

Office of Clergy Services

The primary purpose of the Office of Clergy Services is to serve as a support system and liaison between the Bishop and Cabinet and the Board of Ordained Ministry in all matters related to clergy licensing, ordination, training, equipping, and status. Additional responsibilities of the office include, but are not limited to:

- Recruiting, retaining, and resourcing both pastors and laity
- Maintaining and updating clergy records
- Coordinating conference-wide resources and support systems

Rev. Sharome Henry, the Executive Assistant for Clergy Services, continues to provide excellent support to district offices and candidates with patience and passion. His concern for each of our candidates is expressed through his willingness to help guide them through the process. He is a blessing to both to the candidates and to our church.

Our office inputs, updates and maintains the information in our database for all active and retired clergy, lay ministers, pulpit supplies and candidates in various stages of the process. That work is made possible by the help and guidance of Jim Crews and Russ McKissick in the Conference Information Technology department. The accuracy of this database is pivotal for the completion of the many annual reports for which this office is responsible.

This office continues to oversee the annual update of the clergy/candidate's criminal background checks in accordance with the conference's Safe Sanctuary policy. The policy requires all active clergy, candidates and those assigned to congregations to have a current background check every three years. This year Clergy Services has processed over 300 background checks.

Clergy Services is dedicated to providing quality opportunities for leadership development. This office has also collaborated with the Chairs of the Clergy Orders and Fellowship, and the Board of Ordained Ministry to provide opportunities for leadership development and growth.

In conjunction with the Board of Ordained Ministry, Clergy Services oversees the Licensing School of Pastoral Ministry. This year in addition to the quality instructors from among our clergy membership, we partnered with Candler and the Lewis Center to provide training for the new licensed clergy.

A major project for this year was to update the Clergy Services web page following the release of the 2020/2024 Book of Discipline. This included the updating of all the brochures, process information and the reorganization of the webpage (www.umcsc.org/clergy-services). Old process guides have all been update, new process guides have been created, and the webpage is now organized by Disciplinary paragraph. Our hope was to provide a resource for any status related to clergy and some laity positions in one place.

The work of this office is only possible with the assistance of the district admins. I am grateful for their work and for their diligent oversight of so much information, vital to so many different people. And it is a pleasure to work with our Bishop and Superintendents on many matters related to our clergy, and to attempt to support them as they continue the vital and demanding work necessary to identify, nurture, instruct and supervise the clergy of our Conference. The Conference Board of Ordained Ministry continues to seek the most effective and faithful ways to fulfill its remarkably broad role in evaluating and approving clergy to serve the local churches and various ministries of our Conference. The importance of this work cannot be overstated. The genuine concern and great wisdom of the members of the Board is continually demonstrated in the work that they do on behalf of the conference. The Rev. Morris Waymer continues to provide outstanding leadership to the Board. It has been a privilege to assist the Board in its work.

Without trying to list every event or undertaking of the past year, I continue to respond to requests by phone, email, and correspondence related to licensing, ordination, and all matters related to clergy and their status within the conference, and have met with individuals seeking personal guidance in these areas. It remains an honor to continue to encourage, guide and support clergy as they navigate, pursue and answer their calling. It has been a pleasure to serve in this area of ministry for the past five years, and I look forward to continued service in the coming year.

A. Melton Arant, Jr., Coordinator of Clergy Services