

## Responsibilities of District Superintendent Assignments and Licensed Local Pastors

A **District Superintendent Assignment (DSA)** is a lay person who serves in the local church as an extension of the District Superintendent (DS).

The DSA functions as pastor within the congregation, under the direct supervision of the DS. He or she preaches, teaches, presides at funerals and leads the congregation in other ways as directed by the DS.

A DSA may choose to wear a robe or alb, a clergy collar and a scapular, but not a stole, which is a symbol of ordination.

DSAs are *not* authorized to preside at Holy Communion and Baptism. Therefore they must arrange for an ordained Elder to be present in worship and preside at the communion table or conduct a baptism.

The communion elements may *not* be blessed by an Elder outside the worship experience of the DSA's congregation and then brought to that congregation. This restriction was determined by a Judicial Council ruling (#1109, October 25, 2008) and relates to the United Methodist understanding that the elements are to be used when consecrated, not to be carried to another site as if they had literally become the body and blood of Jesus. See *This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion*.

Please note, however, that this does not exclude "extending the Table" to those who are usually present during worship but are unable to do so because of illness, handicapping conditions, etc.

As with Holy Communion, DSAs must arrange for an ordained Elder to conduct a baptism. All United Methodist baptisms are to be conducted in the presence of the worshipping congregation; there are no "private baptisms."

DSAs are also not authorized to preside at weddings. Although this is allowed by state law, DSAs serve at the direction of the DS and Bishop. Unless they are otherwise directed by the DS or Bishop, they should not preside at a wedding ceremony or sign the marriage license.

**Local Pastors** are clergypersons who, when licensed and appointed, are authorized to serve as the pastor in the congregation(s) to which they are appointed, with sacramental privileges and wedding authority within that parish only.

This means that the Licensed Local Pastor (LLP) may preside at communion, perform baptisms, and preside at weddings in the church building of the congregation to which they have been appointed, as well as off-site when it is for persons connected with his/her parish. This includes church retreats at which the LLP is providing leadership as an extension of his/her appointment.

Examples of the LLP's authority include:

- Presiding at a beach wedding of persons from the LLP's appointed parish

- Conducting the baptism in a river of a young person from the LLP's congregation.

Examples in which the LLP's authority is limited or does not apply include:

- A family member's wedding in a different town. Permission to preside in this situation may be sought through the office of the Bishop and the appropriate judicatory official in the location of the wedding.
- A person from the LLP's congregation wishes to be baptized at a camp at which the LLP is a staff member. The LLP must consult with the DS or Bishop for a determination as to whether the camp qualifies as an extension of the LLP's appointed ministry.

No clergyperson may perform pastoral functions in another's parish without the consent of the resident clergy leader. The DS or Bishop should be consulted in all situations in which there is doubt about the LLP's authority.

Licensed Local Pastors *may*:

- preside at funerals
- wear a robe or alb, a clergy collar and a scapular, but not a stole, which is a symbol of ordination
- use the title is "pastor." In the United Methodist tradition of our area, "Reverend" is used to denote ordained persons.
- participate in the clergy retirement program
- vote as a clergy member at Annual Conference on *most* matters, although not to approve candidates for ordination and not on some constitutional matters. After completion of the Course of Study, Local Pastors may vote on election of clergy delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conference.

LPs *may not*:

preside at communion, baptism or weddings beyond the parish(es) to which they are appointed or for persons unconnected to the ministry of their appointments. This prohibition includes serving as the celebrant for a DSA's congregation.

The authority of the LLP is linked to his/her appointment, as made by the Bishop. When the LLP is not under appointment, no sacramental authority is granted.

An exception is possible for those retired Local Pastors who are given sacramental authority by the DS or Bishop within the parish to which they belong or attend.