

1 **ACTION REQUEST #5**

2
3 **2021 OREGON-IDAHO**
4 **ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

5
6 **TITLE:** Clarify Sexual Ethics Policy to Include Retired Clergy in Requirements

7 **SPONSORING GROUP OR INDIVIDUAL:** Board of Ordained Ministry

8 **SPOKESPERSON:** Teri Watanabe, BOM Chair-Elect

9 **SPOKESPERSON’S ADDRESS:** PO Box 1492, Veneta, OR 97487

10 **SPOKESPERSON’S E-MAIL:** TWwrite1@gmail.com

11 **SPOKESPERSON’S TELEPHONE:** 503-502-4009

12 **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ACTION:** Recommend for approval 19-0-0.

13
14 **I/We petition the Oregon-Idaho Annual conference to take the following action:**

15
16 Amend the fourth, fifth, and sixth paragraphs of the “Implementation of Policy” section of the *Sexual*
17 *Ethics Policy for Clergy of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church* (bottom
18 of page 46, 2021 OR-ID Conference Journal) as follows (text to be added appears in bold):

19
20 **All Oregon-Idaho clergy members (see definition of “clergy” above) and all other clergy currently**
21 **appointed by the Oregon-Idaho Bishop** ~~The following persons are required to complete the three~~
22 **requirements outlined below: an annual online knowledge test on the Sexual Ethics Policy: 1) all**
23 ~~Oregon-Idaho clergy members (see definition of “clergy” above) and 2) all other clergy currently serving~~
24 ~~under appointment by the Oregon-Idaho Bishop.~~

- 25 • **Successfully complete an annual online knowledge test on the Sexual Ethics Policy.** When
26 requested, provisions will be made for the online test to be taken ~~on paper and returned to the~~
27 ~~District Superintendent via the U.S. mail~~ **via telephone or videoconference.**
- 28 • **Complete the Annual Disclosure Form and submit it to the district office.**

29 ~~The following persons are also required to-~~

- 30 • ~~Attend one “Sexual Ethics, Abuse Prevention, and Healthy Boundaries” training offered by the~~
31 ~~Board of Ordained Ministry each quadrennium: all clergy currently appointed by the Oregon-~~
32 ~~Idaho bishop and/or serving in a ministerial role in an Oregon-Idaho ministry setting. The Board~~
33 ~~of Ordained Ministry provides the “Sexual Ethics, Abuse Prevention, and Healthy Boundaries”~~
34 ~~training within the quadrennium. A non-Board of Ordained Ministry training can be reviewed~~
35 ~~by the Board of Ordained Ministry to shall determine if the a non-Board of Ordained Ministry~~
36 ~~training is equivalent to the training promoted by the Board of Ordained Ministry.~~
37 ~~Considerations will include the training’s number of contact hours, content, and the~~
38 ~~qualifications of the workshop leader(s).~~

39
40 Applications for exemption from ~~the required annual online test and the once per quadrennium training~~
41 ~~requirement~~ **these three requirements** shall be made in writing to the District Superintendent. Letters
42 of approval for exemption shall be kept on file in the District Superintendent’s office.

43
44 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

45
46 **What will this action accomplish?**

47 A change to this section of the policy in 2014 was meant to clarify it, but actually created confusion
48 about the requirements. As currently written, the policy implies that most retired clergy are not

1 required to take a quadrennial “Healthy Boundaries” workshop, even though the practice has been that
2 retired clergy are expected to do the training. This language change will make the policy clear that all
3 clergy, including retirees, must do all of the sexual ethics requirements unless formally exempted. The
4 policy will now also include mention of the Annual Disclosure Form, which has been required for many
5 years but has not been in the policy.
6

7 **Why is it important?**

8 When recommending candidates for ordination, the Board of Ordained Ministry seeks to discern a
9 calling from God into the unique identity of an elder or deacon. This identity does not disappear upon
10 entering the retired relationship. As long as persons carry the identity of “clergy,” they must use that
11 identity carefully and intentionally. All three of these requirements, including the quadrennial Healthy
12 Boundaries training, help clergy to understand and be consistently reminded of the importance of clergy
13 ethics. This is especially true for retired clergy who may be particularly vulnerable to the challenges of
14 changing boundaries in areas such as social media, and who continue to serve and hold authority within
15 our congregations and communities in retired status. The policy continues to allow retired clergy to
16 request an exemption from their district superintendent; clergy on Medical Leave can also request a
17 deferment.
18

19 **How will it be carried out? By whom?**

20 If passed by the Annual Conference, the amended policy will be published annually in the Conference
21 Journal. The Board of Ordained Ministry will work in partnership with the district offices to continue to
22 provide the online test, the Disclosure Form, opportunities for the quadrennial Healthy Boundaries
23 training, and to track compliance.
24

25 **How much will it cost? Where will the money come from?**

26 The Board plans to continue its practice of providing Healthy Boundaries workshops at no charge to
27 retired clergy, using money from its budget. This is not a change, so there is no anticipated increase in
28 cost.
29