



South Carolina Conference  
The United Methodist Church

# GUIDE FOR ASSOCIATE MEMBERS



## DISCIPLINARY PARAGRAPHS & BOARD POLICIES TO KEEP IN MIND

**¶ 321. Eligibility and Rights of Associate Members**—Associate members of an annual conference are in the itinerant ministry of the Church and are available on a continuing basis for appointment by the bishop. They offer themselves without reserve to be appointed (and to serve as their superiors in office shall direct). They shall be amenable to the annual conference in the performance of their ministry and shall be granted the same security of appointment as provisional members and members in full connection.

1. Associate members shall have a right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the following: (a) constitutional amendments; (b) all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.
2. Associate members may serve on any board, commission, or committee of an annual conference. They shall not be eligible for election as delegates to the General or jurisdictional or central conferences.
3. Associate members shall be subject to the provisions governing sabbatical leave, leave of absence, location, retirement, minimum salary, and pension.

**¶ 322. Requirements for Election as Associate Members**—1. Local pastors may be elected to associate membership by a three-fourths majority vote of the clergy session, when they have met the following conditions. They shall have: (1) been recommended to the clergy session based on a three-fourths majority vote of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry; (2) reached age forty; (3) served four years as full-time local pastors; (4) completed the Course of Study in addition to the studies for license as a local pastor or received a Master of Divinity degree that includes the basic graduate theological studies from a school of theology listed by the University Senate; (5) completed a minimum of sixty semester hours toward the Bachelor of Arts or an equivalent degree in a college or university recognized by the University Senate; (6) been recommended by a three-fourths majority vote by the district committee on ordained ministry and the Board of Ordained Ministry; (7) declared their willingness to accept continuing full-time appointment; (8) satisfied the board regarding their physical, mental, and emotional health (the annual conference shall require psychological reports, criminal background and credit checks, and reports of sexual misconduct and/or child abuse to provide additional information on the candidate's fitness for the ministry); (9) for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness to the Christian gospel, and in consideration of his/her influence as a clergy member of the annual conference, be willing to make a complete dedication of himself/herself to the highest ideals of the Christian life; and to this end agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, social responsibility, faithful sexual intimacy expressed through fidelity, monogamy, commitment, mutual affection and respect, careful and honest communication, mutual consent, and growth in grace and in the knowledge and love of God; and (10) prepared at least one written sermon on a biblical passage specified by the Board of Ordained Ministry and given satisfactory answers in a written doctrinal examination administered by the Board of Ordained Ministry. (Consideration shall be given to the questions listed in ¶ 324.9.)

2. Upon recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry, an annual conference may equate part-time service to the requirement of full-time service. Such equivalence is to be determined in light of the years of service involved, the quality of that service, the maturity of the applicant, and other relevant factors. 3. Associate members may retire under the provisions of ¶ 358 of the Discipline. They shall retain their license for pastoral ministry for service in the local church and maintain their relationship as retired clergy members of the annual conference. 4. Associate members may be received as provisional members in the annual conference under conditions as set forth in ¶ 324.6 upon receiving a three-fourths majority vote of the clergy members of the conference in full connection, present and voting.

**SCBOMP- V.b Additional South Carolina Associate Membership Policies** —i) Any question regarding satisfactory completion of the United Methodist studies requirement shall be resolved by referring the seminary transcript to the Division of Ordained Ministry for evaluation. ii) Personal Interview with Board to review submitted written materials including a Bible Study, and other supplementary materials. iii) Cost of all testing shall be the candidate's responsibility. A psychological older than ten years

will need to be updated. iv) Be present for the opening Clergy Session of Annual Conference. v) Board of Ordained Ministry Application Process to be submitted by due date. vi) Associate Members may seek Provisional Membership after fulfilling the conditions of ¶324.4A2. They shall make a request to become a Provisional Member in writing to the Bishop and the Coordinator of Clergy Services. The District Superintendent and Chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry shall be copied on the written request. An interview with and recommendation from the BOM Executive Committee to the Conference BOM will be required. If approved by the BOM and Clergy Session by 3/4th vote the associate member will be commissioned as a Provisional member. After election and commissioning to provisional membership, candidates shall complete the Formation in Ministry program designed by the Committee on Formation in Ministry and approved by the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. The Provisional Formation Program is primarily a two-year Residency program. Candidates not approved for full membership/ordination after the initial two year Residency program are required to participate in a continuing Residency Support program. Maternity/Paternity leave will not exempt the provisional member from full participation (attendance) in the Formation in Ministry two-year Residency program.

## Associate Membership

**Who does this?** *This is for anyone who is called to serve in a pastoral role but does not (yet) have a seminary degree or commissioned.*

Who to talk to:

Steps:

### Prerequisites

1. Be at least 40 years of age
2. Have served for at least four years' service as a full time local licensed pastor or equivalent.
3. Completed the Basic Course of Study or received a MDiv degree that included the required Disciplinary courses from a University Senate approved school.
4. Have a minimum 60 hours toward a B.A. or equivalent
5. Be available to accept full time continuing appointment

DS or the Coordinator of Clergy Services

### Becoming a LLP

#### Becoming an Associate Member

- 1) Meet with and be recommended by your dCOM
- 2) Complete and Submit an Application for Clergy Relationship Form (105)
- 3) Attend the Change of Status Meeting (in June of each year)
- 4) Complete the forms in the Associate Membership Packet and return to Clergy Services
  - a) Medical Report (Form F-103)
  - b) Sign the Psychological Consent Forms and submit the original to the Office of Clergy Services.
  - c) Credit Statement (Form 06SCBOM)
  - d) Criminal Background Statement
  - e) Biographical Form (102) with current 2x2 photograph
  - f) Sermon on assigned passage.
  - g) Bible Study on assigned book of the Bible
  - h) Theology & Doctrine Disciplinary Questions
  - i) Call and Discipline Life Disciplinary Questions
  - j) Academic Integrity Statement (13SCBOM)
  - k) DS supervisory Observation Report (05SCBOM) (submitted on your behalf by the DS)
  - l) Official transcripts showing a minimum of 60 hours toward a Bachelor's degree and completion of BCOS
- 5) Complete Phase II of the Psychological with the vendor listed on the Consent Form.
- 6) Complete the Criminal & Credit Background Screening. *(After you submit your Criminal Background Statement, an email invitation will be sent with a link for you to complete a Criminal & Background Screening. The cost will be \$20.00 and will be paid by you online.)*
- 7) Meet with the four subcommittees of the BOM and be recommended by the BOM for Associate membership.
- 8) Receive the approval of the Clergy Session at Annual Conference.

**Congratulations! You're An Associate Member!**

## HELPFUL TERMS TO KNOW

**Advanced Course of Study (ACOS)** – Advanced theological education program of the Division of Ordained Ministry, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. It is provided for those who are licensed as local pastors to complete the Disciplinary Basic Graduate Theological Courses. Participants in the program must have completed candidacy for ordained ministry, the studies for license as a local pastor, been approved/recommended for license by the dCOM and conference Board of Ordained Ministry, completed the Basic Course of Study and is serving an appointment.

**Approved for Service** – A process by which ordained, provisional and licensed clergy from other United Methodist Conferences, Methodist Denominations and other Christian Denominations can be approved to serve United Methodist Churches in South Carolina.

**Associate Member** – Associate members are clergy members of the Annual Conference and have voice and vote at annual conference on all matters except constitutional amendments and matters of ordination, clergy character and conference relations of clergy.

**Certified Candidacy** – Candidacy phase when a candidate has completed the mentoring process and has met with and been certified as a candidate for licensed or ordained ministry by the district committee on ordained ministry.

**Commissioning** – The credentialing of provisional deacons and elders. The act of the church that publicly acknowledges God's call and response, talents, gifts and training of the candidate. The church invokes the Holy Spirit as the candidate is commissioned to be a faithful servant leader among the people, to lead the church in service, to proclaim the Word of God and to equip others for ministry.

**Conference** – The governing and administering body for United Methodists in the South Carolina Area.

**Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (BoM)** – The body that oversees, cares for, and evaluates candidates for ministry through the candidacy process, and is also responsible for maintaining a relationship with local pastors in the conference.

**Course of Study (COS)** - The basic theological education program of the Division of Ordained Ministry, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. It is provided for those who are licensed as local pastors who are unable to attend an approved seminary. Participants in the program must have completed candidacy for ordained ministry, the studies for license as a local pastor, been approved/recommended for license by the dCOM and conference Board of Ordained Ministry, and is serving an appointment. Often referred to as the Basic Course of Study (BCOS).

**Deacon** – Persons called by God, authorized by the Church, and ordained by a bishop to a lifetime ministry of Word, Service, Compassion and Justice to both the community and the congregation.

**District** – The body that oversees, cares for, and evaluates candidates for ministry through the candidacy process, and is also responsible for maintaining a relationship with local pastors.

**District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOM)** - The body that oversees, cares for, and evaluates candidates for ministry through the candidacy process, and is also responsible for maintaining a relationship with local pastors in each district.

**District Superintendent (DS)** – an elder appointed by the bishop, usually for a six-year term. The DS oversees the ministry of the district's clergy and churches, provides spiritual and pastoral leadership, works with the bishop and others in the appointment of ordained ministers to serve the district's churches, presides at meetings of the charge conference, and oversees programs within the district.

**Elder** – Persons who are ordained to a lifetime ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order and Service; authorized to preach and teach the Word of God, to administer the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, and to order the life of the Church for mission and ministry.

## HELPFUL TERMS TO KNOW

**General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM)** – The GBHEM is the leadership development agency of the United Methodist Church. It prepares global leaders for a global church and the world. Every elder, deacon and licensed local pastor benefits from the training and candidacy programs.

**Local Licensed Pastor (LLP)** – Persons who are licensed and appointed to preach, conduct divine worship, and perform the duties of a pastor in the context of a specific appointment, but are not ordained as elders. Licensed local pastors are clergy members of the Annual Conference and have voice and vote on all matters except constitutional amendments and matters of ordination, clergy character and conference relations of clergy.

**Ordination** – The church affirms and continues the apostolic ministry through persons empowered by the Holy Spirit.

**Other Denomination (OF)** – Ordained Clergy Members of other Christian Denominations that have been Approved to Serve United Methodist Churches in South Carolina. They retain their membership in their home denomination and therefore do not have voting rights in the South Carolina Conference.

**Other Elder (OE)** – Ordained Clergy Members of other United Methodist Annual Conferences or Methodist Denominations that have been Approved to Serve United Methodist Churches in South Carolina. They retain their membership in their home conference or denomination and therefore do not have voting rights in the South Carolina Conference.

**Provisional Member** – Conference relationship of commissioned ministers (deacons and elders) who are on trial in preparation for membership in full connection in the annual conference as deacons and elders. During that three-year period, they are participants in the Clergy Leadership Academy and under the care of the Conference Board of Ordained. Provisional members have voice and vote at annual conference on all matters except constitutional amendments and matters of ordination, clergy character, and conference relations of clergy.