

Methodism 101

Week 3: Ordination and Clergy

February 8, 2022

Opening Activity: Think about a clergy person who has had a positive impact on your life. How were they impactful?

All of today's information can be found in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*.

What is ordination? The process through which one becomes an ordained elders or deacons , set apart for specific ministries.

¶301.2: "Within the church community, there are persons whose gifts, evidence of God's grace, and promise of future usefulness are affirmed by the community, and who respond to God's call by offering themselves in leadership as set-apart ministers, ordained and licensed."

Where does the idea of ordination come from?

¶302: "The early church, through the laying on of hands, set apart persons with responsibility to preach, to teach, to administer the sacraments, to nurture, to heal, to gather the community in worship, and to send them forth in witness. The church also set apart persons to care for the physical needs of others, reflecting the concerns for the people of the world."

Read Ephesians 4:1-12

What do ordained clergy do?

¶303: 1.) "Those who are ordained make a commitment to conscious living of the whole gospel and to the proclamation of that gospel to the end that the world made by saved."

2.) "Ordination is fulfilled in leadership of the people of God through ministries of service, word, sacrament, order, compassion and justice.

3.) Elders: "Those whose leadership include preaching and teaching the Word of God, administration of the sacraments, ordering the church for its mission and service, and administration of the discipline of the church are ordained as Elders."

4.) Deacons: "Those who respond to God's call to lead in service, word, compassion, and justice and equip others for this ministry through teaching, proclamation, and worship and who assist elders in the administration of the sacraments are ordained as deacons."

5.) "Through ordination and through other offices of pastoral leadership, the church provides for the continuation of Christ's ministry, which has been committed to the

church as a whole. Without creative use of the diverse gifts of the entire body of Christ, the ministry of the church is less effective. Without responsible leadership, the focus, direction, and continuity of that ministry is diminished. It is out of the faith and witness of the congregation that men and women respond to God's call to ordained ministry.

Elders vs. Deacons

Shared Work: Proclamation, service, weddings, funerals

Elders: Administration of the Sacraments, ordering the church, administration of the discipline of the church.

Deacons: compassion, justice, empowering others to works of compassion and justice, assisting elders in the administration of sacraments.

How does one become an ordained elder or deacon? (§310-314)

- 1.) To Become a certified candidate for ordinations, must complete the following
 - a.) Be a member of a UMC or UM Campus ministry for at least one year.
 - b.) Write your call story and share with the District Superintendent for approval.
 - c.) Register with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry
 - d.) Request a meeting/evaluation with SPRC to be evaluated in light of Wesley's historic questions.
 - i.) Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire nothing but God? Are they holy in all manner of conversation?
 - ii.) Have they gifts, as well as evidence of God's grace, for the work? Have they a clear, sound understanding; a right judgement in the things of God; a just conception of salvation by faith? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?
 - iii.) Have they fruit? Have any been truly convinced of sin and converted to God and are believers edified by their service?
 - e.) Charge Conference approval of $\frac{2}{3}$ written ballot vote.
 - f.) Undergo psychological evaluations, criminal background checks, and credit checks.
 - g.) Meet with the District Committee of Ordained Ministry (DCOM) and be approved by $\frac{3}{4}$ vote.
 - h.) Candidacy must be approved annually by the Charge Conference and the DCOM until the candidate is commissioned.
- 2.) Be Commissioned as a Provisional Deacon, must complete the following
 - a.) Complete and undergraduate degree.
 - b.) Complete a Master of Divinity or equivalent degree.
 - i.) Must include 27 hours of "Basic Graduate Theological Studies" which must include courses in Old Testament, New Testament,

Theology, Church history, mission, evangelism, worship and United Methodist polity, doctrine, and history.

- c.) Be a certified candidate for at least one year.
 - d.) Get approval by the DCOM to apply for provisional membership by $\frac{3}{4}$ vote.
 - e.) Submit academic transcripts.
 - f.) Submit a satisfactory certificate of good health completed by a physician.
 - g.) Respond to written and oral doctrinal examination by the conference board of ordained ministry (BOM) by submitting written work and having a personal interview.
 - h.) Be approved by the BOM with a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote.
- 3.) Be ordained in full connection as a deacon or elder, must complete the following.
- a.) Attend "RIOM: Residency in Ordained Ministry" sessions for three years.
 - b.) Work under "Appointment" for at least 2 years.
 - i.) Elders are assigned or appointed by the Bishop and the cabinet.
 - ii.) Deacons must find their own employment and it must be approved by the Bishop and cabinet.
 - c.) Must satisfy the BOM regarding physical, mental, and emotional health.
 - d.) Prepare and preach at least one written sermon on a Biblical passage specified by the BOM.
 - e.) Present a detailed plan and outline for teaching a Bible study.
 - f.) Present a project that demonstrates faithfulness in carrying out the church's mission of "making disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World."
 - g.) Respond to a written or oral examination by the BOM
 - h.) Be approved for ordination by the BOM with a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote.

Other things clergy do

- 1.) Support the work of the Annual Conference and Districts by serving on committees and task forces.
- 2.) ¶403: Serve as Bishops
 - a.) Bishops are elected from the elders and set apart for a ministry of servant leadership, general oversight and supervision.
 - b.) Bishops lead in the following disciplines
 - i.) A vital and renewing Spirit
 - ii.) And enquiring mind and a commitment to the teaching office
 - iii.) A vision for the church

iv.) A prophetic commitment to the transformation of the Church and the world.

v.) A passion for the unity of the Church

vi.) Ministry of administration

3.) ¶403: Serve as District Superintendents

a.) District Superintendents are elders in full connection appointed by the Bishop and the cabinet as an extension of the superintending role of the Bishop within the Annual Conference under the supervision of the resident bishops.