

CLERGY MEMBERSHIP

Clergy are called by God and affirmed by the community to serve and lead the mission of the church: *to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world*. **This requires transformational spiritual leadership that grows fruitful Wesleyan congregations and turns the church outward to be in ministry with the people in the community and the world.**

For a description of the terms disciple, fruitful Wesleyan congregation, transformational leader, and transformed world, refer to Paragraph 600 regarding the mission of The United Methodist Church.

The Seven Core Responsibilities of a Clergy Person

Clergy leadership is essential for the health and fruitfulness of congregations and for the entire church to advance the mission. The priority of every clergy person is to partner with the laity to call and nurture disciples to discover, understand and live their calling to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. This requires leadership that turns the church outward to be in ministry with the people in the community and the world.

The seven core responsibilities of a clergy person are to:

1. Deepen the spirituality and faith of disciples so that they are working together to continually renew and nurture their faith and the mission of the church in the world.
2. Cast a vision for making disciples and growing fruitful Wesleyan congregations and extension ministries that transform the world so that bold and courageous goals are established and achieved, and the mission is advanced.
3. Increase the knowledge and understanding of the scriptures, theology, and church mission and ministry through the teaching ministry of the church, so that disciples live faithfully and fruitfully and teach others the faith.
4. Lead disciples into the world to witness, show mercy, and act justly so that transformation is occurring in the people of the community and the world.
5. Develop leaders within the congregation or extension ministries so that leaders continue to grow in their proficiency to lead the mission and ministry of the church.
6. Unify the church through The United Methodist Church's doctrine, Wesleyan Path, the teachings and heritage of the church and common mission so that people work together for the witness, mission and ministry of the church in the world.
7. Work with the laity to organize the life of a congregation to effectively fulfill the mission, grow the congregation, meet the budget, and complete all administrative tasks with excellence.

All clergy under appointment by the bishop and supervision by the district superintendents are called to proclaim and teach the Gospel, celebrate the sacraments, officiate at weddings, conduct funerals, serve the people in the community, and order the mission, ministry and administration of a congregation so that it can be fruitful in fulfilling the mission of the church. Clergy in extension ministry lead by extending the mission and witness of the church into the community and the world.

Clergy Membership – Council of Clergy

There are four different clergy memberships in The United Methodist Church: full membership, associate membership, affiliate membership, and local pastor membership. The clergy become members of the council of clergy in the connectional church where the clergy person is serving. Bishops are ordained clergy members who are consecrated for episcopal leadership. A bishop's membership is transferred to and resides with the council of bishops upon their election and consecration as a bishop. There shall be a chairperson of the council of clergy, an ordained full member elected by the clergy, who shall convene and chair the clergy membership meetings. All other offices and committees of the council shall be organized by the clergy membership of the connectional church.

The clergy membership has authority and responsibility to determine the qualities, character and proficiency of its members based on the doctrine, teachings, Wesleyan Path, mission and polity of The United Methodist Church. The clergy members are to evaluate and approve candidates for membership by a two-thirds vote. When a clergy person is approved for membership in the council of clergy, it makes them available for an appointment by the bishop. The clergy membership is also responsible for the discontinuance of clergy membership as established by their policies and process in accordance with the doctrine, teachings, Wesleyan Path and polity of The United Methodist Church.

Clergy Orders

The clergy membership, or groups of clergy persons may create orders in which clergy may participate for spiritual growth, learning, fellowship and connection, through a shared ministry commitment. Orders may be organized at the connectional, regional and/or global church levels. The clergy orders self-organize, have no authority or special privileges from the church and are not given status through *The Connection*.

Itinerant and Non-Itinerant Clergy

Within the clergy membership in The United Methodist Church, there are itinerant and non-itinerant clergy.

Itinerant clergy are those appointed by the bishop to serve a congregation, a connectional church, regional church or a general agency position. If there is any question about whether an appointment is an itinerant or non-itinerant appointment, the bishop, in consultation with the cabinet, shall determine the category. An itinerant clergy person may declare themselves non-itinerant by making a written statement to the council of ordained ministry and may serve in any of the following settings including, but not limited to, parachurch, ecumenical, interreligious, or social service organizations, regional church, central church or general agency positions. All itinerant clergy, after consultation with the district superintendent, shall itinerate as appointed by the bishop. Ordained itinerant clergy are entitled

to an appointment unless their membership is discontinued by the council of clergy, or the council of ordained ministry and the cabinet recommend to the bishop that the clergy person not continue in an itinerant appointment.

Non-itinerant clergy serve beyond a congregation to extend the mission and the witness of the church into the community and the world through an extension ministry appointment. Non-itinerant clergy are responsible for finding their own extension ministry position. An extension ministry setting must be approved by the cabinet and the council of ordained ministry of the connectional church before the bishop can appoint a non-itinerant clergy person. A clergy person desiring an appointment to serve in extension ministry is to consult with their district superintendent prior to any interviews related to the potential appointment.

On occasion, a congregation may create a staff position for a specialized ministry, other than the lead or associate pastor, and indicate that it is a non-itinerant position to the district superintendent. All non-itinerant clergy serving in extension ministry must also have a relationship with a United Methodist congregation. The terms of that relationship are to be negotiated each year between the non-itinerant clergy person and the pastor of the congregation, in consultation with the district superintendent. Such a relationship may be paid or volunteer.

The bishop may not require or unduly influence a non-itinerant clergy person to take an itinerant appointment. A non-itinerant clergy person has the right to refuse any appointment by the bishop without effect upon the clergy person's service or status.

All current ordained deacons of the church are full members and considered non-itinerant members serving to extend the mission of the church with all of the rights and privileges of all ordained full member clergy.

A clergy person who chooses a non-itinerant ministry is not guaranteed an appointment. Non-itinerant clergy may request an itinerant appointment, but an itinerant appointment is not guaranteed. The appointment of a non-itinerant clergy person to an itinerant appointment is at the discretion of the bishop in consultation with the cabinet based on the needs and mission of the church. The change of status from a non-itinerant clergy person who requests to be an itinerant clergy person and guaranteed an appointment must be approved by the council of ordained ministry. From time to time, a non-itinerant clergy person may serve as an interim pastor of a congregation without changing their status. Current full member elders of the church who are in extension ministries have until December 31, 2020 to declare if they are itinerant or non-itinerant clergy.

A clergy person may be appointed by the bishop to a $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ or full time appointment. A clergy person is appointed to a congregation(s) and/or extension ministry one appointment year at a time. All clergy-appointed by the bishop to a congregation are entitled to minimum equitable compensation as set by the connectional church, regardless of whether the clergy person is itinerant or non-itinerant.

Clergy Education

The education of clergy is an important value and a benchmark for evaluating clergy potential and effectiveness. The Master of Divinity degree has been the standard for education for full member clergy. In some regions of the world, education is not easily accessible, particularly the Master of Divinity degree due to several factors, including distance from a school and cost. Also, there are other equivalent degrees or ministry experiences that may offer part or all the necessary education and understanding to serve well as a full member clergy person in the United Methodist Church.

Recognizing that education and knowledge are important to clergy service, and that contextual realities and needs of the mission must be taken into consideration, the required education for a clergy person will be decided by the regional church. Within each regional church, there shall be a team to discern clergy educational requirements. The team shall consist of a lay person from each of the councils on ordained ministry, the chairpersons of the councils of clergy, the presidents/deans of United Methodist seminaries (as available), and the residential bishops or their designees. Every quadrennium, this team is to be convened by the president of the college of bishops of the regional church to:

1. Determine the appropriate education for clergy persons and evaluate the effectiveness of the educational guidelines.
2. Set the educational requirements for full members, associate members and local pastors including any differences in educational requirements for itinerant and non-itinerant clergy.
3. Identify continual education requirements for the growth and development of clergy
4. Identify which non-United Methodist seminaries are approved for clergy to attend to fulfill their educational requirements and continual education.

Regional churches in the same nation or geographic area of the world may decide to align their decisions on these matters to create common educational standards.

Appointments of Clergy

All clergy under appointment by the bishop have the authority to celebrate the sacraments and officiate at weddings and funerals within their appointment setting. Authority is extended to ordained full member clergy, including those who are retired, to also celebrate the sacraments and officiate weddings and funerals beyond their appointment setting.

Sacraments –

Clergy are to teach and prepare the congregation to receive the sacraments, including children. Anyone who is committed to the baptismal vows shall be baptized. In the case of a child, a parent(s) who is committed to the baptismal vows may take the vows on the child's behalf.

Weddings – Clergy may officiate at all weddings permitted by secular law. Clergy are to prepare couples seeking to marry.

Process to Become a Clergy Person

To serve as a clergy person of The United Methodist Church, an individual must pursue one of four membership paths: 1) full membership, 2) associate membership, 3) affiliate membership, or 4) local pastor.

The United Methodist Church has used a process for assessing clergy for membership that the councils of clergy may use or modify to determine clergy membership. The clergy membership of the connectional church has the authority and responsibility to assess a candidate's fitness and readiness for clergy membership based on spiritual maturity, calling, leadership, proficiencies, service, track record, education, and experience.

Attributes of a Clergy Person

An individual seeking to be a clergy person in The United Methodist Church should have the following attributes:

1. A deep and abiding faith in God.
2. A passion to invite people into a relationship with Jesus Christ and a calling to lead disciples to grow in faith and engage in ministry in the world so that disciples are making disciples and engaging in witness, mercy, and justice ministries.
3. The Biblical understanding and proficiency to preach and teach the scriptures so that disciples grow in their faith, develop an understanding for how the Bible was shaped into the canon, and learn how to interpret and apply the Bible for daily living using tradition, reason and experience.
4. The theological understanding and proficiency to preach and teach Wesleyan theology that includes but is not limited to grace, salvation, justification, sanctification, the sacraments, and personal and social holiness.
5. The understanding and proficiency to teach the history of Christianity, United Methodist history and Christian ethics.
6. The practical understanding and application of preaching, worship, mission, pastoral care, church administration and United Methodist polity.
7. Demonstrated leadership competencies and experience that lead people to make faithful and fruitful progress toward mission and ministry goals.
8. The proficiency to teach and organize the church to practice and carry out the *Wesleyan Path*.
9. Demonstrated emotional intelligence including but not limited to self-awareness, awareness of the social environment, ability to manage one's own emotions, and ability to facilitate group conversations so that people feel heard and valued.
10. An understanding of intercultural competence and a demonstrated proficiency to lead, preach and teach so that the congregation becomes more interculturally competent and works to end racism, prejudice and privilege.

11. A proficiency to communicate effectively so that people are inspired, understand the mission and direction of the church, and can apply biblical and theological understanding to their daily living.
12. The proficiency to effectively carry out the seven core responsibilities of a clergy person listed above.

Six Steps for Clergy Membership

The steps for clergy membership in the United Methodist Church are: 1) sponsorship 2) candidacy, 3) preparation for ministry, 4) examination for membership, 5) approval for membership, and 6) credentialing. These steps shall be used to identify and support individuals with the potential, calling, knowledge, proficiencies and experience to lead with excellence and further the mission of the church.

1. **Sponsorship** – Required for full, associate and local pastor membership.

The first step to becoming a clergy person in the United Methodist Church is for a congregation to discern, endorse and sponsor an individual for candidacy for the ministry. When an individual who has been a member of a United Methodist congregation for two or more years seeks to become a candidate for the ministry, the pastor of the sponsoring congregation will ask the district superintendent to provide the current standards on character, proficiency and faith sought in clergy as defined by the connectional council of clergy and cabinet. The charge or church conference may endorse an individual for candidacy upon discernment and assessment by the congregation's board of stewards or the appropriate committee designated by the board of stewards. The board or appropriate committee shall discern if the individual has the calling, spiritual maturity, emotional intelligence, intercultural competence, work ethic, aptitude for ministry and potential to serve effectively as a clergy person. Upon endorsement, it is the responsibility of the endorsed individual to learn and understand the candidacy process for ministry established by the connectional council of clergy. The congregation is to continue to sponsor the candidate through prayers, financial support (at a level that is appropriate for the congregation), encouragement and accountability to follow through with their responsibilities.

An individual who has not been a member for two or more years of a United Methodist congregation may become a candidate if the individual is in a program of theological education approved by the regional church and has served in a United Methodist student appointment or field placement for a minimum of two years. This individual may be endorsed and sponsored by the United Methodist field placement, or the congregation where the student is appointed. Each of these entities are also to sponsor the candidate through prayers, financial support, encouragement and accountability for the candidate to follow through with responsibilities of candidacy and membership.

The congregation or organization that is endorsing the individual is to write to the chairperson of the council of clergy and indicate the name of the endorsed individual, the qualities and abilities of the individual, the growth areas, why the endorsing body believes the proposed

candidate is called and will serve with excellence, and how the congregation or endorsing body or individual will sponsor and support the individual during the process.

Outcome – A congregation or appropriate organization has discerned and endorsed an individual whom they have discerned and evaluated to have the calling, emotional intelligence, intercultural competence, work ethic, character, proficiency, and potential to lead a congregation or extension ministry to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

2. **Candidacy** – Required for full, associate and local pastor membership.

Candidacy is a time for an individual to explore their calling and the role, competencies, education, knowledge, responsibilities, and work ethic required to be an effective and fruitful clergy person. The connectional church council of clergy shall develop a candidacy process that meets the context and needs of the region. Once a candidate is sponsored, the individual shall contact the district superintendent for information about how to proceed in the candidacy process. Candidates shall be assigned a mentor by the district superintendent to aid in their process of discernment. In order to move forward, a sponsored candidate must be approved by a majority vote of the council of clergy or the appropriate committee designated by the council of clergy where the candidate is sponsored. The candidacy process may take 6-18 months.

Outcome – An individual has explored their calling and the role, competencies, education, knowledge, responsibilities, and work ethic required to be an effective and fruitful clergy person, and the individual has made a decision to continue or discontinue their candidacy.

3. **Preparation for ministry and credentialing** - Required for full, associate, affiliate, and local pastor membership

Preparation for Full Membership

- a. Educational requirements are set by the regional church team. This may include a Master of Divinity degree from a United Methodist seminary or an approved seminary or equivalent education and degree(s).
- b. Two years of internships/field education/pastoring in a congregation or extension ministry and a track record of highly effective service and accomplishment.
- c. A track record that demonstrates the attributes of a clergy person.

Preparation for Associate Membership

- a. Educational requirements are set by the regional church team. This may include completion of the course of study program with a United Methodist seminary or a Master or Bachelor's Degree in religious studies (or equivalent) from a United Methodist affiliated seminary, college, or university. Associate members are to have a deep and abiding faith, be competent to lead and carry out ministry with knowledge and understanding in the areas of the Bible, theology, leadership,

preaching, worship, mission, United Methodist polity, history and theology, church history, ethics and organizing people and ministry to grow fruitful Wesleyan congregations/extension ministries to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

- b. Four years of service as a local pastor and a track record of highly effective service and accomplishment.
- c. A track record that demonstrates the attributes of a clergy person.

Preparation for Affiliate Membership

- a. An affiliate member is credentialed in another denomination. Educational requirements are set by the regional church team. The educational requirements may include a Master of Divinity degree from a United Methodist seminary or an approved seminary or equivalent education and degree(s).
- b. Two years of internships, field education or pastoring a congregation or extension ministry.
- c. A track record that demonstrates the attributes of a clergy person.
- d. An affiliate member must participate in a learning and covenant group with other affiliate members led by a district superintendent or a person appointed by the cabinet for 18 months to learn about The Wesleyan Path; the mission, goals and structure of the United Methodist Church; the attributes of United Methodist clergy; and the effective administration of a United Methodist congregation.
- e. An affiliate member may request to become a full member after satisfactory participation in a learning and covenant group and two years of service in a United Methodist congregation with demonstrable results in leading the congregation to progress toward the United Methodist mission, fruitful congregations' goals and competency in understanding, communicating and leading Wesleyan theology and polity.

Preparation for Local Pastor Membership

- a. Educational requirements are set by the regional church team. A local pastor is to have completed local pastor's licensing school.
- b. Two years as a lay person serving and leading in a United Methodist congregation or extension ministry or pastor in another denomination.
- c. A track record of exhibiting the attributes of a clergy person.
- d. Demonstrate leadership competencies and experience that leads people to be faithful and fruitful in progress toward mission and ministry goals.
- e. Once approved for membership, the local pastor must continue to take courses to complete the course of study or a seminary master's degree within 5 years for full time local pastors and 10 years for part time local pastors.

Outcome – Candidates are prepared to serve well in ministry and are ready to interview successfully for clergy membership.

4. **Examination for membership** – required for full, associate, affiliate, and local pastor membership. The clergy membership may use or modify processes used in the past for examining candidates for ministry or develop new process based on the context and needs of the connectional church.

Candidates are to be examined for their knowledge and proficiency to lead and organize a congregation or extension ministry to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Understanding transformational leadership, understanding the marks of a fruitful Wesleyan congregation, and understanding how to engage disciples in ministry with the community and the world are critical to this ministry, particularly for itinerant clergy. At a minimum, candidates are to be examined for the following.

- a. A deep and abiding faith in God.
- b. A passion to invite people into a relationship with Jesus and a calling to lead disciples to grow in faith and engage in ministry in the world so that disciples are making disciples and engaging in witness, mercy and justice ministries.
- c. The Biblical understanding and proficiency to preach and teach the scriptures so that disciples grow in their faith, develop an understanding for how the Bible was shaped into the canon, and learn how to interpret and apply the Bible for daily living using tradition, reason and experience.
- d. The theological understanding and proficiency to preach and teach Wesleyan theology that includes but is not limited to grace, salvation, justification, sanctification, the sacraments and personal and social holiness.
- e. The understanding and proficiency to teach the history of Christianity, United Methodist history and Christian ethics.
- f. The practical understanding and application of preaching, worship, mission, pastoral care, church administration and United Methodist polity.
- g. Demonstrated leadership competencies and experience, particularly transformational leadership that leads people to make faithful and fruitful progress toward mission and ministry goals.
- h. The proficiency to teach and organize the church to practice and carry out the *Wesleyan Path*.
- i. Demonstrated emotional intelligence including but limited to self-awareness, awareness and understanding of the social environment, and ability to manage one's own emotions and facilitate group conversations so that people feel heard and valued.
- j. An understanding of intercultural competence and how to lead, preach and teach so that the congregation becomes more interculturally competent and works to end racism, prejudice and privilege.
- k. A proficiency to communicate effectively so that people are inspired, understand the mission and direction of the church and can apply biblical and theological understanding to their daily living.

- I. A proficiency to effectively carry out the seven responsibilities of a clergy person listed above.

Candidates are to be interviewed by the full council of clergy or sub committees of the clergy membership to determine if a candidate meets the necessary knowledge, understanding, competency, and proficiencies of the Bible, theology, and practice of ministry so that the congregation grows in faith, is organized so that ministry, mission and goals progress and the congregation is growing.

Outcome – The clergy with the best potential to lead the church to health and fruitfulness are identified and gifted clergy who need more time are encouraged and supported to continue growing in their potential and proficiency. Clergy who do not demonstrate the gifts and potential necessary to lead the church toward health and fruitfulness are discontinued.

5. **Approval for membership** – required for full, associate, affiliate, and local pastor membership

A candidate is approved for membership by a two-thirds vote of the clergy membership. Upon approval, the new member receives a certificate of membership, is available for an appointment by the bishop and is entitled to the following.

- a. *Non-ordained full members* - may vote on all legislation in clergy membership meetings and annual conference sessions except for changes to the principles and organization of The United Methodist Church. Full members may be elected or appointed to all organizations of the connectional church except those bodies that require only ordained full members. A full member is available for an appointment. The council of clergy shall recommend to the connectional church council of ordained ministry candidates for ordination.
- b. *Associate members* - may vote on all legislation in clergy membership meetings and annual conference sessions except for matters of clergy membership and election of global conference and regional conference delegates. Associate members may be elected or appointed to all organizations of the connectional church except the board of stewards of the connectional church. An associate member is available for an appointment. The clergy membership shall recommend to the connectional church council of ordained ministry all newly approved associate members for consecration.
- c. *Affiliate members* - may vote on all legislation in clergy membership meetings and annual conference sessions except for matters of clergy membership, election of global conference and regional conference delegates and changes to the principles and organization of The United Methodist Church. Affiliate members may be elected or appointed to all organizations of the connectional church except an organization that requires ordained full members. An affiliate member is available for an appointment. When an affiliate member completes requirements for full membership, 2/3's of the clergy membership present and voting may elect the

affiliate member to become a full member of the council of clergy. The clergy membership shall recommend to the council of ordained ministry recognition of the orders of all approved affiliate members.

- f. *Local pastor members* - may vote on all legislation in clergy membership meetings and annual conference sessions except for matters of clergy membership. Local pastor members may be elected or appointed to all organizations of the connectional church except those organizations that require an ordained full member. Local pastor members are not eligible for election as delegates to the Regional or General Church Conferences. A local pastor member is available for an appointment. The clergy membership shall recommend to the connectional church council of ordained ministry all newly approved local pastor members for licensing and anointing.

A clergy person may not hold membership in two different denominations except as an affiliate member.

Outcome – The council of clergy commits to support new clergy in their growth and development as a member of the clergy and the council gains excellent clergy leaders who have the rights, privileges, and duties of clergy membership.

6. Credentialing

While the council of clergy alone is responsible for membership, the connectional church is responsible for credentialing clergy for service through its council of ordained ministry which is comprised of laity and clergy.

- a. Full member ordination – the council of ordained ministry shall review all candidates for ordination. The council of ordained ministry may require a period of apprenticeship prior to ordination. Candidates approved by the council of ordained ministry shall be ordained at the next connectional church annual conference session. Ordained itinerant clergy are guaranteed an appointment. Ordained full member clergy shall assist the superintendents and bishop in ordering the mission and ministry of the church. The full member may vote on all legislation in clergy membership meetings and annual conference sessions. The ordained full member is available for election as a delegate to the global conference and regional conference and may be elected or appointed to all organizations within the church except for lay positions within the congregation and other lay ministries throughout the church. The ordained full member may serve on the board of stewards of the connectional church.
- b. Associate member consecration – the council of ordained ministry shall review all candidates for consecration and shall vote on each candidate for a license to serve in ministry and consecration. Approved candidates shall receive a license to serve as

an associate member and be consecrated at the next connectional church annual conference session and are eligible for appointment.

- c. Affiliate member recognition of orders – the council of ordained ministry shall review all candidates for recognition of orders and shall vote on each candidate for recognition. Approved candidates shall receive a license to serve as an ordained full member and have their orders recognized at the next connectional church annual conference as a full member of The United Methodist Church and itinerant members shall be guaranteed an appointment.
- d. Local pastor member licensing – the council of ordained ministry shall review all candidates for licensing and shall vote on each candidate for licensing. Approved candidates shall receive a local pastors' license and be anointed at the next connectional church annual conference session and eligible for appointment.

Clergy continue as clergy persons as long as they are a member of the council of clergy. Local pastors and affiliate members only continue as clergy persons for the time they are under appointment by the bishop.

Decisions regarding membership and credentialing may be appealed to the connectional conference discernment council. The ruling of the discernment council shall be final.

Outcome – The connectional church has transformational clergy leadership who are serving with excellence and leading the mission forward as they work in collaboration with the laity to make disciples and grow fruitful Wesleyan congregations for the transformation of the world.

Transfer of Membership

United Methodist clergy may transfer their membership from one connectional church council of clergy to another with the approval of the receiving clergy membership. Clergy who desire to transfer their membership must send their request for transfer to the chairpersons of the council of clergy in both the sending and receiving conferences. The clergy member is to request a letter of recommendation be sent from their present council of clergy chairperson to the chairperson of the receiving council of clergy chairperson. The clergy membership in the receiving conference must approve the transfer by a two-thirds vote. The clergy membership may require a two-year on loan appointment before transferring the clergy person's membership. The transfer of membership does not guarantee an appointment for the clergy person, including an ordained full member. If a new ordained full member clergy person seeks a guaranteed appointment, once the member has been approved by the receiving clergy membership, the clergy member must request of the council of ordained ministry to have guaranteed appointment status. If the council of ordained ministry approves the request, it recommends the clergy person to the board of stewards for approval. Approval by the board of stewards grants guaranteed appointment status.

Clergy Development and Effectiveness

Clergy are to initiate a yearly self-directed learning and development plan to improve their leadership proficiency. Particular attention shall be paid to meeting the seven core responsibilities with excellence and engaging in transformational leadership that makes disciples of Jesus Christ, grows fruitful Wesleyan congregations and transforms the world. The plan is to be developed in consultation with the congregation's board of stewards or appropriate committee and shared with the district superintendent. Clergy who have healthy leadership strive to learn, grow and improve their leadership. Also, in a changing church and world, it is necessary for all clergy to keep pace with changes, new ideas and innovation.

All clergy are encouraged to participate in continuing education to strengthen transformational leadership in order to lead the church to make disciples of Jesus Christ and grow fruitful Wesleyan congregations to transform the world. If a clergy person is not progressing as needed, the superintendent may require particular continuing education and other actions to enhance their proficiency and fruitfulness.

When clergy are not excelling in one or more of the areas of the seven core responsibilities or other expectations of the clergy person, the district superintendent or their designee in consultation with the congregation's board of stewards or appropriate committee, shall develop an improvement plan with goals and benchmarks. This may be initiated by the clergy person, or the board of stewards' chairperson or the district superintendent.

To assist clergy in understanding how well they are leading, a yearly evaluation shall be led by the congregation's board of stewards' chairperson in consultation with the board or appropriate committee. The evaluation is to assess the pastor's progress in the seven areas of responsibility and any other areas identified. It shall be sent to the district superintendent. The cabinet and council of ordained ministry together are to develop an evaluation to be used by the congregations and train the chairpersons of congregations' board of stewards on how to use the evaluation.

If after appropriate evaluations a non-full member clergy person is not effectively leading the core responsibilities of a clergy person or leading a congregation (s) toward health and vitality, and the congregation's board of stewards or the district superintendent ask for an appointment change, the bishop and cabinet are to assess if the member should be reappointed, and if so, under what conditions the clergy person is to be reappointed. These conditions are to be communicated to the clergy person and the chairperson of the council of ordained ministry and placed in the clergy person's file. All attempts shall be made to assist clergy to return to a path of faithful and fruitful service. If there are not sufficient demonstrable results, for the good of the mission of the church, the bishop should not reappoint a clergy person who does not have a guaranteed appointment. There is no action necessary by the clergy membership. The clergy person may continue as a member of the clergy except local pastors and affiliate members who must be under appointment by the bishop in order to be a clergy member of the council of clergy. Affiliate and local pastor members who are not appointed by the

bishop are to turn in their license. Associate and non-ordained full member clergy persons may find an extension ministry or work on the issues identified in order to return to itinerant ministry.

If after appropriate evaluations an ordained full member clergy person is not leading well and the congregation's board of stewards or the district superintendent ask for an appointment change, the bishop and cabinet are to assess if the full member should be reappointed, and if so, under what conditions the clergy person is to be reappointed. These conditions are to be communicated to the clergy person, the chairperson of the council of ordained ministry and placed in the clergy person's file. All attempts shall be made to assist clergy to return to a path of faithful and fruitful service. If there are not sufficient demonstrable results, the district superintendent shall refer the matter to the council of ordained ministry. If at least 90 days before the end of the appointment year, the council concurs with the superintendent, the council may recommend to the board of stewards to discontinue the full member in an appointment. If the board of stewards concurs, the decision shall be documented by the superintendent and placed in the clergy person's file. There is no action necessary by the clergy membership. The clergy person may continue as a full member of the clergy and classified as a non-itinerant full member. The clergy person may find an extension ministry or work on the issues raised to return to itinerant ministry.

Clergy Status

Clergy are to be categorized in one of the following statuses.

1. Itinerant – The clergy person is serving in an itinerant appointment and not retired.
2. Non-itinerant – The clergy person is serving in an extension ministry unless it is an itinerant extension ministry and the individual is not retired.
3. Retired – A clergy person may choose the retired relationship at any point in their career before reaching the mandatory retirement age. The mandatory retirement age is 72 years of age by the first day of a new appointment year. A bishop's retirement age is 72 and a bishop must retire if they will be 72 years old before the day of a new assignment or reassignment. Any retirement benefits start at the date and age determined by the retirement provider. Only clergy who are full members or associate members continue as members of the council of clergy after their retirement, thereby granting them the ability to attend and vote at connectional church conference sessions and council of clergy meetings.
4. Leave of absence – A leave of absence status is assigned in any of the following.
 - a. A clergy person requested from the bishop not to be appointed for a period of time and is not retired.
 - b. The discernment council recommends a leave of absence for the clergy person and the clergy person has not appealed the recommendation within 30 days.
 - c. The recommendation of the discernment council is appealed to the council of ordained ministry and it concurs with the discernment council.

A clergy person on leave of absence who is a full member or associate member may attend and vote at clergy membership meetings and connectional church annual conference sessions but

may not serve as a global conference or regional conference delegate or serve on the board of stewards in a congregation, connectional church, regional church or global church.

A clergy person on leave of absence is not entitled to compensation and benefits from the connectional church while on leave of absence unless otherwise required by law or connectional church policy. If a clergy person on leave of absence requests an appointment from the bishop and there were issues to be addressed while on leave of absence and those issues were addressed, the bishop may appoint the individual upon the approval of the council of ordained ministry and when an appointment is available. If the clergy person is a full member of the church and requests an appointment six months or more prior to the start of new appointments, the bishop shall appoint the clergy person no later than the start of the regular appointment year. Otherwise the bishop may wait until the next appointment cycle.

If the issues were not fully addressed as determined by the bishop and the council of ordained ministry, the clergy person shall continue on leave of absence until the issues are addressed.

Clergy Misconduct

The process for alleged misconduct by a clergy person involves two separate and distinct paths – 1) appointment and 2) membership. Appointment concerns the employment with The United Methodist Church and is separate from the matter of membership. A clergy person's membership resides with the connectional church's council of clergy just as lay membership resides with a congregation and a bishop's membership resides with the council of bishops. If there are concerns about a clergy person's membership, those concerns are to be referred by the district superintendent to the council of clergy who under their policies and procedures are to review the issues and make any determination about membership. This process is further detailed in the 1000 Organization connectional church section of *The Connection*.

Categories of Misconduct

The United Methodist Church believes that grace and redemption are available to all people through Jesus Christ, but it also recognizes the need for appropriate accountability when harm has been done. A clergy person who has:

1. harmed children, youth or adults in any one or more of the following ways - spiritually, physically, emotionally, or sexually in or outside the church,
2. has used their leadership and position to further their personal aims or desires in relationships,
3. been unfaithful in their family relationships,
4. committed financial malfeasance,
5. engaged in conduct unbecoming of a clergy person,
6. undermined the ministry of another clergy person or the church,
7. engaged in harassment, or

8. discriminated against another based upon race, gender, color, national origin, status, ability, or economic condition

is to have their discipleship and leadership reviewed. Where appropriate the clergy person shall be removed from an appointment until the issues are addressed and the church can be assured that the individual will not engage in the same behavior again. A connectional church may further elaborate and give specificity in their policies to any of the misconduct listed above.

The process and organizations to handle clergy misconduct may be found in the 1000 paragraph under connectional church organization.

The Superintendency

The purpose of superintending in The United Methodist church is to organize and equip the church for fruitful mission and ministry in the world. Bishops are the general superintendents of the church and, together through the council of bishops, lead the United Methodist Church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Bishops shall be ordained full members of the United Methodist Church. A bishop's membership is transferred to and resides with the council of bishops upon their election and consecration as a bishop.

Bishops serve together as the council of bishops, which is comprised of the residential and retired bishops of the United Methodist Church. Only residential bishops have a vote within the council of bishops. The council of bishops organizes its ministry, policies and work. In collaboration with the General Board of Stewards of The United Methodist Church, the council of bishops recommends to the global conference the organizational structure of the global church. The global conference shall approve the basic organization of the global church.

Bishops within a regional church serve together as the college of bishops. The college of bishops is comprised of the residential and retired bishops of the region. Only the residential bishops have a vote within the college. Together, the college of bishops encourage, support and hold each other accountable for faithful and fruitful ministry, particularly related to the core responsibilities of a bishop. The residential bishops are to work together for learning and leadership development, to discern strategies for the regional church, and to identify common connectional church strategies for developing leadership, appointing clergy, and growing fruitful Wesleyan congregations.

District superintendents extend the role of superintending within a connectional church. District Superintendents shall be ordained full members of the United Methodist Church. The normal term for a district superintendent shall be up to six years, but this may be extended to no more than up to eight years at the discretion of the bishop, in consultation with the cabinet and the district where the superintendent is assigned. No superintendent shall serve for more than eight years in any consecutive eleven years. No clergy person shall serve as district superintendent for more than twelve years in total.

District superintendents of a connectional church make up the cabinet and, together with the bishop, they:

1. Oversee the spiritual and temporal ministry of the connectional church
2. Lead to grow and deepen faith, discipleship and leadership of the people within the region.
3. Serve as the chief missional strategists and catalysts for transformation, development and growth of the church within the region.
4. Develop transformational spiritual leaders, nurturing fruitful Wesleyan congregations
5. Start new faith communities and congregations, identifying new leaders who inspire new, younger and more diverse people into a relationship with Jesus Christ and into vibrant discipleship.
6. Identify new mission opportunities in the community.

The connectional church is to identify effective ways to focus the time of the bishop and district superintendents on these critical missional areas.

Core Leadership Responsibilities of Bishops

Bishops work together as the council of bishops and regional colleges of bishops to lead The United Methodist Church into the world to bear witness of the saving grace of Jesus Christ. This includes but is not limited to calling the church to repentance and engage the church in witness, mercy ministries and prophetic justice that transforms lives, communities and the world.

Bishops, under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, work in collaboration with the council of bishops, the regional college of bishops, and their superintendents, to transform and grow the church through the following core leadership responsibilities.

1. Deepen spiritual renewal and nurture the faith of the church so that the church and the world are continually renewed by the saving power of Jesus Christ.

In collaboration with the cabinet and connectional church board of stewards, bishops discern the core spiritual needs of the connectional church and the people within the region. By their example, teaching and influence, they nurture the church spiritually and bear witness to God's saving grace, mercy and justice in the region and the world.

Bishops also work together through the regional college of bishops and the global council of bishops, to discern the spiritual needs within The United Methodist Church and the world and collectively lead to renew and nurture faith in the church and the world.

2. Cast a vision for making disciples and growing fruitful Wesleyan congregations for the transformation of the world.

A bishop works with the cabinet, the connectional board of stewards, and the college of bishops to develop goals, strategies and action plans to move forward the vision and mission of the church within the area of the connectional church.

Bishops also work together, through the council of bishops, to cast a vision for the mission and witness of The United Methodist Church in the world. The council of bishops, in collaboration with the General Board of Stewards of The United Methodist Church, discerns goals and, with the general board, presents the goals and how the bishops and board will lead the church to impact lives, communities and the world.

3. Increase lay and clergy disciples' knowledge and understanding of the scriptures, theology, church, mission and ministry through the teaching ministry of the church. The teachings of the church are contained in the Doctrinal Standards, Theological Task, Ministry of All Christians, Social Principles and The Wesleyan Path of The United Methodist Church.

The bishops are to collaborate with practical and scholarly theologians of the church to develop or modify the theological teachings of The United Methodist Church.. Bishops shall use these teachings to develop a common understanding of the theology, ecclesiology and missiology of the church. The council of bishops shall present recommended teachings for the church to the global conference which shall either affirm the teaching by a two-thirds vote, choose not to affirm the teaching, or refer the teaching back to the bishops with specific instructions about further work to be done. The global church may receive teachings from other sources and shall refer them to the council of bishops for review, study and presentation to the global conference.

Bishops and district superintendents will use these teachings in their ministry in the region and as they serve together globally to teach and ground the church in faith for carrying out its mission and ministry.

4. Turn the church outward into the world to witness, show mercy and act justly so that transformation is occurring in the people of the community and world.

Community and world transformation happen wherever lives are changing, hope abounds, diversity is embraced, the Gospel comes alive, and all have the opportunity, knowledge and proficiencies to live to their full God-given potential. (Micah 6:8, Luke 10:27)

A bishop works with the cabinet and connectional church board of stewards to develop missional and witness goals, strategies and action plans for the area and leads the connectional church to engage in the community and the world to effectively achieve them.

Bishops work together, through the council of bishops, and in collaboration with the general board of stewards and other general agencies to lead the mission and witness of The United Methodist Church in the world. The council of bishops, in collaboration with the general church board of stewards, will discern and present missional goals to the global conference for adoption each quadrennium. The council of bishops and the board of stewards will make a quadrennial report to the global conference on the missional accomplishments, the challenges encountered, learnings, and new goals and strategies for the next quadrennium.

5. Develop leaders in the connectional church so that lay and clergy leaders are leading congregations and extension ministries with excellence to increase disciple making and the health and fruitfulness of congregations for the transformation of the world.

Connectional churches have their greatest impact by developing leaders who lead congregations and community ministries that further the mission of The United Methodist Church. Bishops will lead the cabinet and connectional church staff to discern goals and strategies to develop transformational lay and clergy leaders who lead in the church, in the community and the world with excellence.

6. Unify the church through shared mission, values, doctrine, teaching and heritage.

Bishops and district superintendents call, teach, encourage and lead the church to be unified as the church lives and carries out its shared mission, values, doctrine, theological task, teachings and heritage in the world.

Bishops seek the broader Christian unity of the world-wide church by working collaboratively with the ecumenical leaders in their region. The council of bishops, through its ecumenical officer(s) and staff, connects and serves with the world-wide Christian church and its leaders. The bishops shall also work with other faith traditions to affirm the one Creator of all and the need to bear witness that religion should not divide us but can unify through common commitments such as being good stewards of creation, loving mercy, seeking peace and doing justice in the name of God.

7. Lead the organizational life of the United Methodist Church so that the church, particularly through the connectional church, is organized and equipped to fulfill the mission, recruit and develop transformational leaders, grow congregational health and fruitfulness, meet the budget, and complete administrative tasks on time and accurately.
 - a. The bishop works with and through the cabinet to supervise clergy and congregations, organize and align congregations and appoint clergy to make new and nurture existing disciples, grow the health and fruitfulness of congregations and transform the world by furthering the mission and witness of the church in

communities and the world. Cabinets are to establish a consultation process to be used when aligning congregations and making appointments.

- b. Bishops and their cabinets in collaboration with the connectional church board of stewards set the boundaries and parameters of districts, align congregations to form charges and appoint clergy to congregations.
- c. The bishop works with the cabinet and the connectional church board of stewards to set the organizational structure of the connectional church and districts. The connectional board of stewards recommends the organizational structure to the connectional church conference.

Outcome – the leadership of bishops and cabinets will organize, align and equip connectional churches to develop courageous transformational leaders and fruitful Wesleyan congregations that accomplish the following outcomes.

- a. Increase the number of new disciples and deepen the faith and community engagement of present disciples.
- b. Increase the diversity of the church and grow a younger church
- c. Increase the quality and number of fruitful Wesleyan congregations.
- d. Turn the church outward toward the community and world for stronger United Methodist witness, more compassionate ministries of mercy, and more work for justice to end tribalism/racism, oppression, marginalization of people, and abuse of God’s creation and people.

Regionally and globally, the council of bishops and the colleges of bishops will accomplish the following outcomes.

- a. Renew the church spiritually.
- b. Inspire the church to be courageous in serving God in the world.
- c. Unify the church for the mission in the midst of diversity - including but not limited to nationality, ethnicity, tribe, race, language, ministry, culture, theology and experiences across many different contexts and cultures.

Bishops’ Development and Effectiveness

Bishops are evaluated by the connectional board of stewards based on their core responsibilities and expected outcomes and other areas identified as critical to the life of the connectional church. The evaluation developed by the regional episcopacy committee shall be conducted at least once a year, by the executive committee of the connectional board of steward, in consultation with the board. The evaluation will be shared with the bishop, the connectional church personnel committee, and the regional church episcopacy committee. Based on the evaluation, the bishop, the executive committee of the connectional board of stewards and the chairperson of the regional episcopacy committee shall create a development plan that builds on strengths and addresses areas for growth by setting clear and measurable goals and benchmarks. The executive committee of the connectional board of stewards shall meet regularly with the bishop to provide feedback and review progress, learnings and challenges, and shall make progress reports to the regional episcopacy committee.

Bishops are ordained full members of the church and are responsible and accountable to the mission like all clergy. Bishops may be discontinued as a bishop if the council of bishops discontinues their membership according to the policies and processes of the council of bishops or if the bishop is not re-elected by the regional church conference.

If after four years of service as a bishop, or sooner if necessary, the connectional church board of stewards, or the regional church episcopacy committee, or the college of bishops believe the bishop is not meeting the core responsibilities and outcomes expected of bishops, the chairs of the connectional church board of stewards and the chairperson of the regional church episcopacy committee and the president of the college of bishops or their designees will meet to assess the issues and work with the bishop to develop an improvement plan that includes clear and measurable goals and benchmarks. If after a year of the assessment there has not been sufficient growth and development, the group will invite the bishop to retire or return to service in a congregation or extension ministry. If the bishop seeks to continue to serve as a bishop, then the bishop will stand for reelection at the next regional conference. If the bishop is re-elected, the bishop will continue to serve as a bishop and shall continue working on the improvement plan until sufficient growth and development is achieved. If the bishop is not re-elected, the bishop will return to service as an itinerant or non-itinerant clergy person or choose to retire. If discontinued, their membership returns to the connectional conference from which they were elected.

Bishop Misconduct

Bishops are clergy and shall be held to the same standards as other itinerant and non-itinerant clergy concerning character and morality. The misconduct identified under clergy misconduct above is applicable to bishops as well. The council of bishops may further elaborate and give specificity in their policies to any of the misconduct listed in the clergy misconduct section.

The process for handling misconduct by a bishop is found in the 1000 regional church section.

Bishops may be discontinued as a bishop if the council of bishops discontinues their membership according to the policies and processes of the council of bishops. If a bishop's membership is terminated by the council of bishops, the bishop is no longer a clergy person in The United Methodist Church.