

**Handbook
for
Lay Supply Ministers
and
Certified Lay Ministers

2024-2025**



Center for Clergy Excellence
www.vaumc.org/ProfessionalLayMinistries

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for
Lay Supply Ministers and Certified Lay Ministers**

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Lay Supply and Lay Certified Minister's Handbook

The Role of Lay Supply as Defined by the United Methodist Church

The Discipline allows laity to be assigned to a specialized leadership role or as a specialized part of a staff team by the bishop and cabinet. These guidelines recognize the need to clarify the selection process, guidelines and responsibilities, training, support and supervision for lay supply pastors and certified lay ministers.

¶205.4 (2016 Book of Discipline) states *“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 lay person is accountable to the district superintendent or another ordained or licensed minister appointed to oversee the charge, who will make provision for sacramental ministry and provide guidance and mentoring to the layperson assigned. The layperson assigned is also accountable to the policies and procedures of the annual conference where assigned.”*

¶ 268. *Certified Lay Minister*—1. 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 clergyperson. A certified lay minister is assigned by a district superintendent in accordance with ¶ 419.2.

2. The certified lay minister serves 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, or by expanding team ministry in other churches and charges. As with lay ministry in early Methodism, the certified lay minister uses his or her spiritual gifts as evidence of God's grace.

This document includes guidelines on:

- Selection and Requirements of Laity Who Serve as Pastoral Leaders for Congregations, Oversight,
- Responsibilities, Limits of Authority,
- Conference Relationship
- Basic descriptions of United Methodist Sacraments, Polity, and Organization

Section 1.

Requirements for Laity Who Serve as Pastoral Leaders for Congregations

Requirements

A person serving as Lay Supply:

1. According to the Book of Discipline those assigned as Lay Supply, at the end of one year of service, are encouraged to begin the process toward licensing for pastoral ministry or

- certified as a lay minister. Information about licensing as a local pastor can be found on the Conference website: www.vaumc.org
2. Shall obtain a **vaumc email**. Policy dictates that all persons serving on behalf of the Virginia Conference shall have an official email and will use that email for all official conference correspondence. Email CrystalSygeel@vaumc.org to request this email on your behalf.
 3. **Shall be given a profile in the Conference database Unity**. Clergy Excellence will create and update Unity profiles for all Lay Supply serving in the VAUMC.
 4. **Shall create an account in Unity Web**. The primary data base where clergy and conference paperwork is connected to the data base Unity which is called Unity Web. Here, clergy submit their reports as well as process paperwork for Charge Conference. Lay Supply will need to contact ChrisMalak@vaumc.org to obtain credentials for Unity Web.
 5. Shall complete an **expanded background check prior to July 1** of the first of their assignment. Instructions can be found here: <https://vaumc.org/lay-supply/>
 6. Shall complete **Clergy Ethics Training parts I and II prior to July 1** of the first year of their assignment. Instructions can be found here: <https://vaumc.org/lay-supply/>
 - a. The certificate for Part I will automatically be sent to Clergy Excellence
 - b. SY's must send the certificate for Part II to LynHarding@vaumc.org
 7. All Lay Supply and CLM who are assigned to lead churches will participate in their first year of assignment in the following:
 - a. A **Just In Time training** to be scheduled for the last week of June to prepare to be scheduled which is held the first Saturday of June.
 - b. A four-part curriculum which takes place on Mondays in August.
 - i. Afterwards, persons assigned as Lay Supply have the option to participate in a cohort which meets monthly for continuing education, support, and discernment.

Section 2.

Oversight

1. A "sacramental clergy person" is assigned to each church/charge served by lay supply.
2. "Meet the Pastor" meetings are held prior to the assignment. At this meeting, the district superintendent clarifies the position and responsibilities of the person serving as lay supply and the importance of continuing education. The "sacramental clergy person" could be present, if appropriate.
3. Salary is set by the district superintendent in consultation with the local church. Non-ordained Lay Supply are treated as lay employees of the church. If the lay supply pastor is ordained in another denomination but not yet credentialed by the Board of Ordained Ministry, they may be considered clergy for tax purposes only.
4. An annual evaluation will be held with the district superintendent
5. The district superintendent or bishop can remove the person serving as Lay Supply from the position at any time.

Section 3.

Responsibilities, Limits of Authority

1. If assigned as the pastor in charge, the lay supply pastor or certified lay minister assumes some duties of the pastor, including specifically

- a. worship leadership,
 - b. preaching, visitation,
 - c. hospital visitation,
 - d. funerals,
 - e. charge conference reports,
 - f. and teaching.
2. These persons may not preside at the sacraments of Holy Communion or baptism. An ordained clergy person with sacramental authority (active or retired) shall be present to consecrate the elements and preside for communion and to baptize.

However, to further equip Lay Supply in their role, the liturgies for Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Baptism have been adapted and are available here as resources:

- a. [Modified Service of Holy Communion for Lay Ministers/Lay Supply](#)
 - b. [Modified Baptismal Covenant II for Lay Ministers/Lay Supply](#)
3. These persons may not officiate at weddings, even if authorized by the state to do so. Licensed or ordained clergy must be present for a church wedding as well as premarital counseling.

Section 4.

Conference Relationship

1. Note that this is not an appointment, per Judicial Council ruling #890. Lay Supply are used to fill in gaps when they occur, generally short term. The District Superintendent is ultimately the pastor for that church and is totally responsible.
2. In the list of appointments, the conference code SY is used when assigning a Lay Supply pastor to a church/charge or LM if the person is a certified lay minister.
3. According to the VA Conference rules, lay supply and certified lay ministers are members of the District Conference (see Rule VI. C.)
4. Regarding Annual Conference, lay supply and certified lay ministers have neither voice nor vote.
5. All expenses for Just In Time Training, except travel and lodging, are paid by the Conference by way of Ministerial Education Funds.

Section 5.

Additional Resources

1. **Lay Supply Webpage:** Clergy Excellence maintains a webpage for information pertinent to Lay Supply in their roles:
2. **Lay Supply Monthly Cohort:** sessions are held via zoom once a month to provide Lay Supply with opportunities for further education and training, as well as support from colleagues serving in the same way. For more details, contact CrystalSygeel@vaumc.org

Section 6.

Information on Becoming a Certified Lay Minister or Certified Candidate for Licensing or Ordained Ministry

Information on becoming a Certified Lay Minister can be found here: <https://vaumc.org/clm/>
For information on becoming a Certified Candidate for Licensing and/or Ordained Ministry, check here: <https://vaumc.org/clergyexcellence-candidacyforms/>

Section 7.

Who's Who

District Superintendent: Your primary relationship is with your District Superintendent. The District Superintendent is your supervisor.

District Committee on Ordained Ministry: Your primary relationship related to your conference status and recommendation for ministry. The chair of the DCOM is your primary contact.

Center for Clergy Excellence: The conference staff in the Center for Clergy Excellence is available for technical assistance, mentoring, and resourcing. You may reach the staff by email at ClergyExcellence@vaumc.org or visit <https://www.vaumc.org/clergyexcellence> for staff photos and contact information.