

A Lewis Center Report on
**Clergy Age Trends in the
United Methodist Church**
2022 Report

Elders • Deacons • Local Pastors

2022 Report

Lewis Center for Church Leadership

Wesley Theological Seminary



Lewis Center
for Church Leadership

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Highlights of the 2022 Report

Young Elders Decline to Record Low Number

The recent decline in the number of young elders (under 35) began in 2017 and followed modest gains after the low point of 2005. That decline continues; however, the scale of the decline in 2021 and 2022 is larger than seen before. The number of young elders in 2022 is 648. Last year was the first time that the number of young elders was below the previous low of 852 in 2005. This year sets a new record for the fewest young elders. The losses in 2022 were comparable for men and women based on the proportion of each among young elders. The larger declines began in 2019. Since then, the decline in young elders has been 301, or a 32 percent decline.

While the overall number of active elders in the United Methodist Church continued to decline in 2021, the annual rate of decline was 5 percent compared to 13 percent for young elders. Young elders constitute 6 percent of active elders in 2022, the same as in 2021.

Some Shifting from Older to Middle Age Elders

Since 2000, we have been watching a trend of having fewer elders in the middle age (35-54) group and more elders in the older (55-72) group. Since those in the older group face a mandatory retirement age of 72, with most retiring before that age, it seemed that this expanding pool of older elders could not continue to grow indefinitely. After twenty years of growth, one began to wonder whether such a decline might ever happen. In 2020, a modest turn in this trend began that continues in 2022. The middle age group as a proportion of all elders increased by one percent in 2022 (to 41 percent), with a one percent decrease for the older group's proportion (to 53 percent). Keep in mind that all age groups of elders declined in raw numbers, but some declined more than others, thus the change in proportional representation.

Young Deacons Increase

There is an increase in the number of young deacons in 2022 to 100 compared to 95 in 2021. Young deacons comprise 11 percent of all active deacons in 2022, higher than the percentage for young elders and young local pastors. One caution in the deacon statistics to remember is that the total number of deacons is lower in this report than their presence in the denomination. This difference is because many deacons serve in work settings other than congregations and have pension plans through those agencies rather than Wespeth Benefits, from which our numbers come.

Local Pastor Numbers Decline, Including Young Local Pastors

There is a decrease in young local pastors in 2022 to 561 compared to 621 in 2021. There was also a decline in the percentage of young local pastors as a percentage of all local pastors to 8 percent from 9 percent last year. There are proportionately more young local pastors than young elders but fewer than young deacons. Elders and local pastors are appointed as pastors of congregations. In 1990, there were over five elders for each local pastor; today there are 1.6 elders for each local pastor. The proportions of local pastors compared to elders remained the same in 2022 after many years of local pastors showing increased representation and elders decreased representation. While elders and deacons are seeing some declines in the previous rising rates of older clergy from 55 to 72 years of age. This is not true for local pastors where 58 percent of all local pastors are in this oldest cohort.

Purpose and Description

The purpose of this ongoing research effort is to identify clergy age trends in the United Methodist Church so that denominational leaders have the data for planning and a baseline for monitoring future changes. This report builds on previous reports on clergy age trends issued by the Lewis Center for Church Leadership. The first report, *Clergy Age Trends in the United Methodist Church: 1985-2005*, documented the dramatic decline in United Methodist young clergy in both numbers and percentages over 20 years. This report presents a snapshot of where clergy age trends stand in May 2022.

This report is made possible through partnership with the denominational pension agency, Wespeth Benefits (WB). The Lewis Center for Church Leadership works with WB each year to determine age trends for United Methodist clergy.

The project covers elders, deacons, and local pastors in the five jurisdictional conferences of the United Methodist Church in the United States. While not all clergy are in the denominational pension system, most are, and the percentage not in the system tends to stay the same across the years, thus making trend comparisons possible. Readers should keep in mind that the total number of deacons is significantly lower in this report than their presence in the denomination because more deacons than other clergy work in employment settings with pension plans other than through WB. For local pastors, both full-time and part-time local pastors are included. Since WB does not keep records of clergy by race, we are not able to make comparisons by racial groups.

To help the church address the dramatic loss of young clergy first reported in 2005, the Lewis Center for Church Leadership has provided resources beginning with *The Crisis of Younger Clergy* by Lovett H. Weems, Jr., and Ann A. Michel (Abingdon, 2008) and the formation of cohorts of young clergy to provide advanced leader development.

More recently, the Lewis Center developed a series of free one-page downloadable documents to assist those seeking to support younger clergy.

- [Why Young Clergy Matter](#)
- [Ways Established Church Leaders Can Work with Young Clergy](#)
- [Suggestions for Churches with a Young Pastor](#)
- [Suggestions for Churches with a Single Pastor](#)
- [Suggestions for Churches with a Clergywoman](#)

Contributors

Lovett H. Weems, Jr., senior consultant of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership, was project director. Matthew Lyons, marketing manager, contributed to the project. Andrew Q. Hendren, general secretary of Wespeth Benefits and Investments, and the staff, particularly Eloy Cerenil, provided essential cooperation and data.

Summary of Findings

Young Clergy Trends

Young Elders

- The number of under-35 elders decreased by 94 to 648, continuing a six-year decline.
- The percentage of young elders declined from 6.3 percent last year to 5.8 percent in 2022.
- The North Texas Conference reported the highest percentage of young elders at 11.4 percent.

- The Top Ten Conferences by percentage
 - North Texas (#1 in 2021)
 - Central Texas (new since last report)
 - Texas (#1 in 2020, 2019, 2016, 2015, 2014, and 2012)
 - Louisiana
 - Susquehanna
 - North Carolina
 - Alabama-West Florida (new since last report)
 - South Carolina (new since last report)
 - Pacific Northwest (new since last report)
 - Dakotas, Kentucky, Michigan (tie)

- The top ten list continues to be more regionally diverse each year. All five U.S. jurisdictions are represented this year.

- The largest total number of young elders (32) is in the Texas and Western North Carolina Conferences, followed by Virginia (31).

Young Deacons

- The number of under-35 deacons increased by 5 in 2022 to 100.
- The percentage of young deacons among all active deacons remained at 11 percent in 2022.
- The percentage of young deacons remains above that of elders and local pastors.

Young Local Pastors

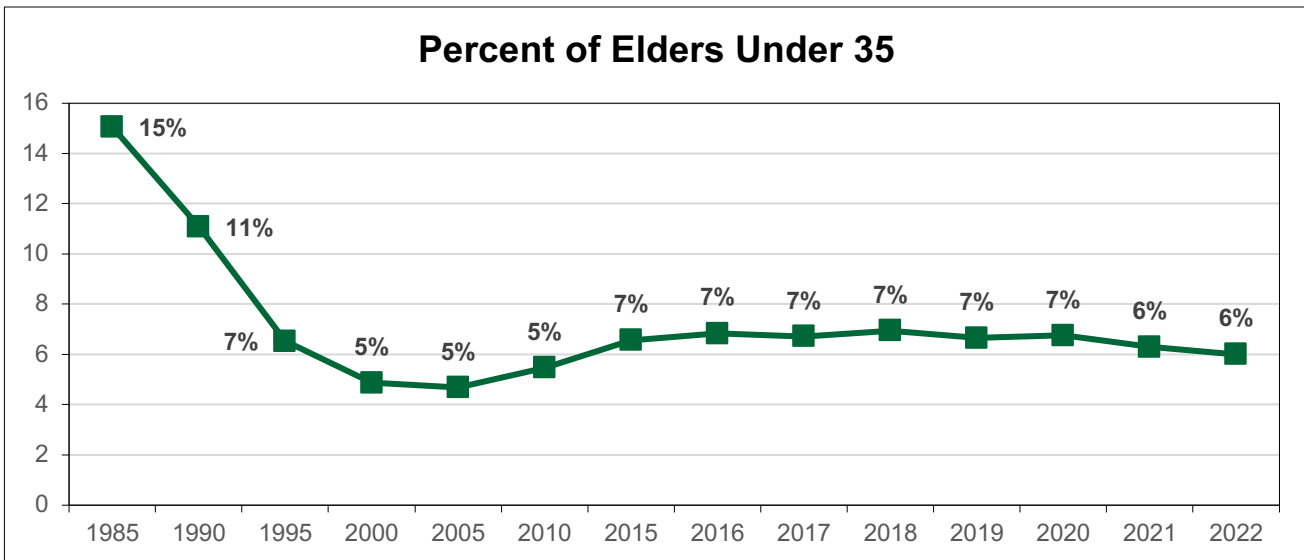
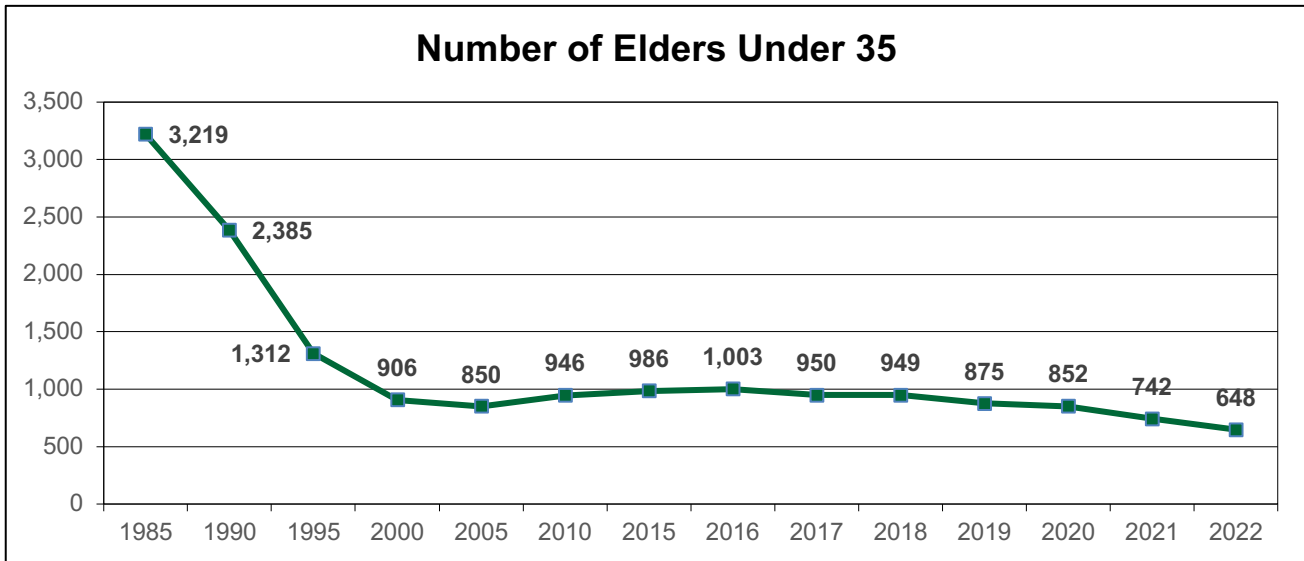
- The number of under-35 local pastors declined to 561 in 2022 from 621 in 2021.
- The percentage of young local pastors among all active local pastors declined to 8 percent in 2022 from 9 percent in 2021.

What's Behind the Accelerated Decline in Young Clergy?

In 2016, the number of young elders (younger than 35) reached a high point for recent years at 1,003. Then followed six consecutive years of declines with losses after 2019 greater than seen since our reporting on trends began in 2005. In 2021, Dr. Ann A. Michel, associate director of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership, used several survey questions to ask those who have reservations about pursuing ordination in the denomination more about the nature of their concerns. Her subsequent article, [*What's Keeping Younger People from Ordained Ministry in the United Methodist Church*](#), is one of the most read and shared *Leading Ideas* articles.

Elders

To have comparable figures across the years for elders, the figures include *not only those ordained elder but also those commissioned on the elder track but not yet ordained.*



Trends of Elders 1985-2022

Year	No. of Elders	No. of Elders Under 35	% Under 35	No. of Elders 35-54	% 35-54	No. of Elders 55-72	% 55-72
1985	21,378	3,219	15%	12,305	58%	5,854	27%
1990	21,507	2,385	11%	12,678	59%	6,444	30%
1995	20,117	1,312	7%	12,843	64%	5,962	30%
2000	18,576	906	5%	12,005	65%	5,665	30%
2005	18,141	850	5%	9,872	54%	7,419	41%
2010	17,293	946	5%	7,698	45%	8,649	50%
2015	15,019	986	7%	5,746	38%	8,287	55%
2020	12,610	852	7%	4,830	38%	6,928	55%
2021	11,771	742	6%	4,652	40%	6,377	54%
2022	11,168	648	6%	4,577	41%	5,321	53%

**Gender Breakdown within
Age Cohorts – Elders**

Year	Gender	Under 35	35-54	55-72
2019	Men	63%	67%	71%
	Women	37%	33%	29%
2020	Men	62%	67%	69%
	Women	38%	33%	31%
2021	Men	62%	67%	68%
	Women	38%	33%	32%
2022	Men	61%	66%	68%
	Women	39%	34%	32%

Median and Average Ages – Elders

Year	Median* Age	Average Age
1985	48	46.8
1990	47	47.5
1995	48	48.4
2000	50	49.5
2005	52	51.5
2010	55	52.8
2015	56	53.4
2016	56	53.4
2017	56	53.5
2018	56	53.5
2019	56	53.6
2020	56	53.4
2021	56	53.5
2021	56	53

*Median – half older, half younger

Average and Median Ages by Conference

Median - half older, half younger

CONFERENCE	2022 Average	2022 Median
ALABAMA-WEST FLORIDA	53	55
ALASKA MISSIONARY	0	0
ARKANSAS	52	53
BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON	54	57
CALIFORNIA-NEVADA	56	58
CALIFORNIA-PACIFIC	56	59
CENTRAL TEXAS	52	54
DAKOTAS	52	54
DESERT SOUTHWEST	54	55
EAST OHIO	54	57
EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA	57	59
FLORIDA	53	55
GREAT PLAINS	51	53
GREATER NEW JERSEY	55	58
HOLSTON	52	53
ILLINOIS GREAT RIVERS	54	57
INDIANA	54	57
IOWA	54	57
KENTUCKY	52	54
LOUISIANA	52	53
MICHIGAN	54	56
MINNESOTA	55	57
MISSISSIPPI	53	55
MISSOURI	53	55
MOUNTAIN SKY	52	54
NEW ENGLAND	53	55
NEW MEXICO	54	56

CONFERENCE	2022 Average	2022 Median
NEW YORK	56	59
NORTH ALABAMA	52	55
NORTH CAROLINA	52	54
NORTH GEORGIA	53	55
NORTH TEXAS	52	53
NORTHERN ILLINOIS	53	55
NORTHWEST TEXAS	55	57
OKLAHOMA	53	56
OKLAHOMA INDIAN MSNY	59	59
OREGON IDAHO	54	56
PACIFIC NORTHWEST	51	52
PENINSULA-DELAWARE	56	58
RED BIRD MISSIONARY	0	0
RIO TEXAS	53	55
SOUTH CAROLINA	54	57
SOUTH GEORGIA	54	56
SUSQUEHANNA	54	57
TENNESSEE-WESTERN KY	52	53
TEXAS	51	53
UPPER NEW YORK	56	58
VIRGINIA	52	53
WEST OHIO	54	56
WEST VIRGINIA	55	58
WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA	53	56
WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA	54	57
WISCONSIN	55	57
All Elders	53	56

Elders

Presence of Elders under 35 by Annual Conference 2020-2022

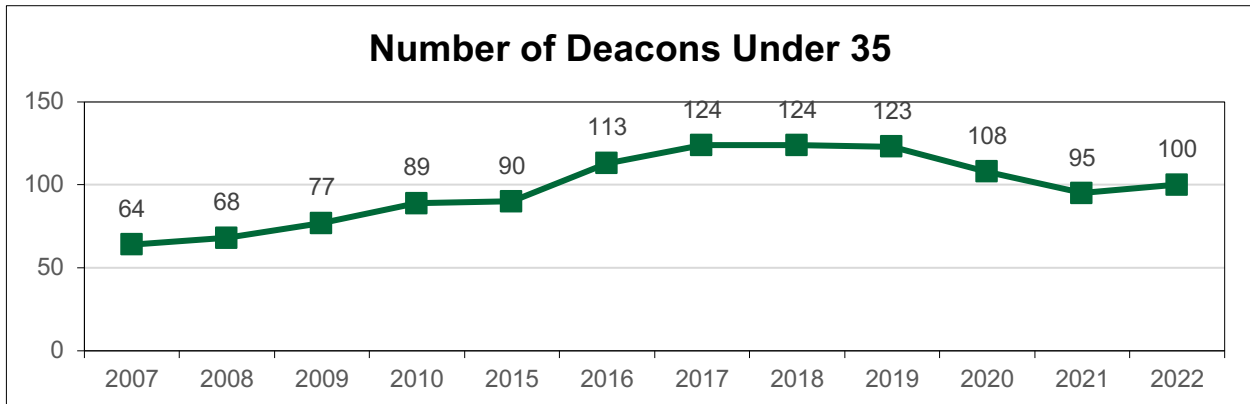
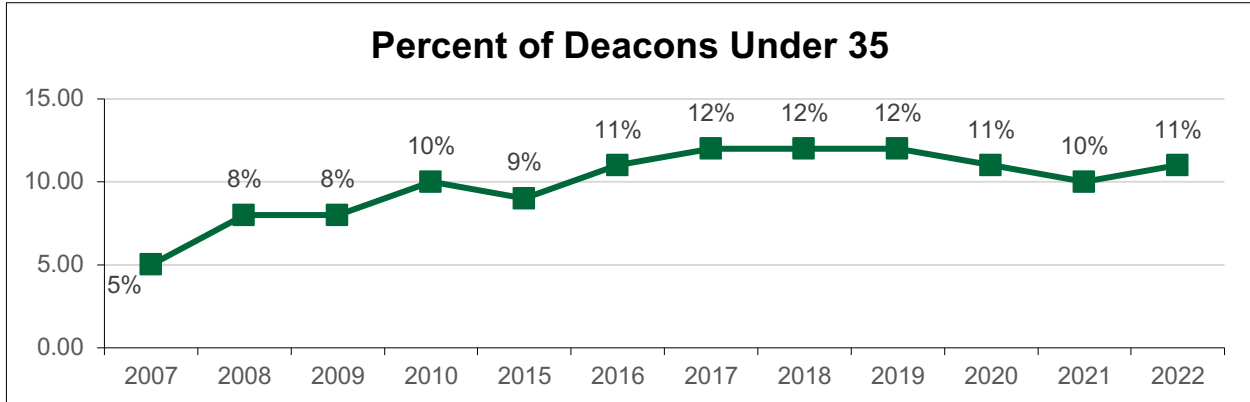
CONFERENCE	2022 Elders under 35	2022 Elders under 35	2022 Elders	2021 Elders under 35	2021 Elders under 35	2021 Elders	2020 Elders under 35	2020 Elders under 35	2020 Elders
Alabama-West Florida	15	8.3%	180	15	8.1%	186	16	8.3%	193
Alaska Missionary	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0
Arkansas	11	6.3%	175	13	7.2%	180	16	8.0%	199
Baltimore-Washington	17	5.4%	316	14	4.3%	326	16	4.7%	341
California-Nevada	6	3.0%	200	8	3.9%	206	11	5.2%	212
California-Pacific	8	2.8%	285	7	2.4%	294	10	3.3%	306
Central Texas	17	9.0%	189	15	7.9%	189	16	8.3%	192
Dakotas	7	7.6%	92	8	8.6%	93	12	11.8%	102
Desert Southwest	2	2.5%	79	1	1.2%	85	2	2.1%	94
East Ohio	11	5.1%	214	16	7.1%	226	16	6.8%	236
Eastern Pennsylvania	6	3.4%	174	7	3.8%	183	6	3.0%	200
Florida	26	7.4%	349	22	6.3%	349	25	6.9%	361
Great Plains	21	6.9%	306	22	7.0%	313	23	7.0%	327
Greater New Jersey	8	3.4%	238	14	5.5%	253	16	6.1%	264
Holston	15	5.8%	259	15	5.7%	262	19	6.9%	275
Illinois Great Rivers	12	5.7%	211	13	5.9%	220	16	6.7%	240
Indiana	18	5.7%	317	26	7.5%	346	24	6.4%	377
Iowa	12	5.6%	215	15	6.4%	235	16	6.3%	255
Kentucky	14	7.6%	184	18	9.1%	197	21	8.5%	248
Louisiana	11	8.5%	129	13	8.9%	146	13	8.0%	163
Michigan	21	7.6%	278	26	8.9%	293	25	7.8%	320
Minnesota	4	3.1%	131	6	4.2%	143	6	4.0%	149
Mississippi	14	5.3%	264	18	6.6%	271	20	7.1%	282
Missouri	7	3.2%	216	9	3.9%	229	12	4.9%	246
Mountain Sky	12	6.3%	191	13	6.5%	201	13	6.1%	212
New England	10	5.9%	169	10	5.6%	178	12	6.1%	197
New Mexico	0	0.0%	55	0	0.0%	65	0	0.0%	73
New York	5	2.1%	239	4	1.6%	243	5	1.9%	261

Presence of Elders under 35
by Annual Conference
2020-2022, continued

CONFERENCE	2022 Elders under 35	2022 Elders under 35	2022 Elders	2021 Elders under 35	2021 Elders under 35	2021 Elders	2020 Elders under 35	2020 Elders under 35	2020 Elders
North Alabama	10	5.1%	198	14	6.3%	221	22	8.8%	250
North Carolina	27	8.4%	323	29	8.5%	340	38	10.3%	368
North Georgia	24	5.9%	404	26	6.2%	417	30	6.8%	443
North Texas	24	11.4%	211	25	11.3%	222	23	9.8%	234
Northern Illinois	11	4.6%	239	15	6.0%	250	20	7.8%	258
Northwest Texas	2	3.0%	67	2	2.9%	70	3	4.0%	75
Oklahoma	14	6.3%	221	15	6.4%	235	16	6.2%	259
OK Indian Missionary	0	0.0%	12	0	0.0%	12	0	0.0%	13
Oregon-Idaho	4	5.3%	75	4	4.9%	82	3	3.8%	79
Pacific Northwest	11	8.0%	138	9	6.3%	143	13	9.0%	145
Peninsula-Delaware	3	3.1%	97	3	2.9%	105	4	3.5%	113
Red Bird Missionary	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0
Rio Texas	7	3.6%	196	7	3.6%	195	9	4.5%	201
South Carolina	27	8.3%	326	20	5.9%	341	21	5.7%	370
South Georgia	5	2.9%	175	6	3.4%	179	8	4.2%	192
Susquehanna	14	8.5%	165	18	9.9%	181	21	10.1%	208
Tennessee-Western KY	16	6.8%	236	21	8.4	251	22	8.0	275
Texas	32	9.0%	356	39	10.6%	367	47	12.1%	389
Upper New York	1	0.5%	182	8	4.0%	202	11	4.9%	226
Virginia	31	6.9%	449	42	8.9%	474	49	9.6%	513
West Ohio	16	4.1%	393	22	5.2%	425	26	5.7%	455
West Virginia	4	2.8%	142	8	4.9%	162	9	5.3%	170
Western North Carolina	32	6.3%	510	36	6.5%	553	46	7.9%	584
Western Pennsylvania	15	6.4%	235	17	6.7%	252	16	5.9%	273
Wisconsin	8	4.9%	163	8	4.4%	180	8	4.2%	192
Total	648	5.8%	11,168	742	6.3%	11,771	852	6.75%	12,610

Deacons

Deacon numbers include *not only those who have been ordained deacon but also those who have been commissioned* on the deacon track but not yet ordained. Readers should keep in mind that the total number of deacons is significantly lower in this report than their presence in the denomination because more deacons than other clergy work in employment settings with pension plans other than through the Wespath Benefits.



Trends for Deacons 2005-2022

Year	No. of Deacons	No. of Deacons Under 35	% Under 35	No. of Deacons 35-54	% 35-54	No. of Deacons 55-72	% 55-72
2005	850	46	5%				
2006	844	52	6%	438	52%	354	42%
2007	902	64	7%	457	51%	381	42%
2008	897	69	8%	441	49%	387	43%
2009	915	77	8%	438	48%	400	44%
2010	930	89	10%	419	45%	422	45%
2014	954	86	9%	382	40%	486	51%
2015	954	90	9%	398	42%	466	49%
2016	1,003	113	11%	415	41%	475	48%
2017	1,008	124	12%	404	40%	480	48%
2018	999	124	12%	399	40%	476	48%
2019	1,006	123	12%	415	41%	468	47%
2020	983	108	11%	429	44%	446	45%
2021	945	95	10%	431	46%	419	44%
2022	935	100	11%	433	46%	402	43%

Median and Average Ages - Deacons

Year	Median* Age	Average Age
2006	53	51.7
2007	52	51.4
2008	53	51.3
2009	53	51.4
2010	54	51.6
2015	54	51.7
2016	54	51.4
2017	54	51.4
2018	53	51.2
2019	53	53.6
2020	53	50.9
2021	52	51
2022	52	51

*Median - half older, half younger.

**Gender Breakdown within Age Cohorts
Deacons**

Year	Gender	Under 35	35-54	55-72
2019	Men	20%	33%	24%
	Women	80%	67%	76%
2020	Men	26%	32%	23%
	Women	74%	68%	77%
2021	Men	28%	31%	22%
	Women	72%	69%	78%
2022	Men	30%	30%	22%
	Women	70%	70%	78%

Deacons

Presence of Deacons under 35 by Annual Conference 2020-2022

CONFERENCE	2022 Deacons under 35	2022 Deacons under 35	2022 Deacons	2021 Deacons under 35	2021 Deacons under 35	2021 Deacons	2020 Deacons under 35	2020 Deacons under 35	2020 Deacons
Alabama-West Florida	4	12.1%	33	3	8.8%	34	3	8.6%	35
Alaska Missionary	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0
Arkansas	3	30.0%	10	2	20.0%	10	2	20.0%	10
Baltimore-Washington	0	0.0%	20	0	0.0%	21	0	0.0%	20
California-Nevada	0	0.0%	8	0	0.0%	5	0	0.0%	7
California-Pacific	2	14.3%	14	2	15.4%	13	2	12.5%	16
Central Texas	1	3.7%	27	1	3.8%	26	2	7.4%	27
Dakotas	0	0.0%	6	0	0.0%	7	0	0.0%	7
Desert Southwest	0	0.0%	3	0	0.0%	4	0	0.0%	6
East Ohio	1	7.7%	13	1	7.7%	13	1	6.7%	15
Eastern Pennsylvania	0	0.0%	20	0	0.0%	18	0	0.0%	19
Florida	2	8.3%	24	2	7.7%	26	1	3.7%	27
Great Plains	6	30.0%	20	4	22.2%	18	2	12.5%	16
Greater New Jersey	0	0.0%	10	0	0.0%	12	0	0.0%	12
Holston	0	0.0%	12	1	8.3%	12	1	7.7%	13
Illinois Great Rivers	3	18.8%	16	2	13.3%	15	3	21.4%	14
Indiana	1	5.3%	19	2	10.0%	20	0	0.0%	20
Iowa	0	0.0%	6	0	0.0%	7	0	0.0%	8
Kentucky	0	0.0%	14	0	0.0%	16	0	0.0%	22
Louisiana	1	5.6%	18	2	9.5%	21	2	10.0%	20
Michigan	1	3.8%	26	1	4.0%	25	1	3.8%	26
Minnesota	2	18.2%	11	1	8.3%	12	1	8.3%	12
Mississippi	3	25.0%	12	4	23.5%	17	6	30.0%	20
Missouri	3	11.1%	27	2	8.3%	24	3	13.0%	23
Mountain Sky	0	0.0%	15	0	0.0%	16	0	0.0%	20
New England	1	9.1%	11	1	9.1%	11	2	18.2%	11
New Mexico	0	0.0%	5	0	0.0%	6	0	0.0%	7
New York	1	14.3%	7	2	25.0%	8	1	12.5%	8

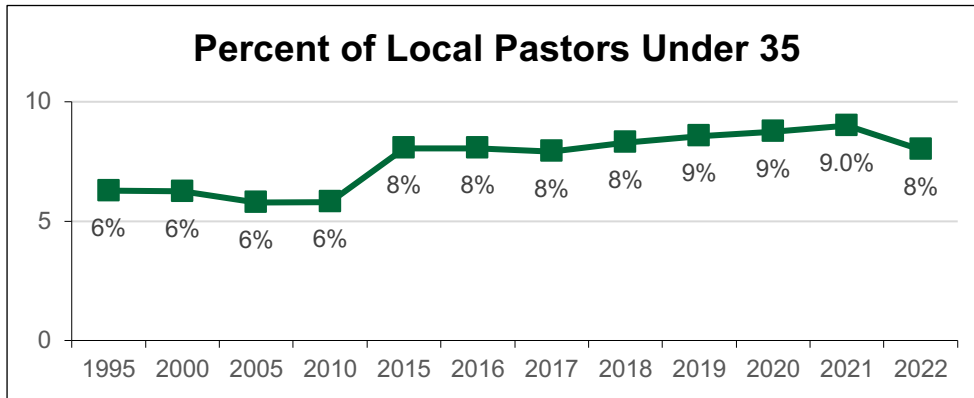
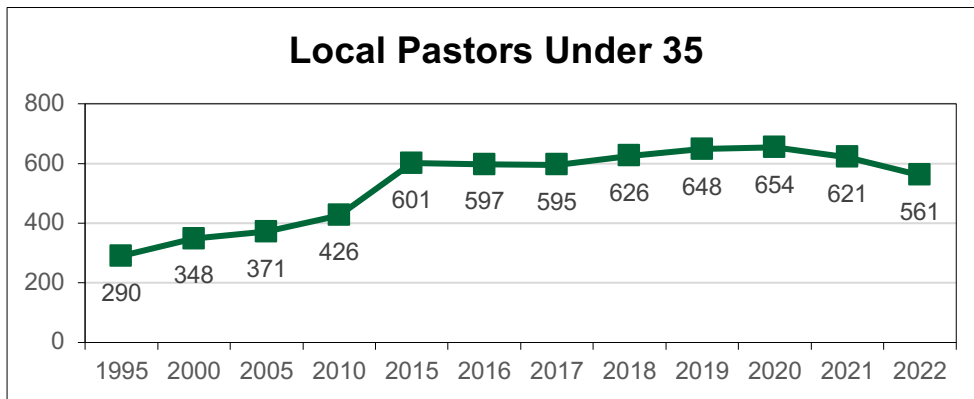
Deacons

Presence of Deacons under 35 by Annual Conference 2020-2022, continued

CONFERENCE	2022 Deacons under 35	2022 Deacons under 35	2022 Deacons	2021 Deacons under 35	2021 Deacons under 35	2021 Deacons	2020 Deacons under 35	2020 Deacons under 35	2020 Deacons
North Alabama	2	13.3%	15	1	7.7%	13	0	0.0%	15
North Carolina	2	8.3%	24	4	17.4%	23	6	25.0%	24
North Georgia	6	9.5%	63	5	7.9%	63	8	11.8%	68
North Texas	9	17.6%	51	8	15.7%	51	9	18.0%	50
Northern Illinois	1	4.8%	21	3	13.0%	23	4	16.0%	25
Northwest Texas	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0
Oklahoma	0	0.0%	19	0	0.0%	19	0	0.0%	23
OK Indian Missionary	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0
Oregon-Idaho	0	0.0%	6	0	0.0%	7	0	0.0%	7
Pacific Northwest	1	12.5%	8	1	4.1%	9	1	12.5%	8
Peninsula-Delaware	0	0.0%	3	0	0.0%	3	0	0.0%	4
Red Bird Missionary	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0
Rio Texas	0	0.0%	19	1	5.6%	18	2	11.8%	17
South Carolina	4	17.4%	23	4	17.4%	23	6	28.6%	21
South Georgia	2	14.3%	14	3	21.4%	14	4	26.7%	15
Susquehanna	0	0.0%	3	0	0.0%	3	0	0.0%	3
Tenn.-Western KY	8	17.8%	45	6	13.3%	45	9	17.6%	51
Texas	4	12.9%	31	4	12.1%	33	5	15.6%	32
Upper New York	2	11.1%	18	2	10.5%	19	0	0.0%	16
Virginia	4	12.9%	31	5	15.6%	32	7	22.6%	31
West Ohio	3	9.1%	33	3	7.9%	38	4	10.0%	40
West Virginia	0	0.0%	9	0	0.0%	10	0	0.0%	10
Western NC	9	12.7%	71	6	9.4%	64	5	7.7%	65
Western Penn.	7	58.3%	12	5	55.6%	9	4	50.0%	8
Wisconsin	1	11.1%	9	1	11.1%	9	1	11.1%	9
Total	100	10.7%	935	95	10.1%	945	108	11.0%	983

Local Pastors

Local pastor numbers include both full-time and part-time local pastors. Associate members are also included in these numbers.



Trends for Local Pastors 1985-2022

Year	No. of Local Pastors	Local Pastors Under 35	% Under 35	Local Pastors 35-54	% 35-54	Local Pastors 55-72	% 55-72
1985	3,804	130	3%	2,212	58%	1,462	38%
1990	3,936	163	4%	2,244	57%	1,529	39%
1995	4,622	290	6%	2,641	57%	1,691	37%
2000	5,571	348	6%	3,109	56%	2,114	38%
2005	6,517	371	6%	3,213	49%	2,933	45%
2010	7,341	426	6%	2,932	40%	3,983	54%
2011	7,353	455	6%	2,790	37%	4,108	57%
2012	7,532	472	6%	2,753	37%	4,307	57%
2013	7,671	522	7%	2,716	35%	4,433	58%
2014	7,395	568	8%	2,597	35%	4,230	57%
2015	7,464	601	8%	2,579	35%	4,284	57%
2016	7,408	597	8%	2,531	34%	4,280	58%
2017	7,512	595	8%	2,544	34%	4,373	58%
2018	7,538	626	8%	2,519	34%	4,393	58%
2019	7,563	648	9%	2,535	33%	4,380	58%
2020	7,478	654	9%	2,546	34%	4,278	57%
2021	7,246	621	8.6%	2,440	33.7%	4,185	57.8%
2022	6,923	561	8%	2,352	34%	4,010	58%

Median and Average Ages – Local Pastors

Year	Median Age	Average Age
1985	51	49.6
1990	51	50.4
1995	51	50.3
2000	52	50.8
2005	53	52.2
2006	54	52.5
2007	54	52.8
2008	55	53.3
2009	55	53.5
2010	55	53.9
2015	57	54
2016	57	54.1
2017	57	54.1
2018	57	54.3
2019	57	54.3
2020	57	54.2
2021	57	54.4
2022	57	55

* Median – half older, half younger

**Gender Breakdown within Age Cohorts
Local Pastors**

Year	Gender	Under 35	35-54	55-72
2019	Men	76%	70%	64%
	Women	24%	30%	36%
2020	Men	76%	70%	64%
	Women	24%	30%	36%
2021	Men	73%	70%	63%
	Women	27%	30%	37%
2022	Men	73%	70%	62%
	Women	27%	30%	38%

Local Pastors

Presence of Local Pastors under 35 by Annual Conference 2020-2022

CONFERENCE NAME	2022 Local Pastors under 35	2022 Local Pastors under 35	2022 Local Pastors	2021 Local Pastors under 35	2021 Local Pastors under 35	2021 Local Pastors	2020 Local Pastors under 35	2020 Local Pastors under 35	2020 Local Pastors
Alabama-West Florida	15	10.8%	139	19	12.9%	147	21	12.5%	168
Alaska Missionary	1	20.0%	5	1	16.7%	6	1	10.0%	10
Arkansas	1	1.2%	83	3	3.4%	87	5	5.5%	91
Baltimore-Washington	7	6.4%	110	11	9.3%	118	10	8.8%	114
California-Nevada	3	6.1%	49	2	3.4%	59	0	0.0%	52
California-Pacific	9	11.1%	81	7	8.8%	80	6	7.3%	82
Central Texas	9	12.5%	72	8	12.1%	66	8	12.7%	63
Dakotas	11	14.7%	75	11	14.1%	78	10	13.3%	75
Desert Southwest	1	3.4%	29	3	10.0%	30	5	15.2%	33
East Ohio	12	6.7%	178	11	5.9%	186	21	9.7%	217
Eastern Pennsylvania	8	7.0%	114	11	9.4%	117	10	9.2%	109
Florida	15	8.5%	176	19	10.2%	186	11	5.9%	187
Great Plains	16	8.0%	201	19	8.4%	226	21	8.6%	244
Greater New Jersey	18	11.4%	158	19	12.6%	151	19	12.2%	156
Holston	10	9.3%	107	9	7.4%	121	6	4.8%	126
Illinois Great Rivers	13	7.1%	183	11	5.8%	189	14	7.3%	192
Indiana	14	8.0%	175	13	6.8%	191	18	8.9%	202
Iowa	4	3.3%	123	5	3.5%	144	6	3.9%	154
Kentucky	20	9.9%	202	24	10.5%	228	23	9.8%	234
Louisiana	4	3.6%	110	5	4.4%	113	6	5.0%	121
Michigan	11	6.4%	172	12	7.2%	167	11	6.1%	179
Minnesota	11	13.1%	84	9	11.0%	82	10	11.9%	84
Mississippi	13	6.2%	209	15	6.3%	239	15	6.1%	246
Missouri	17	8.2%	207	21	9.3%	225	19	8.1%	235
Mountain Sky	5	7.4%	68	2	3.2%	62	3	4.5%	66
New England	7	6.2%	113	11	8.8%	125	13	10.0%	130
New Mexico	2	10.5%	19	2	9.5%	21	0	0.0%	16
New York	5	9.4%	53	8	12.5%	64	9	13.8%	65

Local Pastors

Presence of Local Pastors under 35 by Annual Conference 2020-2022, continued

CONFERENCE NAME	2022 Local Pastors under 35	2022 Local Pastors under 35	2022 Local Pastors	2021 Local Pastors under 35	2021 Local Pastors under 35	2021 Local Pastors	2020 Local Pastors under 35	2020 Local Pastors under 35	2020 Local Pastors
North Alabama	26	11.9%	219	16	7.8%	205	21	9.8%	215
North Carolina	39	15.7%	248	43	17.3%	248	36	14.2%	253
North Georgia	21	8.2%	255	23	8.4%	273	26	9.7%	268
North Texas	6	7.4%	81	10	11.0%	91	9	9.5%	95
Northern Illinois	5	8.6%	58	6	10.3%	58	7	11.1%	63
Northwest Texas	8	12.7%	63	8	12.3%	65	8	10.7%	75
Oklahoma	16	13.9%	115	13	11.1%	117	13	10.9%	119
OK Indian Missionary	0	0.0%	10	0	0.0%	8	0	0.0%	7
Oregon-Idaho	4	19.0%	21	3	15.0%	20	3	10.7%	28
Pacific Northwest	2	7.4%	27	4	13.8%	29	5	16.1%	31
Peninsula-Delaware	8	7.3%	110	11	9.7%	113	12	10.6%	113
Red Bird Missionary	1	20.0%	5	1	16.7%	6	2	28.6%	7
Rio Texas	5	4.0%	125	9	6.3%	142	12	8.6%	139
South Carolina	13	5.2%	252	13	5.1%	255	14	5.6%	249
South Georgia	7	5.6%	124	6	4.8%	125	9	7.0%	129
Susquehanna	14	7.4%	188	26	13.2%	197	32	16.0%	200
Tennessee- Western KY	9	4.3%	211	10	9.8%	156	10	3.8%	262
Texas	19	12.0%	158	24	15.3%	157	23	14.6%	158
Upper New York	7	3.6%	193	7	3.6%	196	9	4.4%	203
Virginia	23	8.2%	282	23	7.9%	292	26	8.6%	304
West Ohio	23	8.8%	261	27	10.0%	271	29	11.0%	263
West Virginia	9	5.7%	158	8	5.1%	157	10	6.0%	168
Western North Carolina	23	11.2%	205	23	11.0%	209	22	10.3%	213
Western Pennsylvania	5	3.0%	165	7	4.2%	166	8	4.8%	166
Wisconsin	6	6.4%	94	9	8.9%	101	7	7.1%	99
Total	561	8.1%	6,923	621	8.6%	7,246	654	8.70%	7,478

Annual Conference Clergy by Age Group – Numeric – 2022

CONFERENCE	Deacons				Elders				Local Pastors			
	Under 35	35 to 54	55 to 72	Total	Under 35	35 to 54	55 to 72	Total	Under 35	35 to 54	55 to 72	Total
Alabama-West Florida	1	5	7	13	15	74	91	180	15	51	73	139
Alaska Missionary	0	8	12	20	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	5
Arkansas	2	12	10	24	11	87	77	175	1	30	52	83
Baltimore-Washington	6	4	10	20	17	120	179	316	7	26	77	110
California-Nevada	0	4	6	10	6	70	124	200	3	20	26	49
California-Pacific	0	4	8	12	8	110	167	285	9	26	46	81
Central Texas	3	9	4	16	17	78	94	189	9	31	32	72
Dakotas	1	12	6	19	7	42	43	92	11	37	27	75
Desert Southwest	0	3	3	6	2	36	41	79	1	8	20	29
East Ohio	0	6	8	14	11	76	127	214	12	47	119	178
Eastern Pennsylvania	1	11	6	18	6	52	116	174	8	36	70	114
Florida	1	15	10	26	26	148	175	349	15	69	92	176
Great Plains	2	5	4	11	21	144	141	306	16	80	105	201
Greater New Jersey	3	6	3	12	8	92	138	238	18	64	76	158
Holston	3	14	10	27	15	121	123	259	10	30	67	107
Illinois Great Rivers	0	4	11	15	12	78	121	211	13	59	111	183
Indiana	1	7	3	11	18	118	181	317	14	66	95	175
Iowa	0	3	2	5	12	84	119	215	4	46	73	123
Kentucky	1	2	4	7	14	82	88	184	20	88	94	202
Louisiana	1	5	7	13	11	55	63	129	4	31	75	110
Michigan	0	8	12	20	21	112	145	278	11	62	99	172
Minnesota	2	12	10	24	4	47	80	131	11	27	46	84
Mississippi	6	4	10	20	14	114	136	264	13	66	130	209
Missouri	0	4	6	10	7	99	110	216	17	80	110	207
Mountain Sky	0	4	8	12	12	84	95	191	5	19	44	68
New England	3	9	4	16	10	73	86	169	7	30	76	113
New Mexico	1	12	6	19	0	26	29	55	2	6	11	19
New York	0	3	3	6	5	85	149	239	5	18	30	53

Annual Conference Clergy by Age Group – Numeric – 2022 (continued)

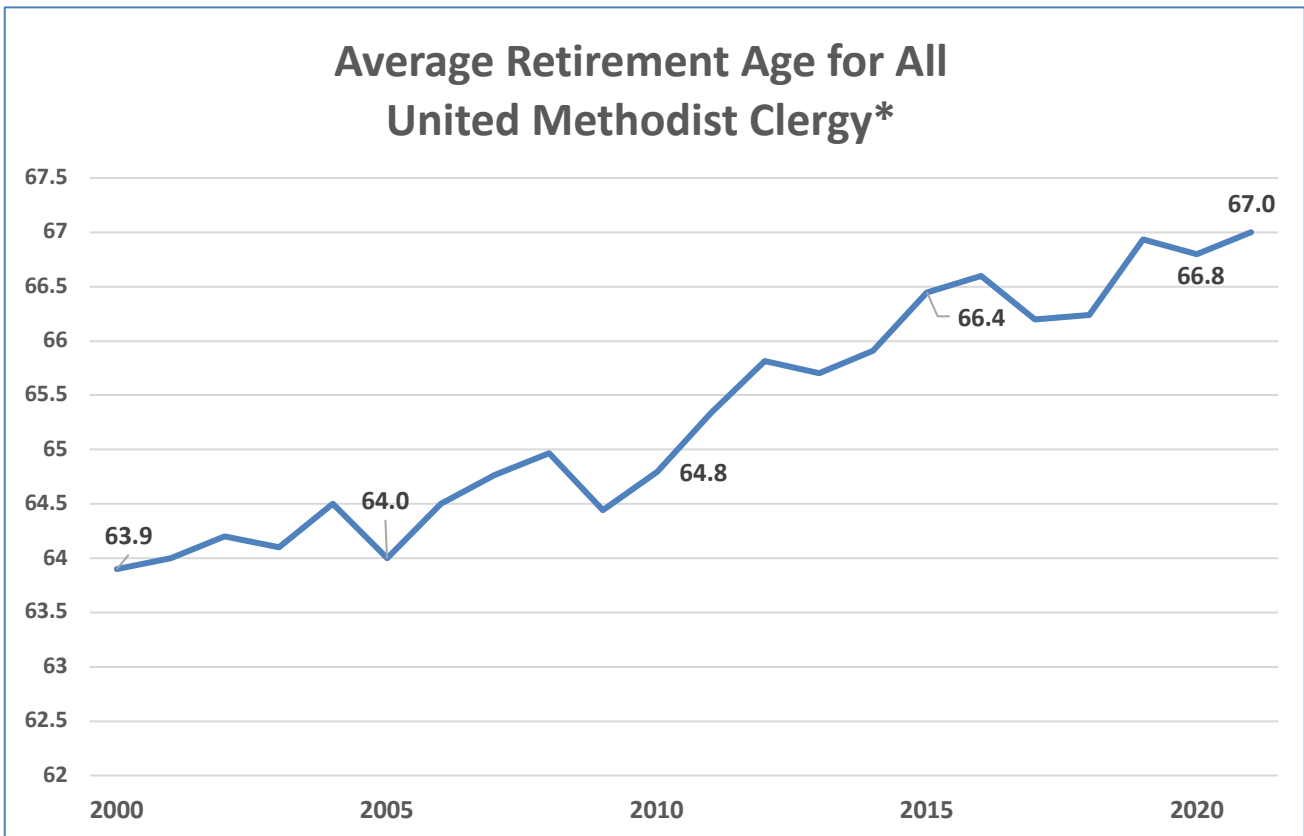
CONFERENCE	Deacons				Elders				Local Pastors			
	Under 35	35 to 54	55 to 72	Total	Under 35	35 to 54	55 to 72	Total	Under 35	35 to 54	55 to 72	Total
North Alabama	2	10	3	15	10	85	103	198	26	64	129	219
North Carolina	2	14	8	24	27	135	161	323	39	83	126	248
North Georgia	6	29	28	63	24	175	205	404	21	83	151	255
North Texas	9	22	20	51	24	89	98	211	6	35	40	81
Northern Illinois	1	11	9	21	11	101	127	239	5	18	35	58
Northwest Texas	0	0	0	0	2	27	38	67	8	21	34	63
Oklahoma	0	9	10	19	14	90	117	221	16	45	54	115
OK Indian Mission	0	0	0	0	0	3	9	12	0	3	7	10
Oregon-Idaho	0	3	3	6	4	29	42	75	4	10	7	21
Pacific Northwest	1	4	3	8	11	65	62	138	2	12	13	27
Peninsula-Delaware	0	3	0	3	3	30	64	97	8	21	81	110
Red Bird Mission	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	5
Rio Texas	0	11	8	19	7	86	103	196	5	50	70	125
South Carolina	4	9	10	23	27	119	180	326	13	69	170	252
South Georgia	2	8	4	14	5	77	93	175	7	38	79	124
Susquehanna	0	1	2	3	14	58	93	165	14	73	101	188
Tenn.-Western KY	8	19	18	45	16	112	108	236	9	72	130	211
Texas	4	18	9	31	32	161	163	356	19	59	80	158
Upper New York	2	2	14	18	1	67	114	182	7	55	131	193
Virginia	4	14	13	31	31	211	207	449	23	93	166	282
West Ohio	3	16	14	33	16	156	221	393	23	103	135	261
West Virginia	0	3	6	9	4	48	90	142	9	45	104	158
West. N Carolina	9	33	29	71	32	202	276	510	23	54	128	205
West. Pennsylvania	7	2	3	12	15	88	132	235	5	48	112	165
Wisconsin	1	5	3	9	8	56	99	163	6	43	45	94
Total	100	433	402	935	648	4577	5943	11168	561	2352	4010	6923

Annual Conference Clergy by Age Group – Percentage – 2022

CONFERENCE	Deacons			Elders			Local Pastors		
	Under 35	35 to 54	55 to 72	Under 35	35 to 54	55 to 72	Under 35	35 to 54	55 to 72
Alabama-West Florida	12.1%	36.4%	51.5%	8.3%	41.1%	50.6%	10.8%	36.7%	52.5%
Alaska Missionary	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%
Arkansas	30.0%	30.0%	40.0%	6.3%	49.7%	44.0%	1.2%	36.1%	62.7%
Baltimore-Washington	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	5.4%	38.0%	56.6%	6.4%	23.6%	70.0%
California-Nevada	0.0%	62.5%	37.5%	3.0%	35.0%	62.0%	6.1%	40.8%	53.1%
California-Pacific	14.3%	28.6%	57.1%	2.8%	38.6%	58.6%	11.1%	32.1%	56.8%
Central Texas	3.7%	55.6%	40.7%	9.0%	41.3%	49.7%	12.5%	43.1%	44.4%
Dakotas	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	7.6%	45.7%	46.7%	14.7%	49.3%	36.0%
Desert Southwest	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	2.5%	45.6%	51.9%	3.4%	27.6%	69.0%
East Ohio	7.7%	38.5%	53.8%	5.1%	35.5%	59.3%	6.7%	26.4%	66.9%
Eastern Pennsylvania	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	3.4%	29.9%	66.7%	7.0%	31.6%	61.4%
Florida	8.3%	50.0%	41.7%	7.4%	42.4%	50.1%	8.5%	39.2%	52.3%
Great Plains	30.0%	20.0%	50.0%	6.9%	47.1%	46.1%	8.0%	39.8%	52.2%
Greater New Jersey	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	3.4%	38.7%	58.0%	11.4%	40.5%	48.1%
Holston	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	5.8%	46.7%	47.5%	9.3%	28.0%	62.6%
Illinois Great Rivers	18.8%	56.3%	25.0%	5.7%	37.0%	57.3%	7.1%	32.2%	60.7%
Indiana	5.3%	63.2%	31.6%	5.7%	37.2%	57.1%	8.0%	37.7%	54.3%
Iowa	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	5.6%	39.1%	55.3%	3.3%	37.4%	59.3%
Kentucky	0.0%	42.9%	57.1%	7.6%	44.6%	47.8%	9.9%	43.6%	46.5%
Louisiana	5.6%	61.1%	33.3%	8.5%	42.6%	48.8%	3.6%	28.2%	68.2%
Michigan	3.8%	57.7%	38.5%	7.6%	40.3%	52.2%	6.4%	36.0%	57.6%
Minnesota	18.2%	45.5%	36.4%	3.1%	35.9%	61.1%	13.1%	32.1%	54.8%
Mississippi	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	5.3%	43.2%	51.5%	6.2%	31.6%	62.2%
Missouri	11.1%	51.9%	37.0%	3.2%	45.8%	50.9%	8.2%	38.6%	53.1%
Mountain Sky	0.0%	26.7%	73.3%	6.3%	44.0%	49.7%	7.4%	27.9%	64.7%
New England	9.1%	63.6%	27.3%	5.9%	43.2%	50.9%	6.2%	26.5%	67.3%
New Mexico	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	47.3%	52.7%	10.5%	31.6%	57.9%
New York	14.3%	28.6%	57.1%	2.1%	35.6%	62.3%	9.4%	34.0%	56.6%

Annual Conference Clergy by Age Group – Percentage – 2022 (continued)

CONFERENCE	Deacons			Elders			Local Pastors		
	Under 35	35 to 54	55 to 72	Under 35	35 to 54	55 to 72	Under 35	35 to 54	55 to 72
North Alabama	13.3%	66.7%	20.0%	5.1%	42.9%	52.0%	11.9%	29.2%	58.9%
North Carolina	8.3%	58.3%	33.3%	8.4%	41.8%	49.8%	15.7%	33.5%	50.8%
North Georgia	9.5%	46.0%	44.4%	5.9%	43.3%	50.7%	8.2%	32.5%	59.2%
North Texas	17.6%	43.1%	39.2%	11.4%	42.2%	46.4%	7.4%	43.2%	49.4%
Northern Illinois	4.8%	52.4%	42.9%	4.6%	42.3%	53.1%	8.6%	31.0%	60.3%
Northwest Texas	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%	40.3%	56.7%	12.7%	33.3%	54.0%
Oklahoma	0.0%	47.4%	52.6%	6.3%	40.7%	52.9%	13.9%	39.1%	47.0%
OK Indian Mission	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	0.0%	30.0%	70.0%
Oregon-Idaho	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	5.3%	38.7%	56.0%	19.0%	47.6%	33.3%
Pacific Northwest	12.5%	50.0%	37.5%	8.0%	47.1%	44.9%	7.4%	44.4%	48.1%
Peninsula-Delaware	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	3.1%	30.9%	66.0%	7.3%	19.1%	73.6%
Red Bird Mission	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%
Rio Texas	0.0%	57.9%	42.1%	3.6%	43.9%	52.6%	4.0%	40.0%	56.0%
South Carolina	17.4%	39.1%	43.5%	8.3%	36.5%	55.2%	5.2%	27.4%	67.5%
South Georgia	14.3%	57.1%	28.6%	2.9%	44.0%	53.1%	5.6%	30.6%	63.7%
Susquehanna	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	8.5%	35.2%	56.4%	7.4%	38.8%	53.7%
Tenn.-Western KY	17.8%	42.2%	40.0%	6.8%	47.5%	45.8%	4.3%	34.1%	61.6%
Texas	12.9%	58.1%	29.0%	9.0%	45.2%	45.8%	12.0%	37.3%	50.6%
Upper New York	11.1%	11.1%	77.8%	0.5%	36.8%	62.6%	3.6%	28.5%	67.9%
Virginia	12.9%	45.2%	41.9%	6.9%	47.0%	46.1%	8.2%	33.0%	58.9%
West Ohio	9.1%	48.5%	42.4%	4.1%	39.7%	56.2%	8.8%	39.5%	51.7%
West Virginia	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	2.8%	33.8%	63.4%	5.7%	28.5%	65.8%
West. North Carolina	12.7%	46.5%	40.8%	6.3%	39.6%	54.1%	11.2%	26.3%	62.4%
West. Pennsylvania	58.3%	16.7%	25.0%	6.4%	37.4%	56.2%	3.0%	29.1%	67.9%
Wisconsin	11.1%	55.6%	33.3%	4.9%	34.4%	60.7%	6.4%	45.7%	47.9%



*includes Jurisdictional and Central Conferences

Average Retirement Ages

	2005	2021
Elders	64	67
Deacons	64	67
Full-Time Local Pastors**	65	67
Part-Time Local Pastors	67	70

**includes Associate Members

Lewis Center for Church Leadership

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Established by Wesley Theological Seminary in 2003, the Lewis Center for Church Leadership helps the United Methodist Church address its current challenges. The Center is building a vision for church leadership grounded in faith, informed by knowledge, and exercised in effective action. It seeks a holistic understanding of Christian leadership that brings together theology and management, scholarship and practice, research and application.

Committed to the broad goal of helping the church reach more people, younger people, and more diverse people, the Center focuses on improving leadership effectiveness and providing actionable insights and best practices to promote effective ministry. The Center seeks to be a trusted resource for church leaders so that congregations increase in service, vitality, and growth. The Center staff of six, along with other researchers and consultants who assist with special projects, also draws on the expertise of the entire Wesley Seminary faculty and a wide array of gifted practitioners.

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