

FAQ on CLM

LEADERSHIP

1. What is a certified lay minister (CLM)?

A Certified Lay Minister is a certified lay servant, certified lay missionary, (or equivalent as defined by his or her central conference), 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 outreach 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. This person enters the certification process, which includes training, support, supervision and accountability while serving in a local church. Certified lay ministry is meant to be longer-term, intentional ministry as part of a ministry team.

2. What does certification mean?

Certification is the process recognized in the United Methodist Church to prepare someone for significant service. In this case, certification provides a layperson with the training, support, supervision and accountability to provide leadership in a congregation or other ministry setting as part of a ministry team and under the supervision of a clergy person.

3. Where do I find this position in the Book of Discipline?

Paragraph 268 explains Certified Lay Minister, requirements and service distinction.

4. How is a CLM different from other recognized ministers?

A CLM is a unique, recognized lay servant in The United Methodist Church. A CLM is intended for missional leadership in churches or other ministry settings as part of a team ministry under the supervision of a clergy person. This category of ministry is actually a part of the historic continuation of lay leadership in our church as a CLM resembles earlier Exhorters, Class Leaders, Lay Preachers, and Missioners.

A CLM is assigned as part of a ministry team and is not appointed. There is to be a supervising clergy person who is appointed to oversee the charge, even if a CLM is serving in a pastoral leadership role within a local congregation. This clergy person provides sacramental authority and ensures provision of sacrament for the congregation including not only the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, but any and all rights and functions under the heading of “ordering of the church” – such as reception of members, weddings, and the like.

Specific distinctions are offered below to explain (not compare) leadership. A CLM is different from...

• ...An Elder?

An Elder is a clergy member of the annual conference ordained to a lifetime ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order and Service. By the authority given in their ordination, they are authorized to preach and teach the Word of God, to provide pastoral care and counsel, to administer the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, and to order the life of the Church for service in mission and ministry. The authority of the elders is not limited to a specific appointment as they are ordained to a lifetime ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order and Service. Elders are also under the guaranteed appointment (placement) of a Bishop and in most cases have completed seminary training.

• ...A Licensed Local Pastor?

A Licensed Local Pastor is a clergy member of the annual conference providing pastoral leadership in a local congregation. They are appointed (placed) by the Bishop for non-itinerant ministry in a local congregation. Their license is tied to their appointment; and when not under appointment, the Licensed Local Pastor reverts

to a lay status. Their training includes attending a Licensing School and completing the Course of Study Program administered through the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

- ...A Certified Lay Speaker?

A Certified Lay Speaker is a certified lay servant (or equivalent as defined by his or her central conference) whose call has been affirmed by the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries or equivalent structure to serve in pulpit supply in accordance and compliance with ¶341.1 of the Book of Discipline. The role of a certified lay speaker is a specific calling for ministry of pulpit supply. The lay speaker has completed a track of study which includes the “Introduction to Lay Ministry: The BASIC Course”, as well as courses on leading worship, leading prayer, discovering spiritual gifts, preaching, United Methodist heritage, and 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 as part of the recertification process. (See par. 267, 2016 BOD)

- ...A Certified Lay Servant?

A certified lay servant is a professing member of a local church or charge, or a baptized participant of a recognized United Methodist collegiate ministry or other United Methodist ministry setting, who desires to serve the Church and who knows and is committed to Scripture and the doctrine, heritage, organization, and life of The United Methodist Church and who has received specific training to witness to the Christian faith through spoken communication, to lead within a church and community, and to provide caring ministry. The certified lay servant serves the local church or charge (or beyond the local church or charge) in ways in which his or her 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 as part of the recertification process. Traditionally, these individuals also speak on Laity Sunday. (See par. 266, 2016 BOD)

5. What attire is appropriate for the CLM to wear during worship?

Since the position of certified lay minister is not a clergy position, the Certified Lay Minister does not have sacramental authority at any time. Appropriate attire would be regular ordinary "go to church" clothes, an alb, or a sash/praise garment. This person provides leadership in a congregation in the work of ministry, but is not considered clergy and should not try to appear as such. Therefore, clergy robe, stole or collar should never be worn.

The CLM should not assume the title "Pastor" or be addressed as “Reverend”.

6. How is the CLM placed for service?

The CLM can be assigned by the Bishop in consultation with the Cabinet (205.4) or by DS (¶) to a congregation to provide preaching, care ministry, program leadership, and witness to the community as part of a mutual ministry team.

7. Who is the CLM accountable to for their leadership?

A supervising clergyperson with equipping gifts is essential to the CLM’s effectiveness. The Mutual Ministry Team, from the local congregation served, is also part of the accountability process.

A local church served by a CLM still has a Pastor Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) and Charge Conference to communicate the CLM’s effectiveness and support.

PROCESS

8. How does a CLM become certified?

One may be recognized by the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries, or equivalent structure, as a certified lay minister after he or she has:

- a) Been certified as a lay servant, lay missionary, (or equivalent as defined by his or her central conference).

- b) Obtained written recommendation from the pastor and the church council or charge conference of the local church in which he or she holds membership.
- c) Completed a track of study for certified lay ministers relevant to the candidate's assignment as defined by the General Board of Discipleship, or the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry in collaboration with the General Board of Discipleship, and the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries or equivalent structure.
- d) Received a letter of recommendation from his/her district superintendent.
- e) Had 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 of persons who have applied in writing to be certified lay ministers and to make recommendation for certification (see ¶666.10). 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.

Recognition as a certified lay minister may be renewed every two years by the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries, or equivalent structure, after the certified lay minister has:

- a) Submitted 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.
- b) Obtained a ministry review by the committee on pastor-parish relations, church council, or charge conference from the congregation of which he or she 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 he or she is assigned.
- c) Completed 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.
- d) Obtained recommendation for recertification from the district superintendent.
- e) Had 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 ¶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.

A certified lay minister may transfer certification to another district or conference upon receipt of a letter from the previous conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries, or equivalent structure, confirming current certification and the completion date of the most recent advanced course taken. Further renewal is in accordance with 268.4. A certified lay minister is not eligible for support by equitable compensation funds or pension funds that are provided for clergy. If a certified lay minister is a lay staff member of a church, circuit or cooperative parish, the local congregation is encouraged to provide compensation and withhold taxes appropriate to a layperson.

TRAINING

9. Where can I get the training to become a certified lay minister?

Training may be offered by your conference or district – check with your Conference Director of Lay Servant Ministries or your District Superintendent for available opportunities. The coursework (4 Modules) is provided by Discipleship Ministries as downloads available for purchase at <http://bookstore.upperroom.org/>. These modules can be used as a group-study with the supervision of a clergy person and the support of a mutual ministry team (key leaders) of the congregation, provided through a lay academy, online through BeADisciple.com or through some

other venue. It is important to check with your conference director on Lay Servant Ministries to determine which type of venue is acceptable in your annual conference.

SUPPORT

10. What are some creative ways to utilize the CLM?

There are many ways that the service of a CLM can enhance the mission of the church. Specifically:

- Serving as a congregational leader in a small church that needs consistent, affordable pastoral care as part of a ministry team with the supervision and support of a clergy person.
- Serving as part of a pastoral ministry team on a larger circuit or parish under the supervision of a lead pastor (appointed Elder or Licensed Local Pastor) to increase the pastoral care in the area.
- Serving as a staff member in a congregation.
- Serving in specialized ministry in a congregation or other ministry setting, such as parish nursing, church planting, children's faith formation, congregational care, men's ministry, small group ministry, etc.

SUPERVISION

11. How is a CLM supervised?

The 2016 Book of Discipline, ¶ 205.4, says that "When a pastoral charge is not able to be served by an ordained or licensed minister, the bishop, upon recommendation of the cabinet, may assign a qualified and trained layperson, lay minister or lay missionary to do the work of ministry in that charge. The layperson is accountable to the district superintendent or another ordained or licensed minister appointed to oversee the charge, who will make provision for sacramental ministry. Upon the bishop's assignment, the layperson will be assigned an additional clergy person as a guide to provide support in the assignment." The supervising clergy person/mentor, therefore, is responsible for:

- Overseeing the pastoral charge in which CLM serves
- Equipping for ministry — Participates in training and/or development of CLM or other assigned e.g. lay missionary
- Providing sacramental ministry in the pastoral charge
- Providing support in the assignment through relational partnering

The supervising clergy person:

- Participates in forming the covenant for ministry within the congregation with CLM and mutual ministry team
- Ensures a collaborative relationship with D.S. for mission and ministry through the CLM and mutual ministry team
- Helps to ensure that the CLM can function in his/her responsibility
- Helps to develop and shape CLM for mission and ministry in a formative relational process

ACCOUNTABILITY

12. How is the CLM placed for service?

The CLM can be assigned by the Bishop in consultation with the Cabinet (205.4) or by DS (¶268) to a congregation 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 outreach ministries as part of a ministry team.

13. Who is the CLM accountable to for their leadership?

A major component to the formation of Certified Lay Ministers is that of accountability. CLMs are accountable to the Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries for overall oversight, to the district superintendent and/or supervising clergy person for service, to the District Committee on Ministry for interview and recommendation of certification, and to the supervisory group within the ministry setting who will conduct a ministry review.