

# COMMITTEE ON LOCAL PASTORS

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The Committee on Local Pastors of the Division of Elders gives thanks to God for those who are called to ministry and committed to serve the Church of Jesus Christ as Local Pastors within the North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church.

## A. Licensing School:

**2007** - This year's licensing school was held at Christ United Methodist Church in Plano on March 17, March 24, March 31, April 14, April 21, April 28 and May 5. Eleven students from the North Texas Conference participated. An exceptional team of teachers, facilitators and instructors provided leadership. The Committee offers a special thanks to Duane VanGiesen, Roy Spore, Paul Escamilla, Paul Gould, Jim Dorff, Kathleen Baskin-Ball, Marsha Engle Middleton and Susan Bryan, as well as to Christ United Methodist Church, Plano.

**2008:** The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry has established the minimum requirements for Licensing School to be **80 class room hours**. To meet this expectation, the North Texas Conference has revised its schedule from previous years. **The 2008 Licensing School will be held on five Saturdays (March 29, April 5, April 12, April 19 and May 17) plus one five day week (May 27-31).** Saturday classes will be held at the new Ministry Center while the five day classes will be conducted at the Prothro Retreat Center.

**General Guidelines** - Students **MUST** be certified candidates for ministry, and **MUST** be recommended to attend Licensing School by their respective District Committees on Ordained Ministry. District Superintendents and District Committees on Ordained Ministry need to identify, recommend and submit the names, addresses and telephone numbers of persons to attend the 2008 NTC Licensing School to the Registrar of the Committee on Local Pastors on or before **February 8, 2008**. Upon receipt of the names, each student will receive a date for an interview with the Committee on Local Pastors and specific information as to the time and location of classes. A License for Pastoral Ministry is granted upon a candidate's appointment to a local church. Approval to serve as a Local Pastor in the North Texas Conference is contingent upon successful completion of Licensing School.

Persons needing to attend a Summer Licensing School may attend the Central Texas Conference Licensing School as space is available. No North Texas Conference funding is available to cover this cost. District Superintendents and District Committees on Ministry should contact the Chair of the Committee on Local Pastors, and the Central Texas Conference Office, as soon as the need arises.

- B. Interviews of Those Eligible to be Appointed as Local Pastor for the First Time:** All persons wishing to be eligible to receive an initial appointment as a Local Pastor must first be recommended by their District Committee on Ordained Ministry. They must then participate in an interview with the Committee on Local Pastors. The purpose of the interview is to determine the candidate's readiness for Licensing School and appointment as a local pastor in ministry through the North Texas Annual Conference. To that end, the candidate must be prepared to speak openly, honestly and effectively with regard to his or her readiness for ministry. It is the responsibility of the prospective Local Pastor to contact the Registrar of the Committee on Local Pastors to set up the interview. **The dates scheduled for these interviews in 2008 are: February 19, February 26, and March 4. If needed, additional interviews may be held on March 11.**

In order to assist the candidate in preparation for the interview and to provide a beginning point of conversation, each candidate is required to submit written answers to the following questions. This written work must be submitted to the registrar **no less than ten days prior to the scheduled interview**. Responses to the questions should be thorough, but should not exceed one page for each question.

- 1) Describe your call to ministry and how this call has led you to seek to be a local pastor in the North Texas Conference.
- 2) Explain your understanding of the itinerant system and your willingness to accept this system in your own ministry.
- 3) Discuss your understanding of the sacraments and how your understanding leads you to administer the sacraments in the local church.
- 4) What is your understanding of the service of a local pastor in ministry?

- 5) Do you know God as a pardoning God? Have you the love of God abiding in you? Do you desire nothing but God? Are you holy in all manner of conversation? \*
- 6) Have you gifts, as well as evidence of God's grace, for the work of ministry? Have you a clear, sound understanding; a right judgment in the things of God; a just conception of salvation by faith? Do you speak justly, readily, clearly? \*
- 7) Have you fruit? Have you been truly convinced of sin and converted to God and are you a believer edified by your service? \*

*\* These three questions are taken from the Discipline, ¶303 and are historic questions regarding fitness for ministry. Responses to these questions should include both an understanding of what these questions mean and the candidate's personal thoughts.*

- C. **Interviews of Continuing Local Pastors:** All continuing Local Pastors must meet with their District Committee on Ordained Ministry for an annual review. Generally, it is not necessary for continuing Local Pastors to meet with the Committee on Local Pastors on an annual basis; however, such interviews may be required as determined by the DCOM, the District Superintendent, or by the Committee on Local Pastors or requested by the Local Pastor. The Committee requires all Local Pastors to meet with it five years following their initial approval in order to maintain a healthy working relationship and to ensure continued professional development (progress in seminary or the Course of Study program). These interviews are scheduled at the convenience of the committee in consultation with the Local Pastor.
- D. **District Committees on Ministry:** District Committees on Ministry are required by Discipline to hold continuing interviews for all Local Pastors each year. Each District Committee on Ministry Chairperson and/or Registrar must complete the Checklist for Continuing Interviews of Local Pastors for each continuing Local Pastor, and then send the checklist to Duane VanGiesen at the Ministry Center on or before [February 8, 2008](#). This list should include the recommended status of each Local Pastor (i.e., as Student, Part-time, or Full-time Local Pastor) as well as their location of appointment as of [February 8, 2008](#). A list of all Local Pastors being discontinued must be included as well. Please note that, at any time during the year, a District Committee on Ministry must notify the Chair of Local Pastors immediately upon discontinuance or change of status of a Local Pastor.
- E. **Mentor Pastors:** Local Pastors under appointment will be held accountable for regular and meaningful meetings with their Mentor Pastors. The Committee on Local Pastors requires that Local Pastors meet with their mentors a minimum of four (4) times per year.
- F. **Educational Requirements and the Statute of Limitations:** As required by the Book of Discipline, Full-time Local Pastors must complete four courses per year in a Course of Study school or the correspondence curriculum prescribed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and Part-Time Local Pastors must complete two courses per year (see ¶318.1 and 318.2 in the 2004 BOD). If for some reason a Local Pastor is unable to complete the prescribed number of courses annually, he or she must secure permission in writing from both the District Committee on Ordained Ministry as well as the Committee on Local Pastors. However, it is the responsibility of the Committee on Local Pastors to enforce the statute of limitations, allowing eight years for full-time Local Pastors to complete the Basic Course of Study, and twelve years for Part-time Local Pastors. The procedure for extension is explained in ¶319.3 of the 2004 Book of Discipline.
- G. **Basic Course of Study School at a United Methodist Seminary or School of Theology:** It is the policy of the North Texas Conference Committee on Local Pastors to cover tuition, room, and board expenses for Local Pastors to attend Basic Course of Study School as long as they are under appointment within the boundaries of the North Texas Conference. Students must pay the registration fee to hold their place in each class, as well as any required "community life" fees. Tuition, room and board expenses will be paid directly to the Course of Study School by the North Texas Conference. Reimbursement for books required for Course of Study courses will be available by providing receipts and itemized book lists to the Chair of the Committee on Local Pastors within three months of the completion of the course. Students making a "D" or lower on their grade report will be billed by the North Texas Conference for the cost of the course in question, including any book reimbursement and room/board expenses related to that course. Failure to pay the North Texas Conference for the cost of these failed courses will result in the student forfeiting conference support for future Course of Study or seminary work, until such date as the outstanding balance is paid. The Committee on Local Pastors will determine exceptions on a case-by-case basis.
- H. **NTC Weekend Extension Course of Study School (COSS):** The North Texas Extension Course of Study School is convenient way in which **Part Time Local Pastors** can fulfill a portion of their required Course of Study work. The school continues to experience growth during each year, and the Committee wishes to thank all instructors for their participation. A special thanks goes to Duane VanGiesen, registrar for the school.

The academic calendar for the extension school runs from September through August. A list of courses for the 2007-2008 year and application forms are available on the North Texas Conference website. The NTC Extension Course of Study School intends to offer courses which will enable the **Part Time Local Pastor** to fulfill a portion of his/her basic Course of Study requirements in a manner that maximizes opportunity for secular employment during the summer months. Focus will be placed on first, second, and third year courses. Classes meet from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. one Saturday per month for three consecutive months.

1. Students interested in participating in the NTC Extension Course of Study School are to contact Duane VanGiesen, Board of Ministry File Administrator, at PO Box 866128, Plano, TX 75086-6128, 972-526-5000 (ext. 211), Fax 972-526-5003. A non-refundable fee of \$50.00 is required for each course from students within the North Texas Conference. Upon receipt of the registration form and fee, course assignments and other materials will be mailed to the student. **No registrations will be accepted later than 30 days prior to the first class session.**
2. Students are welcome from outside the North Texas Conference. Such students must pursue payment methods from within their own conference to attend the NTC Extension Course of Study School, as North Texas Conference funding is not available.
3. Reimbursement for books required for Course of Study courses will be available by providing receipts and itemized book lists to the Chair of the Committee on Local Pastors within three months of the completion of the course.
4. The instructors set locations for the classes, with consideration being given to both student and instructor travel distances.
5. Each course meets one Saturday each month for three consecutive months. Sessions begin by 9:00 AM and conclude by 4:00 PM. Attendance at all three sessions is required.
6. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry authorizes the North Texas Extension Course of Study School to provide instruction for courses included in the basic Course of Study of the United Methodist Church **as an extension of the Regional Course of Study program at Perkins School of Theology. All curricula and assignments meet the General Board's criteria for Extension Course of Study programs.** Grades will be issued, recorded and forwarded to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry for inclusion in the Local Pastor's official transcript.
7. Students making a "D" or lower on their grade report will be billed by the Conference for the cost of the course in question, including any book reimbursement related to that course. Failure to pay the Conference for the cost of the failed course will result in the student forfeiting conference support for future Course of Study or seminary work, until such date as the outstanding balance is paid. The Committee on Local Pastors will determine exceptions on a case-by-case basis.
8. Additional courses may be added at the discretion of the Committee on Local Pastors. **In order to encourage participation in a regional school, the North Texas Conference will not offer the following courses: 512 – "Contemporary Theology" and 514 – "Theology and the Practice of Ministry."**
9. **The NTC Weekend Extension Course of Study School is intended for Part-time Local Pastors who hold secular employment, and are therefore better served by a weekend format rather than the standard on-campus seminary format. Part-time Local Pastors enrolled in the Basic Course of Study are required to complete a minimum of two out of the twenty courses as part of an on-campus Course of Study program such as the Perkins Course of Study. Full-time Local Pastors are required by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to complete all of the Basic Course at a Regional Course of Study. Exceptions to this policy can only be granted by the General Board. Requests for this permission should be made to the DCoM registrar in writing. A copy of the request, accompanied by the decision of the DCoM shall be forwarded to the District Superintendent and registrar of the Conference Committee on Local Pastors for recommendation to the General Board.**

#### **I. North Texas Conference Policy Regarding ¶315 of the 2000 Book of Discipline:**

1. Commissioned Persons and Licensing School:  
When candidates for ordination are commissioned as probationary members of the North Texas Conference, their appointments include the issuance of a license for pastoral ministry, allowing them to perform the duties of pastor during their probationary/residency period. Attendance at Licensing School is not generally required as a prerequisite for commissioning; however, the Committee on Preparation and Qualification of the Board of

Ordained Ministry may request that an individual attend Licensing School as a prerequisite for commissioning.

2. Certified Candidates and Licensing School:

All persons attending Licensing School who will serve within the North Texas Conference must be certified candidates prior to the beginning of Licensing

School. In addition, each Licensing School student shall be explicitly recommended to attend Licensing School by his or her respective District Committee on Ordained Ministry.

3. Seminary Students and Licensing School:

To receive a License for Pastoral Ministry in the North Texas Conference, students must either attend Licensing School or have completed one third of their work for a Master of Divinity degree at a school of theology listed by the University Senate, including at least one course in homiletics. If deemed necessary and/or beneficial, the District Committees on Ministry reserve the right to require attendance at Licensing School for any or all candidates.

4. Course of Study Students and Licensing School:

In the North Texas Conference, all students enrolled in Course of Study School must have previously completed Licensing School successfully.

- J. Psychological Testing and the License for Pastoral Ministry:** Because all certified candidates in the North Texas Conference have undergone psychological testing, all persons seeking a License for Pastoral Ministry will have necessarily undergone this testing. Under no circumstance will a License for Pastoral Ministry be issued without the licensee having been previously tested.
- K. Background Checks:** All persons becoming eligible to serve as a Local Pastor in the North Texas Conference must clear a criminal background check, initiated by their respective DCoM.
- L. Exceptions to Policy:** The District Superintendent, the District Committee on Ordained Ministry, and the North Texas Conference Committee on Local Pastors shall jointly consider any exceptions [to the conference policies](#) on a case-by-case basis. Their decision is final. [Exceptions to the policies of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry can only be made by GBHEM.](#) Any request for an exception to existing policies shall be made in writing to the DCoM and forwarded with the recommended action to the Chair of the Committee on Local Pastors for appropriate referral and/or action.