



HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

GENERAL CONFERENCE 2020 DELEGATES AND ELECTORS

January 7, 2015

This document is provided in order to serve as a guide for annual conferences as they decide the eligibility of delegates and electors for the 2020 General Conference.

These guidelines are based on the amended ¶35 and Judicial Council Decision No. 1181.

Amended ¶35, *United Methodist Book of Discipline*

¶35 – Article IV – The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or central conference shall be elected from the clergy members in full connection and shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements and local pastors who have completed Course of Study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election.

Judicial Council Decision No. 1181 (Feb. 12, 2011)

Digest of Case

The persons who are eligible to be elected as clergy delegates to the General Conference, the jurisdictional conference, or the central conference by the annual conference or the provisional annual conference are the full clergy members of the annual or provisional conference. Eligibility to be elected is conferred by full conference membership without regard to ordination or to years of service.

The persons who are eligible to cast ballots as electors in choosing the clergy delegates to the General Conference, the jurisdictional conference, or the central conference, are (a) the persons who are eligible for election, (b) the associate members, (c) the provisional members who have been judged by the annual conference to have completed the educational requirements and have been elected to provisional membership, and (d) the local pastors who have met two criteria: they have, by either of two options as determined by the annual conference, completed the constitutionally specified level of education; and they have been appointed by the bishop and served for two consecutive years, immediately preceding the election, during which time no withdrawal of the appointed status has occurred.

Any enabling legislation in *2008 Discipline* that does not conform to ¶ 35 is unconstitutional.



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ELIGIBLE FOR ELECTION AS CLERGY DELEGATES:

- Deacons and elders:
 - In full connection, active or retired: those elected to full connection during or before the 2019 Clergy Session are eligible to vote and serve as delegates, even if they have not yet been ordained
 - Leave categories eligible for election:
 - Sabbatical Leave (§351), Voluntary Leave of Absence (Personal, Family, Transitional) (§353), Maternity or Paternity Leave (§355), Medical Leave (§356)

NOT ELIGIBLE FOR ELECTION AS CLERGY DELEGATES:

- Leave categories not eligible for election:
 - Involuntary Leave of Absence (§354.7), Honorable Location (§358.2), Administrative Location (§359.3)
- Provisional members
- Associate members
- Local Pastors

ELIGIBLE TO VOTE FOR CLERGY DELEGATES:

- Deacons or elders in full connection (active or retired)
- Leave Categories eligible to vote: Voluntary Leaves of Absence (personal, family, transitional) (§353), Sabbatical Leave (§351), Maternity or Paternity Leave (§355), Medical Leave (§356)
- Provisional members who have completed all their educational requirements and have been elected to provisional membership
 - Deacons and elders who have been elected to provisional membership, but not yet commissioned, are eligible to vote.¹
- Associate members (active or retired)
- Local Pastors who have completed Course of Study or a M.Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding election.²

Judicial Council Decision No. 1181 states that “the person has ‘served’ an appointment fixed by the bishop for two consecutive conference years as that term is commonly applied.”

NOT ELIGIBLE TO VOTE FOR CLERGY DELEGATES:

- Leave categories not eligible to vote: Clergy on Honorable Location (§358), Clergy on Administrative Location (§359), Clergy on Involuntary Leave of Absence (§354.7)
- Local Pastors who do not meet the criteria listed above

¹ “As a practical matter, an annual conference may delay its first ballot for selecting clergy delegates until after answering the question “Who have ‘completed all of their educational requirements’ for provisional membership?” (Judicial Council Decision No. 1181).

² In annual conferences, it is the bishop’s responsibility to make rulings of law as they apply to the *Book of Discipline*.