



## ***How Pastoral Appointments are made in the Arkansas Annual Conference 2020-2021***

Our Purpose as United Methodists in Arkansas: The Arkansas Annual Conference is passionately pursuing our trajectory of creating vital congregations that make disciples of Jesus Christ, who make disciples equipped and sent to transform lives, communities, and the world. This is our purpose, the “why” behind everything we do and firmly rooted in Jesus’ words:

*18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:16-20 NRSV)*

We embrace this trajectory because we know the difference Jesus makes in our lives as Savior and Lord, and we long for others to experience this same love they so desperately need, but can never get on their own.

### ***Why We Appoint Pastors***

Pastors are appointed to lead congregations so they become more vital in living into our trajectory. While vitality looks different in different contexts, all vital congregations generally do three things consistently:

- Grow members into disciples of Jesus Christ;
- Send out disciples who make more disciples; and
- Equip all disciples to transform lives, communities and the world.

Pastors have a dual focus of leading congregations to serve “those of us already in here” and reaching out to “those who are not yet in here.” This means pastors are appointed both to congregations and to their mission fields.

United Methodist pastors are not called by congregations, but appointed to congregations by the bishop in order to strategically use their unique gifts, experiences and passion. This is such an essential part of the Wesleyan DNA that United Methodist clergy enter into a sacred covenant to go where the bishop sends them.

**CREATING VITAL CONGREGATIONS THAT MAKE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST,  
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## ***The Process for Making Pastoral Appointments***

The cabinet uses a process shaped by transparency, collegiality, prayer and information about the congregation, mission field and pastor.

Making pastoral appointments is a year-round process that involves the Assessment, Appointment Consultation Forms filled out by pastors and Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committees, Vital Signs, year-end statistical reports, Pastoral Profiles, Church Profiles and consultation with pastors and congregations.

Because the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as well as the United Methodist Church, mandates “open itinerancy,” the bishop and cabinet will ensure that clergywomen, clergy couples and ethnic clergy are appropriately considered for every appointment.

While we always consider the personal situations of pastors, the bishop will appoint pastors to those congregations and mission fields where they can best utilize their gifts and graces to help congregations thrive.

- We will not allow compensation, personal preference and tenure to be the primary drivers in making pastoral appointments.
- We will pursue longer tenures for pastors whenever possible in order to help lead congregations to increased vitality and fruitfulness.
- We will appoint pastors who have demonstrated excellence or have a promise of fruitfulness to those congregations most willing to courageously engage the mission field.

## ***What You Can Expect When You Have a Change of Pastors***

Once it has been determined that a pastoral change will occur in a congregation, the district superintendent will collaborate with the Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committee to develop a profile of your congregation, mission field and pastoral leadership needs to guide the cabinet in its work.

The district superintendent will consult with a pastor prior to the bishop finalizing an appointment to confirm that the individual will be able to lead that congregation in increasing its ability to make disciples of Jesus Christ, who make disciples equipped to transform lives, communities and the world.

An “appointment letter” will be shared with the pastor and Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committee following the introduction of the pastor that outlines the rationale for the appointment and the expectations for achieving vitality in that congregation and mission field.

The bishop will only appoint local pastors or assign lay supply pastors after they have successfully completed all appropriate requirements.

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# UNITED METHODISTS OF *Arkansas*

## ***Important Information in The 2016 United Methodist Church Book of Discipline***

¶¶425-430 of The 2016 Book of Discipline outlines the key components that are part of the consultation and appointment process:

- “The bishop and cabinet shall consider all requests for change of appointment in light of the profile developed for each charge and the gifts and evidence of God’s grace, professional experience, and family needs of the pastor.” ¶428.2
- “When a change in appointment has been determined, the district superintendent should meet together or separately with the pastor and the committee on pastor-parish relations where the pastor is serving, for the purpose of sharing the basis for the change and the process used in making the new appointment.” ¶428.3
- “The district superintendent shall confer with the pastor about a specific possible appointment (charge) and its congruence with gifts, evidence of God’s grace, professional experience and expectations, and the family needs of a pastor, identified in consultation with the pastor.” ¶428.5a (see also ¶ 427.2)
- “The district superintendent shall confer with the receiving committee on pastor-parish relations about pastoral leadership,” ¶428.6 (see also ¶427.1)
- “If during this consultation process it is determined by the bishop and cabinet that this decision should not be carried out, the process is to be repeated until the bishop, basing his or her decision on the information and advice derived from consultation, makes and fixes the appointment.” ¶428.8
- “When the steps in the process have been followed and completed, the announcement of that decision shall be made to all parties directly involved in the consultative process before a public announcement is made.” ¶428.10

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### *Wesleyan Covenant Prayer, Modern Version*

**I am no longer my own, but yours.  
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;  
put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,  
exalted for you, or brought low for you; let me be full, let me be empty,  
let me have all things, let me have nothing:  
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.  
And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours.  
So be it. And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.**

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