

A COVENANT OF CLERGY CONDUCT
Produced jointly by the Cabinet and Board of Ordained Ministry
Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference

As clergy of the Oregon/Idaho Annual conference, called by God to be a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, gifted by the Holy Spirit for the building up of the Body of Christ, and having pledged ourselves to live in covenant with the clergy of this conference, we acknowledge our need for God's grace as we seek to be faithful in ministry, and we accept that covenant relationships are a vital and necessary part of fulfilling our vows and calling.

In the Greater Northwest Area, we serve as colleagues in a covenant community. We all wrestle with the complexity of ministerial relationships and friendships with parishioners that require us to be sensitive and clear, especially after we have ended an appointment. These behavior guidelines help us honor our covenant community and United Methodist Connection.

This covenant, made by both exiting and entering clergy during appointment transitions, including retiring clergy, will be shared with the Staff Parish Relations Committee of both congregations.

For the purpose of this document, the terms 'clergy' and 'minister' apply to any person appointed or assigned to a congregation in Oregon-Idaho, including elders, deacons, and licensed local and lay-assigned pastors.

With that in mind, we covenant as United Methodist leaders in Connection in Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference to:

Honor one another as Christian leaders by...

1. Honoring the work or lifestyle of our predecessors, successors, and other ministers by speaking of one another and our ministries with dignity, honor, and respect.
2. Being sensitive, gracious, and appropriately inclusive of former ministers.
3. Practicing the same ministerial code of ethics with ministers and congregations of other denominations as we do in the United Methodist Church.

Honor our congregational relationships by...

1. Performing no ministerial functions in any church or charge to which we are not appointed, except at the request and under the clear direction of the pastor in charge.
2. Upon leaving the appointment, including in retirement, severing all ministerial relationships with the parish, recognizing that all future weddings, baptisms, communions, counseling, visitations and funerals should be fulfilled by our succeeding minister, unless an unusual situation exists and that minister approves it. When we receive a request from a former parishioner, we will always refer them, without comment, to their current minister. We will only agree to any involvement after the appointed pastor invites participation personally.
3. As a former minister and family residing in the same community following serving there as minister, we will find another church to attend. We know our continued presence in the life of the church almost always hinders the congregation and the incoming minister in

06/12/2018 Consequences, even in retirement, in regard to this policy are based on the 2016 UMC Discipline, Par. 2702.1 (f) where clergy may be charged and tried for "relationships and/or behavior that undermines the ministry of another pastor."

A COVENANT OF CLERGY CONDUCT

Produced jointly by the Cabinet and Board of Ordained Ministry
Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference

developing the necessary relationship for successful ministry. We agree only to reconsider this after a minimum of one year absence in consultation with our District Superintendent and the current minister.

4. Avoiding all conversation and communication with church members about a new minister, as well as problems and issues regarding the former church. If approached, we will tactfully explain that ethics do not permit such a discussion.

Commit to healthy communication during and after transitions by...

1. Before exiting a local church appointment, clearly communicating from the pulpit, in writing, and on social media that we will no longer be able to function in any ministerial way with the congregation as an exiting minister.
2. Openly sharing and negotiating exceptions to any ongoing relationships and regular contact with former parishioners with the current minister and our District Superintendent. Continued relationships, whether in person or via social media connections, with parishioners do not assist in the health and welfare of our local churches.
3. Committing not to be present or participate in worship, events or church groups for a minimum of one year after leaving that appointment. Our immediate family members will also take a leave of absence for at least one year. In the case of any exceptions, both clergy and the District Superintendent will make a written plan and agreement. In longer appointments, we understand that the District Superintendent may require a longer period of absence.