

BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY
2025 ARKANSAS CONFERENCE POLICY STATEMENT
3/15/2025

SECTION I: BOARD OPERATION

- A. The Arkansas Conference Board of Ordained Ministry hereafter referred to as the Board or the BOM, is governed by the current Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 635.
- B. All communication to the BOM should be sent to BOM Office, 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202 or bom@arumc.org
- C. The Board will be organized in three classes with the assumption each person will serve 1 quadrennium but no more than 3 consecutive terms.
- D. Board officers are Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Executive Registrar. The Executive Committee consists of the Board Officers and Chair of the Order of Elders, Chair of the Order of Deacons, Chair of the Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors, Chair of the Conference Relations Committee, Chair of Ministerial Assessment, Chair of Vocation and Discernment, and a Cabinet representative. The Chairperson shall appoint other officers and sub-committees as needed.
- E. The Board shall meet at least once in the fall and twice in the spring, and as convened by the Chairperson.
- F. The district committees on ordained ministry (dCOM) are amenable to the annual conference through the BOM and follow 666. District administrative staff may serve as administrators of the dCOM and may attend meetings of the dCOM in an administrative capacity. The files of the dCOM shall be stored in the district office, separate from the supervisory files. District administrative staff, as custodians of records, shall not serve as members of dCOM or BOM.
- G. The Board has the right to ask for a new Ministerial Assessment package at any time and shall ask for a new assessment if more than six years has passed and the candidate continues.
- H. The BOM shall have guidelines for plagiarism and the use of artificial intelligence in BOM/dCOM assignments
- I. The Board shall review its policy statement annually, revising it as needed and presenting it to the Annual Conference for approval.

SECTION II: CANDIDACY, 310

- A. The Inquiring Candidate first contacts the pastor of the local church or other authorized ministry setting, to share the ministry call.
- B. Candidates shall utilize the Candidacy Checklist which outlines the complete candidacy process found at <https://arumc.org/our-resources/forms-and-documents/>
- C. Candidates must attend Orientation to Ministry 312
- D. Candidates are encouraged to pursue undergraduate education and to pursue seminary education in one of the United Methodist seminaries.

SECTION III. THE DECLARED CANDIDATE, 310.2

- A. When approved by the Charge conference, the candidate shall send \$50 for the Ministerial assessment packet to the District Superintendent's Office or pay online.
- B. If the dCOM approves by three-fourths majority written ballot, the dCOM registrar submits Form AR020 to the Board of Ordained Ministry Office and a copy to the candidate.
- C. Persons appointed as local pastors are clergy members of the Annual Conference (§ 315). They are no longer listed in the Business of the Annual Conference as certified candidates (§ 602.1), except the first year they are certified. See further the Local Pastor 315-320 and below.

SECTION IV: THE LOCAL PASTOR 315-320

- A. Upon completion of the candidacy process, and receiving dCOM approval as a certified candidate, the District Superintendent shall recommend the candidate for Local Pastor License School. Candidates shall register, attend, and successfully complete Local Pastor Licensing School or one-third of their work for a Master of Divinity degree at a University Senate-approved theological school in order to be eligible for an appointment (¶315.2a).
- B. Once appointed, the Bishop shall issue a license. The local pastor shall register the license at the county courthouse where appointed for the purpose of performing marriage ceremonies in the State of Arkansas, and the pastor shall submit the county book and page number to the district office.
- C. Local Pastors not attending a University Senate-approved seminary shall enroll in the Basic Five-Year Course of Study (COS) and successfully complete per 319. Course of Study may be completed 100% online.
- D. A Local Pastor who has made satisfactory progress in the Course of Study may be recognized as a retired Local Pastor. 320.5.b
- E. Appointed Retired Local Pastors shall follow all the guidelines of a non-retired appointed Local Pastor, such as continuing COS, meeting annually with the dCOM, completing UM History, Polity and Doctrine, and be assigned a mentor as per ¶320.
- F. Course of Study registrations shall be approved and signed by the Conference Local Pastor Registrar and must be postmarked no less than 14 days prior to the registration deadline printed on the registration form.
- G. The local pastor may enroll as a student in a University Senate-approved seminary program to meet educational requirements. The local pastor will be expected to complete their seminary education within the timeframes defined in 318. When enrolled in seminary, the local pastor is eligible to apply for financial aid from MEF funds. See Financial Aid Section.
- H. All Local Pastors who have not completed their educational requirements will be assigned to a mentoring group led by clergy mentors selected by the BOM. Groups are not organized by district but by affinity cohorts. First-year local pastors who have completed LPLS and are appointed shall meet as a cohort. These clergy mentors will submit annual reports (AR080) for those local pastors who have not completed COS.
- I. Local Pastor Mentoring group work and the dCOM interview is based on the 4-Year Local Pastor and OF Interview program, which cycles each year through a focus on Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service.
- J. Local pastors shall meet annually with the dCOM to evaluate educational progress and ministerial performance, and action is taken on renewal of the License for Pastoral Ministry. The local pastor shall submit annually a school transcript (from college, seminary, or COS), filed with the dCOM Registrar prior to the local pastor's annual dCOM interview.
- K. Upon completing the Five-Year Basic Course of Study, and completing courses in UM History, Polity and Doctrine, the local pastor may be eligible to apply for Associate Membership. See ¶322.
- L. United Methodist History, Polity and Doctrine may be taken at any time during the educational process, but must be completed within 2 years of COS completion. Courses must be taken at an Advanced Course of Study School, University Senate-approved seminary, or online at GBHEM. Taking UM Doctrine, Polity and History, through a University Senate-approved seminary or GBHEM-approved program can be applied as credit for COS 224 and 422

- M. Local pastors shall have completed courses in UM History, Polity and Doctrine within two years of COS completion. Local pastors not continuing to Advanced COS or seminary shall submit a plan for continuing education to the District Superintendent and dCOM annually.
- N. Local Pastor Transfers from Another Conference to Arkansas Conference: Local Pastors in good standing do not transfer from Conference to Conference but surrender the license in their Conference and apply to the Arkansas Conference to have their candidacy status or studies accepted by a dCOM in the Arkansas Conference (§ 312.4). Prior to interviewing with the dCOM for licensing, the minister shall complete the Arkansas Cabinet Vetting Process and requirements for dCOM interview. The Local Pastor shall continue Course of Study per § 318 and shall have completed UM History, Polity and Doctrine within two years of COS completion.
- O. Only Local Pastors who have completed COS or made progress in completing COS shall be designated Retired Local Pastors. § 320.5

SECTION V: ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP, § 321-322

- A. Applicants shall meet the requirements outlined in § 322.
- B. The applicant for associate membership shall consult the District Superintendent, complete and submit, Form AR105, Application for Clergy Relationship to the Annual Conference <https://arumc.wufoo.com/forms/r13729he00iy22q/> to the District Superintendent and the BOM Office by July 15.
- C. The dCOM shall interview the applicant as a candidate for associate membership, considering educational and documentary requirements, pastoral experience and effectiveness, and form a recommendation to the Conference Board. The dCOM shall send to the BOM Office by November 1, the applicant's Form AR105, the District Superintendent's letter of recommendation, and the Action Report. These documents are also filed with the District Registrar.
- D. The Conference Registrar shall inform the applicant by December 1 about the written assignments to be prepared in advance of the BOM interview, the deadline for those assignments, and the date and time for appearing before the BOM (normally a BOM Meeting in late February or early March).
- E. The BOM shall interview the applicant. If favorably approved, the recommendation is presented to the Clergy Session of the annual conference.
- F. Associate members desiring to change relationship to an ordination track as a provisional elder or deacon must first obtain approval from the BOM before taking other steps in the application process.

SECTION VI: PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP § 324

- A. Applicants must complete all educational requirements prior to election to provisional membership.
- B. All seminary courses required by the Discipline and conference rules require a "C" or better grade.
- C. Candidates who begin their seminary studies after July 1, 2025 are required to complete a course in preaching as part of their theological education (§ 324.4).
- D. ~~Beginning January 2011, no one entering a seminary degree program seeking ordination shall enroll in online courses except for hybrid programs offered by the 13 United Methodist seminaries and Asbury Theological Seminary. No more than 2/3 of the degree requirements may be completed through distance learning for all UM seminaries and Asbury.~~
- E. Associate members and local pastors using the advanced course of study alternate pathway may apply for provisional membership as elders (§ 324.4.A.2).

- F. Applications for provisional membership require the completion of Form 105, Application for Clergy Relationship, and the preliminary answers to Questions ¶324.7a-p by the candidate sent to the dCOM registrar by July 15.
- G. Following an interview with the dCOM, their recommendation, reported on Form AR020, District Committee Action Report Form, is sent to the BOM Office. The original Action Report and the District Superintendent's letter of recommendation are placed in the candidate's file. The completed dCOM file is delivered by the District office to the BOM Office by November 1.
- H. The Conference Registrar corresponds with the candidate by December 1, regarding required written work, reference letters and assignments to be prepared and submitted by January 31 to the BOM Office.
- I. The BOM interviews the candidate. Out-of-state seminary students may receive up to 50% of actual cost of transportation when attending Board interviews. If approved, the BOM recommendation for provisional membership is presented to the Clergy Session of the Annual Conference.
- J. Provisional members shall demonstrate effective ministry for a minimum of two consecutive conference years in the same appointment. All provisional residents shall participate in the conference Residency in Ministry (RIM) program. Their service will be evaluated by the BOM and the DS. Arrangements for supervision and residency will be made for provisional members serving outside the Arkansas conference. During the second year of the RIM program, the provisional member may apply for ordination and membership in full connection.
- K. To make an application for Full Connection, the Provisional member shall complete and submit Form AR105, Application for Clergy Relationship, <https://arumc.wufoo.com/forms/r13729he00iy22q/> to the BOM Office by October 1. The Cabinet shall provide a recommendation letter concerning a provisional member's application for Full Connection to the BOM Office by November 1.

SECTION VII: APPOINTMENTS FROM OUTSIDE THE ARKANSAS CONFERENCE AND TRANSFERS
346-347

- A. ~~All ministers requesting Conference to Conference transfer (¶ 347.1) shall complete the Arkansas Conference Cabinet Vetting Process. Ordained clergy, associate members, or provisional members from other annual conferences of the UMC, or other Methodist denominations, seeking to serve in the ARUMC while retaining their home conference membership should contact a district superintendent, complete the Arkansas Conference Cabinet Vetting Process, and obtain the consent of the bishops involved (¶346.1.) If the ordained clergy, associate members, or provisional members from other annual conferences of the UMC, or other Methodist denominations, seek to transfer their clergy membership into the ARUMC, they shall first serve under appointment in the Arkansas Conference for a minimum of two years before applying for a transfer of conference membership into the ARUMC. A recommendation by the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry and approval by the clergy session shall take place prior to the transfer of the member to the ARUMC (¶347.1)~~
- B. All ministers requesting to serve while retaining other faith credentials (¶346.2 and 347.3) or requesting to serve a UM church and start the process of transferring as a UM pastor (¶347.3.b and ¶347.2) shall complete the Arkansas Conference Cabinet Vetting Process and the dCOM interview requirements.
- C. All ministers approved with other faith credentials shall complete the Arkansas Licensing School before being appointed. Exceptions may be granted for other Methodist denominations with a written request to the Executive BOM from the DS.

- D. Those appointed while retaining other faith credentials are required to complete/continue the Basic Course of Study unless they have already completed an MDiv from an accredited Theological Seminary with coursework equivalent to COS. Following a BOM assessment of their academic record, UMC educational requirements may be deemed fulfilled in part or in whole.
- E. Those appointed while retaining other faith credentials are required to take UM History, Polity and Doctrine through ACOS or a University Senate-approved seminary within 2 years of the conference year of appointment unless those classes were completed through their MDiv from an University Senate-approved Theological Seminary.
- F. Those appointed while retaining other faith credentials are required to meet annually with the dCOM to evaluate educational progress and ministerial performance.
- G. Those appointed while retaining other faith credentials are required to supply a letter of current good standing in their denomination by January 31 of each year.
- H. Ministers seeking transfer into United Methodist ministry from another denomination must retain a status of good standing in their home denomination until the transfer is complete and, therefore, shall not join a local United Methodist church (¶1347.2). Ordained clergy seeking admission or restoration into the ARUMC on credentials from another denomination who have previously withdrawn from UMC conference membership shall follow the process in ¶1347.4-5.
- I. Ordained or licensed clergy from other non-Methodist denominations whose credentials have been approved shall serve under appointment for a minimum of two years before applying for transfer into provisional membership, if eligible. (¶1347.3b)
- J. Those appointed who still retain credentials with other Christian denominations shall declare to the dCOM their intentions to transfer credentials to the United Methodist Church within two years of appointment. Failure to start the transfer process after 2 years could result in not being reappointed. This does not apply to those who hold credentials in the ELCA, African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the African Union Methodist Protestant Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and the Union American Methodist Episcopal Church, with which the UMC shares full communion rights.
- K. Ordained clergy from other Christian denominations shall apply to the dCOM using SECTION VI: PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP ¶1324, shall serve as provisional members for at least two years, participating in the Residency in Ministry program, and complete all the requirements of ¶1335, including United Methodist history, doctrine, and polity, along with the other BOD-required courses, before being admitted into full conference membership.

SECTION VIII: FINANCIAL AID

- A. Local Pastor Licensing School: The cost to Arkansas students attending the Arkansas Local Pastor License School (LPLS) is \$750 ~~currently \$350~~. Some funds may be available for students attending other schools outside of our conference boundaries. Approval for these funds must come from the Dean of the Arkansas Conference Local Pastor License School prior to class participation.
- B. Course of Study: Financial Assistance, based on need and the availability of funds, will be 50% of tuition, normal fees, room and board for full- or part-time students in the basic Course of Study; 100% reimbursement of tuition for courses taken in the Arkansas Extension Course of Study School available for part-time local pastors and 50% reimbursement of tuition for those who successfully complete correspondence courses (not to exceed 4 courses). The Board does not pay for repeated courses.
- C. Seminary Financial Aid: All certified candidates attending University Senate-approved seminaries are eligible for MEF funds. Loans will not exceed 50% of tuition per semester unless there is a surplus in the budget year. The seminarian registrar shall have the discretion to

disburse any surplus funds at an equal percentage for all semester applicants not to exceed loan limits. Students attending United Methodist seminaries can receive a maximum of \$10,000 per budget year in loans. Students at other University Senate-approved seminaries can receive a maximum of \$7,000 per budget year in loans.

- D. Students will not receive funds to repeat a failed, dropped, or incomplete course.
- E. Applicants will sign a promissory note. Loans will be forgiven for service at the rate of one year of full-time service for two semesters of aid. In other words, a student who borrows from the fund for six semesters would complete the service obligation by three years of full-time service under Episcopal appointment. Loans to candidates discontinued by dCOM-initiated action shall be forgiven.
- F. The application is at <https://arumc.wufoo.com/forms/x13mnp6818kiscx/>
- G. Applications and all supporting documentation must be received by August 10 for the fall semester, January 10 for the spring/winter (including January term) semester and June 10 for the summer semester. Applications are not complete without an official transcript from the student's seminary. Incomplete applications will not be processed. The Secretary of the BOM will process all applications.
- H. Reimbursement for UM History, Polity, and Doctrine courses will be paid at 50% of the tuition cost in the year the course was taken.
- I. Persons who have completed the basic course of study may wish to become provisional members by the alternate route (see ¶324.4.A.2 or ¶324.4.B.3). They must complete the BOD-specified basic graduate theological studies (¶324.4). Up to 50% of tuition will be provided per seminary financial aid.
- J. Deacon candidates on the professional certification route toward ordination (see ¶324.4.B) will also receive up to 50% of tuition per seminary financial aid.

SECTION IX: CONTINUING EDUCATION ¶351

- A. All clergy under full-time appointment must complete at least one (1) continuing education unit (ten hours of instruction) per year. These CEU's may be fulfilled by CEUs, CMEs, CCEs, or other approved programs. Persons in resident provisional status or those enrolled in Course of Study are exempt from this requirement.
- B. Clergy shall annually report CEUs to their District Superintendent and to the BOM through the BOM Office.
- C. All clergy under full-time appointment with charge conference compensation, on the Pastor's Compensation form, of less than \$58,920 may receive reimbursement from the BOM of up to \$200 annually as funds are available. This amount shall include only projected expenses for tuition, books, fees, room, and board. Travel cannot be included as a projected expense.
- D. Financial aid is not available for Minister's Week at any seminary.
- E. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry Guidelines for granting Continuing Education Units (CEUs) from The Society for the Advancement of Continuing Education for Ministry (SACEM) shall be used by groups seeking to have events certified by the Conference Continuing Education Chairperson. (See GBHEM's website, <https://www.gbhem.org/clergy/clergy-lifelong-learning/guidelines-for-continuing-education/>)
- F. Professional Certification Studies: Applications may be made for up to \$200/year as funds are available to help pay for specialized certification courses. This amount shall include only projected expenses for tuition, books, fees, room, and board. Travel cannot be included as a projected expense.

- G. Applications for granting continuing education credit for an event or reimbursement for continuing education shall be sent to the Chair of Continuing Education, BOM Office.
- H. Sabbatical Leave: All Issues concerning Sabbatical leave will follow the guidelines of ¶ 351, with the addition of those requesting Sabbatical will include their plan with start and end dates.

SECTION X: CHANGES OF CONFERENCE RELATIONSHIP 353-362

- A. The Conference Relations Committee (CRC) shall consist of at least 3 persons to hear requests as listed in ¶634.2(l).
- B. Voluntary Leave (Personal/Family) Requests follow ¶1354. Request for change of relationship to Voluntary Leave of Absence must be made at least ninety (90) days prior to Annual Conference by completing Form AR030 documenting specific reasons for the request. A copy of the Form shall be placed in the person's file.
- C. Maternity/Paternity leave requests follow ¶1356.
- D. All clergy on Leave of Absence for a total of five or more years are required to meet with the CRC annually to review the circumstances that require remaining on Leave of Absence.
- E. While on Voluntary Leave of Absence - Personal/Family, the person shall report annually her/his progress toward resolution/alleviation of the stated reasons for requesting Leave of Absence-Personal/Family. When an end to Leave of Absence- Personal/Family is requested, it shall be by written request at least six (6) months prior to Annual Conference. The CRC shall review the circumstances surrounding the granting of Leave of Absence – Personal/Family for the purpose of determining whether those circumstances have been alleviated or resolved.
- F. Request for change of relationship to Medical Leave (¶1357)
 - 1. The Conference Benefits Officer will provide the person requesting a change in Conference relationship to Medical Leave with the appropriate application packet.
 - 2. The Conference Benefits Officer will notify the Joint Committee on Clergy Medical Leave for a reasonable and appropriate investigation and recommendation to the Cabinet, the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits and the BOM.
- G. Withdrawal (~~360-2 ¶1361~~)

~~All ordained persons withdrawing from annual conference relationship shall meet with the CRC. The CRC shall report to the BOM for a recommendation to the Clergy Executive Session at its next meeting.~~

~~The BOM Secretary shall record in the BOM minutes the report of the CRC and the recommendation of the BOM. A copy of the written report, recommendation and documentation of the person's reasons for withdrawal shall be placed in the person's file. Additional statements shall be recorded from the Cabinet and the person who has withdrawn/exited.~~

 - 1) Withdrawal to unite with another denomination follows ¶1361.1 and ¶1361.4 .
 - 2) Withdrawal from the ordained ministerial office or associate membership follows ¶1361.2 and ¶1361.4 .
 - 3) Withdrawal Under Complaints or Charges follows ¶1361.3 and ¶1361.4.
- H. Readmission to Conference Relationship (¶ 365, 366, 367, 368, 369)
 - 1) All requests for readmission to Conference Membership with the Arkansas Annual Conference shall be made in writing and presented to the BOM at least one hundred twenty (120) days prior to the beginning of the session of the Annual Conference unless stated otherwise by the Book of Discipline.
 - 2) The BOM shall review all files and statements kept by the BOM Office and Registrars.

- 3) All persons requesting readmission to Conference Membership are required to complete the "Ministry Assessment Packet" in Section III A. The full cost of the MAS shall be borne by the person seeking readmission.
- 4) All persons requesting readmission to Conference Membership are required to meet the requirements as outlined in the Book of Discipline appropriate to the reason for the person's original withdrawal, location, leaving or discontinuance.
- 5) Associate Members or clergy members in full connection requesting readmission to Conference Membership (§ 366-368) shall serve under appointment as a Local Pastor – demonstrating effective ministry for a minimum of two consecutive Conference years in the same appointment.
- 6) Former Deacons requesting readmission to Conference Membership shall serve under appointment in an appropriate ministry setting - demonstrating effective ministry for a minimum of two consecutive Conference years in the same appointment.
- 7) During the second year of demonstrating effective ministry in the same appointment, if the applicant has met all Disciplinary and Conference requirements, the former Conference member may apply for Conference Membership and/or credentials previously held.

SECTION XI: CLERGY COVENANT FUND

- A. The Clergy Covenant Fund provides financial assistance to clergy persons and their families. Financial assistance of \$2500 is available to the deceased clergy's family. Up to \$1250 is available to clergy family for financial needs which arise from personal or family crises. The District Superintendent shall make a request for these funds to the Chair of the BOM; the BOM Executive Committee shall consider all requests for approval.
- B. Funds will be provided by means of an offering received during the Clergy Session of the Annual Conference. Clergy will also be given an opportunity each November to make a special Thanksgiving contribution to the Fund. Memorials and special gifts may be made to the Fund at any time. Gifts may be sent any time to: United Methodist Foundation for Arkansas, Clergy Covenant Fund, and 601 Wellington Village Rd, Little Rock, AR 72211.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mark Norman, Chair
Nancy Meredith, Secretary