

Staunton District Director of Congregational Excellence

(revised 1 Nov 2021)

Foundations for Clergy Development

The Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church is moving in exciting new directions. Based on recommendations from the District Alignment Team in 2021, re-alignment of districts, consolidation of superintendents, and development of District Developer positions will be the significant changes in 2021-2022. Although the DAT proposals did not pass the 2021 Annual Conference, the framework for “out of the box” church development is alive and well. These changes are taking place because our churches sit within a larger landscape of adaptive challenges for the 21st century, and in the midst of decline and growing disinterest and disconnection with the church in our communities, the urgency of the Gospel has never been more palpable. More than ever, our commitment must be for the mission of the church to drive the institution, rather than the institution driving the mission.

In a bold, **three step strategy**, the Annual Conference iDAT sought to and the conference continues to seek to: 1) Resource our clergy; 2) Foster clergy-clergy and church collaboration; and 3) Collaboratively engage our communities in new ways.

The basis of responsibilities of Elders and Licensed Pastors in our denomination is delineated in the Book of Discipline, para 340 (Appendix A):

1. The responsibilities of elders are derived from the authority given in ordination. Elders have a fourfold ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service and thus serve in the local church and in extension ministries in witness and service of Christ's love and justice. Elders are authorized to preach and teach the Word, to provide pastoral care and counsel, to administer the sacraments, and to order the life of the church for service in mission and ministry as pastors, superintendents, and bishops.
2. Licensed pastors share with the elders the responsibilities and duties of a pastor for this fourfold ministry, within the context of their appointment.

Each clergy person is bestowed with different gifts and graces. Some are gifted with effective preaching, others with the gift of effective teaching of the Word, yet others with creative sacramental ministry or in depth clinically and spiritually informed pastoral care and counsel.

Despite those gifts and graces, our churches struggle with decline and disinterest in society. Clergy need the support and care of a colleague to help them with their own clergy professional development, a person who will honestly engage them and their congregations in their strengths and weaknesses, to help them build in that fourth challenging area often neglected—to order the life of the church for service in ministry and mission (evangelism). Laity need to also think outside of the traditional framework when they think of “church.” The

District Director of Congregational Excellence can work with clergy as a second “voice” to support innovative thinking, and team with laity to look at ways the “church” can be more engaged in the community..

Director of Congregational Excellence Position Overview

As a member of the Staunton District Superintendent’s staff, the Director of Congregational Excellence will work with religious ministry professionals (Elders, Provisionals, Licensed Local Pastors, Lay Supply, and Certified Lay Ministers) to more effectively order the life of the church for service in ministry and mission. The Director of Congregational Excellence will “come alongside” clergy and lay leadership to help them quantify their **strengths**, target those areas needing growth (**weaknesses**), while simultaneously looking at the status of their church and the role their strengths and weaknesses play in the current climate/demographic of their congregation (**opportunities** and **threats**).

Responsibilities and Duties:

1. Under the advisement of the District Superintendent, strategically target clergy for professional development in locations where the resourcing of clergy and the fostering of clergy-clergy and church collaboration is most critically needed.
2. Develop and propose to the District Superintendent “outside the box” strategic initiatives which lend themselves to the Conference “three-step strategy” and inspire our clergy to the strategic commitment for the mission of the church to drive the institution. Such strategic proposals include but are not limited to:
 - a. Work collaboratively with clergy and laity to develop or update their mission, vision, goals and objectives through processes delineated in # 4. below. This will include “SWOT” analyses both internal to the congregation and external to the community.
 - b. Following the model of Wesley’s small group “societies,” develop and foster clergy small cluster groups geographically as a means for clergy support, nurturing, shared vision, and motivation. These groups can then discuss more deeply the themes addressed by quarterly online speakers in # 2.c below.
 - c. Publicize/encourage participation in conference podcasts, and develop regular online guest speakers to address district clergy on current issues such as:
 - i. Benefits of religious communities and human flourishing
 - ii. Mental health issues in our communities and the role of the church in mitigation.
 - iii. COVID and the church---building on lessons learned and the need for faith communities to modify “business as usual” and minister to/reach people in new ways.
 - iv. Quantifying the value of a church in the community.
 - v. Ministry/preaching/teaching that align with 21st Century learning components such as critical thinking, growth mindset, creativity, and collaboration.

3. Make on-site visits at least weekly in order to develop a rapport with clergy, “listen” to pastor’s concerns/dreams, discern the status of the “order” of the congregation, and partner with clergy/laity to assist in implementing local strategic vision (# 4 below)
4. Assist clergy and leadership in targeted churches with thinking “strategically” to include:
 - a. Assist clergy in developing a local church strategy, including mission and vision, that aligns with the Conference/District mission and vision.
 - b. Help clergy envision the status of their congregation in 5/10/20 years.
 - c. Assist clergy with discerning the congregation’s self-perception.
 - d. Assist clergy with learning how to discern the surrounding community’s perception of the church.
 - e. Work with clergy to connect with the larger community, including County/City Planning Commissions, adjacent businesses, law enforcement, in order to discern their overall role in the larger community (getting beyond the “survival” or “maintenance” status)
 - f. Compile lists of “best practices” of other churches in the district, or churches of other denominations within the district, as models for connection/change.
5. Model for clergy an annual “strategic planning retreat” with their church leadership to develop a clear and attainable “strategic plan” for the congregation over the next 4-5 years.
6. Compile resources online and through other media including “TED Talks,” General Board resources, etc. These resources will form the basis for mentoring, strategic planning sessions, and training/education of effective ordering of the congregation
7. Serve on the Conference Developer Team.
8. Serve as a Simplified Accountable Structure Coach as the conference designated/trained coach for the Staunton District.
9. Serve on the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.
10. Serve on the District Leadership Team.
11. Support the Lay Servant coordinator with development of annual training.
12. Serve on the Board of Mission Managers.
13. Serve on the Board of Embrace, a Staunton District missional priority.
14. Other tasks as the position unfolds and per direction of the District Superintendent.

Professional Competencies:

1. Initiative: Ability to take initiative, work independently, and hold oneself accountable.
2. Program manager: Ability to perform the essential functions of the job in a regular and predictable manner, manage multiple projects with converging deadlines while maintaining a positive, can-do attitude.
3. Resourceful: Aptitude for thinking “outside the box,” and finding creative and effective means for meeting goals.
4. Creative: Ability to develop original ideas.
5. Problem-Solver: Capable of finding solutions to challenges and obstacles.
6. Flexible: Willingness to adjust schedules and priorities as necessary.
7. Team Player: Ability to work effectively with others, both inside and outside the Conference.

8. Lifelong Learner: Initiative to learn new skills, techniques, and ways to accomplish projects and goals.
9. Coachable: Willingness to take direction, receive suggestions, and to be challenged.
10. Trustworthy: Commitment to abide by a strict code of confidentiality.
11. Professional: Positively represents the Conference in word, deed and appearance.
12. Strong team building, “customer” relations and leadership skills. Must be results oriented, a strategic thinker and collaborative in the work environment.
13. Inclusive: Actively searches ways to bring people “in.”

Professional Qualifications/Education/Experience:

1. Ordained United Methodist Elder or laity.
2. Bachelor’s degree in related field required, Master of Divinity, Post Graduate degrees such as D.Min.a plus.
3. Basic and Advanced Clinical Pastoral Education: CPE provides the means for effective dialogue and discernment of gifts and graces with clergy.
4. Successful leadership experience.
5. Professional writing skills.
6. Demonstrated administrative gifts and talents.
7. Expertise in development/ management of complex organizational systems and processes.
8. Experience with developing ministry teams and ministry team leaders.
9. Intermediate or higher computer skills including Microsoft Office, PowerPoint and Internet development are needed.

Appendix A

¶ 340. *Responsibilities and Duties of Elders and Licensed Pastors-*

1. The responsibilities of elders are derived from the authority given in ordination. Elders have a fourfold ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service and thus serve in the local church and in extension ministries in witness and service of Christ's love and justice. Elders are authorized to preach and teach the Word, to provide pastoral care and counsel, to administer the sacraments, and to order the life of the church for service in mission and ministry as pastors, superintendents, and bishops.
2. Licensed pastors share with the elders the responsibilities and duties of a pastor for this fourfold ministry, within the context of their appointment.

a) Word and ecclesial acts:

- (1) To preach the Word of God, lead in worship, read and teach the Scriptures, and engage the people in study and witness.
 - (a) To ensure faithful transmission of the Christian faith.
 - (b) To lead people in discipleship and evangelistic outreach that others might come to know Christ and to follow him.
- (2) To counsel persons with personal, ethical, or spiritual struggles.
- (3) To perform the ecclesial acts of marriage and burial.

- (a) To perform the marriage ceremony after due counsel with the parties involved and in accordance with the laws of the state and the rules of The United Methodist Church. The decision to perform the ceremony shall be the right and responsibility of the pastor.
- (b) To conduct funeral and memorial services and provide care and grief counseling.
- (4) To visit in the homes of the church and the community, especially among the sick, aged, imprisoned, and others in need.
- (5) To maintain all confidences inviolate, including confessional confidences except in the cases of suspected child abuse or neglect, or in cases where mandatory reporting is required by civil law.

b) Sacrament:

- (1) To administer the sacraments of baptism and the Supper of the Lord according to Christ's ordinance.
 - (a) To prepare the parents and sponsors before baptizing infants or children, and instruct them concerning the significance of baptism and their responsibilities for the Christian training of the baptized child.
 - (b) To encourage reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant and renewal of baptismal vows at different stages of life.
 - (c) To encourage people baptized in infancy or early childhood to make their profession of faith, after instruction, so that they might become professing members of the church.
 - (d) To explain the meaning of the Lord's Supper and to encourage regular participation as a means of grace to grow in faith and holiness.
 - (e) To select and train deacons and lay members to serve the consecrated communion elements.
- (2) To encourage the private and congregational use of the other means of grace.

c) Order:

- (1) To be the administrative officer of the local church and to assure that the organizational concerns of the congregation are adequately provided for.
 - (a) To give pastoral support, guidance, and training to the lay leadership, equipping them to fulfill the ministry to which they are called.
 - (b) To give oversight to the educational program of the church and encourage the use of United Methodist literature and media.
 - (c) To be responsible for organizational faithfulness, goal setting, planning and evaluation.
 - (d) To search out and counsel men and women for the ministry of deacons, elders, local pastors and other church related ministries.
- (2) To administer the temporal affairs of the church in their appointment, the annual conference, and the general church.
 - (a) To administer the provisions of the *Discipline*.
 - (b) To give an account of their pastoral ministries to the charge and annual conference according to the prescribed forms.
 - (c) To provide leadership for the funding ministry of the congregation. To ensure membership care including compliance with charitable giving documentation requirements and to provide appropriate pastoral care, the pastor, in cooperation with the financial secretary, shall have access to and responsibility for professional stewardship of congregational giving records.

- (d) To model and promote faithful financial stewardship and to encourage giving as a spiritual discipline by teaching the biblical principles of giving.
- (e) To lead the congregation in the fulfillment of its mission through full and faithful payment of all apportioned ministerial support, administrative, and benevolent funds.
- (f) To care for all church records and local church financial obligations, and certify the accuracy of all financial, membership, and any other reports submitted by the local church to the annual conference for use in apportioning costs back to the church.
- (3) To participate in denominational and conference programs and training opportunities.
- (a) To seek out opportunities for cooperative ministries with other United Methodist pastors and churches.
- (b) To be willing to assume supervisory responsibilities within the connection.
- (4) To lead the congregation in racial and ethnic inclusiveness.

d) Service:

- (1) To embody the teachings of Jesus in servant ministries and servant leadership.
- (2) To give diligent pastoral leadership in ordering the life of the congregation for discipleship in the world.
- (3) To build the body of Christ as a caring and giving community, extending the ministry of Christ to the world.
- (4) To participate in community, ecumenical and interreligious concerns and to encourage the people to become so involved and to pray and labor for the unity of the Christian community.