



South Carolina Conference
The United Methodist Church

APPROVAL FOR SERVICE

GUIDE FOR CHRISTIAN CLERGY FROM NON-METHODIST DENOMINATIONS



This guide is made for any clergy from non-Methodist denominations who are exploring the possibility of ministry with and through The United Methodist Church in the South Carolina Conference. “Methodist denominations” are determined by membership or recognition by the World Methodist Council.

This is intended to be an introductory guide to the process and does not include all the details related to privileges, restrictions and expectations related to the Approval for Service process. For those details please refer to ¶1346 of the 2020/2024 Discipline of the United Methodist Church and the South Carolina Conference’s Policy Guidelines (www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024-Policy-4-21-25.pdf).

We are pleased that you are exploring this avenue of ministry and excited to work with you on this journey!

DISCIPLINARY REFERENCE

¶ 346. **Provisions for Clergy From Outside the Annual Conference**— Ordained clergy, associate members, or provisional members from other annual conferences and Christian denominations may receive an appointment in the annual conference in the following manner:

2. Elders or Ordained Clergy From Other Denominations—On recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the clergy members in full connection may approve annually clergy in good standing in other Christian denominations to serve appointments or ecumenical ministries within the bounds of the annual conference while retaining their denominational affiliation, provided they present suitable credentials, give assurance of their Christian faith and experience, and release required psychological reports, criminal background and credit checks, and reports of sexual misconduct and/or child abuse. They shall submit, on a form provided by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry: a notarized statement detailing any convictions for felony or misdemeanor or written accusations of sexual misconduct or child abuse; or a notarized statement certifying that the candidate has not been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor, or accused in writing of sexual misconduct or child abuse. They shall give evidence of their agreement with and willingness to support and maintain United Methodist doctrine, discipline, and polity. Their ordination credentials shall be examined by the bishop and the Board of Ordained Ministry and, upon its recommendation, may be recognized as valid elders in The United Methodist Church while they are under appointment. When the Board of Ordained Ministry certifies that their credentials are at least equal to those of United Methodist elders, they may be accorded the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the following: (a) constitutional amendments; (b) election of delegates to the General and jurisdictional or central conferences; (c) all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of ministers. They may serve on any board, commission, or committee of an annual conference, except the Board of Ordained Ministry and the board of trustees (¶¶ 634.1, 2512.1). They shall not be eligible for election as delegates to the General, jurisdictional, or central conferences. They shall also be subject to the provisions governing sabbatical leave, leave of absence, location, retirement, minimum salary, and pension. They shall not have security of appointment.

3. Between conference sessions, the Board of Ordained Ministry may approve them for appointment pending the recognition of their orders. The bishop may make *ad interim* recognition of valid ordination after consultation with the cabinet and executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry, pending recognition by the vote of the clergy members in full connection. In every case, prior examination shall be made of the ordained minister’s understanding, acceptance, and willingness to support and maintain United Methodist doctrine, discipline, and polity.

SOUTH CAROLINA POLICY/PROCESS CHECKLIST

Ordained clergy, associate members, or provisional members of other annual conferences or other Methodist churches seeking to serve in South Carolina should follow the process below.

Steps:

Initial Application

1. Complete an Approval for Service Biographical Application: www.umcsc.org/cs-nonmethodist
2. Complete the Previous United Methodist Relationship form: www.umcsc.org/cs-afs-previousum
3. Complete a Notarized Criminal Background Statement and return it to Clergy Services: www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/07SCBOM-Background-Statement-rvsvd-12152022.pdf
4. Complete the Approval for Service Theology Questions: www.umcsc.org/cs-afs-theology
5. Complete a Credit Worthiness Statement: www.umcsc.org/cs-credit
6. Complete a background check. Following the submission of your Criminal Background statement, a link will be sent to you from Client Services (Trak 1) indicating that the Office of Clergy Services has requested that you complete a screening. The email will contain a link to complete and pay for the background check.
7. Have a current or former supervisor submit a supervisory reference: www.umcsc.org/cs-afs-supervisor
8. Have three persons not related to you submit a general reference: www.umcsc.org/cs-afs-personal
9. Complete a Release of Information form allowing your files to be shared with the South Carolina Conference and confirm your status: www.umcsc.org/release-of-information-to-sc

Application Follow-Up

1. Applicants who have submitted a complete application packet (items 1-9 above) December 1st, may be granted an interview with the Approval For Service Committee. Approval For Service interviews generally happen only once a year, and coincide with the beginning of our Appointment Season. Most interviews will take place in January annually online. The Coordinator of Clergy Services will notify your application has or has not been selected for an interview in December.
2. Clergy who receive a favorable recommendation from the Approval for Service Committee will be eligible to serve United Methodist congregations in South Carolina, if appointed. This approval does not guarantee an appointment. Your name and information is shared with the Bishop and Appointive Cabinet for consideration as they make appointments.
3. A District Superintendent will contact you if an appointment for you is projected in South Carolina. This most often happens during our normal appointment process from March till June, but can happen at any time.
4. A South Carolina Conference email address will be assigned to you if an appointment is projected. You will be expected to use this email for all communications to and from the Conference and District.
5. If you are appointed the following will be required before the appointment begins:
 - a. Completion of a Medical Report: www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Medical-form-1-1-3_merged.pdf
 - b. Completion of one of the two Sexual Ethics Courses linked below (you may choose which one):
 1. www.lewisonlinelearning.org/CourseInfo/10004
 2. www.lewisonlinelearning.org/CourseInfo/10000
 - c. Have your official transcripts sent to Clergy Services
 - d. You will be expected to attend our Licensing School to help you begin to recognize and begin to understand any differences in polity that might exist between our denominations. This school takes place in late April and early May. One week is in person, and two Fridays and two Saturdays are online.
 - e. You will have six months to complete a psychological (with our vendor) unless an acceptable one has been included with the files that have been shared with us by your home denomination/church. The Coordinator of Clergy Services will determine if a previously supplied one meets our Disciplinary criteria.

What to After You Are Appointed

- Clergy from other denominations serving in South Carolina retain their membership in their home denomination, and are granted voice but not vote in the South Carolina Conference. Membership on conference boards and agencies is restricted to the denomination of which they are a member.
- Clergy from other denominations serving in South Carolina are under the supervision of a District Superintendent and amenable to the clergy session of the annual conference in the performance of their pastoral duties and shall attend the sessions of the annual conference.

- Ordained Clergy from other Methodist denominations serving in South Carolina will be expected to enroll in an approved program of theological education from a seminary or the Course of Study until they have completed at minimum the Basic Course of Study. Those with an MDiv. from an approved school must take at minimum Advance Course of Study courses (or its equivalent) in United Methodist History, United Methodist Doctrine and United Methodist Polity.
 - If appointed full time they must complete four courses per year. If appointed part time they must complete two course per year. All courses must be completed with a C or higher.
 - When the basic course of study is complete, or the three advance United Methodist course of study classes are complete for those with an approved MDiv, the clergy shall be expected to participate in continuing Education and Spiritual Growth as outlined in ¶ 350. A clergy mentor may be assigned while in the Course of Study or in seminary.
- Clergy from other denominations serving in South Carolina will be issued an Approval for Service Certificate, which must be renewed annually by the district committee on Ordained Ministry in the district to which they are appointed.
 - The certificate does not grant Conference Membership. Acceptance of said certificate is evidence of the Clergy's agreement with and willingness to support and maintain United Methodist doctrine, discipline, and polity. The certificate/approval shall remain valid only so long as the appointment continues and shall be recertified by the Bishop when assignments change between sessions of the annual conference. If the appointment ends and the Clergy Member of Other Methodist Denomination is not appointed to another charge, they shall return their certificate to the District Superintendent for holding until they are once again appointed.
- In order to remain Approved to Serve Clergy from other denominations serving in South Carolina will:
 - Make satisfactory academic progress as outlined above. Official Transcripts should be submitted annually to Clergy Services.
 - Meet annually with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM) of the district under which they are appointed for nurture and accountability and be recommended for License renewal and continuation on the Approval for Service list by the dCOM.
- You may contact Clergy Services at any time with questions.

Welcome to the South Carolina Conference!



Authorization for Release of Records & Waiver of Confidentiality

Office of Clergy Services | South Carolina Conference | The United Methodist Church

This is NOT a request to transfer.

Clergy Contact Information:

Full Name: _____ Birthday: _____
Full legal name

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

I, _____ request, authorize, consent and give permission to
Full legal name
the _____, to freely disclose information
Institution to which permission is granted to share your information
to and obtain information from the South Carolina United Methodist Annual Conference (including release of medical or psychological records or information that might otherwise be protected from disclosure).

I understand that the information which may be disclosed/obtained is: all information pertaining to me that is contained in any files of, or that I have given or made available to, any of the above-named persons, organizations or entities. I also hereby release the South Carolina United Methodist Conference, the above-named persons, organizations or entities, the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, the District Committee on Ordained Ministry and any representatives from said groups from any responsibility for damages resulting from their procurement of information or provision of information to appropriate investigative bodies.

Please share with: Name: Rev. Melton Arant, Conference Secretary & Coordinator of Clergy Services
Address: 4908 Colonial Drive, Columbia, SC 29203 (clergyservices@umcsc.org)

I, the undersigned, understand that I may revoke this consent at any time except to the extent that action has been taken in reliance upon it. This consent will expire sixty (60) days your receipt of it unless another date is specified. I understand that the information requested may be disclosed from records whose confidentiality is otherwise protected by federal as well as state law.

Signature of Clergy: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Witness: _____ Date: _____

INSTRUCTIONS:

*Return completed document to: Rev. Melton Arant, Coordinator of Clergy Services (clergyservices@umcsc.org), for processing.
4908 Colonial Drive, Suite 122, Columbia, SC 29203 Office: (803) 786-9486 Fax: (803) 735-8777.*

Revised 1/2025



Full Name (first middle last & suffix): _____ (spell out full middle name/no initials)

Complete Physical Address: _____

Complete Mailing Address (if different): _____

Date of Birth (month/day/year): _____ Email: _____

Best Contact Number: _____ Type of Number: _____ District: _____

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? ____ Have you ever been accused of a felony? ____

If "Yes" state in detail the nature of the conviction or accusation (add attachment if necessary).

Have you ever been convicted of a misdemeanor? ____ Have you ever been accused of a misdemeanor? ____

If "Yes", please state in detail the nature of the conviction or accusation (add attachment if necessary).

Have you ever been convicted of sexual misconduct? ____ Have you ever been accused of sexual misconduct? ____

If "Yes", please state in detail the nature of the conviction or accusation (add attachment if necessary).

Have you ever been convicted of child abuse? ____ Have you ever been accused of child abuse? ____

If "Yes", please state in detail the nature of the conviction or accusation (add attachment if necessary).

I _____, affirm that all the information provided by me on this form is true, correct and accurate.

I understand that if false information has been given, my application process in the South Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church will be terminated, and I will be subject to any disciplinary actions as set forth by said Annual Conference. By signing this I further grant permission for The Board of Ordained Ministry to conduct Criminal Background Investigations whenever needed.

"A past felony conviction is not an absolute bar to employments with the South Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. It is our policy to consider: 1) The nature and gravity of the offense or conduct; 2) The time that has passed since the offense, conduct and completion of the sentence; and 3) The nature of the job held or sought. It is also our policy to use individualized assessments to consider more complete information to determine whether exclusions based on past criminal conduct are job related and consistent with business necessity."

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Notary Public Signature & Seal

State of _____ County of _____

Sworn before me on this _____ (date)

Notary Signature: _____

Notary Public of the State of _____ My commission expires: _____

You must pay \$20.00 for the criminal and credit background checks to be complete. There are three payment options. Select the option you will use by placing a check in the corresponding box.

- 1. Pay online at: <https://www.umcsc.org/backgroundcheckpayment/> . Select Option A – Change of Status Background Check or
- 2. Send a check with this form for \$20.00 made payable to the SC Conference Treasurer.
- 3. Pay online when you are completing the screening process described below.

Send this completed & notarized form to: Clergy Services, 4908 Colonial Dr., Columbia, SC 29203. (You may email a copy to speed the process while the original is mailed to Clergy Services (ClergyServices@umcsc.org).

Following the submission of this form to Clergy Services, a link from Trak-1/People Facts will be sent to your email address with instructions. If you selected payment option 3 above, you will pay for the background check through Trak-1 when you the instructions.

You must complete the Background/Credit Check to move forward.