

**THE MEMPHIS CONFERENCE
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
CONTINUING FORMATION MANUAL**



Mission Statement: Our purpose is to facilitate continuing formation of appointed pastors within the Memphis 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 2016 *Book of Discipline*.

This policy is a living, breathing document as we seek to find the most effective ways to serve the Educational Needs of all clergy.

Memphis Annual Conference Board of Ordained Ministry Guidelines for Continuing Theological Formation¹

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 activities. (2016 Book of Discipline)

Continuing Education and Spiritual Growth

- *Continuing Education and Spiritual Growth is understood to be a lifelong process.* Clergy Members of the Annual Conference who have full-time appointments may request “at least one week each year and at least one month during one year of each quadrennium” to be devoted to the Continuing Formation process. Such leaves shall not be considered as part of the ministers’ vacations and shall be planned in consultation with their charges or other agencies to which they are appointed as well as the Bishop, District Superintendent, and the Board of Ministry Continuing Education Team. (§BOD 350.2)
- Clergy members of the Annual Conference who have held full-time appointments for at least six years may request a formational and spiritual growth leave of up to six months while continuing to hold a pastoral appointment. Such leaves are with the approval of the committee on Pastor-Parish Relations, the Church Council, and the District Superintendent. Annual Conferences are encouraged to assist with pulpit supply and other temporary support for such leaves. (BOD ¶350.3).
- The Memphis Conference Board of Ordained recommends that each charge provide a minimum of \$750 per year to aid their clergy in obtaining the mandatory requirement of CEU’s. This is to be a separate line item outside reimbursable funds in the financial compensation package. (BOD 351. 4)
- Clergy shall report on their programs of Continuing Education and Spiritual Formation at the annual Charge Conference (BOD ¶351.5, ¶351.6). One copy of this report shall be placed in the personal clergy records and shall be included in Consultation process for each calendar year with both the members of SPRC and the District Superintendent. Clergy will be required to report their total hours each quadrennium, starting July 1, 2020 both for Consultation and for the Board of Ministry Continuing Education Team. Clergy who reach their required CEU hours shall be recognized within the Annual Conference BOM report.

- 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. The appointment to Sabbatical leave is to be made by the Bishop, upon the vote of the Annual Conference after recommendation by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Written requests should include plans for study or travel and should be directed to the BOM, the Bishop, and the District Superintendent. Whenever possible, the compensation level of the last appointment served before the leave should be maintained in the appointment made at the termination of the leave. (*BOD* ¶352).
- Clergy in extension ministries shall give evidence of their continuing formation and spiritual growth program and future plans in their annual reports (*BOD* ¶351.6, ¶344.2a).

Requirements:

All Clergy under Appointment must receive 12 Continuing Education Units per quadrennium.

- Full-time local pastors who have completed the Course of Study
- Active Associate Members under appointment
- Active Elders under appointment
- Active Deacons under appointment
- Active Diaconal Ministers under appointment
- Certified Lay Professionals

It is strongly encouraged for clergy and PPR/SPRC to work together to form a continuing formation program to address any deficits that might be present in his/her professional skill set.

Persons in the above relationships involved in ongoing education (including enrollment in college, seminary, Course of Study, D.Min. and Ph.D. programs), and clergy on Leave of Absence are not required to obtain CEUs.

Definitions and Minimum Standards for Continuing Education

- A. The measuring unit shall be a Continuing Education Unit (CEU).
- B. A CEU shall be defined as 10 contact hours (instructional session or its equivalent) under qualified leadership. It is assumed that programs sponsored by an agency of the general church, jurisdiction, conference, district, ecumenical, or community service institution or covenant study groups will have qualified leadership. If official evidence of CEU's is not offered for a qualifying event or experience, proof of attendance may be given to the BOM Continuing Formation Team for certification.

- For on line continuing education, the sponsoring agency shall offer an official CEU. No more than three (3) CEU's per quadrennium may be completed online.
- CPE beyond the minimum requirement for ordination may be used for continuing education.
- Twenty hours of reading and reflection in areas related to the Characteristics of Effective Clergy in the Memphis Conference is equivalent to one CEU. No more than one CEU defined as reading and reflection may be credited toward the twelve for the quadrennium. Requests for reading credit may be made to the BOM and a written report detailing sources used and reflection provided to the Continuing Education Team.

Accountability

The instrument of accountability will be an annual report submitted to the SPRC and/or District Superintendent on continuing education completed during the year. The district superintendent shall review the clergyperson's continuing education in light of the annual evaluation by the Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee or supervisor if in an extension appointment. In their annual meeting, the district superintendent and clergyperson shall discuss improvements made toward effectiveness in ministry and future needs for continuing education. *BOD ¶419.7* states:

"The superintendent shall seek to be in regular contact with the clergy on the district for counsel and supervision, and shall receive written or electronic reports of the clergy's continuing education, spiritual practices, current ministry work, and goals for future ministry."

Pastors are to give evidence of continuing formation through questions provided in the Charge Conference package.

Continuing Education Grants

Grants are available through the Continuing Education Fund from the Board of Ordained Ministry. Requests may be made in writing and sent directly to the Continuing Formation Team. Requests received will be presented to both the Continuing Formation Team and the Executive Committee of the Board of Ministry. Recipients will be contacted in writing by the Continuing Formation Team.

Contact information for all Continuing Education forms and requests:

Board of Ministry, Continuing Formation Team:

Lora Gowan, 701 Broadway, Paducah, Ky 42001; revlorajean@comcast.net

Bishop of the Memphis Conference:

520 Commerce Street, Suite 201, Nashville, TN 37203.

District Superintendents:

Metro District: 3476 Summer Avenue, Suite 201, Memphis TN 38122

Mississippi River District: 1382 West Church St, Alamo, TN 38001

Purchase District: 2285 Jack Treas Rd, Kirksey, KY 42054

Tennessee River District: 24 Corporate Blvd, Jackson TN 38305

Responsibilities of the Board of Ordained Ministry Continuing Formation Team

- Attend continuing educators' consultations for leadership development and networking, such as GBHEM-sponsored meetings,
- Consult with the cabinet regarding established standards for effectiveness and the kinds of continuing education events that will support clergy in ongoing effectiveness.
- Encourage the use of online continuing education through the UMC's Cyber Campus and the seminaries' Online Continuing Education Consortium,
- Supply a list of retreat centers or other organizations that offer high quality events.
- Encourage sabbatical, study, or renewal leaves when appropriate.
- Award Ministerial Education Funds to individuals and groups (T|635.2x) based on conference guidelines. • Develop an accountability system to confirm that clergy complete continuing education.
- Share information with the annual conference about continuing education programs offered by nearby seminaries.
- Contract with a seminary, the Division of Ordained Ministry, or other agency for consultant services.

¹This document has been developed utilizing much of the content and structure of the Susquehanna Conference, The United Methodist Church Continuing Formation Manual and policies of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.