

Certified Lay Ministry Q/A

What Is a Certified Lay Minister?

A certified lay minister is a certified lay servant or certified lay missionary who is called and equipped to conduct public worship, care for the congregation, assist in program leadership, develop new and existing faith communities, preach the Word, lead small groups, or establish community ministries as part of a ministry team with the supervision and support of a clergy person. A certified lay minister is assigned by a district superintendent in accordance with 419.2. (*2016 Book of Discipline*, 268.1)

Why Do We Have Certified Lay Ministers?

According to 268.2 of the *2016 Book of Discipline*, we have certified lay ministers in order to:

- enhance the quality of ministry, much like a class leader did in early Methodism through service in the local church, circuit, or cooperative parish.
- expand team ministry in other churches or charges.
- use spiritual gifts as evidence of God's grace, as with lay ministry in early Methodism.

What Does a Certified Lay Minister Do?

Our *2016 Book of Discipline* tells us that as part of ministry team under the supervision and support of a clergyperson, a CLM:

- conducts public worship
- cares for the congregation
- assists in program leadership
- develops new and existing faith communities
- preaches the Word
- leads small groups
- establishes community outreach ministries.

How Is a CLM Different from Other Recognized Ministers?

A CLM is a unique, recognized lay servant in the UMC intended for missional leadership in churches as part of a team ministry under the supervision of a clergyperson. CLMs are assigned by the district superintendent and operate under a system of training, support, supervision, and accountability. The following are short descriptions of how a CLM differs from other recognized ministers.

- *Lay Supply*: Laypersons are often appointed as lay supply pastors as an interim measure until a clergyperson can be appointed. Lay supply persons often do not have training, very little supervision, and are not usually held to the same system of accountability as a CLM. Lay supply tends to be temporary, while a CLM has potential for continued ongoing ministry.
- *A Certified Lay Servant*: Certified lay servants serve in ministry and mission within the local congregation where they are members in good standing, or they may serve beyond their local church. They may provide temporary pulpit supply and serve in any way in which their witness, leadership, and service inspires others to a deeper commitment to Christ and more effective discipleship. The certified lay servant is to complete an advanced course every three years.
- *A Certified Lay Speaker*: A certified lay Speaker is a certified lay servant who is called and equipped to serve the church in pulpit supply in accordance and compliance with 341.1 of the *Book of*

Discipline. Their purpose is to complement and support, not replace, pastors. The lay speaker has completed a track of study that includes the "Introduction to Lay Ministry: The BASIC Course" and advanced courses on leading worship, leading prayer, discovering spiritual gifts, preaching, United Methodist heritage, United Methodist polity, and/or other courses as determined by the annual conference committee on lay servant ministries (or equivalent structure). The certified lay speaker is to complete another advanced course every three years.

- *A Licensed Local Pastor:* A licensed local pastor is a clergy member of the annual conference who provides pastoral leadership in a local congregation. He or she is appointed by the bishop for non-itinerant ministry. The license is tied to the appointment and when not under appointment, the licensed local pastor reverts to a lay status. The training includes attending a conference licensing school and completing the Course of Study program available from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.
- *An Elder:* An elder is a clergy member of the annual conference ordained to a lifetime ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service. Under the guaranteed appointment of a bishop, elders usually have completed seminary training. Their sole livelihood comes from a church.

What are the Basic Steps For CLM Certification?

- Be certified as a lay servant or lay missionary.
- Obtain written recommendation from the pastor and the church council or charge conference of the local church in which the individual holds membership.
- Complete a track of study for certified lay ministers relevant to the candidate's assignment and in collaboration with the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries.
- Receive a letter of recommendation from the district superintendent.
- Have all requirements for certification, including appropriate screening and assessment as defined by the annual conference, reviewed by the conference committee on lay servant ministries, or equivalent structure, for referral to the district committee on ordained ministry for examination. After the district committee on ordained ministry interviews the candidate, the district committee on ordained ministry will make a recommendation to the conference committee on lay servant ministries for final certification by that committee.

What are the Basic Steps for Recertification every two years?

- Submit an annual report to the charge conference or church council where membership is held and to the conference committee on lay servant ministries, or equivalent structure, giving evidence of satisfactory performance as a certified lay minister.
- Obtain a ministry review by the committee on pastor-parish relations, church council, or charge conference from the congregation of which the individual is a member or, when under assignment, from the committee on pastor-parish relations, charge conference, or supervisory board of the ministry setting in which the person is assigned.
- Complete a lay servant ministries advanced course or approved continuing education event, as defined by the conference committee on lay servant ministries or equivalent structure in the last two years.
- Obtain recommendation for recertification from the district superintendent.

- Have all requirements for recertification reviewed by the conference committee on lay servant ministries, or equivalent structure, for referral to the district committee on ordained ministry for examination of persons who have applied in writing to be renewed as certified lay ministers and to make recommendation for recertification (see 1]666.10). After the district committee on ordained ministry interviews the certified lay minister, the district committee on ordained ministry will make a recommendation to the conference committee on lay servant ministries for final recertification by that committee.