

The Susquehanna Annual Conference



Local Pastors Handbook 2012 - 2016

**The Board of the Ordained Ministry
Rev. Charles Sprenkle, Chairperson
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Registrar for Local Pastors and Associate Members**

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THE LOCAL PASTORS HANDBOOK

This handbook is a guide for the Local Pastor, 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 allow and 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.

STEPS INTO MINISTRY:

Resources for the Candidacy process can be found on the conference website – www.susumc.org. From there, scroll down the left column and click on Board of Ordained Ministry. Then click on Resources. There you will find a narrative Candidacy Process Guide, Personal information form and a Candidacy Tracking spreadsheet. These are the first steps towards becoming a Local Pastor. One must be a Certified Candidate for Ministry to enroll in Licensing School. It is also strongly encouraged that one is Certified as a Candidate before enrolling in seminary.

1. DEFINITION OF LOCAL PASTOR

(See 2012 Book of Discipline, ¶315 -319, 340)

A Local Pastor is approved annually by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry 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 or extension ministry. Upon completion of the requirements (see below), the District Committee on Ordained Ministry shall certify the completion of the prescribed studies to the candidates and the Board of Ordained Ministry, and, on approval of the clergy session of annual conference, they shall be listed in the journal as eligible to be appointed as Local Pastors. The license for pastoral ministry will not be awarded until an appointment to a pastoral charge is made.

2. AUTHORITY AND DUTIES OF THE LOCAL PASTOR

(See 2012 Book of Discipline, ¶316-319, 340)

- A. The Local Pastor is licensed by the annual conference to serve only in the charge to which they are appointed.
- B. The charge is defined as the people in or related to the community being served.
- C. The Local Pastor may be appointed to extension ministry settings when approved by the Bishop and the Board of Ordained Ministry.
- D. The authority for licensing must be renewed annually by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry and the conference Board of Ordained Ministry.
- E. A Local Pastor is authorized to perform the ceremony of marriage for couples within the parish assigned to the Local Pastor. The couple to be married must, of course, have a valid marriage license through the Orphans Court of any county in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- F. If the Local Pastor is moved between sessions of the annual conference, the license shall be re-issued by the Bishop.
- G. The Local Pastor is supervised by the district superintendent. A clergy mentor will be assigned to assist and encourage the pastor's work in Course of Study school or such educational requirements as the District Committee on Ordained Ministry shall require and give counsel on matters of pastoral responsibility.
- H. The Local Pastor shall attend each session of the annual conference and is subject to the

directives of the annual conference.

- I. Membership of the full-time and part-time Local Pastor is in the annual conference. The Local Pastor 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.
- J. The Local Pastor may serve on any board, commission, or committee with voice and vote, except on matters of clergy character, qualifications, status, and ordination. However, Local Pastors who have completed the Course of Study may serve on the District Committee on Ordained Ministry or Board of Ordained Ministry with voice and vote (§ 635.1; 665.1)
- K. In matters regarding the relationship of the Local Pastor to the charge or to their association with the Annual Conference in which they serve, the Local Pastor will be advised in writing of any change in their standing or affiliation.

***Note:** *stoles are to be worn **only** by ordained Elders and Deacons. Local Pastors in the Susquehanna Annual Conference are not permitted by the Bishop to wear the liturgical stole of an ordained Elder or Deacon. However, other clergy attire, such as clergy collars are certainly permitted. In printed media Local Pastors are referred to as Pastor. Rev. is reserved for Elders and Deacons*

3. CATEGORIES OF LOCAL PASTOR (See 2012 Book of Discipline, ¶318)

In recommending to the annual conference those who have met the requirements to serve as Local Pastors for the ensuing year, the Board of Ordained Ministry shall classify them in three categories of service:

A. 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 for full-time Local Pastors;
- 3. Has completed or is in the process of completing the Course of Study by taking four courses per year; or is enrolled part-time as pre-theology student or in seminary.
- 4. Maintains a continuing education program as directed by the annual conference;
- 5. Is not a full-time student in any school, university, or seminary.

B. A 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; and
- 4. Completes 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 the Course of Study is completed; or is enrolled as pre-theology student or in seminary.

C. Student Appointed as Local Pastor (full or part time)

- 1. Is enrolled in an appropriate school of higher education or seminary listed by the University Senate;
- 2. Has met the requirements for licensing; and
- 3. Makes appropriate progress in the required educational program as determined

- by the Board of Ordained Ministry
- 4. May be appointed as student Local Pastors in a conference other than the conference in which they are certified candidates.
- 5. Students who are appointed as Local Pastors continue to relate to the District Committee on Ordained Ministry in the conference in which they are certified candidates and shall be responsible to them for the continuation of their certified candidacy.

4. REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSE AS A LOCAL PASTOR
(See 2012 Book of Discipline, ¶315)

All persons who are not ordained as elders but are appointed to preach, conduct divine worship, and perform the duties of a pastor shall have a license for pastoral ministry. The Board of Ordained Ministry (¶635.2g) may recommend to the executive session of the annual conference the licensing of those persons who are:

- 1. Provisional elders commissioned by the annual conference *or*
- 2. Persons who have done the following:
 - a) Completed the conditions for candidacy certification (see section on Candidacy Certification in this Handbook and in (¶¶311.1-2)
 - b) The Orientation to Ministry. (¶312 effective Jan. 1, 2013) This requirement is fulfilled by attending the appropriate “God’s Calling” event (January event for those up to age 25, August event for adults 26 and older)
 - c) Completed the studies for the license as a Local Pastor as prescribed and supervised by the Division of Ordained Ministry or 1/3 of the work required for a Master of Divinity degree at a school of theology listed by the University Senate.
 - d) Been examined and recommended annually by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (¶ 665.8);
 - e) Been approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry and the executive session of the annual conference (¶ 315.3);

5. LICENSING SCHOOL FOR LOCAL PASTORS
(See 2012 Book of Discipline, ¶315)

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, Section of Elders and Local Pastors. The Licensing School seeks to provide a basic theological foundation for the practice of ministry and to provide beginning skills for those persons who are about to begin serving a local church as a Licensed Pastor. They are the minimal knowledge and skill components essential to the practice of ministry. Licensing School is the beginning of the educational process and is to be followed by Course of Study or Seminary.

A person must be a certified candidate to attend licensing school. The application may be obtained from your district superintendent. You may contact Rev. Dromazos through the district superintendent or by the contact information given below. Contact the Local Pastors’ Registrar of the Board of Ordained Ministry for information on other licensing schools. Licensing schools charge a registration fee, which is paid by the candidate.

To be considered for an appointment as a Local Pastor a person must attend one of these schools and successfully complete the course. However the attending of this school does not guarantee an appointment to a local church. The license as a Local Pastor will not be granted until such time as one is appointed to a charge.

8. MENTORING:

The district superintendent shall assign a clergy mentor. The clergy mentors shall be elders or Local Pastors who have completed COS and shall work with the Local Pastor in meeting the above requirements for continuance. It is the responsibility of the Local Pastor to request that the District Superintendent assign a clergy mentor and initiate meetings with the mentor. The mentor may offer help and guidance in a confidential and mutually beneficial relationship. Mentors should send a quarterly note to the District Superintendent indicating the dates and times of meetings. For Local Pastors who have completed the five-year Course of Study, mentoring is not required. Retired elders are welcomed to serve as clergy mentors for Local Pastors.

9. DISCONTINUANCE OF THE LOCAL PASTOR

(See 2012 Book of Discipline, ¶320.1)

Please refer to the *2012 Book of Discipline* for information regarding discontinuance and surrendering of license and credentials. When a Local Pastor retires or is no longer under appointment or the District Committee on Ordained Ministry does not recommend continuation of the license for pastoral ministry, the license and credentials are surrendered to the district superintendent for deposit in the Bishop's office. 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 the license was discontinued, the Board of Ordained Ministry, and the cabinet. In cases where an appointment is not available, the person may be continued under the category "approved but not appointed". Such persons may be appointed at the discretion of the Bishop. 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. Reinstatement may then be approved by vote of the clergy members in full connection (¶337.1).

10. RETIREMENT OF THE LOCAL PASTOR

(see 2012 Book of Discipline, ¶320.5)

A Local Pastor who has made satisfactory progress in the Course of Study (¶318.1 or 318.2) may be recognized as a retired Local Pastor. **Pensions and Related Benefits** information can be obtained from the conference pension officer. Retired Local Pastors may attend the annual conference sessions with voice but without a vote. Retired Local Pastors can be asked to help with sacraments.

11. COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOLS

(See 2012 Book of Discipline, ¶319.3)

Persons licensed as Local Pastors who are not provisional members shall continue in college, in a program of theological education at an approved seminary, or in the five-year Course of Study. The Course of Study for ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church is provided and administered by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry for persons:

- who are certified candidates for ordained ministry,
- who have successfully completed a conference approved licensing school,
- who have been licensed by the Bishop after approval by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry and Board of Ordained Ministry, and
- who are not attending college or an approved school of theology.

The Course of Study is the basic theological education program of the Division of Ordained Ministry, Section of Elders and Local Pastors. The Course of Study for Ordained Ministry is offered at seven regional Course of Study schools held each summer on the campuses of designated United Methodist theological seminaries.

Local pastors under full time appointment will complete their COS in the residential on-campus program. This is the policy of the Division of Ordained Ministry, to whom our Conference Board is accountable. Their rationale follows:

While it is true that every course must meet for 20 hours of class time (whether extension school or regional school), the regional schools are on the seminary campuses. Students have access to more seminary faculty and libraries, have extra learning activities and can absorb more of what the Council of Bishops Task Force called "our Wesleyan ethos." Pedagogically, one can simply learn more with time and daily engagement, versus the 10 hours for each of 2 weekends, or driving in for 7 hours for 3 Saturdays.

The Division appreciates the work of extension schools and the efforts of bi-vocational persons to continue their learning. But the Division wants to ensure that those in full time ministry make the effort to immerse themselves in learning at one of our seminaries. We do realize that from time to time, there may need to be exceptions. That is why it can be requested. However, it is always an exception for a reason, not a matter of convenience.

Extension courses offered only for part-time Local Pastors are held throughout the year at certain locations. These extension centers usually offer courses in a two or three weekend format, which allows bi-vocational Local Pastors to participate without taking a lot of time away from their work. A part time pastors can take up to 10 courses at the extension centers.

The Course of Study includes a five-year curriculum with four courses per year as follows:

First Year:

- The Pastor as Interpreter of the Bible
- Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit
- Pastoral Care for Spiritual Formation
- Pastoral Leadership and Administration

Second Year:

- Hebrew Bible I: The People of God: The Life and Faith of Ancient Israel
- Theological Heritage: Early & Medieval Christianity
- Formation for Discipleship
- Practice of Preaching

Third Year:

- New Testament I: The People of God: The Life and Faith of the New Testament
- Our Theological Heritage: The Reformation
- Our Mission from God: Evangelism
- Pastoral Care and Counseling

Fourth Year:

- Hebrew Bible II Word of God: Old Testament Texts
- Wesleyan Movement
- Worship and Sacraments
- Personal and Social Ethics

Fifth Year:

- New Testament II: The Word of God: New Testament Texts
- Contemporary Theology
- Our Mission from God: Transforming Agent
- Theology and the Practice of Ministry

Please read carefully the following guidelines for **special circumstances** related to these courses:

- In case of emergency or unusual circumstances, with the approval of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry, courses may be also taken through a correspondence curriculum provided by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. In the Susquehanna Conference, a maximum of **four** courses may be taken by correspondence. Applications for correspondence courses may be obtained from the Office of Ministerial Services. The student pays course fee. The cost is affordable and further information may be obtained through the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. <http://www.gbhem.org>
- Students who wish to take fewer than the “norm” of 4 courses for full-time and 2 courses for part time pastors MUST receive permission from their DCOM and the Local Pastor registrar.
- 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. The request for evaluation must come through the conference Board of Ordained Ministry by letter to the Local Pastor’s registrar.
- No credit is recognized in the Course of Study for undergraduate college work.
- At the discretion of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, clinical pastoral education units or credit from an accredited graduate degree program may be applied to the Course of Study.
- It is the policy of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to limit students to four courses per year in the Course of Study while enrolled in the basic five-year curriculum. The reason for the limitation is that Course of Study students are expected to participate in a program of supervised ministry with a clergy mentor who will assist in the preparation of assignments and the integration of what has been learned with the practice of pastoral ministry.
- While Local pastors may certainly choose the School at which they would like to study, occasionally a transfer may be desirable. However, multiple transfers are not likely to have a positive outcome. While most Course of Study schools will allow the transfer of a number of credits, each Course of Study school prefers that the student fulfills the bulk of their work at one particular school.
- Hybrid COS courses offered at United in Dayton, Ohio are currently being reviewed as to how many may be taken in completing COS.

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry pays tuition for each student enrolled in the four-week summer residential Course of Study schools. The Susquehanna Annual Conference generally offers a reimbursement of \$200 per course passed with a minimum grade of “C” for those Local Pastors registered for the Course of Study. *Scholarships are not given for grades lower than a “C”.*

The scholarship program for Course of Study is reviewed each year and the award is based upon the offerings taken annually by the churches of the Conference on United Methodist Student Day. Your expenses will surely be larger than your stipend, so care should be taken to have extra funds available. Books and supplies are the responsibility of each Local Pastor. Many churches provide budget money for the educational needs of their pastor and the Local Pastor is encouraged to be in dialogue with their PPRC or S/PRC about additional support. The minimum pastor's compensation package includes a continuing education amount. This can be applied to COS an expense as COS is considered to meet the yearly continuing education requirement.

Please note that that Local Pastors who receive a failing grade (“F”) in a class will be required to repeat the course at their own expense.

The Course of Study schools listed seem to best serve the needs of Local Pastors in the Susquehanna Annual Conference. However, you may attend other GBHEM certified schools:

Wesley Theological Seminary Washington DC 202-885-8688
Sara Sheppard 4500 Massachusetts Ave., NW Washington DC 20016
ssheppard@wesleyseminary.edu
www.wesleyseminary.edu/courseofstudy

Wesley Theological Seminary Philadelphia Area Extension School 267-258-9507
Gordon Hendrickson PO Box 163 St. Peters, PA 19470
Gordon@acts6.org

Wesley Theological Seminary Buffalo, NY Extension School 716-677-0802
Denise Barham 810 Union Road – West Seneca, NY 14224
Denisebarham2000@yahoo.com
www.unyumc.org/pages/detail/1464

The Ohio Valley COS (Methodist School of Theology *METHESCO*) <http://www.mtso.edu/cos/>
Course of Study School of Ohio at MTSO 740-362-3120
3081 Columbus Pike Delaware, OH 43015 cos@mtso.edu

Methesco operates the Spring Heights, WV COS for part-time Local Pastors.
Spring Heights Education Center COS
2067 Barrcut Road Spencer, WV 25276

Course of Study School of Ohio @ UTS 937-529-2218
Phyllis Nesselroad 4501 Denlinger Rd. Dayton, OH 45426 cos@united.edu
www.united.edu dept. link “course of study school of Ohio”

Duke Divinity School 888-GO-2-DUKE
Box 90965 Durham, NC 27708-0965 <http://www.divinity.duke.edu/learningforlife/programs/cos/>
Duke Divinity School COS 919-613-5323
312 Blackwell Street, Suite 101 Durham, NC 27701

Wesley Seminary offers full time Local Pastors four courses each summer. Two courses are offered each two-week period. Full time Local Pastors complete one full year by taking both two week terms. Part time Local Pastors have the option of completing one-half year of the course of study by completing two courses (or one term).

Duke Divinity School offers full time Local Pastors four courses taught in four consecutive weeks. The Duke Course of Study is not divided into two-week sections. On campus housing in dormitories is available in single or double rooms. Meals are the responsibility of the student. Campus cafeterias are available as are numerous local restaurants. Each dormitory has facilities for storage and cooking of food. Off- campus housing is available through campus housing. Apartments are available for one person or families. Registration forms may be obtained directly from the seminary. First year students may obtain the form by either calling the Seminary or the Office of Ministerial Services.

The Ohio Valley Course of Study School (Methesco) is for full-time and part-time Local Pastors, hosted by Methodist Theological School in Ohio in cooperation with United Theological Seminary. The school is held on the MTSO campus, with additional locations in West Virginia and Michigan, which is the site for the Native American extension. Courses are offered using a two-weekend format four times a year and over two weeks in the summer. There is generally one month between the first and second weekends of each course. Students may take one course during each regular term, and/or two in the two-week intensive program. (At the Spring Heights location in West Virginia, students take two courses over two, three-day weekends within the first three levels of courses, then one course per session over two, two-day weekends for upper level courses. (See below.)

Weekend Course of Study for Part-time Local Pastors

The Ohio Valley COS and Duke Divinity School offer weekend course of study classes for **part time Local Pastors**. Wesley Seminary has also begun a satellite COS in West Chester, Pennsylvania and in Buffalo, NY, Mt Vernon Square, Washington DC for part-time Local Pastors unable to attend the summer COS sessions. Tuition for the weekend Course of Study is paid by the student, in addition to lodging, meals, and travel. The annual conference generally offers a scholarship for all four courses per year on the weekend model. Please check with the registrar for Local Pastors and associate members for details.

For information about other Course of Study Schools, contact the Office of Ministerial Services. Information is provided through their website: <http://www.gbhem.org> Follow the link to Local Pastor information.

For Your Consideration:

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, clergy mentors, and the Office of Ministerial Services can offer advice as to particular circumstances. One option is to contact a present or past student to learn of the particular schools that are most important to you.

The curriculum is basically the same at all schools. All require advance reading and written assignments and will assign reading and written work to be completed after the classes have ended. It is advisable for the pastor, in consultation with the SPRC, 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.

Your main task in the Course of Study program is to learn well the skills necessary for pastoral ministry. Your churches should understand this and that you are given leave to study. From time to time, pastors do get stressed out over trying to meet the needs of their parishioners while at the Course of Study School. Keep in mind that with adequate preparation, and with the help of your district superintendent, others can readily cover the needs of your parish.

Registration forms may be obtained directly from the Seminary. Completed forms must be sent with the registration fee first to your district superintendent for signature and then to the Local Pastors registrar for signature with a stamped, addressed envelope for the seminary of your choice. The forms will be mailed from the Local Pastors registrar's office. A copy will be kept on file.

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, the North Central Jurisdictional Course of Study School at Garrett-Evangelical in Evanston, Illinois, and the Course of Study School at Claremont in California. 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 underwrites both the tuition and the transportation costs of students attending these schools. For more information, contact the Office of Ministerial Services. If you have other specific language needs, contact the Office of Ministerial Services for assistance and options.

New Congregational Development and Lay Missioner Training Schools

The New Congregational Development and Lay Missioner Training Schools prepare students for new congregational development among poor and marginalized people as part of the mission strategy of the United Methodist Church. Those who successfully complete the program may qualify for license as a Local Pastor and/or credit in the Course of Study. The Course of Study School at Emory in Atlanta and the Appalachian Local Pastors School in the Red Bird Missionary Conference has offered training in new congregational development. The Perkins Course of Study School in Dallas, TX, has offered Lay Missioner Training for Hispanic lay leaders and their pastors. A similar program has been offered from time to time at Garrett-Evangelical Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. For Contact Information:

Perkins: http://www.smu.edu/theology/coss/ENG/coss_eng_main05.html

Garrett: <http://www.garrett.northwestern.edu/content.asp?A=4&C=1199>

Also check with your district superintendent before enrolling in either of these programs. The Susquehanna Conference does not currently use persons in these categories as Local Pastors.

12. LOCAL PASTORS PREPARING FOR PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP AND ELDERS ORDERS (see *2012 Book of Discipline*, ¶324.6-14)

Local pastors may fulfill the requirements for provisional membership and commissioning when they have:

- Reached forty (40) years of age
- Completed the five-year Course of Study for ordained ministry of which no more than half can be completed by correspondence (maximum 4), distance learning or extension schools as offered by seminary approved university settings..

- **Completed thirty-two semester hours of graduate theological study or its equivalent** as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, including a minimum of twenty-four semester hours of the basic graduate theological studies of the Christian faith including the areas of: Old Testament, New Testament, theology, church history, mission of the church in the world, worship/liturgy, and at least two semester or three quarter hours in each of the areas of United Methodist doctrine, polity, and history. Most Local Pastors will complete these courses through the Advanced Course of Study. Four to six semester hours of credit may be earned each summer in this Advanced Course of Study (see below).
- Once commissioned a provisional member, all requirements for full membership and ordination as an elder must be met, including serving two years as a provisional member. See ¶324, *2004 Discipline* and the Susquehanna Annual Conference policies.
- Contact the Elders Registrar for the application deadline for interviews with the Board of Ordained Ministry. Request an application packet prior to that date.

Advanced Course of Study

The purpose of the Advanced Course of Study for Ordained Ministry is to provide a curriculum which will enable a Local Pastor to meet the educational requirements for full conference membership and ordination as an elder.

- 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, preaching, teaching or worship. Courses in evangelism and United Methodist history, doctrine and polity are required.
- Four to six semester hours of credit may be earned each summer in the Advanced Course of Study.
- Advanced Course of Study students may enroll in the Master of Divinity curriculum courses.
- Each student shall have all courses approved and recorded by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.
- 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.
- Susquehanna Annual Conference students must meet the educational requirements set by the Board of Ordained Ministry for full membership and ordination as an elder.

These requirements must be met one full year prior to ordination.

Advanced Course of Study courses are offered during the summer sessions with the regular Course of Study schools. (See Section 11 - Course of Study Schools as above for registration, scholarship, and cost information.)

13. APPLYING FOR ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Some Local Pastors may wish to apply for Associate Membership in the Annual Conference after they have completed Course of Study. An Associate Member has the same appointment security as Elders have and are fully itinerant.

Requirements for Commissioning and Ordination
Susquehanna Conference Board of Ordained Ministry
For Licensed Local Pastors, COS Complete, Seeking Associate Membership
(Full itineration)

1. Disciplinary requirements:

Refer to ¶ 321-322 in The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church

- a. Reached 40 years of age (Paragraph 322.1)
- b. Served four years as full-time Local Pastor (Paragraph 322.2).
Per Susquehanna Conference policy, two of these years are to be served following completion of COS. *Those years must be full time and are not to be rolled into a 2 year equivalent.*
- c. Completed five-year, 20 credits, Course of Study (Paragraph 322.4).
Half of which may be taken by week end, online/distance learning or correspondence (max 4)
- d. Completed a minimum of 60 semester hours toward a Bachelor of Arts or equivalent at an approved school or university. (Paragraph 322.4)

Each candidate will ask his/her District Committee to approve their application for Associate Membership.

Each candidate will ask his/her District Superintendent to submit a reference.

Contact the Local Pastor & Associate Member Registrar for the application packet and information regarding interviews with the Board of Ordained Ministry. Request an application packet prior to that date.

Each candidate will submit written materials and be interviewed in: **Worship; Life Issues; Theology; VIM experience; Bible Study**

14. FELLOWSHIP OF LOCAL PASTORS AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

The Susquehanna Annual Conference places a high value on the ministry of the Local Pastor. The first line of support for the Local Pastor is their mentor. Through this relationship, the Local Pastor has an advocate, a prayer partner and a person of wise counsel with whom to relate. The Local Pastors also have the counsel of the Local Pastors registrar, clergy colleagues and of course, their district superintendents. We believe in being **connectional**. This is to say that we share our joys, our resources, our support for each other, and our love for Christ in ways that keep us healthy and productive in our life and our ministry.

From time to time, certain circumstances warrant additional help. Family crises, health related emergencies and unexpected difficulties arise. The Local Pastor has a great variety of resources at hand. Do not be afraid to ask for help when you need it. The annual conference provides budget and debt counseling services, personal and family therapy services and other such helps. There is a Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members. The Fellowship seeks to assist each Local Pastor in the highest standards of ministry in its quarterly meeting format. Please take time to learn

what it means to be in this *connection* and seek to practice being *in connection* with your colleagues in ministry. When you need help, you are encouraged to ask for it.

Purpose

The purpose of the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members is to provide a direct connection to the ministry of the Order of the Elders with Local Pastors and associate members of the annual conference. Together we are partners with Christ in the ministry of the church to our world. In the Proverbs we read “*As iron sharpens iron so one person sharpens another*” (Proverbs 27:17) The Fellowship will function to inform the Local Pastors and associate members in ministry, affirm them in their work and inspire them in their calling. Through the unique connections formed through this fellowship, our Local Pastors and associate members will have the space to create and nurture meaningful collegial relationships that can deepen their faith and create a natural and beneficial sense of accountability in ministry. In addition, the fellowship can strengthen the sense of shared ministry with those of the Order of Elders to create an authentic camaraderie in our calling.

Organization

The Fellowship is organized to have one person from each conference district, a Local Pastor or an associate member to serve as chair, one person to serve as secretary. In addition, the registrar of Local Pastors and associate members, the dean of the Local Pastors licensing school, and the chairperson of the Order of Elders will serve on the Fellowship to guide and advise the Fellowship in its work and function. The resident Bishop also serves to convene and guide the Fellowship.

The chairperson and secretary of the steering team will be nominated by the Board of Ordained Ministry and elected by clergy session of annual conference to serve for a quadrennium. The Bishop, in consultation with the cabinet and the Board of Ordained Ministry, will select team members so that each district is equally represented.

Role of the Order of Elders and the Board of Ordained Ministry

The ministry of all Local Pastors and associate members is directly connected to the ministry of the elders. Our shared ministry is to make disciples of Jesus Christ and to preach the word, order the church and administer the sacraments. The Order of Elders models transformational ministry in the Wesleyan spirit of connection in order to affirm and by grace, inspire the Local Pastors and associate members in our common tasks for Jesus Christ and his church.

The Board of Ordained Ministry guides the Local Pastors and associate members to faithfully follow our United Methodist *Discipline* and to provide guidance and encouragement to them. In addition to spiritual and ethical nurture, the chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry ensures financial representation of the Fellowship to the conference council on finance and administration in our yearly budgeting process.

Structure of the Steering Team

1. The Chairperson

By *Discipline*, one Local Pastor or associate member shall be selected to serve as chairperson of the Fellowship. The chairperson will serve in this role for a quadrennium. The chairperson will call meetings of the steering team, move the work of the meetings, and ensure that each district liaison is fully informed of the work of the Fellowship. The chairperson will also work for consensus in the steering team and assist in developing the programmatic work of the Fellowship.

2. Secretary

One Local Pastor or associate member shall serve as secretary to the Fellowship. The duties of the secretary will include keeping accurate records of the meetings of the steering committee and representing his/her district to the Fellowship. The secretary will also relate to the communication structures in the annual conference, such as the *Link*, *QuikLink* and other media resources to keep our Local Pastors and associate members informed of the Fellowship's activities.

3. Team Members (11)

Seven persons, being licensed Local Pastors or associate members currently under appointment, shall be selected from their peers to serve on the steering team. They will represent the districts in which they are appointed. They will meet with the rest of the team on a regular basis to determine the needs of the Fellowship as it relates to Local Pastors and associate members, and will take an active part in the planning, preparation, execution and evaluation of the activities of the Fellowship.

4. Registrar

The Local Pastors and associate members registrar will serve on the steering team in an advisory capacity. In addition, the registrar will report the needs, concerns and progress of the Fellowship to the Board of Ordained Ministry on a regular basis.

5. Dean of the Local Pastors Licensing School

The dean of the Local Pastors licensing school will serve on the steering team in advisory capacity. The dean will have input on the team and will also monitor the needs of the Fellowship and relate to the curriculum needs of the yearly licensing school.

6. Chairperson of the Order of Elders

The chairperson of the Order of Elders will serve on the steering team in an advisory capacity. In addition, the chairperson of the Order of Elders will report the needs, concerns and progress of the Fellowship to the Bishop, cabinet and to the Board of Ordained Ministry. The chairperson will also serve as a channel of communication regarding the shared ministry of the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members and the Order of Elders.

7. Bishop

The Bishop, by *Discipline*, convenes the Fellowship and is responsible for its well-being, direction and nurture and serves to discern and coordinate our shared ministry in the annual conference.

Funding & Budget Process

The chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry shall consult with the steering team and the Local Pastor and Associate Members Registrar each year to develop a budget for the ministry of the Fellowship. The chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry will represent the Fellowship to the conference council on finance and administration. It is anticipated that costs will include fees and expenses for seminar speakers, retreat expenses, printed material, and media resources.

An Overview of the Work of the Fellowship

The Fellowship will organize its ministry in accordance with the *Discipline* as outlined above. Because the needs for basic information and spiritual growth are so important among our Local Pastors, the steering team will organize to address these issues and especially to offer training in best ministry practices and opportunities for spiritual development. The work of the Fellowship is to utilize our resources in our connection to learn and grow so that our ministries have a high impact for transformation in the local church and community. Our focus therefore will be to offer practical help for a variety of programs and avenues for the development of a spirituality that will support

and sustain transformational leadership as pastors live out the gospel in their own lives and with the members of their churches and in the wider community. Pastors as professionals are the last of the “general practitioners” and are often scrambling for resources in efforts to address the gospel in their own setting. Within our conference we have many experienced pastors able to help with best practices as well as exciting new ideas and worthwhile cautions. We also have a Center for Spiritual Formation that offers a wide variety of resources for spiritual enrichment and spiritual direction. Our larger United Methodist connection likewise offers a wealth of resources in the Wesleyan tradition that can greatly benefit our Local Pastors and associate members in the Fellowship. A year’s worth of meetings would be organized similar to this structure offered below:

June	Orientation to Ministry for New Local Pastors (one day format)
November	Three Day Retreat for all Local Pastors and Associate Members
Late March	Best Practices/Spiritual Formation Seminar
May	Best Practices/Spiritual Formation Seminar

15. PENSIONS AND RELATED BENEFITS FOR LOCAL PASTORS

Contact Mr. Gary Smith or Ms. Zedna Haverstock, at the Conference Treasurer’s Office in Mechanicsburg. (1-800-874-8474)

16. CLERGY TAXES

United Methodist Clergy taxes are challenging. Many tax preparers are NOT familiar with the nuances of clergy taxes. You are encouraged to attend the Clergy Tax seminar which is generally held each fall. Watch the *QuikLink* for details. Clergy are considered employees for IRS purposes but self-employed for Social Security. You must make quarterly payments towards your Social Security taxes. State and local taxes may be withheld. Federal tax may be withheld or paid quarterly along with the SS tax.

17. PAPERWORK AND REPORTS

There is of course, much administrative work to be done by the Local Pastor. Reports need to be filed, statistics need to be updated on a regular basis, and the membership records need to be accurate. One of the administrative tasks of the church year is the preparation required for the annual charge or church conference.

Charge Conference Preparation and Presentation

The preparation for charge conference begins as soon as one is appointed to a charge and continues through the year. These steps will help to ensure a successful charge conference:

1. Watch for an announcement from the district superintendent regarding the availability of charge conference materials on the conference web site. The annual conference website [<http://www.susumc.org>] has links to the charge conference report forms.
2. Dates for Charge/Church conferences are generally assigned by the Superintendent. When known, place the date on the charge calendar and announce it to the charge. Follow the guidelines in the *Discipline* for announcing Charge/Church Conference.

3. Be sure to schedule meetings with your SPRC and finance committees so they can begin their work and be prepared at charge or church conference with accurate information.
4. As soon as possible begin meeting with the committee on lay leadership to secure the necessary personnel to do the work of ministry in the local church. It is not always necessary to fill every position listed on the district and conference forms.
5. Some forms and reports need to be distributed to lay persons (such as the Report of the Trustees form to the trustee chairperson, forms for the lay speakers, etc.) well ahead of the scheduled charge or church conference. If possible, make copies of the previous year's reports to assist them in the completion of the reports for the current year.
- 6 Keeping good records throughout the year helps to ensure that everything needed for the charge or church conference reports is accurate and up to date.
- 7 The clergy mentor should be a primary resource to the Local Pastor in preparing for the charge conference.

End of the Year Reports

Many of the same statistics that were reported at the charge conference will need to be filed on a special report at the end of the year. These reports cover the calendar year, from the first of January to the end of December, and become the basis for the figures found in the yearly Journal of the annual conference.

1. These reports will be available on-line. Watch for information through the *QuikLink*.
2. Note the dates by which all monies are to be paid on your yearly shares of ministry by the conference treasurer.
3. Schedule a time to work with the church treasurer to meet and figure the amounts to be reported. Other persons, such as your membership secretary, trustee's chairperson and S/SPRC chairperson will need to be contacted as well for help in obtaining membership, financial and other figures.
4. Ensure that all reports are submitted by the January 31 deadline. Annual audit is due March 15.

Membership Records

It is absolutely essential that thorough and accurate membership records be maintained. If the church being served is not using the **Membership Record System for the Local Church**, or something similar, every effort should be made to change to that type of record keeping. The Local Pastor will want to be diligent in maintaining a chronological roll of the church's members, which will make it possible to know at a glance how many members are currently enrolled in the church. If the church does not have a layperson serving as membership secretary, one should be recruited to help with maintaining this record as well as the preparatory membership roll, records of baptisms, changes in membership, and records of all births, deaths, marriages, etc. Good record keeping is a key part of the ministry of administration.

18. WHO'S WHO

District Superintendent (DS): Your primary relationship is with your district superintendent. Call him/her about appointment information and with questions that your mentor suggests that you refer to the DS. Get to know your DS. The better your DS knows you, the better your DS can represent your gifts for ministry in the appointment process.

District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOM): Your primary relationship related to your credentials for ministry. Files on Local Pastors are kept by the DCOM.

Clergy Mentor: A person assigned by the DCOM in cooperation with the district superintendent to mentor all Local Pastors who have not completed Course of Study.

Registrars of the Board of Ordained Ministry: provide help to district committees and district superintendents in working with Local Pastors, coordinate registrations for the Course of Study, licensing school, new clergy orientation, and work with Local Pastors who are seeking ordination.

Chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry: Rev. Charles Sprenkle is the person to contact if you have questions or requests of the board. If you are making application *under an exception* in *The Discipline*, you must write a letter, stating the reason for the exception. The Executive committee of the board will act on all requests as needed.

Pensions and Health Insurance: Contact Mr. Gary Smith or Ms. Zedna Haverstock, at the Conference Treasurer's Office in Mechanicsburg. (1-800-874-8474)

19. Continuing Education

Guidelines for Continuing Theological Education and Spiritual Formation Board of Ordained Ministry

For the following persons

- **Elders under appointment**
- **Deacons in full or Associate Membership under appointment**
- **Local pastors under appointment**
- **Diaconal ministers**
- **Associate Members under appointment**

The minister, in consultation with the SPRC and the district superintendent, shall develop a continuing theological education program annually. The Board of Ordained Ministry is charged with providing support services and certification of continuing education events. Support includes help in learning how to plan a program for continuing theological education which enables ministry, making continuing theological education events available, and providing limited financial resources upon written request to the continuing education and spiritual formation committee to participate in approved programs when funds are available.

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

- A. The measuring unit shall be a Continuing Education Unit (C.E.U.).
- B. Definition of a C.E.U.: Each of the following shall be the equivalent of one C.E.U.:
1. Ten contact hours (instructional session or its equivalent) under qualified leadership. [It is assumed that programs sponsored by an agency of the general church, jurisdiction, conference, district, ecumenical, or community service institution or covenant study groups will have qualified leadership. In such instances, a letter from the sponsoring agency will be sufficient. For professional study-travel, only trips which provide the required contact hours (lectures, discussions under qualified leadership) are acceptable. Repeat trips to the same place will not qualify.]
 2. Twenty hours of reading and reflection in the knowledge competency areas as follows: scripture, theology, church history, church polity, understanding and practice of the art of communication (including computer literacy), and human relations, provided that no more than one C.E.U. defined as reading and reflection may be credited toward the minimum standard annually.
 3. The sponsoring agency should provide C.E.U. certificates. If attending an event that is not issuing a certificate, an application to the Continuing Formation Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry may be made by documenting attendance and contact hours. If approved, BOOM will issue a certificate.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- A. The primary instrument of accountability will be an annual report made during the fall months on continuing education completed during the year. The report form will be included in the Charge Conference forms. Note that continuing education/formation is reported based on the conference year and not the calendar year.
- B. Copies of the report will be distributed to: (1) the charge conference, (2) the district superintendent,

PROGRAM AREAS FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

The following areas are affirmed as appropriate for continuing education and spiritual formation. It is suggested that at least one half of the total continuing education applied to minimal standards over a quadrenium should be spent in professional and pastoral studies to enrich your ministry. Some clergy spend time pursuing other studies for personal enrichment, and that is often a healthy way to channel your energy and discover new abilities, skills and insights. Spiritual formation through events focusing on prayer, Bible study and other spiritual disciplines and retreats is especially important in sustaining ongoing ministry. Each year, in January, you are required to give a report of your continuing educational pursuits. The report is due to the office of the district superintendent by January 31st, each year.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Check the Board of Ordained Ministry Website for information on financial assistance. *QuikLink* will also be a source of information for special events and financial help.