

PETITION TO THE 2017 ROCKY MOUNTAIN ANNUAL CONFERENCE

TITLE: Clergy Ethics and Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training

ACTION TO BE VOTED ON:

1 Rocky Mountain Conference clergy as identified in **Schedule A** must attend a Rocky Mountain Conference Ethics and
2 Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training workshop at least once in each quadrennium*.

3 Rocky Mountain Conference clergy as identified in **Schedule B** must attend a Rocky Mountain Conference Ethics and
4 Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training workshop at least once in each quadrennium* if the person is serving in a
5 ministry setting either by appointment of the Bishop, by DS assignment, or by arrangements with the ministry setting.

6 While not required, lay employees and volunteers in leadership roles in UM ministry settings are strongly encouraged
7 to attend a Rocky Mountain Conference Ethics and Sexual Misconduct Training workshop at least once in each
8 quadrennium*.

9 * Note: For purposes of this petition, “quadrennium” is defined as the time period beginning July 1st following one
10 UMC General Conference and extending through June 30th following General Conference four years later.

11 **Schedule A**

12 AF Affiliate Member
13 AM Associate Member
14 CLM Certified Lay Minister
15 COD Clergy, Other Denomination
16 DM Diaconal Member
17 DP Probationary Deacon from Another Conference
18 FD Deacon in Full Connection
19 FE Elder in Full Connection
20 FL Full-time Local Pastor
21 OA Associate Member, Other Conference
22 OD Deacon, Other Conference
23 ODP Probationary Deacon, other Conference
24 OE Elder, Other Conference
25 OF Full Member, Other Conference
26 OP Probationary Member, Other Conference
27 OR Retired Member Other Conference
28 PD Probationary Deacon PE - Probationary Elder
29 PL Part-time Local Pastor
30 PM Probationary Member (1992 Book of Discipline)
31 SP Student Local Pastor
32 SY Supply Pastor

33 **Schedule B**

34 RA Retired Associate Member
35 RF Retired Affiliate Member
36 RD Retired Deacon
37 RI Retired Diaconal Minister
38 RE Retired Elder
39 RL Retired Local Pastor
40 RP Retired Probationary Member

41 **Clergy Serving in Extension Ministry**

42 The requirement for quadrennial Ethics and Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training applies to clergy serving in
43 extension ministry (defined as any ministry setting beyond the local church). However, these settings are sometimes
44 at great distance from the Rocky Mountain Conference, and the Conference Ethics and Sexual Misconduct Prevention
45 Training workshop may not address ethical issues in ways that are relevant to the range of extension ministries to
46 which our clergy are appointed. Therefore, clergy serving in extension ministry may petition the Chair of the Ethical
47 Education Task Force (with copy to their respective District Superintendent) to substitute training either closer to them
48 or more appropriate for their setting. Information describing the alternative training's content sufficient to allow the
49 Chair of the Ethical Education Task Force (**EETF**) to determine equivalency to our standards must be provided well
50 ahead of participation in such training. A decision regarding the acceptability of the alternative training will be
51 rendered in writing (or by e-mail) by the Chair of the Ethical Education Task Force, and upon completion, the clergy
52 person(s) making the request shall provide an official certificate of completion to the Chair of the Ethical Education
53 Task Force and their District Superintendent as proof of their participation in that training.

54 **Clergy for Whom English and/or for Whom North American Culture**
55 **is Not their Primary Language or Culture**

56 Clergy for whom English and/or for whom North American culture is not their primary language or culture are not
57 exempt from this quadrennial ethics training requirement. Nor are they exempt from conducting their ministry within
58 the laws of the State in which they serve or within the guidelines and requirements of *The Book of Discipline*.
59 However, the Ethical Education Task Force recognizes that extra effort needs to be made to develop Ethics and Sexual
60 Misconduct Prevention Training that is accessible and understandable to them, and the Task Force commits itself to
61 this work.

62 **Concerning Compliance**

63 The Clergy Continuing Formation Report received from each person as per Schedule A or Schedule B in connection
64 with each local church's annual church or charge conference shall include the following question: "When and where
65 did you last attend a Rocky Mountain Conference Ethics and Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training workshop?"
66 The office of the District Superintendent shall review each report to ensure compliance. In addition, the Chair of the
67 Ethical Education Task Force shall report to the Cabinet prior to the Annual Conference session marking the start of
68 the fourth year of the quadrennium (see * Note above for definition of "quadrennium") the list of clergy in compliance
69 with this Conference mandate and those out of compliance, with the intent being that all clergy are given ample
70 opportunity to participate in acceptable ethics training.

71 Clergy mandated by this petition to complete Ethical Education training who fail to do so by the end of the current
72 quadrennium (see * Note above for definition of "quadrennium") shall have a letter noting their non-compliance
73 placed in their District and Conference personnel files. Two such letters shall result in the matter being referred to the
74 Bishop for possible further disciplinary action.

75 **Content of the Conference Ethics and Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training**

76 The curriculum used by the RMC Ethical Education Task Force shall be focused on matters of understanding ministry
77 as a sacred trust with clergy being held to the highest standards of ethical behavior within this understanding.
78 Therefore, matters of power and appropriate behavior in clergy relationships, particularly where intimacy and sexual
79 expression intersect with the sacred trust of clergy leadership, along with clergy emotional and spiritual self-care, will
80 be central to the Ethics and Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training. To the extent that mandatory reporting of
81 suspected abuse (including neglect) of any sort of children, youth, and vulnerable adults by State law is a necessity for
82 clergy, this topic will be addressed, as well. Finally, matters of financial ethics are critical to the sacred trust of
83 ministry, as the persons we serve are asked to entrust not only their spiritual lives to the ministry of the church but a
84 portion of their financial resources, as well. And so ethics related to handling the finances of a particular ministry
85 setting will also be addressed. Other areas of ethics in ministry are, no doubt, of great importance and sacred trust,

86 e.g., “Safe Sanctuaries” (ministries dealing with safe and ethical treatment of children, youth, and vulnerable adults),
87 appropriate use of social media and church technology, and how best to be in ministries with those on the margins of
88 society, to name a few. However, these areas will not be addressed by the Conference Ethics and Sexual Misconduct
89 Prevention Training because they are seen as being more the purview of the local church rather than this AC
90 legislation.

91 **Frequency of Offerings of the Conference Ethics and Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training**

92 The Conference Ethics and Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training will be offered the day prior to the start of the
93 Annual Conference sessions the last 3 out of the 4 years in each quadrennium and as part of the Board of Ordained
94 Ministry credentialing process for incoming clergy, whether they be clergy seeking commissioning as provisional
95 members of the Annual Conference or credentialed clergy coming into the RMAC from other locations. In addition,
96 Training workshops will be supported by the EETF if they are held at ministry settings around the Annual Conference
97 and facilitated by others prepared to do so.

98 **Delivery of the Conference Ethics and Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training**

99 The appointive Cabinet, the Board of Ordained Ministry, and the EETF are committed to the principle that the best
100 training is interactive and occurs with participants interacting with each other in a person-to-person environment.
101 Therefore, development of Internet-based, individual Ethics and Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training will not be a
102 priority of the EETF. However, efforts will be made by the EETF to develop workshops that utilize “virtual meeting
103 technology” to allow participants in remote locations to participate in web-based training workshops via Internet
104 connection.

105 **Renaming of the Ethical Education Task Force**

106 The Ethical Education Task Force will henceforth be known as the Conference Committee on Ethics in Ministry
107 (CCEM) unless and until it is changed by action of the Annual Conference in the future.

PETITION DETAILS

This petition is a

- Binding Action
 Non-Binding Resolution

Effective Date: July 1, 2017

Termination Date: June 30, 2021

Does this petition modify the Annual Conference Standing Rules and Operational Procedures (SROP)?

- Yes
 No

If “Yes,” please complete the information below.

- This petition will modify Section 7.1
“Conference Church Ethics and Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training”
 This petition will create a new Section x.x.x

Conference Agency responsible for implementation and termination review:

Conference Committee on Ethics in Ministry
(formerly Ethical Education Task Force)

NOTE: All paragraph numberings within the SROP and the final designation of the Conference Agency responsible for implementation and termination review are subject to review by the Rules Committee.

ORIGINATOR OF THE PETITION (individual, church, or organization):

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Address: First UMC / 522 White Ave.
City, State, Zip: Grand Junction, Colorado 81501
Email: pastorsteve@fumcgj.org
Phone: 970-242-4850 (Church)

PERSON TO PRESENT PETITION AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE:

Name: Steve Easterday-McPadden
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Phone @ Conference: 303-746-8345

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Will there be any identifiable financial impact to the Conference?
 Yes – but included in Board of Ordained Ministry Budget
 No

If “Yes,” please fill in the information below.

To Be Completed by the Originator of the Petition

Cost: \$
Period
 One Time
 One Year
 Multiple Years

To Be Completed by Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CFA)

Review by CFA 05/12/2017

Included in proposed 2018 budget

Yes
 No

Amount if included

The actual 2018 cost is unknown, but is covered in the budget line item managed by the Board of Ordained Ministry.

May be considered for budgets in future years

Yes
 No

Projected Amount To be determined

Recommendation by CFA concerning funding:

Approved

Reason for recommendation:

Supports the effective implementation of training requirements specified by the Rocky Mountain Conference Standing Rules and Operational Procedures.

RATIONALE (Not debatable):

- 1 The current legislation governing the Annual Conference policy on clergy sexual misconduct training goes back to
- 2 2006 Petition AC 11 and Amended 2009 Petition AC12. Because it is part of the ongoing “Annual Conference
- 3 Standing Rules and Operational Procedures,” this legislation needs to be periodically reviewed for pertinence,
- 4 appropriateness, and scope and put forward to the Annual Conference for affirmation and acceptance. It is felt that the
- 5 proposed legislation accomplishes these goals.
- 6 Finally, the work of the Ethical Education Task Force (EETF) has been ongoing for well over 20 years with multiple
- 7 changes in personnel and focus. As such, the EETF functions much more like a standing committee of the Rocky
- 8 Mountain Conference than a task force. Hence, the name change from Ethical Education Task Force to Conference
- 9 Committee on Ethics in Ministry.

ATTACHMENTS (Additional Information / Not Debatable)

None