

**BOARD OF ORDAINED
MINISTRY**

**The
Probationary Process**

**Toward
Effectiveness
in Ministry**

**The Probationary
Process for Deacons
and Elders**

The process of becoming a full-connection Elder or Deacon in the United Methodist Church has undergone an enormous change in recent years. The probationary process, as it has come to be known, is being implemented in various ways throughout United Methodism.

Here in the Desert Southwest Annual Conference, the probationary process has been designed in accordance with disciplinary requirements to enhance and further the educational process of the probationary members, while developing both mentoring and covenant relationships with peers in the process and with full-connection elders and deacons. It is the Board's hope that the Probationary Process will help us all become more effective pastors.

For further understanding of the probationary process, please see Paragraph 317 of the *Book of Discipline*.

www.dswboom.org

For more information, please consult with the chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the registrar for probationary membership, or visit our website at www.dswboom.org.

The Probationary Process

The Goals

Since ministry during the probationary period establishes lifelong patterns, the Board of Ordained Ministry provides a process through which probationary members may begin ministry within a community of nurturing supervision and support, fostering the development of personal expectations and disciplines which we hope will result in effective lifelong ministry.

Participants in the probationary process will:

- Learn to integrate formal study, life experiences, and the evolving challenges of leadership in a multi-cultural church that is at once local and global.
- Establish practices of spiritual discipline that will nurture and sustain a deep and growing Christian faith and effectiveness in ministry.
- Identify and begin the development of skills enhancing our commitment to carry out the church's mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ by equipping laity for ministry.
- Claim our role within the ministry of all God's people.
- Be welcomed into and connected within the clergy covenant.
- Experience a working introduction to the United Methodist ethos and the resources of the denomination.
- Begin to develop vocational identity within the context of servant ministry.

These objectives will be worked out by four strategies: mentoring, covenant groups and connectional relationships, continuing theological education, and supervision.

The probationary process is a revolving three-year program of spiritual growth and practical learning designed to develop effectiveness in ministry for probationary members in the Desert Southwest Annual Conference. All probationary members must satisfactorily complete the probationary process to be eligible for full-connection membership.

Fall Probationary Retreat

"How Is it With Your Soul?"

During the annual Fall Probationary Retreat, we will ground ourselves in intentional fellowship, spiritual growth, and mutual support in ministry. As a part of the Fall Retreat, covenant groups will be formed for the coming year. The retreat usually falls in September.

Additional Workshops

In addition to the Fall Retreat, there will be two additional gatherings of probationary members each year. During a rotating three-year period, six unique topics will be explored (see next column). With prior approval, a comparable CE event may be substituted for up to one session each year.

In addition to these six events, probationary members are expected to be in attendance at the conference sponsored Gathering each February.

The Workshop Sessions

YEAR A	
Session 1	Visioning, Planning, and Conflict Management (November 2004)
Gathering	Teamwork in Ministry (February 2005)
Session 2	Pastoral Care Resources and Realities (April 2005)
YEAR B	
Session 3	Exploring, Equipping, and Empowering Lay Ministries (November 2005)
Gathering	Topic TBA (February 2006)
Session 4	Worship and Sacraments as a Way of Life (April 2006)
YEAR C	
Session 5	Stewardship in the Local Church (November 2006)
Gathering	Topic TBA (February 2007)
Session 6	Evangelism and Church Growth Ministries (April 2007)

Covenant Groups and Connectional Relations

Probationary members are required to participate fully in a covenant group. These groups encourage the formation of spiritual habits and mutual ministry that will continue to empower ministry throughout a career. Covenant groups will consist of no more than six persons meeting with a facilitator and will meet 4-6 times annually for 18-20 hours total. Meetings will include prayer, worship, and the integration of practical theology. Groups will change from year to year, reforming each year at the Fall Retreat.

In addition, at least once during the Probationary Process, probationary members will participate in a conference camp as either a dean or camp staff.