

The Ministry of the Local Pastor

The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2008

Section IV. License for Pastoral Ministry

¶ 315. “License for Pastoral Ministry – All persons not ordained as elders who are appointed to preach and conduct divine worship and perform the duties of a pastor shall have a license for pastoral ministry. . .”

Persons who choose to be local pastors must be certified candidates through their district committee on ordained ministry following all requirements found in The Discipline and the Texas Annual Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. They may serve in part-time or full-time appointments.

The license for Local Pastor is renewed annually by their district committee and their license remains valid only so long as the appointment continues under the supervision of a district superintendent.

The Local Pastor may meet their academic requirements by attending seminary to complete a M.Div. degree or go to Course of Study, which requires a curriculum of five courses taken within eight years for the full-time local pastor and twelve years for the part-time local pastor. While under appointment and attending seminary or Course of Study, a Local Pastor shall be assigned a clergy mentor. (¶349)

¶316. “. . . A Local Pastor, approved annually by the district committee on ordained ministry, may be licensed to perform all the duties of a pastor (¶340), including the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion as well as the service of marriage (where state laws allow), burial, confirmation, and membership reception, within and while appointed to a particular charge or extension ministry.”

A Local Pastor only has pastoral authority within his or her charge conference.

Licensed local pastors are a necessary part of the itinerant structure of The United Methodist Church. When there is a shortage of seminary graduates available for appointment to churches, local pastors are asked to step in and fill the void. When new churches are started in ethnic and immigrant communities, local pastors from these communities often are appointed to care for these groups. When churches can no longer provide the salary package and benefits required for full-time itinerant ministry, local pastors are appointed to meet the needs of these congregations.

“I don’t know what we would do without Local Pastors in my district. Most of our churches are served by hard-working Local Pastors.”

District Superintendent

For more information:

http://www.gbhem.org/site/c.lsKSL3POLvF/b.3584091/k.9D9C/Local_Pastor.htm