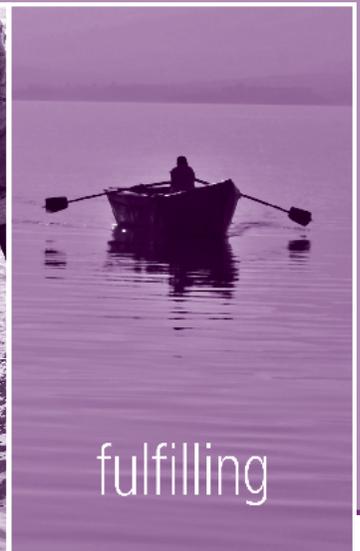


understanding



preparing



fulfilling

The Ministry of Deacons • • • • •

Ordained to Word, Service, Compassion, and Justice

Deacons are called by God, authorized by the church, and ordained by a bishop to a lifetime ministry of Word, Service, Compassion, and Justice, to both the community and the congregation in a ministry that connects the two. Deacons exemplify Christian discipleship and create opportunities for others to enter into discipleship.

The work of deacons is the work of justice, serving, and equipping others to serve the needy, neglected, and marginalized with compassion. In the congregation the deacon leads, teaches, and proclaims the Word in forming and nurturing disciples.

Deacons Provide Leadership

- In the teaching and proclamation of the Word
- In worship and in assisting the elders in the administration of the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion
- In inspiring and nurturing disciples
- In conducting marriages and funerals
- In the congregation's mission to the world
- In leading the congregation in response to the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world

For the sake of extending the mission and ministry of the church, the bishop may grant local sacramental authority to a deacon in the absence of an elder in the deacon's primary appointment (¶328).

Conference Membership

A deacon is a clergy member of the annual conference and shall have the rights of voice and vote in the clergy session and the annual conference. They serve and may hold office as clergy on boards, commissions, or committees of the annual conference, and

are eligible for election as clergy delegates to the General, Central, or Jurisdictional Conference (¶329.2).

Deacons may be appointed by a bishop to serve in:

- Agencies and settings beyond the local church, including ecumenical agencies
- United Methodist church-related agencies, educational settings such as schools, colleges, theological schools
- A local congregation, charge, or cooperative parish

Places deacons serve:

- Local church**
 - Music ministry
 - Christian education
 - Mission outreach
 - Parish visitor
 - Youth ministry
 - Business administration
 - Evangelism
 - Ethnic ministries
- Parish ministries**
 - Legal assistant
 - With groups
 - As parish nurse
- Annual Conference**
 - Connectional ministries
 - Campus ministry
 - Mission strategy
 - Social justice
- Teaching**
 - Schools
- Colleges
- Theological schools
- Agencies**
 - Community centers
 - Schools
 - Aged-care facilities
 - Counseling
 - Hospice-care centers
 - Hospitals
 - Prisons
 - General agencies
 - Group homes
- A group of churches or district**
 - Music ministry
 - Disaster relief
 - Homeless ministry
 - Outreach to community
 - Unemployment ministry
 - Youth ministry
 - Rehabilitation programs

First Steps – Deacon

- Read *The Christian as Minister*. Discuss your insights with a clergyperson or candidacy mentor. This book is available for purchase at www.Cokesbury.com.
- Contact a pastor, a deacon, an elder, or the district superintendent, to inquire about admission into the candidacy process. The district superintendent is responsible for inviting candidates to enter the candidacy process.
- Participate in a candidacy mentoring group or meet with a candidacy mentor (as determined by the annual conference) to complete *Fulfilling God's Call: Guidelines for Candidacy* (Candidacy Guidebook) and refine your call to ministry.

Becoming a Certified Candidate – Deacon ¶ 310

- Show proof of a minimum one year membership in the UMC or other United Methodist ministry setting.
- Register online in the Candidacy Application System and pay the candidacy application fee.
- Meet with the district Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM) to discuss your call to ordained ministry and your written statement of call (¶ 310).
- Complete all steps required to become a certified candidate as listed in ¶¶ 310-314 and determined by the annual conference.
- Complete Orientation to Ministry as scheduled by your annual conference (¶ 314).

Educational Requirements and Academic Qualifications – Deacon ¶ 324

- High school diploma or equivalent.
- Bachelor's degree (some exceptions apply) and one-half graduate education including one-half of the Basic Graduate Theological Studies must be completed before commissioning and provisional membership.
- Graduate degree options for ordination as a deacon and full membership include:
 - Master of Divinity degree from a University Senate-approved seminary
 - Other master's degree from a University Senate-approved seminary
 - Master's degree in an area of specialization and completion of Basic Graduate Theological Studies
- Alternative education for candidates over 35 years old—Bachelor's degree, Professional Certification, and Basic Graduate Theological Studies

Commissioning, Ordination and Clergy Membership ¶ 324 and ¶ 330

- Demonstrate gifts for ministries of service and leadership to the satisfaction of the dCOM.
- Complete application requirements including health certificate, background checks, written theological exam, and autobiographical statement.
- Interview first with the dCOM and then with the BOM to be recommended for commissioning.
- Receive approval from the Clergy Session of the annual conference by being elected to provisional membership, followed with commissioning by a bishop.
- After successfully completing the requirements of the provisional membership period, apply for recommendation by the BOM, and approval by the Clergy Executive Session for ordination and full membership.
- Be ordained by a bishop.

The candidacy process is listed in ¶¶ 310-314 in *The Book of Discipline*.

The ministry of the Deacon is described in ¶¶ 328-331 in *The Book of Discipline*.



Visit www.gbhem.org/candidacy or www.gbhem.org/deacons for more information.

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