



APPOINTMENT PROCESS FOR THE GMC IN FLORIDA

IMPORTANT BACKGROUND

Since the days of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, Methodists have appointed their clergy. In the beginning, John Wesley would appoint Methodist preachers to various societies. Eventually, he decided to ordain Thomas Coke to send him to North America so that Methodists in the then colonies would have good order. This has been our system of providing clergy for over 300 years. Some other denominations have a called system. In a called system, the local church interviews (some might say audition) pastoral candidates to decide whom they will “call” as their new pastor. This has never been the case in Methodism.

The Global Methodist Church, standing on over three centuries of precedent, continues to use an appointed system for clergy. The GMC has made important modifications to the system to allow local churches to have more input in who their pastor will be, but in the end, the system is still an appointive one. Below is the process the GMC in Florida is using, following the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, to provide clergy to churches.

THE PROCESS

1. Clergy are considered appointed indefinitely to a church. They are no longer appointed one year at a time. We aim for new appointments to begin on July 1. This helps pastors who have school-aged children and allows them to complete a school year before moving. Our annual conference has a regularized calendar when we ask churches and pastors to discern whether God is calling them to a new season of leadership. Unless there is a significant emergency, we work within that time frame to provide a consistent calendar for all churches. This ensures each church and pastor has the greatest potential of being matched with the right congregation.
2. The first step in the process is for the church to complete a church profile. The presiding elder will provide the profile to the Staff Parish Relations Committee. The profile provides valuable information about the church and the community where it's located. Eventually, this profile will be given to the pastor projected to serve the church. Likewise, the pastor will complete a profile sharing about their gifts, graces, strengths, and areas of growth. Eventually, the church will receive this profile.
3. The presiding elder will meet with the church's leaders responsible for pastors and staff to determine the qualities the church needs in a new pastor. Essential to this conversation is to already have discussed the following items:
 - a. Spiritual gifts needed in a pastor (spiritual gifts are those listed by the Apostle Paul in Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28).

- b. Specific skills needed in a new pastor especially if there is an area of the church that needs attention. (An example would be that a missional priority for the church is to start a new small groups ministry and the church needs a pastor with experience/skills in that area).
- c. The compensation you will pay the pastor. First, you should decide if you're going with a part-time or full-time pastor. Currently, there is no minimum salary requirement for clergy. That said, at some point, the presiding elder is likely to suggest that a salary may be too low to be considered full-time.
 - i. If the church requests a part-time pastor, pastors are appointed in quarter increments. ($\frac{1}{4}$ time = 10 hours a week, $\frac{1}{2}$ time = 20 hours a week, $\frac{3}{4}$ time = 30 hours a week).
 - ii. At half-time, clergy earn retirement benefits. The church pays 5% of the salary plus housing (parsonage or housing allowance – if parsonage, the value is calculated as 25% of the pastor's base salary). The church also matches, dollar for dollar, what the pastor contributes up to an additional 5%.
 - iii. At $\frac{3}{4}$ time, clergy earn life and disability insurance coverage paid for by the church.
 - iv. At full-time, clergy earn health insurance which depends on whether the pastor is single, married, or has a family.
 - v. The Global Methodist Church has chosen [Guidestone](#) to provide retirement benefits as well as life and disability insurance. Information about the GMC's health insurance, retirement plan, and insurance benefits can be found at <https://www.guidestone.org/Updates/Global-Methodist-Church>. There are four exemptions for churches providing health insurance to full-time clergy:
 - 1. If the pastor's spouse's employer provides coverage and the pastor is on the spouse's insurance.
 - 2. If the pastor is bi-vocational and the pastor receives coverage through their other employer.
 - 3. If the pastor has military insurance (TriCare or VA).
 - 4. The pastor is on Medicare or Medicaid.
 - vi. Full-time clergy also must be provided with a parsonage or a housing allowance. Please click here to read our Cabinet policy on clergy housing: <https://floridagmc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Cabinet-Policy-for-Clergy-Housing.pdf>.
 - vii. Please also decide if the church is providing an account for reimbursed business expenses (such as books, taking a parishioner to lunch, etc.) and/or continuing education.
 - viii. Appointed clergy are NEVER under contract to a church and an employment contract should not be prepared. Clergy serve at the pleasure of the Bishop and Conference Superintendent.

- ix. Please click here to read the Cabinet policy on moving expenses for clergy: <https://floridagmc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Cabinet-Policy-for-Moving-Expenses.pdf>.
- d. Talk about the unique context of your congregation and the community in which you are located to help the presiding elder understand if certain considerations should be considered to ensure a good projected appointment.
- 4. After the meeting with the church, the presiding elder will meet with the Cabinet and the Cabinet will begin the work of projecting appointments. Each church will be projected with one pastor.
- 5. The Presiding Elder will work to quickly get in touch with the church to arrange an introductory meeting where the church and projected pastor will be introduced. At this meeting, contact information will be shared, profiles will be swapped, and arrangements will be made for an in-person meeting.
- 6. The church and the pastor will then have several weeks (approximately 2-3) of discernment to get to know each other well. We encourage multiple meetings and times of contact. There should be at least one in-person visit. ***PLEASE NOTE:*** It is important to remember that this is not an audition of the pastor, and the pastor should not be referred to as a “candidate.” This is a time of mutual learning and discernment.
 - a. We understand that churches are likely to go to the website of the church where the pastor currently serves and will listen to his/her sermons. This is fine. It is not acceptable to have the pastor preach for the projected search as this turns the appointive system into a called system.
 - b. Churches should understand that pastors are likely to visit their websites, social media sites, etc., and should endeavor to ensure they are updated and accurate. Pastors will also be looking at your facilities with “outside eyes” and are likely to notice things that members don’t since the members are there often.
 - c. Compensation will have already been determined before the projection and the meeting period is not to be considered a time to negotiate salary.
 - d. The intention is that at the end of the several weeks period, the church and pastor will decide they are a good match, and the Cabinet will then work to finalize the appointment.
 - e. If the pastor or the church determines there are missional reasons why the projected appointment is not a good match, then they must submit those reasons in writing to the presiding elder.
 - i. After the Cabinet reviews the missional reasons, the Conference Superintendent will decide if they are valid. If the missional reasons are valid, the Conference Superintendent will project another pastor to the church and the above process will be repeated.
 - ii. An example of missional reasons includes, but are not limited to, the following: the church wants to start a new small groups ministry and the projected pastor has no experience doing so. Another example would be that the church needs to go through a building and capital campaign and the pastor has never led one.

- iii. **PLEASE NOTE:** it is highly unlikely that if either the pastor or the church requests reconsideration multiple times that they will continue to be granted.
- 7. Once the appointment is set, the presiding elder will work with the pastor and church to decide on a starting date as well as an announcement date to share the appointment more broadly.
 - a. **PLEASE NOTE:** Until the announcement date, this projected appointment must be held in strict confidence. Confidentiality is not about some people getting to know information that others don't. Confidentiality is about the right people finding out the right information at the right time. When people find out information at the wrong time, people are harmed. It is usually the pastor and/or their family.
 - b. We have had situations where someone did not hold things in confidence and a pastor's child finds out on the school bus from a friend that his/her family is moving. A pastor deserves to share that information with his/her family at the time of his/her choosing.
 - c. We have had instances where a pastor's spouse's employer is told the pastor is moving before the spouse is ready resulting in the spouse being fired.
 - d. We have had instances where a church leader shares the information with someone across the country thinking there was no way it would ever get back to someone in Florida, and in our world of social media, it did.
 - e. **Church leaders should not share this information with anyone, including spouses, and no one should follow the new pastor on social media until the announcement is made.**