

Handbook
for
Lay Supply Ministers
and
Certified Lay Ministers

2021-2022



Center for Clergy Excellence
www.vaumc.org/ProfessionalLayMinistries

Lay Minister's Handbook

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Lay Minister's Handbook

¶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. Upon the Bishop's assignment, the layperson will be assigned an additional clergyperson as a guide to provide support in the assignment. If the assignment is to continue longer than one year, within that year the layperson will begin the process of becoming either a certified lay minister or a certified candidate, thus coming under the care of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry. The layperson assigned is also accountable to the policies and procedures of the annual conference where assigned."

¶ 268.1 (2016 Book of Discipline) states "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"

Thus, 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.

1. Requirements for laity serving as pastoral leaders

See the Guidelines in the appendix of this handbook for more information on rights and responsibilities of the Lay Supply or Certified Lay Minister.

1. A person serving as lay supply must be a certified lay speaker/servant, a certified lay minister, a certified candidate for ministry, or an ordained or licensed clergy from another denomination.
2. A person serving as lay supply shall complete a criminal and sex offender background check.
3. A "sacramental elder" is assigned to each church/charge served by lay supply.
4. Prior to the assignment, an introductory meeting is held between the lay supply and the S/PPRC of the congregation. 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 elder" could be present, if appropriate.
5. Salary is negotiated with the local church and district superintendent. Non-ordained lay supply are treated as lay employees of the church. If the lay supply minister is ordained

in another denomination but not yet credentialed by the Board of Ordained Ministry, they may be considered clergy for tax purposes only.

6. An annual evaluation will be held with the district superintendent.
7. 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.
8. The district superintendent or bishop can remove the person serving as lay supply from the position at any time.
9. According to Cabinet Policy, those assigned as lay supply are encouraged to begin the process toward licensing for pastoral ministry or certified as a lay minister by the end of their first year of assignment. Information about licensing as a local pastor can be found on the Conference website. (www.vaumc.org/ProfessionalLayMinistries).

2. Steps to becoming a Certified Lay Minister

Notify the Chair of your District Committee on Ordained Ministry along with your District Superintendent that you are interested in becoming a Certified Lay Minister. You will be sent an invitation by email to create a UMCARES account online. This website will guide your journey through the process.

1. You must be a certified lay servant or a person with equivalent training (if not a certified lay servant, contact the Center for Clergy Excellence).
2. Upload to your UMCARES account a written statement requesting status as a certified lay minister, including the assignment being requested, your reasons for requesting this status and evidence of how your service in the local church has demonstrated appreciation of the history, polity, doctrine, worship and liturgy of The United Methodist Church
3. Complete the Biographical Form available from your UMCARES account.
4. Complete a VA State Criminal and Sex Offenders Background Check. Instructions available from your UMCARES account.
5. Complete the Expanded Background Check. Instructions available from your UMCARES account.
6. Obtain written recommendation by the pastor of the local church where you hold membership, including verification of a vote of the church council or charge conference supporting your request to be a certified lay minister. This letter is mailed to the district office.
7. Verification of completion of courses relevant to your assignment including preaching and exegesis, the care of the congregation, etc., sent to the district office.
8. Obtain the written recommendation of the District Superintendent, including willingness to assign you to a ministry position as a certified lay minister. This will be uploaded to your UMCARES account.
9. Interview with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.

3. Steps to becoming a Certified Candidate for Licensed or Ordained Ministry

Notify the Chair of your District Committee on Ordained Ministry along with your District Superintendent that you are interested in becoming a Certified Candidate. If you do not already have a UMCARES account, you will be sent an invitation by email to create one. This website will guide your journey through the process.

For an overview of the steps in this journey, see the Becoming a Certified Candidate document in the appendix of this handbook.

If you are a Certified Lay Minister, the forms and background reports submitted toward this status will carry forward toward your admission interview with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry. You will be placed on a new track and may follow the instructions in UMCARES for your next steps.

4. Steps to Obtaining a License as a Local Pastor

In brief:

1. Notify the Chair of your District Committee on Ordained Ministry along with your District Superintendent that you are interested in becoming a Licensed Local Pastor.
2. The “Licensing as a Local Pastor” track will be added to your UMCARES account. You may work on both this track and your Certified Candidate track simultaneously.
3. Submit to UMCARES, the necessary documents toward an interview with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (outlined below);
4. Receive the recommendation of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry for licensing;
5. Complete the studies for the license for pastoral ministry (Licensing School);
6. Be approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry and the executive session of the Annual Conference. (§ 635.2h).

5. Requirements for License as a Local Pastor (see 2016 Book of Discipline, ¶315)

All persons who are not ordained as elders but are appointed to preach, conduct divine worship, and perform the duties of a pastor in a local church shall have a license for pastoral ministry. The Board of Ordained Ministry may recommend to the executive session of the annual conference the licensing of those persons who meet the following requirements:

- a) Complete the requirements for certification as a candidate;
- b) Complete the requirements for the interview for licensing for pastoral ministry as follows:
 1. Submit a sermon video by web link/DVD along with your sermon manuscript.
 - a. When establishing a setting for preaching your sermon, it is not necessary for it to be in a Sunday morning worship service. For example, you can gather friends in a chapel, speak at a mid-week service or a nursing home. But you must preach/speak before an audience.
 - b. Length of the sermon shall be 10 to 15 minutes only.

- c. Candidate may choose any scripture.
- d. In a separate document, respond to the sermon description questions as listed in the UMCARES track.
- e. Submit through UMCARES your written responses to the following questions (minimum of 3 and maximum of 5 pages total for all questions, typed and double spaced):
 - 1. What is the meaning and significance of the Sacraments?
 - 2. Talk about the nature of the Kingdom of God and then use a Biblical parable to illustrate one aspect of the Kingdom.
 - 3. What is your understanding of the Wesleyan concept of divine grace?
 - 4. How will you discern and implement God's vision for your ministry setting?
- c) Interview and be recommended by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry;
- d) Complete the studies for the license as a local pastor (Licensing School) as prescribed and supervised by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.
- e) Be approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry and the executive session of the Annual Conference. (§ 635.2h).

6. Licensing School (see 2016 Book of Discipline, ¶315.2c)

Studies for License as a Local Pastor are a joint enterprise between the District Committee on Ordained Ministry, the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry, and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. The first basic philosophy which informs this program is within the covenant of United Methodist ordained ministers. Full members have a basic and continuing responsibility to work in the preparation of new candidates. They can fulfill that responsibility by sharing practical knowledge and skills for the practice of ministry. The second basic tenet is that persons licensed must exhibit certain basic minimum competencies. Basic to this concept is the fact that these studies are not another hoop through which to jump or a roadblock to be bypassed. They are what the church considers the knowledge/skill components essential to the practice of ministry.

Virginia Conference Licensing School

To be considered for an appointment as a local pastor a person must attend this school. However, the attending of this school does not guarantee an appointment to a local church. The license as a local pastor may be withheld until such time as one is appointed to a charge.

Virginia Conference Licensing School is typically held the third or fourth week of May annually and usually begins on Tuesday morning and concludes the following Tuesday afternoon (8-days). Location is determined annually. For information on the school, contact the Center for Clergy Excellence at ClergyExcellence@vaumc.org, 804-521-1126.

Registration information is distributed through the District Superintendent and the district office. Registration begins March 1 and the deadline for all registrations is May 1 annually. Candidates pay a portion of the tuition, lodging, and meal costs through the registration fee. The Board of Ordained Ministry pays the remainder of the student costs through the Ministerial Education Fund Apportionment. The schedule, required textbooks, and pertinent details are available to

those who have registered. Pre-course work and readings are required prior to Licensing School, so early registration is helpful.

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.

UMCAREsplus: The United Methodist Candidate And Record Entry System (UMCARES) is a secure, web-based record management software program designed by The United Methodist Church. UMCAREsplus is a document sharing tool for active candidates, certified lay ministers, and local pastors as they relate to the DCOM. Required documents, written materials, and forms for each conference relationship are detailed on specific tracks within this system. After viewing the resources at <http://www.vaumc.org/UMCARES>, contact your DCOM Chair for further assistance with this tool. Escalated technical assistance by the Center for Clergy Excellence may be available as necessary.