

## MENTORING AND MENTORS

**¶ 349. Mentors—1.** *Mentoring occurs within a relationship where the mentor takes responsibility for creating a safe place for reflection and growth. An effective mentor has a mature faith, models effective ministry, and possesses the necessary skill to help individuals discern their call in ministry. Mentoring is a part of the preparation and growth for inquirers and candidates for ordained ministry, local pastors and provisional members of an annual conference. Mentoring is distinct from the evaluative and supervisory process that is a part of preparation for ministry.*

*It is expected that all annual conferences will make available and encourage the use of spiritual directors, coaches, pastoral counselors, or vocational mentors for all clergy, separate from the superintendent, and that clergy will use these kinds of support as a standard practice of ministry throughout the clergy career and in all assignments or appointments.*

**2. Mentors shall be recommended by the cabinet, selected, trained and held accountable by the Board of Ordained Ministry.**

*There are two categories of mentor, each with distinct functions and responsibilities as follows:*

- a) Candidacy mentors are clergy in full connection, associate members, or local pastors who have completed the Course of Study trained to provide counsel and guidance related to the candidacy process. Candidates will be assigned to a candidacy mentoring group, wherever possible, or to a candidacy mentor by the district committee on ordained ministry in consultation with the vocational discernment coordinator (wherever named) and the district superintendent (¶ 310). Candidates will be assigned to a candidacy mentor or mentoring groups to meet with until they begin serving as a local pastor or provisional member.*
- b) Clergy mentors are clergy in full connection, associate members, full-time, or part-time local pastors who have completed the Course of Study or a master of divinity from a University Senate-approved theological school and are trained to provide ongoing counsel with local pastors and with provisional members. Local pastors, while in Course of Study or seminary (¶ 317.4), shall be assigned a clergy mentor by the district committee on ordained ministry. Provisional members shall be assigned a clergy mentor in full connection by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Licensed or ordained clergy from other denominations shall be assigned a clergy mentor by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Clergy mentoring begins when a local pastor, provisional member, or clergy of another denomination receives an appointment.*

## CANDIDACY MENTORS

### SELECTION AND ASSIGNMENT (¶349.2a)

- The candidacy registrar, district superintendent, and vocational discernment coordinator review the need for candidacy mentors in each district
  - The DS, in consultation with the dCOM and district leadership, suggests clergy to be trained as candidacy mentors
  - The candidacy registrar and vocational discernment coordinator administer the training for candidacy mentors and confirm those who have been trained
  - The DS assigns a candidacy mentor after receiving and approving a new candidate's request for admission into the candidacy process (¶310.1b)

### CRITERIA

- It is important for candidacy mentors to represent a variety of backgrounds and experiences and to include deacons, elders, and local pastors. Different family lifestyles, ages, genders, and ethnic groups should also be represented. This variety provides opportunities for candidates to be in contact with

church leaders who may represent the community's wider diversity, while also giving candidates access to mentors with whom they can relate to more closely.

- Effective mentors have a mature faith, model effective ministry and possess the skills needed to help individuals discern their call to ministry (§349.1). As mentors are selected and trained, the following standards are helpful in deciding who should be invited to serve as a mentor. Mentors are clergy who:
  - Are spiritually mature and demonstrate a deep and continuing commitment to God and to growing in grace and love
  - Demonstrate a strong understanding of call and commitment to Christian ministry as lived through the church's ministry and appreciate a variety of ministry expressions
  - Continue to develop vocationally throughout life's opportunities and challenges
  - Encourage others to be comfortable with in-depth conversations regarding the many facets of vocational and personal development
  - Are open and flexible in adapting candidacy studies to candidates' needs when possible
  - Maintain family relationships and personal lives that are congruent with the standards expected of clergy

## TRAINING

- All mentors should be trained once every four years. This allows all mentors to know the most recent candidacy, licensing and ordination requirements and the annual conference's current mentoring and interviewing structure and procedures
- If your conference wishes to award continuing education credits for training events, note that 10 contact hours of educational time is equal to one CEU.
- While duration can vary from a half-day to an overnight retreat, training sessions should include certain components:
  - Theological grounding for mentoring and reciprocal learning
  - Identifying the differences among supervision, evaluation and mentoring and the role of each in candidate development and assessment
  - Discussion and clarification of the meaning of confidentiality in the relationship among the mentor, candidate and candidacy colleagues within a mentoring group
  - Education about the current candidacy, licensing and ordination process, the use of Passage, the conference's process for psychological assessment and the mentor's responsibilities in these tasks
  - Developing familiarity of the basic candidacy materials, including *The Christian as Minister, Answering the Call: Candidacy Guidebook*, and other conference resources
  - Information about any BOM or dCOM deadlines regarding the application process and interviews
- In most circumstances, the candidacy registrar and vocational discernment coordinator organize and lead mentor training. Additional leadership may include experienced mentors, dCOM/BOM members, the district superintendent or the BOM staff person for the annual conference. On occasion, GBHEM staff may be available to provide leadership.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

- Pray with and for candidates.
- Talk with candidates to establish covenant and meeting schedules.
- Study and discuss *Answering the Call: Candidacy Guidebook* with candidates.
- Establish and maintain confidentiality of mentoring relationship.
- Provide information regarding the psychological assessment process.
  - Initiate the psychological assessment process in Passage or through the conference's assessment process.
  - Proctor psychological assessments as requested by the conference.
  - Complete and return psychological assessments and accompanying forms/reports in a timely manner.

- Discuss upcoming P/S-PRC and charge conference meetings with candidates.
- Complete annual mentor reports.
- Meet with the dCOM and candidate at the certification approval meeting.
  - Share mentor report.
  - Record dCOM vote and recommendation in Passage.
- Make sure the BOM candidacy registrar is aware of any status changes for candidates.
- Maintain a Candidacy Mentor file, including all relevant paperwork and reports for candidates.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

- The candidacy registrar and vocational discernment coordinator ensure the continuing quality of the candidacy process and oversee the work of the candidacy mentors.
- Most mentors will work well with candidates. However, a few may lose interest or may not have the skills needed for the work. If this is the case, then the registrar or vocational discernment coordinator may find a replacement.
- Primary concerns are to maintain high standards of guidance and mentoring for candidates so that they will have every opportunity to explore their vocational options and to attract the best possible candidates for ministerial leadership.
- The importance of mentoring candidates in the development of future church leaders cannot be overstated. The resources that mentors and the annual conference invest in the mentoring program have the potential to effect ministerial leaders throughout their ministry.

## **GROUP CANDIDACY MENTORING**

The candidacy mentoring process formerly occurred in a one-on-one relationship between candidates and mentors. As the Study of Ministry Commission looked for ways to streamline the candidacy process, one of the recurring themes was the difficulty in identifying qualified and effective mentors to guide candidates through discernment and certification. Annual Conferences are encouraged to offer candidacy mentoring in a group setting whenever possible. The group setting provides several benefits:

- Maintains a high quality of gifted mentors
- Requires fewer mentors to serve the candidate pool
- Creates more time to focus on discernment
- Allows candidates to learn from each other
- Creates opportunities for mutual support
- Builds community amongst candidates and mentors
- Allows the candidacy requirements to be completed more smoothly and consistently (i.e.

psychological assessment, coordinating timing of dCOM and BOM interviews, ensuring that candidates don't miss yearly deadlines for certification and renewal, enrolling candidates in candidacy registry, etc.)

## **THE GOALS AND INTENT OF CANDIDACY STUDIES**

- For the candidate, the central goal is to explore and understand both the licensed and ordained ministry, as well as his/her own personal and vocational development.
- For the UMC, through the local church and dCOM, the central goal of candidacy is to examine the person's calling, grace, gifts and fruit as they point to his/her promise for effectiveness as a licensed or ordained minister and to discern how he/she might be part of the licensed or ordained ministry of the church.
- Candidacy is the opportunity to explore facets of decisions that the candidate is making about his/her future in licensed or ordained ministry. The spiritual journey that has led the person to this point is lifelong. The candidacy study will help one continue to discern where God is leading.
- Candidacy studies are organized around these areas: Grace, Gifts, and Fruit. Candidacy is built upon the

discernment of the ministry of all Christians.

- Grace is exhibited in a candidate's life as the evidence of one's call to licensed or ordained ministry and one's relationship to God.
- Gifts are the talents that one brings to licensed or ordained ministry and one's promise for ministry.
- Fruit is the evidence of the Holy Spirit working in the life of a candidate for ministry which is exemplified in personal and professional relationships.
- The heart of candidacy is in the deepening relationship with God and in the personal relationships that are established with the persons one meets in each *step of* candidacy. *One of the most important of these* relationships will be with the candidacy mentor.
- Candidacy studies revolve around three elements that will be evident in the personal relationships developed through candidacy studies. Those elements are Covenant, Spiritual Formation and A Call to Servant Leadership.
- John Wesley talked about "formation for holiness of heart and life," growing in one's love of God (heart) and love of neighbor and all creation (life). Candidacy studies are intended to assist the candidate into being formed in the likeness of Christ.
- God's call to Servant Leadership is inward as it comes to the individual and outward through the discernment and validation of the Church.
- The candidacy process focuses on fitness. Competence, readiness, and effectiveness are developed as one progresses in candidacy studies and will continue to be developed as one is engaged in the practice of ministry.
- A primary purpose of candidacy is to help both the candidate and the church assess accurately one's fitness for ministry.

## Resources

- BOM Library of Resources and Forms – [gbhem.org/bom-library](http://gbhem.org/bom-library)
  - Set of flyers on the Ministry of Deacons, Ministry of Elders, Ministry of Local Pastors and Ministry of Endorsed Clergy
- *Answering the Call: Candidacy Guidebook*. Mentors may download a Candidacy Guidebook PDF by emailing [candidacy@gbhem.org](mailto:candidacy@gbhem.org)

## **CLERGY MENTORING**

- Helps local pastors and provisional members focus on ministry practice and developing effectiveness. This is distinct and different from Candidacy Mentors, who work with candidates to discern their calling and guide them through the candidacy process.
- Provisional deacons, provisional elders and those transferring from other denominations are assigned mentors during their provisional membership period. Local pastors (both part-time and full-time) are assigned mentors while enrolled in Course of Study.
- Begins when a local pastor or provisional member receives an appointment.
- The BOM may assign local pastors and provisional members to a mentor or a mentoring group.

## **CLERGY MENTORS**

Clergy Mentors are nominated by the cabinet. The dCOM, in consultation with the district superintendent, assigns local pastors to a mentor or a mentoring group. The BOM assigns provisional members to a mentor or a group mentoring.

Mentors are not supervisors, experts, counselors or “just friends.” When done well, clergy mentoring helps establish and maintain healthy practices for growing in effectiveness throughout ministry.

## **GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND GIFTS OF GOOD MENTORS**

- Spiritual maturity
- Calling and commitment to ministry
- Vocational development
- Understand the different roles of mentoring and supervision
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Respect of colleagues

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Meets with the clergy to establish a covenant and schedules for regular and ongoing meetings
- Prays for the clergy
- Maintains negotiated confidentiality in the mentoring relationship, building it on trust
- Makes at least one onsite visit to the workplace of the provisional member or local pastor each year
- Encourages the clergy to reflect on their growth in discernment of vocation

## **RESPONSIBILITIES FOR LOCAL PASTOR MENTORS**

- Becomes familiar with Course of Study and Extension School for local pastors and the educational materials used
- Discusses Course of Study work with the local pastor and consults on matters of pastoral responsibility. Discusses specific assignments from Course of Study instructors
- Offers feedback about coursework
- Knows the resources, contact people and procedures relevant to continuation as a local pastor, including any dCOM deadlines related to the application process for continuation and interviews
- Writes annual mentor reports for the dCOM

## **RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROVISIONAL MEMBER MENTORS**

- Learns about the conference’s Residency in Ministry (RIM) program and the materials it uses
- Knows the resources, contact people and procedures relevant to the provisional process, including any BOM deadlines related to the application process and interviews
- Writes annual mentor reports to the BOM

### Training Clergy Mentors

- The BOM is responsible for training mentors. Chairs of the Orders and Fellowship, the RIM Process Coordinator or others also may participate in the training event. Additional leadership may include district superintendents or the annual conference's staff person who relates to the BOM. On occasion, GBHEM staff may be available to provide leadership.
- All mentors should be trained once every four years (even if they have previously undergone training). This allows them to learn the updated requirements for provisional membership and local pastor credentialing, and the annual conference's current mentoring and interviewing procedures.
- The BOM may also want to consider inviting both mentors and clergy entering into mentoring relationships to be trained together. Experienced mentors are valuable resources for training new mentors.
- Clergy mentoring has dual areas of responsibility that include mentoring both provisional members and local pastors; the BOM may want to consider different training for each category of mentor.
- Continuing education credits may be awarded for participation in these training events. Ten contact hours of worship or educational time is equal to one (1) CEU.
- The duration of training may vary from several hours to an overnight retreat, but training should include certain information.
  - Information on reporting, confidentiality and role clarity
  - Differences among supervision, evaluation and mentoring, and the role each of these has in clergy development and assessment
  - Information about current licensing and ordination processes, the ongoing approval and interview process for local pastors and provisional members and the mentor's responsibilities in these tasks

### ESTABLISHING ACCOUNTABILITY

- The BOM is responsible for the continuing quality of the clergy mentoring process and overseeing mentors' work.
- If any mentors lose interest or appear not to have the skills needed for the work, the BOM should find replacements.
- It is important to maintain a high standard of guidance and mentoring for new clergy so that they will have every opportunity to develop in effectiveness in ministry. The relationships built among clergy and mentors have the potential for positive impact throughout a clergy person's ministry. Those who serve as mentors provide a great gift and serve in a much-needed area of ministry on behalf of the annual conference.

### RESOURCES

- *Clergy Mentoring: A Manual for Commissioned Ministers, Local Pastors, and Clergy Mentors*, GBHEM.
- "From Readiness to Effectiveness: The Residency Program for Provisional, Commissioned Members of The United Methodist Church – Principles and Guides for annual conferences," GBHEM.
- "From Readiness to Effectiveness: Preparation for Professional Ministry in The United Methodist Church – Tool Kit for annual conference Leaders," GBHEM.