

Lay Supply (SY) and Certified Lay Minister (CLM) Guidelines

Guidelines developed by the Florida Conference Office of Clergy Excellence

Background Rationale for Lay Supply 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 or lay minister 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.”

¶ 268.1 (2016 *Book of Discipline*) as quoted on the Discipleship Ministries website states “In order to enhance the quality of ministry to small membership churches, expand team ministry in churches and in deference to an expression of gifts and evidence of God’s grace associated with the lay ministry of early Methodism, the certified lay minister is to be recognized and utilized. The certified lay minister shall preach the Word, provide a care ministry to the congregation, assist in program leadership, and be a witness in the community for the growth, missional and connectional thrust of The United Methodist Church as part of a ministry team with the supervision and support of a clergy person.”
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/clm-resources>

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.

Selection and requirements of laity who serve as pastoral leaders for congregations

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 who is in good standing with their denomination. .
2. A person serving as lay supply shall complete a criminal, sex offender, social security, vehicular and credit background check (instructions available in the district office).
3. A “sacramental elder” is assigned to each church/charge served by lay supply.
4. “Meet the Pastor” meetings are held with the Staff Parish Relations Committee 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 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 pastor is ordained and in good standing 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 Staff a parish Relations Committee and the district superintendent.
7. Note that this is not an appointment, per Judicial Council ruling #890, but an assignment. Lay supply are used to fill in gaps when they occur, generally short term, and not to exceed one year. The District Superintendent is ultimately the pastor for that church and is totally responsible for the charge.
8. The district superintendent or bishop can remove the person serving as lay supply from the position at any time.

9. According to the Book of Discipline ¶ 205.4 and Cabinet Policy, those assigned as lay supply are encouraged to begin the process of becoming a certified lay minister, certified candidate for ministry or licensed for pastoral ministry by the end of their first year of the assignment. Information about certification and licensing as a local pastor can be found on the Conference website.
<https://www.flumc.org/candidacyprocess> or
<https://www.flumc.org/ordainedandlicensedministry>
10. In the list of appointments, the conference code **SY** is used when assigning a lay supply pastor to a church/charge or **CLM** if the person is a certified lay minister
11. Regarding Annual Conference, lay supply and certified lay ministers have neither voice nor vote.

Responsibilities of the Lay Supply or Certified Lay Minister

1. If assigned as the pastor in charge, the lay supply pastor or certified lay minister assumes some duties of the pastor, including specifically worship leadership, preaching, visitation, hospital visitation, funerals, charge conference reports, and teaching.
2. These persons may not preside at the sacraments of Holy Communion or Baptism. An ordained elder (active or retired) shall be present to consecrate the elements and preside for communion and to baptize.
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.