

## **POLICIES OF THE BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY**

*North Georgia Annual Conference*

### **A. CERTIFIED CANDIDATES**

1. Psychological evaluation before certification as a candidate:
  - a. When the District Superintendent assigns a Mentor to an individual seeking to become a Certified Candidate for Ordained Ministry, he/she shall also direct the applicant to provide the District Committee on Ordained Ministry with a psychological evaluation produced by: Emory Clergy Care, Dr. Fred L. Smoot, 3700 Crestwood Parkway, Suite 270, Duluth, GA 30096. 678-924-9260 (Phone). 678-924-9265 (Fax).
  - b. Candidate will schedule appointment with Emory Clergy Care and send full payment. Appointment will be cancelled if full payment (minus scholarship) is not received at least one week in advance. Payment is non-refundable. There is no penalty if appointment is re-scheduled at least one week in advance.
  - c. Emory Clergy Care will provide psychological testing and a clinical interview, including the MMPI-2, the Kern Lifestyle Inventory, the Sentence Completion test, and the SASSI (Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory). Within one month of the testing and interview, Emory Clergy Care will send a report to the referring District Superintendent, who will share the information (orally--no copies shall be made) with the Mentor and the District Committee on Ordained Ministry. The report shall remain in the custody of the District Superintendent until such time as the candidate is recommended for provisional membership or is transferred to another district. The report shall then be transferred to the Office of Ministerial Services for use by the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry in its consideration of the person for annual conference membership, or to become a part of the candidate's permanent file. Disposal of the report shall be in accordance with established Annual Conference policies. In some instances, the Board of Ordained Ministry may require another psychological evaluation when the candidate is being considered for provisional membership in the Annual Conference.
  - d. The cost of the assessment will be \$400.00 and will be paid by the candidate. In cases of special need, a District Superintendent may request financial assistance (up to \$150 per person) from the Board of Ordained Ministry.
  - e. Emory Clergy Care will provide a regular schedule of testing and interviews, and will also provide training for District Committees on Ordained Ministry. In addition, the District Superintendent, the Chairperson of the District Committee, or the Mentor may consult with the psychologist about particular applicants.
  - f. In the event that further psychological testing or counseling is needed, Emory Clergy Care will facilitate referrals, follow up and subsequent reports to the Board of Ordained Ministry.

## 2. Identity and Criminal Background Reports:

- a. Persons seeking certification as Candidates for Ordained Ministry shall provide the District Committee on Ordained Ministry with an Identity and Criminal Background Report. When the District Superintendent assigns a Mentor to an individual, who is a Declared Candidate, he/she shall advise the person of this requirement and give him/her the "Instructions for Identity and Criminal Background Report."
- b. When the District Superintendent receives the report, it shall be entered into the applicant's file. The District Superintendent shall forward this report to the Office of Ministerial Services and Spiritual Formation when the Candidate is recommended to the Board of Ordained Ministry. It shall be included in the Candidate's file when he/she is interviewed by the Board of Ordained Ministry.
- c. If an individual's report reveals that he/she has a criminal record, the District Superintendent shall inquire of the applicant the circumstances of each criminal incident revealed in the report, and shall communicate to him/her the policies and procedures that shall be followed. The Superintendent shall advise the District Committee on Ordained Ministry of the facts contained in the report and of the applicant's comments regarding these facts. The District Committee shall review this history with the applicant prior to any vote to certify the applicant's candidacy for ordained ministry.
- d. This report shall be in the hands of the District Superintendent before the candidate undergoes the psychological evaluation. If an individual has a criminal background, this information shall be conveyed to the psychologist prior to the evaluation.
- e. If a District Committee certifies the candidacy of an applicant with a criminal background and this person is appointed to serve in a local church before being ordained, the facts of the criminal incident should be fully revealed to the Staff-Parish Relations Committee of the church to which the individual is being appointed.
- f. The cost of the Identity and Criminal Background Report shall be the responsibility of the Candidate.

Summary: Since every individual's situation is unique, it is not advisable to lay down blanket guidelines for dealing with individuals with criminal backgrounds. However, sound judgment would indicate that the level of reform and conversion might be indicated by the number of criminal incidents, the length of time that the applicant has led a responsible, law-abiding life between the criminal incident and the present, and the Committee's assessment of the applicant's personal integrity and trustworthiness. Violent, abusive, and dishonest behaviors are often deeply ingrained in the personality. When there is a choice between affirming an individual's reformation and protecting a congregation, District Committees would be well advised to err on the side of protecting a congregation.

## 3. Financial Status:

The following is required of all candidates for commissioning and ordination.

- a. A current credit report from Equifax with a minimum FICO Credit Score of 650 is the established minimum expectation. However, if a candidate's Credit Score does not meet the established minimum expectation, candidate is to provide additional information using the balance sheet/income statement form provided by dCOM/BOM.

- b. If balance sheet/income statement is submitted, debt/income ratios must satisfy established minimums.
- c. Credit reports of candidates that fail to satisfy the established credit score and/or ratios will be referred to Credit Advisory Task Force for review.
- d. Task Force will review all referred credit reports and return a list of questions for BOM and/or dCOM to ask candidates during interview process.
- e. If a candidate's Equifax FICO score is below 650, the candidate must have submitted a balance sheet/income statement and the most recent FICO score to OMS for submission to the Credit Advisory Task Force. For Provisional Candidates the resulting information will be turned over to the dCOM, and the dCOM must have reviewed the information with the candidate. The dCOM report on Credit Status must be submitted before the candidate may be properly before the BOM.

4. Certified Candidates under Pastoral Appointment:

- a. Certified Candidates who have met the requirements for and have been approved and appointed as Local Pastors shall be accountable to the District in which they serve. The District Committee on Ordained Ministry shall be responsible for securing and maintaining records, including the transfer of candidacy.
- b. Certified Candidates under appointment as local pastors must receive annual approval of the dCOM as long as they are under appointment as local pastor. This replaces the required annual approval of the home church charge conference for persons who have been approved as local pastors but not appointed.

5. Transfer of Candidacy from another Annual Conference:

A person who is a certified Candidate for Ordained Ministry, or who is in the candidacy process in another annual conference, may have his or her candidacy transferred to a District Committee on Ordained Ministry in the North Georgia Annual Conference with the approval of the receiving District Committee. They would need to be either a (professing or affiliate) member of, on the staff of, or appointed to a church in the North Georgia Conference for two or more years with at least one year of service in some form of congregational leadership immediately preceding recommendation to the Board for provisional membership. If a Certified Candidate from another Annual Conference has been appointed in North Georgia or has been on staff in a North Georgia United Methodist Church for at least two years prior to being commissioned as a provisional member of the North Georgia Conference, at the request of the Candidate who has the Candidacy transferred to the North Georgia Conference and with the recommendation of the District Superintendent, the dCOM may consider the Candidate for recommendation to the Board of Ordained Ministry for provisional membership.

6. Candidates Deferred from Provisional Membership:

- a. Deferred candidates reapplying for Provisional Membership remain accountable to the District Committee that initially recommended them unless an appointment is received in another district. In the event of appointment in another District, their candidacy is transferred to that district and the recommendation to the Board must come from the district in which the candidate is serving. There shall be consultation between the two District Superintendents and the District Committees on Ordained Ministry.

b. When deferred candidates for provisional membership are required to have mentors, candidates will be referred to the appropriate District Committee on Ordained Ministry for assignment and follow up.

7. A candidate must be a Certified Candidate for one year before the dCOM may recommend the candidate to the BOM for Provisional interviews. The minimum of one year of certification begins on the date the dCOM certifies the candidate.

## **B. DISTRICT COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

### 1. Board Members on District Committees:

The Conference Board of Ordained Ministry recommends that all members of the Board in a particular District serve on that District Committee on Ordained Ministry. One member of the Board will be designated as the official liaison between the Board and the dCOM.

### 2. District Committee Recommendations to Board of Ordained Ministry:

A three-quarters vote of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry is required for each candidate recommended to the Board of Ordained Ministry.

### 3. Declaration of Orders

The Candidate sent forward by the District Committee is to be identified as seeking provisional membership to become a Deacon or as one seeking to become an Elder.

## **C. PROVISIONAL MEMBERS**

### 1. Homiletics Requirement for Candidates for Elder's Orders

All candidates for elder's orders must complete at least one course in homiletics. This course must be in a classroom for academic credit.

### 2. Psychological Evaluation:

a. Those seeking Provisional Membership shall secure a psychological evaluation provided by the designate of the Board of Ordained Ministry, unless they received an evaluation at the time of certification as candidates. The expense shall be shared by the Board and the candidate.

b. If the psychological evaluation administered during the candidacy process is more than four years old, on December 31 of the year the candidate meets with the District Committee on Ministry to be recommended to the Board, an additional evaluation will be required for each provisional candidate before meeting with the Board for recommendation to the Annual Conference. There shall be no exceptions. The cost of this evaluation is the responsibility of the candidate. The Board may require an additional evaluation of any candidate regardless of how many years have passed since the first evaluation. In such cases, the candidate will pay \$150 and the Board will pay the remainder of the cost. The results of all psychological evaluations must be in the candidate's file when he/she appears before the Board.

c. Provisional Members shall be required to have a free follow-up session with Emory Clergy Care during the year prior to applying for full connection. A report from Emory Clergy Care will be required at the full connection interview.

### 3. Financial Status:

The following is required of all candidates for commissioning and ordination.

- a. A current credit report from Equifax with a minimum FICO Credit Score of 650 is the established minimum expectation. However, if a candidate's Credit Score does not meet the established minimum expectation, candidate is to provide additional information using the balance sheet/income statement form provided by dCOM/BOM.
- b. If balance sheet/income statement is submitted, debt/income ratios must satisfy established minimums.
- c. Credit reports of candidates that fail to satisfy the established credit score and/or ratios will be referred to Credit Advisory Task Force for review.
- d. Task Force will review all referred credit reports and return a list of questions for BOM and/or dCOM to ask candidates during interview process.
- e. If a candidate's Equifax FICO score is below 650, the candidate must have submitted a balance sheet/income statement and the most recent FICO score to OMS for submission to the Credit Advisory Task Force. For Provisional Candidates the resulting information will be turned over to the dCOM, and the dCOM must have reviewed the information with the candidate. The dCOM report on Credit Status must be submitted before the candidate may be properly before the BOM for commissioning. Full Connection Candidates with a FICO score below 650 are to submit a balance sheet/income statement to OMS for the Credit Advisory Task Force consideration within 6 months of full connection material submission deadline for inclusion in full connection packet and BOM interview consideration.

### 4. Application for provisional membership:

The form to apply for provisional membership shall, among other questions, include questions pertaining to Citizenship, Social Security number (if applicable) Green Card number (if applicable) Residency Card (if applicable) and the status of the card.

### 5. Length of Provisional Period:

Provisional Members shall serve at least three but not more than eight years as Provisional Members before becoming eligible for reception into Full Connection as Deacons or Elders.

### 6. Place of Provisional Service:

Provisional Service may be rendered in (a) a local church or (b) an Extension Ministry appointment. Proper supervision, either directly or indirectly, by a District Superintendent shall be provided in either setting.

### 7. Recommendations for Provisional Membership:

The recommendations should include a letter from the candidate's Senior Pastor, the District Superintendent (if under appointment) and if the candidate works in a church or extension ministry, a letter from one's immediate supervisor.

## 8. Educational Requirements:

In order to be considered for Provisional Membership, all candidates must have completed all of their required studies, including United Methodist Studies, before the Annual Conference session at which they will be received and commissioned. All candidates who are first approved as certified candidates after July, 2010 will be required to have a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university, in addition to the required graduate studies, before they can be commissioned. Exceptions to the bachelor's degree requirement after July, 2010 may be considered by the BOM via written request to the BOM and the Office of Ministerial Services, and would be considered according to the criteria of ¶324.3- Undergraduate Requirement.

## 9. Service Requirements:

- a. Provisional Elder: In order to be commissioned as a provisional elder the candidate must have a full-time appointment approved by the Cabinet.
- b. Provisional Deacon: Candidates for provisional deacon status may be commissioned if the Cabinet approves an appointment to either half-time service or more. They must be under the supervision of a full connection deacon or elder during the provisional period. Provisional Deacons in Appointments Beyond the Local Church (ABLC) who do not have direct and on-site supervision by a full connection deacon or elder must write to the Extension Ministry Committee and describe their supervisory structure and have it approved in order for the year to meet the provisional expectations. For example, a Provisional Deacon may have supervision not on-site but accessible by close communication with monthly face to face meetings. The appointment must include compensation. If a person serves part-time during any portion of the provisional period, one additional year will be required before becoming eligible for ordination and full connection.

## 10. United Methodist Studies:

- a. All studies in United Methodist history, doctrine, and polity must be completed for academic credit from an educational institution approved by the University Senate. The courses may be taken in an interactive class on-line through the internet from United Methodist University Senate approved theological seminaries. Courses taken by correspondence will not be accepted.
- b. Persons transferring from other denominations must have completed United Methodist Studies before admission to Provisional Membership in the North Georgia Conference.

## 11. Eligibility for Ordination as a Student for an Advanced Degree while working Part Time:

Upon recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry, a Provisional Member in a graduate program and serving part-time under appointment shall be able to equate less than full-time to the requirement of full-time service for the three-year provisional requirement. The part-time appointment must meet the requirement of the policy on "Place of Provisional Service."

## 12. Full Time Employment:

- a. "Full-time service shall mean that the person's entire vocational time, as defined by the district superintendent in consultation with the pastor and the committee on pastor-parish relations, is devoted to the work of ministry in the field of labor to which one is appointed by the bishop" (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Para. 338.1), therefore Provisional Members who wish to pursue further academic credit must first have the approval of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, the District Superintendent, and the Executive Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

b. Full time post-Master's degree work will not count towards the required provisional period.

13. Voting Procedures for Provisional Membership:

Election to Deacon or Elder's orders or to conference membership- provisional, associate, full connection, or readmission-shall require a three-fourths majority vote. The vote on each candidate shall be taken immediately after the candidate's interview with the full Board.

14. Categories for Provisional Interview:

The Board shall have three categories of provisional candidates: (a) Eligible, (b) Deferred, and (c) Denied. Those "Deferred" may be appointed to serve as Local Pastors, but may not be received into Provisional Membership. Persons on elder track who are deferred would be available for full time appointment. Provisional deacon candidates are subject to the Service Requirements, item 9(b) above. All "Eligible candidates" not received into provisional membership will continue in the "Eligible" status, and will be accountable to their District Committee on Ordained Ministry. They will need the recommendation of the dCOM in order to come before the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry again for consideration for Provisional Membership. They will not be required to resubmit their papers and other materials, except as specifically directed by the Board.

15. Deferment for Provisional Membership:

a. A candidate for Provisional Membership who is "Deferred" remains accountable to the District Committee on Ordained Ministry, and must receive the recommendation of the Committee in the district where charge conference membership is held in order to be considered again by the Board of Ordained Ministry.

b. A candidate for Provisional Membership who is Deferred due to information from the psychological evaluation shall have a new psychological evaluation or counseling with Emory Clergy Care before reapplication to the Board. When the Board requires more thorough testing, such requirement must be documented and specified on the candidate's Action Report by official action of the Board.

c. The Interview Team shall prepare specific recommendations/requirements for candidates who are Deferred before the candidate is presented to the full Board, and before the Board vote. These recommendations/requirements shall be adopted or amended by the full Board.

d. The Presenter of a candidate who is Deferred shall: (1) carefully review recommendations/requirements with the candidate; (2) meet with the candidate within two weeks to review the substance of the Board's action and to provide support; (3) contact any support personnel (counselors, supervisors, etc.) and inform them of expectations (written reports, guidance, etc.).

e. The Registrar shall inform, in writing, the District Superintendent, the Chairperson of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry and the Covenant Group Leader of a candidate's status of Deferred and any recommendations and/or requirements.

f. Candidates reapplying for Membership after having been Deferred shall submit such papers or materials as determined by the Board of Ordained Ministry to be appropriate and needed.

#### 16. Covenant Group Participation:

- a. New Provisional Members are to be informed of the requirement of Covenant Group participation and the definition of full-time service under supervision.
- b. Supervision for Provisional Members serving outside the bounds of the Annual Conference in either a local church or an Extension Ministry appointment shall be assigned an Elder/Mentor in lieu of participation in a Covenant Group year and at the discretion of the Board shall be expected to participate in the Covenant Group and mentoring process of the Conference in which they are appointed. Annual reports/evaluations shall be sent to the Board.
- c. Communication between the Provisional Member and the Mentor must be close and frequent enough for the Mentor to evaluate the Provisional Member's readiness for admission to Full Connection and ordination.
- d. The Board of Ordained Ministry may choose to waive participation in a Covenant Group for persons who are transferring from another denomination if they have served under appointment in North Georgia for at least three years. Participation in a Covenant Group is mandatory for all other Provisional Members
- e. More than one absence from Covenant Group meetings and/or provisional continuing education events in any one-year will result in an automatic one-year extension of the provisional period. In cases of extenuating circumstances, a committee consisting of the Covenant Group Leader, Director of Ministerial Services, BOM Chair, and Chair of BOM Committee on Residency, may grant an exception to this policy upon written request of the provisional member. This request should be sent to the Director of Ministerial Services for consideration. Failure to notify a Covenant Group Leader in advance of an absence will result in an automatic one-year extension of the provisional period.

#### 17. Continuation in Provisional Membership:

- a. When a Provisional Member seeking admission to Full Connection does not receive the necessary three-fourths vote, the Presenter of the Provisional shall: (1) carefully review recommendations/requirements with the Provisional; (2) meet with the Provisional within two weeks to review the substance of the Board's action and provide support, (3) contact any support personnel (counselors, supervisors, etc.) and inform them of expectations (written reports, guidance, etc.).
- b. The Registrar shall inform, in writing, the District Superintendent of a Provisional who is continued, giving the reason for the continuance of provisional status and any recommendations and/or requirements.

#### 18. Service Before Transfer

Provisional Members from another conference must serve at least one year under appointment in the North Georgia Conference immediately prior to applying for ordination and Full Connection in North Georgia.

## **D. CANDIDATES FOR FULL CONNECTION ELDERS**

### 1. Medical Report:

All persons seeking approval for Full Connection shall submit the results, on the form provided, of a complete physical examination by a licensed physician within the previous year.

## **E. GENERAL POLICIES**

### 1. Lay Members of the Board:

Laypersons, including Diaconal Ministers, who serve on the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, shall have both voice and vote on all business matters of the Board, including matters of clergy ordination, character, and conference relations. These same privileges are extended to them at the Clergy Executive Session of the Annual Conference.

### 2. Definition of Self-Avowed Practicing Homosexual:

A self-avowed, practicing homosexual is a person who engages in sexual acts with a person or persons of the same sex, which are either witnessed or openly acknowledged. (Adopted by the 1994 session of Annual Conference)

### 3. Definition of "status" in Article IV of the Church's Constitution:

"Status" is defined as a legal relationship or legal condition of a group of persons based on race, sex, or national origin.

### 4. Separation/Divorce:

While in the process of marital separation or divorce, persons will not be considered by the Board of Ordained Ministry for ordination or for conference membership (provisional, associate, full connection, or readmission). Board members who are in the process of marital separation or divorce will not participate in the interviews of candidates.

### 5. Completion of Application Files:

The Board of Ordained Ministry will consider only candidates whose files are complete, in the Registrar's office, by the deadline set by the Board. The Board expects all candidates (a) to take responsibility to read the instructions from the Board carefully, and (b) to insure that their files are complete by the deadline.

### 6. Executive Committee:

The Executive Committee of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry shall be comprised of the elected officers and the Cabinet Representative(s).

### 7. Lodging at Board Meetings:

The Board will pay the double occupancy rate for overnight rooms for all board members and candidates during the interview retreats. Board members who wish to have a single room are responsible to pay the additional cost at the time of registration for the interview retreats. This option is not available to candidates and spouses are asked not to attend the interview retreat with the candidates.

8. Substance Abuse:

Any candidate who discloses or is discovered to have engaged in substance abuse shall, as a condition of his or her after-care program, be required to participate in random drug testing, before being approved for ordination.

9. Board Responsibility for Required Testing or Therapy:

a. The Board has some responsibility for ministers in Full Connection. Therefore, if for any reason the Board of Ordained Ministry requests psychological testing, a psychiatric evaluation or the like, for any minister in Full Connection, the Board shall assume **all** the cost.

b. The Board of Ordained Ministry has no responsibility for financing the therapy or other requirements placed upon candidates or Provisional Members unless such therapy is required by the Board. Candidates for ministry pay for their own psychotherapy and any additional psychological testing unless it is required by the Board.

10. Appeal of Board decision:

An appeal to the decision of the Board of Ordained Ministry regarding a person's eligibility for provisional or full connection membership may be made only when it can be proven to the satisfaction of the BOM Executive Committee that the Board had inaccurate information on the credit report, medical report, psychological evaluation or school transcripts or background report.

11. Letters of Reference:

Candidates will not have access to the content of Letters of Reference without prior consent of the writer.

## **F. EXTENSION MINISTRIES**

1. Criteria for Extension Ministry Appointments:

The Board of Ordained Ministry may approve an Extension Ministry appointment when the following criteria have been met:

(a) The appointment is a true extension of the Christian ministry of the Church

(b) An Application for an Extension Ministry Appointment has been approved by the Board.

(c) One's ordination vows may be fulfilled in the appointment; (d) Institutional approval for fulfilling ordination vows is given in writing.

2. An Extension Minister's Accountability to the Annual Conference:

a. An annual report shall be sent to the Bishop, Registrar of the Board, and Extension Ministry Committee chairperson once each quadrennium. Annual evaluations from the place of service shall be submitted other years.

b. An annual written statement by the District Superintendent in the area where ministry is performed, affirming a healthy relationship with The United Methodist Church shall be sent to the Bishop, Registrar of the Board, and the Extension Ministries chairperson.

c. Verification of an accountability structure within the field of service given annually. This may be a written statement issued by the institution for which the minister works or by his/her supervisor.

### **G. CONFERENCE RELATIONS**

#### 1. Readmission after Surrender of Ministerial Credentials:

Those seeking readmission to the Annual Conference and restoration of credentials after surrender of ministerial orders must be recommended to the Annual Conference by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry of the District in which they surrendered their credentials, the Board of Ordained Ministry, and the Cabinet, in order to begin the process of compliance with the requirements of the *2008 Book of Discipline* (§ 364-368).

#### 2. Leave of Absence/Honorable Location

A minister on Leave of Absence or Honorable Location shall have an Elder in Full Connection or a Deacon in Full Connection assigned to him/her by the Board of Ordained Ministry for support and accountability.

### **H. PASTORAL CARE FOR MINISTERS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

1. Counseling for clergy and their family members shall be provided through Emory Clergy Care. The clergyperson, bishop, cabinet, or the Board of Ordained Ministry may initiate such care. The board shall assume all costs.

2. It is recommended that all clergy have a routine consultation with Emory Clergy Care each 3 – 5 years; the Board of Ordained Ministry shall assume all costs.

### **I. MINISTERIAL EDUCATION FUND**

#### 1. Loans and Grants Students Preparing for Membership in the North Georgia Annual Conference:

a. An applicant must be related to a Charge Conference in the North Georgia Annual Conference.

b. An applicant must be a Certified Candidate for Ordained Ministry in one of the twelve districts of the North Georgia Annual Conference and be enrolled in a school approved by the University Senate of The United Methodist Church and be enrolled in a program pursuing degree goals in keeping with the requirements for the ordination one is seeking. This requirement may be waived for the first semester of seminary.

c. Students must make at least a C grade for each course in which they are enrolled. If the student fails to make a C grade in a course, the next time the student enrolls to retake that course they shall not be eligible for a scholarship. If the student enrolls in any other course, they will be eligible to receive a scholarship. It is recommended that the District Superintendent and/or the dCOM Chair have a conversation with the student regarding their grade to determine if there are/were special circumstances they may have been unaware of which created a difficult situation for the student to finish the course with a satisfactory grade.

If the District Superintendent feels there are special circumstances that would justify excusing the student from this policy he/she must advise the Office of Ministerial Services in writing stating those circumstances. Unless a letter from the District Superintendent is in the student's file, a future Course of Study scholarship for the failed course for the student will not be available.

2. Maximum Loan Amounts as:

- a. Seminary/all years: \$2,000 per semester or \$170/semester hour. .
- b. Course of Study/Licensing School: Actual cost of tuition.
- c. Undergraduate students who are Certified Candidates: \$1,000 per semester
- d. The maximum any applicant may receive is \$16,000.
- e. The MEF Committee may exceed these limits in cases of extreme need or when balances in or projections for the Ministerial Education Fund make larger loans feasible.

3. No loans shall be made for training beyond the Master of Divinity or equivalent degree.

4. Criteria for approving applications for loans:

- a. Students are to submit financial information for MEF Committee to make determination of need.
- b. The maximum scale adopted by the North Georgia Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.
- c. The recommendation of the school.
- d. The recommendation of the District Superintendent.
- e. The resources in the MEF.
- f. Personal interview with the MEF Committee for new and renewal applications when necessary.
- g. The applicant must be eligible to serve 15 years under full time appointment to the North Georgia Conference.

5. Deadlines for Applications:

Applications for loans for the academic year must be in the hands of the MEF Committee Chairperson no later than July 15. Late applications will be held for consideration for the following term. Winter and Spring deadline is December 1. Summer school deadline is May 1. The MEF Committee shall hold firmly to these deadlines! It is the applicant's responsibility to see that the application is in on time!

6. Repayment of (MEF) loans may be accomplished through either of the following methods:

- a. All debts shall be canceled upon the individual's giving four years of full-time service or the equivalent in the North Georgia Annual Conference under appointment of the Bishop.
- b. When a person withdraws from school or the ordination/consecration process, within six months she/he shall begin regular repayment of no less than \$ 500 per year plus a percentage agreed upon by both parties. Persons having graduated must begin similar repayments within two years of graduation unless ordination/consecration is in process. It is the applicant's responsibility to contact the chair of the MEF Committee in order to set up a repayment schedule.

- c. The applicant fails to meet the requirements of the four years of service as a full member of the North Georgia Annual Conference, she/he must contact the Office of the Treasurer to set up a repayment schedule of no less than \$500 per year plus 4% interest.
- d. Applicants who transfer to other Annual Conferences before the four-year requirement is met are encouraged to make arrangements for the repayment of their loans, either by themselves or by the Annual Conference to which they transfer, before the transfer is effective.
- e. All loans shall be repaid within a maximum of ten years from the time of the awarding of the last grant or from the time of graduation, whichever occurs later.

### **J. TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS**

#### 1. The Procedure for Joining an Order through Changing of Orders:

- a.) Provisional Members may request to change the track they are on by notifying the Chairperson of the Board and the Registrar of the Board in writing and stating the reason for requesting the change, including the emerging sense of their call. The Executive Committee of the Board must approve the change. The provisional members must serve at least two years on the track in which they wish to be received in full connection.
- b.) A member in Full Connection may request the Board's permission to change orders. The member must:
  - 1. Write the Chairperson and Registrar of the Board and state the reason why the member wishes to change orders.
  - 2. Meet the Educational Requirements of the new order.
  - 3. Must serve a two-year period in the order being sought before appearing before the Board to seek approval of the change of orders.
- c.) The Board of Ordained Ministry will assign a full connection mentor in the order to which the clergy person is transitioning. A report from the mentor shall be received from at the full connection interview.

The following is for Deacons transitioning to Elders only.

- 1. Deacons changing to Elders shall receive an appointment (in a ministry appropriate to the Order to which they are transitioning) by the cabinet or continue as a Deacon until an appointment is available.
- 2. Deacons transitioning to Elders may be granted a License for Pastoral Ministry if an appointment is available.
- 3. Upon completion of the two-year period the Deacon must participate in the elder interview process with the Board of Ordained Ministry and submit the following paper work according to the schedule established for full connection interviews:

- A current sermon preached on an assigned text in the context of corporate worship with a congregation
- Written responses to questions 1, 2, 12, 13 from Section C: The Called and Disciplined Life
- Letters of References as required of all elder candidates
- Demonstration of effectiveness in ministry as required of all elder candidates
- Final transcript verifying the completion of the M.Div. degree at a University Senate approved seminary, and any additional requirements of the North Georgia Conference.

### **K. FULL TIME LOCAL PASTORS**

#### 1. Board Approval

The Board of Ordained Ministry must approve all full-time Local Pastors upon recommendation of the District Committee on Ministry (dCOM). The dCOM must receive the results of a psychological evaluation, criminal background check and credit report before recommending persons to be approved as full-time Local Pastor. These documents, along with a written recommendation by the district superintendent and the chair of the district committee must be submitted to the registrar of the Board at least four weeks prior to the individual being interviewed by the Board.

Written responses to questions provided by the Board shall be submitted to the Board four weeks prior to being interviewed for full-time local pastor status.

All conditions of the policies for psychological evaluation, identity and criminal background reports, and credit reports for certified candidates shall also apply to full-time Local Pastors.

### **L. ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP**

Candidates for Associate Membership shall be evaluated by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry and the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, according to the standards for Full Connection candidates, in order to determine whether the candidate is fit, ready and effective.

Whenever a district committee recommends for Associate Membership a candidate who does not meet the 4 year full time service requirement of ¶322.1 of the Discipline, the district committee shall include in its recommendation to the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry the rationale for why the candidate's part time service is equivalent to 4 years of full time service pursuant to ¶ 322.2.

A candidate for Associate Membership recommended by the district committee who does not meet the 4 year full time service requirement of ¶ 322.1 must be interviewed by the Board of Ordained Ministry Committee on Local Pastors for the purpose of evaluating the candidate's service records for equivalency pursuant to the provisions of ¶ 322.2. If the Committee on Local Pastors determines there is part time service equivalent to 4 years of full time service, the candidate may continue

through the process for becoming an Associate Member. If the Committee on Local Pastors determines there is not part time service equivalent to 4 years of full time service, the candidate continues under the supervision of the district committee.

The interviews of Associate Member candidates with the full Board can take place during the Board retreats in November or March.

### **M. OTHER DENOMINATIONS**

#### 1. Process for transfer:

Ordained clergy with credentials in another denomination that wish to serve under appointment or to have their credentials recognized and transfer to the North Georgia Conference must have the recommendation of district superintendent and the District Committee on Ministry in the district where they reside.

At the initial point of expressed interest, a full connection member of the Annual Conference shall be assigned by the district superintendent to serve as mentor to any clergyperson of another denomination seeking to serve an appointment or to transfer. This mentor shall submit an annual report to the dCOM.

The dCOM must receive the results of a psychological evaluation, criminal background check and credit report before recommending persons to have their credentials recognized and/or transferred into the conference. These documents, along with a written recommendation by the district superintendent and the chair of the district committee must be submitted to the registrar of the Board at least four weeks prior to the individual being interviewed by the Board.

Upon approval of the Board, clergy with credentials from another denomination may be appointed while retaining those credentials. A minimum of two years service under appointment in North Georgia is required before the person is eligible for transfer.

Written responses to a series of questions supplied by the board must be submitted prior to seeking approval from the board to serve under appointment. Persons seeking to transfer shall submit to the same process as Certified Candidates seeking approval for provisional membership in the annual conference.

All conditions of the policies for psychological evaluation, identity and criminal background reports, and credit reports for certified candidates shall also apply to all persons seeking conference membership.