

## **United Methodist Itineracy**

Prepared for Uwharrie District, Laura Auten, Missional Strategist and District Superintendent

Acts 13: 2-3: "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them'. Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off."

Acts 14:23: "And after they had appointed elders for them in each church, with prayer and fasting they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe."

### ***Why do United Methodist pastors move from place to place?***

Itineracy is the system in The United Methodist Church by which pastors are appointed to a church or a charge by a bishop. United Methodist pastors are under obligation to serve where appointed. The present form of the itineracy grew from the practice of Methodist pastors traveling widely throughout the church on circuits. Source: A Dictionary for United Methodists, Alan K. Waltz, Copyright 1991, Abingdon Press

### ***What is a Bishop? Who is our Bishop?***

A Bishop is an ordained elder elected to the office of bishop. A bishop serves as a general superintendent of the denomination. Individually and collectively bishops give general oversight to the temporal and spiritual interests of the entire denomination. The Greek word for bishop is episcopos, which is the root word for episcopal. Our Bishop is Bishop Paul Leeland, Western North Carolina Annual Conference, Southeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church.

### ***What is a District Superintendent?***

A District Superintendent is an ordained minister appointed by a bishop to oversee the pastors and local churches in a district. The superintendent carries a wide range of responsibilities for the local churches in the district and throughout the Conference as a whole. Primary responsibilities relate to overseeing the work of the local churches, including presiding at Charge Conferences, and supervising the work of the pastors, including participating with the bishop in the making of appointments. The District Superintendent is the chief missional strategist for the district. Source: A Dictionary for United Methodists, Alan K. Waltz, Copyright 1991, Abingdon Press

### ***What is the Cabinet?***

The organization in an annual conference whose membership consists of the resident bishop and the district superintendents. The Cabinet provides oversight and direction for the work of the annual conference, districts, and local churches. The Cabinet works as a unit on developing the appointments for the ministerial members, which are made or fixed by the bishop.

Source: A Dictionary for United Methodists, Alan K. Waltz, Copyright 1991, Abingdon Press.

## Other Terms and Definitions

**Ministry of All Christians:** Through our baptism, all are called to ministries of sharing the gospel. Each baptized Christian, lay and ordained, is equipped with unique gifts and distinctive vocations. All are called to share the love of God in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Source: The Method our Mission: United Methodist Polity and Organization, Lacey C. Warner

**Elder:** A person ordained to a lifetime ministry of service, word, sacrament and order. He or she is authorized to preach and teach God's word, to administer the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, and to order the life of the church for mission and ministry. Elders itinerate and make themselves available for appointment by the bishop. Elders serve both the local church and in settings that extend the ministry of the church. Source: Sharing God's Gifts Glossary of United Methodist Terms

**Deacon:** An ordained clergyperson who is called to serve all people, particularly the poor, the sick, and the oppressed, and to equip and lead the laity in ministries of compassion, justice and service in the world. In this capacity, he or she leads the church in relating the gathered community to their ministries in the world, thus connecting the church's worship with its service in the world. A deacon has the authority to teach and proclaim God's Word, to lead in worship, to assist elders in the administration of the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, to perform the marriage ceremony where the laws of the state permit, and to bury the dead. Deacons are ordained to a lifetime ministry of word, service, compassion and justice. Deacons do not itinerate. They are full members of the annual conference. Source: InfoServ

**Local pastor:** A licensed (not ordained) pastor, annually approved by the district committee on ordained ministry, who is authorized to perform all duties of an ordained minister, including the sacraments, while assigned to a particular charge under the supervision of a district superintendent. A clergy mentor oversees the local pastor's work in the course of study for ordained ministry and advises on matters of pastoral responsibility. Source: Sharing God's Gifts Glossary of United Methodist Terms

**Ordination:** The act of conferring ministerial orders, presided over by a bishop. The setting apart for ministry by prayer and the laying on of hands. The authorization of the church for the practice of Service, Word, Sacrament and Order (in the case of an elder) and for the practice of Word, Compassion, Justice and Service (in the case of a deacon). Source: Sharing God's Gifts Glossary of United Methodist Terms

**Pastor or Staff-Parish Relations Committee.** Officially elected to represent the church to work closely with the pastor and staff concerning their relationship with the congregation and the entire work of the church. The committee helps clergy and staff set leadership and service priorities. It is to confer with the district superintendent concerning the appointment of the pastor for the church. The committee recommends the salary for the pastor to the Charge Conference. It consists of from five to nine members of the pastoral charge. Source: A Dictionary for United Methodists, Alan K. Waltz, Copyright 1991,

***The United Methodist Book of Discipline:*** A fundamental book outlining the law, doctrine, administration, organizational work and procedures of The United Methodist Church. It is authoritative and legally binding. Each General Conference amends The Book of Discipline, and the actions of the General Conference are reflected in the quadrennial revision. Often referred to as *The Discipline*. Source: Sharing God's Gifts Glossary of United Methodist Terms

### **What does The Discipline say about appointment-making?**

Section VIII. Appointment-Making ¶ 425. Responsibility— 1. Clergy shall be appointed by the bishop, who is empowered to make and fix all appointments in the Episcopal area of which the annual conference is a part. Appointments are to be made with consideration of the gifts and evidence of God's grace of those appointed, to the needs, characteristics, and opportunities of congregations and institutions, and with faithfulness to the commitment to an open itineracy. Open itineracy means appointments are made without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, color, disability, marital status, or age, except for the provisions of mandatory retirement...Through appointment-making, the connectional nature of the United Methodist system is made visible...

¶ 426. Consultation and Appointment-Making— Consultation is the process whereby the bishop and/or district superintendent confer with the pastor and committee on pastor-parish relations, taking into consideration the criteria of ¶ 427, a performance evaluation, needs of the appointment under consideration, and mission of the Church. Consultation is not merely notification. Consultation is not committee selection or call of a pastor. The role of the committee on pastor-parish relations is advisory. Consultation is both a continuing process and a more intense involvement during the period of change in appointment. 17 1. The process of consultation shall be mandatory in every annual conference. ¶ 427. Criteria— Appointments shall take into account the unique needs of a charge, the community context, and also the gifts and evidence of God's grace of a particular pastor.

¶ 428. Process of Appointment-Making— The process used in appointment-making shall include: 19 1. A change in appointment may be initiated by a pastor, a committee on pastor-parish relations, a district superintendent, or a bishop. 2. The bishop and the cabinet shall consider all requests for change of appointment in light of the profile developed for each charge and the gifts and evidence of God's grace, professional experience, and family needs of the pastor. 3. When a change in appointment has been determined, the district superintendent should meet together or separately with the pastor and the committee on pastor-parish relations where the pastor is serving, for the purpose of sharing the basis for the change and the process used in making the new appointment.

¶ 429. Frequency— While the bishop shall report all pastoral appointments to each regular session of an annual conference, appointments to charges may be made at any time deemed advisable by the bishop and cabinet. Appointments are made with the expectation that the length of pastorates shall respond to the long-term pastoral needs of charges, communities, and pastors. The bishop and cabinet should work toward longer tenure in local church appointments to facilitate a more effective ministry.

United Methodist Publishing House. *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2012* (Kindle Locations 7014-7030). United Methodist Publishing House. Kindle Edition.