



UNITED METHODIST LAY MINISTRY CERTIFICATIONS

A COMPARISON OF CLS, CLSp & CLM

CATEGORY	 CERTIFIED LAY SERVANT (CLS)	 CERTIFIED LAY SPEAKER (CLSp)	 CERTIFIED LAY MINISTER (CLM)
 Ministry status	Certified laity	Certified laity	Certified laity
 Primary purpose	Equip and strengthen the ministry of the church through leadership, service, and witness	Provide trained lay preaching and worship leadership beyond the local church	Lead and develop congregational ministry under clergy supervision
 Primary setting	Local church	Multiple churches, districts, and conference ministries	Assigned ministry, congregation, cooperative parish, charge, or other ministry setting designated by the District Superintendent
 Book of Discipline	¶266	¶267	¶268
 Credential granted by	Annual Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries	Annual Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries	Annual Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries after DCOM recommendation
 DCOM approval required	✗	✗	✓
 Initial application requirements	Recommendation of the pastor and charge conference (or church council, where applicable)	Active Certified Lay Servant in good standing with recommendation of the pastor and charge conference (or church council)	Active Certified Lay Servant in good standing; recommendation of the pastor and charge conference (or church council); approval by the District Superintendent and recommendation of the DCOM
 Assignment	Serves in local church and beyond as invited or assigned	Serves where requested for preaching and worship leadership	Assigned by the District Superintendent to a ministry team or ministry setting
 Supervision	Pastor and Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries	Pastor, District Superintendent (as applicable), and Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries	Supervising clergy, District Superintendent, and Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries
MINISTRY FUNCTIONS			
 Lead in local church	✓	✓	✓
 Serve beyond local church	✓	✓	✓
 Preach	✓	✓	✓
 Lead worship	✓	✓	✓
 Teach / Lead studies	✓	✓	✓
 Provide pastoral care	✓	✓	✓
 Exercise congregational leadership	Limited	Moderate	✓
 Develop new ministries	✓	✓	✓ (explicitly identified in ¶268)
 Establish new faith communities	May assist	May assist	✓ (explicitly identified in ¶268)
 Administer Baptism & Holy Communion	✗	✗	✗
 Receive members into the church	✗	✗	✗
 Officiate weddings	✗ (not by virtue of certification)	✗ (not by virtue of certification)	✗ (not by virtue of certification)
 Conduct funerals	May participate	May participate	May conduct where permitted by supervising clergy and conference practice, but not by virtue of clergy authority
EDUCATION & EVALUATION			
 Initial educational requirements	Basic Course + one approved advanced course	CLS requirements + Lay Speaker coursework and evaluation	CLS requirements + six CLM Foundation courses + four CLM Module courses
 No. of required courses	2	4 (2 CLS + 2 Lay Speaker)	12 (2 CLS + 6 CLM Foundations + 4 CLM Modules)
 Preaching evaluation	✗	✓	✓
 Completion & evaluation of personal ministry project required for certification	✗	✗	✓
 Continuing educational requirements	Continuing education	Continuing education	Continuing education, ministry review, and biennial recertification
 Credential renewal	Conference renewal requirements	Conference renewal requirements	Biennial recertification



Equipping and empowering laity to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.