christ and his teaching. Elders carry the responsibility of helping the people of God understand and interpret the Word of God in ways that bear witness to the eternal truths of God revealed in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit in every age and season. With the sacraments serving as central practices of Christian faith and life, forming the identity of both individuals and the assembly as part of the body of Christ, it is the elder who has primary responsibility to help the church embody its sacramental life in a way that forms it as an ongoing witness to Christ’s life-transforming power in the present age. A significant emphasis of the ministry of ordering the life of the church is about creating abundant space so that the work of the Holy Spirit can take place. In ordering the life of the church, the elder is responsible for cultivating a healthy spiritual life among Christian disciples around a Kingdom vision that enables the church to become an agent of transformation in the world.

In the United Methodist tradition, bishops are not ordained to a new order, as they are in many other parts of the ecumenical church. United Methodist bishops are elected from among the elders and consecrated to a new expression of the ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Order. From apostolic times, leaders have been designated to exercise oversight (*episcopé*) in the wider church (1 Timothy 3). One of the principal gifts offered by episcopal leaders (bishops) is “to express and safeguard the unity of the body” (*BEM*, “Ministry,” §23). In the service of consecration for bishops, the ministry of the newly elected is lifted up this way: “You are called to guard the faith, to seek the unity, and to exercise the discipline of the whole church; and to supervise and support the church’s life, work, and mission throughout the world” (*Ordinal*, 59).

IV. The Nature of Ordained Ministry: Called, Equipped, Formed, Sent

Ordained ministers are persons who respond to the call of God and the church and enter into the vocation

that requires the enhancement and testing of their natural and spiritual gifts, knowledge, and skills for the particular work of ordained ministry, a formation of their Christian identity and character, and their willingness to be sent in mission in and to the world. Ordained ministers are called, equipped, formed, and sent.

Called into Ordained Ministry

The Latin word *vocare* means “to call” or “to summon.” A vocation is a form of work for which a person has perceived a sense of calling by God that one feels compelled or driven to fulfill. A call is an internal disposition that pays attention to the work of the Holy Spirit in one’s life. The call of the baptized to general ministry draws a person into a distinctive understanding and practice of life through witness and service, which is formed by a constant commitment to love God, to imitate Jesus, and to live one’s life formed by the gifts one is given through the gospel.

The call of God to ordained ministry is, first, an inward call that asserts that the person is driven by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the gospel and lead communities of faith in the whole ministry of the church. There is no single way in which God calls a person into ordained ministry. Each person who receives a call to ordained ministry will hear or experience God’s affirmation and beckoning differently. According to Wesley, this call of God is confirmed by “marks” that demonstrate one’s love for God, gifts and grace for the work of ministry, and evidence of success in the lives of other people with whom they have ministered (John Wesley, *Address to the Clergy*, 1756).

Second, the call of the church is an outward call that confirms the inward call to the tradition in which the person seeks to live out the inward call. For Wesley, this took place during a “trial” period of at least one year when the candidate was tested while fulfilling work in an appointed circuit (*Address to the Clergy*). Today, confirmation of the outward call of the church occurs through a specific set of steps that move a candidate toward greater clarity about the call to United Methodist ordained ministry. The call to ordained ministry is a call on behalf of and for the whole church; so, on occasion, a candidate will discern that a different conference or even a different denomination may be the best community in which to fulfill her or his call.

A response to a call is only the beginning of a lifelong process of equipping and formation, shaped by the reality of ordination in one’s life. Call may be the motivator into ordained ministry, but equipping and formation are the processes that sustain an ordained minister in what Wesley described as that “incessant labour of love” (*Address to the Clergy*).

Equipped Through Lifelong Learning

As previously stated, gifted leaders are expected to equip “the saints” in order to fulfill the purpose of bringing people and communities to a point of mature faith, this is to say, mature discipleship. Mature disciples would then, according to Ephesians 4:14 (NRSV), have the capacity to discern the “trickery” and “deceitful scheming” of those who would lead them astray, and, most important, participate in building up the body in love.

Both Wesley and Asbury emphasized the importance of equipping preachers and clergy for their work as a fundamental priority. Begun as a list of assigned books to be completed each year, this practice evolved into the Course of Study and then into a seminary education. The underlying presupposition of Methodism’s founders, which has been maintained throughout our tradition, is that clergy require a fundamental understanding of: the world in which they live, the Scriptures, the history and traditions of the church universal, and the practices of ministry. To this end, today’s Course of Study and seminary education offer the minimum necessary to prepare persons for their clergy vocations. The ecclesial expectation is that all clergy will continue to identify areas of growth fulfilled through their commitment to lifelong learning.

Formed Throughout One’s Ministry

In his *Address to the Clergy*, Wesley emphasized the importance of “right intention,” and the ability to love God and neighbor with all one’s soul and strength to such an extent that it “swallow[s one] up, possess[es one] whole, [and] constitute[s one’s] supreme happiness.” The minister is to be an “example of all holy and heavenly tempers, filling the heart so as to shine through the life.” The minister’s life is supposed to be “one incessant labour of love; one continued tract of praising God, and helping [others].”

For the heart to remain full, for ministry to remain “one incessant labour of love,” a person must be sustained by an emotionally and spiritually healthy life. This kind of sustenance requires an ongoing, intentional, lifelong process of formation. Consequently, a person’s call to the vocation of ordained ministry is explored and enhanced, not just during one’s education, but also in the course of spiritual and ecclesiastical formation. This formation takes place during the stages of candidacy and provisional membership prior to being approved for ordination. This takes a significant number of years because the process is designed to assist clergy with learning the information needed to be effective in their appointments, and also forming their identity as an ordained minister, refining their personal and communal spiritual practices,

and integrating what they learn with who they are becoming.

A deep, mature commitment to ministry cannot be sustained without parallel dedications to a life of maturing knowledge and skills, faith and character. It encompasses both an ongoing commitment to intellectual growth and a deeply personal and communal spiritual journey. Both are required to sustain one's call and ministry throughout life. It requires an increasingly full sense of one's connection and accountability to one's order and to the church. It requires a willingness to submit long-term to a deepening, humbling awareness of the presence and sustaining power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God in one's life of missional service.

Sent in Mission to the Church and the World

Because the church universal exists for the purpose of being an agent of God's apostolic mission in and to the world, United Methodist ordained ministers are, by the very essence of their call, sent out into mission. Elders are both sent out in mission through itineracy and lead the church in mission. Deacons identify the type and location of their ministries and are appointed to and lead missional ministries in both the church and world. This is the key to Methodist itineracy.

Matthew 28 and 2 Corinthians form the biblical basis for this understanding. Jesus sent out the apostles with the mandate to make disciples of all nations. They traveled to parts of the world they had never known with the responsibility of making space for, establishing, and building up the body of Christ. Sent out as ambassadors of Jesus Christ, the apostles itinerated throughout Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia.

Wesley's movement of preachers was predicated on the same basis. So Wesley's preachers traveled in two ways. First, they were sent to different parts of England and Ireland and then reappointed, nearly every year, to new locations. Second, they traveled on circuits within the region to which they had been appointed. In U.S. Methodism, the ordained minister who itinerated was known as the "traveling preacher" and the order of elder as "the missional order" in the *Book of Discipline*.

The United Methodist system of itineracy—that of appointing clergy with specific gifts, graces, and skills to churches and ministries with matching missional needs—is designed to enhance the possibilities of sharing the gospel in effective ways. While the system has evolved throughout our history, it is fundamental to a Methodist understanding of the relationship between apostolic mission and ordination.

V. How Our History Can Inform Our Theology and Future Polity

While this document seeks to articulate a theology of ordained ministry, our intent is to spark a much larger conversation about how to restructure and realign our systems of leadership to be more effective in our mission. The models of ministry we have inherited largely arose in a twentieth-century context and are increasingly unsustainable. We are not without hope, however. We believe our history gives us a ready road map for a revival of United Methodism. We can learn much from the historic adaptability of the Methodist movement that can help the church reimagine itself for the future, creating new structures to support ministries with "traditioned" innovation.

Lay-led, Apostolic Ministries

At its origin, Methodism was largely a lay-led movement. The vast majority of Wesley's preachers in Britain, Ireland, and the American colonies were laypersons (including several women). Over time, we have grown to be more clergy-dependent. For example, the key question we always seem to ask with a new church start is about viability, which means, ultimately, the ability to pay a pastor. Why is the ability to pay a pastor the standard for what it means to be church? Historically, the church depended on lay pastors to further its mission, yet the role of lay pastor was replaced by the idea of "local pastor" in the 1976 *Discipline*. Nevertheless, lay pastors still exist in United Methodism as a missional adaptation in central conferences.

- What can we learn from our history to release laypeople to inhabit their own incarnational ministries?
- In what ways can we imagine a renewed emphasis on lay-led apostolic ministries that remain networked with and connected to a sending church?
- What kinds of pathways can we create to support and encourage experimentation and innovation inside and outside local churches (learning from faith partners like Missional Wisdom or Fresh Expressions)?
- What are the best ways for the ordained to support a vital sacramental life shared between a local church and its apostolic expressions?
- What kind of equipping and formational processes would be helpful to create a distinctive Methodist ethos and identity within highly contextualized lay-led apostolic ministries?
- What kind of accountability should be expected for such lay-led initiatives?
- What can we learn from the central conferences about equipping and deploying lay pastors?

Revitalized Circuit-based Ministries

Circuits were Wesley's original organizational structure for itineracy. Circuits were fully adaptable to the American colonies and the new frontier as well. Lay preachers, and then later, ordained clergy were assigned to a logical pattern of locations that facilitated travel and maximized access to the sacraments.

- How might revitalized circuit-based ministries encourage shared missional initiatives in the communities in which they are set?
- How might ordained clergy be deployed to serve collaboratively with circuits to magnify cooperative ministry opportunities among churches?
- What economic models might be used to support collaborative circuit ministries to make the whole system more sustainable?
- How might revitalized circuits bring a sense of being a connectional church closer to the experience of the local church?
- What possibilities might there be for some smaller churches to become centers of Wesleyan discipleship led by lay class leaders with a vital sacramental life cared for through clergy, appointed to serve the local circuit connection?
- How might ordained clergy appointed to circuits ensure a vital sacramental life for lay-led churches?
- How are circuits being used in central conferences?

Revitalized circuits in the twenty-first century could also become centers for formation, cultivating both lay and clergy leadership.

- How might ordained clergy appointed to circuits serve as mentors and teachers in cooperation with seminaries and Courses of Study for the formation and equipping of student pastors in the ordination process?
- How might circuits become formational communities, cultivating a shared ministry consciousness founded on a sense of interdependence among students and resident clergy in formation?
- How might the principles of apprenticeship benefit those in the formational process?
- How might the curricula of seminaries and Courses of Study take advantage of such formational learning communities as part of their teaching, particularly in relation to equipping students in the disciplines of practical ministry?
- In what ways could clergy gifted in teaching be equipped to serve as extension faculty to facilitate circuit-based contextual learning communities?

- How would clergy formation in circuits impact central conferences?

Licensing, Ordination, and the Authority to Administer the Sacraments

The practice of licensing for ministry began in the late 1600s in England when the government decided they needed to have a way to approve or disapprove of particular nonconformist faith groups (meaning simply, *not* Church of England). This innovation started with the state, not the church, and was tied to the ability to perform weddings on behalf of the state. In the U.S., that standard got flipped so that it became the church that issues a license, which the state then uses to determine who is eligible to perform weddings. The idea of licensing clergy in lieu of ordaining them is a twentieth-century innovation, with extraordinary provision made in the 1939 *Discipline*. It was not until 1976 that the status of "local pastor" was normalized, and local pastors were given the responsibility to administer the sacraments in their appointments.

John Wesley did not agree to non-ordained preachers administering sacraments, and the Church of England did not approve of priests celebrating Communion outside the bounds of the church. Lay preachers were never given permission to celebrate the sacraments, with the notable exception of Robert Strawbridge, the Irish lay preacher who immigrated to Maryland. It seems we have built a rather complex and convoluted polity around an *exception*. When Wesley did ordain Whatcoat and Vasey and sent them to the new United States with Thomas Coke, it was for the purpose of making the sacraments available in America, where the ties to the Church of England were severed. It is worth noting that he did not choose to use the exception of Mr. Strawbridge as his blueprint for making the sacraments available. Instead, he chose to break covenant with the Church of England and take upon himself the authority to ordain. For Wesley, sacramental authority belongs with the ordained.

- What would be the implications of returning to the Wesleyan and ecumenical standard of conferring the authority to administer the sacraments at ordination instead of by licensing?
- How might we reframe our understanding of the respective ministries of deacons and elders?
- What is the nature of the covenant and mutual accountability within an order?
- In what ways might deacons and elders adopt distinctive, yet complementary postures in magnifying the sacramental life of the church?

Recovering the Distinction Between Local and Traveling Clergy

In the late 1700s and early 1800s, local deacons and elders who did not itinerate were being ordained. The term *location*, which we still use, meant that a clergy person left the company of traveling preachers, but could still be appointed to a church. Local elders and deacons completed the same educational requirements as traveling deacons and elders. They were also supervised and managed by presiding elders who were always traveling elders.

The reunification of 1939 saw the continued status of local deacon and local elder. The key distinctions were completion of higher levels of education, itineration, and membership in the annual conference. Local clergy did not travel and were members of the quarterly or district conference. Traveling clergy itinerated and were members of the annual conference. It wasn't until the merger of 1968 that the official distinction between local and traveling clergy disappeared from the church. In 1996, of course, the ordained deacon was added as a category of non-itinerating clergy. For a candidate, the distinction between local and traveling clergy may be discerned as an expression of one's call.

In what ways might recovering the distinction between local and traveling clergy help the church:

- stand in continuity with our Wesleyan roots?
- reconnect with our Methodist heritage?
- create greater continuity with our ecumenical partners?
- resolve the dissonance between our theology and practice?
- create greater flexibility in central and missional conferences?
- provide greater opportunities for part-time and bivocational ministries?

Transitional Issues

Looking forward, if the church were to take seriously the lessons we can learn from our history and our theology, we can anticipate significant transitional questions. Among them, we would ask the church to consider:

- What kinds of systemic change would be needed to transition “licensed local pastors” to “ordained local clergy”?
- When should ordination take place? What should be required educationally and formationally for the status of “local” ordination?
 - MDiv or equivalent
 - COS with bachelor's degree

- Formational experience serving in a circuit under the supervision (apprenticeship?) of extension faculty
- Examination and affirmation of the Board of Ordained Ministry
- How would these requirements be understood in central conferences?
- What implications would there be for the curricula of seminaries and Courses of Study?
- How can we best encourage seminary education while still affirming the value of Course of Study to equip local clergy?
- How would local elders or deacons relate to the annual conference?
 - Could associate membership be a possibility? If so, how might it need to change from its current form?
 - How might local ordination affect clergy with limited itineracy?
- How might local clergy serve?
 - A church within a circuit
 - Entrepreneurial ministries with alternative models of sustainability
 - Ministry partnerships
 - Bivocational or part-time ministries
 - What other ways could we imagine?
- With flexibility in appointment models and an emphasis on alternative models of sustainability, would security of appointment be needed or advantageous for local clergy?
- What kind of process would be needed to help licensed local pastors transition toward ordination?
- What kind of time frame would best allow for such transition for those who choose to pursue ordination?
- What happens to those who choose not to pursue ordination or are denied by the Board of Ordained Ministry?
- How would such a change affect conferences and districts that are currently dependent upon licensed local pastors?
 - Would a shift in emphasis on circuits adequately address the need to provide for the availability of the sacraments?
 - What would be required to make a system of lay-led Wesleyan class-based “churches” sustainable in relation to a circuit?
- How would such a change impact central conferences?

In relation to traveling clergy, we would ask:

- What are the expectations of traveling clergy and how are they different from local clergy?

- What kind of ritual (if any) should accompany election to full membership?
- Should security of appointment be attached to full membership?
- Should full members be expected to be fully itinerant?
- What kind of transitional process should be required for “local” (associate member) clergy to transition to full membership, including the appointive status of “traveling” clergy?
 - Advanced Course of Study (for those without an MDiv or equivalent)
 - Examination and affirmation by the Board of Ordained Ministry
 - Historic examination (Wesleyan questions) by the bishop
 - Election by the clergy session
 - Other requirements?
- How might residency processes assist in this transition?
 - What is the best approach for residency programs? Should they focus more on additional equipping (over and above seminary and Course of Study) or on formation for ministry?
 - To extend the medical metaphor, would there be benefits to identifying “attending” clergy using apprenticeship models?
- Should a security-of-appointment guarantee be given to clergy in residency and actively pursuing full membership?
- Can traveling clergy choose to serve a “local” appointment (i.e., bivocational or less than full time) while remaining a full member?
- Under what conditions might a full member clergy transition to associate membership to serve a “local” appointment with no effect on ordination credentials?
 - Eight-year review
 - Peer review
 - Episcopal and superintendent’s review
 - Status and location
 - Other means?
- How would a shift in the understanding of ordination and full membership impact central conferences?

VI. Conclusion

Methodists have historically prioritized the mission field as a most essential element in arriving at our polity (way of being in practice). This has ultimately resulted in non-ordained local pastors who operate under a license, having been granted sacramental responsibility, while ordained deacons have only provisional sacramental authority. In so doing, The United Methodist Church has diverged from the apostolic tradition with respect to sacramental authority. Moreover, we have diverged from our own founder’s theological vision. John Wesley freely deployed laymen and laywomen to serve preaching ministries, which he understood as being distinct from the priestly ministry of administering the sacraments. Ironically, it was this very theological conviction that led him to the exceptional act of performing extraordinary ordinations himself. Our questions for the church have sought to help us uphold the link between ordination and our sacramental life while, at the same time, reshaping the church to meet the mission of tomorrow.

Toward this end, along with the need to realign our polity with a sound theology of ordination, is the question of how we reorder the work of ministry for the church to provide for agile and innovative possibilities for ministry in a very complex, diverse, and global context. Wesley’s strength lay in his ability to create new approaches to ministry without sacrificing his strong theological roots. It is our hope that this document may inspire a broad-ranging conversation about how we reorder our life of ministry that arises out of our heritage and speaks effectively into a twenty-first-century global context. *DCA Advance Edition*

Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Discipline*

¶309.2e

Petition Number: 20418-OM-¶309.2e-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Requirements for Transitioning Orders Between Deacon and Elder

Amend ¶ 309.2e:

e) completed at least two years, and no more than eight years, under appointment in a context related to while licensed for the ministry of the order to which they are transitioning.

Rationale:

Deacons or elders transitioning orders must demonstrate effective service before being received into the new order. Ordained clergy are not licensed to practice ministry. Deacons may officiate sacraments with the resident bishop's permission. To require a license during this transition causes confusion about a deacon's clergy status during the transition.

¶310.

Petition Number: 20421-OM-¶310-G; Feagins, John - San Antonio, TX, USA.

Eligibility of Certified Candidates for Course of Study

Amend ¶ 310 after subsection 3 as follows:

3. In special circumstances, the district committee on ordained ministry may authorize other United Methodist ministry settings to serve in the role of the local church for the purpose of recommending candidacy and specify the persons or bodies that will serve in the roles of pastor, pastor parish-relations committee, and charge conference.

4. Certified candidates who have completed studies for the license as a local pastor as prescribed and supervised by the Division of Ordained Ministry shall be eligible to enroll in the Course of Study regardless of appointment status.

Rationale:

This change resolves a conflict with ¶ 313.2 requiring the candidate to make progress in studies, allowing the candidate to make such progress regardless of

appointment status. This especially impacts ethnic-minority and non-English speaking candidates.

¶310.

Petition Number: 20747-OM-¶310-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

A Fully Inclusive Way Forward—Part 4 of 8

Amend the following portions of the *Book of Discipline* as indicated:

¶ 310.2.d) Footnote 3. . . .

The General Conference, in response to expressions throughout the church regarding ~~homosexuality and ordination~~, reaffirms the present language of the *Discipline* regarding the character and commitment of persons seeking ordination and affirms its high standards.

. . .

In the Social Principles, the General Conference has said that ~~“we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.”~~ Furthermore, the Principles state that “we affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity between two people a man and a woman. We believe that God's blessing rests upon such marriage, whether or not there are children of the union. . . .

Rationale:

In answer to the call of the gospel for the church, as the body of Christ, to be fully inclusive of all people, the portions of the *Discipline* that have negative impact on the lives of LGBTQ persons ought to be stricken.

¶310.2.

Petition Number: 20707-OM-¶310.2-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Local Discernment of Clergy Candidates

Footnote 3:

The General Conference, ~~in response to expressions throughout the Church regarding homosexuality and ordination~~, reaffirms the present language [. . .]

In the Social Principles, ~~the General Conference has said that we “do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Chris-~~

tian teaching.” Furthermore, the Principles state that “we affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity.” ~~between a man and a woman.~~

Rationale:

Allows annual conferences to decide how sexuality applies to the standards of holy living in clergy candidates. Protects practicing gay clergy who cannot be appointed within their annual conference because of a lack of safe appointments.

¶310.2d.

Petition Number: 20419-OM-¶310.2d-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA. 1 Similar Petition

Next Generation UMC #7—Candidacy

Amend ¶ 310.2(d) footnote 3 as follows:

In adopting the statements in ¶¶ 304.2 and 310.2d on the moral and social responsibility of ordained ministers, the General Conference seeks to elevate the standards by calling for a more thoroughgoing moral commitment by the candidate and for a more careful and thorough examination of candidates by district committees and boards of the ministry. The legislation in no way implies that the use of tobacco is a morally indifferent question. In the light of the developing evidence against the use of tobacco, the burden of proof would be upon all users to show that their use of it is consistent with the highest ideals of the Christian life. Similarly, regarding beverage alcohol, the burden of proof would be upon users to show that their action is consistent with the ideals of excellence of mind, purity of body, and responsible social behavior.

Therefore, the changes here do not relax the traditional view concerning the use of tobacco and beverage alcohol by ordained ministers in The United Methodist Church. Rather they call for higher standards of self-discipline and habit formation in all personal and social relationships. They call for dimensions of moral commitment that go far beyond any specific practices that might be listed. (See Judicial Council Decision 318.)

The General Conference, ~~in response to expressions throughout the Church regarding homosexuality and ordination,~~ reaffirms the present language of the *Discipline* regarding the character and commitment of persons seeking ordination and affirms its high standards.

For more than 200 years candidates for ordination have been asked Wesley’s Questions, including “. . . Have they a clear, sound understanding; a right judgment in the things of God; a just conception of salvation by faith? . . .”

(¶ 310). All candidates agree to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life and to this end agree “to exercise responsible self-control, by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and the knowledge and love of God” (¶ 304.2).

The character and commitment of candidates for the ordained ministry is described or examined in six places in the *Book of Discipline* (¶¶ 304, 310.2, 324, 330, 333, and 335). These say in part: “Only those shall be elected to full membership who are of unquestionable moral character and genuine piety, sound in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and faithful in the discharge of their duties” (¶ 333).

The statement on ordination (¶ 304.2) states: “*The Church expects those who seek ordination to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life . . . [and to] agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits. . . .*”

There are eight crucial steps in the examination of candidates. They are:

(1) The self-examination of the individual seeking ordination as he or she responds to God’s call in personal commitment to Christ and his church.

(2) The decision of the committee on pastor-parish relations, which makes the first recommendation to the charge conference when a member seeks to become a candidate for ordained ministry.

(3) The decision of the charge conference, which must recommend the candidate.

(4) The decision of the district committee on ordained ministry, which must recommend the candidate to the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and, where applicable, the decision of the district conference.

(5) The decision of the Board of Ordained Ministry, which must recommend deacon’s ordination and provisional membership. See Judicial Council Decisions 513, 536, 542.

(6) The decision of the clergy members of the annual conference, who must elect candidates to provisional membership.

(7) The recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry for deacon’s or elder’s ordination and full membership.

(8) The election to deacon’s or elder’s ordination and full membership by the clergy members of the annual conference.

All clergy members of the annual conference are accountable as to character and effectiveness to the annual conference throughout their entire ministry.

The General Conference has made it clear in the “Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task” (Part III of the *Discipline*) that Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason are our guidelines. “United Methodists share with other Christians the conviction that Scripture is the primary source and criterion for Christian doctrine.”

In the Social Principles, the General Conference has said that we “do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.” Furthermore, the Principles state that “we affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity between a man and a woman. We believe that God’s blessing rests upon such marriage, whether or not there are children of the union. We reject social norms that assume different standards for women than for men in marriage.” Also, “we affirm the integrity of single persons, and we reject all social practices that discriminate or social attitudes that are prejudicial against persons because they are single.”

The General Conference affirms the wisdom of our heritage expressed in the disciplinary provisions relating to the character and commitment of ordained ministers. The United Methodist Church has moved away from prohibitions of specific acts, for such prohibitions can be endless. We affirm our trust in the covenant community and the process by which we ordain ministers.

In our covenant we are called to trust one another as we recommend, examine, and elect candidates for the ordained ministry and conference membership. See Judicial Council Decision 480.

Rationale:

Affirms the role of boards of ordained ministry to evaluate all candidates based on their fitness and readiness for ordained ministry. This footnote is adjusted to reflect proposed changes in ¶ 161.C and ¶ 161.G that removes language that discriminates against a particular class of people.

¶310.2d.

Petition Number: 20420-OM-¶310.2d-G; Taylor, Deborah Tinsley - Riverside, IL, USA for Northern Illinois Annual Conference. 6 Similar Petitions

A Simple Plan #4

[Also submitted as:

ALL BELONG: Honoring the Calling and Gifting of the Holy Spirit]

Amend footnote 3 of ¶ 310.2(d) as follows:

In adopting the statements in ¶¶ 304.2 and 310.2d on the moral and social responsibility of ordained ministers, the General Conference seeks to elevate the standards by calling for a more thoroughgoing moral commitment by the candidate and for a more careful and thorough examination of candidates by district committees and boards of the ministry. The legislation in no way implies that the use of tobacco is a morally indifferent question. In the light of the developing evidence against the use of tobacco, the burden of proof would be upon all users to show that their use of it is consistent with the highest ideals of the Christian life. Similarly, regarding beverage alcohol, the burden of proof would be upon users to show that their action is consistent with the ideals of excellence of mind, purity of body, and responsible social behavior.

Therefore, the changes here do not relax the traditional view concerning the use of tobacco and beverage alcohol by ordained ministers in The United Methodist Church. Rather they call for higher standards of self-discipline and habit formation in all personal and social relationships. They call for dimensions of moral commitment that go far beyond any specific practices which might be listed. (See Judicial Council Decision 318.)

~~The General Conference, in response to expressions throughout the Church regarding homosexuality and ordination, reaffirms the present language of the *Discipline* regarding the character and commitment of persons seeking ordination and affirms its high standards.~~

For more than 200 years candidates for ordination have been asked Wesley’s Questions, including “. . . Have they a clear, sound understanding; a right judgment in the things of God; a just conception of salvation by faith? . . .” (¶ 310). All candidates agree to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life and to this end agree “to exercise responsible self-control, by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and the knowledge and love of God” (¶ 304.2).

The character and commitment of candidates for the ordained ministry is described or examined in six places in the *Book of Discipline* (¶¶ 304, 310.2, 324, 330, 333, and 335). These say in part: “Only those shall be elected to full membership who are of unquestionable moral character and genuine piety, sound in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and faithful in the discharge of their duties” (¶ 333). The statement on ordination (¶ 304.2) states: “*The Church expects those who seek ordination to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life . . . [and to] agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits. . . .*”

There are eight crucial steps in the examination of candidates. They are:

(1) The self-examination of the individual seeking ordination as he or she responds to God's call in personal commitment to Christ and his church.

(2) The decision of the committee on pastor-parish relations, which makes the first recommendation to the charge conference when a member seeks to become a candidate for ordained ministry.

(3) The decision of the charge conference, which must recommend the candidate.

(4) The decision of the district committee on ordained ministry, which must recommend the candidate to the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and, where applicable, the decision of the district conference.

(5) The decision of the Board of Ordained Ministry, which must recommend deacon's ordination and provisional membership. See Judicial Council Decisions 513, 536, 542.

(6) The decision of the clergy members of the annual conference, who must elect candidates to provisional membership.

(7) The recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry for deacon's or elder's ordination and full membership.

(8) The election to deacon's or elder's ordination and full membership by the clergy members of the annual conference.

All clergy members of the annual conference are accountable as to character and effectiveness to the annual conference throughout their entire ministry.

The General Conference has made it clear in the "Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task" (Part III of the *Discipline*) that Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason are our guidelines. "United Methodists share with other Christians the conviction that Scripture is the primary source and criterion for Christian doctrine."

In the Social Principles, the General Conference has said that we "~~do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.~~" Furthermore, the Principles state that "we affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity ~~between a man and a woman.~~ We believe that God's blessing rests upon such marriage, whether or not there are children of the union. We reject social norms that assume different standards for women than for men in marriage." Also, "we affirm the integrity of single persons, and we reject all social practices that discriminate or social attitudes that are prejudicial against persons because they are single."

The General Conference affirms the wisdom of our heritage expressed in the disciplinary provisions relating to the character and commitment of ordained ministers. The United Methodist Church has moved away from prohibitions of specific acts, for such prohibitions can be endless. We affirm our trust in the covenant community and the process by which we ordain ministers.

In our covenant we are called to trust one another as we recommend, examine, and elect candidates for the ordained ministry and conference membership. See Judicial Council Decision 480.

Rationale:

In the Wesleyan tradition we aim to live by the admonition to do no harm. Revising sections of the *Book of Discipline* that prevent people from being full participants in the life of The United Methodist Church alleviates some of the harm The United Methodist Church

¶314.2.

Petition Number: 20422-OM-¶314.2; Girrell, Rebecca - Lebanon, NH, USA.

Reinstatement of Certified Candidate Status

Amend ¶ 314.2 as follows:

2. *Reinstatement of Certified Candidate's Status*—Certified candidates whose status has been discontinued by a district committee on ordained ministry of an annual conference of The United Methodist Church may ~~shall only~~ be reinstated by the district committee of the district in which they were discontinued, or by another district upon transfer of the certified candidate's file including all possible documentation of the circumstances relating to the discontinuance of certified candidate status.

[Retain rest of the paragraph as written]

¶315.

Petition Number: 20423-OM-¶315-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Categories and Qualifications for the License for Pastoral Ministry

Amend ¶ 315

¶ 315. *License for Pastoral Ministry*—All persons not ordained as elders who are appointed to preach and conduct divine worship and perform the duties of a pastor shall have a license for pastoral ministry. Those listed below (¶ 315.2a-d) shall have been approved by a three-

fourths majority vote of the Board of Ordained Ministry (§ 635.2h) and a three-fourths majority vote of the clergy session.

~~6.1. In every case, t~~ Those who are licensed shall have:

a) Released the required psychological reports, criminal background and credit checks, and reports of sexual misconduct and/or child abuse. They shall submit, on a form provided by the ~~conference~~ Board of Ordained Ministry:

(1) a notarized statement detailing any convictions for felony or misdemeanor or written accusations of sexual misconduct or child abuse; or

(2) a notarized statement certifying that the candidate has not been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor, or accused in writing of sexual misconduct or child abuse.

~~b) Been approved by a three-fourths majority vote of the Board of Ordained Ministry (§ 635.2h);~~

~~c) b) Provided the board with a satisfactory certificate of good health on a prescribed form from a physician approved by that board.~~

~~d) Received approval by a three-fourths majority vote of the clergy session.~~

2. The Board of Ordained Ministry (§ 635.2h) may recommend to the clergy session of the annual conference the licensing of those persons who are:

~~1. Provisional elders commissioned by the annual conference; or~~

2. a) Local pastors who have completed the following:

a) (1) The conditions for candidacy certification in §§ 310.1-2;

b) (2) The Orientation to Ministry;

c) (3) The studies for the license as a local pastor as prescribed and supervised by the Division of Ordained Ministry or one-third of their work for a Master of Divinity degree at a school of theology listed by the University Senate University Senate-approved theological school;

d) (4) Been examined and recommended by a three-fourths majority vote of the district committee on ordained ministry (§ 666.9); or

3 b) Associate members of the annual conference; or

c) Provisional elders commissioned by the annual conference; or

~~4. Deacons in full connection, seeking to qualify for ordination as an elder; or~~

~~5. d) Licensed or ordained clergy from other denominations who have training equivalent to the studies for license as a local pastor prescribed by the Division of Ordained Ministry but do not meet the educational requirements for provisional membership in the annual conference.~~

Rationale:

Lists the categories of licensing in sequential order and clarifies which categories of licensed clergy must receive a 3/4 majority recommendation of the BOM and approval of the clergy session. Clarifies that deacons in full connection, seeking to qualify for ordination as an elder, do not require licensing.

§315.6c.

Petition Number: 20424-OM-§315.6c; Girrell, Rebecca - Lebanon, NH, USA.

Reduce Inappropriate Medical Disclosure and Discrimination—Licensed Ministry

Amend the *Book of Discipline* § 315.6.c (License for Pastoral Ministry) as follows:

c) Provided the board with a satisfactory letter from a physician stating the individual's good health and listing any medical restrictions or modifications as applicable. Disabilities and diagnoses are not to be construed as unfavorable health factors when a person with a disability or diagnosis is capable of meeting the professional standards and is able to render effective service as one licensed for pastoral ministry. ~~certificate of good health on a prescribed form from a physician approved by that board.~~

Rationale:

Replaces the health form with a letter from a physician, eliminating the high potential for confidential information to be disclosed in violation of the candidate's privacy. Adds that disabilities/diagnoses are not grounds for lack of fitness for ministry, making the policy consistent with that for provisional members.

§316.1.

Petition Number: 20427-OM-§316.1; Haines, Amy - Worthington, OH, USA for West Ohio Annual Conference.

Clarification of Context of Ministry Regarding Licensed Clergy

Amend § 316.1 so that it reads:

1. Provisional elders approved annually by the Board of Ordained Ministry and local pastors approved annually by the district committee on ordained ministry may be licensed by the bishop to perform all the duties of a pastor (§ 340), including the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion as well as the service of marriage (where state laws allow), burial, confirmation, and membership

reception, within and while appointed to a particular charge or extension ministry. For the purposes of these paragraphs the A charge or extension ministry will be is defined as “the people within or related to the community in which it is located.” or ~~ministry setting being served.”~~ Those licensed for pastoral ministry may be appointed to extension ministry settings when approved by the bishop and the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Rationale:

Variances across districts and conferences can limit the way a licensed local pastor expands the outreach of their church or ministry setting. This clarification allows licensed local pastors to perform ministry in their church’s community, since the licensed local pastor may be the only pastor in the community.

In

¶316.6.

Petition Number: 20425-OM-¶316.6; Wilder, Michael - Guntersville, AL, USA. 1 Similar Petition

Local Pastor Voting Rights

Delete ¶ 316.6 and substitute the following:
The membership of local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment is in the annual conference. Local pastors who have served at least two years preceding the election as appointed by the bishop, during which time no withdrawal of the appointed status has occurred, who are enrolled in or have completed one of the two constitutionally specified educational processes, Course of Study or M.Div., and are in good standing with the conference board of ordained ministry shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters excluding matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.

¶316.6.

Petition Number: 20426-OM-¶316.6-G; Huff-Cook, Becky - Indianapolis, IN, USA for Indiana Annual Conference. Wharff, Mark - Modesto, CA, USA for California-Nevada Annual Conference. 1 Similar Petition

Granting Voice to All Clergy (Local Pastors)

~~Delete constitutional amendments, election of delegates to General, jurisdictional, or central conferences, and . . . Local Pastors who have completed Course of Study or a Master of Divinity degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment~~

~~before the election may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conferences:~~

Rationale:

WHEREAS, the Indiana Annual Conference utilizes over 350 Licensed Local Pastors to serve in our congregations; and

WHEREAS, many of our Local Pastors served as Lay Members of Annual Conference prior to being appointed; and

WHEREAS, Local Pastors’ church membership is transferred to the annual conference (clergy) while under appointment

¶316.6.

Petition Number: 20428-OM-¶316.6-G; Huff-Cook, Becky - Indianapolis, IN, USA for Indiana Annual Conference.

Responsibilities and Duties of Those Licensed for Pastoral Ministry

~~Delete constitutional amendments, election of delegates to general, jurisdictional, or central conferences, and~~

~~Delete clergy adding elders or deacons~~

~~Delete have completed the Course of Study or a Master of Divinity degree and adding and have remained in good standings with their respective dCOM~~

Rationale:

“The membership of local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment is in the annual conference where they shall have the right to vote on all matters except constitutional amendments, election of delegates to General, jurisdictional, or central conferences, and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. Local pastors

¶316.6.

Petition Number: 20665-OM-¶316.6-G; Speer, Lloyd - Fairless Hills, PA, USA for Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.

Local Pastor Voting Rights

AMEND ¶ 316.6 under Chapter 2. Section IV. *License for Pastoral Ministry. Responsibilities and Duties of Those Licensed for Pastoral Ministry* to read:

The membership of local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment is in the annual conference where they shall have the right to vote on all matters except constitutional amendments, election of delegates to General;

Jurisdictional, or central conferences, and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. Local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment shall be eligible for election as delegates to the General, central, or jurisdictional conferences. Local pastors ~~who have completed Course of Study or a Master of Divinity degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment before the election~~ may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conferences and may vote on constitutional amendments.

¶316.6.

Petition Number: 20668-OM-¶316.6-G; Wilcox, Lynn - Hop Bottom, PA, USA.

Voting Rights of Licensed Local Pastors

Amend ¶ 316.6:

The membership of local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment is in the annual conference where they shall have the right to vote on all matters ~~except constitutional amendments, election of delegates to General, jurisdictional, or central conferences, and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. Local pastors who have completed Course of Study or a Master of Divinity degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment before the election may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conferences.~~ after two years of consecutive appointment, part-time or full-time, and simultaneous or consecutive completion of four classes in the Course of Study track or two semesters towards an M.Div. degree, be permitted to vote on jurisdictional and General Conference delegates, constitutional amendments, on all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy and, on the ordination of clergy.

Rationale:

General Council on Finance and Administration reports there are 20,067 clergy in the United States appointed to local churches. Of those, 33 percent are licensed local pastors without vote. The average congregation served by licensed local pastors has 83 members and attendance averages 42. Small congregations are disproportionately without clergy

¶316.6.

Petition Number: 20685-OM-¶316.6-G; Page, John - Cave Spring, GA, USA.

Increase Voting Rights for Local Pastors

The membership of local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment is in the annual conference where they shall have the right to vote on all matters. ~~except constitutional amendments, election of delegates to general, jurisdictional, or central conferences, and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.~~ Local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment before the election may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conferences.

Rationale:

WHEREAS, the number of ordained elders continues to decline and the number of local pastors continues to increase;

WHEREAS, nearly 80 percent of U.S. congregations average less than one hundred in worship;

WHEREAS, the majority of those small membership churches are pastored by local pastors;

WHEREAS, more than 55 percent

¶317.

Petition Number: 20429-OM-¶317-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Interim License for Pastoral Ministry Approval

Delete ¶ 317 from current location and move it to follow ¶ 315:

~~¶ 317.~~ **NEW ¶.** Following ¶ 315 *Interim License as Local Pastor*—Between sessions of the annual conference, persons who have completed the conditions for licensing listed above (¶ 315.6) may be granted interim license as a local pastor before receiving approval of the clergy session. ~~upon~~ Upon recommendation of the cabinet, the district committee on ordained ministry, and executive committee of the ~~conference~~ Board of Ordained Ministry, the candidate and may be appointed by the bishop.

Rationale:

Clarifies that interim local pastors may be appointed between annual conference sessions before receiving approval of the clergy session. Also, better organizes licensing paragraphs by ordering the two paragraphs on qualifications for licensing together.

¶318.2.

Petition Number: 20430-OM-¶318.2-G; Paige, Peggy - Ingalls, MI, USA for United Methodist Rural Advocates.

Discontinue Mentoring for PLP after COS Is Completed

Amend ¶ 318.2. as follows:

¶ 318.2. *Part-Time Local Pastors*—Those eligible to be appointed as part-time local pastors are persons (a) . . . (b) . . . (c) . . . (d) . . .

Part-time local pastors may be appointed to small membership churches that are grouped together in a charge under the supervision of a mentor. Mentoring shall continue until such time as educational requirements have been met unless requested by the clergyperson or district superintendent.

Rationale:

All local pastors are assigned a clergy mentor while in the COS or in seminary (¶ 316.4.2). Full-time local pastors no longer have a mentor once they complete the COS; part-time local pastors should be allowed the same grace no matter where they are appointed.

¶319.

Petition Number: 20639-OM-¶319; Olm, Donald - Gallatin, TN, USA for National Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors.

Ordination of Local Pastor

Add new subparagraph ¶ 319.6:

Upon completion of Course of Study or an M.Div. degree and having served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment, full-time local pastors will be eligible to seek ordination as a local elder. Local elder status would be achieved by a process of application and examination to the district committee on ordained ministry. Examination by the district committee on ordained ministry would include the applicant (1) prepared and preached at least one written sermon on a biblical passage specified by the district committee on ordained ministry; (2) presented a detailed plan and outline for teaching a Bible study; (3) presented a project that demonstrates fruitfulness in carrying out the church's mission of "making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." Upon ¾ vote approval of the district committee on ordained ministry recommendation will be made to the Board of Ordained Ministry to then be voted upon by clergy session. Upon approval of clergy session, the local elder may retire under the provisions of ¶ 357 of the *Discipline*. They

shall retain their license for pastoral ministry for service in the local church and maintain their relationship as retired clergy members of the annual conference. The district committee on ordained ministry will not be required to interview the local elder annually and the local elder will be subject to all continuing education and evaluation requirements of ordained clergy.

Rationale:

This addition recognizes the years of service and experience of local pastors and honors the same by recognizing the lifetime call to pastoral ministry of all persons called by God

¶319.2.

Petition Number: 20432-OM-¶319.2; Haines, Amy - Worthington, OH, USA for West Ohio Annual Conference.

Annual Licensing for Local Pastors

Amend ¶ 319.2 so that it reads:

Upon completing each year's education and other qualifications, a local pastor who is not a provisional member may be recommended for continuance by the district committee on ordained ministry. Upon completion of educational requirements, either Course of Study or Master of Divinity degree from a senate-approved seminary, a local pastor may be continued annually by the district committee on ordained ministry without meeting in person with the committee unless requested by the committee, the district superintendent, or the local pastor. The clergy members in full connection of the annual conference may approve continuance of a local pastor after reference to and recommendation by its Board of Ordained Ministry.

Rationale:

This would enable our district committees on ministry to honor and affirm the work of local pastors who are in vital, effective ministry. Without a mandatory annual meeting with the DCOM, this affirmation would lighten the load of the DCOM, as they also have responsibilities to oversee CLMs.

¶319.3.

Petition Number: 20431-OM-¶319.3-G; Gadlage, Christopher - Decatur, IN, USA.

Clarifying Course of Study Requirements

Amend ¶ 319.3:

3. A full-time local pastor shall complete the Course of Study curriculum within eight years of beginning the Course of Study and a part-time local pastor within twelve years of beginning the Course of Study, unless a family situation or other circumstance precludes the local pastor's opportunity to meet said requirements. Only time serving under appointment shall be considered when calculating this time limit. The local pastor may be granted an annual extension beyond the prescribed limit upon a three-fourths vote of the district committee on ordained ministry, recommendation by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry, and the vote of the clergy members in full connection.

Rationale:

Because undergraduate studies are sufficient progress, the beginning point of the Course of Study completion requirement needs to be clarified and time not appointed to a church should not be considered part of the time limit for Course of Study completion.

¶319.5.

Petition Number: 20683-OM-¶319.5-G; Masters, Scott - Chesterfield, NH, USA.

Equilization for Voting Rights Among Clergy

¶ 319.5. *Retirement of Local Pastor*—A local pastor who has made satisfactory progress in the Course of Study as specified in ¶ 318.1 or .2 may be recognized as a retired local pastor. Retirement provisions for local pastors shall be the same as those for clergy members in ¶ 357.1, .2, .4, with pensions payable in accordance with applicable provisions of the Clergy Retirement Security Program. Retired local pastors may attend annual conference sessions with voice ~~but not~~ and vote.

Rationale:

While preserving the rights of full clergy membership in annual conferences, this legislation reverses the disenfranchisement of thousands of clergypersons without, or experiencing, limited voice and vote in annual conferences. This petition recognizes that all need appropriate voice and vote to be a part of discerning our denomination's future.

¶320.4.

Petition Number: 20433-OM-¶320.4-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Reinstatement of Local Pastors

Amend ¶ 320.4

¶ 320. *Exiting, Reinstatement, and Retirement of Local Pastors Who Are Not Provisional Members*—

...

4. *Reinstatement of Local Pastor Status*—

a) Local pastors whose approved status has been discontinued . . . and the cabinet.

b) Persons seeking reinstatement shall . . . membership is currently held.

c) When approved by the clergy members in full connection . . . meet requirements as provided in ¶¶ 315, 318.

d) Whenever persons whose approval as local pastors has been discontinued by an annual conference are being considered for ~~appointment or temporary employment~~ licensing in another annual conference, . . . approval as local pastors.

Rationale:

Numbering the steps for the process of reinstatement clarifies what local pastors must do in order to be reinstated either in their home conference or in a new conference.

¶320.4.

Petition Number: 20434-OM-¶320.4; Girrell, Rebecca - Lebanon, NH, USA.

Reinstatement of Local Pastor Status

Amend ¶ 320.4 as follows:

4. *Reinstatement of Local Pastor Status*—Local pastors whose approved status has been discontinued from an annual conference of The United Methodist Church or one of its legal predecessors may be reinstated ~~only~~ by the annual conference that previously approved them, its legal successor, or the annual conference of which the major portion of their former conference is a part, ~~only~~ upon recommendation by the district committee on ordained ministry from which their license was discontinued, the Board of Ordained Ministry, and the cabinet. Persons seeking reinstatement shall provide evidence that they have been members of a local United Methodist church since the time of the discontinuance of their local pastor status, or for at least one year prior to their request for reinstatement. The district committee shall require a recommendation from the charge conference where these persons' ~~his or her~~ membership is currently held. When approved by the clergy members in full connection as provided in ¶ 337, their license and credentials shall be restored, and they shall be eligible for appointment ~~as pastors of a charge.~~ They shall complete

current studies and meet requirements as provided in ¶¶ 315, 318.

Whenever persons whose local pastor status approval as local pastors has been discontinued by an annual conference are being considered for appointment or temporary employment in another annual conference, the Board of Ordained Ministry where these persons are being considered shall obtain from the Board of Ordained Ministry of the conference where local pastor status approval has been discontinued verification of their qualifications and information about the circumstances relating to the discontinuance of local pastor status termination of their approval as local pastors.

Rationale:

This amendment makes the language more consistent with similar paragraphs of the *Discipline* and resolves the apparent contradiction posed by the second paragraph, which allows for local pastor status to be reinstated by a different annual conference.

¶321.1.

Petition Number: 20435-OM-¶321.1-G; Huff-Cook, Becky - Indianapolis, IN, USA for Indiana Annual Conference. 1 Similar Petition

Granting Voice to all Clergy

Delete the following: (a) constitutional amendments; (b)

Rationale:

WHEREAS, Associate members have answered the call to ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ and submitted to “itinerant ministry of the Church and are available on a continuing basis for appointment by the bishop” (¶ 321); and

WHEREAS, Associate members serve a vital role in the life of The

¶321.1.

Petition Number: 20436-OM-¶321.1; Morgan, Darrell - Fort Payne, AL, USA.

Associate Clergy Member—Voting Rights

Amend by addition and deletion ¶ 321.1:

1. Associate clergy members, ~~shall have a right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the following: (a) constitutional amendments; (b) all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations~~

~~of clergy. with the exception of matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy (¶ 635.1), shall have the right to vote on all matters including constitutional amendments, election of clergy delegates to the General and jurisdictional or central conferences.~~

¶321.1.

Petition Number: 20437-OM-¶321.1; Wilder, Michael - Guntersville, AL, USA.

Local Pastor Voting Rights

Amend ¶ 321.1: Associate members shall have a right to vote in the annual conference on all matters ~~except (a) constitutional amendments; matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy (¶ 635.1).~~

¶321.1.

Petition Number: 20439-OM-¶321.1; Wharff, Mark - Modesto, CA, USA for California-Nevada Annual Conference.

Amend 321.1

Amend ¶ 321.1 as follows:

1. Associate members shall have a right to vote in the annual conference on all matters ~~except~~ including the following: (a) constitutional amendments; (b) all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.

¶321.2.

Petition Number: 20438-OM-¶321.2; Wharff, Mark - Modesto, CA, USA for California-Nevada Annual Conference. 1 Similar Petition

Associate Members as Delegates

Amend ¶ 321.2 as follows:

2. Associate members may serve on any board, commission, or committee of an annual conference. They shall ~~not be eligible for election to elect and to be elected~~ as delegates to the General or jurisdictional or central conferences.

¶323.2.

Petition Number: 20440-OM-¶323.2; Olm, Donald - Gallatin, TN, USA for National Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors.

Election of Fellowship Chair

Amend ¶ 323.2

The bishop shall convene the fellowship and the Board of Ordained Ministry shall coordinate its life and work. Necessary financial support shall be provided by the annual conference through the budget of the board. Quadrennially the board, with guidance from the present Fellowship Chair, shall nominate for chairperson of their Conference Fellowship at least one local pastor who has completed education requirements and/or associate member, not to exceed 3 nominees, to then be elected by the from within the fellowship membership and the Fellowship shall elect quadrennially a chairperson of the Fellowship members present during a gathered meeting of the annual session of the Fellowship, conference who, The elected chairperson, in cooperation with and under the guidance of the bishop, will provide continuing leadership for the Fellowship. The elected Fellowship chairperson, full-time or part-time, shall be a member of the Board of Ordained ministry and its executive committee as specified in ¶ 635.1(a).

Activity of the Fellowship will be reported regularly to the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Rationale:

The Fellowship members and its leadership are the most knowledgeable of those persons who are eligible to be elected chairperson. This gives clarity to the work of electing the Fellowship Chair in order to bring consistency across conferences and confirms the right of the Fellowship to elect their own chairperson

¶324.

Petition Number: 20441-OM-¶324-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Editorial Changes for Clarity in Provisional Membership Paragraph

Amend ¶ 324

¶ 324. *Qualifications for Election to Provisional Membership*— . . .

4. Graduate Requirement:

a) Candidates for ~~deacon or elder~~ provisional membership shall have completed a minimum of one-half of the 27 semester hours of basic graduate theological studies in the Christian faith from a University Senate-approved theological school. These courses may be included within or in addition to a seminary degree. These basic graduate theological studies ~~must~~ shall include courses in

Old Testament; New Testament; theology; church history; mission of the church in the world; evangelism; worship/liturgy; and United Methodist studies in doctrine, polity, and history.

b) A) Elder—a candidate for ordination as an elder shall also:

1. ~~H~~ave completed a minimum of one half of the studies toward a Master of Divinity degree from a University Senate-approved theological school or its equivalent; ~~or including one half of the basic graduate theological studies from a seminary listed by the University Senate.~~

6. ~~2.~~ Local pastors may fulfill the requirements for provisional membership as elders when they have:

. . .

c) completed the Course of Study. Course of Study requirements may be fulfilled as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (¶ 1421.3d) by:

1. Completion of Course of Study, of which no more than one-half may be taken online; or by correspondence or Internet; up to one-half of Course of Study may be online courses; and

2. Completion of an equivalent program of study embedded in an undergraduate degree at a ~~UM~~ United Methodist-related college or university.

d) completed an Advanced Course of Study . . . The Advanced Course of Study shall include the basic graduate theological studies (¶ 324.4a).

e) B) Deacon—a candidate for ordination as a deacon shall also have:

(1) ~~1.~~ completed a minimum of one half of the studies of a master's degree from a ~~United Methodist seminary or one listed by the University Senate~~ University Senate-approved theological school, or

(2) ~~2.~~ received a master's degree in the area of the specialized ministry in which the candidate will serve, or

(3) ~~completed one half of the basic graduate theological studies, in a context which will provide formation as a United Methodist deacon in full connection within a cohesive program developed by the seminary and approved by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, documented by a record of completion from that school.~~

5. ~~3.~~ In some instances a candidate who is pursuing ordination to serve as a deacon in full connection may fulfill the academic requirements through the following professional certification alternate route:

a) shall have reached thirty-five years of age at the time to become a certified candidate;

b) completed a bachelor's degree, received professional certification or license in the area of ministry in which the candidate will serve, have completed a minimum of eight semester hours of graduate credit or equiv-

alent quarter hours in the area of specialization, and have been recommended by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry;

c) have completed a minimum of one-half of the twenty-seven semester hours of the basic graduate theological studies of the Christian faith including the areas of: Old Testament; New Testament; theology; church history; mission of the church in the world; evangelism; worship/liturgy; and United Methodist doctrine, polity, and history, in a context which will provide a cohesive program and formation as a United Methodist deacon in full connection within a cohesive program developed by the seminary and approved by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, documented by a record of completion from that school;

6. Local pastors may fulfill the requirements for provisional membership as elders when they have:

a) completed four years of full-time service or the equivalent;

b) satisfied all requirements of Sections 1-3 and 7-14 of this paragraph;

c) completed the Course of Study. Course of Study requirements may be fulfilled as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (§ 1421.3d) by:

1. Completion of Course of Study, of which no more than one-half may be taken by correspondence or Internet; up to one-half of Course of Study may be online courses; and

2. Completion of an equivalent program of study embedded in an undergraduate degree at a UM-related college or university.

d) completed an Advanced Course of Study consisting of thirty-two semester hours of graduate theological study offered by a seminary recognized by the University Senate or its equivalent as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. The Advanced Course of Study shall include the basic graduate theological studies (§ 324.4a).

7. . . .

8. . . .

9. Each candidate shall respond to a written and oral doctrinal examination administered by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry. The examination shall cover the following:

. . .

10. Each candidate shall have been recommended in writing to the conference Board of Ordained Ministry . . .

11. Each candidate shall have a personal interview with the conference Board of Ordained Ministry . . .

12. . . .

13. . . .

14. Each candidate shall have been recommended

in writing to the clergy session based on at least a three-fourths majority vote of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

Rationale:

The paragraph is reorganized to group deacon ordination and elder ordination into separate subparagraphs. Additional changes are editorial to make the paragraph more concise and clearer.

¶324.

Petition Number: 20445-OM-¶324-G; Feagins, John - San Antonio, TX, USA.

Pathway to Elder for Provisional Itinerant Local Pastors

Amend ¶ 324 section 6 as follows:

6. Local pastors may fulfill the requirements for provisional membership as elders when they have:

a) completed four years of full-time service or the equivalent;

b) satisfied all requirements of Sections 1-3 and 7-14 of this paragraph;

c) completed the Course of Study. Course of Study requirements may be fulfilled as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (§ 1421.3d) by:

1. Completion of Course of Study, of which no more than one-half may be taken by correspondence or Internet; up to one-half of Course of Study may be online courses; and

2. Establishing eligibility to enroll in the Advanced Course of Study by: a) Completion of an equivalent program of study embedded in an undergraduate degree at a UM-related college or university, or b) completion of at least twelve years in itinerant full-time appointment serving two or more pastoral charges.

d) completed an Advanced Course of Study consisting of thirty-two semester hours of graduate theological study offered by a seminary recognized by the University Senate or its equivalent as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. The Advanced Course of Study shall include the basic graduate theological studies (§ 324.4a).

Rationale:

Local pastors are by definition non-itinerant. The requirement of the undergraduate degree for proven itinerant pastors with the calling and gifts of elders who are economically unable, in their stage of life, to return to undergraduate studies is a form of socioeconomic bias in conflict with ¶ 4 Article IV

¶324.

Petition Number: 20446-OM-¶324; Ingram, Kimberly Tyree - Huntersville, NC, USA.

Education of Local Pastors Becoming Provisional Members

Amend ¶ 324.6c

Local pastors may fulfill the requirements for provisional membership as elders when they have:

... c) completed the Course of Study. Course of Study requirements may be fulfilled as determined by The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (¶ 1421.3d) by:

1. Completion of Course of Study, of which no more than one-half may be taken by correspondence or Internet; up to one-half of Course of Study may be online courses; **and or**

2. Completion of an equivalent program of study embedded in an undergraduate degree at a UM-related college or university.

Rationale:

These are expected to be two different Course of Study options for the educational route of local pastors to move toward ordination through provisional membership.

¶324.1.

Petition Number: 20443-OM-¶324.1-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Candidacy or Licensing Requirement for Provisional Membership

Amend ¶ 324.1

¶ 324. *Qualifications for Election to Provisional Membership*—

...

1. *Candidacy or Licensing Requirement*: Each candidate shall have been a certified candidate or a local pastor for at least one year.

Rationale:

Certified candidates can be licensed for ministry without being certified for one year. This petition clarifies that a minimum of one year of service as local pastor also qualifies as experience toward eligibility to apply for provisional membership.

¶324.4

Petition Number: 20442-OM-¶324.4-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Basic Graduate Theological Studies Requirements

Amend ¶ 324.4

¶ 324. *Qualifications for Election to Provisional Membership*— . . .

4. *Graduate Requirement*:

a) Candidates for deacon or elder shall have completed a ~~minimum of one-half of the 27 semester hours~~ of the basic graduate theological studies in the Christian faith. These courses shall each be three (3) semester hours, or the equivalent and may be included within or in addition to a seminary degree. These basic graduate theological studies ~~must~~ shall include courses in Old Testament; New Testament; theology; church history; mission of the church in the world; evangelism; worship/liturgy; and United Methodist doctrine, polity, and history. The combined credit hours for the United Methodist studies shall be a minimum 6 semester hours, or the equivalent. Basic graduate theological studies shall not be taken pass/fail.

Rationale:

Since BGTS are critical to theological education and preparation for ministry, these courses should be taken for a grade and completed prior to commissioning. Clarifies hour requirements for BGTS and UM Studies.

¶324.5.

Petition Number: 20444-OM-¶324.5-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Alternate Provisional Membership Route for Deacons

Amend ¶ 324.5

5. ~~In some instances a candidate who is pursuing ordination to serve as deacon in full connection may fulfill the academic requirements through the following professional certification alternate route: Candidates who have professional certification may fulfill the requirements for provisional membership as deacons when they have:~~

a) ~~shall have reached thirty-five years of age at the time to become a certified candidate; completed four years of full-time (or the equivalent) employment in the area of specialized ministry; and~~

b) ~~completed a bachelor's degree~~, received professional certification or license in the area of ministry in which the candidate will serve, have completed a minimum of eight semester hours of graduate credit or equivalent quarter hours in the area of specialization, and have been recommended by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry;

Rationale:

This change validates years of experience in ministry as an equivalent to some of the required education in the other available paths toward becoming an ordained deacon. The required bachelor's degree is retained in ¶ 324.3.

¶324.8.

Petition Number: 20447-OM-¶324.8; Girrell, Rebecca - Lebanon, NH, USA.

Reduce Inappropriate Medical Disclosure and Discrimination—Provisional Membership

Amend the *Book of Discipline* ¶ 324.8 (Provisional Membership) as follows:

8. Each candidate shall present a satisfactory letter from a physician stating the individual's good health and listing any medical restrictions or modifications as applicable. ~~certificate of good health by a physician on the prescribed form.~~ Disabilities and diagnoses are not to be construed as unfavorable health factors when a person with a disability or diagnosis is capable of meeting the professional standards and is able to render effective service as a provisional member.

Rationale:

Replaces the detailed health form with a letter from a physician, eliminating the high potential for confidential information on the health form to be disclosed in violation of the candidate's privacy. This also clarifies that both disabilities and diagnoses are not grounds for lack of fitness for ministry.

¶325.

Petition Number: 20448-OM-¶325-G; Barnes, Robert - Mitchellville, MD, USA for Mount Oak Fellowship.

Ensure Clergy Session Rights in Commissioning Candidates

AMEND ¶ 325 by ADDING language as follows:
 ¶ 325. *Commissioning*— . . . After fulfilling all the candidacy requirements and upon recommendation of the

conference Board of Ordained Ministry, the clergy session shall vote on the provisional membership and commissioning of the candidates. If there is more than one candidate for provisional status presented to the clergy session for a vote, then each candidate shall be voted on individually, rather than having a single vote taken on the entire group of candidates. . . .

Rationale:

The practice in some areas of voting on all candidates as a group may save time. But if the clergy session is going to have a serious responsibility in reviewing candidates, it must have a right to do more than rubber-stamp all candidates or reject all without distinction.

¶326.

Petition Number: 20450-OM-¶326-G; Cady, Stephen - Rochester, NY, USA.

Residency Requirement when Living Outside of Home Annual Conference

Append to the end of the first paragraph of ¶ 326:

When provisional members are appointed outside of their annual conference boundaries, they shall have the option to complete their residency curriculum under the auspices of the Board of Ordained Ministry in the annual conference where they reside.

Rationale:

Many provisional elders under appointment outside of their home annual conference are forced, often at great expense, to return several times a year to complete their residency curriculum. Some BOOMs allow provisional elders to complete residency in the annual conference of residence. This petition makes it consistent across the connection.

¶326.1.

Petition Number: 20449-OM-¶326.1-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Authority of Provisional Deacon

Amend ¶ 326.1

¶ 326. *Service of Provisional Members*—

. . .

1. Provisional members . . . local church. A provisional member preparing for ordination as a deacon shall be ~~licensed for~~ commissioned to the practice of ministry

within the appointment setting during provisional membership to perform the duties of the ministry of the deacon as stated in ¶ 328 and be granted support as stated in ¶ 331.10. The appointment setting is defined as “people within or related to the community or ministry setting being served.” Such authorization granted by the license . . .

Rationale:

Clarifies that the practice of provisional member deacons is limited to the appointment setting during provisional membership. This makes the authority of provisional member deacons and provisional member elders the same in being located within the appointment setting.

¶327.

Petition Number: 20455-OM-¶327; Patterson, Cynthia - North Canton, OH, USA for East Ohio Annual Conference.

Establish Process for Reinstatement of Provisional Membership

Add new subparagraph after ¶ 327.7 to read:

8. Reinstatement to Provisional Membership—Provisional members whose conference relationship has been discontinued shall only be reinstated by the Board of Ordained Ministry of the annual conference in which they were discontinued. When approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry and the clergy session, their provisional member’s credentials shall be reissued and they shall be eligible to continue with the full eligibility and rights of a provisional member.

Rationale:

Discontinued provisional members who seek to return to the ordination process do not have a clearly defined process to reenter conference relationship without re-applying for provisional membership. This new provision defines, similar to the reinstatement of a local pastor, how conference relationship and matriculation toward full membership may be restored.

¶327.

Petition Number: 20673-OM-¶327-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Elimination of Mandatory Retirement Ages

Amend ¶ 327 as follows:

¶ 327.7. Provisional members may not be retired under the provisions of ¶ 358. ~~Provisional members who~~

~~have reached the mandatory retirement age shall be automatically discontinued.~~ Provisional elders may be classified as retired local pastors under the provisions of ¶ 320.5.

Amend ¶ 357 as follows:

~~¶357.4. Mandatory Retirement—Every clergy member of an annual conference who will have attained age seventy-two on or before July 1 in the year in which the conference is held shall automatically be retired.~~

Amend ¶ 408 as follows:

¶ 408. *Termination of Office*—An elder who is serving as a bishop up to the time of retirement shall have the status of a retired bishop.

1. ~~Mandatory Retirement—~~a) A bishop shall be retired on August 31 next following the regular session of the jurisdictional conference if the bishop’s sixty-eighth birthday has been reached on or before July 1 of the year in which the jurisdictional conference is held.⁵

b) ~~A bishop in a central conference shall be retired at a date no later than three months following the adjournment of General Conference, if the bishop’s sixty-eighth birthday is reached on or before the opening day of his or her scheduled conference effective on January 1, 2016. This action becomes effective at the adjournment of General Conference 2016.~~

c) Pension, as provided under the Clergy Retirement Security Program or the Global Episcopal Pension Program (or, in either case, any successor bishop pension or retirement plan or program), as either may apply, shall be payable as provided in such plan or program following the close of the jurisdictional or central conference.

d) If, however, the retired bishop accepts any one of the following assignments of churchwide responsibility, the General Council on Finance and Administration, after consultation with the Council of Bishops, shall set a level of compensation not to exceed a maximum determined by the General Conference on recommendation of the General Council on Finance and Administration with the compensation costs borne by the Episcopal Fund: (1) assignment of a special nature with direct relationship and accountability to the Council of Bishops, or (2) assignment to a general agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education. Assignment of retired bishops to United Methodist Church-related institutions of higher education must be at the initiative of the institutions, with service not to exceed the mandatory retirement ages of the institutions.

If a bishop is assigned to a general agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education, that agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education will pay 50 percent of the compensation established by GCFA for the position. The

general agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education shall further assume all responsibility for the bishop's operational and travel expenses related to the assignment.

Compensation for any special assignment shall cease after the bishop ~~has reached the mandatory age of retirement for all ordained ministers (§ 358.1) or completes the assignment. , whichever comes first, .~~ Retired bishops elected by the Council of Bishops as executive secretary and ecumenical officer may continue to be compensated for such special assignment(s) throughout the terms of office. No assignment to a jurisdiction, central conference, annual conference, or non-United Methodist agency shall qualify for additional compensation from the Episcopal Fund under the provisions of this paragraph. The status of a retired bishop on special assignment shall, for purposes of housing and other benefits, be that of a retired bishop.

Amend ¶ 417 as follows:

¶ 417. *Selection and Assignment*—Inasmuch as the district superintendency is an extension of the general superintendency, the bishop shall appoint elders to serve as district superintendents. Prior to each appointment, the bishop shall consult with the cabinet and the committee on district superintendency of the district to which the new superintendent will be assigned (¶ 426) for the purpose of determining leadership needs of the annual conference and the district (¶ 401). In the selection of superintendents, bishops shall give due consideration to the inclusiveness of The United Methodist Church with respect to sex, race, national origin, physical challenge, and age; ~~except for the provisions of mandatory retirement.~~

Amend ¶ 425 as follows:

¶ 425. *Responsibility*—1. Clergy shall be appointed by the bishop, who is empowered to make and fix all appointments in the episcopal area of which the annual conference is a part. Appointments are to be made with consideration of the gifts and evidence of God's grace of those appointed, to the needs, characteristics, and opportunities of congregations and institutions, and with faithfulness to the commitment to an open itineracy. Open itineracy means appointments are made without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, color, disability, marital status, or age; ~~except for the provisions of mandatory retirement.~~

Amend ¶ 715 as follows:

¶ 715.3. Normal retirement for all general agency staff personnel shall be at age sixty-five or the completion of forty years of service to The United Methodist Church in an elective, appointive, or employed capacity. ~~Mandatory retirement for elective and appointive staff shall be at age seventy-two.~~ There shall be no mandatory retirement age for ~~other employed~~ staff. All general

agency staff personnel may elect to retire from the employing general agency at any time in accordance with the policy in place at the general agency or, if the general agency has a voting representative on the committee on personnel policies and practices of the General Council on Finance and Administration, with the policy established by the General Council on Finance and Administration upon recommendation of the committee on personnel policies and practices.

Rationale:

Mandatory retirement based on age is inimical to the best interest of God's people and of all society. It is illegal in most, if not all, secular institutions in the United States and ought to be abandoned as obsolete in the Church.

¶327.2.

Petition Number: 20452-OM-¶327.2-G; Gadlage, Christopher - Decatur, IN, USA.

Granting Voice to All Clergy (Provisional Members)

Amend ¶ 327.2:

Provisional members shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the following:
a) ~~constitutional amendments;~~
b) ~~all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. Provisional clergy members who have completed all of their educational requirements may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conferences.~~

Rationale:

Provisional members do not all have representation at General, jurisdictional, or central conferences, and have no voice in constitutional matters. All United Methodists should have voice and representation in these important matters. (This petition is related to Petition Granting Voice to All Clergy (Provisional Members) ¶ 35.)

¶327.2.

Petition Number: 20453-OM-¶327.2; Wharff, Mark - Modesto, CA, USA for California-Nevada Annual Conference. 2 Similar Petitions

Amend 327.2

Amend ¶ 327.2 as follows:

2. Provisional members shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the following:

(a) constitutional amendments;

(b) all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. Provisional clergy members who have completed all of their educational requirements may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conferences.

¶327.3.

Petition Number: 20454-OM-¶327.3; Wharff, Mark - Modesto, CA, USA for California-Nevada Annual Conference.

Amend 327.3

Amend ¶ 327.3 as follows:

3. Provisional members may serve on any board, commission, or committee of the annual conference except the Board of Ordained Ministry (¶ 635.1). They shall not be eligible for election to elect and to be elected as delegates to the General, central, or jurisdictional or conferences.

¶327.6.

Petition Number: 20451-OM-¶327.6-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Fair Process Appeal Timeline for Provisional Members

Amend ¶ 327.6

¶ 327. *Eligibility and Rights of Provisional Membership*—

...

6. *Discontinuance from Provisional Membership*—

... In the case of discontinuation without consent, prior to any final recommendation, a provisional member will be advised of the right to receive a fair process hearing before the committee on conference relations of the Board of Ordained Ministry. To receive a fair process hearing, the provisional member shall notify the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry in writing no later than forty-five days preceding the beginning of the annual conference session. A report of the action

...

Rationale:

This change provides adequate time for a Board of Ordained Ministry to administer a fair process hearing that adheres to time lines in the *Discipline*, as well as falling within established dates of the annual conference session.

¶328.

Petition Number: 20456-OM-¶328-G; Williams, Alice - Orlando, FL, USA.

Administration of Sacraments by Deacons

Amend the *Book of Discipline* ¶ 328 as follows:

... Deacons give leadership in the church's life: in teaching and proclaiming the Word; in contributing to worship; in assisting the elders in administering the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, or in presiding at the celebration of the sacraments; ~~when contextually appropriate and duly authorized;~~ in forming and nurturing disciples; in conducting marriages and burying the dead; ... ~~the resident bishop of the annual conference in which the deacon is appointed ay authorize the deacon to preside at the celebration of the sacraments.~~ Presiding at the celebration of sacraments involves taking responsibility to lead the gathered community in celebrating baptism and Holy Communion

Rationale:

The role of ordained deacon is no less, or more, a valid and valued calling than that of an ordained elder in the ministry and life of The UMC. As such, ordained deacons should have the same authority entrusted to them to administer the sacraments as an ordained

¶330.

Petition Number: 20457-OM-¶330-G; Barnes, Robert - Mitchellville, MD, USA for Mount Oak Fellowship.

Ensure Clergy Session Right in Ordaining Deacons

AMEND ¶ 330.6 by ADDING language as follows:

6. A provisional member of the annual conference who has completed the requirements for deacon's orders and admission into full membership shall be eligible for election to full membership and ordination as deacon by a bishop. If there is more than one candidate for ordination as deacon presented to the clergy session for a vote, then each candidate shall be voted on individually, rather than having a single vote taken on the entire group of candidates. Following election, the bishop and secretary of the conference shall provide a certificate of full membership in the annual conference, and following ordination, a certificate of ordination.

¶330.

Petition Number: 20458-OM-¶330-G; Merrick, Tracy - Wexford, PA, USA.

Amend Questions Required for Ordination as Deacon and Admission to Full Connection

Change ¶ 330.5.c.4 as follows:

¶ 330. *Requirements for Ordination as Deacon and Admission to Full Connection* . . .

5. The following questions are guidelines for the preparation of the examination:

c) The Practice of Ministry . . .

(4) Provide evidence of your willingness to relate yourself in ministry to all persons without regard to race, color, ethnicity, national origin, social status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, economic condition, or disability.

Rationale:

A series of petitions are being submitted to expand and bring consistency in the *Book of Discipline* among the various lists of included constituencies. If this and the other changes are adopted, the following paragraphs would be consistent, except for contextual differences: ¶ 4, ¶ 162, ¶ 330,

¶330.3c.

Petition Number: 20459-OM-¶330.3c-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Alternate Ordination Route for Deacons

Amend ¶ 330.3c

3. They shall have met the following educational requirements: (a) graduation with a Bachelor of Arts or equivalent degree . . . ; (b) graduation with a Master of Divinity degree or a master’s degree from a graduate theological school recognized by the University Senate, or a master’s degree in an area of specialized ministry; (c) or are candidates over the age of 35 who have completed four years of full-time (or the equivalent) employment in the area of specialized ministry with and who have received professional certification or license in their area of ministry including a minimum of eight semester hours of graduate academic credit. Educational requirements in every case shall include the completion of the basic graduate theological studies of the Christian faith, as outlined listed in ¶ 324.4a.

Rationale:

This validates ministry experience as an alternate way to meet some of the requirements toward becoming an ordained deacon. This is a similar alternate ordination route to what local pastors may use after completing education-

al requirements and a minimum of four years’ service in appointive ministry.

¶333.

Petition Number: 20460-OM-¶333-G; Barnes, Robert - Mitchellville, MD, USA for Mount Oak Fellowship.

Ensure Clergy Session Rights in Ordaining Elders

AMEND ¶ 333.2 by ADDING language as follows:

2. A provisional member of the annual conference who has completed the requirements for elder’s orders and admission into full membership shall be eligible for election to full membership and ordination as elder by a bishop. If there is more than one candidate for ordination as elder presented to the clergy session for a vote, then each candidate shall be voted on individually, rather than having a single vote taken on the entire group of candidates. Following election, the bishop and secretary of the conference shall provide a certificate of full membership in the annual conference, and following ordination, a certificate of ordination.

Rationale:

The practice in some areas of voting on all candidates as a group may save time. But if the clergy session is going to have a serious responsibility in reviewing candidates, it must have a right to do more than rubber-stamp all candidates or reject all without distinction.

¶334.5.

Petition Number: 20712-OM-¶334.5-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Local Discernment of Marriage and Wedding Services

Add new subparagraph after ¶ 334.5:

6. No elder will be required or compelled to perform, or prohibited from performing, any marriage, union, or blessing of any couple, including same-sex couples. Elders have the right to exercise and preserve his or her conscience when requested to perform any marriage, union, or blessing of any couple.

Rationale:

Allows local churches to host same-sex wedding services on church property. Grants all clergy the freedom to exercise their conscience when invited to preside at any wedding service, regardless of sexuality.

¶335.

Petition Number: 20461-OM-¶335-G; Plasterer, George - Clearwater, FL, USA. 1 Similar Petition

Ability to Teach the Faith

Amend *Discipline* ¶ 335, *Requirements for Admission to Full Connection and Ordination as Elder*, by adding new language as follows:

¶ 335. . . . (8) responded to a written or oral doctrinal examination administered by the Board of Ordained Ministry. The candidate should demonstrate the ability to communicate clearly in both oral and written form. The candidate's reflections and the board's response should be informed by the insights and guidelines of Part III of the *Discipline*. The review of the candidate by the Board of Ordained Ministry shall include evaluating the candidate's ability to articulately teach our church's Doctrinal Standards (¶ 104), affirm them as his or her own doctrinal beliefs, and refute common objections to our doctrine. The following questions are guidelines for the preparation of the examination:

a) Theology.

. . .

(5) Identify and respond to objections some may have to the following parts of our church's doctrinal standards (¶ 104):

(a) the existence of God;

(b) the eternal divinity of Jesus Christ;

(c) original sin;

(d) the impossibility of us being justified before God on account of our own righteousness;

(e) the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice on the cross for our sins;

Rationale:

Before we ordain individuals to a lifetime ministry involving teaching the word and administering the sacraments, it is important to go beyond asking about their subjective experiences or personal beliefs, and carefully examine how well they can affirm, teach, and defend our church's faith.

¶335.

Petition Number: 20462-OM-¶335-G; Cady, Stephen - Rochester, NY, USA.

Enabling Provisional Elders to be Appointed to Theological Doctoral Studies

Amend ¶ 335 in the first paragraph to the following:

. . . Such ministry settings may include campus ministry, college and university chaplaincy, overseas/mission work, full-time doctoral studies for the purposes of teaching in a seminary or theological school setting, and other ministries so recognized by the Division of Ordained Ministry of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Rationale:

BOOMs are currently inconsistent in their support of provisional elders who are also doctoral students pursuing a degree in the theological encyclopedia. This petition makes it explicit that being appointed as a full-time doctoral student for the purpose of teaching in a seminary or theological school setting is legitimate.

¶338.

Petition Number: 20464-OM-¶338-G; Williams, Alice - Orlando, FL, USA.

Separation Timeframe for Clergy

Amend the *Book of Discipline* ¶ 338 by adding a new subparagraph 5 as follows:

5. In order to assist in a successful transition of leadership through the appointment process of ordained elders, provisional elders, associate members and local pastors, once a clergyperson receives a new appointment, or retires, the general practice shall be that they disengage from the church and congregation they are leaving for a period of one year. This includes attendance at worship, performance of clergy duties (weddings, funerals, baptisms, teaching Sunday school or Bible studies, preaching, etc.), and engagement of social media regarding the church unless requested and agreed to by the incoming clergyperson.

Rationale:

To everything there is a season. In an effort to facilitate a successful transition, and to assist the incoming pastor in connecting fully with his or her new congregation, the outgoing pastor should agree to disengage from his or her previous appointment for a period of one year.

¶338.

Petition Number: 20465-OM-¶338-G; Feagins, John - San Antonio, TX, USA.

Open Itineracy

Amend ¶ 338 as follows:

¶ 338. The Itinerant System—The itinerant system is the accepted method of The United Methodist Church by which ordained elders, provisional elders, and associate members are appointed by the bishop to fields of labor. All ordained elders, provisional elders, and associate members shall accept and abide by these appointments. When making appointments, bishops and cabinets shall adhere to the ethical principles of inclusive, equitable, and commit to and support open itineracy and the protection of the prophetic pulpit ~~and diversity~~. Persons appointed to multiple-staff ministries, either in a single parish or in a cluster or larger parish, shall have personal and professional access to the bishop and cabinet, the committee on pastor-parish relations, as well as to the pastor in charge. The nature of the appointment process is specified in ¶¶ 425-429.

1. Full-time service shall be the norm for ordained elders, provisional elders, and associate members in the annual conference. Full-time service shall mean that the person's entire vocational time, as defined by the district superintendent in consultation with the pastor and the committee on pastor-parish relations, is devoted to the work of ministry in the field of labor to which one is appointed by the bishop.

2. *Less Than Full-Time Service*—On occasion, less than full-time service is requested by or required of an elder, provisional elder, or associate member. A clergy member may be appointed in one-quarter, one-half, or three-quarter time increments by the bishop to less than full-time service without loss of essential rights or membership in the annual conference. Division of Ordained Ministry-endorsed appointments beyond the local church may be for less than full-time service.

a) Appointment to less than full-time service is not a guarantee, but may be made by the bishop under the following circumstances:

(1) *Limited Itineracy*—Less than full-time service may be granted—but is not guaranteed—when the elder, provisional elder, or associate member has declared in writing that itineracy is limited due to temporary constraints. The clergy member shall present that written declaration to the bishop and the chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry prior to the annual conference session at which the appointment is made.

(2) *Self-Initiated*—The elder, provisional elder, or associate member seeking less than full-time service shall present a written request to the bishop and the chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry at least 90 days prior to the annual conference session at which the appointment is made. Exceptions to the 90-day deadline shall be approved by the cabinet and the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

~~(3) Bishop-Initiated—For missional purposes, the bishop may appoint an elder, provisional elder, or an associate member to less than full-time service. The clergy person shall be notified at least 90 days prior to final termination of the current appointment. Special attention shall be given to ensure that the values of open itineracy are preserved.~~

b) *Provisions for Less Than Full-time Appointment*

(1) Following appropriate consultation, as established in ¶¶ 338 and 425-429, and upon joint recommendation of the cabinet and the Board of Ordained Ministry, the less than full-time category shall be confirmed by a two-thirds vote of the clergy members in full connection of the annual conference.

(2) Reappointment to less than full-time service shall be approved annually by the bishop and cabinet and shall not be granted for more than a total of eight years, except by a three-fourths vote of the clergy members in full connection of the annual conference.

(3) Elders, provisional elders, and associate members who receive appointment at less than full-time service remain within the itineracy and, as such, remain available, upon consultation with the bishop and cabinet, for appointment to full-time service. A written request to return to full-time appointment shall be made to the bishop and cabinet at least six months prior to the annual conference session at which the appointment is to be made.

(4) The bishop may make *ad interim* appointments at less than full-time service upon request of the elder, provisional elder, or associate member following consultation as specified in ¶¶ 424-428 and upon recommendation of the cabinet and executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the same to be acted upon by the next regular session of the annual conference.

3. Interim appointments may be made to charges that have special transitional needs.

a) Interim clergy may serve outside the annual conference where membership is held under the provision of ¶ 346.1, with approval and consent of the bishops involved.

b) Interim appointments will be for a specified length of time, established in advance following consultation with the district superintendent, the pastor-parish relations committee, and the interim pastor.

4. Associate members, provisional members, or full members may be appointed to attend any school, college, or theological seminary listed by the University Senate, or participate in a program of clinical pastoral education in a setting accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education or another accrediting agency approved by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Rationale:

Involuntary part-time appointment (section 3) is a form of biased, punitive, and economic coercion that conflicts with Judicial Council Decision 1226, restrictive rules III and IV, inclusiveness, fair process, and open itineracy. Clarifies that open itineracy is an ethical principle.

¶338.2.

Petition Number: 20463-OM-¶338.2-G; Paige, Peggy - Ingalls, MI, USA for United Methodist Rural Advocates.

Bi-Vocational/Tent-making Part Time Ministry

Add new subparagraph after ¶ 338.2 a) as follows and renumber the remaining:

¶ 338.2 *Less Than Full-Time Service*—

a) Appointment to less than full-time service is not a guarantee, but may be made by the bishop under the following circumstances:

(1) Bi-vocational/tentmaking ministry—Less than full-time service may be granted—but is not guaranteed—when the elder, provisional elder, or associate member has declared in writing a plan for service to the local church and employment beyond the local church. The clergy member shall present that written declaration to the bishop and chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry prior to the annual conference session at which the appointment is made.

Rationale:

In the changing culture and landscape, we need to be sensitive to the needs of churches and community as well as the abilities or lack thereof for churches to support full-time clergy with benefits. Bi-vocational/tentmaking options need to be available for ordained elders, deacons, provisional elders, and associate members

¶339.

Petition Number: 20466-OM-¶339; Plowden, Warren - Macon, GA, USA for South Georgia Annual Conference.

Define Pastor

Amend *BOD* ¶ 339 as follows:

¶ 339. *Definition of Pastor*—A pastor is an ordained elder, deacon, probationer deacon (according to the 1992 *Book of Discipline*), associate member, provisional elder, or local pastor approved by vote of the clergy session and maybe appointed by the bishop to be in charge of a station, circuit, cooperative parish, extension ministry, ecumenical shared ministry, or to a church of another denomination, or on the staff of one such appointment.

menical shared ministry, or to a church of another denomination, or on the staff of one such appointment.

¶339.

Petition Number: 20467-OM-¶339; Hodge, Jeffrey - Liverpool, NY, USA for Upper New York Annual Conference.

Pastoral Definition Reform

Be it resolved that ¶ 339 in the *Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

¶339. *Definition of a Pastor*—A pastor is an ordained elder, probationary deacon (according to 1992 *Book of Discipline*), associate member, provisional elder, or local pastor approved by vote of the clergy session and may be appointed by the bishop to be in charge of a station, circuit, cooperative parish, extension ministry, ecumenical shared ministry, or to a church of another denomination or on the staff of one such appointment. Ordained deacons in full connection and provisional deacons, with all rights, privileges, and responsibilities granted to them in the Discipline shall also be defined as pastors.

¶340.2.

Petition Number: 20708-OM-¶340.2-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Local Discernment of Clergy Candidates

Add new subparagraph after ¶ 340.2:

3. Clergy who cannot in good conscience remain a member of an annual conference, based upon the standards for ordination of practicing homosexual persons in that conference, may choose to transfer under ¶ 347 and shall be supported through the process.

Rationale:

Allows annual conferences to decide how sexuality applies to the standards of holy living in clergy candidates. Protects practicing gay clergy who cannot be appointed within their annual conference because of a lack of safe appointments.

¶340.2.

Petition Number: 20713-OM-¶340.2-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Local Discernment of Marriage and Wedding Services

Add new subparagraphs after ¶ 340.2:

3. No clergy at any time may be required or compelled to perform, or prohibited from performing, any marriage, union, or blessing of any couple, including same-sex couples. All clergy have the right to exercise and preserve their conscience when requested to perform any marriage, union, or blessing of any couple.

Rationale:

Allows local churches to host same-sex wedding services on church property. Grants all clergy the freedom to exercise their conscience when invited to preside at any wedding service, regardless of sexuality.

¶341.

Petition Number: 20714-OM-¶341-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Local Discernment of Marriage and Wedding Services

Amend ¶ 341:

6. Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions same-sex marriages shall not be conducted performed by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches on property owned by a local church unless that church decides by a majority vote of church conference to allow same-sex marriages on that property.

Rationale:

Allows local churches to host same-sex wedding services on church property. Grants all clergy the freedom to exercise their conscience when invited to preside at any wedding service, regardless of sexuality.

¶341.6.

Petition Number: 20468-OM-¶341.6; Thaarup, Jorgen - Copenhagen, Denmark.

Follow Civil-law of the Country

Action proposed: Amend ¶ 341.6:

¶ 341.6. Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches in countries where civil-laws do not permit a pastor to perform same-sex marriage ceremonies.

Rationale:

The regulations of marriage given by the church must follow the regulations given by civil-laws in the different countries

¶341.6.

Petition Number: 20469-OM-¶341.6-G; Taylor, Deborah Tinsley - Riverside, IL, USA for Northern Illinois Annual Conference. 13 Similar Petitions

A Simple Plan #5

[Also submitted as:

Next Generation UMC #8, ALL BELONG: Extending the Rite of Marriage to All, A Fully Inclusive Way Forward Part 5 of 8]

Amend ¶ 341.6 as follows:

~~Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.~~

Rationale:

In the Wesleyan tradition we aim to live by the admonition to do no harm. Revising sections of the *Book of Discipline* that prevent people from being full participants in the life of The United Methodist Church alleviates some of the harm The United Methodist Church

¶346.1.

Petition Number: 20470-OM-¶346.1-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Provisions for Associate Members from Outside the Annual Conference

Amend ¶ 346.1:

¶ 346. *Provisions for Clergy from Outside the Annual Conference*—Ordained clergy, associate members, or provisional members from other annual conferences and Christian denominations may receive an appointment in the annual conference in the following manner:

1. *Ordained Clergy, Associate Members, or Provisional Members from Other Annual Conferences and Other Methodist Denominations*—With approval and consent of the bishops or other judicatory authorities involved, ordained clergy, associate members, or provisional members of other annual conferences or other Methodist churches may receive appointments in the annual or missionary conference while retaining their home conference membership or denominational affiliation. . . .

Rationale:

Associate members are not required to have their license approved annually by their conference and have an ongoing relationship with the conference and The UMC.

Therefore, they should be able to serve in other conferences after meeting all requirements listed in ¶ 346.1.

¶347.

Petition Number: 20471-OM-¶347; Smith, Jeremy - Seattle, WA, USA.

Retain Annual Conference Authority in Recognizing Ordination

Amend ¶ 347.5 as follows:

Transfers from Other Denominations.

5) Ordained clergy seeking admission into an annual conference on credentials from another denomination who have previously withdrawn from membership in the effective relation in an annual conference of The United Methodist Church or one of its legal predecessors shall not be admitted or readmitted without ~~the consent of receiving a recommendation from~~ the annual conference from which they withdrew or its legal successor, or the annual conference of which the major portion of their former conference is a part, such ~~consent recommendation~~ to be ~~granted upon recommendation of sent from~~ its Board of Ordained Ministry within 90 days of the request.

Rationale:

Annual conferences have sole authority on ordination. The entirety of Section XII prescribes authority to the annual conference and presiding bishop. To require cross-conference approval for ordination negates that authority. Changing “consent” to “recommendation” retains both annual conference authority and prudent investigation.

¶347.1.

Petition Number: 20473-OM-¶347.1-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Associate Members Transferring to Another Annual Conference

Amend ¶ 347.1

¶ 347. *Transfers*—1. *From Other Annual Conferences*—Ordained clergy, associate members, or provisional members from other annual conferences of The United Methodist Church may be received by transfer into full, associate, or provisional ~~or full~~ membership with the consent of the bishops involved. . . .

Rationale:

Provides a way for associate members to transfer annual conferences.

¶347.1.

Petition Number: 20474-OM-¶347.1-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Full BOM Recommendation Required for Transfer

Amend ¶ 347.1

¶ 347. *Transfers*—1. *From Other Annual Conferences*—Ordained clergy, or provisional members from other annual conferences of The United Methodist Church may be received by transfer into provisional or full membership with the consent of the bishops involved. Recommendation by the ~~executive committee of the~~ Board of Ordained Ministry and approval of the clergy session shall take place prior to the transfer.

Rationale:

Requires that the full Board of Ordained Ministry (rather than only the executive committee) recommend a candidate to the clergy session for transfer.

¶347.2.

Petition Number: 20475-OM-¶347.2-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Clergy Session Approves Transfers from Other Methodist Denominations

Amend ¶ 347.2

¶ 347. *Transfers*—

. . .

2. *From Other Methodist Denominations*—a) Ordained elders or ordained clergy from other Methodist churches may be received by transfer into provisional or full conference membership or as local pastors, . . . that meet this definition. ~~Prior consultation with the chairperson or executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry shall be held in order to determine that the minister meets the standards for conference membership established by the Discipline and the annual conference.~~ Recommendation by the Board of Ordained Ministry and approval of the clergy session shall take place prior to the transfer. A psychological report, . . .

Rationale:

The Board of Ordained Ministry recommends to the clergy session all clergy membership and conference relations requests before decisions are final. The clergy session is the only body with authority to approve conference

relations and membership decisions and must be included in any decision about transfer into the conference.

¶347.3.

Petition Number: 20476-OM-¶347.3-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Clarity for Transfer Process from Another Denomination

Amend ¶ 347.3

¶ 347. *Transfers*—

3. *From Other Denominations*—

~~c) Following the provisional member’s election to full conference membership as a deacon or elder as provided in ¶ 326, the bishop and secretary of the conference shall provide a certificate of full membership in the annual conference:~~

4. . . .

5. . . .

6. Election to membership and recognition of orders.

To complete the transfer process:

a) Following the provisional member’s election to full conference membership as a deacon or elder as provided in ¶ 330 or ¶ 335 respectively, the bishop and secretary of the conference shall provide a certificate of full membership in the annual conference; and

b) 6. After the orders of an ordained minister of another church shall have been duly recognized, and the minister has been approved for elected to full membership, . . .

Rationale:

Reordering the paragraph in this sequence shows the entire process required to complete a transfer from another denomination. This ordering ensures that those who transfer receive a certificate of membership and that their original ordination is recognized in The UMC after the vote for election into full membership.

¶347.3a.

Petition Number: 20472-OM-¶347.3a; Girrell, Rebecca - Lebanon, NH, USA.

Reduce Inappropriate Disclosure and Discrimination—Transfer

Amend the *Book of Discipline* ¶ 347.3.a (*Transfers From Other Denominations*) as follows:

3. *From Other Denominations*—a) On recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the clergy mem-

bers in full connection may recognize the orders of ordained clergy from other denominations and receive them as provisional members or local pastors. They shall present their credentials for examination by the bishop and Board of Ordained Ministry and give assurance of their Christian faith and experience. They shall give evidence of their agreement with and willingness to support and maintain United Methodist doctrine, discipline, and polity and present a satisfactory letter from a physician, as described in ¶ 324.8. certificate of good health on the prescribed form from a physician approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry. [Retain the rest of the paragraph as written.]

Rationale:

Replaces the health form with a letter from a physician, eliminating the high potential for confidential information to be disclosed in violation of the individual’s privacy. Refers back to disability/diagnosis nondiscrimination for those seeking provisional membership, making the policy more consistent.

¶348.

Petition Number: 20477-OM-¶348-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Assigning Clergy Mentors

Amend ¶ 348

~~¶ 348. *Mentors*—1. Mentors shall be recommended by the cabinet, selected, trained and held accountable by the Board of Ordained Ministry. There are two categories of mentor, each with distinct functions and responsibilities as follows:~~

~~2. 1. Mentoring occurs within a relationship . . . preparation for ministry.~~

It is expected that all annual conferences will make available and encourage the use of spiritual directors, coaches, pastoral counselors, or vocational mentors for all clergy, separate from the superintendent, and that clergy will use these kinds of support as a standard practice of ministry throughout the clergy career and in all assignments or appointments.

†. 2. Mentors shall be recommended by the cabinet, selected, trained and held accountable by the Board of Ordained Ministry. There are two categories of mentor, each with distinct functions and responsibilities as follows:

a) Candidacy mentors . . .

b) Clergy mentors are clergy in full connection, associate members, full-time, or part-time local pastors

who have completed the Course of Study or a Master of Divinity from a University Senate-approved theological school and are trained to provide ongoing oversight and counsel with local pastors and with provisional members. Local pastors, while in Course of Study or seminary (§ 316.4), shall ~~will~~ be assigned a clergy mentor by the district committee on ordained ministry ~~in consultation with the district superintendent~~. Provisional members ~~will~~ shall be assigned a clergy mentor in full connection by the ~~conference~~ Board of Ordained Ministry ~~in consultation with the district superintendent~~. A candidacy mentor ~~may continue with the same person if trained to serve as a clergy mentor~~. Licensed or ordained clergy from other denominations shall be assigned a clergy mentor by the Board of Ordained Ministry (§ 346.2, § 347.3b).

~~4. Clergy mentoring begins when a person local pastor, provisional member, or clergy of another denomination receives an appointment as a local pastor or as a provisional member.~~

~~3. Local pastors and provisional members will be assigned to a clergy mentoring group, wherever possible, or to a clergy mentor by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Persons transferring from other denominations will also be assigned a clergy mentor (§ 347.3b).~~

~~It is expected...~~

Rationale:

The previous wording caused confusion regarding the role of the BOM and superintendent in assigning clergy mentors. This new wording and ordering help to clarify the purpose and implementation of mentoring.

¶349.

Petition Number: 20479-OM-¶349-G; Berneking, Nathanael - Columbia, MO, USA.

Adjusting the Eighth Year Assessment

Amend ¶ 349 as follows:

¶ 349. *Evaluation*—Evaluation is a continuous process for formation in servant ministry and servant leadership that must take place in a spirit of understanding and acceptance. Evaluation serves as a process for clergy to assess their effectiveness in ministry and to discern God's call to continue in ordained ministry.

1. For clergy serving local churches, the district superintendent, in consultation with the pastor-parish relations committee, will evaluate annually the each clergy's effectiveness for ministry (§§ 334.2c, 419, 635.2o, r), using criteria, processes, and training developed by the cabinet and the Board of Ordained Ministry. The clergy in local

churches shall participate annually in an evaluation with the committee on pastor-parish relations for use into enhance an ongoing effective ministry and for to identifying continuing education needs and plans (§ 258.2g[5]), using criteria, processes, and training developed by the Board of Ordained Ministry and the cabinet. The process of evaluation shall include self-assessment and appropriate metrics, and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry will offer models to guide cabinets and Boards of Ordained Ministry in the evaluation process.

2. Deacons in appointments beyond the local church and elders and local pastors in appointments to extension ministries will undergo annual evaluation by their immediate supervisors, engage in annual self-evaluation, and include copies of these evaluations in the annual report submitted to their bishop, district superintendent, and the Board of Ordained Ministry (§ 344.2a). They shall have an annual conversation with their district superintendent about their ministry.

3. Every clergyperson shall also engage in a six-month process of personal and professional assessment and development every eight years. Subject to the discretion offered to the clergy by this paragraph, ~~t~~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, chosen by the clergyperson in his or her sole discretion, such as a retreat, spiritually centered program of continuing education, or series of coaching and mentoring sessions.

a) Subject to subsection d) below, ~~t~~The formal review may~~shall~~ include a self-evaluation, metrics appropriate to the ministry settings to which clergy are appointed, observations of trends from the previous eight years, and reviews or interviews with people close to the ministry of the clergy being reviewed.

b) The in-depth renewal opportunity shall be submitted by the clergyperson to the ~~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.~~ Nothing, in this section, however, shall be interpreted to require the annual conference or local church to provide funding for a clergyperson's in-depth renewal opportunity. Clergy are responsible for selection of such opportunities with costs and time away appropriate to the current

appointment, professional expense budget and personal finances of the clergy person. 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 formal review and the pastor's selected renewal opportunity 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 initiate a plan for such assessment by January 1, 2020. Each annual conference may, in the discretion of the bishop and cabinet, utilize current evaluation processes and measures of effectiveness in place of the formal review contemplated in subsection a), provided that such evaluations and measures already utilize metrics appropriate to each appointed clergy person's appointment.~~

Rationale:

This amendment would give annual conferences discretion in utilizing their own mode of evaluation for the eighth year assessment required by ¶ 349, thereby relieving them of added costs. It would also grant clergy agency and discretion, important factors in achieving renewal, in establishing their own plan for spiritual renewal.

¶349.3.

Petition Number: 20478-OM-¶349.3; Davis, Ashley - Montgomery, AL, USA for Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference.

Evaluation for Continuing Formation for Full Members and Local Pastors

Delete ¶ 349.3

Rationale:

Deletion of ¶ 349.3 removes from *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* the eight-year review, which consists of a six-month evaluation process for full members and local pastors. This evaluation process was prescribed by the 2016 General Conference. The *Discipline* calls for

¶349.3.

Petition Number: 20715-OM-¶349.3-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Local Discernment of Marriage and Wedding Services

Add new paragraph after ¶ 349.3:

4. No deacon will be required or compelled to perform, or prohibited from performing, any marriage, union, or blessing of any couple, including same-sex couples. Deacons have the right to exercise and preserve his or her conscience when requested to perform any marriage, union, or blessing of any couple.

Rationale:

Allows local churches to host same-sex wedding services on church property. Grants all clergy the freedom to exercise their conscience when invited to preside at any wedding service, regardless of sexuality.

¶354.2a.

Petition Number: 20481-OM-¶354.2a-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Limit Usage of Involuntary Leave

Amend by addition and deletion in the following way:

¶ 354.2a). A written and signed administrative complaint is not resolved through the supervisory (¶ 362.1b, c), or complaint (¶ 362.1e), or trial process within ninety days, or clearly cannot be resolved within 90 days. Because of the authority of committees on investigation to suspend (¶ 2704.2c), this option shall not be used when the complaint alleges any chargeable offenses (¶ 2702.1).

Rationale:

If the Judicial Council does not rule ¶ 354.2a) unconstitutional because it does not provide for hearing and appeal as written, it must be limited as an option to administrative complaints (incompetence, ineffectiveness) and not be used for complaints using offenses listed in ¶ 2702.1). As written, this paragraph can

¶354.5.

Petition Number: 20480-OM-¶354.5-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Separating Interim from Requested Involuntary Leave

Amend by addition of the following:

¶ 354.5 Between sessions of the annual conference, the bishop and cabinet may request that an involuntary leave of absence be granted following fair process (¶ 361-

363) before the conference relations committee if accepted by the Board of Ordained Ministry and administrative review committee meeting as soon as possible thereafter. The pastor shall have fair process rights to appear before both. This interim involuntary leave must be approved by two-thirds majority vote of the clergy session and taken separately from any other involuntary status sought by the cabinet for the following year. The cabinet may also terminate ¶ 363) an involuntary leave during the interim and require support by the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry and the support of a majority of the clergy session.

Rationale:

Paragraph 354.5 is not consistent with changes made regarding ¶¶ 361-363, 636, and 2718.3-4. These changes bring it up to date. Further, it should require a change in the “Business of the Annual Conference” report and require separate votes on interim and regular requests for involuntary leave.

¶357.1.

Petition Number: 20482-OM-¶357.1-G; Kim, Young Je - Falls City, NE, USA. 10 Similar Petitions

Increase Mandatory Retirement Age

Amend ¶ 357.1 as follows:

Mandatory Retirement—Every clergy member of an annual conference who will have attained age ~~seventy-two~~ seventy-five on or before July 1 in the year in which the conference is held shall automatically be retired.

Rationale:

1. Many professionals are now working late into their 70s and beyond.
2. Other denominations have retirement ages of 75 and beyond (e.g., 2017-2019 *Book of Order* . . . *Presbyterian Church USA*—no age limit; 2018 *Manual of Policies* . . . of the Evangelical Lutheran

¶357.1.

Petition Number: 20483-OM-¶357.1-G; Heinzman, William - Herndon, VA, USA.

Elimination of Mandatory Retirement Age for Clergy

Delete subparagraph 1 of paragraph 357 of the *Book of Discipline*. Renumber remaining subparagraphs accordingly.

Rationale:

While we are seeking to be a more inclusive, welcoming church, we force clergy to retire when they reach the age of 72; many of whom are healthy and might continue to serve, if given the opportunity. We should eliminate this unfounded practice of ageism.

¶357.1.

Petition Number: 20484-OM-¶357.1-G; Taylor-Storm, Dawn - West Chester, PA, USA.

Entering Candidacy After Age 72

Add new paragraph to *BOD* ¶ 357.1:

Candidates for ministry at age 72 or older may enter the candidacy process and be appointed in local pastor retired status under the provisions of ¶ 320.5.

Rationale:

Age is not a determination of fitness for ministry. This addition to our *Discipline* would allow conferences an ability to appoint candidates who feel a call to ministry at age 72 or above.

¶357.7.

Petition Number: 20485-OM-¶357.7; Girrell, Rebecca - Lebanon, NH, USA.

Reduce Inappropriate Medical Disclosure and Discrimination—Return from Retirement

Amend the *Book of Discipline* ¶ 357.7.2 (Return to Effective Relationship [from Retirement]) as follows:

(2) a satisfactory letter from a physician, as described in ¶ 324.8. ~~certificate of good health on the prescribed form from a physician approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry.~~

[Retain the rest of the paragraph as written.]

Rationale:

Replaces the health form with a letter from a physician, eliminating the high potential for confidential information to be disclosed in violation of the individual’s privacy. Refers back to disability/diagnosis non-discrimination for those seeking provisional membership, making the policy more consistent.

¶361.

Petition Number: 20486-OM-¶361; Wilson, John - Pittsburgh, PA, USA for Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference.

Remedial Action and Disposition in Administrative Matters

Add new paragraph between ¶ 361.1 and 361.2; re-number remaining subparagraphs:

¶ 361. *Administrative Referral, Disposition, and Remedial Action*—If the bishop determines that a clergy-person’s effectiveness is in question after completing the process of ¶ 334.3, the bishop may recommend an involuntary action listed in ¶ 361.1 or refer the bishop’s findings to the Board of Ordained Ministry for its consideration of remedial or other action.

a) Referral—When a referral is made by the bishop, the Board of Ordained Ministry shall develop a response in a timely manner.

(1) The matter shall be referred to the conference relations committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry. And this committee shall conduct an administrative hearing following fair process provisions.

(2) The bishop or a cabinet representative shall present the administrative matter to the committee.

(3) The respondent shall be given an opportunity to address the administrative matter in person, in writing, and with the assistance of a clergy-person in full connection, with voice.

b) Disposition—The conference relations committee makes a recommendation to the Board of Ordained Ministry following the fair process hearing.

(1) Once the committee has heard the bishop or bishop’s designee, the respondent, and others as determined by the chairperson of the conference relations committee, it may recommend remedial action, discontinuance, leave of absence, administrative location, dismissal of the matter, or other such action that it deems appropriate to the Board of Ordained Ministry.

(2) The board may accept or amend the recommendations of the committee, or it may dismiss the matter. In rare instances, the board may refer the complaint back to the bishop for possible referral as a judicial complaint.

(3) The board alternatively may refer the matter to the resident bishop as deemed appropriate for a process that seeks a just resolution.

(i) The bishop shall institute such a process and may use the assistance of a trained, impartial third-party facilitator(s) or mediator(s). Such referral shall not constitute a dismissal.

(ii) The appropriate persons, including a cabinet member and a representative of the Board of Ordained Ministry, shall enter into a written agreement outlining the process including any agreement on confidentiality. The parties shall be told that any resolution remains subject to the final approval by the board.

(iii) If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolutions, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters disclosed to third parties. If the just resolution process results in resolution, the signed written statement of resolution shall be given to the board, and the board may dismiss the matter, retain oversight relating to any terms or conditions of the statement of resolution, or take such other action as deemed appropriate.

(iv) If the process does not result in resolution, the matter is returned to the board for further action. The board’s response will be shared with the clergy-person, the bishop, the cabinet.

c) Remedial Action—In cooperation with the cabinet and in consultation with the clergy-person, the Board of Ordained Ministry may choose or recommend one or more of the following options for a program of remedial action, subject to regular oversight by the board and annual review:

(1) Program of continuing education and spiritual growth (¶ 350);

(2) Leave of absence, voluntary or involuntary (¶¶ 353, 354);

(3) Early retirement or involuntary retirement (¶ 357);

(4) Sabbatical leave (¶ 351);

(5) Honorable location (¶ 358);

(6) Surrender of ordained ministerial office (¶ 360);

(7) Medical Review (¶ 356);

(8) Personal counseling or therapy;

(9) Program of career evaluation;

(10) Peer support and supervision;

(11) Private reprimand: a letter signed by the chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry and the clergy-person’s district superintendent, addressed to the clergy-person with a file copy in the permanent file of the Board of Ordained Ministry stating the appropriateness of the administrative matter, the specific remedial action required, and the conditions under which the reprimand shall be withdrawn. A report of the reprimand and the remedial action taken shall remain in the personnel file of the clergy-person once the reprimand has been withdrawn.

Rationale:

Legislation restores language from the 2008 *Book of Discipline* for referral, disposition, and remedial action for an administrative matter that was removed by 2012 General Conference to streamline the judicial/administrative complaint process. The process was ruled unconstitutional in JD 1296, which restored judicial language, this petition restores administrative language.

¶361.

Petition Number: 20490-OM-¶361-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Organize Administrative Fair Process Paragraphs

Move current ¶ 363 to the beginning of ¶ 361:

¶ 361. ~~¶363.~~ *Disposition of Recommendations of In Cases of Involuntary Status Change—*

1. When there is a recommendation for an involuntary status change, the Board of Ordained Ministry shall take action in a timely manner. The recommendation shall be referred to the conference relations committee who shall conduct an administrative hearing following the fair process provisions of ¶ 361.2. The bishop or the Board of Ordained Ministry, as appropriate, shall designate the person to present the recommendation to the committee. The respondent shall be given an opportunity to address the recommendation in person, in writing, and with the assistance of a clergy person who is a member in full connection of the respondent's annual conference, and who shall have voice. Once the committee has heard the person designated to represent the recommendation, the respondent, and others as determined by the chairperson of the committee, it shall report its decision to the Board of Ordained Ministry. The board may affirm or reverse the decision of the committee.

† 2. Conference Relations Committee—Each annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry shall establish . . . [Re number rest of paragraph.]

Rationale:

Moves the explanation of the involuntary status change process to the beginning of the administrative fair process section. The requirements and steps for completing the process now follow. This organization provides a clearer understanding of the administrative fair process. The contents of ¶ 363 are not changed.

¶361.

Petition Number: 20491-OM-¶361-G; Smithson, Mark - Louisville, KY, USA.

Conference Relations Committee

Amend ¶ 361:

1. 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. Members of the conference relations committee may be selected randomly to hear cases within their jurisdictional or central conference.

Rationale:

This will alleviate the concern that annual conferences may become overly conservative or overly liberal in their interpretation and enforcement of the *Book of Discipline* by having a cross conference committee hear cases.

¶361.2.

Petition Number: 20489-OM-¶361.2-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

When Fair Process Begins in Administrative Complaints

Amend by Addition to ¶ 361.2 as follows:

¶ 361.2. *Fair Process Hearings—*As part of the holy covenant . . . in administrative hearings. The administrative proceedings and the rights set forth in this paragraph commence upon referral of a signed complaint to the proper authorities (JCDs 697, 704, 784) and shall be observed during the supervisory response. The process set forth . . .

Rationale:

Cabinets, simplifying their handling of a troubled pastor, desire postponing fair process rights. What happens before referral to the conference relations committee in the administrative track is called “supervision” but is usually where the pastor is isolated, intimidated, and coerced to decide “voluntarily” to take leave or withdraw. Fair process

¶361.2c.

Petition Number: 20488-OM-¶361.2c; Costello, Robert - Somers Point, NJ, USA.

Allows the Accompanying Person to Be Both Elder and a Lawyer

Amend by addition to ¶ 361.2c):

The respondent shall have a right to be accompanied . . . by a clergy person . . . who may also be a lawyer, in accordance . . .

Other paragraph impacted: ¶ 362 1(b).

Other parallel passages that should be changed: ¶¶ 413, 2702.3(c), 2706.2c), 362.1(b).

Rationale:

Elders should not be barred from serving as advocates, just because they are also licensed as attorneys. Advocacy in any hearing on behalf of a respondent is difficult and requires skills most pastors do not ordinarily have. When an accompanying clergyperson happens also to be a lawyer, he or she

¶361.2g.

Petition Number: 20487-OM-¶361.2g; Wilson, John - Pittsburgh, PA, USA for Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference.

Addressing the Principle of Legality—Clergy

Add new paragraph ¶ 361.2.g—Prior to the start of the administrative hearing by the conference relations committee the clergyperson may choose to have a trial. This choice must be made in writing and submitted to the chair of the conference relations committee prior to the start of the administrative hearing. The procedures are provided for in ¶¶ 2707-2713.

Rationale:

This legislation addresses the principle of legality raised in JD 1366 by restoring language and procedures used prior to 1996 *Discipline*. This language was found to meet the principle of legality in Judicial Council Decision 351 and the provisions of ¶ 20 of the Constitution.

¶362.

Petition Number: 20492-OM-¶362-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Organize Complaint Procedures Paragraphs

Move ¶ 362 to be inserted before current ¶ 2703:

PROCEDURES FOR REFERRAL AND INVESTIGATION OF A JUDICIAL COMPLAINT

¶ 362. ¶ NEW. *Complaint Procedures*—1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church is a sacred trust. The qualifications and duties of local pastors, associate members, provisional members, and full members are set forth in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, and we believe they flow from the gospel as taught by Jesus the Christ and proclaimed by his apostles. Whenever a person in any of the above categories, including those on leaves of all types, honorable or administrative location, or retirement, is accused of violating this trust,

the membership of his or her ministerial office shall be subject to review.

This review shall have as its primary purpose a just resolution of any violations of this sacred trust, in the hope that God’s work of justice, reconciliation, and healing may be realized in the body of Christ.

A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right insofar as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. In appropriate situations, processes seeking a just resolution as defined in ¶ 362.1c may be pursued. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration.

A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct as defined in ¶ 2702.1. When a complaint is received by the bishop, both the person making the complaint and the person against whom the complaint is made will be informed in writing of the process to be followed at that stage. When and if the stage changes, those persons will continue to be informed in writing of the new process in a timely fashion. All original time limitations may be extended for one 30-day period upon the consent of the complainant and the respondent.

a) *Supervision*—In the course of the ordinary fulfillment of the superintending role, the bishop or district superintendent may receive or initiate complaints about the performance or character of a clergyperson. A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct or unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties. The person filing the complaint and the clergyperson shall be informed by the district superintendent or bishop of the process for filing the complaint and its purpose.

b) *Supervisory Response*—The supervisory response of the bishop shall begin upon receipt of a formal complaint. The response is pastoral and administrative and shall be directed toward a just resolution among all parties. It is not part of any judicial process. The complaint shall be treated as an allegation or allegations during the supervisory process. At all supervisory meetings no verbatim record shall be made and no legal counsel shall be present. The person against whom the complaint was made may choose another person to accompany him or her with the right to voice; the person making the complaint shall have the right to choose a person to accompany him or her with the right to voice.

The supervisory response shall be carried out by the bishop or the bishop’s designee in a timely manner, with attention to communication to all parties regarding the complaint and the process. At the determination of the bishop, persons with qualifications and experience in

assessment, intervention, or healing may be selected to assist in the supervisory response. The bishop also may consult with the committee on pastor-parish relations for pastors, the district committee on superintendency for the district superintendents, appropriate personnel committee, or other persons who may be helpful.

When the supervisory response is initiated, the bishop shall notify the chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry that a complaint has been filed, of the clergy person named, of the general nature of the complaint, and, when concluded, of the disposition of the complaint.

c) Just Resolution—The supervisory response may include a process that seeks a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s), in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. If the bishop chooses to initiate a mediated attempt to produce a just resolution, then the bishop, the person filing the complaint, the respondent, and other appropriate persons shall enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality.

A process seeking a just resolution may begin at any time in the supervisory, complaint, or trial process. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. A just resolution agreed to by all parties shall be a final disposition of the related complaint. A process seeking a just resolution may begin at any time in the supervisory or complaint process. This is a not an administrative or judicial proceeding.

d) Suspension—When deemed appropriate, to protect the well-being of the person making the complaint, the congregation, annual conference, other context for ministry, and/or clergy, the bishop, with the recommendation of the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry, may suspend the person from all clergy responsibilities, but not from an appointment, for a period not to exceed ninety (90) days. With the agreement of the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the bishop may extend the suspension for only one additional period not to exceed thirty (30) days. During the suspension, salary, housing, and benefits provided by a pastoral charge will continue at a level no less than on the date of suspension. The person so suspended shall retain all rights and privileges as stated in ¶ 334. The cost of supply of a pastor during the suspension will be borne by the annual conference.

e) Referral or Dismissal of a Complaint—Upon receiving a written and signed complaint, the bishop shall, within ninety (90) days, carry out the supervisory response process outlined above. If within ninety (90) days after

the receipt of the complaint resolution is not achieved, the bishop shall either:

(1) Dismiss the complaint with the consent of the cabinet giving the reasons therefore in writing, a copy of which shall be placed in the clergy person's file; or

(2) Refer the matter to the counsel for the church as a complaint.

f) Supervisory Follow-up and Healing—The bishop and cabinet shall provide a process for healing within the congregation, annual conference, or other context of ministry if there has been significant disruption by the complaint. This process may include sharing of information by the bishop or the bishop's designee about the nature of the complaint without disclosing alleged facts, which may compromise any possible forthcoming administrative or judicial process. When facts are disclosed, due regard should be given to the interests and needs of all concerned, including the respondent and complainant who may be involved in an administrative or judicial process. This process for healing may include a process of a just resolution, which addresses unresolved conflicts, support for victims, and reconciliation for parties involved. This can take place at any time during the supervisory, complaint, or trial process.

g) A complaint may be held in abeyance with the approval of the Board of Ordained Ministry if civil authorities are involved or their involvement is imminent on matters covered by the complaint. The status of complaints held in abeyance shall be reviewed at a minimum of every ninety (90) days by the bishop and the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry to ensure that the involvement of civil authorities is still a valid impediment for proceeding with the resolution of a complaint. Abeyance of a complaint may be terminated by either the bishop or the Board of Ordained Ministry. The time in which a complaint is held in abeyance shall not count toward the statute of limitations. A clergy person shall continue to hold his or her current status while a complaint is held in abeyance.

Rationale:

Locating all complaint procedures into the judicial complaint process section by moving them from the administrative fair process section (¶ 361-¶ 363) better organizes the related paragraphs. The contents of the current ¶ 362 have not been changed.

¶362.

Petition Number: 20493-OM-¶362-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA.

Next Generation UMC #9—Moratorium on Complaint Proceedings

Amend ¶ 362 by adding a new subparagraph (h), as follows:

¶ 362. *Complaint Procedures*—1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church is a sacred trust. The qualifications and duties of local pastors, associate members, provisional members, and full members are set forth in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, and we believe they flow from the gospel as taught by Jesus the Christ and proclaimed by his apostles. Whenever a person in any of the above categories, including those on leaves of all types, honorable or administrative location, or retirement, is accused of violating this trust, the membership of his or her ministerial office shall be subject to review.

* * *

h) Moratorium on Complaints Proceedings Concerning Human Sexuality—In light of the current deep conflict within The United Methodist Church around issues of human sexuality, effective as of the close of the General Conference of 2020, no complaint proceedings (including, without limitation, a bishop’s supervisory response, suspension proceedings, attempts to achieve a just resolution, or referral of a complaint) shall be commenced, and all such complaint proceedings that may be pending shall be suspended, insofar as the alleged misconduct asserted in the complaint is that the respondent is a “self-avowed practicing homosexual” (however that term may be defined, including, without limitation, living in a same-gender marriage, domestic partnership, or civil union); that the respondent has conducted, performed or celebrated a same-gender wedding or other same-gender union; that the respondent has certified, licensed, commissioned, ordained, or consecrated a “self-avowed practicing homosexual”; that the respondent has provided “funds to any gay caucus or group” or used funds “to promote the acceptance of homosexuality”; or that the respondent has otherwise engaged in conduct that *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* currently states is “incompatible with Christian teaching.”

This moratorium on all new and pending complaint proceedings concerning human sexuality provisions applies not merely to charges that are explicitly based on ¶ 2702.1(b), but also to any charge that the same alleged conduct constitutes a chargeable offense under any other provision of the *Discipline*, including (without limitation) “immorality” under ¶ 2702.1(a); “disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church” under ¶ 2702.1(d); “dissemination of doctrines contrary to the established standards of doctrine of The United Meth-

odist Church” under ¶ 2702.1(e); and “fiscal malfeasance” under ¶ 2702.1(f).

This moratorium shall remain in effect unless and until it is repealed or modified by the General Conference.

Rationale:

The substantial resources required for individual complaint processes related to this deep disagreement in The UMC are best focused on critical missions and ministries. This moratorium offers necessary space for important systematic work to be completed by General Conference delegates without the additional conflict that complaints processes and trials create.

¶362.

Petition Number: 20498-OM-¶362; Lambert, Jennifer - Phoenix, AZ, USA for Desert Southwest Annual Conference.

Complaint Procedures

Amend ¶ 362 as follows:

¶ 362. *Complaint Procedures*—1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church is a sacred trust. The qualifications and duties of local pastors, associate members, provisional members, and full members are set forth in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, 2016 and we believe they flow from the gospel as taught by Jesus the Christ and proclaimed by his apostles. Whenever a person in any of the above categories, including those on leaves of all types, honorable or administrative location, or retirement, is accused, by a professing lay member or another clergy member of the conference in which they serve and/or live (with exceptions being made for complaints where criminal charges or abuse may be involved), of violating this trust, the membership of his or her ministerial office shall be subject to review.

¶362.

Petition Number: 20500-OM-¶362; Smith, Jeremy - Seattle, WA, USA. 1 Similar Petition

ALL BELONG: Restoring Wesleyan Accountability to Just Resolutions

Amend ¶ 362 as follows:

¶ 362. *Complaint Procedures*—1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church is a sacred trust. The qualifications and duties of local pastors, associate members, provisional members,

and full members are set forth in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, and we believe they flow from the gospel as taught by Jesus the Christ and proclaimed by his apostles. Whenever a person in any of the above categories, including those on leaves of all types, honorable or administrative location, or retirement, is accused of violating this trust, the membership of his or her ministerial office shall be subject to review.

This review shall have as its primary purpose a just resolution of any violations of this sacred trust, in the hope that God's work of justice, reconciliation and healing may be realized in the body of Christ.

A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right in so far as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. ~~Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint.~~ In appropriate situations, processes seeking a just resolution as defined in ¶ 362.1c may be pursued. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration.

A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct as defined in ¶ 2702.1. When a complaint is received by the bishop, both the person making the complaint and the person against whom the complaint is made will be informed in writing of the process to be followed at that stage. When and if the stage changes, those persons will continue to be informed in writing of the new process in a timely fashion. All original time limitations may be extended for one 30-day period upon the consent of the complainant and the respondent.

Amend ¶ 362.c as follows:

c) *Just Resolution*—The supervisory response may include a process that seeks a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s), in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. If the bishop chooses to initiate a mediated attempt to produce a just resolution, then the bishop, the person filing the complaint, the respondent, and other appropriate persons shall enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality. A process seeking a just resolution may begin at any time in the supervisory, complaint, or trial process. ~~No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect.~~ If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including any terms and conditions,

shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. A just resolution agreed to by all parties shall be a final disposition of the related complaint.

A process seeking a just resolution may begin at any time in the supervisory or complaint process. This is a not an administrative or judicial proceeding.

Amend ¶ 362.3e as follows:

e) *Referral or Dismissal of a Complaint*—Upon receiving a written and signed complaint, the bishop shall, within 90 days, carry out the supervisory response process outlined above. If within 90 days after the receipt of the complaint resolution is not achieved, the bishop shall either:

(1) Dismiss the complaint ~~as having no basis in law or fact~~, with the consent of the cabinet, giving the reasons therefore in writing, copies of which shall be placed in the clergy person's file ~~and shared with the complainant~~; or

(2) Refer the matter to the counsel for the church as a complaint.

Rationale:

Because all belong in the body of Christ, this petition acts to delete and remove harmful consequences of General Conference decisions that undermine the trust and responsibility placed in the elected and appointed leaders of our church, and conferred disproportionate power to those who file complaints.

¶362.

Petition Number: 20503-OM-¶362-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Remove Traditional Plan Language and Clarify Just Resolution

Amend ¶ 362:

¶ 362. *Complaint Procedures*—1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church is a sacred trust. The qualifications and duties of local pastors, associate members, provisional members, and full members are set forth in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, and we believe they flow from the gospel as taught by Jesus the Christ and proclaimed by his apostles. Whenever a person in any of the above categories, including those on leaves of all types, honorable or administrative location, or retirement, is accused of violating this trust, the membership of his or her ministerial office shall be subject to review.

This review shall have as its primary purpose a just resolution of any violations of this sacred trust, in the

hope that God's work of justice, reconciliation, and healing may be realized in the body of Christ.

A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right insofar as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. ~~Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint.~~ In appropriate situations, processes seeking a just resolution as defined in ¶ 362.1c may be pursued. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration. A just resolution is most possible within the bounds of an annual conference, the basic body in the church. When a complainant lives beyond the bounds of the annual conference of the respondent, the bishop or counsel for the church shall hear the concerns and harms of the complainant and may continue the just resolution without the complainant's final approval in order to address local community and contextual needs.

A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct as defined in ¶ 2702.1. When a complaint is received by the bishop, both the person making the complaint and the person against whom the complaint is made will be informed in writing of the process to be followed at that stage. When and if the stage changes, those persons will continue to be informed in writing of the new process in a timely fashion. All original time limitations may be extended for one 30-day period upon the consent of the complainant and the respondent.

a) Supervision—In the course of the ordinary fulfillment of the superintending role, the bishop or district superintendent may receive or initiate complaints about the performance or character of a clergy person. A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct or unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties. The person filing the complaint and the clergy person shall be informed by the district superintendent or bishop of the process for filing the complaint and its purpose.

b) Supervisory Response—The supervisory response of the bishop shall begin upon receipt of a formal complaint. The response is pastoral and administrative and shall be directed toward a just resolution among all parties. It is not part of any judicial process. The complaint shall be treated as an allegation or allegations during the supervisory process. At all supervisory meetings no verbatim record shall be made and no legal counsel shall be present. The person against whom the complaint was made may choose another person to accompany him or her with the right to voice; the person making the complaint shall have the right to choose a person to accompany him or

her with the right to voice. The supervisory response shall be carried out by the bishop or the bishop's designee in a timely manner, with attention to communication to all parties regarding the complaint and the process. At the termination of the bishop, persons with qualifications and experience in assessment, intervention, or healing may be selected to assist in the supervisory response. The bishop also may consult with the committee on pastor-parish relations for pastors, the district committee on superintendency for the district superintendents, appropriate personnel committee, or other persons who may be helpful. When the supervisory response is initiated, the bishop shall notify the chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry that a complaint has been filed, of the clergy person named, of the general nature of the complaint, and, when concluded, of the disposition of the complaint.

c) Just Resolution—The supervisory response may include a process that seeks a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s), in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. If the bishop chooses to initiate a mediated attempt to produce a just resolution, then the bishop, the person filing the complaint, the respondent, and other appropriate persons shall enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality. A process seeking a just resolution may begin at any time in the supervisory, complaint, or trial process. No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) ~~shall~~ may be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. A just resolution agreed to by all parties shall be a final disposition of the related complaint. A process seeking a just resolution may begin at any time in the supervisory or complaint process. This is a not an administrative or judicial proceeding.

d) Suspension—When deemed appropriate, to protect the well-being of the person making the complaint, the congregation, annual conference, other context for ministry, and/or clergy, the bishop, with the recommendation of the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry, may suspend the person from all clergy responsibilities, but not from an appointment, for a period not to exceed ninety days. With the agreement of the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the bishop may extend the suspension for only one additional period not to exceed thirty days. During the suspension, salary, housing, and benefits provided by a pastoral charge will continue at a level no less than on the date of suspension. The person

so suspended shall retain all rights and privileges as stated in ¶ 334. The cost of supply of a pastor during the suspension will be borne by the annual conference.

e) *Referral or Dismissal of a Complaint*—Upon receiving a written and signed complaint, the Bishop shall, within 90 days, carry out the supervisory response process outlined above. If within 90 days after the receipt of the complaint resolution is not achieved, the bishop shall either:

(1) Dismiss the complaint as ~~having no basis in law or fact~~, with the consent of the cabinet, giving the reasons therefore in writing, copies of which shall be placed in the clergyperson's file ~~and shared with the complainant~~; or

(2) Refer the matter to the counsel for the church as a complaint.

f) *Supervisory Follow-up and Healing*—The bishop and cabinet shall provide a process for healing within the congregation, annual conference, or other context of ministry if there has been significant disruption by the complaint. This process may include sharing of information by the bishop or the bishop's designee about the nature of the complaint without disclosing alleged facts, which may compromise any possible forthcoming administrative or judicial process. When facts are disclosed, due regard should be given to the interests and needs of all concerned, including the respondent and complainant who may be involved in an administrative or judicial process. This process for healing may include a process of a just resolution, which addresses unresolved conflicts, support for victims, and reconciliation for parties involved. This can take place at any time during the supervisory, complaint, or trial process.

g) A complaint may be held in abeyance with the approval of the Board of Ordained Ministry if civil authorities are involved or their involvement is imminent on matters covered by the complaint. The status of complaints held in abeyance shall be reviewed at a minimum of every 90 days by the bishop and the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry to ensure that the involvement of civil authorities is still a valid impediment for proceeding with the resolution of a complaint. Abeyance of a complaint may be terminated by either the bishop or the Board of Ordained Ministry. The time in which a complaint is held in abeyance shall not count toward the statute of limitations. A clergyperson shall continue to hold his or her current status while a complaint is held in abeyance.

¶362.1.

Petition Number: 20494-OM-¶362.1-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA.

Next Generation UMC #18— Amend Just Resolution Process

Amend ¶¶ 362.1, 413.3c, 2701.5, 2706.5.c.3 by deleting the same sentence to all four as follows: ~~Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint.~~

¶ 362. *Complaint Procedures*—1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church is . . .

This review shall have as its primary purpose a just resolution of any violations of this sacred trust, in the hope that God's work . . .

A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities achieving real accountability by making things right insofar as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. ~~Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint.~~ In appropriate situations, processes seeking a just resolution as defined in ¶ 362.1c may be pursued. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration.

A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct as defined in ¶ 2702.1. When . . .

¶ 413. *Complaints Against Bishops*—

3. c) The supervisory response may include a process seeking a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s) in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. (See ¶ 362.1b, c.) The appropriate persons, including the president of the College of Bishops, or the secretary if the complaint concerns the president, should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including an agreement as to confidentiality. No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. Such written statement of resolution shall be given to the person in charge of that stage of the process for further action consistent with the agreement. ~~Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint.~~

¶ 2701.5. *A Just Resolution in Judicial Proceedings*—A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right insofar as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. ~~Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint.~~ Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, age, and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration. During the just resolution process, the parties . . .

¶ 2706.5 c) Findings other than reasonable grounds by committee or other actions

(3) Upon recommendation of the counsel for the church and the counsel for the respondent, the committee may refer the matter to the resident bishop as deemed appropriate for a process seeking a just resolution. The bishop shall institute such a process and may use the assistance of a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s). Such referral will not constitute a dismissal or double jeopardy under ¶ 2701.2d. The appropriate persons, including the counsel for the church, the complainant, and counsel for the respondent, should enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality. No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect. If resolution is achieved, a written statement, affirming such resolution, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the same persons who signed the written agreement outlining the process, and they shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. ~~Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint.~~ If the resolution results in a change of ministerial status, the disclosure agreement shall not prevent the disciplinary disclosures . . .

Rationale:

The goal of a just resolution is to fairly and fully resolve conflict, not keep a list of all harms. This deletion from 2019 enables The UMC to honor the admonition of Scripture to “keep no record of wrongs” (1 Corinthians 13:5). Identifying “all harms” is subjective in nature.

¶362.1.

Petition Number: 20497-OM-¶362.1-G; Beard, Janet - Minneapolis, MN, USA for Minnesota Annual Conference.

Amend Complaint Procedures

Amend ¶ 362.1, paragraph 4 of *The Book of Discipline* as follows:

A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct as defined in ¶ 2702.1. The complainant, if clergy, shall be a member of the same annual conference as defined in ¶ 369.1, or a clergy member of another annual conference appointed in the same annual conference, or a layperson with membership in a United Methodist church within the same annual conference as the clergy about whom the complaint is filed. When a complaint is received by the bishop, both the person making the complaint and the person against whom the complaint is made will be informed in writing of the process to be followed at that stage. When and if the stage changes, those persons will continue to be informed in writing of the new process in a timely fashion. All original time limitations may be extended for one 30-day period upon the consent of the complainant and the respondent.

Rationale:

A logical reading of Matthew 18:15-20 (Rule of Christ) would suggest that a complainant and respondent are members of the same annual conference. Complaints filed against clergy in another annual conference do not promote healing and love and in fact further break an already fractured denomination.

¶362.1a.

Petition Number: 20499-OM-¶362.1a-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Limiting Cabinet Complaint Initiation

Amend by addition in ¶ 362.1a) as follows:

¶ 362.1a) *Supervision*—In the course of the ordinary fulfillment of the superintending role, the bishop or superintendent may receive or initiate complaints about the performance or character of a clergyperson. To initiate a judicial complaint, they must be the victim or a witness to the alleged event. To initiate an administrative complaint, they must have attempted appropriate remedial actions (¶ 334.3) or sought medical evaluations as needed (¶ 356). A complaint is a written . . . purpose.

Rationale:

As supervisors, bishops and superintendents have a role. Reasonable limits are possible under the *Discipline* and they must be put in place.

As the paragraph now stands, the phrase “or initiate” allows bishops and superintendents prone to autocracy to

destroy pastor's ministries and ravage the morale of whole conferences.

¶362.1b.

Petition Number: 20501-OM-¶362.1b; Costello, Robert - Somers Point, NJ, USA.

The Role of Elders in Supervisory Meetings

Amend by addition to ¶ 362.1b):

b) *Supervisory Response*—The supervisory response of the bishop shall begin upon receipt of a formal complaint. The response is pastoral and administrative and shall be directed toward a just resolution among all parties. It is not part of any judicial process. The complaint shall be treated as an allegation or allegations during the supervisory process. At all supervisory meetings no verbatim record shall be made and no legal counsel shall be present. An elder who is also an attorney is permitted to accompany the respondent, with voice, at supervisory meetings.

Rationale:

Advocacy in any hearing on behalf of a respondent is difficult and requires skills most pastors do not ordinarily have. When an accompanying clergyperson happens also to be a lawyer, he or she may have just the extra skills a respondent needs in either administrative or judicial hearings that could

¶362.1c.

Petition Number: 20496-OM-¶362.1c-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA.

Next Generation UMC #17— Just Resolution-Amend Complainant Role

Amend ¶¶ 362.1(c), 413.3.(c), 2701.5, and 2706.5(c)3 by deleting the same sentence to all four as follows: ~~No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect.~~

Also delete the complainant(s), in ¶¶ 2701.5 and 2706.5(c)3.

¶ 362. *Complaint Procedures*—1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church is a sacred trust. . .

...

c) *Just Resolution*—The supervisory response may include a process that seeks a just resolution in which the

parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s), in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. If the bishop chooses to initiate a mediated attempt to produce a just resolution, then the bishop, the person filing the complaint, the respondent, and other appropriate persons shall enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality. A process seeking a just resolution may begin at any time in the supervisory, complaint, or trial process. ~~No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect.~~ If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. A just resolution agreed to by all parties shall be a final disposition of the related complaint.

¶ 413. *Complaints Against Bishops*

...

3. After receiving a complaint as provided in ¶ 413.2,

...

...

c) The supervisory response may include a process seeking a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s) in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. (See ¶ 363.1b, c.) The appropriate persons, including the president of the College of Bishops, or the secretary if the complaint concerns the president, should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including an agreement as to confidentiality. ~~No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect.~~ If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. Such written statement of resolution shall be given to the person in charge of that stage of the process for further action consistent with the agreement. Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the church and other parties to the complaint.

¶ 2701.5. *A Just Resolution in Judicial Proceedings*—A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right insofar as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed

by the church and other parties to the complaint. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, age, and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration. During the just resolution process, the parties may be assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s) in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. Processes that seek a just resolution are encouraged at any time, including through the judicial proceedings. After the referral of a matter as a judicial complaint from counsel for the church to the committee on investigation, if a process seeking a just resolution is used, the appropriate persons, including the counsel for the church, ~~the complainant(s)~~; and the counsel for the respondent, should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including any agreement on confidentiality. ~~No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect.~~ If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the same persons who signed the written agreement outlining the process, and they shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. If the resolution results in a change of ministerial status, the disclosure agreement shall not prevent the disciplinary disclosures required for possible readmission.

¶ 2706.5. Bill of Charges and Specifications, Deliberations, Vote, and Referral

c) Findings other than reasonable grounds by committee or other actions

(1) If the committee on investigation determines . . .

(2) If the committee on investigation determines . . .

(3) Upon recommendation of the counsel for the Church and the counsel for the respondent, the committee may refer the matter to the resident bishop as deemed appropriate for a process seeking a just resolution. The bishop shall institute such a process and may use the assistance of a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s). Such referral will not constitute a dismissal or double jeopardy under ¶ 2701.5. The appropriate persons, including the counsel for the Church, ~~the complainant(s)~~; and counsel for the respondent, should enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality. ~~No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect.~~ If resolution is achieved, a written statement, affirming such resolution, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the same per-

sons who signed the written agreement outlining the process, and they shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint. If the resolution results in a change of ministerial status, the disclosure agreement shall not prevent the disciplinary disclosures required for readmission. The written statement affirming such resolution shall be given to the bishop for further action(s) to implement the agreement, if any. If the process does not result in resolution, the matter shall be returned to the committee.

Rationale:

This amendment removes language from the 2019 Traditional Plan that makes the complaint process more expensive and creates the potential for unresolvable conflict, which increases the likelihood of costly clergy trials that distract from making disciples for Jesus Christ.

¶362.1c.

Petition Number: 20502-OM-¶362.1c; Costello, Robert - Somers Point, NJ, USA.

The Role of Cabinet Members in Just Resolution

Amend by addition to ¶ 362.1c):

c) *Just Resolution*—The supervisory response . . . If the bishop chooses . . . on confidentiality. From that point forward, no bishop, bishop’s representative, or other cabinet representative shall participate in the just resolution process. The presiding bishop will appoint a person to supervise the just resolution process. A process seeking a just resolution . . . to third parties. A just resolution agreed to by all parties shall be a final disposition of the related complaint.

Rationale:

Bishops and cabinet members often involved in the judicial process in many ways and they are sorely tempted to control the outcome of just resolution procedures. That crosses the line of constitutional responsibilities. Cabinet members are “executive” and just resolution belongs to the annual conference, the entity that hires and

¶362.1e.

Petition Number: 20495-OM-¶362.1e-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA.

Next Generation UMC #10— Amend Complaint Process

Amend the complaint process ¶ 362.1e and ¶ 413.3d as follows:

¶ 362.1 e) *Referral or Dismissal of a Complaint*—Upon receiving a written and signed complaint, the bishop shall, within 90 days, carry out the supervisory response process outlined above. If within 90 days after the receipt of the complaint resolution is not achieved, the bishop shall either:

(1) Dismiss the complaint as ~~having no basis in law or fact~~, with the consent of the cabinet, giving the reasons therefore in writing, copies a copy of which shall be placed in the clergyperson's file ~~and shared with the complainant~~; or

(2) Refer the matter to the counsel for the church as a complaint.

¶ 413.3.d) (i) If the supervisory response results in the resolution of the matter, the bishop in charge of the supervisory response and the two episcopacy committee members appointed to the supervisory process (¶ 413.3) shall monitor the fulfillment of the terms of the resolution. If the supervisory response does not result in resolution of the matter, the president or secretary of the College of Bishops may either dismiss the complaint as ~~having no basis in law or fact~~, with the consent of the College of Bishops and the committee on episcopacy, giving the reasons therefore in writing, a copy copies of which shall be placed in the bishop's file ~~and shared with the complainant~~, refer the matter to the committee on episcopacy as an administrative complaint pursuant to ¶ 413.3e, or refer the matter to counsel for the church pursuant to ¶ 2704.1 to prepare a complaint to forward to the committee on investigation.

Rationale:

In the Wesleyan tradition, we live by the admonition to do no harm. These deletions from the 2019 Traditional Plan restore discernment and discretion to the office of the episcopacy. There are other reasons that a complaint might be subject to dismissal, beyond having no basis in law or fact.

¶364.

Petition Number: 20504-OM-¶364; Girrell, Rebecca - Lebanon, NH, USA.

Readmission to Provisional Membership

Amend ¶ 364 by adding a new paragraph following the first paragraph (which currently ends “to perform those ministerial functions for which they are qualified.”)

Persons whose provisional membership has been discontinued from one annual conference may be appointed or considered for appointment in a different annual conference. In such circumstances, these persons may follow the above provisions to be readmitted to provisional membership in the annual conference in which they are seeking, or are under, appointment. In addition, the Board of Ordained Ministry of that annual conference shall obtain verification of their qualifications, and information about the circumstances relating to the discontinuance of provisional membership, from the Board of Ordained Ministry of the conference in which provisional membership was discontinued.

Rationale:

In our interconnected world, it becomes increasingly likely that former provisional members might geographically relocate and/or be called again in a new context. This amendment would give such people the choice of reentry into provisional membership, rather than restarting the process, while preserving and addressing the conditions of discontinuance.

¶365.3.

Petition Number: 20505-OM-¶365.3; Girrell, Rebecca - Lebanon, NH, USA.

Reduce Inappropriate Medical Disclosure and Discrimination—Honorable Location

Amend the *Book of Discipline* ¶ 365.3 (*Readmission After Honorable or Administrative Location*) as follows:

3. A satisfactory letter from a physician, as described in ¶ 324.8, ~~certificate of good health on the prescribed form from a physician approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry~~. The Board of Ordained Ministry shall require psychological evaluation.

Rationale:

Replaces the health form with a letter from a physician, eliminating the high potential for confidential information to be disclosed in violation of the individual's privacy. Refers back to disability/diagnosis non-discrimination for those seeking provisional membership, making the policy more consistent.

¶367.

Petition Number: 20506-OM-¶367-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Delete Outdated Readmission After Termination Process

Delete ¶ 367 in its entirety.

Rationale:

The procedures in this paragraph apply to those terminated prior to General Conference 1976. They are no longer timely and need to be deleted.

¶368.5.

Petition Number: 20507-OM-¶368.5; Girrell, Rebecca - Lebanon, NH, USA.

Reduce Inappropriate Medical Disclosure and Discrimination—Involuntary Retirement

Amend the *Book of Discipline* ¶ 368.5 (*Readmission After Involuntary Retirement*) as follows:

5. Presentation of satisfactory letter from a physician, as described in ¶ 324.8. certificate of good health on the prescribed form from a physician approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry.

[Retain the rest of the paragraph as written.]

Rationale:

Replaces the health form with a letter from a physician, eliminating the high potential for confidential information to be disclosed in violation of the individual's privacy. Refers back to disability/diagnosis non-discrimination for those seeking provisional membership, making the policy more consistent

¶369.1.

Petition Number: 20508-OM-¶369.1-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Accountability of Superintendents

Amend by addition:

¶ 369.1 1. The annual conference is the basic body of The United Methodist Church. All clergy, including district superintendents, are amenable to the annual conference in the performance of their duties

Rationale:

Because ¶ 424.3 violates the separation of powers, this paragraph takes precedence over it with or without amendment. Superintendents who violate the *Discipline* must be held accountable just as any other pastor is within the annual conference and its means to do that under fair process.

¶635.1a.

Petition Number: 20509-OM-¶635.1a-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Opening Nominations for the Board of Ordained Ministries to the Plenary

Amend by addition to ¶ 635.1a) in the following way:

¶ 635.1a) Members for the Board of Ordained Ministry shall be nominated by the presiding bishop . . . and with the cabinet, and by nomination from the floor of the annual conference. To ensure adequate . . .

In addition, this amendment needs to be made in ¶¶ 636 (*Conference Administrative Review Committee*) and 2703 (*Composition of the Committee on Investigation*).

Rationale:

Paragraph 33 gives responsibility for all matters of character, performance, and conference relations to the conference and not to the cabinet members. Nominations must be open from the floor for every group that deals with reviewing those or the conference ends up without access to the make-up of those groups.

¶635.1a.

Petition Number: 20511-OM-¶635.1a-G; Lambrecht, Thomas - Spring, TX, USA.

Assuring Boards of Ministry Compliance

Amend by addition ¶ 635.1.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. Prior to being nominated for membership on the Board of Ordained Ministry by the bishop, any individual must certify to the bishop that he or she will uphold, enforce, and maintain the *Book of Discipline* related to the duties of the Board of Ordained Ministry, including but not limited to all the qualifications for ordination (¶¶ 304, 330, 335, 336). Additionally, the bishop must certify to the annual conference secretary that he or she has only nominated individuals who have so certified. To ensure adequate board membership . . .

Rationale:

Guarding against nonconforming boards of ordained ministry, this provision ensures that members of the board commit to upholding the requirements of the *Discipline* and makes the bishop responsible for nominating only

such persons. Permitting boards to not conform to the *Discipline* tears the unity of the church.

¶635.2a.

Petition Number: 20510-OM-¶635.2a; Banks, Martha - Akron, OH, USA.

Effectively Recruiting and Retaining Young Clergy of Color

Amend *Discipline* ¶ 635.2.a:

To assume the primary responsibility for the enlistment and recruitment of 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 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 ministry as a vocation and guide those persons in the process of education, training, and 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. In United States annual conferences, it shall actively recruit and retain clergy of color, with particular efforts to recruit and retain young clergy of color, using empirically supported, culturally relevant employment practices for African American, Native American, Latina/o, and Asian American/Pacific Islander clergy, respectively, and shall include a report of its racial diversity clergy recruitment and retention practices and progress in the annual conference journal. All persons Persons recruited should have an understanding of and appreciation for persons of different racial and ethnic heritages.

Rationale:

Men of color make up less than 8% and women of color make up less than 4% of United Methodist clergy in the United States (Kane, 2014), where the average age of first appointments of clergy of color is 45 years old (Johnson, 2012). ¶162A of the Social Principles of

¶635.2h.

Petition Number: 20512-OM-¶635.2h-G; Lambrecht, Thomas - Spring, TX, USA.

Assuring Full Examination

AMEND by addition to ¶ 635.2.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. The Board of Ordained Ministry shall conduct a full examination to ascertain whether an individual meets the requirements of all applicable disciplinary standards and shall not ignore such standards, including but not limited to ¶ 304.1-3 and the standards appropriate to the candidate's stage in the process (¶¶ 310, 313, 315, 322, 324, 330, 335, 336). The board shall certify to the clergy session that such an examination has occurred and its results. If the board determines as a matter of fact that an individual fails to meet any of the requirements, including but not limited to unrepentantly engaging in any sexual relationship outside of monogamous heterosexual marriage, the board shall not recommend the individual to the clergy session of the annual conference for commissioning or ordination.

Rationale:

Incorporates Judicial Council Decisions 1343, 1344, and 1352 in the *Discipline*, requiring boards of ordained ministry to fully examine candidates' qualifications under ¶ 304.3. Guarding against nonconforming boards of ordained ministry, this forbids boards from recommending persons found to be unqualified under that paragraph to the clergy session.

¶666.7.

Petition Number: 20513-OM-¶666.7; Smith, Taylor - Griffin, GA, USA.

Amendment of Voting Process for Certification of Candidates for Ordained Ministry

Amend ¶ 666.7 as follows:

¶ 666.7. The vote of the committee on matters of candidacy shall be by individual written ballot of the committee present. A three-fourths majority vote is required for certification. All other matters of candidacy shall be by a simple majority vote. The committee shall notify the candidates in writing twenty-four hours following the initial interview unless extraordinary circumstances concerning the candidates' fitness for ministry merit further study. Further consideration of an inquiring candidate's certification shall take place over a period of no more than 14 days, after which the district superintendent shall inform the candidate of their decision and next steps.

Proposed Non-Disciplinary Legislation

Petition 20661.

Petition Number: 20661-OM-NonDis-\$-G; Haller, Laurie - USA for 2017-2020 Study of Ministry Commission.

Create 2021-2024 Study of Ministry Commission

General Conference has endorsed a Study of Ministry Commission most quadrennia since the creation of The United Methodist Church in 1968. As ministry needs continue to evolve, the church needs focused study and recommendations on the nature and structure of ministry in the new realities of the church and the world. We propose that the church continue the Study of Ministry Commission for the 2021-2024 quadrennium.

We recommend a team of 15-18 members who are broadly representative in ethnicity, age, geographic area, ministry orders, laity, and theological perspectives. Commission members should have specific experience and skill sets related to licensed and ordained ministry (e.g. Boards of Ordained Ministry, cabinets, theological education, agencies, and local churches). At least one-third of the 2021-2024 Commission should be members from the 2017-2020 Study of Ministry Commission. There shall also be at least one central conference member from Africa, one from Europe, and one from the Philippines. We advocate especially for the representation and inclusion of younger clergy. The Council of Bishops, in consultation with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, will select the commission's members and leadership. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry will assign staff to resource and carry out the commission's work and provide funding for its staff's participation.

The 2020 General Conference will appropriate funds sufficient for the commission's work, with funding and implementation of the commission administered through the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

The commission will respond to the church's needs and will partner with key entities, such as the Council of Bishops, the Committee on Faith and Order, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, United Methodist seminaries, and Boards of Ordained Ministry. The commission should continue to lead in the development of the church's understanding of a theology of ordained ministry and consider innovations that further The United

Methodist Church's mission in the world. The commission's work will include the following tasks:

1. Continue to study and develop a theology of ordained ministry and its implications for The United Methodist Church through initiating a churchwide conversation and a process of feedback about the theology of ordination grounded in the church's study of "A Sacred Trust: A Theological Framework for Ordained Ministry in The United Methodist Church." This study document is included as a part of the commission's report found in the *ADCA*.

2. Present a revised document to the 2024 General Conference that is based on feedback from annual conferences and other bodies of the church.

3. Present legislation to the 2024 General Conference to align the church's polity related to licensed and ordained clergy with the church's understanding of a theology of ordained ministry as expressed in the developing study document, "A Sacred Trust."

4. Continue consultation with the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters to provide guidance and language in the development of text for the *General Book of Discipline*, Chapter Two—"The Ministry of the Ordained," and Chapter Three—"The Superintendency." Members of the Study of Ministry Commission shall be on the writing committee for the *General Book of Discipline*.

5. Further examine the formation and education of clergy, working toward a systemic model that embraces both Master of Divinity and Course of Study work, and continues into provisional membership and the early years of ministry. The commission should also reflect on the possibility of allowing annual conference Boards of Ordained Ministry to consider persons for ordination who have completed advanced degrees (beyond the bachelor's degree) in fields relevant to ministry when those degrees are integrated with basic graduate theological studies at an approved seminary.

6. Examine new educational models and patterns for ministry education and formation as related to the church's developing understanding of a theology of ordained ministry and responding to ministry needs for our current context.

7. Assist the church in its understanding of the Ordering of Ministry as related to needs resulting from the 2020 General Conference.