

Provincial Acolyte

Definition of Office

(from the Book of Order, Church Life in the Southern Province, Ch. 13, 4. "Acolytes")

The Renewed Moravian Church has taken from the Ancient Church the title of "Acolyte" and has transformed it into a discipleship in the congregation and Church.

The Provincial Elders' Conference has the right to authorize the reception of Provincial Acolytes for denominational service. They should be persons who exemplify the teaching of Christ and are respected by fellow members of the Church. The Provincial Elders' Conference shall have the authority to appoint a qualified person as a Provincial Acolyte to serve as pastor of a specific congregation. Such appointments shall be for a period of one year. These can be renewed. The reception of a Provincial Acolyte takes place in the presence of the assembled congregation by the right hand of fellowship given by a representative of the Provincial Elders' Conference.

When an ordained person is not available for the administration of the sacraments, the Provincial Elders' Conference may, after giving special instruction regarding the meaning and observance of the sacraments, authorize the Provincial Acolyte to administer the sacraments in the congregation for the period of time in which he/she has been appointed.

Role and Responsibilities

A Provincial Acolyte is appointed by the Provincial Elders' Conference upon request of the joint boards (or church board) of the congregation where they serve. Expectations and terms of appointment shall be defined and agreed between the Acolyte, joint boards (or church board) and the Provincial Elders' Conference.

Duties of a Provincial Acolyte may include those authorized by Unity Synod (*as described in #691, Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum*). Pastoral duties include: prayer, pastoral care, preaching, teaching, evangelism and administering the work and witness of the church. Other responsibilities may be assigned by the Provincial Elders' Conference.

Each Provincial Acolyte fulfills the responsibilities of pastor only for the specific congregation in which he/she has been appointed. Acolytes do not exercise pastoral responsibilities or administer the sacraments elsewhere.

(If authorized to administer the sacraments) In serving the elements of Holy Communion, or for Baptisms, the Provincial Acolyte shall not wear the surplice, but may wear an appropriate gown.

The Provincial Elders' Conference may appoint an ordained pastor (active or retired) to meet with and serve as a mentor and advisor for a Provincial Acolyte.

The Provincial Elders' Conference may set standards for required education or training for Provincial Acolytes to complete prior to their appointment, or for their continuing education after appointment.