

General Conference 2012 Delegates and Electors

Division of Ordained Ministry
General Board of Higher Education & Ministry
www.gbhem.org



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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 2012 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 TO BE ELECTED AS CLERGY DELEGATES

- Deacons and elders:
 - In full connection, active or retired - those elected to full connection by the 2011 Clergy Session are eligible to vote and to serve as delegates, even if they have not yet been ordained
 - Leave categories eligible to be elected: Sabbatical Leave (§352), Voluntary Leave of Absence (Personal, Family, Transitional) (§354), Maternity or Paternity Leave (§356), Incapacity Leave (§357)

NOT ELIGIBLE TO BE ELECTED AS CLERGY DELEGATES

- Leave categories not eligible to be elected: Involuntary Leave of Absence (§355.7), Honorable Location (§359.2), Administrative Location (§363.3 b) (4)¹
- 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) (§354), Sabbatical Leave (§352), Maternity or Paternity Leave (§356), Incapacity Leave (§357)
- Provisional members who have completed all their educational requirements and have been elected to provisional membership – with the new wording of §35, deacons and elders who have been elected to provisional membership, but not yet commissioned, are eligible to vote.²
- Associate members, active or retired
- 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 election.³

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 (§359), Clergy on Administrative Location (§363), Clergy on Involuntary Leave of Absence (§355.7)
- Local Pastors who do not meet the criteria listed above

¹ Those on Administrative Location may not be elected because their status is the same as those on Honorable Location who no longer have membership in the annual conference. When corrected, §363.3 b) (4) supports this: The first line states: "The provisions of §363.3b apply to administrative location..." It should read: "The provisions of 359.2 apply to administrative location..."

² "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)

³ In annual conferences, it is the bishop's responsibility to make rulings of law as they apply to the *Book of Discipline*.