

*Handbook  
for  
Local Pastors  
and  
Associate Members*



*Desert Southwest Conference*

The United Methodist Church

2022

## Table of Contents

Definition of Local Pastor .....	3
Responsibilities and Duties of the Local Pastor .....	3
Categories of Local Pastor .....	4
A. Full-Time Local Pastor .....	4
B. Part-Time Local Pastor .....	4
C. Student Local Pastor .....	5
Requirements for License as a Local Pastor.....	5
Steps to Obtaining a License as a Local Pastor .....	5
Licensing School .....	6
Continuance as a Local Pastor .....	6
Discontinuance as a Local Pastor .....	7
Retirement of the Local Pastor .....	8
Course of Study Educational Program .....	8
How to Register for Classes .....	9
Approval for Classes and Reporting Grades.....	9
Hispanic Course of Study Schools .....	10
Advanced Course of Study Educational Program .....	10
Associate Membership .....	10
Requirements for Election as Associate Members .....	11
Rights of Associate Members.....	11
Local Pastors Preparing for Probationary Membership and Elder’s Orders.....	11
Scholarships .....	12
Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members .....	12
Pensions and Health Insurance.....	13
Additional Policies and Guidance.....	13
Who’s Who .....	14
Resources .....	14
Local Pastor Clergy Mentor Guide .....	15
Appendix A.....	17

# HANDBOOK FOR LOCAL PASTORS AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

This handbook is a guide for the Local Pastor who is licensed for pastoral ministry, to assist in the call to serve God and to carry out the ministry of Jesus Christ through the local church. In addition, this handbook can assist District Superintendents and District Committees on Ordained Ministry in working with Local Pastors. This handbook is divided into sections to facilitate updating and improvement. It is not intended to be the final authority on a situation or condition, but it is to serve as a practical and understandable resource in the ministry of the Local Pastor.

## Definition of Local Pastor

(see 2016 Book of Discipline, ¶ 315, 316, 318)

All persons not ordained as elders, who are appointed to preach and conduct divine worship and perform the duties of a pastor shall have a license for pastoral ministry. Local Pastors who have completed the following may be recommended to the executive session of the annual conference to receive the license for pastoral ministry:

- The conditions for candidacy for licensed and ordained ministry (certified candidacy) (¶310)
- Been interviewed and recommended by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (“DCOM”)
- Attended Licensing School
- Been approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM)

A Local Pastor is approved annually by the DCOM and licensed by the Bishop to perform all the duties of a pastor, including the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion as well as the service of marriage, burial, confirmation, and membership reception, while appointed to a particular charge. Granting of the license for pastoral ministry is made when an appointment to a pastoral charge is made. In the Desert Southwest Conference, licenses are usually presented at the session of the Annual Conference.

## Responsibilities and Duties of the Local Pastor

(see 2016 Book of Discipline, ¶ 316)

- A. The Local Pastor is licensed by the Annual Conference to serve only to the charge to which they are appointed.
- B. The charge is defined as “the people within or related to the community being served. (¶316.1)
- C. The license must be renewed annually by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry and the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. An interview is required every year. The District Superintendent must sign the license annually.
- D. For the performance of marriage in Nevada, a license should be obtained through the District Court of the county of residence, after receiving the Local Pastor’s License.
- E. The License for Pastor Ministry (including the student Local Pastor) related to the District Committee on Ordained Ministry in the district where he/she is appointed.

- F. The Local Pastor is supervised by the District Superintendent and a Clergy Mentor, who will support the Local Pastor's work in Course of Study, and in the performance of the duties of a Local Pastor.
- G. The Local Pastor shall attend each session of the Annual Conference and be responsive to the directives of the Annual Conference.
- H. Membership of the Full-Time and Part-Time Local Pastor is in the Annual Conference. They may vote on all matters presented to the Annual Conference, except constitutional amendments, election of delegates to General or Jurisdictional conferences, and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. When first licensed, local church membership will be transferred to the annual Conference.
- I. The Local Pastor, except student Local Pastors, may serve on any board, commission, or committee with voice and vote, except on matters of clergy character, qualifications, status, and ordination, except on the District Committee on Ordained Ministry. They shall not be eligible to vote on or serve as delegates to the General, Jurisdictional, or Central Conference. (§318.5)
- J. Those licensed for pastoral ministry may be appointed to an extension ministry with the approval of the Bishop and the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.
- K. All local pastors shall receive written communication about decisions made regarding their relationship with the annual conference.
- L. Local Pastors who have completed the Course of Study and have served in appointments of ½ time or greater for 15 years or more are eligible to apply to be a Retired Local Pastor. Eligible Local Pastors can ask for this special retired status through the Board of Ordained Ministry. Those who have achieved the standing of Retired Local Pastor may annually request from the District Committee on Ordained Ministry and the Bishop a license to serve in the local church where they hold membership for the purpose of providing sacramental rites of baptism and Holy Communion, at the request of the appointed pastor. (§316.8)

### Categories of Local Pastor

(see 2016 Book of Discipline, ¶ 318)

- A. Full-Time Local Pastor
  - 1. Serves under appointment to a charge on a full-time basis.
  - 2. Is paid at least the minimum salary and benefits as established by the Annual Conference.
  - 3. Has completed or is in the process of completing the Course of Study by taking four courses per year.
  - 4. Following completion of the Course of Study, maintains a continuing education program as directed by the Annual Conference.
- B. Part-Time Local Pastor
  - 1. Has met the requirements for licensing.
  - 2. Does not devote their entire time to ministry in the local church.
  - 3. Does not receive in cash support per year from all Church sources a sum equal to or larger than the minimum base compensation established by the annual conference for Full-Time Local Pastors.
  - 4. Is enrolled in an appropriate school of higher education in their home conference (per Judicial Council Decision #895)

5. Shall complete two courses per year in a Course of Study school or the correspondence curriculum prescribed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, until they complete the Course of Study.

C. Student Local Pastor

1. Is enrolled in an appropriate school of higher education or seminary approved by the University Senate outside their home conference.
2. Has met the requirements for licensing.
3. Must be licensed for ministry by the conference where student is serving and is appointed by home conference.
4. Makes appropriate progress in their education program as determined by the Board of Ordained Ministry.

### Requirements for License as a Local Pastor

(see 2016 Book of Discipline, ¶ 315.2)

All persons who are not ordained as elders but are appointed to preach, conduct divine worship and perform the duties of a pastor in a local church shall have a license for pastoral ministry. The Board of Ordained Ministry may recommend to the executive session of the Annual Conference the licensing of those persons who meet the following requirements:

- Completed the conditions for candidacy certification. (see Candidacy for Licensed and Ordained Ministry ¶ 310)
- Been interviewed and recommended annually by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.
- Completed studies for the license as a Local Pastor as prescribed and supervised by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (see sections on Licensing School in this Handbook).
- Been approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry and the executive session of the Annual Conference. (¶ 369.3)

### Steps to Obtaining a License as a Local Pastor

A summary:

- Become a declared candidate.
- Become a certified candidate.
- Receive the recommendation of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.
- Complete the studies for the license for pastoral ministry (Licensing School).
- Been approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry and the executive session of the Annual Conference. (¶ 369.3)

## Licensing School

(see 2016 Book of Discipline, ¶ 310 & 315.2b)

Studies for License as a Local Pastor are a joint enterprise between the District Committee on Ordained Ministry, the annual Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Division of Ordained Ministry. The first basic philosophy that informs this program is within the covenant of United Methodist ordained ministers. Full members have a basic and continuing responsibility to work in the preparation of new candidates. They can fulfill that responsibility by sharing practical knowledge and skills for the practice of ministry. The second basic tenet is that persons licensed must exhibit certain basic minimum competencies. Basic to this concept is the fact that these studies are not another hoop through which to jump or a roadblock to be bypassed. They are what the church considers the knowledge/skill components essential to the practice of ministry.

In the Desert Southwest Conference, in conjunction with all the conferences in the Western Jurisdiction, support a Jurisdiction Licensing School. Please check <https://localpastors.org> for the upcoming dates.

### WESTERN JURISDICTION LICENSING SCHOOL

See above for the requirements for those seeking to become licensed Local Pastors. To be considered for an appointment as a Local Pastor a person must attend this school. However, the attendance at this school does not guarantee an appointment to a local church. The license as a Local Pastor will be withheld until such time as an appointment is made.

Registration: Registration found online at <https://localpastors.org/registration/>. Register as early as possible in order to obtain and review the required textbooks. Forms should be sent to the District Superintendent AND the Registrar for Local Pastors for signature before being sent to the school.

Cost: Candidates pay 50% of the cost for tuition and lodging. Meals are NOT included. Payment is due with the registration form unless other arrangements are made. Candidates are responsible for their own travel. If a candidate is attending an online licensing school, the DSC will pay 50% of the cost of tuition but the cost of books is entirely at the candidate's expense.

For information about Licensing School contact: <https://localpastors.org/registration/>

The current candidate cost for the Western Jurisdiction Licensing School is \$450.

Other Methodist schools and regions also offer classes for Licensing School and Course of Study. To check on other schools, visit: <https://www.gbhem.org/clergy/licensing-course-of-study/resources-forms/>

## Continuance as a Local Pastor

(see 2016 Book of Discipline, ¶ 319)

It is the responsibility of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry to annually interview and recommend for continuance all persons who are licensed Local Pastors. The following guidelines (¶ 319) will be used:

1. Persons licensed as Local Pastors who are not probationary members shall continue in college, in a program of theological education at an approved seminary, or in the Course of Study.
2. Upon recommendation by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry, the clergy members in full connection may approve the continuance as a licensed Local Pastor. For guidance on this recertification and license renewal interview visit the DSC BOOM webpage:  
<https://dscumc.org/board-of-ordained-ministry/forms/>
3. Full-Time Local Pastors shall complete the five-year Course of Study curriculum within eight years. Part-Time Local Pastors shall complete the course of study within twelve years unless family or circumstances preclude the Local Pastor's ability to meet these requirements. An extension beyond the prescribed limit may be granted annually by a three-fourths vote of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry ("DCOM"), recommendation of Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, and the vote of the clergy members in full connection.
4. A Local Pastor may choose to remain in a local relationship with the annual conference upon having completed the five-year Course of Study. Full-Time Local pastors are required to receive a minimum of one CEU per year and eight CEU's per quadrennium. Part-Time Local Pastors are encouraged to do continuing education. (See Scholarships section for policies and financial assistance available.)

All Local Pastors shall be assigned a Clergy Mentor by the DCOM and District Superintendent. The Clergy Mentor shall work with the Local Pastor in meeting the above requirements for continuance and through the Local Pastor Mentoring Guide (also found in this guidebook). The Local Pastor may be in a one-to-one relationship or a Mentor-Covenant Group with one mentor and other Local Pastors. It is the responsibility of the Local Pastor to ensure that a Clergy Mentor has been assigned by DCOM, and to initiate contact with that mentor. Clergy mentors who have not completed Course of Study may be assigned mentors who are Local Pastors who have completed the five-year Course of Study, associate members, or ordained connection. Local Pastors who have completed Course of Study will be assigned associate members or ordained clergy.

### Discontinuance as a Local Pastor

(see 2016 Book of Discipline, ¶ 320.1)

Please refer to the 2016 Book of Discipline for information regarding discontinuance and surrendering of license and credentials. When a Local Pastor ceases to seek to be appointed or the District Committee on Ordained Ministry does not recommend continuation of license, license and credentials are surrendered to the District Superintendent for deposit with the secretary of the conference. After consultation with the pastor, the former Local Pastor shall designate the local church in which membership shall be held. Reinstatement takes place only upon recommendation by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry from which their license was discontinued, the Board of Ordained Ministry, and the cabinet. Persons seeking reinstatement shall provide evidence that they have been members of a local United Methodist church for at least one year prior to their request for

reinstatement. A recommendation from the charge conference where membership is held is required in addition to other documents determined by the District Committee and Board of Ordained Ministry.

### Retirement of the Local Pastor

(see 2016 Book of Discipline, ¶ 320.5)

A Local Pastor who has completed the Course of Study and has served under appointment for 15 years at half-time or greater is eligible to apply to BOOM for the special designation of “Retired Local Pastor”. Retirement provisions for Local Pastors shall be the same as those for clergy members. Retired Local Pastors may attend Annual Conference sessions with voice but not vote. A retired Local Pastor may be appointed by the Bishop to a charge and licensed without any additional claim upon either the conference minimum compensation or further pension credit. Please see Appendix A for more information regarding this policy.

### Course of Study Educational Program

(see 2016 Book of Discipline, ¶ 318, 319)

Persons licensed as Local Pastors shall continue in college, in a program of theological education at an approved seminary, or in the five-year Course of Study. (¶ 319) The Course of Study in The United Methodist Church is provided and administered by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry for persons:

- Who are certified candidates of ordained ministry,
- Who have successfully completed Licensing School,
- Who have been licensed by the Bishop after approval by the District Committee Board on Ordained Ministry,
- Who are unable to attend a full-time approved school of theology.

The Course of Study is a basic theological education program of the Division Ministry. It is provided for those who are licensed as Local Pastors and are unable to be approved for full-time seminary. Participants in the program should have Ordained Ministry and Licensing School. The Course of Study is offered at regional Course of Study schools held each summer on the campuses of United Methodist theological seminaries.

The Course of Study includes a five-year curriculum with four courses per year.

Read carefully the following guidelines for special circumstances related to these courses:

- General Board of Higher Education (GBHEM) offers COS classes at a cost of \$350 and \$400 for ACOS classes. A maximum of four courses only may be taken by correspondence per year through GBHEM.
  - It is the policy of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to limit courses per year in the Course of Study while enrolled in the basic five-year program. The reason for the limitation is Course Study students program of supervised ministry with a pastoral mentor who will assist in assignments and the integration of what has been learned with the practice of ministry.



- A candidate who has attended an accredited theological seminary may request that work completed in the school of theology be evaluated by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry for transfer to the Course of Study. Contact the conference BOOM Register if you would like to have your seminary coursework converted to COS.
- No credit is recognized in the Course of Study for work completed on the undergraduate level.
- At the discretion of the General Board, a clinical pastor accredited graduate degree may be applied to the Course of Study.
- When attending the Course of Study, pastors should make arrangements for duties and preaching/worship responsibilities to be covered by someone else. All one's time during school should be devoted to studies. Travel home should be for emergency personal and family reasons only.
- According to the Book of Discipline, no more than one-half of the classes may be taken in this format. (§ 324.6c1 & § 1421.3c-d)

## How to Register for Classes

You can sign up for courses through GBHEM here: [www.gbhem.org/clergy/licensing-course-of-study](http://www.gbhem.org/clergy/licensing-course-of-study). Or you can register for the regional schools here: <https://www.courseofstudy.org/>. Each Regional Course of Study School offers all 20 courses of the Basic Five-Year COS and seeks to meet the needs of both the full-time and part-time local pastors.

Care should be taken when making the decision as to which school to attend. There are many factors to consider, including geographic location, facilities, class periods, and individual needs. District Superintendents, mentors, and the Board of Ordained Ministry can offer advice as to particular circumstances. One option is to contact a present or past student to learn of the particulars that are important to you.

The curriculum at each school is identical and regulated by the Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Most require advanced reading and writing assignments and will assign reading and writing work to be completed after classes. Again, it is mandatory for the student to arrange for substitute preachers while in school. Weekend time is needed for study and rest. Traveling home to preach adds to the stress of school (not to mention the added time needed for sermon preparation). Your District Superintendent may be able to assist you with suggestions for substitute preachers. Also work with the laity in your church for pulpit help.

Please remember that Bible I (COS 121) is a prerequisite to Bible II (COS 221) and Theological Heritage I (COS 122) is a prerequisite to Theological Heritage II (COS 222). Full-time local pastors are to complete Course of Study within eight years. Part-time local pastors are encouraged to complete Course of Study within twelve years. (2016 Book of Discipline P. 319.3)

### Approval for Classes and Reporting Grades

In the Desert Southwest Conference, Linda Larsen is the Licensed Local Pastor Registrar. Once you have selected a course or courses that you intend to attend, complete the registration form and have it signed by your District Superintendent. Send the signed copy to Linda at [lindalarsen@dscumc.net](mailto:lindalarsen@dscumc.net).

The Board of Ordained Ministry will pay half of the tuition for the COS classes. When you submit your registration form to Linda, the LP registrar, she will process your form by sending 50% of the payment for classes enrolled to the school and sending the approved registration form to the registrar of the

Regional School or Extension Course of Study School. You will be responsible for the remaining half of the cost, which should be paid directly to the school.

Note: The Board of Ordained Ministry has deemed that Local Pastors who receive a grade below “C-” in a class will be required to repeat the course at their own expense.

### Hispanic Course of Study Schools

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry sponsors three Hispanic Course of Study schools. They are held at Perkins Course of Study School in Dallas, TX and the North Central Jurisdictional Course of Study School at Garrett-Evangelical in Evanston IL. Students interested in taking the Course of Study in the Spanish language may apply to the director of the Course of Study School at any of these schools. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Office of Ministerial Services can provide more information. If you have other specific language needs, contact the Office of Ministerial Services for assistance and options.

### Advanced Course of Study Educational Program

The purpose of the Advanced Course of Study for Ordained Ministry is to further the education of a Local Pastor and to provide a curriculum pathway that enables a Local Pastor to meet the education requirements for a probationary membership.

The courses chosen will not duplicate those included in the basic five-year curriculum. Courses selected shall include both foundational and functional studies appropriate to each candidate. Foundational courses include studies in the areas of theology, church history, biblical study, or church in society. Functional courses include advanced work in counseling, church administration, evangelism, preaching, teaching, or worship.

- Four to six semester hours of credit may be earned each year in the Advanced Course of Study. Advanced Course of Study students may enroll in the Master of Divinity curriculum courses.
- Graduate studies not taken in a theological school, which parallel courses offered for advanced studies, may be approved by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to a maximum of nine semester hours. Such studies must have been taken within the last 10 years.
- One basic unit of Clinical Pastoral Education may be recognized as the equivalent of six semester hours in the Advanced Course of Study.
- Desert Southwest Conference students must meet the educational requirements set by the Board of Ordained Ministry for probationary membership.

Advanced Course of Study courses are offered during the spring. Contact the individual school to determine the schedule of classes. (See Section titled How to Register for Classes above for registration information.)

### Associate Membership (see 2016 Book of Discipline, ¶ 321, 322)

Associate members of the annual conference are in the itinerate ministry and are available on a continuing basis for appointment by the Bishop. They shall be granted the same security of appointment as probationary members and members in full connection.

### Requirements for Election as Associate Members

1. Annual renewal of license for pastoral ministry with service as a Full-Time Local Pastor for four years.
2. Reached the age of 40.
3. Completed the five-year Course of Study (with no more than half of the classes taken online).
4. Completed a minimum of sixty semester hours toward the Bachelor of Arts or equivalent degree in an accredited college or university.
5. Declared the willingness to accept continuing full-time appointment.
6. Been recommended by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.
7. Completed the application process, been examined, interviewed, and recommended by the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

### Rights of Associate Members

1. Vote in the annual conference on all matters except constitutional amendments, election of delegates to the general and jurisdictional or central conference, and all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.
2. Serve on any board, commission, or committee of the annual conference. They shall not be eligible for election as delegates to the general or jurisdictional or central conferences.
3. Shall be subject to the provisions governing sabbatical leave, leave of absence, location, retirement, minimum salary, and pension.

Associate members may be received as probationary members in the annual conference upon completing all the requirements in ¶ 324.6, upon receiving a three-fourths majority vote of the clergy members of the annual conference in full connection, present and voting.

### Local Pastors Preparing for Probationary Membership and Elder's Orders

(see 2016 Book of Discipline, ¶ 324.6, 335)

Local Pastors may fulfill the requirements for probationary membership and commission when they have:

- Completed the five-year Course of Study for ordained ministry, of which no more than four courses may be taken by correspondence or internet,
- Completed a bachelor's degree from a college or university recognized by the University Senate. Exceptions to the undergraduate degree requirements may be made in consultation with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in some instances, for mission purposes, for persons who have a minimum of sixty semester hours of Bachelor of Arts credit (see ¶ 324.3 for details),
- Completed an Advanced Course of Study consisting of thirty-two semester hours of graduate theological study offered by a seminary recognized by the University Senate or its equivalent as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Studies must include a minimum of twenty-four semester hours of basic graduate theological studies of the Christian faith including the areas of: Old Testament, New Testament, theology, church history,

evangelism, mission of the church in the world, worship/liturgy, and at least two or three quarter hours in each of the areas of United Methodist doctrine, polity, and history.

- Four to six semester hours of credit may be earned each spring in the Advanced Course of Study (see below). Credit may also be obtained through courses at an approved seminary.
- Once commissioned a probationary member must complete all requirements for full membership and ordination as an elder, including serving two years as a provisional member. See ¶ 333, 335 and the DSC website for more information <https://dscumc.org/board-of-ordained-ministry/>

## Scholarships

Besides the 50% of tuition scholarship for those attending COS (see section on Approval for Classes and Reporting Grades), the DSC and GBHEM have additional financial assistance opportunities for those pursuing additional education.

For those who are pursuing a MDiv and ordination, there is the grant-to loan program in our conference that forgives the grant after three years under appointment once provisional member status is achieved. There are also scholarships available through BOOM for those pursuing ordination. You can find more information about them here: <https://dscumc.org/board-of-ordained-ministry/funding/>. Additionally, there is money through the GBHEM for those attending seminary. Be sure to check out their website for more information. <https://www.gbhem.org/loans-scholarships/>.

Ethnic pastors are eligible to have 100% of their COS classes paid for through a special grant program in the Desert Southwest Conference. Contact the LP Registrar, Linda Larson, for more information about the approval and program before registering for classes. Likewise, the GBHEM also offers Native American Ministries Course of Study Scholarships. Information about this program can be found at GBHEM's COS website. <https://www.gbhem.org/clergy/licensing-course-of-study/>

For those LPs who are under appointment, BOOM offers \$1000 continuing education scholarships to each pastor per quadrennium. You can use this grant to help pay for either COS or seminary classes. Information on how to apply for this quadrennial MEF money can be found here: <https://dscumc.org/board-of-ordained-ministry/scholarships-clergy/>

Finally, be sure to check with your local church's finance and SPRC committees. Many churches provide budget money and/or have foundations set up for the educational needs of their pastor.

## Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members

(see 2016 Book of Discipline, ¶ 323)

The 2016 Book of Discipline states that each Annual Conference may organize a Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members. All licensed Local Pastors and associate members may be members of and participate in the fellowship. The fellowship will provide mutual support for its members for the sake of the life and mission of the church. The Discipline outlines the functions of the fellowship to include providing for regular gatherings of Local Pastors and Associate members, encouraging Local

Pastors to continue study beyond the Course of Study, developing a bond of unity and common commitment among the members, and enabling creation of relationships that allow mutual support and trust. The Board of Ordained Ministry provides financial support for the fellowship. A retreat is held annually, and a gathering is held at Annual Conference.

## Pensions and Health Insurance

Local Pastors under full or three-quarter (3/4) time appointment can decline Healthcare coverage due to the following reasons: 1. Enrollment in coverage through former or current employer; 2. Enrollment as a dependent in your spouse's employer-provided coverage; 3. Enrollment in Champus/TRICARE; 4. Enrollment in Medicaid or Medicare; 5a. Coverage under HealthFlex through your local church (Salary-Paying Unit) through your Plan Sponsor (Annual Conference) is considered unaffordable under the ACA. Participant is not offered or provided HealthFlex coverage by the local church (salary-paying unit) through the Plan Sponsor. 5b. The participant has no offer of employer-provided coverage under HealthFlex.

A Part-time Local Pastor can waive out of Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP). Waiving means waiving participation in both monthly defined benefit and the defined contribution account portions of the program. No credited service will be given for the period waived participation.

Local pastors under less than three-quarter (3/4) time appointment are not permitted to participate in the Healthcare but will receive Pension Credits but without 'Death and Disability'.

Questions regarding Pension and Health Benefits may be addressed to Randy Bowman, Conference Benefits Officer at the Conference Office, Extension 212 or [rbowman@dscumc.org](mailto:rbowman@dscumc.org), or Dina Reid at the Conference Office, Extension 214, or [dreid@dscumc.org](mailto:dreid@dscumc.org).

## Additional Policies and Guidance

Licensed Local Pastors and the Walk to Emmaus: The Desert Southwest Conference Cabinet has made the following policy regarding licensed Local Pastors serving communion and serving as spiritual directors for the Walk to Emmaus.

For part-time and full-time licensed Local Pastors, the Desert Southwest Conference Cabinet defines "the community being served" to include Emmaus communities when permission is given on an appointment year basis by the District Superintendent for a Local Pastor to serve as spiritual director and to serve Holy Communion on a Walk to Emmaus weekend.

### Vestments

All clergy-- whether appointed local pastors, provisional members, or ordained deacons and elders-- may wear clergy collars in The United Methodist Church (or choose not to!). Purple clergy collared shirts are to be worn by our bishops only. Only ordained deacons and elders (including bishops) should wear the stole, and then only the stole appropriate to their office.

## Who's Who

Chair, Board of Ordained Ministry: Rev. Sharon Ragland is the current BOOM Chairperson and is the person to contact if you have questions or requests for the Board, such as requesting Retired Local Pastor status or petitions for exceptions in The Discipline. You can email her at: [dscboomchair@gmail.com](mailto:dscboomchair@gmail.com).

Chair, Fellowship of Local Pastors: Pastor Kimber Govett is the chair of the fellowship and can be reached at [pastorkimbergovett@gmail.com](mailto:pastorkimbergovett@gmail.com).

Clergy Mentor: A person assigned by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry in cooperation with the District Superintendent. Clergy mentors may be full-time Local Pastors who have completed the five-year Course of Study or Master of Divinity, associate members, deacons or elders in full connection.

Conference Candidacy Coordinator and Board of Ordained Ministry Register: Rev. Dee Dee Azhikakath is the current staff person that oversees these roles. Questions about education requirements, transcripts, using the Passage and EM360 platforms, mentor training, psychological testing, scholarships as well as associate membership and ordination can be directed to her. You can reach her at [boom@dscumc.org](mailto:boom@dscumc.org).

District Committee on Ordained Ministry: This is your primary relationship regarding your credentials for ministry, and your continuation as a Local Pastor. Files relating to Local Pastors are maintained by the DCOM.

District Superintendent: Your primary supervisory relationship is with your District Superintendent.

Registrar of Local Pastors for the Board of Ordained Ministry: Pastor Linda Larsen is the local pastor registrar. Email at: [lindalarsen@dscumc.net](mailto:lindalarsen@dscumc.net). The Registrar maintains records relating to education progress and copies of official transcripts from the Board of Higher Education. She also releases the funds for the 50% COS educational scholarship. You must make sure that all Course of Study and Advanced Course of Study grades get sent to the local pastor registrar for documenting your educational progress.

## Resources

Here are some helpful resources for local pastors.

- DSC BOOM website: <https://dscumc.org/board-of-ordained-ministry/>
  - Forms
  - Pathways toward, application and questions for Associate Membership and Ordination
  - Financial Aid
- Western Jurisdiction Licensing School and Course of Study: <https://localpastors.org/course-of-study/>
- GBHEM Course of Study: <https://www.gbhem.org/clergy/licensing-course-of-study/>

## Local Pastor Clergy Mentor Guide

**BOD ¶1348.b** *Clergy mentors are clergy in full connection, associate members, full-time, or part-time local pastors who have completed the Course of Study trained to provide ongoing oversight and counsel with local pastors and with provisional members. Local pastors will be assigned a clergy mentor by the district committee on ordained ministry in consultation with the district superintendent. Provisional members will be assigned a clergy mentor in full connection by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry in consultation with the district superintendent. A candidacy mentor may continue with the same person if trained to serve as a clergy mentor.*

### **Assigning Mentors:**

1. Before the fall DCOM meeting, DCOM chairs will ask local pastors the following in a private email or phone call:
  - Do you have a mentor?
  - If so, who is it?
  - If so, do you want to keep them?
  - If not, do you have someone in mind?
2. DCOM chairs, in consultation with the district superintendents, should assign mentors balancing local pastor's preference, proximity to the local pastor's appointment as well as mentor leadership and availability.
  - a. Mentors may be assigned over district boundaries, especially to continue a successful local pastor/mentor relationship.
  - b. Local pastors should not have their supervising pastors assigned as their mentors.
  - c. Local pastors who are seeking ordination and already have a candidacy mentor may continue in that relationship.
3. Local pastor mentor relationships are expected to be long term, spanning several years.

### **Benchmarks to Cover as a Mentor to a Local Pastor:**

In the first year, a local pastor should meet with their mentor 12 times and cover the following suggested topics:

1. Funerals
2. Weddings
3. Marriage Counseling
4. Church Budgeting
5. Nomination Process
6. Meeting Agendas
7. Worship Planning
8. Time Management
9. Conflict Management
10. Boundaries
11. Spiritual Growth
12. Long Term Goals (COS, ACOS, Associate Member or Ordination)

In the subsequent years after year one, mentors and local pastors should meet six times a year. Topics should be guided by the local pastor's interests, growing edges that need improvement and educational classes.

**Local Pastor Mentors Covenant:**

Mentors should agree to the benchmark meeting guidelines above, commit to the local pastor long term mentor relationship and turn in a yearly evaluation to the DCOM chair sharing the local pastor's strengths, growing edges, education progress and effectiveness as a pastor.



## Appendix A

February 4, 2021

Dear Local Pastors,

The Board of Ordained Ministry (“BOM”) has been working on creating policies that help all elders, deacons and local pastors understand various requirements and pieces of the discipline over the past several years, starting under the leadership of Rev. Julius Keller. One of those areas we have been working on is the special designation of Local Pastor, retired.

Paragraph 320.5 in the Book of Discipline says, “*Retirement of Local Pastor*- A local pastor who has made satisfactory progress in the Course of Study as specified in 318.1 or .2 may be recognized as a retired local pastor. Retirement provisions for local pastors shall be the same as those for clergy members in 358.1,.2,.4, with pensions payable in accordance with applicable provisions of the Clergy Retirement Security Program. Retired local pastors may attend annual conference sessions with voice but not vote. A retired local pastor may be appointed by the bishop to a charge and licensed upon recommendation by the district committee on ordained ministry without creating additional claim upon the conference minimum compensation nor further pension credit.

In March of 2019 Bishop Bob gave the BOM clarity around this paragraph and suggested we create a policy for local pastors to receive the designation Local Pastor, retired. As a result, our board recommended and approved a policy that states “A local pastor must serve 15 years of 1/2 time service or greater in order to receive the designation of LP, Retired.” We had hoped this information would be shared with all the local pastors at that time so that everyone could plan accordingly. We recently learned that this news had not been widely shared with all of you. We would like to correct that error and avoid any further confusion as you plan for retirement in the years to come.

Moving forward, in order to be granted the designation Local Pastor, retired, you must have served as a local pastor for 15 years of ½ time service or greater. We are aware that a few of you will reach the age of mandatory retirement (72 years) before you have 15 years of ½+ time service. Should you choose, you will be able to request an exception through the Board of Ordained Ministry when the time comes for you to enter into a Local Pastor, retired status, or you can notify your DS and DCOM that you no longer wish to serve as a Licensed Local Pastor. If you would like to request an exception to the years of service requirement you will need to write a letter to the BOM registrar when you request approval of your retirement.

If some of you are feeling called into a long-term relationship and membership with the annual conference, Associate Membership might be the route for you to take. You are eligible to apply for Associate Membership after serving four years in a full-time appointment, finishing the COS program, and completing 60 credits towards a Bachelor of Arts or equivalent degree. You can learn more about this membership status on our website: <https://dscumc.org/board-of-ordained-ministry/provisional-member/associate-membership/>

We appreciate each of you and your service to the Desert Southwest Annual Conference. We also appreciate you working with us as we strive to create equitable policies for all of our clergy. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me or your district superintendent for more information and guidance. Thank you for all that you do.

Rev. Melissa Rynders  
Chair of Desert Southwest Board of Ordained Ministry  
[Dscboomchair@gmail.com](mailto:Dscboomchair@gmail.com)

This document is intended to be a guide for those in or entering into the Ministry as Local Pastors or Associate Members. The paragraph number (¶) quoted throughout this document refer to paragraphs in the 2016 Book of Discipline. If there is a conflict of information, the Book of Discipline overrules this document.

This document is based on the Virginia Annual Conference that kindly gave permission for its use in whole or in part by the Desert Southwest Conference.

Any errors or omissions that are noticed should be brought to the attention Rev. Dee Dee Azhikakath, the Conference Candidacy Coordinator and BOOM Registrar, who is the editor of this document.  
[boom@dscumc.org](mailto:boom@dscumc.org).

*Last edited: 8-24-2022*