

General Conference 2012

Changes in Lay Speaking Ministries :

The legislation passed at General Conference that changes Lay Speaking Ministries to Lay Servant Ministries will officially take effect January 1, 2013.

The logo will be changed by replacing the word Speaking with Servant by the Creative Services Department of the General Board of Discipleship.

The changes to Paragraph 32 of the Constitution which merely changes the title of the Conference Director of Lay Speaking Ministries to the Conference Director of Lay Servant Ministries as a member of the annual conference. This legislation was passed at General Conference but because it is a change in the constitution it must be ratified (approved) by the annual conferences. Voting against this title change in this paragraph will not change the name of the program nor the actual title of the Conference Director. The paragraph changes in the name of the program and titles of the district and conference directors have already been approved by General Conference and do not require ratification of the annual conferences.

Paragraph changes approved by General Conference 2012:

Lay Speaking Name Change (Petition 20235-DI-&266) (this petition amends all paragraphs which contain the words lay speaker or Lay Speaking Ministries B paragraph 266 is cited here because it is the main paragraph for Lay Speaking Ministries)

Amend & 266 and all other related paragraphs (including, but not limited to, & 247.11, & 251. f, &252.2. c, & 267. 1.,2., 3. & 268. 1., 2., 3. & 269. & 271.2 & 341 & 607.8 & 631.3., 5., 6., 7. b, d ,&659.6 & 666. 2.,4. & 667. 1., 2., 3., 4., 5. & 1117. 6) by changing "lay speaker" to "lay servant" and "lay speaking ministries" to "lay servant ministries": Section XI.

Lay Speaking Servant Ministries

& 266. Lay Speaking ServantC1. A lay speaker servant (local church or certified) is a professing member of a local church or charge who is ready and desirous to serve the Church...

2. Lay speakers servants are to serve the local church or charge (or beyond the local church or charge) in any way in which their witness or leadership and service inspires the laity...

3. Through continued study and training a lay speaker servant should prepare to undertake one or more of the following functions, giving primary attention to service within the local church or charge.

4. Lay speaker servant training courses shall be those recommended by the General Board of Discipleship or alternates approved by the conference committee on lay speaking Lay Servant Ministries. Such training should enable ministries with all language and cultural groups as appropriate.

5. It is recommended that a service of commitment be held for persons recognized as local church or certified lay speakers servants.

RATIONALE :

Rationale: The term lay speaker has developed the connotation of preaching and for this reason many potential leaders avoid the leadership training that could develop their skills and enhance their spiritual gifts. Despite efforts to emphasize leading@ and caring@ rather than communicating@ resistance to the name and hence the training remains. There have been efforts in the past to change the name but those names did not fully describe the ministry and used confusing terminology such as "Minister". Several annual conferences are not using the name Lay Speaking Ministries and at least one is already using the name Lay Servant Ministries. We are all called to be servants of Jesus Christ and servant leaders; therefore the name Lay Servant and Lay Servant Ministries seems very appropriate for this ministry of leading, caring, and communicating.

Please note the following amendments by the general conference legislative committee :

1. In &266.4, add this sentence to the end: These courses are open to all, whether or not an enrollee applies to serve as a lay servant.

2. After &266.5 add a new &266.6: text is attached. (This amendment provides for a lay speaker track within lay servant ministries. Lay speakers will have specific training as listed and will be interviewed by the district committee on lay servant ministries)

Provisions for Lay Speakers - A lay speaker is a professing member of a local church or charge who is called and equipped to serve the church in pulpit supply in accordance and compliance with &341.1. A lay speaker will complete a course of study provided by Lay Servant Ministries or equivalent conference structure. Lay speakers will be certified by the annual conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries or equivalent structure after examination. The concept of lay speaker is based on the

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historical tradition of ministry of the laity instituted by John Wesley. While lay speakers are engaged in a variety of ministries, their purpose is to complement and support, not replace, pastors. The lay speaker will preach the Word when the pastor is unavailable, or in accordance with §341.1. A certified lay servant or a person with requisite training defined by the district or conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries or equivalent structure may be certified as a lay speaker. The lay speaker will complete a course of study to include the Lay Servant Basic course, and Leading Worship, Leading Prayer, Discovering Spiritual Gifts, Preaching, and United Methodist Heritage and Polity, and/or other courses as may be determined by the annual conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries or equivalent structure. The lay speaker will be recommended by the pastor of the local church where their membership is held and by a vote of the charge conference.

Upon completion of the required course work, the individual will be examined by the district committee on Lay Servant Ministries or equivalent structure and recommended to the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries or equivalent structure for certification. The lay speaker must apply for re-certification and appear before the district committee on Lay Servant Ministries or equivalent structure every three years and receive the endorsement of this local church charge conference.

A lay speaker is a volunteer and serves without compensation.

Petition # 20232 - §267.2 (this petition defines the service of local church lay servants to coordinate with the three tenets of lay speaking/servant ministries; leading, caring, communicating.)

The local church lay speaker servant with appropriate training (see §266.3) shall serve the local church in which membership is held by witness to the spoken word, vital leadership service, and care giving ministry, through ministries of leading, caring and communicating (see § 266.3)

Rationale:

not every lay servant has the spiritual gifts or abilities to preach, and the words "witness to the spoken word" have been interpreted as "preaching". Additional courses beyond the basic course are available to equip the laity servants to preach. Leading, caring and communicating our key responsibilities of lay servants.

Petition #20233 B DI B & 268.2 (this petition defines the service of certified lay servants to coordinate with the three tenets of lay speaking/servant ministries with the addition of the role of class leader)

Amend § 268.2 as follows:

The certified lay speaker servant with appropriate training shall continue to serve the local church in the witness of the spoken word, vital leadership service, and care-giving ministry through ministries of leading, caring, and Communicating, and may serve in the role of class leader (see § 266.1 and .3).

Petition #20240-DI-§631.6d) (this petition not only changes the name of the conference director of lay speaking ministries but also ensures that that position is filled by a certified lay servant B a lay person)

Amend § 631.6 (d)

There will be a conference director of Lay Speaking Servant Ministries. This position will be filled in a manner determined by the annual conference. This position shall be filled by a Certified Lay Servant. The conference director will chair.

Rationale: There is no guidance on who shall be appointed as a conference director of Lay Speaking Ministries. (Additional legislation proposes change of Lay Speaking Ministries to Lay Servant Ministries in § 266 and all other references.)

Petition #20239 B DI B & 667 (this petition also changes the name of the district director of lay speaking ministries and ensures that the district director is a certified lay servant B a lay person)

Amend § 667 :

Districts are encouraged to create a district committee on Lay Speaking Servant Ministries related to the annual conference through the conference committee on Lay Speaking Servant Ministries. There shall be a district director of Lay Servant Ministries filled in a manner determined by the district. This position shall be filled by a Certified Lay Servant.

Rationale:

There is no requirement to appoint a district director of Lay Speaking Ministries. There is no guidance on who shall be appointed as a district director of Lay Speaking Ministries. (Additional legislation proposes change of "Lay Speaking Ministries" to "Lay Servant Ministries" in § 266 and all other references.)

Petition #20238 B DI B & 268.1. C (this petition defines the nebulous term "appropriate committee")

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Amend & 268.1.c

Had his or her qualifications reviewed and approved by the district committee on lay servant ministries and the annual charge conference (see & 667.3) appropriate committee (see & 258.2f [9].)

Rationale: certified lay speakers are not the same as lay preachers. Certified lay speakers are not approved by the Staff Parish Relations Committee. Another piece of legislation changes lay speakers to lay servants.

I have included the petition below in the summary so that you know that there were attempts to correct/amend this paragraph.

Petition #20237 B LC B & 258.2 g 9 (this petition was rejected in favor of petition #20075 B LC B 258.2 g 9 B however, #20075 did not get enough votes in committee to be put on the consent calendar and was not voted on in the plenary session. This means it is not in effect B there was no change in the disciplinary paragraph)

The proposed petition is below : (Failed)Petition # 20075 Legislative Committee report states:

Amend & 258.2 g (9)

to enlist, interview, evaluate, review, and recommended annually to the charge conference lay preachers speakers and persons for candidacy for licensed or ordained ministry (see && 247.8 and 310),Y The committee shall provide to the charge conference a list of students candidates from the charge who are preparing for licensed or ordained ministry; Diaconal ministry, and/or missionary service, and shall maintain contact with these students candidates , supplying the charge conference with a progress report on each student candidate. (Not approved by General Conference)

Additional legislation: for your information Petition #20234 B LC B & 220 - Ministry of All the Baptized

Amend & 220, fourth sentence, as follows:

participation in disciplined groups such as covenant discipleship groups or class meetings is an expected part of personal mission involvement.

Rationale:

this language, covenant discipleship groups or class meetings, provides more specific examples of the kinds of disciplines, accountable small groups that can foster personal growth and mission or involvement as disciples of Jesus Christ transforming the world.