



South Carolina Conference
The United Methodist Church

GUIDE FOR ORDAINED ELDER IN FULL CONNECTION



DISCIPLINARY PARAGRAPHS & BOARD POLICIES TO KEEP IN MIND

¶ 332. Ministry of an Elder—Elders are ordained ministers who, by God’s grace, have completed their formal preparation and have been commissioned and served as a provisional member, have been found by the Church to be of sound learning, of Christian character, possessing the necessary gifts and evidence of God’s grace, and whose call by God to ordination has been confirmed by the Church. Elders are ordained to a lifetime ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service. By the authority given in their ordination, they are authorized to preach and teach the Word of God, to provide pastoral care and counsel, to administer the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, and to order the life of the Church for service in mission and ministry. The servant leadership of the elder, in both parish and extension ministries, is expressed by leading the people of God in worship and prayer, by leading persons to faith in Jesus Christ, by exercising pastoral supervision, and by ordering the Church in mission in the world. As members of the Order of Elders, all elders are in covenant with all other elders in the annual conference and shall participate in the life of their order.

¶ 333. Elders in Full Connection—1. Elders in full connection with an annual conference by virtue of their election and ordination are bound in special covenant with all the ordained elders of the annual conference. In the keeping of this covenant they perform the ministerial duties and maintain the ministerial standards established by those in the covenant. They offer themselves without reserve to be appointed and to serve, after consultation, as the appointive authority may determine.¹⁶ They live with all other ordained ministers in mutual trust and concern and seek with them the sanctification of the fellowship. By entering into the covenant, they accept and subject themselves to the process of clergy discipline, including serving on committees on investigation, trial courts, or appellate committees. Only those shall be elected to full membership who are of unquestionable moral character and genuine piety, sound in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and faithful in the discharge of their duties.¹⁷

2. A provisional member of the annual conference who has completed the requirements for elder’s orders and admission into full membership shall be eligible for election to full membership and ordination as elder by a bishop. Following election, the bishop and secretary of the conference shall provide a certificate of full membership in the annual conference, and following ordination, a certificate of ordination.

3. An elder shall be ordained by a bishop by the laying on of hands, employing the Order of Service for the Ordination of Elders (see ¶ 415.6). The bishop shall be assisted by other elders and may include laity designated by the bishop representing the Church community. Judicatory leaders from full communion partners may participate in the ordination service and may join the ordaining bishop in laying hands on the head of the candidate, while participating elders and laity may lay hands on the back or shoulders of the candidate.

¶ 334. Ministry, Authority, and Responsibilities of an Elder in Full Connection—An elder in full connection is authorized to give spiritual and temporal servant leadership in the Church in the following manner:

1. Elders in full connection shall have the right to vote on all matters in the annual conference except in the election of lay delegates to the General and jurisdictional or central conferences (¶ 602.1a) and shall share with deacons in full connection responsibility for all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. This responsibility shall not be limited by the recommendation or lack of recommendation by the Board of Ordained Ministry, notwithstanding provisions which grant to the Board of Ordained Ministry the right of recommendation. They shall be eligible to hold office in the annual conference and to be elected delegates to the General and jurisdictional or central conferences under the provision of the Constitution (¶ 36, Article IV). Every effective elder in full connection who is in good standing shall be continued under appointment by the bishop provided that if the elder is appointed to serve in an affiliated relationship in a missionary conference (¶ 586) and that appointment is terminated by the bishop who

presides in the missionary conference, then the responsibility for meeting this obligation rests with the bishop of the conference of which the elder is a member.

2. There are professional responsibilities (§ 340) that elders are expected to fulfill and that represent a fundamental part of their accountability and a primary basis of their continued eligibility for annual appointment. These shall include:

- a) Continuing availability for appointment.
- b) Annual participation in a process of evaluation with committees on pastor-parish relations or comparable authority as well as annual participation in a process of evaluation with the district superintendent or comparable authority.
- c) Evidence of continuing effectiveness reflected in annual evaluations by the pastor-parish relations committee and by the district superintendent or comparable authorities
- d) Growth in professional competence and effectiveness through continuing education and formation. The Board of Ordained Ministry may set the minimum standards and specific guidelines for continuing education and formation for conference members;
- e) Willingness to assume supervisory and mentoring responsibilities within the connection.

3. When an elder's effectiveness is in question, the bishop shall complete the following procedure:

- a) Identify the concerns. These can include an elder's failed professional responsibilities or vocational ineffectiveness.
- b) Hold supervisory conversations with the elder that identifies the concerns and designs, collaboratively with the elder, a corrective plan of action. c) Upon evaluation, determine that the plan of action has not been carried out or produced fruit that gives a realistic expectation of future effectiveness.

4. If an elder fails to demonstrate vocational competence or effectiveness (§ 340) as defined by the annual conference through the Board of Ordained Ministry and cabinet, then the bishop may begin the administrative location process as outlined in § 359.

§ 335. Requirements for Admission to Full Connection and Ordination as Elder—Provisional members who are candidates for full connection and ordination as elders and have been provisional members for at least two years may be admitted into membership in full connection in an annual conference and approved for elder's ordination by three-fourths majority vote of the clergy members in full connection of the annual conference, upon recommendation by three-fourths majority vote of the Board of Ordained Ministry, after they have qualified as follows. They shall have: (1) served full-time under episcopal appointment for at least two full annual conference years following the completion of the educational requirements specified in (3)(b). Years of service in any ministry setting requiring the regular proclamation of the word, the administration of the sacraments, and the short or long term ordering of the life of the community of faith may count toward the fulfillment of this requirement. Such ministry settings may include campus ministry, college and university chaplaincy, hospital and prison chaplaincy, military chaplaincy, overseas/mission work, and other ministries so recognized by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Upon recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry, an annual conference may equate less than full-time 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. Supervision is to be (a) personally assumed or delegated by the district superintendent, and (b) assumed by a mentor assigned by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Their service shall be evaluated by the Board of Ordained Ministry as effective according to written guidelines developed by the board and adopted by the clergy members in full connection. In rare cases, the Board of Ordained Ministry may, by a two-thirds vote, approve years of service in an autonomous Methodist church as meeting this requirement if adequate supervision has been provided; (2) been previously elected as provisional members; (3) met the following educational requirements: (a) graduation with a Bachelor of Arts or equivalent degree from a college or university listed by the University Senate, or demonstrated competency equivalence through a process designed in consultation with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; (b) graduation with a Master of Divinity degree from a school of theology listed by the University Senate, or its equivalent as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; or (c) met the

education requirements of ¶ 324.6 for local pastors; (d) educational requirements in every case shall include completion of the basic graduate theological studies of the Christian faith as outlined in ¶ 324.4a; (4) satisfied the board regarding physical, mental, and emotional health; (5) prepared and preached at least one written sermon on a biblical passage specified by the Board of Ordained Ministry; (6) presented a detailed plan and outline for teaching a Bible study; (7) presented a project that demonstrates fruitfulness in carrying out the church's mission of "Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World"; (8) responded to a written or oral doctrinal examination administered by the Board of Ordained Ministry. The candidate should demonstrate the ability to communicate clearly in both oral and written form. The candidate's reflections and the board's response should be informed by the insights and guidelines of Part III of the *Discipline*. The questions in ¶335.(8) are guidelines for the preparation of the examination.

¶ 336. Historic Examination for Admission into Full Connection—The bishop as chief pastor shall engage those seeking to be admitted in serious self-searching and prayer to prepare them for their examination before the conference. At the time of the examination the bishop shall also explain to the conference the historic nature of the following questions and seek to interpret their spirit and intent. The questions listed in ¶336 and any others that may be thought necessary will be asked.

SCBOMP-IX.a. Additional requirements in the S.C. Conference- i. The two year provisional period required for full Elder may be served in a conference other than South Carolina, provided that supervision is performed and documentation of such is supplied to the South Carolina Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

ii. The two year "Formation in Ministry", including Residency, is a program of the S.C. Conference. It is a requirement for admission to Full Membership for all applicants. The Formation in Ministry program begins in the first year of full-time appointment within the geographical bounds of the S.C. Conference after academic requirements for the Master of Divinity Degree have been completed, including thirty hours in Basic Theological Studies. Exceptions to this requirement may be approved by the BOM Executive Committee.

iii. Provisional Members who are candidates for full connection and ordination are required to have served fulltime under episcopal appointment for at least two full annual conference years. Those appointed to Less Than full-time Service shall be credited with years of service under episcopal appointment in amounts equal to the years designated in the "Less Than full-time Service" question in the Business Questions. At least one of the two years shall be served within the geographical bounds of the S.C. Conference (SCBOM Policy). Exceptions to this requirement may be approved by the BOM Executive Committee.

iv. The following shall be required for all persons seeking admission into Full Membership as Elder:

1. A statement from the District Committee on Ordained Ministry indicating the candidate's strengths and areas where a need for continued growth is indicated. (Note: This will necessitate an interview with the candidate for Full Membership just as with candidates for Provisional Membership and other relationships.)
2. A checklist from the candidate's District Superintendent, which would relate the results of supervisory observation with regard to both behavior and function.
3. A statement summarizing the candidate's participation in the "Formation in Ministry" Program by the Director of the program. This is to be a mutual statement by the director and the candidate and is to be signed by both.
4. All persons seeking full membership and Elder's orders shall have successfully completed at least three quarter hours or two semester hours in EACH of the following: Black studies; Women's Studies; and One unit/quarter of Clinical Pastoral Education. The requirements for Women's Studies and Black Studies may be online, taken at the undergraduate or graduate level, but not directed study.
5. Candidates must complete all academic courses listed in the Basic Graduate Theological Studies and South Carolina Conference requirements with a "C" grade or higher to be credited with completion of those courses.

Full Member

Who does this? Those who are called to ordained ministry as a deacon or elder.
Completed seminary or the BCOS & ACOS and the SC Educational requirements.

Who to talk to:	Steps:
	<p>Prerequisites</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Been a Provisional Member for at least two years, no more than eight. 2. Served under Episcopal appointment full time for at least two years. 3. Met all the Provisional Member Academic Requirements 4. Completed the additional SC Academic Requirements <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Clinical Pastoral Education b. Black History or Black Studies, c. Women's studies a. Homiletics or preaching is not part of the Disciplinary Requirements and must be taken before provisional membership for anyone not enrolled in seminary prior to January 1, 2005. For those enrolled prior to January 1, 2005 it must be taken before full membership.
DS or the Coordinator of Clergy Services	<p>Becoming a Full Member</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete and Submit an Application for Clergy Relationship Form (105) 2. Attend the Change of Status Meeting (in June of each year) 3. Complete the forms in the Provisional Membership Packet and return to Clergy Services <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Updated Pastor Profile with current photograph (.jpeg) f. Sermon on assigned passage. g. Bible Study on assigned book of the Bible h. Theology & Doctrine Disciplinary Questions i. Call & Discipline Life Disciplinary Questions j. Academic Integrity Statement (13SCBOM) k. Statement of Fulfillment of Theological Studies l. DS Observation Report (05SCBOM) (submitted on your behalf by the DS) m. dCOM Observation Report (submitted on your behalf by the dCOM) n. Official transcripts with completion of SC academic requirements <p><i>Notes: 1) Submit a copy of all Completed Forms and Requested documents to the Office of Clergy Services and a copy to your district office. 2) All completed forms and requested documents should be submitted by October 1 to attend the Candidacy</i></p> 4. Complete Phase II of the Psychological with the vendor listed on the Consent Form. 5. Complete the Criminal & Credit Background Screening. <i>(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.)</i> 6. Meet with the interview team of the BOM and be approved in all four areas of evaluation. 7. Receive the recommendation of the BOM for Full membership and ordination 8. Receive the approval of the Clergy Session at Annual Conference.

Congratulations! You're An Ordained Full Member!