

SECTION A

Introduction

Dear District Committees on Ordained Ministry,

Thank you for serving on one of the Missouri Conference District Committees on Ordained Ministry (dCOM). This is an awesome and holy responsibility to journey alongside persons as they seek to discover, clarify and live out their call from God in ministry. Your work will shape the church, and the world, for generations to come. As we help these persons move through the process of responding to God's call, we are accountable to God, to the laity, to the licensed local pastors, and candidates, to local churches, to the United Methodist Church, to the Missouri Annual Conference, to the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) and to each other. I am grateful for your willingness to share your gifts with God through the work of the dCOM and by extension the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Over the past few years a committee has worked with the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry to evaluate the practices of the Conference BOM. A dCOM taskforce has spent considerable time on the practices of the dCOMs. I offer that team an enormous amount of gratitude! This handbook comes out of that work.

The handbook attempts to address everything you will need to do your work as a committee from organization to the interview processes. While there is room for district personality, this handbook offers a standard to offer all persons a healthy, fair and meaningful experience. The Board of Ordained Ministry wants to ensure that all candidates are examined consistently. This handbook offers a common set of questions and interview processes for all candidates, local pastors, provisional elders and provisional deacons. We hope this provides a constant experience across the Conference

All of the work of this committee carries a high level of confidentiality, from the files to our committee discussions. As a matter of trust, it is essential that you observe the enclosed covenant. We will not discuss the work of this committee with anyone outside of the committee nor share the files with others.

As I give thanks for the leaders God is raising to serve the churches and ministries of this Conference, I pause to give thanks for the dCOMs, District Superintendents, our district and Conference staff, and the Board of Ordained Ministry. I give thanks for your place among this body and invite your prayers for our office as well.

Much of the work in this handbook may be found on the Conference website at www.moumethodist.org/dcomhandbook. We value your input. If you have changes you would like to suggest, please email them directly to the Center for Leadership Excellence (mstatler@moumethodist.org).

Again, thank you for your direct involvement with what God has in store for the candidates and ministries of this Conference.

In Christ,



Rev. Mark Statler, Director of Leadership Excellence

THE MINISTRY OF THE DISTRICT COMMITTEE ON ORDAINED MINISTRY

Adapted from The 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, ¶666

The District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM) shall be amenable to the Annual Conference through the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM). All actions are recommendations to the BOM and shall be reported yearly to the Board through the mid-year report by the district committee registrar. The dCOM is an extension of the BOM and as such its mission falls under that of the BOM.

Part of the focus of the Board of Ordained Ministry is to recruit, prepare, send and support transformational leaders, so disciples for Jesus Christ will be made in the local church and in ministries beyond the local church. Expectations we will look for those in vocational ministry who will be transformational leaders:

- Christ-centered
- Fruitfulness
- Excellence
- Accountability
- Collaboration
- Diversity

We don't need the same type of transformational leader everywhere, *but* everywhere needs transformational *leadership!*

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE dCOM

The District Committee on Ordained Ministry is responsible for the following actions:

1. Maintain a list of all persons who have declared their candidacy for licensed or ordained ministry and are pursuing candidacy studies
2. Certification of candidates for licensed or ordained ministry and annual continuance of certification
3. Recommendation for licensing for pastoral ministry and annual continuance of licensing
4. Recommendation for Associate Membership prior to interviews with the Board of Ordained Ministry
5. Recommendation for Provisional Membership prior to interviews with the BOM
6. Recommendation for readmission to Conference Membership prior to interview with the Board of Ordained Ministry
7. Recommendation for certification as a Certified Lay Minister and biennial renewal of certification
8. Aid the local church in the process of enlisting persons for ordained ministry as deacon or elder or for service as a licensed local pastor or certified lay minister
9. Maintain a list of all candidates under its care as well as maintain individual files for every candidate
10. As a courtesy to the District Superintendent, the dCOM may interview those who have been

approved to serve in supply status as requested

MEMBERSHIP GUIDELINES

Adapted from The 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, ¶666

1. At least six clergy in full connection appointed in the district, including elders and deacons, and where possible women and ethnic clergy, a deacon or elder who is age 35 or younger, an associate member, and may include one local pastor who has completed the Course of Study or seminary equivalent
2. A representative of the Board of Ordained Ministry (currently, the dCOM Chair serves as the representative on BOM)
3. The District Superintendent or Associate Conference Superintendent (ex-officio), who may not serve as chair
4. At least three professing lay members
5. All members shall be nominated by the District Superintendent and approved by the Annual Conference
6. Interim vacancies are filled by the District Superintendent
7. All named to the district committee shall be members with vote
8. All members shall be nominated annually by the District Superintendent in consultation with the chairperson or executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry and approved by the Annual Conference

dCOM LEADERSHIP JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

The dCOM shall elect its officers at the first meeting following the Annual Conference session when the members are elected.

District Superintendent

- Receives letter or email from candidate as outlined in the Candidate Step-by-Step Guide (see Section D, Resources).
- Interviews candidate to assess readiness to enter candidacy
 - Sends After Interview Action Report to file and to Conference Candidacy Coordinator
 - If there are reservations for any reason, the DS may set up an introductory interview with the dCOM.
- Invite the candidate to the Candidacy Summit and enter into UMCARES. (The initial mentor for the candidate will be the Dean of Candidacy Mentors)
- Gives approval for Charge Conference interview and vote
- Nominates District Committee on Ordained Ministry members and leaders
- Attends dCOM meetings with vote
- Recruits Candidacy Mentors (with Center for Leadership Excellence), Candidacy Liaisons and Local Pastor Mentors
- Arranges for training for all mentors in coordination with the Center for Leadership Excellence
- If there are any physical files for candidates, the DS coordinates the transfer of files of candidates and local pastors moving in and out of the district.

- Reviews the Annual Conference reports to verify all certified candidates and local pastors are listed

dCOM Chair

- Sets the meeting dates, locations, agendas and presides at these meetings
- Following the DS's receipt of a letter or email from a potential candidate, may assist in the assessment interview with the Superintendent
- Schedules certification interviews with candidates who have completed the candidacy process and submitted all required documents. These interviews are typically scheduled in May and November. All documents are due one month prior to the interview.
- Writes letter to each candidate regarding the results of the interview and recommended action
- Provides oversight for all dCOM leaders
- Serves as the Board of Ordained Ministry representative to dCOM
- Assists in training members of the dCOM
- Works with the DS and dCOM Registrar to complete and review all reports

dCOM Registrar

- Tracks all candidates
- Maintains the paper document file for each candidate (held in district offices)
- Reviews candidate files prior to interview to verify that the file is complete
- Works with the DS and dCOM Chairperson to complete and review all reports

Secretary/District Office

- Sends meeting notices, if delegated by the chair
- Records and sends minutes of the meetings to the dCOM members, the district office and to the Conference Candidacy Coordinator within 14 days of the meeting (includes vote totals and action taken for all votes taken). Submission of minutes helps to keep the business of the Annual Conference accurate and aids in the necessary upkeep of the candidate's information.
- Keeps a file of all dCOM minutes in the district office (may be electronic)

Conference Candidacy Coordinator

- Receive referrals from the DS of those persons who are interested in entering the Group Candidacy Process.
- Through the Group Candidacy Process, the Conference Coordinator will apply for and

- administer the psychological tests as determined by the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.
- Through the Group Candidacy Process, the Conference Coordinator will assign the candidate to a cohort group with a trained mentor/s

CONFIDENTIALITY

The District Committee on Ordained Ministry is responsible for several items that may result in sharing of sensitive material. It is therefore understood that each member of the dCOM is held to a covenant of confidentiality. All members will sign a Confidentiality Agreement (see Section D, Resources) that will be kept in the district office. Any member who does not hold to this covenant will be referred to the DS for consideration of removal from the committee.

PASSAGEUMC

Passageumc is a software database used by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) to track the progress of an individual. It will be used for all persons in the candidacy process and for those seeking Commissioning and Ordination. As soon as a person becomes an Inquiring Candidate, their contact information is entered into Passageumc by the DS or their designee.

Passageumc consists of tracks. An Inquiring Candidate shall be placed in two tracks upon being entered into the Passageumc system (Undecided, Elder, Deacon or Local Pastor).

THE DISCERNMENT PROCESS

In the United Methodist Church, there are several ways in which a person may serve in specialized ministry. As part of the discernment process, each person needs to prayerfully consider which form of ministry or vocation they are best suited to live out. Below are the various specialized ministries that are understood to be credentialed and result in a lay or clergy relationship with the Annual Conference. Please see the *Discipline* paragraph for a fuller description of each specialized ministry.

Adapted from The 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church. Paragraph citations are in parentheses.

Lay Servant Ministry Overview

The United Methodist Church has established three categories for laypersons in the area of lay servant ministries to develop, prepare and engage principled Christian leaders for the mission of making disciples for the transformation of the world:

- Certified Lay Servant (§266)
- Certified Lay Speaker (§267)
- Certified Lay Minister (§268)

Certified lay servants who wish to develop their skills further may choose a track to become certified as lay speakers (those who are called specifically to pulpit supply ¶205.4) or as lay ministers (those who are called to long-term, intentional ministry as part of a ministry team).

Certified Lay Servant

A certified lay servant serves the local church or charge (and/or beyond) and:

- Provides program leadership, assistance and support
- Leads meetings for prayer, training, study and discussion
- Conducts, or assists in conducting, services of worship, preaches the Word or gives addresses
- Provides congregational and community leadership and fosters caring ministries
- Assists in the distribution of the elements of Holy Communion
- Teaches the Scriptures, doctrine, organization and ministries of The United Methodist Church

Certified Lay Speaker

A certified lay speaker serves by preaching the Word when requested by the pastor, district superintendent or committee on lay servant ministries in accordance and compliance with ¶267 of The Book of Discipline. The role of a certified lay speaker is a specific calling for the ministry of pulpit supply.

Certified Lay Minister

A certified lay minister serves as part of a ministry team with the supervision and support of a clergyperson and:

- Conducts public worship
- Cares for the congregation
- Develops new faith communities
- Preaches the Word
- Leads small groups
- Establishes outreach ministries
- Serves as a class leader
- Assists in program leadership
- Engages in specialized ministries after appropriate training such as in parish nursing, church planting, men's ministry, children's faith formation, congregational care and more
- Assigned yearly by DS
- Renews certification every two years
- Equipped through Certified Lay Ministry and Lay Servant Ministry courses of study

Licensed and Ordained Ministry Overview

Licensed Ministry

Local Pastor (¶315-320)

- Licensed to pastoral ministry to perform the duties of a pastor in a local church setting
- Not required to itinerate
- License and appointment renewed each year
- Equipped through Course of Study classes or seminary if on an ordination track

Associate Member (¶321-322)

- Permanent license to pastoral ministry to perform the duties of a pastor in a local church setting
- Itinerant ministry
- Equipped through Course of Study classes and minimum of 60 bachelor hours

Ordained Ministry Deacon (§328-330)

- Local church or appointment beyond the local church
- Ordained to Word, Service, Compassion and Justice
- Non-itinerant clergy who seek their own employment, which may become an appointment with the bishop's approval
- Equipped through graduate and/or seminary training

Elder (§332-334)

- Pastoral charge or extension ministry
- Ordained to Word, Sacrament, Order and Service
- Itinerant clergy appointed to serve by the bishop
- Equipped primarily through seminary training (although alternative educational routes are possible)