



## The Ministry of Local Pastors • • • • • • • •

### Licensed to Word, Sacrament, and Service

A local pastor answers God's call to serve the mission of Jesus Christ through serving a local congregation in The United Methodist Church. When appointed, the local pastor performs the usual duties of a pastor, including preaching and teaching; leading in worship and liturgy; receiving new members; performing the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion; and the services of marriage (where state laws allow), burial, and confirmation. The local pastor's authority is only within the appointment setting and does not extend beyond it. The local pastor is not ordained, and serves under the authority of a license for pastoral ministry after completing the steps outlined below and meeting any annual conference requirements.

### Licensed to Order the Life of the Congregation(s)

The local pastor oversees the ministry of the congregation(s) where appointed to fulfill its mission of witness and service in the world. The local pastor gives pastoral support and guidance, and trains lay leadership in fulfilling their ministries. The local pastor has administrative oversight of the charge and supervises the programs of the congregation(s) he or she serves (§ 316).

### Local Pastors as Clergy

Full-time and part-time licensed local pastors under appointment are clergy members of the annual conference. Those who are licensed for pastoral ministry and appointed to the local church shall preach, conduct divine worship, and perform the duties of a pastor (§§ 32, 315, 602).

### Local Pastor Relationships

The local pastor is supervised by a district superintendent and bishop, and meets regularly with a clergy mentor and the district Committee on Ordained Ministry for ongoing approval to serve. Local pastors participate annually in the Course of Study in order to receive theological education. After completion of the Course of Study, a local pastor may engage in Advanced Course of Study or continuing education. Along with associate members, they participate in the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members for ongoing peer support while in ministry.

### Students Appointed as Local Pastors

Students who are enrolled in pre-theological or theological studies in a college, university, or school of theology listed by the University Senate may be appointed as part-time or full-time local pastors. Students may be appointed to serve either in the annual conference where their certification is held or in another annual conference where they attend school (§ 318.3).

### First Steps – Local Pastor

- Read *The Christian as Minister*. Discuss your insights with a clergyperson or candidacy mentor. This book is available for purchase at [www.Cokesbury.com](http://www.Cokesbury.com).
- Contact a pastor, a deacon or elder, or the district superintendent, to inquire about admission into the candidacy process. The district superintendent is responsible for inviting candidates to enter the candidacy process.
- Participate in a candidacy mentoring group or meet with a candidacy mentor (as determined by the annual conference) to complete *Fulfilling God's Call: Guidelines for Candidacy* (Candidacy Guidebook) and refine/verbalize call to ministry.

### Becoming a Certified Candidate – Local Pastor (§ 310)

- Show proof of a minimum one year membership in the UMC or other United Methodist ministry setting.
- Register online in the Candidacy Application System and pay the candidacy application fee.
- Meet with the district Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM) to discuss your call to licensed ministry and your written statement of call (§ 310).
- Complete all steps required to become a certified candidate as listed in §§ 310-314 and determined by the annual conference.
- Complete Orientation to Ministry as scheduled by your annual conference (§ 314).

### Educational Requirements and Academic Qualifications – Local Pastor (§§ 315, 319)

- High school diploma or equivalent.
- Licensing School—required in order to receive a License for Pastoral Ministry.
- Basic Course of Study—A prescribed theological education course for Local Pastors that is designed for a five-year period.
- Advanced Course of Study—Includes 32 semester hours of graduate theological study which begins after the Basic Course of Study is completed.

### Continuing Steps – Local Pastor

- Annual renewal of the License for Pastoral Ministry through the dCOM with approval by the BOM (§ 319.2).
- Local pastors may continue to serve in that capacity after completion of Course of Study (§ 319) or after meeting additional requirements local pastors may apply for Associate Membership in an annual conference (§ 322).
- After completion of Advanced Course of Study and meeting additional requirements, local pastors or associate members may apply for provisional membership leading to ordination in an annual conference (§ 324.6).

The candidacy process is listed in §§ 310-314 in *The Book of Discipline*.

The ministry of the Local Pastor is described in §§ 315-323 and § 340 in *The Book of Discipline*.



Visit [www.gbhem.org/candidacy](http://www.gbhem.org/candidacy) or [www.gbhem.org/localpastors](http://www.gbhem.org/localpastors) for more information.

Telephone: 615-340-7416 • E-mail: [localpastors@gbhem.org](mailto:localpastors@gbhem.org)