

6. Deacons considering a call to ordination as an elder, or in whom the gifts and graces for the ministry of elder are recognized by a bishop or presiding elder (district superintendent), may be appointed to the office of pastor in a local church. If such an appointment is more than a temporary assignment, a deacon who accepts such an appointment must declare candidacy for ordination as an elder and begin the process toward such ordination following the completion of all educational requirements as a deacon.

¶ 410. ORDINATION AS ELDER. 1. Deacons who desire to be ordained as an elder shall declare their candidacy for such ordination to the annual conference board of ministry or equivalent. They shall be eligible for ordination as elder once they:

- a. Prove themselves faithful, mature, and effective over a period of a minimum of two years' service as a deacon;
- b. Complete the educational requirements for ordination as an elder specified in ¶ 407.4a.
- c. Pass an advanced level examination in doctrine, history, discipline and Bible;
- d. Be interviewed and recommended by a two-thirds vote of the annual conference board of ministry or equivalent for ordination as an elder. In evaluating candidates who attend an educational institution not on the Global Methodist Church's recommended list, the annual conference board of ministry will evaluate whether the candidate's courses and preparation meets the standards of the Global Methodist Church. The annual conference board of ministry shall evaluate whether the candidate evidences a sufficient foundation in and commitment to the doctrine, ethical principles, and discipline of the Global Methodist Church; and
- e. Be approved by two-thirds vote by the elders of the annual conference in executive session and be approved by the bishop.

2. The additional educational requirements specified in ¶ 407.4b must be completed within seven (7) years of ordination as elder. Persons who do not complete such requirements in a timely manner shall be ineligible thereafter to serve in the office of pastor of a local church but may continue to serve in other capacities as a deacon.

3. Elders are clergy members in full connection of the annual conference with full voice and vote on all matters. An elder not serving under appointment shall be classified as inactive and shall not have voting rights in the annual conference, except as provided for in ¶ 418. Elders may be appointed by the bishop as a presiding elder (district superintendent), to local ministry as pastor in charge, to the staff of a local church, as a chaplain, as an evangelist, or to other ministry settings. Elders are eligible to be elected to the office of bishop.

¶ 411. MINISTERIAL TRAINING FUND. A fund shall be maintained for ministerial education by the Transitional Leadership Council. Once certified, a candidate may request a loan to assist with educational requirements. A service commitment of five years duration after ordination is required of any clergy who receives such assistance, with twenty percent of the loan amount forgiven for each year of ministry within the Global Methodist Church.

¶ 412. SUPPLY PASTOR. Upon recommendation of the board of ministry and affirmation by the clergy session of the annual conference, a bishop may appoint a person to serve as a supply pastor under the immediate supervision of an elder who can provide mentoring to the supply pastor and preside at the sacramental ministry of the congregation. Supply pastors are clergy members of the annual conference with full voice, but not vote, on all matters. Supply pastors not serving under appointment shall be classified as inactive and shall not have voice in the annual conference. A supply pastor must be a candidate for ordained ministry and must be ordained as deacon within three years of being appointed to serve as a supply pastor. Persons serving as pastors in a

predecessor denomination who do not yet qualify for ordination as deacon shall have three years from the time of their transfer into the Global Methodist Church to be ordained while continuing to serve as a supply pastor.

¶ 413. CHAPLAINCY AND OTHER ENDORSEMENTS. The Transitional Leadership Council shall appoint a provisional ecclesiastical endorsing board that shall report to the TLC to fulfill the following ministry objectives and requirements: (1) evaluate applications and recommend persons to specialized ministries that require a denominational endorsement, (2) provide professional and pastoral support and accountability by those appointed to serve in chaplaincy/institutional ministry settings, (3) interpret and advocate for those serving such appointments to bishops, annual conferences and local congregations, (4) work to identify quality continuing education opportunities for those appointed to endorsed ministries, and (5) liaison with other faith groups, chaplaincy organizations, colleges, theological seminaries and conferences to share the vision and opportunities for boundary ministries in institutional and secular settings. In its discretion, the Transitional Leadership Council may select a Director of Endorsing Ministries to oversee ongoing completion of the objectives listed above. The Director shall work with the Transitional Leadership Council to establish necessary funding, implementing policies, and logistical support. The Director shall be ultimately accountable to the Transitional Leadership Council and shall work in close collaboration with the ecclesiastical endorsing board on all matters relevant to the effective discharge of responsibilities.

¶ 414. EVANGELISTS. The Transitional Leadership Council shall appoint a provisional endorsing board to encourage the work of evangelists in the Global Methodist Church that shall report to the TLC to fulfill the following ministry objectives and requirements: (1) evaluate applications and recommend persons to the ministry and office of evangelist, (2) provide professional and pastoral support and accountability by those appointed to serve in evangelistic ministry settings, (3) interpret and advocate for those serving such appointments to bishops, annual conferences, and local congregations, (4) work to identify quality continuing education opportunities for those appointed as evangelists, and (5) liaison with other faith groups, evangelistic organizations, colleges, theological seminaries and conferences to share the vision and opportunities for evangelists.

¶ 415. TRANSFER OF CLERGY CREDENTIALS. Clergy applying to transfer to the Global Methodist Church from another Christian denomination (except for those specified in ¶ 419) must provide the following: (1) A formal resume with references, (2) Proof of ordination, (3) Official transcripts of all post high school education, and (4) a copy of all personnel files maintained by his or her former denomination to be sent to the board of ministry at the written request of the clergy person. The applicant must also: (1) Submit to a background and credit check, and psychological examination, (2) Interview with a presiding elder (district superintendent), (3) pass denominational exams on doctrine, history, polity, and Bible for their level of ordination, and (4) Interview with the annual conference board of ministry or equivalent. Upon the completion of these requirements, transfers must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the annual conference board of ministry, a two-thirds vote of the clergy session of the annual conference to which the applicant is seeking admittance, and by, the receiving bishop.

¶ 416. APPOINTMENT OF CLERGY FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS.

1. Upon recommendation of the board of ministry and affirmation by the clergy session of the annual conference, a bishop may appoint clergy in good standing in other Christian denominations to serve appointments or ecumenical ministries while retaining their denominational

affiliation. Their appointment shall be as a **Valid Deacon** or **Valid Elder**. Clergypersons retaining their affiliation with other denominations while receiving appointment in the Global Methodist Church shall meet the following criteria:

- a. Complete an application prepared by the Board of Ordained Ministry, including the following:
 - i) Testimony to their Christian faith and call to ministry.
 - ii) Permission and Release of any required psychological tests, a criminal background and credit check, reports of sexual misconduct or child abuse.
 - iii) Either a notarized statement certifying that the candidate has not been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor or accused in writing of sexual misconduct or child abuse, OR a notarized statement detailing any convictions for felony or misdemeanor or written accusations of sexual misconduct or child abuse.
- b. A statement agreeing to teach, support and maintain Global Methodist Church doctrine.
- c. Give evidence through an interview with the board of ministry that they have read the *Transitional Book of Doctrine and Discipline* and will support and maintain Global Methodist Church discipline and polity.
- d. Present suitable credentials as an ordained clergyperson from another Christian denomination,
- e. Present evidence of completion of education equivalent to that required for deacons in the Global Methodist Church. Clergypersons holding ordination from another denomination or congregation, but not meeting the required educational standards of the Global Methodist Church may be appointed provisionally, with full educational requirements for deacon to be completed within three years of the start of the appointment. Progress toward completion of educational requirements shall be shown annually.

2. Clergy affirmed as Valid Deacons or Valid Elders may be accorded the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the following: a) constitutional amendments; b) election of delegates to General, regional, or annual conferences; and c) all matters of ordination character, and conference relations of ministers. Valid Deacons and Valid Elders may serve on any board, commission or committee of the annual conference, except the board of ministry and the board of trustees. Valid Deacons and Valid Elders may not be elected as delegates to General, regional or annual conferences.

3. Between conference sessions, the board of ministry may approve such persons for appointment pending their approval at the next regular clergy session of the annual conference. The bishop may make *ad interim* appointments of such persons once approved by the board of ministry. In every case, prior examination and on-going review shall be made of such person's understanding, acceptance, and willingness to support and maintain the doctrine, discipline, and polity of the Global Methodist Church.

¶ **417. LEAVES OF ABSENCE.** A change in conference status may be affected by the following:

1. *Voluntary Leave Process.* Clergy may request in writing a voluntary temporary leave of absence of up to one year from their ministerial duties due to medical needs, family circumstances, or other personal issues. Transitional leaves may similarly be granted for clergy in good standing who are temporarily between appointments. Such a change in conference status may be granted or terminated by majority vote of the clergy members of the annual conference upon recommendation by two-thirds of the annual conference board of ministry. Between sessions of annual conference, a voluntary leave of absence may be granted or terminated by a two-thirds vote of the board of ministry, with the recommendation of the bishop and a two-thirds majority of the presiding elders (district superintendents). Renewal of voluntary leave may be made annually by the majority vote of

the clergy session, for a period of up to five years. After that time, the clergy person must choose either honorable location status (§ 417.7) or senior status (§ 418), with the approval of a majority of the clergy session. Either status discontinues the person's eligibility for appointment and does not require annual renewal of status.

2. *Voluntary Leave Conditions.* Clergypersons on voluntary leave shall have no claim on conference funds but may be eligible to continue in conference health programs through their own contributions. They may serve on annual conference commissions, committees, or boards, as well as vote for clergy delegates to General or Regional Conferences. Persons on voluntary leave of six months or longer are considered inactive and, except for election of clergy delegates, do not have vote at the annual conference. However, they do remain members of the annual conference with voice. They may continue to engage in part-time, unpaid ministry as a volunteer. Those on voluntary leave shall continue to be amenable to the annual conference for their conduct and the performance of ministry.

3. *Sabbatical Leave.* Clergy who have been serving in a full-time appointment for six consecutive years may be granted sabbatical leave for a program of study, travel, or renewal. Sabbatical leaves of three months or less may be granted by the pastor-parish relations committee, with the approval of the presiding elder (district superintendent). A longer sabbatical leave of up to one year must be approved by the conference board of ministry. Compensation for the clergy during a sabbatical of three months or less shall be continued by the local church. Longer sabbaticals shall be the responsibility of the individuals involved, though the support of congregations and others is encouraged.

4. *Involuntary Leave Process.* Involuntary leaves may be requested by the bishop, two-thirds of the presiding elders (district superintendents), and a two-thirds vote of the annual conference board of ministry. The board shall also determine what if any disciplinary action or other conditions are required (e.g., therapy, remedial education, etc.). Placing a person on involuntary leave shall require a two-thirds vote of the clergy members meeting in executive session. The fair process for administrative hearings shall be followed in any involuntary leave procedure (§ 814). When an end to the involuntary leave of absence is initiated by the bishop and a two-thirds majority of the presiding elders (district superintendents), the annual conference board of ministry shall review the circumstances surrounding the granting of the status to determine if the conditions of the leave have been met. If the board determines that such is not the case, it may continue involuntary leave of absence. Involuntary leave may continue for up to five years from when it was first granted, at which time the board must pursue administrative location (§ 417.7). Termination of involuntary leave shall require a two-thirds vote of the board of ministry and a two-thirds vote of the clergy members meeting in executive session.

5. *Involuntary Leave Conditions.* Clergypersons on involuntary leave shall have no claim on annual conference funds and the conference shall assume no responsibility for salary, pension, or other benefits during the leave of absence, but the clergyperson may be eligible to continue in conference health programs through their own contributions. Clergy on involuntary leave shall not participate in the commissions, committees, or boards of the district or annual conference. They shall be in the inactive status, with no voice or vote at annual conference, may not be delegates to General Conference, and may not vote for clergy delegates. Those on involuntary leave shall continue to be amenable to the annual conference for their conduct and shall not participate in any official acts of ministry during the leave.

6. *Maternity and Paternity Leave.* Any clergy member (including both spouses in a clergy couple) may request maternity or paternity leave for up to three months at the birth or arrival of a child into the home for purposes of adoption or fostering. Such leave shall be granted by the pastor-parish relations committee in consultation with the presiding elder (district superintendent). During

the leave, the clergyperson's annual conference status will remain unchanged, and the health and benefit plans will remain in force. Compensation shall be provided by the salary-paying unit for no less than two months of leave, and the presiding elder (district superintendent) shall provide for the pastoral needs of the congregation, as appropriate.

7. *Honorable or Administrative Location.* Persons who have been placed on honorable location (with consent) or administrative location (without consent, JPP 2.2c and 3) are no longer members of the annual conference. They shall not have voice or vote at the annual conference unless specifically granted voice by the annual conference. Their membership shall be held in a local church of their choice, with the written consent of the pastor in charge and, in the case of administrative location, the pastor-parish relations committee. Any ministerial service is limited to the church/charge where they hold membership and must be only with the written consent of the pastor in charge.

¶ 418. **SENIOR STATUS.** Following the scriptural pattern, there is no retirement for clergy or laity from the work of God's Kingdom. However, clergy persons serving in appointments may choose senior status within the annual conference, with the approval of a majority of the board of ministry and a majority of the clergy session. There is no mandatory age for such status. Senior status releases clergy members from any obligation to accept an appointment to ministry from the bishop, though clergy in senior status may voluntarily accept an appointment from the bishop to any ministry setting for which they qualify. Senior clergy, including bishop emeriti, retain their active status and right to both voice and vote at annual conference if they fulfill either of the following conditions: a) they are within seven years of the effective date of their aligning with the Global Methodist Church or the end of their last appointment, whichever is later, provided that they notify the conference secretary at least ninety days prior to the annual conference session of their intention to participate as a voting member, or b) they are under appointment by the bishop for at least one-quarter time (no notification necessary). Senior clergy not qualifying under the preceding sentence retain voice, but not vote, at annual conference. Those in senior status, whether active or inactive, may be elected as a delegate to General or Regional Conference and serve on district or annual conference commissions, committees, or boards.

¶ 419. **TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS.**

1. Clergy who are current or former ordained members of The United Methodist Church may apply to the Transitional Leadership Council (¶ 703.2h) or a body that it designates to be received as clergy members of the Global Methodist Church and to have their ordained status recognized. The application shall be accompanied by a copy of the applicant's ordination certificate(s) and shall include an explicit affirmation of the doctrines and Social Witness set forth in this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* and an agreement to abide by its discipline. The applicant shall consent to a background check. The Transitional Leadership Council or the body it designates, shall review the application and vote on each application received. An affirmative vote on each application shall result in the applicant being admitted to clergy membership in the Global Methodist Church and recognition of the applicant's ordained status in the Global Methodist Church.

2. Current or Former Associate Members and Licensed Local Pastors in The United Methodist Church.

a. Persons who are current or former associate members or licensed local pastors in The United Methodist Church may apply for clergy membership in the Global Methodist Church and to be ordained as a deacon or elder. Each application shall be evaluated by the Transitional Leadership Council body(ies) designated for that purpose. The application must include a copy of the certificate

or license from the person's service in The United Methodist Church, a transcript of courses completed to meet the requirements of ¶ 407, and a declaration that the applicant affirms the doctrines and Social Witness set forth in this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, agrees to abide by its discipline. Those meeting the qualifications for ordination as deacons or elders set forth in this chapter shall, with the approval of the Transitional Leadership Council or the body(ies) designated by it be ordained at a service convened for that purpose. If an associate member or a licensed local pastor meets the educational requirements to be ordained as an elder and has served in The United Methodist Church for at least two years, the two-year period of minimum service as a deacon in ¶ 410.1.a shall not be applicable and the person shall immediately be ordained as a deacon and then as an elder at the same annual conference session following approval by its clergy session.

b. Those current or former licensed local pastors in The United Methodist Church not meeting the qualifications for ordination as a deacon or elder in the Global Methodist Church may be granted a license by action of the Transitional Leadership Council as a local pastor for a one-year term, renewable for two additional years by the board of ministry of the annual conference in which they are appointed, while they work toward meeting the qualifications for ordination as a deacon in the Global Methodist Church, provided that they are appointed to pastor a local church. After the second renewal of the license, if the person has not met the qualifications for ordination as a deacon, their authority to pastor a local church shall cease. The license shall terminate if the person ceases to be appointed as pastor of a local church. The clergy status as a local pastor under this paragraph is limited to the circumstances described here, is transitional in nature, and shall cease to exist following the convening General Conference of the Global Methodist Church. A pastor operating under a license granted under this provision shall be a clergy member of the Global Methodist Church while licensed, shall have sacramental authority in their appointment, and shall have full voice and vote on all matters except the ordination and conference relations of deacons and elders. Such a person shall be under the supervision of the board of ministry of the annual conference in which they are appointed, and a supervising elder appointed by a president elder, a president pro tem, or a bishop.

3. Clergy will be placed in the annual conference in which their appointment is located or may transfer to a different annual conference in the connection. The clergy person will be subject to the bishop of that annual conference for appointment. Prior to the convening General Conference of the Global Methodist Church, it is expected that the appointments of clergy serving congregations in which both transition into the Global Methodist Church will be retained, unless a change is needed because of illness, family situation, death, the election of senior status, clergy misconduct, or the financial exigencies of the congregation.

4. Persons in the candidacy process in The United Methodist Church who desire to affiliate with the Global Methodist Church prior to its convening conference shall be received by the annual conference board of ministry or the Transitional Leadership Council designated body handling candidates. The candidate shall comply with the provisions of ¶ 406 and their membership in a congregation of The United Methodist Church for at least one year shall satisfy the membership requirement of ¶ 406. The candidate shall request that a copy of all candidacy files held by their former district or annual conference be forwarded to the body credentialing candidates. Candidates shall continue at the point in the process where they are in The United Methodist Church. Candidates will not need to repeat steps or requirements they have already completed. Candidates will continue in their candidacy process according to the requirements listed in this chapter. Candidates eligible to be ordained under the qualifications of this chapter may move toward ordination at the next annual conference session under the processes laid out in this chapter.

5. The Transitional Leadership Council or its designee may in its sole discretion grant exceptions to the requirements upon petition of a person seeking certification as a candidate or