

2026

Presiding Elder Playbook of the Upper Midwest Conference of the Global Methodist Church

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WHO THIS HANDBOOK IS FOR

This handbook is written primarily for Presiding Elders of the Upper Midwest Conference as a practical guide for faithful leadership. It is also intended to help local churches, clergy, and lay leaders understand the role of the Presiding Elder, what support they can expect, and how we work together in a connectional system.

BACKGROUND

This sourcebook is to be a guide to assist with the administration of the Upper Midwest Conference. The role of the Presiding Elder (PE) is a connection point

between clergy and the annual conference within the Global Methodist Church. This role is an extension of the office of bishop and conference superintendent.

The PE is a volunteer role that is often served by actively pastoring elders. (A stipend is given to the church the presiding elder is appointed to in order to show we value their time given to conference work). Having presiding elders who serve the district and a local church helps us align with our commitment to having low connectional funding rates and not developing a top-heavy bureaucracy.

This sourcebook is not intended to be a mandatory operations manual, but rather a guide as we seek the most efficient and God-honoring ways to organize our work.

Given the new nature of our conference, we hope our leadership is offered grace as they lead in these positions beyond the local church for the greater good of God's kingdom.

THE PRESIDING ELDER AT A GLANCE

Presiding Elders Are:

- Pastors to pastors
- Representatives of the Bishop and Conference
- Leaders of the appointment and charge conference process
- Shepherds of connectional health
- Assigned as a volunteer

Presiding Elders Are Not:

- Day-to-day supervisors of church staff
- Replacement pastors for local churches
- Arbitrators for every disagreement
- Full-time conference staff

What are my priorities in the role of presiding elder:

1. Your own Spiritual Walk with God
2. Your Family
3. Your Local Congregation
4. Your duties as a Presiding Elder

The Conference affirms that faithfulness in this role requires healthy boundaries. Presiding Elders are encouraged to steward their time and energy in a way that honors these priorities. When conflicts arise between these priorities, Presiding Elders should consult with a Conference Superintendent.

What are the time expectations for my presiding elder work?

A presiding elder will regularly spend 16 hours a month in this position.

- District Gathering with clergy: 4 hours
- Cabinet meetings via zoom: 4 hours
- Calls, Emails, Visits: 8 hours

THE ROLE OF PRESIDING ELDER

The role of the presiding elder is laid out in ¶ 609 of our Book of Doctrine and Disciplines.

Required Responsibilities

In the Upper Midwest here are the three main tasks we expect PEs to lead:

PASTOR TO THE PASTOR: Pastors need pastors. Leading a congregation can be isolating and challenging. Siloing into one's own area is a temptation. The Presiding Elder's role is to shepherd and pastor the clergy in their district. This includes mandatory regular district area meetings. Clergy and presiding elders are expected to be present at these meetings, whether online or in person. These meetings are to give clergy approximately 4 hours a month together, so it could be once a month or divided throughout the month. These meetings are an opportunity to hear the needs of clergy and to ensure they are being supported not only by their conference representative but also by a cadre of peers experiencing similar issues in their local setting.

The Presiding Elder's primary posture toward clergy is pastoral care and encouragement, not inspection. Accountability flows out of relationship, covenant, and shared mission.

APPOINTMENT MAKING—provide leadership in the consultation between churches and pastors regarding beginning and ending appointments. The PE is expected to be present when potential pastors are being previewed—and is responsible for completing all appointment-related paperwork. In our highly consultative system,

churches and pastors have the choice to accept or decline appointments, but declining an appointment may lead to longer pastoral transitions.

CHURCH/CHARGE CONFERENCES—provide leadership in scheduling the annual church/charge conference, special called church/charge conferences and the submission of all paperwork and minutes. Any elder can preside at a church/charge conference, but the PE must exercise discretion in assigning them. The PE may delegate this responsibility, but it is encouraged that the PE preside over at least 20% of charge conferences.

Our Book of Doctrines and Discipline outlines the priorities of a church's charge conference. They are to “review and evaluate the total mission and ministry of the church, receive reports, elect leaders, and adopt the objectives and goals recommended by the church council that are in keeping with the objectives of the Global Methodist Church.” When a charge conference is properly prepared, this work can be clarifying, dignifying and empowering. It is an opportunity for a church as a whole to embrace a vision for the coming year, and to celebrate all the good work that has been accomplished in the year behind. A good charge conference is more than a box to check. It is how a community evaluates, makes intentional choices and equips itself for mission. It is one of the ways we guard against mission drift. Because the charge conference can be such a powerful gathering, we encourage each church to hold its own conference and to work toward a meaningful annual gathering for the whole community.

Delegated Roles of the Presiding Elder

These are under the PE's responsibility, but given our structure, we believe these areas should be delegated to other individuals or a collaboration with others in our districts. The PE's volunteer plate will be full with the above responsibilities.

MISSIONAL RESOURCE - As a missional movement each church will have opportunities for district-wide, conference-wide and international mission partnership. It's hoped that priority for partnerships will be given to Global Methodist partnerships. The district can work to gather a team of clergy and laity to develop and implement partnerships or connect churches to other resources from across the conference.

CHURCH PLANTING - Provide leadership in lifting the value and necessity of church planting and multiplication—including identifying places or people groups who would benefit from starting a new community of faith. While anyone or any church can decide to start a church in the GMC, the district can pray for, financially support, give gifts in kind, and give the opportunity to people to participate in planting churches in their district. The Multiplication Team desires lay leaders in each district to assist in church planting.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING - Each district can work to provide leadership training. One option is the International Leadership Institute (ILI) History Makers Training. The PE can help make this happen through a recruited and trained team.

MEDIATION/CONFLICT RESOLUTION: Following the Biblical Model found in Matthew chapter 18, there can be district support to provide guidance and facilitate conversations in the face of conflict. They provide training on how to have crucial conversations and educate leaders under their care regarding watching over one another in love with accountability practices.

CABINET

The Cabinet includes all active Presiding Elders appointed by the Bishop in consultation with the Conference Superintendents. It also consists of the Conference Superintendents, Chair of the Board of Ministry and Multiplication Lead. The Conference Superintendents call meetings.

Luann Benge North West Iowa	Mike Hader South West Iowa/Nebraska East
Andrew Happ East Central Iowa	Jeff Kelley Nebraska West
Rey Colon North Dakota East	Jeff Kodis North Central Iowa
Bruce Kronen Minnesota Northwest	Jonathan Lee Minnesota Southeast
Chad Lierman South Central Iowa	Joleen Pietrzak South Dakota Southeast
Darla Hadrick South Dakota West/Wyoming	Phil Rogers North East Iowa
Corey Jenkins North Dakota West/Montana	Bruce Smith South East Iowa
Jake Schadel Nebraska North Central	Shanon Williams Nebraska South Central
Roger Spahr South Dakota Northeast	

Multiplication Lead: Zach Kingery

Board of Ministry Chair: Val Reinhiller

Cabinet meetings are mandatory for all presiding elders. Due to vacations, family matters, and responsibilities in the local church, there may be a need for an absence from time to time. Please alert a Conference Superintendent when these needs arise. You will be responsible for acquiring the information you missed during the meeting.

THE PURPOSE OF CABINET MEETINGS

- To gather and support one another for the work before us
- To prayerfully gather and seek God's will for local congregations
- To hold one another accountable for our faith journeys and our discipleship of local churches and their pastors
- To make appointments that will lead to the building of the kingdom of God
- To find ways to energize and equip the local church
- To learn about church leadership so we can teach church leadership

APPOINTMENTS

The Book of Doctrine and Disciplines shares about appointments in ¶ 610.

Conference Appointment Process Priorities

- The Conference Cabinet is deeply committed to prayer and mutual discipleship as we work.
- The Conference is committed to long-term appointments. The most effective years of ministry occur after year seven. Our goal is to help congregations and pastors work toward long-term tenures.
- Below is the order of consideration for all appointments:
 1. Discernment of the Will of God (as best we can know it)
 2. The Mission-field
 3. The Local Church
 4. The Pastor
- The conference is committed to cross-racial appointments, and the cabinet is committed to sending qualified candidates to congregations without regard to race, tribal or ethnic origin, gender, disability, marital status, or age.
- To be considered for an appointment, clergy must complete a 'Clergy Profile' requesting consideration.
- Appointments are made after deep consultation with leadership teams from the local church. Presiding Elders will work with local congregations to develop a profile that reflects the needs of the mission field and the local church. This includes the work of the Pastor Parish Relations Committee. This data will assist the cabinet in selecting candidates for consideration.
- The Annual Conference is committed to giving Pastor Parish Relations committees the best candidates available and meeting their criteria.
- The Annual Conference is committed to not rushing the appointment process. Once we have received the profile, most appointments could take between 10 and 12 weeks.

Appointment Process

1. Church profile completed
2. Cabinet discerns candidates
3. PE contacts one candidate at a time
4. Preview with PPRC

5. Bishop makes the appointment
6. Announcement coordinated
7. Onboarding begins

What follows is a detailed explanation of each step.

1. When a church opens in our district, Conference Superintendents would be the first contact of the PE. The PE would send a **church profile** which would be sent to the other PEs before the next meeting. Superintendents would both have a chance to look at the profile and might consult on potential fits from across the conference, as well as potential fits from outside the conference, to bring to the next Appointive Cabinet meeting. It would be wise to give our PE's a chance to consider options to bring to that meeting also. (The Appointive Cabinet is the sub-cabinet group, currently, East and West.)
2. When the Appointive Cabinet meets, we will talk about the churches that are open in our districts and set our priorities on which ones are first priorities and start with the top one or two. Together, we make a list of potential pastors who best fit the needs of that congregation. Superintendents would bring possible candidates who are coming from outside the conference. If there is a serious candidate from outside the conference, we might invite that person to join our zoom meeting for a short 20 minute meet and greet, so all of us could meet this person. This could be done for anyone to give the Cabinet a better feel for the person. (If the candidate is from outside the conference the Board of Ministry can give a summary.)

After a list is made and discussed we **pray for God's direction and wisdom together**. Then we ask each PE to share who they feel would be the best fit, leaving the PE of that church's district as the last person to give his/her discernment. If one of the potential pastors happens to be on this Appointive Cabinet it would be appropriate to ask her/his input but would ask to leave the meeting as we decide who should be asked first. As a group we agree on who should be approached.

******If no ordained pastor is selected, the PE can consider an assignment of a layperson. When the cabinet agrees on that layperson, they must have a

background check done through the Board of Ministry before being offered the assignment.

3. We don't contact any potential candidates until the Appointive Cabinet agrees who we are going to have the PE of that district or Superintendent contact. (The reason for this is so we can maintain confidentiality for the pastors being contacted so their present congregation doesn't unnecessarily find out their pastor may move, and multiple PE's aren't contacting the same people for multiple places.) **The receiving PE contacts the candidate.** We give that pastor 3 days to pray and consult. If they choose not to consider taking the next step to meet the PPRC, the PE calls the Superintendent and permission can be given to move on to the second-best option.

4. If the pastor feels God is leading them to the next step, the **PE sets up the preview with the PPRC/Leadership** of the congregation.

Here is where we need to explain the appointment system blended with a more collaborative process with the PPRC. The PE can now say that the Cabinet has looked over all the potential pastors and would like to present the best available for them to meet. If we have done our work well and the preview goes well, we have a match. We will have a list of more than one option, when possible, but will only send one pastor to preview at a time. (The local church is responsible for costs of a preview and should be communicated clearly. This would include travel expenses for the pastor coming for the preview.)

Once the match has been made, the Presiding Elder will work with the congregation and the clergy on a compensation package including:

- Moving Assistance
- Compensation Forms
- Accountable Reimbursement Policy
- Explanation of Housing Allowance, Housing Exclusion
- BENEFITS: Pension, Health Insurance, and Disability
- Waiver for Health Care Enrollment
- Waiver for Pension Enrollment
- Vacation, Continuing Education, and Mission Participation policies

5. Once these details are finalized, the PE will fill out a Change of Appointment Form and send it to their Conference Superintendent. Who will forward the form to the **Bishop for the appointment to be made.**

6. The announcement of the appointment is coordinated on the Change of Appointment form. **The announcement should be made at the same time at all churches involved**, both the sending and receiving churches in the change of appointment.

7. **Onboarding will begin** to prepare the church and pastor to begin well and get to know one another. (This process is still being developed.)

Appointment Designations

Certified Lay Minister: ¶502 – May be assigned as a Lay Pastor to a local congregation. Laity currently serving in the role that are NOT certified Lay Ministers and who do not want to be ordained should be encouraged to complete the certified lay minister coursework. Laity are ASSIGNED to a congregation. Not appointed. The Presiding Elder is the acting administrator of any pastoral charge in which a pastoral vacancy may develop or where no pastor is appointed. Laity assigned serves under the direct supervision of the PE. (Paragraph 609)

- No change of appointment form is needed for assignments.
- Every lay pastor needs to be supervised by a presiding elder.
- No Health or Pension Benefits
- No Sacramental Authority. Communion and Baptisms must be done by the Presiding Elder or assigned elder.

Deacon: ¶503.1 – May be appointed to a located ministry in a church or approved organization beyond the church.

- Change of appointment forms are required for these appointments
- Full-time: eligibility for health benefits
- Full Sacramental Rights in accordance with ¶413

Elder: ¶503.2 – May be appointed to a located ministry in a church or approved organization beyond the church.

- Change of appointment forms are required for these appointments
- Full Sacramental Rights

Supply Pastor: ¶512 – BOM-approved candidates for ministry may request to serve in the capacity of Supply Pastors prior to ordination. With the BOM’s approval of this designation, Supply pastors may be appointed to a located ministry in a church.

- Change of appointment forms are required
- Full Time: eligibility for health benefits
- With the completion of the Sacramental training and approval of Bishop

OTHER PROCESSES

Expense Vouchers

When there are expenses for travel, please use an expense voucher. (First time getting reimbursed, also fill out a direct deposit form for quick reimbursement.) We reimburse for mileage to and from other churches or conference events. We use the IRS mileage rate. Send the form to your Conference Superintendent for a signature of approval and they will pass it on to the Conference Bookkeeper.

Clergy transfer between Annual Conferences

1. The Conference superintendents of each conference.

- When a pastor is requesting a transfer for appointment or otherwise, the conference superintendent of the receiving conference should make sure the current Conference Superintendent is aware and supportive.

2. The current presiding elder of the pastor seeking to transfer, as well as the presiding elder in the new conference.

- After the presiding elder who is seeking to appoint a pastor from another conference ensures that the conference superintendents have had conversation, they should reach out to the current presiding elder to confirm there are no red flags.

3. The Board of Ministry of the conference the pastor is seeking to transfer to.

- Before a transfer is completed and an appointment set, the receiving Board of Ministry should approve the transfer.

Clergy Coaching

We are working to develop coaching options for our pastors and churches.

Annual Evaluations

PEs should have annual contact with appointed clergy and assigned laypersons for the purpose of review and visioning for the future. This will include discussion of “continuing education, spiritual practices, current ministry work and goals for future ministry.”

(¶609.8)

PEs will also have an annual review with a Conference Superintendent on the same criteria.

FORMS TO COME.

COMPENSATION GUIDELINES

GUIDELINES RECOMMENDED BY THE CABINET

SALARY GUIDELINES

The Global Methodist Church does not have a “minimum salary.” These salary ranges are offered as guidelines for local congregations trying to determine. These are approximate values.

SALARY RANGES:

0- \$20k $\frac{1}{4}$ time - up to 10 hours per week

\$21-\$30k $\frac{1}{2}$ time - up to 20 hours per week

\$31-\$45k $\frac{3}{4}$ time - up to 30 hours per week

No Housing Allowance for part-time - may have a parsonage as an extra benefit

\$65+ Full-time - Includes benefits of Health and Pension

Plus, a parsonage or \$20K housing allowance

Housing allowance should be around the fair market value to rent and run a home in the community of the church. This will vary from community to community.

MOVING GUIDELINES

Bruce Kronen is checking on some prices to give us an idea.

How can we encourage churches to create a fund for a pastoral transition? With lower connectional giving, there are no funds for moves at the conference level.

Can we find any solution or assistance when clergy move to senior status??

CLERGY VACATION GUIDELINES

While ultimately vacation policies should be set by the local congregation and be negotiated between the clergy and PPR, the Annual Conference values rest and refreshment for all clergy, so we recommend a minimum of 4 weeks vacation including 4 Sundays.

In addition to the vacation: 1 week of Sabbatical/Continuing Education annually and 1-3 Months of Sabbatical every 4 years.

PARSONAGE GUIDELINES

Still need to develop this.

Clergy Sacramental Authority				
Status	Sacramental Privilege	Marriages*	Funerals	Annual Conference
Elder (E)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Voice and vote on all matters.
<i>Inactive Elder</i>	Yes			<i>Voice. No vote.</i>
Deacon (D)	Yes/No Deacons may receive sacramental authority if required as part of their appointed ministry job description.	Yes	Yes	Voice and vote on all matters.
<i>Inactive Deacon</i>	No			<i>Voice. No vote.</i>
Transitional Local Pastor (TLP)	Yes TLP's have sacramental authority only within the context of their appointed ministry	Yes	Yes	When under appointment, voice and vote on all matters on all matters except ordination and conference relations of deacons and elders.
<i>Inactive TLP</i>	No			<i>Voice. No vote.</i>
Supply Pastor (SP)	Yes SP's have sacramental authority only with proper sacramental training. Requires Bishop approval.	Yes	Yes	Voice on all matters while under appointment. <i>No vote.</i>
<i>Inactive Supply</i>	No			<i>No voice. No vote.</i>

Valid Elder (VE)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Voice on all matters.
Valid Deacon (VD) <i>(ordained in another denomination)</i>	VE's have sacramental authority within the context of their appointed ministry. VD's may receive sacramental authority through the GMC while under appointment if required as part of their appointed ministry job description.			Vote on all matters except constitutional amendments, election of delegates to General, regional, or annual conferences, and all matters of ordination character, and conference relations of ministers.
<i>Inactive VE/VD</i>	<i>Not within the GMC</i>			<i>No voice. No vote.</i>
Senior Elders (SSE) Senior Deacons (SSD)	SSE's, Yes. SSD's may receive sacramental authority if under appointment and if required as part of their appointed ministry job description.	Yes	Yes	Voice on all matters. Vote on all matters for seven years following either 1) transfer into GMC, or 2) completion of last appointment.
<i>Inactive SSE/SSD</i>	SSE's, Yes. SSD's, No.			<i>Same as above.</i>
Certified Lay Minister (CLM) <i>(Not clergy)</i>	No	No	Yes	No

*The marriage column reflects a general GMC best practice or position, but state laws vary on clergy requirements for performing a wedding. A wedding is not a sacrament. Therefore, it does not demand ordination to perform a marriage. However, how our buildings are used, and services are conducted is the responsibility of the clergy. We recommend that only an appointed pastor (supply or ordained) or a clergy they approve be the only person to perform a marriage in a Global Methodist Church. The clergy can invite a religious leader to preside with them if they desire. Outside of a church building, any Global Methodist leader can

perform a marriage, but any Global Methodist who performs a marriage must abide by our polity's definition of marriage. Failure to do so will result in a complaint being filed.

PRESIDING ELDERS ARE MANDATORY REPORTERS

When a Presiding Elder becomes aware of a reportable issue, they must immediately notify a Conference Superintendent. Presiding Elders should not attempt to investigate independently.

Reportable issues include:

- Moral Failure
- Sexual Misconduct
- Financial Malfeasance
- Dangerous Situational Issues

APPENDIX

[Change of Appointment Form](#)

[Presiding Elder Expense Voucher](#)

[Direct Deposit Form](#)

[Clergy Evaluations](#)

[Church Profile](#)

[Pastor Profile](#)