



Oregon Synod

Discipline Committee Member

Discipline Committee members are responsible for ensuring due process in cases of alleged misconduct by a rostered leader or congregation member, serving on a hearing panel when a formal charge is filed, and maintaining confidentiality.

Members should be available for assisting in the rare but important task of discernment around disciplining a congregation or church member with whom the congregational council cannot reach a mediated agreement. This committee is only engaged if the Consultation Committee has not been able to reach an agreement and refers the matter to the Discipline Committee. This is detailed in the synod constitution and may include lengthy conversations, structured hearings, group deliberation, ongoing prayer and the difficult but often necessary task of setting boundaries for various parties in writing.

The role requires analytical, listening, and communication skills, and the ability to act with justice and discretion. The discipline committee demands a flexible schedule of its members, as they may be called to serve on a hearing panel on short notice and the work can be demanding and time-sensitive. Volunteers are to follow all guidelines related to behavior and conduct and will be treated with the same care and respect as that accorded to paid staff.

Term

Committee members are elected for single six-year terms without consecutive re-election, serve as a pool of potential hearing panel members, and are called upon as needed rather than meeting regularly.

Key responsibilities

1. Ensure due process: Participate in ensuring that disciplinary processes for rostered leaders, congregations, and members are fair and follow established procedures.
2. Serve on a hearing panel: When a formal charge is filed, members are selected to serve on a specific hearing panel, which includes an equal number of clergy and lay members from both the synod and churchwide committees.
3. Hear evidence and make recommendations: As part of the hearing panel, review evidence, hear the defense from the accused, and make a judgment on the validity of the charges.
4. Recommend actions: Based on their judgment, recommend appropriate actions to be taken.
5. Maintain confidentiality and discretion: The role requires a high degree of discretion and the ability to maintain confidentiality throughout the process.