

## FELLOWSHIP OF LOCAL PASTORS AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

*(This is found on page 14 of the Susquehanna Annual Conference Local Pastors Handbook)*

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 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:

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