



### **SUPERNUMERARY STATUS** African Methodist Episcopal Church

#### **Definition**

A **Supernumerary** is “*an ordained preacher for whom there is no appointment available, or one who is allowed to be without appointment by request.*”

— *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, p. 1220*

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#### **Purpose**

Supernumerary status provides an orderly, connectional means by which an ordained preacher may be released from **active pastoral appointment** while remaining **within the itinerant system of the African Methodist Episcopal Church**, under episcopal authority, and subject to the Discipline.

Supernumerary status does not constitute withdrawal from the Church, surrender of orders, or independent ministry.

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#### **Polity Clarification (Turner's Polity)**

The African Methodist Episcopal Church is episcopal in authority, connectional in structure, and itinerant in ministry. Under Turner's polity:

- Clergy status is conferred and regulated by the Church, not self-determined by the individual;
- Supernumerary status is not self-effectuating and may not be assumed independently;
- Placement on the Supernumerary Roll requires **Annual Conference action** and episcopal approval;
- Supernumerary ministers remain under the **authority of the Bishop** and the governance of the Discipline.

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#### **Eligibility**

An ordained preacher may be considered for supernumerary status when:

- No pastoral appointment is available; or
- The preacher formally requests to be without appointment due to health, vocational transition, family circumstances, professional obligations, or other sufficient cause.

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## Required Process

- A written request for supernumerary status must be submitted to the Bishop through appropriate ecclesiastical channels.
- The request shall state the reason for seeking supernumerary status.
- The request shall be presented to the Annual Conference for consideration.
- Upon majority vote of the Annual Conference, the preacher shall be placed on the Supernumerary Roll.
- The action shall be recorded in the official Conference Journal.

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## Church Affiliation

A minister granted supernumerary status **must affiliate with a local African Methodist Episcopal Church** as designated or approved by the Bishop or Presiding Elder.

Supernumerary status does not permit detached or unaffiliated ministry. Church affiliation is required to ensure continued pastoral covering, accountability, and connectional participation.

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## Quarterly Conference Accountability

Supernumerary ministers are **members of the Quarterly Conference** and are required to **answer the Quarterly Conference** of the church with which they are affiliated.

The Discipline provides that:

*“The Quarterly Conference shall consist of the traveling preachers on a circuit or station; supernumeraries; retired ministers; local preachers; exhorters; stewards; stewardesses; trustees; class leaders; General Officers; deaconesses; licensed missionary workers; evangelists; the superintendent of the Church School; the presidents of the Lay Organization, A.C.E. Fellowship and Missionary societies, and administrators of the AME institutions, organizations and agencies, provided the latter are members of the AME Church.”*

— Discipline, p. 429

Accordingly:

- Supernumerary ministers shall be reported and recorded in the Quarterly Conference;
- They remain subject to disciplinary inquiry, moral accountability, and ecclesiastical oversight;
- Failure to maintain church affiliation or to answer the Quarterly Conference may result in review of status by the Bishop and/or Annual Conference.

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## Rights and Limitations

A supernumerary preacher:

- Retains ordination and ministerial credentials;
- Is not entitled to a pastoral appointment;
- Must affiliate with a local African Methodist Episcopal Church;
- Is required to answer the Quarterly Conference of the affiliated church;
- May not exercise pastoral authority or ministerial functions unless expressly authorized by the Bishop;
- **May return to active service only by request, subject to episcopal discretion.**

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### **Recordkeeping**

Upon approval of supernumerary status:

- The Secretary of the Annual Conference shall record the action in the official minutes;
- The preacher's status shall be reflected on the Supernumerary Roll;
- Credentials shall be maintained in accordance with the Discipline.

## TEMPLATE LETTER

### Request for Supernumerary Status

*(To be submitted by ordained clergy seeking supernumerary classification)*

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**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**To:** The Right Reverend \_\_\_\_\_  
Presiding Prelate, \_\_\_\_\_ Episcopal District  
African Methodist Episcopal Church

**Re: Request for Supernumerary Status**

Grace and peace be unto you.

I respectfully submit this letter requesting placement on **Supernumerary Status** within the \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

In accordance with the *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, a supernumerary is defined as “*an ordained preacher for whom there is no appointment available, or one who is allowed to be without appointment by request.*” After prayerful discernment and careful consideration, I am requesting to be released from active pastoral appointment at this time.

This request is made for the following reason(s):

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I affirm my continued commitment to the doctrine, discipline, polity, and connectional life of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. I understand that supernumerary status does not sever my relationship with the Church, does not constitute withdrawal, and does not release me from episcopal authority or accountability.

I further acknowledge and affirm that, if granted supernumerary status:

- I will affiliate with a local African Methodist Episcopal Church as designated or approved by the Bishop or Presiding Elder;
- I will answer the Quarterly Conference of the church with which I am affiliated, in accordance with the Discipline;
- I will not exercise pastoral authority or ministerial functions unless expressly authorized by the Bishop;
- Any return to active pastoral service is by request only and subject to episcopal discretion;
- This request is subject to the approval of the Annual Conference by majority vote and entry into the Conference Journal.

I submit this request with humility and gratitude for the leadership, care, and order of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and I ask for your prayerful consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

**Rev.** \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

**Printed Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Annual Conference:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Affiliated Local Church (if known):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Information:** \_\_\_\_\_