

# Policy and Procedure Handbook

The South Georgia Annual Conference  
Board of Ordained Ministry



2008-2012

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**SOUTH GEORGIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
**BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY**

The following is a copy of a form that is included in the *Candidacy Packet* that can be obtained from a district superintendent or from the Director of Ministerial Services by mentors to candidates for ministry.

**CHECK LIST FOR CANDIDATES**

The following checklist is to insure that persons meeting with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM) are ready for committee action. As the candidate will notice, there are several items listed that require a considerable lead-time to provide the gathering, assessment, and reporting back of data of the dCOM. At least six weeks should be allowed for the Psychological Assessment, Criminal Record Check, and the Medical Report to be processed. When a candidate has completed the following, he or she is ready to meet with the district committee.

- ( ) One year membership in a local United Methodist Church or recognized United campus ministry or other United Methodist Ministry setting. ¶ 311.1a)
- ( ) Complete candidacy studies with a candidacy mentor (¶ 311.1c)
- ( ) Meet with the Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committee requesting its recommendation to the Charge Conference (¶ 311.1d)
- ( ) Receive the recommendation for certification from your charge conference (¶ 311.1.e)
- ( ) Complete the psychological assessment. (See enclosed sheet.)
- ( ) Submit a report of a medical examination on the prescribed form, completing all tests indicated. (Form enclosed)
- ( ) Submit a credit and a criminal record check . (Form on Ministerial Services website)
- ( ) Candidacy mentor must write and present a report to the dCOM. The report must be read and signed by the candidate. Please provide copies for every dCOM member.
- ( ) Provide written answers to the questions found in *The Book of Discipline* (¶ 311.2a).
- ( ) Provide BOTH the divorce petition(s) and decree(s) when applicable.
- ( ) Submit three (3) copies of the biographical data form 102 (Min.Ser. website)
- ( ) Provide official college and/or seminary transcripts.

**QUALIFICATIONS FOR ORDINATION**

“Ordained ministers are called by God to a lifetime of servant leadership in specialized ministries among the people of God. Ordained ministers are called to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns and hopes of the world and the promise of God for Creation. Within these specialized ministries, deacons are called to ministries of Word and Service (par. 328) and elders are called to ministries of Service, Word, Sacrament and Order (par.

332). Through these distinctive functions, ordained ministers devote themselves wholly to the work of the Church and to the up-building of the ministry of all Christians. They do this through careful study of Scripture and its faithful interpretation; through effective proclamation of the gospel and responsible administration of the sacraments; through diligent pastoral leadership of their congregations for a fruitful discipleship; and by following the guidance of the holy Spirit in witnessing beyond the congregation in the local community and to the ends of the earth. The ordained ministry is defined by its faithful commitment to servant leadership following the example of Jesus Christ, by its passion for the hallowing of life, and by its concern to link all local ministries with the widest boundaries of the Christian community.” (§ 137, *The Book of Discipline 2008*) For more information on the purpose and qualifications for ordination, see §§ 301-304, *The Book of Discipline 2008*. Candidacy for ordained ministry is the first formal step toward annual conference membership and ordination as a deacon or an elder in full connection in The United Methodist Church.

### **STEP 1: THE INQUIRING CANDIDATE**

- A. The journey into ordained ministry begins with the inquiry stage. To begin, a candidate contacts the pastor in a local church or another deacon or elder. He or she will be directed to read *UNDERSTANDING GOD’S CALL*.

In consultation with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM) a trained mentor will be assigned to the candidate to work through the *guidebook*. The mentor is assigned to the candidate in consultation with the dCOM and with the district superintendent. (§ 311. *The Book of Discipline 2008*) *UNDERSTANDING GOD’S CALL: MINISTRY INQUIRY PROCESS* is available from Cokesbury Publishing House, 1-800-672-1789.

- B. After completing the *MINISTRY INQUIRY PROCESS*, the inquiring candidate, who wishes to explore ordained ministry, should write the district superintendent.

### **STEP 2: THE EXPLORING CANDIDATE**

- A. The exploring candidate applies to the district superintendent in writing for admission to the candidacy studies. In order to apply, the person will be a member in good standing of The United Methodist Church for at least one year. Upon receipt of the letter of application, the district superintendent will coordinate with the assigned mentor the procedure of enrolling the candidate in the candidacy process on-line.
- B. The candidate is assigned a candidacy mentor by the dCOM in consultation with the district superintendent and will complete enrollment online with the assistance of the mentor and the district superintendent. A candidacy mentor is a trained clergy person that will guide the candidate through the candidacy process. For more information on candidacy mentors, please see § 349 in *The Book of Discipline 2008*.

- C. The candidate enrolls in the candidacy studies online with the Division of Ordained Ministry at the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry by completing the enrollment form and the Inventory of Religious Activities and Interests (IRAI). The enrollment fee provides for the cost of materials and administrative expenses. The district superintendent is a key resource person to get a candidate enrolled.
- D. The candidacy mentor helps the exploring candidate examine the call of God in light of the biblical record, the role and function of United Methodist clergy, personal gifts and graces, and evidence of leadership.

### **STEP 3: THE DECLARED CANDIDATE**

Once the exploratory process has been completed, in order to become a declared candidate, a person will have graduated from an accredited high school or received a certificate of equivalency (GED). (§ 311.1.e *The Book of Discipline 2008*)

The staff/pastor-parish relations committee will interview the candidate using his or her statement and Wesley's historic questions (§ 310 of *Discipline 2008*) and make a recommendation to the charge conference.

The charge conference votes whether to recommend the candidate to the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM). The recommendation must be confirmed by a two-thirds (2/3's) vote and submitted using Form 104 (available from the district superintendent).

### **STEP 4: THE CERTIFIED CANDIDATE**

Prior to certification, the candidate applies for and completes a psychological assessment arranged by the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. Locate further and more detailed information under the section entitled *Psychological Assessment*, which begins on page 11.

The candidate submits a report of a medical examination.

The candidate fills out the release form on page 17 of this document for criminal and credit check search. Send the completed and signed form to Reverend Gene Cochran, Director of Ministerial Services, PO Box 18149, Macon, GA 31209.

The candidate appears before the dCOM for examination after completing psychological assessment as required by the annual conference. The candidate should also make sure his or her mentor submits a report to the dCOM that is signed by the candidate.

The candidate submits a written response to questions regarding God's call to ordained ministry: personal beliefs, gifts, and future usefulness; understanding of the ministry of the deacon and elder in The United Methodist Church. (§ 311.2 *The Book of Discipline 2008*)

The candidate agrees to maintain the highest ideals of Christian life as set forth in *The Book of Discipline 2008* (§§ 102-104, 160-166).

The approval of dCOM of a candidate is required by a three-fourth (¾'s) majority vote. The committee forwards the approval on Form 113 to the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

### **LOCAL PASTOR STUDIES (optional)**

All information concerning Local Pastors is found beginning in § 315 of *The Book of Discipline 2008*.

There are three (2) categories of Local Pastors. See § 318 of *The Book of Discipline 2008*. These are: Full-time Local Pastor, Part-time Local Pastor. Local pastors are unordained persons who are licensed for ministry in The United Methodist Church. They may carry out ministerial functions and exercise sacramental privileges within the bounds of the charges where they are appointed.

A certified candidate may apply for license as a local pastor after completing studies in Licensing School for Local Pastors prescribed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and administered by the Board of the Ordained Ministry or after completing one-third (⅓) of the work toward a Master of Divinity degree.

Licensing studies is a prerequisite for appointment as a full-time, part-time or student local pastor. The license is valid only during the period that the pastor is serving under the appointment of the bishop. The license is renewed from one year to the next when the appointment is made. When a person who is qualified to be licensed is no longer serving as pastor of a charge, he or she may not continue to exercise ministerial functions. When one is not appointed, the license should be given to the district superintendent, who will keep it on file. Exception : Recognized retired local pastors may retain their licenses and perform ministerial functions as prescribed in *The Book of Discipline*.

The applicant to the Licensing School for Local Pastors notifies the district superintendent, who will arrange for him or her to receive an application form. The completed application is mailed to the director of the school. The current registration fee for the school is \$80.00.

A local pastor must make satisfactory progress in the Course of Study School each year unless he or she is enrolled in a college or seminary accredited by ATS. Courses of Study are held in various schools of theology. The most convenient for South Georgia local pastors is at Candler School of Theology, Emory University. Each summer, during a four-week period of in-residence study, the full-time local pastor completes “one year” in the Five-Year Course of Study. The part-time local pastor is required to complete “one-half year” of study during a *two-week* in-residence period in the Course of Study School. (Correspondence is an option for part-time local pastors; more on this later) Registration forms are available by calling 1-404-727-4587. The Registrar for Local Pastors, the Rev. Rickey Rushing, 455 Mt. Olivet Church Rd., Fleming, GA 31309, can assist you with further information about this process.

### **STEP 5: CANDIDACY RENEWAL**

The candidate’s progress must be reviewed and candidacy renewed annually by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM) on recommendation of the candidate’s charge conference. A renewal form will be made available to pastors and it can be signed annually, as applicable, by the district superintendent.

A candidate who is enrolled as a student will present an official transcript to the dCOM annually. The school must be recognized by the University Senate of The United Methodist Church. If you are uncertain that a school is on this list, contact Rev. Cochran at 478-742-4766.

### **STEP 6: COMPLETION OF CANDIDACY TOWARD PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP AND COMMISSIONING**

A candidate is eligible for election to provisional membership and commissioning after meeting the following qualifications.

- Candidacy requirement: Each candidate will have a minimum of two (2) years and not more than twelve (12) years.
- Service requirement: Each candidate will have a minimum of two (2) years in a service setting as determined by the dCOM. This may be concurrent with academic study.
- Undergraduate requirement: A candidate will have completed a bachelor’s degree from a college or university recognized by the University Senate. Exception may be made after consultation with the Director of Ministerial Services, who will consult the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, for (a) persons who have a minimum of sixty

(60) semester hours of academic credit and (b) M.Div. graduates who have attended a college that is not recognized by the University Senate.

- ! Graduate requirement: A candidate will have (a) completed the course work required for a Master of Divinity degree from a school approved by the University Senate (including the graduate level courses prescribed by the *Book of Discipline 2008*, as described in the next paragraph).
- ! (§ 324.3c). Included in the course work are the following requirements for South Georgia: Two (2) courses in preaching, one (1) course in worship. The candidate must have a course each in United Methodist history, United Methodist polity, and United Methodist doctrine. Those under *The Book of Discipline 1996* must have a course in Christian Missions. Those under *The Book of Discipline 2000 and later* must also have a course in Evangelism.
- ! Alternate route for a deacon candidate: A candidate pursuing ordination as a deacon who has (1) reached thirty-five [35] years of age, (b) completed a bachelor's degree, received professional certification or license in an area of specialized ministry, and (d) completed a minimum of eight [8] semester hours of graduate credit in the area of specialization and twenty-four [24] semester hours of basic graduate theological studies may apply for provisional membership and commissioning (§ 324.5).
- ! Local pastor route: A local pastor may apply for provisional membership and commissioning if he or she has: (a) reached forty(40)years of age, (b) completed the five-year Course of Study, (2) acquired thirty-two (32) semester hours of graduate theological study or its equivalent, as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, including twenty-four (24) semester hours of basic graduate theological studies.
- ! The candidate will (a) present a satisfactory certificate of health, (b) respond to a written concise autobiographical statement, be interviewed and recommended by a three fourth's ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) majority vote of the dCOM, (d) submit Form 114 (included with the candidacy packet of information. This disclosure form will be notarized. It is a statement detailing any written accusations or convictions for felony, misdemeanor or incident of sexual misconduct. This form is required prior to an interview with the Board of Ordained Ministry.

## **STEP 7: FULL MEMBERSHIP AND ORDINATION AS A DEACON OR AS AN ELDER**

A candidate who has been a provisional member for at least two (2) years may apply for membership in full connection in an annual conference and ordination as a deacon or an elder.

A candidate for the order of deacon may be recommended by the Board of Ordained Ministry to the clergy session for ordination as a deacon in full connection if he or she has (a) served under episcopal appointment in a ministry of service for at least two (2) annual conference years as a provisional member of the conference after completion of the educational requirements; (b) been supervised throughout the provisional period by a district superintendent and a mentor assigned by the Board of Ordained Ministry; and (c) responded to an examination administered by the Board of Ordained Ministry on the covenantal relationship to God, the interrelatedness of the church and the world. A candidate for the order of elder may be recommended to the clergy session for ordination as an elder in full connection if she or he has (a) served under episcopal appointment for at least two (2) full annual conference years as a provisional member of the conference after completion of the educational requirements; (b) been supervised throughout the provisional period by a district superintendent and a mentor assigned by the Board of Ordained Ministry; (c) satisfied the Board of Ordained Ministry regarding physical, mental and emotional health; (d) taught a book of the Bible, (e) preached a video-taped sermon, (f) submitted an autobiographical statement; (g) prepared a verbatim case study. This forms a part of the examination administered by the Board of Ordained Ministry in the areas of theology and vocation (§ 335 of *The Book of Discipline 2008*). The candidate will have participated in the Residence in Ministry (RIM) Program during the provisional period (See pp. 25 - 30)

### **LICENSE FOR PASTORAL MINISTRY AND THE MINISTRY OF THE DEACON**

The new ordering of ministry has created a separate order of deacon which is distinct from the ministry of the elder and the licensed local pastor. The unique ministry of the deacon is to “embody, articulate, and lead the whole people of God in its servant ministry . . . of connecting the church with the most needy, neglected and marginalized among the children of God.” (§ 329 of *The Book of Discipline 2008*) While *The Book of Discipline* states that deacons will “give leadership in the church’s life in the teaching and proclamation of the Word, in worship, in assisting the elders in the administration of the sacraments and in conducting marriages and burying the dead” (§ 329). Deacons in full connection are not appointed as pastors of local churches and are not generally granted sacramental authority. However, Paragraph 329 reads, “For the sake of extending the mission and ministry of the church, a pastor-in-charge or district superintendent may request that the bishop grant sacramental authority to the deacon to administer the sacraments in the absence of an elder, within a deacon’s primary appointment.”

Clearly, the license for pastoral ministry is for “one who performs the duties of a pastor” (§ 316 *The book of Discipline 2008*) and can only be used in the charge to which she or he is appointed. The local pastor may celebrate the sacraments within the bounds of his or her charge. The licensed local pastor and Deacon in Full Connection are both clergy but have different relationships to the annual conference. The deacon is a member in full connection and has unrestricted vote in the clergy session and all other sessions of the annual conference. The local pastor has limited vote in the annual conference and in the clergy session. For further clarification, the elder in full connection has sacramental

authority at large in the church and has unrestricted vote in the clergy session and all other sessions of the annual conference. Provisional Members, who have been ordained deacons, and Associate Members (also deacons) have limited vote in the clergy session and other sessions of the annual conference.

The Board of Higher Education and Ministry has ruled that when a Deacon in Full Connection desires to be appointed as pastor of a charge, he or she must assume the status of a local pastor and temporarily set aside his or her rights and privileges as a Deacon in Full Connection. Because of the nature and level of the deacon's education, he or she will not be required to attend a licensing school to be granted a license. When the deacon is no longer appointed as a local pastor to a charge, he or she can assume his or her mantle of Deacon in Full Connection. At some point, the Board of Ordained Ministry will inquire if/when the deacon plans to lay aside his or her role as a local pastor.

The deacon, though well trained in a specialized field and possessing many skills, his or her training is unlikely to have included training for pastoral ministry; thus, he or she who has taken the status of local pastor will be required to enroll in the Course of Study School. The Division of Ordained Ministry, Section of Elders and Local Pastors, can evaluate the deacon's academic record to determine what, if any, additional education is needed (1421, *The Book of Discipline 2008*).

Laying aside the status of a Deacon in Full Connection and becoming a local pastor should not be done except in exceptional cases, where the gifts and specialized training of the deacon can be used in a particular situation that will meet the unique needs of a congregation. It should be for a specified length of time. If a deacon continues to serve as a licensed local pastor beyond three (3) years, the deacon should be urged to choose to:

(1) reassume his or her role as a deacon and seek an appointment suited to the deacon or (2) seek ordination as an elder or (3) discontinue as a deacon and continue to function as a local pastor.

The most effective means for a deacon to provide a sacramental ministry in an appointment to a staff or to a chaplaincy is to work in partnership with an elder. The elder may be a colleague in the appointment setting, a pastor in the community, a pastor in the local church, where the deacon is also appointed, or a retired elder.

### **LICENSING FOR PROVISIONAL MEMBERS PREPARING TO BECOME DEACONS IN FULL CONNECTION**

A candidate for ordained deacon, who has completed all the academic theological requirements, has been elected a provisional member, commissioned and licensed will be able to "give leadership in the church's life in worship, in assisting the elders in the

administration of the sacraments, and in conducting marriages and burying the dead” (328 *The Book of Discipline 2008*) under the supervision of the district superintendent and the Board of Ordained Ministry during this provisional time (§ 326 .1 *The Book of Discipline 2008*).

Therefore, the Section of Deacons and Diaconal Ministries strongly recommends that persons in candidacy preparing to be provisional members and licensed for the ministry of the deacon participate in a formation retreat designed by the Section of Deacons and Diaconal Ministries in order to assist candidates with issues such as:

- the privileges and responsibilities of license for provisional members preparing to become deacons in full connection
- identity of the deacon
- the meaning of the community
- accountability
- the liturgical role of deacon
- the connecting role of the deacon between the congregation and the needs of the community
- the partnership of ministry with the elder, the laity and the deacon

The license is distinct from the license for pastoral ministry described in §§ 315 and 316 of *The Book of Discipline 2008*. The license for pastoral ministry is, of course, to perform the duties of a pastor, including sacramental authority under the supervision of the district superintendent.

Provisional members preparing to become Deacons in Full Connection can be appointed to serve in an approved setting of specialized ministry under the supervision of the district superintendent and the Board of Ordained Ministry in accordance with § 326 of *The Book of Discipline 2008* and will complete the appropriate form (prepared by the United Methodist Publishing House) for appointment of provisional members in the deacon track.

## **RELATED POLICIES OF THE SOUTH GEORGIA CONFERENCE BOARD OF THE ORDAINED MINISTRY**

### **I. Psychological Assessment**

Every person who applies for entry into the United Methodist ministry must receive psychological evaluation as part of the candidacy process. This policy has been in effect since June 15, 1990. No one beginning candidacy after that date will be interviewed without having undergone this assessment. The psychological assessment must be available to the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM) when it interviews the candidate for certified candidacy (usually in December).

Each candidate will be tested at his/her own expense. The District Superintendent will encourage churches to assist with this expense. The BOM will pay for psychological testing beyond the certified candidate level as specified below. The fee for individual testing is \$600, the candidate will pay all of the fees.

Testing must be done at the center below unless the Chair of the Psychological Assessment Committee approves other arrangements. Appointments may be made with the following office:

**Susan F. Davenport, Ph.D.**  
**Psychological Offices**  
**121 Carl Vinson Parkway**  
**Warner Robins, GA 31088**  
**Telephone: 478-922-2365**

In general, alternative testing can only be obtained from Ministerial Assessment Specialists (MAS) certified by the Division of Ordained Ministry and must include the battery of tests and the reporting format used by the South Georgia Annual Conference. Psychological assessment scheduled outside of the bounds of the South Georgia Annual Conference must be approved by the Psychological Assessment Committee. Contact Rev. Deborah Wight-Knight, Conference Pastoral Counselor to initiate that process.

Each candidate is responsible for setting up an interview with an approved evaluation agency. Do this as soon as possible. Postponement could create a calendar backlog and make it impossible to schedule an appointment for you. Call at least one month before you wish to be evaluated.

A verbal report is made available to the candidate through a clinical interview with the testing psychologist, usually on the day of testing. The candidate will receive a written report several weeks later. The psychologist will release the report to the BOM only with the candidate's permission. If a candidate wishes to appeal his or her assessment he or she can request a second evaluation from a different General Board approved, Ministerial Assessment Specialist. This will be at the candidate's expense. If the candidate has concerns about the cultural or gender accuracy of the assessment and wishes to appeal, effort will be made to help him or her find an approved Ministerial Assessment Specialist that will be sensitive to those concerns. The second assessment must be obtained prior to meeting with the dCOM (for candidacy) or the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) for conference membership.

Once the candidate releases the report, copies are then sent to the Board of Ordained Ministry within two (2) to four (4) weeks. Information in the report will remain as confidential as possible, consistent with the need of the dCOM and BOM to evaluate and nurture the candidate appropriately. The psychological assessment will be used by the dCOM and the BOM as *one* resource to determine a candidate's fitness for ministry. It will also serve as a source of formative feedback to assist the candidate in preparing for

ministry. Based on the psychological assessment the dCOM or the BOM may establish requirements for the candidate to complete as part of the candidacy or conference membership process. This may include additional psychological testing. The candidate will be asked to complete a release form so the evaluation can be shared on a “need to know” basis with individuals and/or committees designated on the form. One copy of the evaluation will be kept in the candidate’s file in the office of Rev. Gene Cochran, Director of Ministerial Services to the Board of Ordained Ministry. Another copy will become a part of the candidate’s district file until the candidate is recommended to the BOM for provisional membership. The testing agency also maintains a copy.

The assessment is kept in a “permanent file” and safe-guarded by the Director of Ministerial Services for the Board of Ordained Ministry until the candidate is admitted to full connection. When the candidate is admitted to Full Connection as a deacon or elder, the psychological assessment will be destroyed along with other documents in the “permanent” file. The testing agency will also destroy the psychological assessment at that time.

As above, psychological assessment is required to become a certified candidate. This assessment must be in the candidate’s file when he or she applies for provisional membership in the annual conference. The psychological assessment *may not be more than 4 years old* on December 31 of the year the dCOM refers the Certified Candidate to the BOM for consideration for provisional membership. If the assessment is greater than 4 years old it must be repeated prior to appearing before the BOM. The applicant for provisional membership will pay 50% (\$300) of the cost of testing necessitated by this four-year rule. If further testing has been requested as part of the candidacy process, this also must be completed prior to appearing before the BOM. Those applying for provisional membership have the same rights to appeal as candidates (at their own expense.)

New psychological assessment is not typically required for Full Connection although the BOM may request it if deemed appropriate.

The BOM has the right to require psychological assessment (at its own expense) of ministers requesting a change of status such as incapacity leave or reinstatement from incapacity leave.

Persons who enter the ministry of the South Georgia Conference in the local pastor relationship, e.g., from other denominations, must have psychological assessment before the Board of Ordained Ministry will approve their licensing as a local pastor. If a person comes from another conference having had a psychological evaluation, the Chair of the Psychological Assessment Committee will determine when the testing was done and if it meets the standards of testing set for candidates in the South Georgia Annual Conference. Such individuals could be asked to undergo another psychological assessment. Persons who undergo testing in these situations will follow the payment guidelines applicable to candidates.

Chair of the Psychological Assessment Committee:

Rev. Lynn Meadows-White  
5122 Pierce Chapel Road  
Midland, GA 31820  
706-327-9807

If you have questions, please contact Rev. Gene Cochran at P.O. Box 18149, Macon, GA 31209, email @ [ecochran@sgaumc.com](mailto:ecochran@sgaumc.com). (478) 742-4766

### **Clergy/Candidates with Divorce in Their Background**

Clergy and candidates with a divorce in their background are required to furnish the Board of Ordained Ministry, prior to certification, copies both of their divorce petition and their divorce decree. District Committees on Ministry are charged with the responsibility to secure and examine these documents, investigate the issues surrounding the candidates' previous divorce(s), and forward the petition(s) and decree(s) to Rev. Gene Cochran.

While we affirm the lifelong marriage commitment for both clergy and laity, we also know that all of us are subject to the pressures of society. Though clergy families are faced with a lifetime of uprooting and sometimes unrealistic expectations, statistically they do a better job of dealing with marital and family conflict than society at large. We believe that clergy are expected to model exemplary Christian behavior both personally and professionally. We also believe that parishioners should be able to take inspiration from the example of a pastor and his/her family who, themselves, resolve problems in their marriages.

Therefore, clergy and their families should reach out in every possible way for help and guidance when it appears that their marriages and families are in trouble. They should be encouraged to do this before their homes are thrown into crisis and irreparably damaged. Clergy separation and divorce do occur. There are many causes and circumstances which differ in each situation. While there is no perfect way to deal with the causes and circumstances, we would suggest a series of steps to be taken when a clergy person and his/her spouse decide to separate or divorce.

1. Clergy inform district superintendent of impending separation or divorce
2. District superintendent notifies bishop and cabinet
3. District superintendent meets with clergy and spouse as soon as possible. If there appears to be no possibility of reconciliation, then:
4. The district superintendent chooses a co-district superintendent and sets a meeting time with the clergy and spouse for guidance, information and explanation of procedures to follow.
5. The district superintendent contacts the chair of the Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee and, with the pastor, meets to discuss the impending separation or divorce and to develop a strategy for informing the Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee and the congregation at large.

6. If a grievance is written and filed, then ¶ 361, *The Book of Discipline 2008* takes full effect.
7. If no grievance is filed, then the Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee and the congregation are informed and prepared for all partners to deal with grief, anger, hurt and other emergent feelings.
8. Then the district superintendent, pastor and chair of the Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee and, when possible, the bishop meets and considers options open both to the local church and to the pastor. The options are:
  - a) Retaining current appointment
  - b) An appointment to another parish
  - c) An appointment beyond the local church
  - d) Leave of absence
  - e) Sabbatical leave
  - f) Honorable location
  - g) Retirement
  - h) Withdrawal from the ministerial office
  - i) Voluntary termination
  - j) Transfer to another conference
9. Upon the determination and implementation of decisions on the appointment and conference relations of the clergy, the district superintendent should again inquire into the needs of the clergy family. When it is necessary for the non-clergy spouse to relocate, provision should be made, if possible, for loans or grants from available resources as needed. When the member moves to another charge and the spouse relocates in another community, the cabinet should remain in contact with the family until they are settled and their basic needs are met, assisting with whatever resources are available.

*The foregoing information was taken/adapted from The South Georgia Conference Journal, 1986, Part I, page 159ff.*

### **III. Instructions for Obtaining Credit Check**

The Executive Session of the 1995 South Georgia Annual Conference approved the policy that requires a credit reference check by anyone seeking entry into the conference. This applies to persons seeking certified candidacy and those seeking to serve as a Local Pastor, Associate Member, Commissioned/Provisional Member, Full Conference Member, transfers from another denomination and transfers from other annual conference. Further, at each change of status, e.g., from Provisional Membership to Full Connection, persons will be expected to submit a new credit check.

### **IV. Instructions for Obtaining Criminal Record Checks**

Effective June 13, 1994, all persons entering the South Georgia Annual Conference as a certified candidate, or at any other clergy relationship, must submit to a criminal record check. This check will include all of the states in which the candidate has lived for the last ten years. Further, at each change of status, e.g., from provisional membership to full connection, the candidate will be asked to provide an updated report.. There will be a fee to help the Conference cover the costs of the background checks. The exact costs of the background and credit checks will be determined in the Fall of 2010. Candidates will be notified of the fee at the appropriate time.

The candidate will complete the Criminal Record Consent Form. The signature and seal of a notary public are required. A record check will not be run if it lacks these.

Both the criminal check and credit checks will be run through the Office of Ministerial Services.

A sample of the Credit and Criminal Record Check Consent Form is provided on the following page.

**CREDIT AND CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK CONSENT FORM**

**I HEREBY AUTHORIZE THE Board of Ordained Ministry of the South Georgia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church to receive and use a current Credit and Criminal Record Check pertaining to me as it considers me for service in pastoral ministry in the Annual Conference.**

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**DATE**

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**Your Full Name (Please Print)**

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**Other Names one has used**

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**Street Address and Phone Number**

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**City, State, Zip**

**County of Residence**

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**Date of Birth**

**Social Security Number**

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**Your Signature**

**Sex**

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**Notary Signature**

**Mail this form to: Rev. Gene Cochran, Office of Ministerial Services, P.O. Box 18149, Macon, Georgia 31209. Also, enclose a photocopy of your Driver's License or another official photo ID .**

## V. Medical History

The Executive Session of the South Georgia Annual Conference adopted the following policy statement regarding the medical report of ministerial candidates and its appropriate use.

1. Every person applying for the United Methodist ministry in the South Georgia Annual Conference must provide the District Committee on Ordained Ministry with a health evaluation on a prescribed form approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry.
2. This policy applies to any person who begins the candidacy process after June 13, 1994. It also applies to any transition of status as approved by the 1998 Board of Ordained Ministry.
3. This policy will also apply to those people transferring from other denominations and those persons who are transferring candidacy from other Annual Conferences as certified candidates. The Board of Ordained Ministry may, at its discretion choose to apply this requirement to those persons who are returning from honorable location.
4. The information from the health examinations will be considered in the process of determining the candidate's fitness and probably effectiveness in ministry. While it will comprise one factor in making that decision, it is not meant to be exclusionary in the overall determination. This is in compliance with the intent and purpose of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
5. Candidates will sign a waiver permitting this medical information to be shared with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry, the Board of Ordained Ministry, the cabinet and the Executive Session of the Annual Conference. A copy will be sent to the Board of Pensions for the candidate's participation in the health benefit and pension plans, eliminating a duplication of examinations. While the Board of Ordained Ministry will be as restrictive as possible in giving access to the medical report, those charged with the responsibility of making a recommendation on the candidate will be granted access as needed.
6. The medical report form can be acquired from the office of the Director of Ministerial Services to the Board of Ordained Ministry. The attending physician will return the medical report to Rev. Gene Cochran, who will make it available to the Board of Ordained Ministry's medical consultant for review and to the Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits. The form is a two (2) part document: the first part is completed by the candidate, the second part by the attending physician. The candidate must insure that both parts are sent to Rev. Cochran. The Chair of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry will be informed if there are issues that should be considered with the candidate. The medical report will be kept in the candidate's "permanent" file at the office of the Director of Ministerial Services. An approved form for the medical examination is included with each candidacy for ministry packet in the

district superintendents' offices. A form may also be obtained from Rev. Cochran in Macon.

7. The health examination will be done at the candidate's expense; however, the candidate's local church might be encouraged to assist the candidate in this and other costs. The district superintendent and the Chair of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry can assist with a request to the local church.

## **EXTENSION MINISTRIES**

Persons interested in ministry beyond the bounds of a local church may be appointed to any one of a number of extension ministries. Any ministry approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry that is not exclusively bound to a local church in the annual conference is considered an extension ministry.

Elders, deacons, commissioned provisional members, and local pastors of the annual conference may be appointed to various extension ministries approved by the bishop and the Board of Ordained Ministry. See ¶¶ 343 in *The Book of Discipline 2008* for procedures and qualifications to enter an extension ministry.

The Board of Ordained Ministry relates to all who serve in extension ministries through its Chair of the Extension Ministries Committee, Rev. Mike Brown. The extension minister will find his/her relationship to the chair both necessary and helpful.

The chair of the committee is available to assist the extension minister with any issues relating to the Board of Ordained Ministry or to the annual conference.

Persons serving in some types of extension ministry should apply for endorsement The United Methodist Endorsing Agency in Nashville. Dr. Tom Carter is one of the contact persons at our Nashville office. If you need assistance with this, please contact Rev. Cochran.

Upon the chair's yearly request, the extension minister is to submit a written report of your work and fulfillment of your goals. Bishop King expects written narrative to provide supplemental detail about the ministry of the extension minister. The report goes to the chair of the committee, to Bishop King, and to the extension minister's district superintendent in the South Georgia Conference.

In appreciation for the extension ministers' work beyond the bounds of a local church, the Board of Ordained Ministry and Bishop King sponsor an annual breakfast to honor them. The breakfast occurs on the first full morning of the Annual Conference session. An invitation is extended to the breakfast from the Rev. Mike Brown as a reminder of the occasion.

## CLERGY FROM OTHER CONFERENCES AND DENOMINATIONS

### 1. Transfers from other United Methodist Annual Conferences

See ¶¶ 346, 347 AND 604 of *The Book of Discipline 2008*

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. Consultation with the chair of the Cabinet Transfer Committee and the chair or Executive Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry will be held prior to the transfer.

The Cabinet Transfer Committee represents Bishop King. At present, the chair of the transfer committee is the Reverend Ronnie Wills, Chair, 1602 Goff Circle, Cordele, GA 31015, Telephone 229-273-3119, FAX 229-273-4476, [americusds@mchsi.com](mailto:americusds@mchsi.com).

The chair of the Executive Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry is the Reverend Doctor Ben Martin.

### 2. Transfers from other Methodist Denominations

See ¶¶ 346 and 348, *The Book of Discipline 2008*. Consent of the South Georgia Area Bishop is obtained through the Cabinet Transfer Committee. Contact the chair of the transfer committee. For admission, annual Conference's standards for conference membership must be fulfilled as set by the Board of Ordained Ministry. See ¶ 346.

### 3. Transfers from other Denominations

Read thoroughly the following: See ¶¶ 346, 347, and 348, *The Book of Discipline 2008*.

The policy of the Board of Ordained Ministry requires ordained clergy from other denominations to serve under ¶ 346.2 before being admitted as a Provisional Member or as a Local Pastor under ¶ 347.3. The time will be one (1) or two (2) years as determined by the Cabinet Transfer Committee and the Board of Ordained Ministry.

To begin the process under ¶ 346.2, the applicant will contact the district superintendent in whose district he or she resides. A local United Methodist pastor can give guidance in this. If out of the bounds of the South Georgia Conference, the applicant will contact the bishop's office, which will provide the name, address and telephone number of the chair of the Cabinet Transfer Committee.

Credentials will be submitted to Bishop King through the Cabinet Transfer Committee and to the Board of Ordained Ministry through Rev. Gene Cochran.

The Board of Ordained Ministry requires a medical examination, a psychological assessment, a criminal record check and a credit check for admission to provisional membership or acceptance as a local pastor.

The district superintendent may suggest meeting with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry prior to applying for provisional membership or acceptance as a local pastor under ¶ 347.3 of *The Book of Discipline 2008*.

### **MENTORING AND MENTORS - ¶ 349 *The Book of Discipline 2008***

Mentors are recommended by the cabinet and trained by the Board of Ordained Ministry. There are two (2) categories of mentor: candidacy mentor and clergy mentor, each with distinct functions and responsibilities as follows:

**Candidacy Mentors** are clergy in full connection, trained to provide counsel and guidance related to the candidacy process. Candidates will be assigned a candidacy mentor by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry in consultation with the district superintendent (¶ 311 of *The Book of Discipline 2008*). Candidacy mentors will work with the candidate until that candidate begins serving in an appointive ministry as a local pastor, a commissioned minister or as a probationary member ordained a deacon under *The Book of Discipline 1992*.

**Clergy Mentors** are clergy in full connection, associate members and local pastors who have completed the C.O.S and are trained to provide ongoing oversight and counsel with local pastors and provisional members.

! Local pastors will be assigned a clergy mentor by the Board of Ordained Ministry in consultation with the district superintendent.

! A candidacy mentor may continue with the same person if he or she is trained to be a clergy mentor.

! The Board of Ordained Ministry may assign one mentor to work either with one person, several persons individually or with a group.

### **Criteria for Selecting Guides and Mentors**

Steps into selection of people to serve as mentors and guides are:

! The candidacy registrar and the district superintendent conduct an annual review of the need for additional candidacy guides and mentors in each district.

! When the need exists, the candidacy registrar either plans for or leads those events which train the candidacy guides and mentors for their tasks.

! The district superintendents, in consultation with the leadership of their districts, suggest the names of the best possible persons to be trained as candidacy mentors.

! The candidacy registrar administers the training program for candidacy mentors and certifies the names of those who qualify to serve in the candidacy process. A list of qualified guides and mentors is reported to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the cabinet, the district committees on ordained ministry and the Board of Ordained Ministry. An up-to-date list is maintained in the office of the Director of Ministerial Services to the Board of Ordained Ministry, who assures that the list is updated at the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

It would be valuable for the guides and candidacy mentors in an annual conference to represent a variety of backgrounds to include deacons and elders, family lifestyles, ages, gender and ethnic groups. This variety will provide opportunities for candidates to be in contact with church leaders who may represent the characteristics of the wider church community while at the same time giving them access to guides and mentors they can relate to more effectively. Candidates will not be assigned to guides or mentors solely on the basis of race or gender, but it is important to have a variety of backgrounds represented in order to enhance the quality of the program as a whole.

### **Criteria for Selecting Mentors**

The following standards are suggested for confirmation with the district superintendents, district committees and others involved in the selection process in the annual conference.

! **Spiritual Maturity:** Deep and continuing commitment to God and to growing in grace and love is essential. The inner light and warmth that result from the overflowing of God's presence should be easily visible in every candidacy guide and mentor.

! **Calling and Commitment to the Ministry of Jesus Christ:** Candidacy guides and mentors should be genuinely committed to the ministry of the church, to the variety of forms it takes both for laity and clergy, and convinced of its validity and worth in today's world.

! **Vocational Development:** Although they may have experienced serious disappointments or crisis in their lives, candidacy guides and mentors must have learned to cope constructively with the opportunities and challenges which emerge in their lives.

! **Personal Qualities:** Candidacy guides or mentors need to value each person as unique and important with no strings attached. In addition, they need to value the church and its future with a goal of obtaining the best future leadership for the church available. The assumptions and rationale for these and other related values should be open and easily accessible in a non defensive, nonjudgmental manner.

**! Experience and Effectiveness:** Candidacy guides and mentors should have general exposure to and appreciation of a wide variety of ministries (lay and clergy) in The United Methodist Church. They need to appreciate, equally, the ministry of the deacon, the elder, the local pastor and the lay servant in The United Methodist connection and the unique ministry of each. On the other hand, the guides and mentors merit the respect of everyone in the church because of their selfless and effective ministry to which they have been called.

**! Family Relationships and Personal Life:** Whether married or single, the personal life of the guide and mentor should be congruent with the high standards expected of Christians. In the candidacy process, the subjects of spouse and family relationships receive significant attention; therefore, the guides and mentors are expected to reflect the high qualities of a Christian home that supports them in their career as ordained ministers.

**! Formal Assessment:** The Board of Ordained Ministry requires formal psychological assessment as part of the candidacy program. Therefore, the candidacy mentor may participate in the process as part of their selection as a mentor. This would alert the individual of his or her strengths and weaknesses and would enable her or him to experience these procedures in the same way that candidates do.

**! Excitement and Joy:** Ideally, every guide and mentor should experience and express excitement, awe, mystery and joy of believing the Holy Spirit is at work in the world today. Such enthusiasm is contagious. The guide or mentor may enable the candidate to become free to realize God's call and encourage personal growth and vocational commitment.

### **Training Mentors to Work with Candidates**

The candidacy registrar has responsibility for providing training for candidacy guides and mentors; however, a candidacy registrar is expected to share this leadership responsibility with others who are appropriately qualified. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry will provide trainers and training resources upon request.

At least one training event should be arranged every year to provide training of new guides and mentors. These events might also enrich the experience of those who are continuing in this responsibility. A morning and afternoon schedule or an overnight schedule with an evening through the following noon will probably be an adequate time-frame. Experienced guides and mentors can often be valuable to new persons learning about the candidacy process.

**Each workshop should include the following elements:**

- ! the rationale and assumptions for the candidacy process
- ! the place of candidacy in the entire entry procedure for ordination as a deacon or elder
- ! careful study of the basic materials for candidacy, including *Ministry Inquiry Process, Guidebook*, and the *Supervising Pastor's Manual*
- ! opportunity prior to the meeting for mentors to take the Inventory of Religious Activities and Interest (IRAI). This is done online. The Minnesota Multi phasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and other testing instruments are included in the psychological assessment conducted by the Pastoral Institute in Columbus and by Behavioral Medicine in Macon. Mentors will benefit from a discussion and demonstration of the use of the IRAI.
- ! preparation and use of the mentor's report by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry and the consideration of issues or records and confidentiality
- ! discussion and clarification of the role of the guide and mentor
- ! selected examples and practice in using the *Ministry Inquiry Process*, the "Exploratory Studies" in *The Candidacy Guidebook*, and other materials
- ! information about resources, contact persons and procedures relevant to the candidacy process
- ! some unhurried time for participants to share feelings, reactions and expectations about candidacy studies and the work of the guides and mentors
- ! a question-and-answer opportunity with the trainer about the workshop itself.

These agenda should be adapted to the needs of the guides and mentors. As the more basic information becomes well known to participants, there is more opportunity for practice and role-plays of situations that guides and mentors may need. At times, selected candidates, themselves, may participate in training events by sharing their perceptions of candidacy and, perhaps, by role-playing certain situations with a guide or mentor.

When possible it may be helpful to invite the spouses of candidacy mentors to participate in the training sessions. Some spouses may be unable to attend or not be interested, but others will welcome the opportunity to be part of this important dimension of the church's future.

Where appropriate, the candidacy registrar may be able to arrange for continuing education or other educational credit for the participants in these training workshops. Since guides and mentors, like most candidacy registrars, are not paid for this important and time consuming work, fringe benefits, such as meals, travel expenses, continuing education credit and other ways of saying “thank you,” can be an extra boost to guides and mentors. Districts or annual conference Boards of Ordained Ministry will need to budget funds for this purpose.

In most instances, the candidacy registrar will organize and lead these training events; however, the registrar is expected to draw on the support of others trained by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry whenever a major training event takes place in the annual conference. Additional leadership may include members of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry or the Board of Ordained Ministry, a district superintendent, the ministerial assessment specialist providing psychological assessment reports, or others who may have participated in the development and continuing work of the candidacy process. On occasion the staff of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry may be available to provide leadership as well.

## **RESIDENCY IN MINISTRY PROGRAM**

### **What is the Residency in Ministry (RIM) program?**

The Conference Board of Ministry is charged with maintaining a program of support and guidance for the provisional members of the South Georgia Conference that is consistent with *The Book of Discipline*, which states, “Provisional members are on trial in preparation for membership in full connection in the annual conference as deacons or elders. They are on probation as to character, servant leadership and effectiveness in ministry.” (§ 327 BOD)

This program is offered to achieve the goals set forth in § 326 of BOD:

1. Extending theological education by using covenant groups and mentoring to support the practice and work of probationers’ ministry as servant leaders.
2. Contemplate the grounding of ordained ministry.
3. Understanding the covenant ministry in the life of the conference.

The Residency in Ministry program will seek to fulfill these goals by two basic components:

1. RIM Covenant Groups meeting monthly
2. An Annual Teaching Retreat

### **Who participates in the RIM?**

1. Provisional Elders and Provisional Deacons of the Annual Conference who have met the disciplinary requirements of §324 BOD 2008 and comparable paragraph in previous editions.
2. Provisional members who transfer into the South Georgia Annual Conference from other Conferences.
3. Ordained Clergy from other denominations that have been received by the South Georgia Annual Conference as provisional members.

**How long do people participate?**

Persons commissioned as Provisional Elders or Provisional Deacons will participate in the RIM program for a minimum of two (2) years from being commissioned. If they are not ordained after two (2) years, they will be assigned to a 2<sup>nd</sup> year group for a third year. Beyond that, mentors will be assigned at the direction of the BOM. Provisional Elders and Provisional Deacons who transfer into the South Georgia Conference will participate until they are ordained elders/deacons or complete the two-year program. Persons who go on leaves of absence do not participate in the RIM Program while on leave, but return to a group assigned by the RIM Program Chair upon resuming an appointment.

**What are the components of the RIM PROGRAM?****1. Participation in a RIM Covenant Group led by a Conference assigned Mentors.**

A. Small groups assigned by class year of commissioning (there could be more than one class year depending on the number commissioned that year and geographical considerations)

B. Meet monthly beginning with the RIM Orientation Meeting, held in May prior to persons being commissioned. One meeting will be held at the Annual Teaching Retreat. Full participation in Covenant Group meetings will provide one (1) hour of CEU credit. One suggestion is for the group to meet at each participant's local church setting during the year to better help group members know and appreciate one another's ministry.

C. There will be two mentors for each group, or three for a Conference-wide group. At least one of which will be a member of the BOM. The mentors' primary role is encouragement and instruction, not evaluation. Mentors on the BOM will excuse themselves from being assigned to BOM Ordination interview and voting on their own group participants. Mentors on the BOM, in consultation with the Conference Director of Ministerial Services, should review each candidate's file and advise candidates during the annual continuation interview of any requirements that need to be met as they move through the ordination process.

D. Meetings will follow the following format:

a. **Group Directed Book Discussion:** The group will be reading an assigned book, with discussion (40 minutes) facilitated by a provisional members assigned by a rotation. The Year One Book Discussion will be from *Leading Beyond the Walls: Developing Congregations with a Heart for the Unchurched*, by Adam Hamilton, Abingdon Press ISBN #0-687-06415-5. The Year Two Book Discussion will be from *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry* by Will Willimon Abingdon Press ISBN: 0-687-04532-0

b. **Sermon or Significant Act of Ministry:** Provisional Elder candidates will prepare, preach and video tape a sermon. Provisional Deacon candidates will perform a significant act of ministry that was done in your local ministry setting. One sermon/significant act of ministry per month will be viewed and discussed by the group until everyone in the group has presented. Every person should present a sermon or significant act of ministry twice in the two years.

c. **Self-Selected Book Reviews** - One member of the group will present a brief book review on a book chosen from an assigned list. This will happen every month until everyone has presented.

d. **Prayer and Sharing of Ministry Experiences** and questions about practical ministry issues.

e. **Review of the BOM Ordination Paperwork:** It will be appropriate for some time to be given in near the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> Year for discussion of the ordination questions/assignments. Members should bring drafts of their answers for the questions to be discussed that day, as assigned by the RIM Covenant Mentors. The questions can be found in the BOM section of the South Georgia Conference web site ([www.sgaumc.com](http://www.sgaumc.com)).

## **B. Continuing Pastoral Education**

As with all appointed clergy, provisional members are required to complete 2.5 units of Continuing Pastoral Education, as outlined in our South Georgia Conference Standing Rules. Full participation in the RIM Program will allow the provisional member to receive these credits:

1. One (1) unit of credit for Full and Engaged Participation in the Monthly RIM Covenant meetings.

2. Up to one (1) unit for attendance and participation at the RIM Annual Teaching Retreat.

**C. Annual Teaching Retreat**

All provisional members will be required to participate in the Annual Teaching Retreat. The Retreat will be a two day, one night event provided by the Board of Ordained Ministry. The event will be provided at no cost to the participants and the topics will vary each year.

**D. Annual Meeting with the District Superintendent**

In the course of the Cabinet-required annual face-to-face meetings that every District Superintendent schedules with clergy in appointments, the District Superintendent offers evaluation and feedback to the provisional member. This feedback is submitted in January by every District Superintendent to the Conference Director of Ministerial Services to be included in the files for each provisional member. This is required by ¶1326 of the BOD.

**E. Annual check-in with representatives from the Conference BOM**

This meeting is set up by the BOM Registrar and to be completed at the Annual Teaching Retreat. This will eliminate the year one probationers from coming to the annual Board of Ordained Ministry meeting. This is required by ¶1326 of the BOD.

*Chair, The Rev. Scott Hagan*

## CHANGES IN CONFERENCE RELATIONS

### *The Book of Discipline 2008*

#### **Leave of Absence (§ 354 & 355 *The Book of Discipline*)**

- a. Voluntary leave of absence (§ 354, a,b,c)
- b. Involuntary leave of absence (§ 355)

#### **Maternity/paternity leave (§ 356)**

#### **Health/incapacity leave (§ 357)**

### **Policy RE: Clergy on Voluntary Leave of Absence Exit and Re-entry Process**

*The Book of Discipline*, 2008, § 354, describes the Disciplinary details surrounding an individual's request for a voluntary leave of absence.

#### **First Steps**

Any clergy seeking a voluntary leave of absence shall meet with his or her District Superintendent and one other DS. This meeting is intended to be an intentional expression of pastoral concern and supervision. The Superintendents will explain the following process to the clergy as he or she makes his/her decision to take a voluntary leave of absence. This process is the Annual Conference's intentional effort to be as helpful as possible to the clergy as he or she confronts the circumstances that necessitated the request for the leave of absence. The clergy's District Superintendent will write a letter to document this process in the weeks following the decision to take a voluntary leave of absence.

1. First, the clergy will write a letter to the Board of Ordained Ministry requesting a voluntary leave of absence. This letter should offer detailed reasons for the requested leave of absence. Copies of this letter should be sent to the Bishop and the clergy's District Superintendent (§ 354.1).
2. Clergy may request voluntary leave of absence for a variety of reasons: a) personal leave; b) family leave; or c) transitional leave. See § 354.2 for a description of each of these options. Voluntary leave of absence is not an option should there be active complaints or charges against that clergy until those complaints or charges have been resolved (§ 354.5).

## **Exit Interview**

3. *The Book of Discipline*, 2008, ¶ 354.3 states that representatives of the Board of Ordained Ministry may conduct an interview to determine if sufficient cause exists to recommend granting the leave of absence. It is the South Georgia Annual Conference Board of Ordained Ministry's policy that all clergy seeking a voluntary leave of absence will interview first with a Triad consisting of the Conference Relations Committee Chair (or designee), a District Superintendent who relates to the Board, and the Conference Pastoral Counselor. This interview may occur in conjunction with a regularly scheduled Board of Ordained Ministry meeting or at some other time. Ideally, the interview with the Triad will occur as soon after the initial request is filed with the Board of Ordained Ministry as practical.
4. It is the desire of this Triad to understand, clarify and document the reasons leading to the request for a leave of absence. The Triad will encourage the clergy to develop an action plan for dealing with these circumstances in a redemptive manner. Triad members may suggest resources that may assist the clergy in working through the presenting issues. The information gathered in this interview will be added to the clergy's file with the Board of Ordained Ministry, and a copy will be placed in the clergy's personnel file maintained by their District Superintendent.
5. The Triad will report to the Conference Relations Committee members who will make a recommendation to the full Board of Ordained Ministry regarding the requested leave of absence. The clergy may be asked to meet with the Conference Relations Committee to assist that body in making a determination about its recommendation to the Board of Ordained Ministry.

## **Transition Interview**

6. *The Book of Discipline*, 2008, ¶ 354.11 states that a clergy must make a written request to reenter from voluntary leave of absence at least six months prior to the Annual Conference session. If /when a clergy feels he or she is ready to re-enter the effective relationship, he or she should set up an appointment with the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. An interview will be scheduled with a Triad composed of the Conference Relations Committee Chair or designee, a District Superintendent who relates to the Board of Ordained Ministry, and the Conference Pastoral Counselor. This appointment will be called the "Transition Interview."
7. The clergy should be prepared to describe in detail how the circumstances surrounding the leave of absence have been alleviated or resolved. The Triad will review the clergy's file prior to the transition interview to gain a more complete understanding of the original circumstances.

### **Conference Relations Committee Interview**

8. The Conference Relations Committee will meet with the clergy. Committee members will receive a briefing from the Triad as preparation for the interview with the clergy. The Committee's task is to determine if the circumstances that led to the leave of absence have been satisfactorily resolved so the clergy can resume an unimpeded ministry. Upon completion of the interview, the Committee may make one of the following recommendations (§ 354.11):
  - A. To recommend the clergy's return to effective relationship to the full Board of Ordained Ministry.
  - B. To recommend the clergy remain on voluntary leave of absence until the issues are more fully resolved.
  - C. To recommend the clergy for honorable location.
  - D. To recommend to the Bishop and District Superintendents that the clergy be placed on involuntary leave of absence, administrative location or involuntary retirement.

### **Final Recommendations**

9. The recommendation of the Conference Relations Committee will be considered by the full Board of Ordained Ministry. If the Board of Ordained Ministry determines to deny the request for a return to effective ministry, the clergy will be informed of the remaining options specified above and in § 354.11.

### **Effective Dates**

10. This policy becomes effective immediately for all clergy requesting voluntary leave of action following the policy's adoption by the Board of Ordained Ministry, which was November 5, 2008.
11. Clergy who were already on voluntary leave of absence prior to the policy's adoption (November 5, 2008) will be scheduled to meet with the Triad for the Exit Interview. The purpose of this meeting is to clarify the reasons for the leave of absence, to offer pastoral concern, and to assist the clergy in developing an action plan to alleviate the circumstances. A file will be constructed for retention by the Board of Ordained Ministry during this leave period. A copy of the report will be placed in the clergy's personnel file maintained by their District Superintendent.

BOM Approved: 11-05-08

## **Retirement (¶ 359)**

- a. Mandatory Retirement: age 72.
- b. Voluntary Retirement
  - 1. With twenty (20) years of service
  - 2. With thirty-five (35) years of service or at age sixty-two (62)
  - 3. With forty (40) years of service or at age sixty-five (65)
- c. Involuntary Retirement
- d. Pre-retirement Counseling
- e. Charge Conference Membership
- f. Appointment of Retired Ordained ministers
- g. Return to Effective Relationship

## **Re-admission to Conference Relationship (Section XV, ¶ 363)**

- ¶ 361 - Re-admission after honorable or administrative location
- ¶ 362 - Re-admission after leaving the ministerial office
- ¶ 363 - Re-admission after termination by action of the annual conference
- ¶ 364 - Re-admission after involuntary retirement

## **Continuing Education - ¶ 349**

### **Interview Questions for:**

- Full Membership (Elder) ¶ 336
- Full Membership (Deacon) ¶ 330, d
- Commissioning/Provisional - ¶ 324.9

### **Transition Diaconal to Deacon - See information on questions.**

### **Certification - See information on questions**

## MINISTERIAL EDUCATION FUND

The Ministerial Education Fund (MEF) is one of the great strengths of The United Methodist Church in regard to theological education and the preparation of clergy. Twenty-five (25) percent of the funds raised by the MEF apportionment remains in the annual conference for programs of service loans for seminary students, licensed local pastors, diaconal ministers, and persons in certified ministries; however, the administrative costs of the Board of Ordained Ministry are to come from the annual conference, not the MEF. In most conferences, the MEF is used as follows (General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Board of Ordained Ministry Handbook, Chapter 20, page 5; see also ¶ 635.2w of *The Book of Discipline 2008*).

- ! Student Financial Aid, Service Loans
- ! Continuing Education
- ! Call and Enlistment
- ! Creation of "Orders of Ministry": Order of Elders, Order of Deacons, Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members
- ! Clergy Care

Of the seventy-five (75) percent of the MEF which comes to the general church, eighty-three (83) percent supports the thirteen (13) United Methodist seminaries. The balance of these funds support the work of the Division of Ordained Ministry in general services to the church, scholarships for seminary students, certification programs, Course of Study, and training of new district superintendents.

Apportionments paid to the MEF will go to support students in seminary, Course of Study, and license for pastoral ministry. The South Georgia Conference's Board of Ordained Ministry will continue to make sure that apportioned income staying within South Georgia will be used for these purposes in supporting our students. **Every church is encouraged to pay 100% of the Ministerial Education Fund apportionment. This will keep the service loans high and will help our seminary students and Course of Study students from incurring additional debt.**

MEF reserves are being used to support the Board of Ordained Ministry's mandated tasks of creating and supporting the Order of Elders, Order of Deacons, Fellowship of Local Pastors/Associate Members, the Residence in Ministry programs for provisional/commissioned ministers, and recruitment of new ministers.

## Service Loan Information

The Board of Ordained Ministry administers the MEF for the South Georgia Conference. The primary use of the MEF in South Georgia is in Service Loans for seminary, course of study, and college students who are certified candidates.

## Funds for Service Loans

- I. **Service Loans** *(to be repaid after completion of the educational requirements by five years of service in the South Georgia Conference or cash repayment plus three (3) percent interest from the date of graduation. The following rates are the 2010-2011 school year, beginning fall semester 2009.*
  - A. Master of Divinity Degree of Masters degree fulfilling the primary requirements for ordination under *The Book of Discipline 1992* (the former orders of ministry) as well as subsequent editions of *The Book of Discipline* (Deacon and Elder under our current ordering of ministry). Applicants must be certified candidates .  
RATE: \$150 per semester hour (with a maximum of \$3,600 per year for a total of three (3) years.
  - B. College Students: Applicants must be certified candidates.  
RATE: \$50 per semester hour or \$40 per quarter
  - C. Course of Study for Local Pastors:  
RATE: \$425 per course for Basic Course of Study; \$700 per course for Advanced Course of Study.
  - D. Foundation Course of Study and/or Certification Course for ministers moving toward ordination or relationship with the annual conference  
RATE: Check with Chair of M.E.F., Reverend Gene Cochran.

## Licensing School for Pastoral Ministry

The total cost will be absorbed by the Ministerial Education Fund with the exception of the registration fee of \$200 paid by the student. Registration fee for out of conference attendees is \$750 paid by the student.

## Distribution of Funds

The distribution of Ministerial Education Fund monies for college, seminary and other graduate school students is *ex post facto* or after the fact of academic credit. Students must complete the Academic Credit Claim Form, to be signed by the registrar/dean of the school and send it to the MEF Committee Chair.

## **Special Funds**

Through the South Georgia United Methodist Foundation, Inc., several generous people have created a trust for ministerial education. Application for these funds may be made by writing to the Chair of the Ministerial Education Fund Committee.

### **Steps for Receiving Ministerial Education Funds**

- A. Each student, district superintendent and financial aid officer completes the application form, which verifies that the student is eligible. It will not have to be completed again unless there is a change from college to seminary or a change from one college to another or from one seminary to another seminary.
- B. Prior to receiving the funds for the first quarter or semester, the student will sign a Service Loan Agreement included in the application
- C. At the end of each quarter or semester, the student will be responsible for the verification, by signature of the dean, registrar, or other official, of academic hours credited. "In-progress" or "incomplete" course work is not acceptable.
- D. The student will submit an Academic Credit Claim form to the Chair of the Ministerial Education Fund Committee. Upon receipt, the chair will make a requisition from the Conference Treasurer. The Academic Credit Claim form will be kept as a record of funds distributed.

The Board of Ordained Ministry and the Ministerial Education Fund Committee of the annual conference are grateful for the privilege to work with seminary students, course of study participants, college students and candidates for ministry in the South Georgia Annual Conference. Seminary debt remains a limiting factor for many pastors. The full payment by every church of the Ministerial Education Fund apportionment allows pastors to keep their educational debts lower than they might otherwise be. The generosity of the churches of our annual conference contributes to the creation of more effective pastors for the South Georgia Conference.

The Chair of the Ministerial Education Fund Committee is the Reverend Gene Cochran.

**RELATIONSHIP OF ORDERS OF CLERGY**  
**Refer to ¶¶ 310 and 314 of *The Book of Discipline 2008***

In compliance with ¶ 306 there shall be in each annual conference and Order of Deacons and an Order of Elders. All persons ordained as clergy in The United Methodist Church upon election to full membership in the annual conference shall be members of and participate in an order appropriate to their election.

An order is a covenant community within the church to support, mutually, to care for and to hold accountable its members for the sake of the life and mission of the church.

¶ 307 identifies the activities of an order:

1. Provide for regular gatherings of ordained deacons and ordained elders for continuing formation in relationship to Jesus Christ through such experiences as Bible study, study of issues facing the church and society and theological exploration in vocational identity and leadership
2. Assist in plans for individual study and retreat experiences
3. Develop a bond of unity and common commitment to the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church and the annual conference
4. Enable the creation of relationships that allow mutual support and trust
5. Hold accountable all members of the order in fulfillment of these purposes

There is also a directive in ¶ 635.2.p *The Book of Discipline 2008* for the Board of Ordained Ministry to be supportive in forming a fellowship for local pastors to provide community or to “work with and support the ordering of local pastors, including receiving reports, offering financial support, and coordinating their continuing formation.”

**Diaconal Ministry**

Diaconal ministry is the predecessor of the new Order of Deacon. The office of Diaconal Ministry is the church’s recognition of persons who have received a call to specialized ministries of service. They are recognized as lay persons in professional ministry in different settings of service.

Diaconal ministers who seek to become ordained deacons in full connection shall apply before December 31, 2004. The work of the former conference boards of diaconal ministry will be cared for by the conference boards of ordained ministry effective January 1, 1997.

## PROCEDURES FOR TRANSFER OF CONFERENCE RELATIONS

The transfer of diaconal ministers from one conference to another shall be under the provisions of *The Book of Discipline 1992* ¶ 312.

### TRANSITION TO DEACON IN FULL CONNECTION

Diaconal Ministers who seek to become ordained deacons in full connection under the provision of ¶ 369 shall apply before December 31, 2004.

According to *The Book of Discipline 2004* ¶ 366 Transitional Provision, all persons having begun candidacy for diaconal ministry . . . prior to January 1, 1997, will be allowed to proceed under the provision of *The Book of Discipline 1992* (¶¶ 305-306; ¶¶ 419-421). These continuing procedures must be completed prior to December 31, 2008.

¶ 369.3 - Diaconal Ministers who are in good standing with the annual conference and have completed a minimum of three (3) years in an approved service appointment may become ordained deacons in full connection provided the following requirements are completed:

- a. Applied in writing to the Board of Ordained Ministry for the transfer of their credentials to ordained deacon in full connection
- b. Completed a continuing formation and education program developed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry
- c. Demonstrated an understanding of the call to the order of deacon and whose ministry fulfills and exemplifies the definition and description of the ordained deacon (¶¶ 328, 329), and who has either met the educational requirements of the diaconate (¶ 330), or whose competence and experience are determined to be equivalent by the Board of Ordained Ministry through the Division of Deacons, if constituted.
- d. Received a two-thirds (2/3) positive vote of the clergy session.

Since the Order of Deacons embodies and provides a continuation of the diaconate, it is appropriate that those diaconal ministers who present themselves for transfer to the Order of Deacons in Full Connection be interviewed using the following questions:

1. Personal biographical statement, including his or her call into ministry
2. What is your understanding of your call to servant ministry as expressed in the Deacon in Full Connection?
3. Describe the connection between work and worship in the ministry of the deacon.

4. According to *The Book of Discipline 1996*, what is your understanding of the deacon's appointment by a bishop?
5. What is the meaning of ordination in the context of the general ministry of the church?
6. Describe in what ways you will, as a deacon, lead and support the congregation in its servant ministry and equip all baptized Christians for their ministry?
7. In what ways will you, as a deacon, seek to express the ministry of compassion and justice as you assist lay persons, who claim their own ministry?
8. In what ways will you, as a deacon, help to connect the needs of the world and gifts of the congregation?
9. What are the rights and responsibilities of conference membership in full connection?

### **TRANSITION FROM DEACON IN FULL CONNECTION TO ELDER IN FULL CONNECTION**

Interested persons may receive information on this by contacting the office of the Director of Ministerial Services to the Board of Ordained Ministry - Rev. Gene Cochran, P.O. Box 18149, Macon, GA 31209 or [ecochran@sgaumc.com](mailto:ecochran@sgaumc.com)

### **PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION**

Certification in specialized ministry in The United Methodist Church is the church's recognition that an individual has been called to specialized ministry; has made a commitment to meet the standards for academic training, experience and continuing necessary study; and achieve and maintain excellence in ministry. Certification is available to laity, diaconal ministers, ordained deacons and ordained elders (*The Book of Discipline 2008*, ¶ 635.2. u).

There are three (3) avenues toward completion of the academic requirements:

1. with a master's degree in the area of specialization
2. with a bachelor's degree and
  - a. five (5) graduate certification courses or
  - b. with a manor in the area of specialized ministry approved by the Second of Deacons and Diaconal Ministries

3. without a bachelor's degree, provided

- a. individuals with effective experience (four {4} years minimum prior to enrollment for certification studies) in directing the area of specialized ministry program in a local church may meet the educational requirements without a bachelor's degree, provided the individual has completed at least twenty-four (24) semester hours, or equivalent quarter hours, of undergraduate course work and fulfills all other academic requirements. Successful completion of the five (5) certification studies in the area of specialized ministry as determined by the Section of Deacons and Diaconal Ministries of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of The United Methodist Church or
- b. In special circumstances, individuals with effective experience (four {4} years' minimum prior to enrollment for certification studies) in directing the area of a specialized ministry program in a local church may meet the education requirements without undergraduate course work, provided the individual completes twenty-four (24) semester hours of courses from the major in the area of specialized ministry as a cohesive set of courses from a United Methodist college or university approved by the Section of Deacons and Diaconal Ministries. This set of courses should be the core of the major that the school offers.

**Presently there are six (6) areas of certification:**

1. camp/retreat ministry
2. Christian education
3. evangelism
4. music ministry
5. spiritual formation
6. youth ministry

Refer to *The Book of Discipline 2008* ¶ 1423.

**Focus of the Certification Interview**

The committee shall deal with the skills of the person, the knowledge of the person regarding the structure, programming and resources of The United Methodist Church in the areas of specialization. The following questions are to be used as a guide for those who are conducting the interview for one seeking certification:

1. State your commitment to the nature and mission of the church.
2. In what ways do you fulfill your call and commitment to the church's ministry as a certified person in the area of specialized ministry?

3. Describe your setting for ministry.
4. What is your understanding of the nature and function of the structure and organization of The United Methodist Church?
5. How do you characterize United Methodist denominational program or curriculum resources? In what places/resources will you find The United Methodist program/curriculum described? How are decisions made as to the selection/use of appropriate/particular resources in the local church/agency?
6. How would you characterize positive/effective staff relationships? A multiple staff relationship? Your role in a multiple staff relationship? How do you relate to authority?
7. How do you see the development of your particular field of ministry in the next ten (10) - fifteen (15) years?
8. Share some positive and negative experiences in both your ministry and personal life this last year. And how would you describe the areas in which you perceive a need for growth or help in your ministry?
9. What are your plans for continuing education for personal and professional growth?

### **Procedures for Biannual Renewal of Certification**

The Registrar for Deacons will obtain and send renewal forms to each certified individual. A deadline date for renewals to be returned will be given. The registrar will review each renewal and then make a report to the Board of Ordained ministry. The registrar will make sure that the names of those certified appear in the *Conference Journal* annually. Following the annual conference, the registrar will send the report to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. The Registrar for Deacons is the Reverend Cathy Tucker, P.O. Box 7, Bonaire, GA 31005. (478) 923-7317.

### **CONTINUING EDUCATION (The Book of Discipline 2008 ¶ 351)**

The Conference Coordinator of Continuing Education is the Reverend Doreen Smalls, and she will assist individuals who need approval of a CEU event for credit.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY OF CANDIDATES BEFORE THE BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY**

The Board of Ordained Ministry is a community within the church, the Body of Christ. Historically, from the perspective of our Anglican heritage, the community of faith recruits, credentials, supports and holds accountable persons for ministry. John Wesley asked three (3) questions of all persons discerning the call to itinerant ministry. They are relevant today for the Board of Ordained Ministry and for the annual conference as these bodies recommend and approve persons for ministry.

1. Do they know God as pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire nothing but God? Are they holy in all manner conversation?

This question opens the way for the community to discern with the individual his or her relationship to/with God.

2. Have they (the candidates) gifts, as well as evidence of God's grace, for the work? Have they a clear, sound understanding; a right judgment in the things of God; a just conception of salvation by faith? Do they speak justly, readily and clearly?

Gifts are evidences of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual and, therefore, do we see in the life of the candidate that there are gifts to offer the larger community of the church and of the world?

3. Have they fruits? Have they been truly convinced of sin and converted to God, and are believers edified by their service?

The community looks to ministers who are effective and faithful. Have lives been changed because of their ministry?

### **Questions that Members of the Board of Ordained Ministry Might Ponder:**

- ! How do we as the Board of Ordained Ministry embody community in our life and work?
- ! How do we see ourselves as entrusted with this responsibility on behalf of the larger community?
- ! Who are we as persons called by God and what do we bring to the interview with candidates?
- ! What are the processes of the interview (from the initial step to the follow-up letter after the interview), which express living in the Body of Christ together for the candidate and members of the Board of Ordained Ministry?

## **Covenant**

The interview is the process of Christ's covenant. Are we merely observers of the candidate or are we in relationship with him or her? When we as a board engage in the interview process, how is covenant experienced?

In the context of covenant, guidance and support may include honest and direct feedback, sharing interview results which are contrary to the wishes of the person being interviewed, and maintaining the covenant beyond the bounds of the interview in ongoing relationship.

## **Communication of a Desire for Positive Relationships with Candidates**

Interviews are taking places which relate to a transition in a person's life. Whether seeking to enter ordained ministry, beginning a study program, requesting a leave or a change in conference relationship, significant change is underway. Changes often create anxiety. Acknowledge the anxiety and take the time to create an open and caring environment. Interviewers are expected to show genuine honesty and trust.

Members of interview teams will want to provide as much feedback as possible during the interview and make sure that what is being said is clear to the listeners. Offer guidance and support to the person being interviewed. Demonstrate concern for the individual Listen with the heart to how a candidate is saying his or her words. Make sure that is said is understood by everyone involved. Be sensitive, yet firm, in holding to our United Methodist beliefs and doctrines.

## **CANDIDACY: FITNESS FOR MINISTRY**

Fitness and potential effectiveness are basic to the purpose of the candidacy interview. This interview includes spiritual, psychological and physical dimensions. The interview team will want to know something about how the candidate relates to God and how he or she understands the call to the ordained ministry.

The convening leader will take note of any "red flags" in the psychological assessment.

Physical limitations are to be measured by ¶ 324.8 of *The Book of Discipline 2008*. When a candidate will not be able to render service because of a physical incapacity, it is better to recognize and explore implications of this early in the candidacy process.

Although fitness issues are an ongoing concern throughout a person's vocational journey, candidates for certification should not be judged either in terms of the development of skills for ministry or of demonstrated effectiveness. *Fitness* and *potential* are the criteria which are used in the certification interview.

## **PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP: READINESS FOR MINISTRY**

Determination of readiness for commissioning to full-time ministry is the purpose of a provisional interview. Attention is given to the applicant's academic background, theological statement and seminary reports on field education experiences/internships which indicate readiness for ministry. The interview includes questions that point to whether or not a candidate is fit for ordained ministry and is developing the skills to be effective.

## **FULL MEMBERSHIP: EFFECTIVENESS IN MINISTRY**

The purpose of this interview is to focus on the effectiveness for ministry. The primary documentation for the interview is the written work, the reports and evaluations of the district superintendent and the Committee on Staff/Parish Relations or personnel committee of the employer.

Candidates applying for deacon's ordination, who are in appointments beyond the local church with a personnel committee, should establish an advisory committee related to the probationer's appointment for the purpose of giving support and supervision.

Effective ministry is the final area of consideration as a candidate progresses toward full conference membership. This is a very important interview. The interview committee(s) will have time allotted it/them to be thorough in its/their questioning and listening.

## **INTERVIEWS**

### **1. Certification of Candidacy**

The certification of a candidate for ordained ministry is the first important watershed in that person's progress toward ordained ministry. Since the primary purpose of this interview is to determine the candidate's fitness for ordained ministry, the district committee will closely examine the candidate's interests, lifestyle, personality and call to ministry.

### **2. License as a Local Pastor**

The licensing of a local pastor requires an interview by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry. If the candidate is applying for license as a full-time local pastor *for the first time*, an interview by the Board of Ordained Ministry is required. The primary purpose of this interview is to determine the candidate's fitness and readiness for ordained ministry using documentation from candidacy certification, the local pastor licensing school and any other source required by the annual conference. *If a person has been approved but not appointed over a two-year period of time*, she or he must return for an interview with the Board of Ordained Ministry; however, the District Committees on Ordained Ministry will interview these individuals annually. The Reverend Steve Meguiar or Rev. Gene Cochran can provide information as needed.

### 3. Associate and Provisional Membership

This is an entrance interview scheduled after a person requests admission to provisional membership and \*Associate Membership. Most provisional members will be commissioned for ministry. Please see note below for further information about Associate Membership and Provisional Membership concurrent with ordination as a deacon.

The District Committee on Ordained Ministry will first make a recommendation on behalf of the candidate to the Board of Ordained Ministry. The district committee will insure that the candidate has met all of the requirements of *The Book of Discipline* for this relationship. This interview will, for many, be the first for the candidate with the Board of Ordained ministry. Its primary purpose is to determine the candidate's readiness for ordained ministry using Course of Study School and/or seminary transcripts, field education or other seminary reports, along with a theological statement. Candidates for this relationship will be required to meet other requirements that are carefully spelled out in *The Book of Discipline* and the material that will be furnished to the candidate by Rev. Gene Cochran, Director of Ministerial Services to the Board of Ordained Ministry.

**NOTE:** The board is no longer considering applicants for Associate Membership and ordination as a deacon under provisions of *The Book of Discipline, 1992*. All candidates for Associate Membership must now qualify under the current legislation for that status. Some candidates for Provisional Membership and ordination as a deacon may qualify under *The Book of Discipline, 1992*. This would apply pertain to persons who have been on track since January 1997, and were processed into the system under the 1992 legislation.

The questions in the following sections are placed here as a guide for your information. Please do not use them, independently, to meet the written requirements for any status for which you wish to apply. All applications for a change of status must be submitted to Rev. Gene Cochran, who will provide a packet of information that each candidate must have. The packet will have the questions that must be answered in form required by the Board of Ordained Ministry.

#### **Provisional Membership and Commissioning**

The *2008 Book of Discipline* reinstated as a minimum requirement the option of a candidate applying for provisional membership and commissioning when half of their educational requirements (graduate level work) have been met. **The South Georgia BOM has voted to extend that requirement to the completion of all educational requirements including the courses in United Methodist History, Polity and Doctrine. The additional South Georgia requirements (two preaching courses [see c) below], a worship course, a missions course, and an evangelism course) must be completed**

**prior to being eligible to apply for provisional membership and commissioning. But note also that in South Georgia the required service years as a provisional after seminary and in the Residents in Ministry program are now 2 (Two)years instead of 3 (Three) years.** For those who have completed all the requirements and are applying for provisional status and commissioning, **no one will be approved until it is confirmed by the Bishop and the Cabinet that there is an available appointment.** Hence, each candidate who appears before the Conference BOM will be either:

- a) deferred pending an appointment** - meaning that their work was satisfactory and they will be approved if an appointment is available (if one is not available they do not have to repeat the work in re-applying.)
- b) deferred with deficiencies** - meaning their work did not meet the standards set by the BOM in one or more of the areas (Preaching/Teaching, Called and Disciplined Life, Theology and Doctrine), and they will have to repeat their required work and resubmit it to the BOM the next year.
- c) homiletics courses must be taken on campus rather than online.**

#### **4. Membership in Full Connection**

This formal interview procedure is initiated when the candidate requests full conference membership and has met all conference requirements and those of *The Book of Discipline* under which they are qualifying. The purpose of the interview is to determine the candidate's effectiveness in ministry using the recommendation of the district superintendent and a theological statement written in the context of full time service in preparation for ordination as an elder. The specialized service while a provisional member will be evaluated in terms of the candidate's ability to express and give leadership in servant ministry. Material is provided the candidate for membership in full connection by Rev. Gene Cochran upon application by the candidate. The material is not sent out automatically to the candidate simply on the basis that he or she appears to have met the qualification to make application. One may become a full member of the annual conference as an elder or as a deacon after meeting the requirements set forth by the Board of Ordained Ministry and *The Book of Discipline*.

## Interview Questions for Elder in Full Connection

### Theology

1. How has the practice of ministry affected your experience and understanding of God?
2. What effect has the practice of ministry had on your understanding of humanity and the need for divine grace?
3. What changes has the practice of ministry had on your understanding of (a) the lordship of Jesus Christ and (b) the work of the Holy Spirit?
4. The United Methodist Church holds that Scripture, tradition, experience and reason are sources and norms for belief and practice, but that the Bible is primary among them. What is your understanding of this theological position of the church?
5. How do you understand the following traditional evangelical doctrines:
  - A. Repentance?
  - B. Justification?
  - C. Regeneration?
  - D. Sanctification?

What are the marks of the Christian life?

6. For the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness to the Christian gospel, and in consideration of your influence as an ordained minister, are you willing to make a complete dedication of yourself to the highest ideals of the Christian life: and to this end will you agree to exercise responsible selfcontrol by personal habits conducive to physical health, intentional intellectual development, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, integrity in all personal relationship, social responsibility and growth in grace and in the knowledge of the love of God?
7. What are the meaning and significance of the sacraments?
8. Describe the nature and mission of the Church. What are the primary tasks of the Church today?
9. What is your understanding of:
  - A. The Kingdom of God?
  - B. The Resurrection?
  - C. Eternal Life?

## Vocation

† How do you understand your vocation as an ordained deacon?

## The Practice of Ministry

1. How has the practice of ordained ministry affected your understanding of the expectations and obligations of the itinerant system?
2. Do you offer yourself without reserve to be appointed and to serve as the appointive authority may determine?
3. Describe and evaluate your personal gifts for ministry. What would be your areas of strength and areas in which you need to be strengthened?
4. Are you willing to relate yourself in ministry to all persons without regard to race, color, ethnicity, national origin, social status, gender, sexual orientation, age, economic condition or disabilities?
5. \*Will you regard all pastoral conversations of a confessional nature as a trust between the person concerned and God?
6. Provide evidence of experience in peace and justice ministries.

*The Book of Discipline, 2008 ¶ 823.5*  
\*Added by Board of Ordained Ministry

**NOTE:** Before ordination as an elder in full connection, the candidate must have completed the following graduate level courses either in seminary or through independent study program with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.:

<b><u>Under 1992 Discipline</u></b>	<b><u>Under the 1996 Discipline</u></b>	<b><u>Under the 2004 &amp; 2008 Discipline</u></b>
2 courses, preaching 1 course, worship United Methodist Polity United Methodist Doctrine United Methodist History	2 courses, preaching 1 course, worship United Methodist Polity United Methodist Doctrine United Methodist History 1 course, Christian Mission	2 courses in preaching 1 course in worship United Methodist Polity United Methodist Doctrine United Methodist History 1 course, Christian Mission 1 course, Evangelism

## Interview Questions for Deacon in Full Connection

### Theology

1. How has the practice of ministry affected your experience and understanding of God?
2. What effect has the practice of ministry had on your understanding of humanity and the need for divine grace?
3. What changes has the practice of ministry had on your understanding of (a) the lordship of Jesus Christ and (b) the work of the Holy Spirit?
4. The United Methodist Church holds that Scripture, tradition, experience and reason are sources and norms for belief and practice, but that the Bible is primary among them. What is your understanding of this theological position of the church?
5. How do you understand the following traditional evangelical doctrines:
  - A. Repentance?
  - B. Justification?
  - C. Regeneration?
  - D. Sanctification?

What are the marks of the Christian life?

6. For the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness to the Christian gospel, and in consideration of your influence as an ordained minister, are you willing to make a complete dedication of yourself to the highest ideals of the Christian life: and to this end will you agree to exercise responsible selfcontrol by personal habits conducive to physical health, intentional intellectual development, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, integrity in all personal relationship, social responsibility and growth in grace and in the knowledge of the love of God?
7. What are the meaning and significance of the sacraments?
8. Describe the nature and mission of the Church. What are the primary tasks of the Church today?
9. What is your understanding of:
  - A. The Kingdom of God?
  - B. The Resurrection?
  - C. Eternal Life?

## Vocation

† How do you understand your vocation as an ordained deacon?

## The Practice of Ministry

1. How has the practice of ordained ministry affected your understanding of the expectations and obligations of the itinerant system?
2. Do you offer yourself without reserve to be appointed and to serve as the appointive authority may determine?
3. Describe and evaluate your personal gifts for ministry. What would be your areas of strength and areas in which you need to be strengthened?
4. Are you willing to relate yourself in ministry to all persons without regard to race, color, ethnicity, national origin, social status, gender, sexual orientation, age, economic condition or disabilities?
5. \*Will you regard all pastoral conversations of a confessional nature as a trust between the person concerned and God?
6. Provide evidence of experience in peace and justice ministries.

*The Book of Discipline, 2008 ¶ 330*

\*Added by Board of Ordained Ministry

**DEACONS IN FULL CONNECTION MINISTERING TO  
BOTH COMMUNITY AND THE CHURCH**

**May Serve in a Variety of Settings**

<b>They Could be Employed by</b>	<b>To Work in</b>
Local Church ( or urban)	Within team ministry with emphasis on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· music ministry</li> <li>· youth ministry</li> <li>· Christian education</li> <li>· church business administrator</li> <li>· care of elder shut-ins</li> <li>· mission outreach into local community</li> <li>· ethnic ministries</li> <li>· evangelism - parish visitor</li> </ul>
A group of Churches or District (rural or urban)	Emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· music ministry</li> <li>· care of victims of natural disaster</li> <li>· ministry with ethnic persons</li> <li>· mission strategy</li> <li>· ministry in newly-developing house areas</li> <li>· ministry with caravan park dwellers</li> <li>· youth ministry</li> <li>· regional programs for disabled unemployed homeless, residential care for children and young people</li> <li>· hospice care for sick and dying</li> <li>· alcohol and drug rehabilitation programs</li> <li>· marriage counseling services and ministry among widowed, separated and divorced</li> <li>· nurturing ministries in parishes</li> <li>· holiday ministry in tourist resorts</li> <li>· outreach ministry in inner-city and low income areas</li> <li>· counseling</li> </ul>
Agencies	Focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· community centers</li> <li>· hospitals</li> <li>· schools</li> <li>· prisons</li> <li>· aged care facilities</li> <li>· industry</li> <li>· counseling</li> <li>· general agencies</li> </ul>

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Parish Missions	Focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· care of children, elderly, homeless, unemployed, disabled, alcoholics</li><li>· parish nurse</li></ul>
Ethnic Communities	Focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· community development</li><li>· youth ministry</li><li>· Christian education</li><li>· ministry with women and children</li><li>· health care</li></ul>
Annual Conference	Focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· social justice</li><li>· mission strategy</li><li>· overseas mission</li><li>· youth ministry</li></ul>

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**THE COMMISSIONED MINISTER AS A PROVISIONAL MEMBER  
and the  
ORDAINED DEACON AS A PROVISIONAL MEMBER (*Book of Discipline, 1992*)**

**Interview Questions**

1. Describe your personal experience of God and the understanding of God you derive from biblical, theological and historical sources.
2. What is your understanding of humanity and the human need for divine grace?
3. How do you interpret the statement Jesus Christ is Lord?
4. What is your conception of the activity of the Holy Spirit in personal faith, in the community of believers and in responsible living in the world?
5. What is your understanding of the Kingdom of God, the Resurrection, eternal life?
6. What are the theological tasks of a provisional member and commissioned minister with special reference to Part II of The Book of Discipline?

**NOTE: the person applying for probationary membership and deacon's orders under *The Book of Discipline 1992* will answer question 6a rather than question 6.**

- 6a. What are the theological tasks of a probationary member and an ordained deacon in The United Methodist Church? Let *The Book of Discipline 1992* inform your response.
7. The United Methodist Church holds that the living core of the Christian faith was revealed in Scripture, illumined by tradition, vivified in personal experience and confirmed by reason. What is your understanding of this theological position of the Church?
8. Describe the nature and mission of the Church. What are its primary tasks today?
9. Discuss your understanding of the primary characteristics of United Methodist polity.
10. How do you perceive yourself, your gifts, your motives, your role and your commitment as a provisional member and commissioned minister?

**NOTE: the person applying for provisional membership and deacon's orders under *The Book of Discipline 1992* will answer question 10a rather than question 10.**

- 10a. How do you perceive yourself, your gifts, your motives, your role and your commitment as a provisional member and an ordained deacon in The United Methodist Church? Let *The Book of Discipline 1992* inform your response.
11. Describe your understanding of *diakonia*, the servant ministry of the church, and the servant ministry of the provisional member and commissioned minister.

**NOTE: the person applying for provisional membership and deacon's orders under *The Book of Discipline 1992* will answer question 11a rather than question 11.**

- 11a. Describe your understanding of *diakonia*, the servant ministry of the church, and the servant ministry of the provisional member and who is an ordained deacon. Let *The Book of Discipline 1992* inform your response.
12. What is the meaning of ordination in the context of the general ministry of the Church?
13. Describe your understanding of an inclusive church and ministry.
14. You have agreed as a candidate for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness of the gospel, and in consideration of the influence of this mission and witness as ministers, to make a complete dedication of yourself 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. What is your understanding of this agreement?

*The Book of Discipline 2008*, ¶ 324.

### **Interview Questions for Professional Certification**

1. State your commitment to the nature and mission of the church.
2. In what ways do you fulfill your call and commitment to the church's ministry as a certified person in the area of specialized ministry?
3. Describe the setting of your ministry.
4. What is your understanding of the nature and function of the structure and organization of the United Methodist Church?
5. How do you characterize United Methodist denominational program or curriculum resources? In what places/resources will you find The United Methodist programs/curriculum described? How are decisions made as to the selection/use of appropriate/particular resources in the local church/agency?

6. How would you characterize positive/effective staff relationships? A multiple-staff relationship? Your role in a multiple-staff relationship? How do you relate to authority?
7. How do you see the development of your particular field of ministry in the next ten to fifteen (15) years?
8. Share some positive and negative experiences in both your ministry and personal life this last year. And how would you describe the areas in which you perceive a need for growth or help in your ministry?
9. What are your plans for continuing education for personal and professional growth?

**NOTE:** These questions are also listed in the sub-section titled "Focus of the Certification Interview."

**STATEMENTS TO GUIDE INTERVIEW COMMITTEES IN THE  
EVALUATION OF A CANDIDATE D (indicates Deacon) - E (indicates Elder)**

1. (D & E) The candidate shows a clear, continuing understanding of being called by God into the ordained ministry of the church.
2. (D & E) The candidate shows clear understanding of the meaning of ordination and of the ordained ministry as distinguished from or related to the general ministry of the whole church.
3. (D & E) The candidate demonstrates capacity to relate to people with warmth and genuine concern.
4. (E) The candidate shows willingness to accept the risks and sacrifices entailed in serving in the ministry and a commitment to the itinerant system and collegiality in ministry.
5. (D & E) The candidate demonstrates willingness to make a complete dedication to the highest ideals of the Christian life, to exercise responsible self-control and self-discipline and to order her or his personal habits, conduct and behavior so as to enhance and not to jeopardize his or her witness and influence as a minister.
6. (D & E) The candidate is able to affirm and articulate a personal experience of faith in and commitment to God as revealed in Jesus Christ.
7. (D & E) The candidate shows ability to think and communicate theologically and to fulfill the theological tasks of ordained ministry.

8. (D & E) The candidate's thinking is consistent with the doctrinal standards of The United Methodist Church as set forth in Part II of *The Book of Discipline*.
9. (E) The candidate understands the traditional evangelical doctrines.
10. (E) The candidate's sermon gives evidence of being able to communicate effectively and persuasively – with clarity and conviction.
11. (D) The candidate's project gives evidence of being able to communicate effectively and persuasively – with clarity and conviction.
12. (E) The candidate's sermon deals honestly with the biblical text in a fresh and lively way and relates the text to the contemporary situation with clear and imaginative insight.
13. (D) The candidate's project deals honestly with biblical text in a fresh and lively way and relates the text to the contemporary situation with clear and imaginative insight.
14. (E) In the sermon and interview, the candidate shows understanding of and appreciation for the role of the preacher as the proclaimer of the Good News.
15. (D) In the project and interview, the candidate shows understanding of and appreciation for the role of the teacher as the proclaimer of the Good News.
16. (D & E) The Candidate understands the meaning and significance of the Lord's Supper.
17. (D & E) The candidate understands the meaning and significance of Baptism, Confirmation and Renewal.
18. (D & E) The candidate is sensitive to the use of inclusive language in written work and in oral interviews.
19. (D & E) The candidate's Bible study outline demonstrates satisfactory gifts, grace and understanding of the teaching ministry of the church.
20. (D & E) The interview teams will meet to bring together an overall impression of the candidate's fitness, potential and promise for fruitful and effective service as an ordained ministry. A report and recommendation will be made to the whole membership of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

## **CERTIFICATION/FOUNDATION CLASSES Contact the Following**

Gammon Theological Seminary, contact: Jonathan Jackson, 404-527-7744

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, contact: Margaret Ann Crain, 847-866-3973, 1-800-seminary, FAX 847-866, [margaretann.crain@nwu.edu](mailto:margaretann.crain@nwu.edu)

United Theological Seminary, contact: Doris Arnett Whitaker, 937-278-5817, FAX 937-278-1218, [dawhitaker@united.edu](mailto:dawhitaker@united.edu)

Wesley Theological Seminary, contact: Susan Willhauck, 202-885-6482, FAX 202-885-8605, [swillhauck@wesleysem.org](mailto:swillhauck@wesleysem.org)

The Iliff School of Theology, contact: Dr. Jeffrey martin, Office of Ministry Studies, 303-765-3116, [jmahan@oliff.edu](mailto:jmahan@oliff.edu)

Methodist Theological School in Ohio, contact: Deanna Stickley-Miner, 740-362-3126, FAX 740-362-3135, [dstickley@mto.edu](mailto:dstickley@mto.edu)

Perkins School of Theology, SMU, contact: Gary MacDonald, 214-768-3535, 1-888-theology, Ext. 4, FAX 214-768-2117, [gmacdona@mail.smu.edu](mailto:gmacdona@mail.smu.edu)

Pfeiffer University School of Theology, contact: Kathleen Kilbourne, Director MCE, 704-521-9116, [kborne@pfeiffer.edu](mailto:kborne@pfeiffer.edu)

St. Paul School of Theology, contact: Sondra Matthaei, 816-245-4835, FAX 816-483-9605, [mattaei@spst.edu](mailto:mattaei@spst.edu)

## COURSE OF STUDY CORRESPONDENCE CURRICULUM

Students in the Course of Study may do their work in correspondence with the Division of Ordained Ministry when circumstances prevent them from attending a regional school in the extension program for *part-time* local pastors.

Enrollment in the correspondence courses must be approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry of the annual conference. Forms for this purpose may be acquired from Rev. Cochran in the office of the Director of Ministerial Services to the Board of Ordained Ministry. They may also be acquired on-line by going to General Board of Higher Education and Ministry – [www.gbhem.com](http://www.gbhem.com). Then click on LIBRARY RESOURCES and cursor down to the section on ORDAINED MINISTRY. Select the form you need and print it.

Students usually enroll for one (1) to four (4) courses in a given year. A generous portion of the fees will be borne by the Ministerial Education Fund. For information about additional fees, contact the Reverend Rickey Rushing.

When enrollment application is received by the Division of Ordained Ministry, the student receives a study guide containing assignments for each unity, study suggestions, and directions for preparing the reports.

Reports are graded by United Methodist seminary professors or adjunct professors. The routine handling and grading of reports require approximately four (4) weeks. Reports for which credit is expected by annual conference time must reach division by April 1.

Information on the Course of Study correspondence curriculum and official transcripts of the Course of Study program is available through the Division of Ordained Ministry.

Course of Study Office  
Division of Ordained Ministry  
General Board of Higher Education and Ministry  
P.O. Box 340007  
Nashville, TN 34203-0007

Telephone 615-340-7416; FAX 615-340-7395  
Direct your email to Ms Lynn Daye at [ldaye@gbhem.org](mailto:ldaye@gbhem.org)

## **POLICY ON PROFESSIONAL SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

### **South Georgia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church**

#### I. Purpose

The South Georgia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church believes that all church professionals (as defined in this policy) work in a covenant of sacred trust. This covenant is characterized by great power and even greater responsibility. Regrettably, the reality is that some church professionals violate the trust given them. Sexual misconduct is one of the gravest violations of this trust. Therefore, the purpose of this policy is to state unambiguously the position of the South Georgia Annual Conference that sexual misconduct, on the part of any church professional, is an unacceptable breach of sacred trust representing a tragic breakdown of the church of professionalism, character and commitment. This breakdown threatens not only those immediately affected but also the well-being and credibility of the church itself.

The intention of this policy is to give guidance to the laity and clergy of South Georgia regarding sexual misconduct, to help guard against inappropriate behavior.

#### II. Theological Foundation

In the church we proclaim Jesus Christ as the Lord. Living in Christ's grace, we have our life, health and our hope. We believe that Jesus not only shows us the way to God, but also the way to live before and with one another. In Christ, we believe that God has shown love for all persons and intends that all persons should relate to one another in love and justice. Further, we believe that in Christ, God has valued all human life – men, women and children – and intends that in all relationships the dignity and worth of everyone are respected. We believe, therefore, that sexual misconduct is an offense against God, our neighbor, and ourselves.

One who repents of sinful behavior is, indeed, promised forgiveness. However, we understand repentance in terms of changed behavior, not merely in terms of sorrow or feelings of regret. We also believe that discipline must be distinguished from forgiveness. A church professional guilty of sexual misconduct needs and may receive forgiveness and be offered avenues for redemption and change. And yet, the church must still take steps to protect the people of God through the responsible use of church discipline.

#### III. Definitions

A. Sexual misconduct occurs within the professional relationship when a church professional engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a parishioner, client, employee, student or staff member (adult, teenage or child), whether or not there is consent from the individual. Beyond the professional relationship, sexual

misconduct includes any inappropriate sexual conduct or sexualized behavior on the part of a church professional. Sexual misconduct includes, but is not limited to, sexual harassment and any form of criminal sexual conduct.

- B. Sexual harassment is the attempt to coerce any unwilling person into a sexual relationship, or the subjection of any person to unwanted sexual attention, when it has been communicated that such attention is unwelcome and/or offensive. Behaviors considered in determining whether or not sexual harassment has occurred include: unwanted sexual advances or demands either verbal or from exploitation of a position of power. Such actions may include sexually oriented humor or language, questions or comments about sexual behavior or preference. Unwelcome or undesired physical contact, inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance, or repeated requests for social engagements when there is an employment, mentor or collegial relationship between the persons involved.
- C. A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct or unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties.
- D. A church professional is a clergy person (elder, deacon, local pastor) or diaconal minister in any status or relationship with the annual conference whose appointment is set by the bishop.
- E. A complainant is a person who submits a written, signed allegation of sexual misconduct. A complainant may be a parent or responsible party for a minor or an adult incapable of self-reporting.

#### IV. Sexual Ethics Support Team

##### A. TEAM PURPOSE:

The South Georgia Annual Conference shall create a Sexual Ethics Support Team whose purpose shall be to offer support, at the bishop's discretion, for any party involved in a complaint of sexual misconduct including: the complainant, the accused church professional, and/or a congregation affected by such a complaint.

##### B. TEAM MAKEUP:

The South Georgia Annual Conference Sexual Ethics Support Team shall consist of nine (9) members chosen by the bishop in consultation with the cabinet, Board of Ordained ministry and the Commission on the Status and Role of Women. This nine-member team shall be divided as follows: one-third ( $\alpha$ ) church professionals, one-third ( $\alpha$ ) mental health professionals and one third ( $\alpha$ ) lay persons who are not mental health professionals. Membership of the team shall reflect both racial and gender inclusiveness and shall consist of persons sensitive to issues of sexual harassment, misconduct and abuse. In special circumstances, the bishop may choose to go beyond the bounds of the South Georgia Annual Conference and the

membership of the conference team to offer support to persons involved in a sexual misconduct complaint. The nine members of the South Georgia team shall serve two (2) year terms with a maximum of eight (8) years of consecutive service allowed for any team members.

#### C. TEAM FUNCTION

1. The bishop may offer one or more persons from the Conference Support Team in response to the needs of a complainant, an accused church professional or a congregation experiencing a sexual misconduct complaint.
2. A support team member(s) will:
  - a. Explain the procedures available within the structures of the church for addressing a complaint and for following fair process as defined in *The Book of Discipline 2008*.
  - b. Offer resources and consultation to the accused church professional, the complainant, or the congregation and assist in any appropriate manner.
  - c. Accompany the person(s) to whom they are assigned (either complainant or accused) to meetings with church authorities if the person(s) so desires.

#### D. TEAM TRAINING:

Sexual Ethics Support Team members shall be trained in issues of sexual misconduct. This training shall be the responsibility of the bishop and the cabinet. Names of persons completing such training shall be made available to the annual conference.

#### V. Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Complaints or Sexual Misconduct

- A. Anyone who desires to report a concern regarding sexual misconduct by a church professional may contact their pastor, another United Methodist pastor, a district superintendent or the bishop. If a pastor is contacted with such a report that pastors shall pass the report to his or her superintendent as soon as possible.
- B. The provisions of ¶ 361 shall determine and in all ways define the process of appropriate response.
- C. When an allegation of misconduct on the part of a church professional is subject to mandatory reporting requirements by the state (as in the case of minors or adults incapable of reporting), it shall be reported to the bishop and to appropriate authorities and agencies.
- D. When appropriate, the bishop may use the services of one or more Sexual Ethics Support Team members in response to the complaint or incident of sexual misconduct.
- E. In all cases of complaint involving sexual misconduct, great care shall be taken to explain to both the accused church professional and the complainant their rights to fair process as provided in *The Book of Discipline 2008*.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

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Macon, GA 31204

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Macon, GA 31210

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Albany, GA 31707

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Macon, GA 31209

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Bonaire, GA 31005

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Macon, GA 31210

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Savannah, GA 31401

Chair, Psychological Assessment

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Warner Robins, GA 31093

Chair, Continuing Education

Rev. Doreen Smalls                      P.O. Box 20408                      888-266-7642  
St. Simons Island, GA 31522

<u>Chair, Extension Ministers</u>		
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<u>Chair, Residents in Ministry</u>		
Rev. Scott Hagan	2400 Devonshire Drive Columbus, GA 31904	706-322-6973
<u>Chair, Conference Relations Committee</u>		
Rev. Jimmy Towson	1217 Forest Hill Rd. Macon, GA 31210	478-477-1161
<u>Chair, Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors</u>		
Rev. John P. Drake	P.O. Box 702 Soperton, GA 30457	912-529-4054
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<u>Representative to Conference Personnel Committee</u>		
Rev. Dr. Jay Harris	500 Bass Road Macon, GA 31210	478-477-1901
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<u>Ex Officio (non-voting) and Candidacy Registrar</u>		
Rev. Gene Cochran	P.O. Box 18149 Macon, GA 31209	478-742-4766

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