

THE SUSQUEHANNA CONFERENCE
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
CONTINUING FORMATION MANUAL



Revised 10/07/2013

Mission Statement: Our purpose is to facilitate continuing formation of appointed pastors within the Susquehanna Annual Conference in order to give servant leadership for a joy-filled people in vital congregations making disciples of Jesus Christ.

All paragraph references are to the *2012 Book of Discipline*

Continuing Education and Spiritual Growth

1. ¶351.1 (2012 Book of Discipline)

Throughout their careers, clergy shall engage in continuing education for ministry, professional development, and spiritual formation and growth in order to lead the church in fulfilling the mission of making disciples for Jesus Christ. This shall include carefully developed personal programs of study augmented periodically by involvement in organized educational and spiritual growth

2. Continuing education and spiritual growth is understood to be a lifetime process. These plans should allow at "at least one week each year and at least one month during one year of each quadrennium" to be devoted to this process. (¶351.2)

3. Clergy members of the Annual Conference who have held full-time appointments for at least five years may request a formational and spiritual growth leave of up to six months while continuing to hold a pastoral appointment. (¶351.3)

4. Financial arrangements for continuing education as part of one's professional development, formation, and spiritual growth shall be negotiated in the following manner: (a) for elders and local pastors it shall be done in consultation with the district superintendent and the committee on pastor-parish relations; (b) for deacons, with an appropriate supervisory body; (c) for district superintendents, with the district committee on superintendency; (d) for conference staff, with the appropriate supervisory body; (e) for others in extension ministries, with the appropriate persons in their agency. (¶351.4)

5. Clergy shall report on their programs of Continuing Education and Spiritual Formation at the annual charge conference. (¶351.5, 351.6) This form shall be copied and 1 copy placed in personal clergy records, recording secretary of Church Conference, forwarded to the District Superintendent, and the Bishop's Office

6. A Sabbatical Leave must be approved by the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and is available to associate members and clergy members in full connection who have been serving in a full-time appointment for six consecutive years from the time of their reception into full or associate membership. (¶352)

7. Clergy in extension ministries shall give evidence of their continuing formation and spiritual growth program and future plans in their annual reports (¶351.6, 344.2a).

DEFINITION AND RATIONALE

Continuing Formation includes spiritual formation as well as study and skill development. As all Christians need to be involved in a lifelong process of spiritual formation which includes discernment of God's specific call, prayer, Christian fellowship, and the other classical disciplines of the Christian life. Clergy also have a responsibility to continue to grow in the skills and knowledge required to participate with Christ in leading the Church in their own time and place.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CONTINUING FORMATION

1. Each clergyperson is responsible for developing and carrying out his/her own personal plan for continuing formation. In developing a personal program the following areas should be considered:
 - a.) The skills needed to effectively serve in the current appointment.
 - b.) Personal spiritual needs.
 - c.) Developing a vision for the future.
2. For those appointed to a local church, the local church Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee is responsible for providing time and monetary resources so that clergy can be involved in continuing formation. (§258.2.g.8) At the present moment, the Annual Conference policy mandates a minimum of **\$750** for continuing education and spiritual formation to be part of the compensation package of full time appointments.
3. The Board of Ordained Ministry is responsible for setting the guidelines and standards for continuing education, formation in servant leadership and continuing spiritual growth in Christ, and ensuring the availability of needed experiences. (§635.2.o,p,q)
4. The Bishop and the Cabinet are responsible for the enforcement of requirements placed upon clergy appointed within the conference. (§419.5)
5. The Board of Ordained Ministry is responsible to administer the portion of the Ministerial Education Fund for use by the annual conference in its programs of...continuing formation....and professional growth of ordained ministers. (§635.2x)

Susquehanna Annual Conference Policies

1. Each clergy person under appointment is required to complete a minimum of 2.5 Continuing Education Units each conference year and a total of 10 Continuing Education Units during each quadrennium.
2. Ten contact hours are equivalent to 1.0 Continuing Education Unit.
3. Continuing Education Units may be granted by the Committee on Continuing Formation of the Board of Ordained Ministry for individual programs of study and skill development and for group events in which Continuing Education Units are not offered. The Committee will require a detailed description of the study program or event, an outline of the program and content, the name of qualified leaders or resource persons and the date(s) for the program the number of contact hours involved and a written request for CEU'S. Limited funding may be available for these events.
4. Realizing that the two often overlap, it is the conviction of the Committee on Continuing Formation that an individual program of continuing formation should include a balance between spiritual formation and study/skill development.
5. Clergypersons should design and carry out a balanced program of continuing formation in a four year cycle. Every four years, one's personal program should be evaluated and revised.

TYPES OF CONTINUING FORMATION EVENTS, HOW TO APPLY AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT AVAILABLE SHORT-TERM EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

(Short Retreats, Conferences, Individualized Educational or Spiritual Programs or Small Groups Organized for Study)

Applicants must be full or associate members or full-time local pastors under appointment in the Susquehanna Conference. - Eligibility shall not be tied to seniority.

Financial Support: Grants may be given by the Continuing Formation Committee from Continuing Education Funds Line Item upon the approval of the Board of Ordained Ministry. Only direct educational expenses shall be considered.

How to apply for credit:

- All who are seeking Continuing Educational Units in individualized educational programs, individualized spiritual programs and small groups organized for study must obtain authorization from the Committee on Continuing Formation either prior to but not more than 3 months after completion of the event. (Submitting an application does not assure granting of CEU's. Therefore all are urged to apply prior to participation in the event)
- General Guidelines for the building of short-term educational opportunities i.e., the Individualized Educational Program, Individualized Spiritual Program and Small Groups organized for Study.
 - What are the specific educational and formational objectives?
 - How is the program to be administered?
 - What evaluative devices are to be included?
 - Annotated Bibliography (after completion).
- **Individualized Spiritual Program:**
 - All criteria applicable to the Individualized Educational Program apply here as well.
 - The program may be designed around:
 - Spiritual Retreat
 - A significant event in the applicant's area of weakness, as identified by the S/PPRC or by the applicant.
 - A Documented Travel Journey
 - Annotated Bibliography
 - Itinerary
 - Learning objectives
 - Journal (after completion)
- **Small Group Organized for Study**
 - Title or Subject
 - Participants
 - Learning objectives - what does the group intend to do?
 - Format: Location, Frequency of meetings, Accountability
 - Coordinator/Administrator
 - What does the group intend to produce?

- The product of the group's work must be submitted to the Committee on Continuing Formation prior to the granting of Continuing Education Credit. **Reminder** - Credit should be negotiated with the Continuing Formation Committee prior to the beginning of the program.

NON-STRUCTURED EVENTS -These must include evaluative devices submitted to the Committee on Continuing Formation of the Board of Ordained Ministry. These evaluative devices may include the following: (1) Research papers. (2) Reaction papers. (3) Critiques. (4) Logs (5) Journals (6) Written Reports (7) Oral reports/Interviews.

Continuing Education Units shall be granted by the Board of Ordained Ministry upon recommendation of the Continuing Formation Committee at the completion of the Short-Term Educational Programs and Events. A Certificate will be issued accordingly.

ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

Realizing the growing availability of non-degree longer term programs funds are now available amounting to \$3000 for such programs. The guidelines for Advanced Academic Degrees apply.

ADVANCED DEGREE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS - The Candidate is requested to provide the Board of Ordained Ministry with the following: a) A description of the advanced professional or academic programs and a letter of acceptance from the Institution. b) A statement of personal and professional goals as discussed with the District Superintendent. c) A letter of approval from the District Superintendent. d) A letter of support from the SPRC of the Charge/agency.

Funding - Depending upon the availability of funds, up to **\$5000.00** may be granted to each Candidate. *The grant will be issued in two installments, one at the beginning of the program and the other at the midway point of the program. A progress report from the Institution should be forwarded to the BOOM annually through the Committee on Continuing Formation Chair.* - Grants will be considered only for those applicants who have completed their educational requirements for ordination and have completed 5 years under appointment. - At the completion of the program a copy of the Diploma/Certificate must be forwarded to the Board of Ordained Ministry for the records, through the Continuing Formation Committee Chair.

SABBATICALS (12 months) Availability: - Available to full-members who have been under full-time appointment for six consecutive years from the time of their reception into full membership. - Available to associate members who have been under full-time appointment for eight consecutive years from the time of their reception into associate membership. - Further leave is possible only after six additional years of service. Financial Support should come from the following sources: - Local Church. Educational Leave Fund administered by the Committee on Continuing Formation of the Board of Ordained Ministry. Expenses which may be covered by the Educational Leave Fund: i. Tuition ii. Travel iii. Living Costs iv. Day care v. Direct Educational Expenses

How to apply: - Apply in writing to the Chairperson of the Continuing Formation Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry with a copy to the Bishop and District Superintendent at least six months in advance. Include the following documentation if applicable: i. A letter from the District Superintendent. ii. A letter from the P/SPRC of the local church. iii. A letter from the Administrative Board or Council of the local church. iv. A budget outlining cost and sources of funding. v. Outline

and content of course/program. Continuing Education Credit is to be negotiated with the Committee on Continuing Formation.

SHORT-TERM STUDY LEAVES (One to six months)

Availability - One month study leaves are available to members and full time Local Pastors each quadrennium. -- Three Month leaves are available to members and full-time Local Pastors after five years of full-time service. - Six Month leaves are available to members and full-time Local Pastors after ten years of full-time service. - If the leave is longer than one month, further leave is possible only after six additional years of service. Financial Support - The local church, Conference, or institution served, shall pay at least 80% of the cash salary of the clergyperson during the leave. - Grants may be made available from the Continuing Formation Committee from the Educational Leave Fund. - Expenses that may be covered by the Educational Leave Fund include: Tuition, Travel, Living Costs, Day Care, Direct Educational Expenses

How to Apply - Apply in writing to the Chairperson of the Committee on Continuing Formation of the Board of Ordained Ministry. - Include the following documentation: letter from the District Superintendent, preferably six months in advance, letter from the SPRC of the local church indicating approval of the educational plan, letter from the Administrative Board/Council stating that the plan has been shared and discussed with them, budget outlining cost and sources of funding, outline and content of course/program. Continuing Education Credit is to be negotiated with the Committee on Continuing Formation.