

Policy Manual

*Baltimore-Washington Conference
Board of Ordained Ministry*

Revision Date: 2 April 2025

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Keeping Our Sacred Trust: Professional and Sexual Misconduct Policy for Ministry Professionals

Approved 2022, Revised 2025

Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church

I. Purpose

A church ministry professional is in a position of power and authority, which entails a sacred trust to maintain an environment that is safe for people to live and grow in God's love. Church ministry professionals sometimes violate the trust given them. Professional and sexual misconduct within ministerial relationships inhibits the full and joyful participation of all in the community of God, hinders the mission of Jesus Christ, harms individuals, families, and churches, and is a betrayal of that sacred trust.

Each ministry leader has the responsibility to avoid actions and words that hurt others, and also to protect the vulnerable against actions or words that cause harm. It is both the ethical and the legal responsibility of the Annual Conference to ensure that there are procedures in place for making and responding to complaints of professional or sexual misconduct. The Baltimore-Washington Conference does not condone or tolerate instances of professional or sexual misconduct. As a conference we are committed to procedural integrity and pastoral care through a fair process of justice-making for victims and survivors, accountability for abusers, and healing for all parties.

This policy seeks to mitigate instances of sexual misconduct among or by those assigned or appointed to serve in positions of pastoral leadership by providing resources for clarity, accountability, and training on issues of sexual misconduct; along with guidelines for responding to incidents of misconduct, should they occur. This policy does not supplant the formal complaint process and its attendant fair process protection as found in the 2020/2024 Book of Discipline. Rather the policy stands alongside it, to ensure the deepest clarity of definitions, expectations, and processes.

II. Theological Foundation

Every human being is created in the image of God and therefore possesses sacred worth, which must be respected in all relationships. We are one connected body, and when one part of the body is injured physically, emotionally, or spiritually, the whole body suffers. (I Corinthians 12:12-26)

Galatians 3:26-29 reminds us that we are all God's children. United Methodists "support equity among persons without regard to ethnicity, situation, gender," or age. (§3351, 2020/2024 Book of Resolutions) We further seek to create environments of hospitality in which persons are shown and schooled in respect, equality and the kinship of Jesus Christ while also protected from misconduct.

Professional and sexual misconduct are abuses of power and authority. Such abuses are not only an act against one person, but an act against fellow ministry professionals, members in the local congregation, the church at large, and God.

III. Definitions

A. Ministry Leaders: Ministry leaders are defined in our context as those persons who have been entrusted with authority within a congregation or faith community and its facilities by virtue of being appointed or assigned by the Baltimore-Washington Conference, or being employed or elected by the local church or faith community. (§3351, 2020/2024 Book of Resolutions).

B. Sexual misconduct: "Sexual misconduct within ministerial relationships is a betrayal of sacred trust. It is a continuum of sexual or gender-directed behaviors by either a lay or clergy person within a ministerial relationship (paid or unpaid). It can include child abuse, adult sexual abuse, harassment, rape or sexual assault, sexualized verbal comments or visuals, unwelcome touching and advances, the use of sexualized materials including pornography, stalking, sexual abuse of youth or those without the capacity to consent, or the misuse of the pastoral or ministerial position using sexualized conduct to take advantage of the vulnerability of another" (§3351, 2020/2024 Book of Resolutions).

C. Sexual Harassment: We define sexual harassment as any unwanted sexual comment, advance, or demand, either verbal or physical, that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating, or coercive. Sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship rather than as an exclusively sexual issue" (§161.M, 2020/2024 Book of Discipline) Sexual harassment "can create a hostile, offensive environment that can include unwanted sexual jokes, repeated advances, touching, or comments that insult, degrade or sexually exploit

women, men, elders, children, or youth” which “alters the conditions of employment or volunteer work or unreasonably interferes with the employee or volunteer’s performance” (§3351, 2020/2024 Book of Resolutions).

D. Complaint: A complaint is a written, signed, and dated report claiming misconduct, as defined in ¶2703.2 (clergy) or ¶2703.3 (laity) of the 2020/2024 Book of Discipline, received by the Bishop (§363).

E. Complainant: A complainant is a person who submits a written, signed, and dated complaint regarding an alleged incident of sexual or professional misconduct. F. Respondent: A respondent is a person against whom a complaint is made. G. Just Resolution: The complaint procedures in ¶363 “may include a process that seeks a just resolution.” “A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right in so far as possible and bringing healing to all the parties.” (§363, 2020/2024 Book of Discipline).

IV. Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Complaints of Misconduct

A. Anyone who desires to discuss a concern regarding sexual or professional misconduct may contact their pastor, another United Methodist clergy person or, a District Superintendent.

The contact information for District Superintendents may be found at www.bwcumc.org. B. Persons may contact a confidential hotline staffed by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women for additional information or support. COSROW hotline: 1- 800- 523-8390.

C. The two aforementioned processes are first steps toward making a formal complaint. The Report of Ministry Leader Sexual or Professional Misconduct Form is a standardized form that can be used for reporting concerns to the Bishop about misconduct in writing. The form can be obtained by contacting a District Superintendent or downloaded from the conference website at bwcumc.org.

D. When an allegation of misconduct is subject to mandatory reporting requirements by the state (as can be the case with a minor or an adult incapable of self-reporting), it shall be reported to the Bishop and to the appropriate authorities and agencies. All persons serving as pastoral leaders are responsible for knowing the reporting requirements in the area where they serve.

E. The provisions of ¶362, 363, 364 and 2701-2720 of the 2020/2024 Book of Discipline (as well as any other relevant paragraphs) shall determine the procedure for responding to the complaint.

F. Legitimate complaints are encouraged and will be taken seriously. Retaliation against anyone who in good faith reports an act of ministerial misconduct will not be tolerated and will be handled through appropriate discipline. However, individuals who make false, frivolous, or malicious complaints will be held accountable. Immunity from prosecution of participants in administrative or judicial processes is described in ¶362.3 and ¶2701.4d of the 2020/2024 Book of Discipline.

G. Upon receiving a written, signed and dated complaint, immediate action will be taken in accordance with the provisions of the current Book of Discipline for just resolution, real accountability, and healing for all parties.

H. The Bishop or any District Superintendent may receive or initiate complaints about the performance or character of a ministry leader (¶363.1, 2020/2024 Book of Discipline). Confidentiality will be preserved, and general information will only be shared on a need to-know basis. However, a certain degree of transparency is essential for the process of just resolution, real accountability, and healing for all parties.

V. Cyberspace and Social Media Guidelines

Social Media is comprised of a variety of online activities and anything posted remains accessible, even if it has been deleted. Sexual and professional boundaries can be violated in cyberspace. Messages that contain threatening, obscene, offensive, vulgar, profane, pornographic, racist, sexist, hurtful, tactless, demeaning, libelous, defamatory, sexually explicit, sexual innuendo, and the like, even though no harm or hurt is intended, are inappropriate.

Anyone who participates in this form of misconduct is subject to discipline. Care should be taken to be wisely selective about sites visited, and messages that are posted online.

VI. Dating Between Clergy and Parishioners

The Judicial Council asserts that dating, romantic or sexual relationships between clergy and their parishioners “are never appropriate because of the imbalance of power” (Decision 1228). Therefore, dating between clergy and their parishioners cannot be considered a situation of two consenting adults entering into a relationship, and it is an act of misconduct for a clergy person to enter into a dating relationship with a parishioner. For the sake of maintaining healthy

boundaries and preventing a betrayal of sacred trust, a clergy person who has a genuine desire to date a parishioner must contact their District Superintendent and, in consultation with the District Superintendent, determine a reasonable course of action for discontinuing the pastor/parishioner relationship before beginning a dating relationship.

VII. Sexual and Professional Misconduct Response Teams:

Bishops or their designees may deploy a Response Team whenever a congregation experiences a trauma. Response Team ministry provides a way for judicatory leaders to enable effective assessment, intervention, training and resourcing of congregations experiencing events affecting congregational health by enlisting a group of persons who training, expertise, and resources in specific areas of ministry. A Response Team is implemented to support and facilitate the healing of all parties. The Response Team is not called to any judicial or Disciplinary processes for legal resolution of a situation.

VIII. Training and Other Requirements

A. Per the Book of Resolutions, all United Methodist clergy are required to receive up-to-date ethics training regularly (§3351, 2020/2024 Book of Resolutions). The Baltimore-Washington Conference requires all appointed ministerial professionals to complete official/approved training on professional boundaries and sexual ethics every appointive year, covering topics which may include identifying sexual misconduct, techniques for maintaining appropriate boundaries, and ways to keep one's self and congregation safe. At least one training during the quadrennium must be completed in an interactive model either in-person or via an interactive platform such as Zoom. The others may be completed through a self-led online course. A current list of possible trainings will be maintained and available at www.bwcumc.org/resources/safe-sanctuaries. All transfers and candidates for ministry are required to complete these trainings prior to commissioning, appointment, or assignment, whichever comes first. Compliance with these trainings is a condition of employment or ministerial appointment.

B. In order to ensure equitable access to trainings for all ministry leaders, funding for training may be made available through the Ministerial Education Funds (MEF) up to \$100 per year subject to availability.

C. The well-being of ministry leaders is of utmost importance. To care holistically for leaders in a manner that seeks to be supportive and restorative, a ministry leader shall complete a background check every five (5) years that includes a federal criminal background check. Any concerns arising from a background report are to be sent to the Episcopal Office to determine a course of action. In addition, it is understood that any programs or activities within any ministry

site that engage with vulnerable populations shall comply with all state and local standards for criminal background checks.

D. Reporting of completed trainings will be required on an annual basis through church conference forms.

This policy will be readily available for all those in ministerial positions in the Baltimore Washington Conference at www.bwcumc.org.

Transfer from Other Annual Conferences, Other Methodist Denominations, and Other Christian Denominations

Inquiries regarding transfer of membership into the BWC Conference should begin with a request to the Bishop's Office, with the Board of Ordained Ministry playing a consultative role based on the type of transfer.

General Expectations

- Transfers and Recognition of Orders will be based on the missional needs of faith communities in the Baltimore-Washington Conference.
- Under most circumstances, clergy from other conferences will be required to have at least two years of experience in the BWC under appointment before being considered for transfer. Only those in full-time appointments will be considered for transfer.
- Elders under appointment in the BWC are expected to be fully itinerant.

Denominational Guidelines

- Transfer of membership is described in ¶347 of the 2020/2024 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church and covers both transfers from other Annual Conferences of the United Methodist Church (Ordained Clergy and Provisional Members), and transfers from other Methodist Denominations (Ordained Elders, or ordained clergy).
- Recognition of Orders of Clergy from other Denominations is described in ¶347 of the 2020/2024 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church.
- Membership for clergy of other Christian Denominations is described in ¶347.3. Clergy from other Christian Denominations may be received as provisional members or local pastors.

¶347.1 From Other Annual Conferences

Ordained clergy or provisional members from other annual conferences of The United Methodist Church may be received by transfer into provisional or full membership with the consent of the bishops involved. Consultation with the chairperson or executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry shall be held prior to the transfer.

¶347.2 From Other Methodist Denominations

Ordained elders or ordained clergy from other Methodist churches shall be received by transfer into provisional or full conference membership or as local pastors, with the consent of the bishops or other authorities involved, without going through the process required for ministers from other denominations. Prior consultation with the chairperson or executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry shall be held in order to determine that the minister meets the standards for conference membership established by the Discipline and the annual conference.

¶347.3 From Other Denominations

On recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the clergy members in full connection may recognize the orders of ordained clergy from other denominations and receive them as provisional members or local pastors. They shall present their credentials for examination by the Bishop and the Board of Ordained Ministry and give assurance of their Christian faith and experience. They shall give evidence of their agreement with and willingness to support and maintain the UM doctrine, discipline and polity.

Clergy of other christian denominations (¶346.2)

A) Process for Request of Appointment:

1. Send a letter to the Bishop requesting an appointment.
2. Upon receipt of the letter, the Bishop's Office reviews the following documents:
 - a. Criminal Background Check
 - b. Resume and biographical statement
 - c. Personnel File from your denomination
 - d. A statement from the most recent Superintendent connected with your work
 - e. A psychological report
 - f. Reports of sexual misconduct and/or child abuse
 - g. Seminary and College Transcripts

- h. A statement indicating your understanding, acceptance and willingness to support and maintain United Methodist doctrine, discipline and polity.
 - 3. The Bishop will consult with the chairperson or executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM) prior to the appointment. This consultation will be an interview of the candidate by the Conference Relations Chair of the BOOM, the Assistant to the Bishop and the cabinet representative to BOOM.
 - 4. When the above steps have been completed, a report shall be sent to the Bishop who, in consultation the Cabinet, will decide whether to offer the applicant an appointment.
 - 5. Before the appointment begins, the applicant must be declared eligible to serve in the BWC by clergy members in full connection or, between sessions of the Annual Conference, by BOOM. This eligibility allows an ordained member of another Christian Denomination to serve in the Annual Conference and does not assume eventual membership in the Conference.
- B) Recognition of Orders:
- 1. Send a letter to the Bishop requesting recognition of orders.
 - 2. Upon receipt of the letter, the Bishop's Office reviews the following documents:
 - a. Criminal Background Check
 - b. Resume and biographical statement
 - c. Personnel File from your denomination
 - d. A statement from the most recent Superintendent connected with your work
 - e. A psychological report
 - f. Reports of sexual misconduct and/or child abuse
 - g. Seminary and College Transcripts
 - h. A statement indicating your understanding, acceptance and willingness to support and maintain United Methodist doctrine, discipline and polity

3. The Bishop will consult with the chairperson or executive committee of the Board of Ordained (BOOM) prior to the appointment.
4. This consultation will be an interview of the candidate by the CRC chairperson or designated members of BOOM, the Assistant to the Bishop and the cabinet representative to BOOM.
5. When the above steps have been completed, a report shall be sent to the Bishop.
6. Upon recommendation by BOOM and the Bishop, the clergy members in full connection may recognize the orders of clergy from another Christian Denominations (§347.3) and receive them as provisional members or local pastors. This step is taken when the applicant intends to pursue membership in the Annual Conference, and is the point where BOOM takes responsibility for the candidate's process of mentoring and examination.

NOTE: When pastors are from other Christian Denominations, the Recognition of Orders is made by the clergy members in full connection upon the recommendation of the Bishop and the Board of Ordained Ministry. (§347.3) Pastors whose orders are recognized are not conference members until the completion of provisional membership described below.

C) Admission as a Provisional Member:

1. When the Orders of Clergy from another Christian Denomination have been recognized, the clergy members in full connection may receive the clergy into provisional membership upon recommendation of the Board of Ordained ministry (§347.3). Clergy from other Christian Denominations shall serve as provisional members for at least two years and complete all the requirements of §335 and §347.3b and complete the BWC Residence in Ministry (RIM) program before seeking full membership. The BWC requires a provisional membership period of three years.

NOTE: When pastors are from other Christian Denominations, admission as a provisional member is made by clergy members in full connection, upon the recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Other scenarios:

1. Ordained clergy from other denominations can serve as DS hires. Ordained clergy from other denominations who have been hired to serve in the local church by the DS have not been

appointed by the Bishop nor approved by BOOM and therefore do not have sacramental authority in our churches. If they want to have their orders recognized, they need to go through the process outlined above.

2. Ordained clergy from other denominations can also serve as local pastors provided, they meet the requirements of ¶315.

NOTE: When pastors are from other Christian Denominations, admission as a local pastor is made by clergy members in full connection, upon the recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Mentors for Provisional Elders and Deacons Throughout Candidacy

Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM) affirms the benefits of clergy mentors for the professional preparation of provisional elders and deacons throughout their provisional candidacy term, and a Candidate Mentor Coordinator on BOOM shall be responsible for the work in this policy.

Each commissioned elder and deacon (“provisional candidates”) shall be assigned a clergy mentor by the Candidate Mentor Coordinator.

The assigned Mentor-Candidate pairing will be kept throughout the length of the candidacy period, unless a change is requested by either the Mentor or Candidate.

Candidate Mentor Coordinator

One BOOM member will serve as the Candidate Mentor Coordinator (CMC), which is an Executive Committee position.

The CMC will provide basic information about mentoring candidates to all ordained clergy in the B-W Annual Conference and provide suggestions to all ordained clergy serving in this role.

The CMC will organize and maintain a registry of ordained clergy persons who have expressed interest in serving as candidate mentors.

The CMC will recruit ordained clergy to become candidate mentors.

The CMC will develop informational guidelines/best practices for mentoring candidates and will distribute that to interested clergy.

The CMC will assign Mentor and Candidate pairings and keep a registry of their contact information and share the names of Mentors with DCOMs.

The CMC will monitor the suitability of the Mentor-Candidate connection.

Mentor Qualifications

Mentors shall be:

An ordained clergyperson, active and retired, in good standing within the B-W Annual Conference
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B. In order to ensure equitable access to trainings for all ministry leaders, funding for training may be made available through the Ministerial Education Funds (MEF) up to \$100 per year subject to availability.

C. The well-being of ministry leaders is of utmost importance. To care wholistically for leaders in a manner that seeks to be supportive and restorative, a ministry leader shall complete a background check every five (5) years that includes a federal criminal background check. Any concerns arising from a background report are to be sent to the Episcopal Office to determine a course of action. In addition, it is understood that any programs or activities within any ministry site that engage with vulnerable populations shall comply with all state and local standards for criminal background checks.

D. Reporting of completed trainings will be required on an annual basis through church conference forms.

This policy will be readily available for all those in ministerial positions in the Baltimore Washington Conference at www.bwcumc.org.

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An ordained clergyperson outside the B-W Annual Conference, in good standing with their Annual Conference, whom the Candidate identifies as a potential Mentor.

Assignment of a Mentor to a Provisional Candidate

The CMC will provide information about the mentor program to the provisional clergy, preferably at an in-person setting, such as a Residency in Ministry meeting.

The CMC will invite the Provisional Candidates to provide the name(s) of clergy persons whom they believe would be effective, affirming, and beneficial Mentors for them.

The CMC will contact each clergyperson recommended by the Provisional Candidates and invite them to serve as a Mentor.

Where no names of Mentors are proposed by the Candidate or if the proposed Mentor is contacted but unable to serve in that capacity, the CMC will contact other clergy persons on the registry of potential mentors and invite them to serve as mentors.

A process for selecting mentors from the registry of potential mentors will be developed under the advisement of the IDEA+ Committee of BOOM.

Monitoring the Mentor-Candidate Partnership

The CMC will ask each Candidate twice each year whether the mentoring partnership should be continued or changed.

If the Candidate discloses information that indicates the Mentor should not serve as a Mentor in the future, the information will be held in confidence by the CMC but also retained in the registry of Mentors. Depending on the nature of the concern, this may be brought to the Executive Committee for advisement.

The CMC will invite each Mentor once each year to confirm their commitment to continue with the partnership with the Candidate.

Should either the Mentor or the Candidate request an end to that partnership, the CMC will notify that change in writing to both Mentor and Candidate. The CMC will also invite the Candidate to a conversation to assess any particular criteria for the recruitment and assignment of another Mentor. When a new Mentor is assigned, the CMC will notify the DCOM Chair.

Originator: Jeff Zalitoris

Abstention Policy

Purpose:

To clarify when members of the Board of Ordained Ministry should abstain and how abstentions are to be counted in the voting tally.

Context:

During the 2021 Full Member Exam, the Board sought clarity amongst its body regarding how to count abstentions in the calculation of whether a candidate had met the $\frac{3}{4}$ approval threshold. Ultimately, the Board decided to not count abstentions in the vote tally. This policy seeks to codify that precedent.

When:

Any Board member may choose to abstain at any time for any reason. All Board members are required to abstain and refrain from participating in any discussion of candidates who are close family members (spouse, parent, child, sibling). The Board chair abstains from all votes.

How:

During each vote, Board members can choose to vote yes, no, or abstain. Abstentions will not be counted in the vote total. For example, if the vote count for a candidate seeking a status change is Yes – 30, No – 10, and Abstain – 10, the candidate would be approved because he or she would have received a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of yes votes.

Policy on Reinstatement Pursuant to BOD ¶368

¶368 of the 2020/2024 Book of Discipline (BOD) addresses the readmission of those who have been terminated, surrendered, or had their membership and license for ministry revoked due to sexual orientation, gender identity, or for celebrating a same gender wedding or union. This policy specifies how the Board of Ordained Ministry (BoOM) of the Baltimore-Washington Conference (BWC) will implement this BOD requirement.

1. Prior to voting on a request for reinstatement, the Conference Relations Committee (CRC) of BoOM shall verify the requestor is fit to return to duty:
 - a. Contact the Ministerial Services Coordinator to initiate the process to perform a criminal background check and verify satisfactory results.
 - b. Request the Episcopal Office to review all extant prior personnel and/or complaint records and verify there were no issues aside from those covered by ¶ 368 involved in the severance.
 - c. Request from the clergy person seeking reinstatement a completed “Clergy Sexual Misconduct Questionnaire” and verify compliance upon receipt.
 - d. Request a statement from the most recent District Superintendent of record at the time of severance with regards to the reinstatement request and review as available.
 - e. Interview the clergy person seeking reinstatement.
2. Upon satisfactory completion of the above requirements, the CRC shall present the reinstatement request along with all pertinent findings for consideration by the full BoOM.
3. Should the BoOM affirm the reinstatement by the required $\frac{2}{3}$ vote, the reinstatement will be included in the next Clergy Executive Session Report for consideration by the Clergy Session, in accordance with ¶ 368.

Originator: Tim Dowell

Ministerial Education Fund (MEF) Policy

The Board handles funds allotted to the BWC from the General Church through the Ministerial Education Fund (MEF) (ref. 2020/2024 Book of Discipline ¶816) for the purpose of “enabl[ing] the church to unify and expand its program of financial support for the recruitment and education of ordained and diaconal ministers and to equip the annual conferences to meet increased demands in this area. The maximum amount possible from this fund shall go directly for programs and services in theological education, the enlistment and continuing education of ordained and diaconal ministers, and courses of study.”¹

It is the duty of the Board of Ordained Ministry “To administer the portion of the Ministerial Education Fund for use by the annual conference in its programs of enlistment, basic professional educational aid, continuing formation, ethnic ministry and language training, and professional growth of ordained ministers. Priority shall be given to scholarships for seminary students preparing for ordination.”²

Scholarships for seminary students preparing for ordination shall be treated as “Service Loans,” and shall be repaid in accordance with Paragraph 816.a&b.

1. At the present time, MEF funds are granted primarily to Certified Candidates who are enrolled either in Course of Study or a Masters-level degree program. Course of Study courses are covered in full Masters level degree expenses are covered up to \$500 per credit hour.
2. Candidates may also apply to receive MEF monies toward courses required for their ordination track. All those seeking ordination in the BWC should plan to complete the 27 credits of Basic Graduate Theological Studies (BGTS) in a school approved by the University Senate prior to commissioning. Special exception is made for those who transfer into the BWC from other denominations, to complete these requirements during their provisional period. Please note that, in addition to the BGTS, the BWC requires a course in Christian Ethics.
3. If the recipient serves 5 years in full-time ministry under episcopal appointment after commissioning/ordination, the loan is forgiven. Otherwise, the loan is repaid with interest. Candidates who transfer to another conference shall have record of their indebtedness reported to that conference at time of transfer, with the understanding that

¹ Paragraph 816 of *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2020/2024*

² Paragraph 634.2.w of *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2020/2024*, p. 490

the receiving conference assumes both the responsibility for and the benefit of the repayment in years of service.

4. With regard to persons required to take seminary class/Clinical Pastoral Education as a result of Elders or Deacons Examination Retreat, not including individual/group therapy or counseling, the rate for payout will be based on same rate as payout for seminary students.
5. Additional, one-time gifts made available from the MEF for scholarship to License to Preach School, Certification Courses, or other purposes aligned with the purpose of that fund shall be governed by the availability of funds. Whereas professional development is the responsibility of the local church, gifts for professional development will only be made after demonstration that local church accountable reimbursement/professional development resources have been exhausted.

Provisional Member Exam Invitation Policy

Purpose: To clarify the qualifications that Certified Candidates invited to apply for Provisional Membership (PM Applicants) by the Provisional Member Registrar need to meet in order to be considered by the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM) on presentation day for an invitation to the Provisional Member Exam.

Context: There is a lack of clarity regarding the eligibility requirements for PM Applicants to be presented during the Provisional Member presentation day. This policy seeks to bring clarity and improve past practices.

What: To be presented during the Provisional Member presentation day PM Applicants must successfully complete the following:

Submit all required application materials through the BWC Application Portal. The checklist for all application materials is located on the BWC website (<https://www.bwcumc.org/provisional-membership/>). If all the required application materials are not submitted through the BWC Application Portal by the deadline indicated on the checklist the PM Applicant will be returned to the care of their District Committee on Ministry (DCOM).

If a PM Applicant does not receive at least five of the eight required evaluations by the deadline indicated on the checklist the PM Applicant will be returned to the care of their DCOM.

If a PM Applicant does not achieve a passing score on the Sermon Evaluation Rubric found on the BWC website (<https://www.bwcumc.org/provisional-membership/>) the PM Applicant will be returned to the care of their DCOM.

If a PM Applicant does not receive a passing score on the Biblical Skills Evaluation Rubric found on the BWC website (<https://www.bwcumc.org/provisional-membership/>) the PM Applicant will be returned to the care of their DCOM.

Three readers will be assigned to review and score a PM Applicant's written work. If a reader does not meet the deadline the PM Registrar will consult with the BOOM Co-chairs to discern how best to proceed. The average of each section and the average overall scores of the readers will be calculated.

If the PM Applicants average overall score does not pass or if the PM Applicant fails to receive an average passing score in two or more sections on the Written Evaluation Rubric found on the BWC website (<https://www.bwcumc.org/provisional-membership/>) the PM Applicant will be returned to the care of their DCOM.

Only PM Applicants who meet the criteria described above will be interviewed by a presenter and presented to the Board for consideration on Provisional Member presentation day. If the Board affirms a motion to invite the PM Applicant by at least a ½ majority the PM Applicant will be invited to the Provisional Member exam if not the PM Applicant will be returned to the care of their DCOM.

PM Applicants will be notified of the Board's decision via a letter sent by the Provisional Member Registrar.

The DCOM of any PM Applicant returned to their care will receive a copy of the PM Applicant's Evaluation Rubrics.

Originator: Paul Johnson

Full Member Exam Invitation Policy

Purpose: To clarify the qualifications that Provisional Members invited to apply for Full Membership (FM Applicants) by the Full Member Registrar need to meet in order to be considered by the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM) on presentation day for an invitation to the Full Member Exam.

Context: There is a lack of clarity regarding eligibility requirements for FM Applicants to be presented during the Full Member presentation day. This policy seeks to bring clarity and improve past practices.

What: To be presented during the Full Member presentation day FM Applicants must successfully complete the following:

Submit all required application materials through the BWC Application Portal. The checklist for all application materials is located on the BWC website (<https://www.bwcumc.org/full-membership/>). If all the required application materials are not submitted through the BWC Application Portal by the deadline indicated on the checklist the FM Applicant will remain under the care of BOOM.

If a FM Applicant does not receive at least five of the eight required evaluations by the deadline indicated on the checklist the FM Applicant will remain under the care of BOOM.

If a FM Applicant does not achieve a passing score on the Sermon Evaluation Rubric found on the BWC website (<https://www.bwcumc.org/full-membership/>) the FM Applicant will remain under the care of BOOM.

If a FM Applicant does not receive a passing score on the Biblical Skills Evaluation Rubric found on the BWC website (<https://www.bwcumc.org/full-membership/>) the FM Applicant will remain under the care of BOOM.

Three readers will be assigned to review and score a PM Applicants written work. If a reader does not meet the deadline the PM Registrar will consult with the BOOM Co-chairs to discern how best to proceed. The average of each section and the average overall scores of the readers will be calculated.

If the PM Applicants average overall score does not pass or if the PM Applicant fails to receive an average passing score in two or more sections on the Written Evaluation Rubric found on the BWC website (<https://www.bwcumc.org/provisional-membership/>) the FM Applicant will remain under the care BOOM.

Only FM Applicants who meet the criteria described above will be presented to the Board for consideration on Full Member presentation day. If the Board affirms a motion to invite the FM Applicant by at least a ½ majority the FM Applicant will be invited to the Full Member exam if not the FM Applicant will remain under the care of BOOM.

FM Applicants will be notified of the Board's decision via a letter sent by the Full Member Registrar.

FM Applicants who are not invited to the Full Member Exam will receive a copy of their evaluation rubrics and assigned a candidacy mentor.

Originator: Paul Johnson

Mentors for Provisional Elders and Deacons Throughout Candidacy

1. Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM) affirms the benefits of clergy mentors for the professional preparation of provisional elders and deacons throughout their provisional candidacy term, and a Candidate Mentor Coordinator on BOOM shall be responsible for the work in this policy.
2. Each commissioned elder and deacon (“provisional candidates”) shall be assigned a clergy mentor by the Candidate Mentor Coordinator.
 - a. The assigned Mentor-Candidate pairing will be kept throughout the length of the candidacy period, unless a change is requested by either the Mentor or Candidate.
3. One BOOM member will serve as the Candidate Mentor Coordinator (CMC), which is an Executive Committee position.
 - a. The CMC will provide basic information about mentoring candidates to all ordained clergy in the B-W Annual Conference and provide suggestions to all ordained clergy serving in this role.
 - b. The CMC will organize and maintain a registry of ordained clergypersons who have expressed interest in serving as candidate mentors.
 - i. The CMC will recruit ordained clergy to become candidate mentors.
 - ii. The CMC will develop informational guidelines/best practices for mentoring candidates and will distribute that to interested clergy.
 - c. The CMC will assign Mentor and Candidate pairings and keep a registry of their contact information and share the names of Mentors with DCOMs.
 - d. The CMC will monitor the suitability of the Mentor-Candidate connection.
4. A Mentor to a Provisional Candidate may be:
 - a. An ordained clergyperson, active and retired, in good standing within the B-W Annual Conference,
 - b. An ordained clergyperson outside the B-W Annual Conference, in good standing with their Annual Conference, whom the Candidate identifies as a potential Mentor.

5. Assignment of a Mentor to a Provisional Candidate

- a. The CMC will provide information about the mentor program to the provisional clergy, preferably at an in-person setting, such as a Residency in Ministry meeting.
- i. The CMC will invite the Provisional Candidates to provide the name(s) of clergypersons whom they believe would be effective, affirming, and beneficial Mentors for them.
- ii. The CMC will contact each clergyperson recommended by the Provisional Candidates and invite them to serve as a Mentor.
- iii. Where no names of Mentors are proposed by the Candidate or if the proposed Mentor is contacted but unable to serve in that capacity, the CMC will contact other clergypersons on the registry of potential mentors and invite them to serve as mentors.
- iv. A process for selecting mentors from the registry of potential mentors will be developed under the advisement of the IDEA+ Committee of BOOM.

6. Monitoring the Mentor-Candidate Partnership

- a. The CMC will ask each Candidate twice each year whether the mentoring partnership should be continued or changed.
- i. If the Candidate discloses information that indicates the Mentor should not serve as a Mentor in the future, the information will be held in confidence by the CMC but also retained in the registry of Mentors. Depending on the nature of the concern, this may be brought to the Executive Committee for advisement.
- b. The CMC will invite each Mentor once each year to confirm their commitment to continue with the partnership with the Candidate.
- c. Should either the Mentor or the Candidate request an end to that partnership, the CMC will notify that change in writing to both Mentor and Candidate. The CMC will also invite the Candidate to a conversation to assess any particular criteria for the recruitment and assignment of another Mentor. When a new Mentor is assigned, the CMC will notify the DCOM Chair.

Originator: Paul Johnson

Clergy Renewal Leave Grant Program

The Baltimore-Washington Conference (BWC) provides Renewal Leave Grants through the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM), funded by the Ministerial Education Fund (MEF), ranging from \$2,500 to \$5,000, to cover costs associated with clergy persons seeking time away from pastoral duties through renewal leave. Grant awards will be determined and notifications made by October 1.

Eligibility

In order to be eligible for consideration, applicants must:

- ☐ Be full members or associate members of the Baltimore Washington Conference, or local pastors who have made satisfactory progress on the Course of Study, and who are currently in an appointment,
- ☐ have served a minimum of six (6) consecutive years under full-time appointment (or the part-time equivalent) prior to their application,
- ☐ not have received Renewal Leave Grant award in the previous six (6) years,
- ☐ receive approval of their District Superintendent, Staff Parish Relations Committee, and Administrative Council/Church Council/Unified Board.

Timeline for Grant Application and Use

Eligible applicants shall submit their application between June 1 and September 1 of the preceding year via the **Renewal Leave Grant Application Form** found on the BWC website. All required approvals and recommendations described in the “Application Process” below must be received by September 1 in order for the application to be considered. Funding may be used during the subsequent calendar year. Award notifications will be made by October 1.

Application Process

The applicant must do the following:

1. Meet with both the District Superintendent and the Pastor-Staff Parish Relations Committee of the local church/charge being served at the time of the request to formulate the Renewal Leave Plan.

2. Secure the approval of the Renewal Leave Plan by the Administrative Council/Church Council/Unified Board of the church/charge being served at the time of the request.
3. Have the chairs of both the SPRC and Administrative Council/Church Council/Unified Board submit their approval/recommendation via the online “**Renewal Leave Grant Recommendation Form**” found on the BWC website.
4. Secure the written approval of their District Superintendent at the time of the request via the “**Renewal Leave Grant Recommendation Form**” found on the BWC website.
5. Complete the online application via the “**Renewal Leave Grant Application Form**” found on the BWC website by September 1.

NOTE

Arranging pastoral supply is the responsibility of the pastor. The District Superintendent may be able to provide contact information of individuals willing to provide pastoral leadership to the church during the Renewal Leave. Funding for this coverage (in addition to other financial requests) may be included in the grant application.

Criteria for Evaluation and Approval of Applications

- Applicants must be full members or associate members of the Baltimore Washington Conference or local pastors who have made satisfactory progress on the Course of Study, and who are currently in an appointment. Applicants must have served a minimum of six (6) consecutive years under full-time appointment (or the part-time equivalent) prior to their application.
- Applicants who have been granted a renewal grant previously may apply for additional grants. However, first-time applicants shall be given priority.
- Each application shall be considered carefully and prayerfully by representatives of the Board of Ordained Ministry Policy Committee. Their decision will be reported to the clergy person, the SPRC, and the District Superintendent of the pastoral charge.

The following shall be carefully considered:

- The circumstances of each applicant.

- The recommendations of the District Superintendent, the Pastor-Staff Parish Relations Committee, and the Administrative Board/Church Council/Unified Board.
- The availability of sufficient funds to underwrite the request.

Funding

1. The local church/charge will continue to pay the pastor's salary and benefits during the period she or he is on Renewal Leave.
2. If awarded a grant, payment of the grant funds will be made by the annual conference directly to the church, following receipt of a voucher from the local church Treasurer for expenses. If the grant includes funds to pay the person giving pastoral coverage, this will be remitted according to arrangements made before the Renewal Leave. If the grant includes funding for expenses incurred by the pastor, payment will be made to the pastor after the submission of appropriate receipts.
3. All reimbursement requests must be submitted to the Ministerial Services Coordinator within one month after the completion of the Renewal Leave, or by December 31 of that year, whichever comes first.