

Cabinet Practices for Assigning Lay Persons to Serve Churches April 2015

The selection and ministry of lay pastors is an essential part of the work that we do together. In recent years, an increasing number of laypersons are serving pastoral roles. Some are serving at least quarter-time, and receiving at least minimum salary compensation. Some are serving and being paid "less than quarter-time" salaries. Some are serving as an interim, until an appointment can be made. And some lay persons serve in a rotation as part of a team of laypersons offering worship leadership.

1. Lay persons assigned to a pastoral role in the local church are persons whose identity is that of the laity. In the United Methodist Church, laypersons are not under appointment, rather they are considered "assigned" to a local church.

2. Before an assignment can be made, in order to appropriately screen persons, the following requirements shall be met: (A checklist is attached and should be included in file)
 - Been an active participant in a United Methodist Church for one year prior to being assigned.
 - Phone or in-person interview with District Superintendent
 - Letter of reference from candidate's pastor (or Church Council chair if church does not have an appointed pastor)
 - Personal Data Inventory application
 - Complete BOM screening packets (criminal background and credit checks)
 - Conference Safe Sanctuaries Certified
 - Boundaries Training (including the Lewis Center's *Do No Harm* on-line training).

A psychological is required of those assigned, with the exceptions of those serving in a rotation and those serving in assignments expected to last less than 6 months

3. The District Superintendent is the "pastor of record" for all lay persons assigned, and as such is responsible for general supervision. An elder or licensed local pastor (§1205.4) can be assigned by the District Superintendent to carry-out normal patterns of supervision, and provide annual reports to the District Superintendent. Lay pastors serving in a position more than 6 months shall have an annual evaluation conversation, and file a consultation request, with their district superintendent.

4. Superintendents, or an assigned supervising elder or local pastor, provide normal patterns of supervision for churches supplied by a rotation team as if a pastor was appointed.

5. The District Superintendent shall assign an elder, or Licensed Local Pastor who has completed Course of Study, to serve as a lay pastor’s mentor. The mentor will assist with questions about ministry and consecrate elements for the lay pastor to share in his/her assigned church.
6. Laypersons must teach and practice ministry in accordance with the doctrine, polity, and mission of the United Methodist Church as outlined in the current Book of Discipline. This includes, among other things, leading the church to make new disciples and to give 100% to apportionments.
7. Given that lay persons serving a pastoral role are not ordained, commissioned or licensed, they do NOT have sacramental authority. They may not baptize and may not consecrate elements of the Lord’s Supper. They may not legally conduct weddings.

As directed by their District Superintendent, they may distribute/share the elements of communion (bread and cup) that have been recently consecrated through the ministry of an ordained Elder. Under the supervision of an elder, lay persons serving in a pastoral role may assist an elder in the liturgies, prayers and sermons of weddings and baptisms. They are authorized to preach, conduct funerals, and may receive persons into the membership of the church. (NOTE: two sample communion services which a lay person might use are attached).

8. Laypersons assigned to pastoral roles are encouraged to participate in learning opportunities, such as any lay servant ministry class or SCI.
9. The church’s Church Council, upon recommendation of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, shall determine the honorarium and/or reimbursement given to the assigned Lay Minister. Honorarium and reimbursements plans shall be voted upon at the Annual Church or Charge Conference.

This document has been reviewed, and agreed upon by _____, who is being assigned as a lay person to supply the _____ Church; and the District Superintendent of the _____ District.

Layperson Assigned to Local Church

Date

District Superintendent

Date

Process for Lay Supply Assignments

LAY PASTOR _____

DISTRICT _____

Superintendent _____

_____ Active participant for one year in a United Methodist Church _____

_____ Phone or in-person interview with District Superintendent Date: _____

_____ Letter of reference from candidate's pastor received
(or Church Council chair if no appointed pastor) Date: _____

_____ Completed Personal Data Inventory application Date: _____

_____ Submitted BOM screening packet Date: _____

_____ Clean criminal background check Date: _____

_____ Clean credit check Date: _____

_____ Conference Safe Sanctuaries Certified Date: _____

_____ Boundaries Training/Lewis Center's
Do No Harm on-line training Date: _____

Is this person assigned to serve for a period of less than 6 months? _____

If yes, NO further screenings are necessary

If no, see below for one additional screening.

If the answer to the above questions was NO, one additional screening is needed:

_____ Psychological testing taken Date: _____

_____ Report received and reviewed Date: _____

Supervising Elder or Licensed Local Pastor Assigned: _____

Date Assigned

Sample communion liturgy – as you work with an Elder to have elements consecrated

We prepare ourselves to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion, that has been celebrated in our sister congregation(s) (and you might wish to name a particular church where elements were consecrated) around the state, in the last weeks. Let us prepare our hearts to receive what has already been consecrated for us.

O Lord God, it is always right to offer our praise to you.

Holy are you, and blessed is your son Jesus Christ. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

We remember the power of the words the Apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians, Chapter 11...

Paul states.....

²³For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We remember that as this bread was broken and this cup was lifted in our sister congregation, you poured out your spirit, making them the body and blood of Christ for those gathered in that setting and here. In the same manner, we ask that by the outpouring of your Spirit we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.

The leader lifts the bread in silence- then lifts the cup also in silence.

All who seek to lead a new life in Christ are invited to the Lord's Table. Whether or not you are a member of this congregation, we invite you to this feast of God's grace if it is your desire to lead a new life in Christ. Please come.

Sample communion liturgy

Greeting:

Brothers and sisters in Christ, as part of the laity, I cannot officiate at the Sacrament of Holy Communion. However, (Yesterday / Last night), I participated in the Sacrament of Holy Communion at __ (church name) __, where these elements were blessed for our use by ____ Rev. (Name) _____. (This morning) we join in (last night's) fellowship with our extended church family here in the district and all those around the conference this morning who commune together in the presence of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We share as part of the Communion of Saints who Jesus bids to share the bread and cup when we gather together.

Preparation of Hearts:

Let us prepare our hearts for this sharing with a moment of silence. During this time let us become real before Jesus, letting him know our fears, our faults, our joys, our griefs—for Jesus comes to heal, to make us whole, to grace us and fill us by his presence here with us. Let us now go before our God. (Silence)

Lord's Prayer

Please join me now in the Prayer which Jesus taught us.....Our Father.....

Scripture Reading:

Hear now the power of the words the Apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians, Chapter 11...

Paul states.....

²³For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

²⁶For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, let us now proclaim Jesus' death through the sharing from the cup and the eating of the bread.

Invitation:

Everyone here today is welcome to join in celebrating Jesus' presence among us. (*Here you can state the method of receiving (intinction, i.e. dipping the bread into the juice/ tearing a piece of bread, receiving a piece of bread/ taking a cup from the altar/ etc)*) Please come. The table is ready.