Certified Lay Minister (CLM) Process

Michigan Conference
The United Methodist Church

Overview

(Adapted from the Certified Lay Ministry Guidelines 2017, by Discipleship Ministries)

A certified lay minister is called and equipped to preach the Word, conduct public worship, care for the congregation, develop faith communities, lead small groups, or establish community outreach ministries as part of a ministry team with the supervision and support of a clergyperson. Much like a class leader in early Methodism, the certified lay minister enhances the quality of ministry to small-membership churches as part of a 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 expresses their gifts as evidence of God's grace.

Why Do We Have Certified Lay Ministers?

According to ¶268.2 of *The Book of Discipline of The UMC – 2020/2024*, we have certified lay ministers in order 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.
- expand team ministry in other churches or charges.
- use spiritual gifts as evidence of God's grace, as with lay ministry in early Methodism.

What Does a Certified Lay Minister Do?

The Book of Discipline of The UMC – 2020/2024 tells us that a CLM as part of ministry under the supervision and support of a clergyperson:

- conducts public worship,
- cares for the congregation,
- assists in program leadership,
- develops new and existing faith communities,
- preaches the Word,
- leads small groups and
- establishes community outreach ministries.

How Do CLMs Work with a Ministry Team?

A CLM is *not* ordained or licensed clergy under appointment of the bishop. A CLM is a layperson certified for intentional leadership or assigned by the DS to a congregation or ministry. A CLM does not replace clergy — but works with clergy so that the congregation has the leadership necessary for vital mission and ministry. A CLM must be part of a ministry team.

Forming the Ministry Team

A CLM serves as part of a ministry team that should include the DS and/or supervising clergyperson assigned to guide the CLM, and a smaller group of three to five people in the local church referred to as a "mutual ministry team." Together, these people form the support necessary for the CLM to be effective in ministry. They are partners in ministry. The mutual ministry team in the place of assignment develops the ministry covenant together to assure that there is a clear understanding of the expectations of the CLM and other members of the mutual ministry team.

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The content of the ministry covenant captures the important details and basics that guide the ministry in that place. It covers areas such as: a short mission statement or description of the congregation and the purpose or role of the CLM, the congregation's ministry plan, the financial responsibilities to the CLM, ministry assessment and evaluation. For more information on the ministry covenant see Module 1 of the CLM Training Modules (Discipleship Resources). These modules are available through the Upper Room Online Bookstore.

CLMs are accountable to:

- the Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries for overall oversight,
- the District Superintendent and/or supervising clergyperson for service,
- the District Committee on Ministry for interview and recommendation of certification,
- the supervisory group within the ministry setting who will conduct a ministry review.

STEPS TO BECOME A CERTIFIED LAY MINISTER (CLM)

1. It may be helpful to consult with the pastor of your church. A resource could be *The Christian as a Minister: An Exploration into the Meaning of God's Call*, published by GBHEM, found on Cokesbury.com.

2. Be certified as a Lay Servant or lay missioner.

3. Be certified as a Lay Speaker. Which includes: Leading Worship, Leading Prayer, Discovering Spiritual Gifts, Preaching, United Methodist Heritage and United Methodist Polity. (No more than half of the classes can be through beadisciple.com).

4. Complete the course Advanced Course Leading Bible Study.

5. Complete the four module academy courses. See Appendix B of this document, page 6. These may be offered by your district or be a conference offering.

6. Complete conference Protection Policy training and authorization including a background check. More information can be found on the conference Protection Policy webpage.

7. Obtain a letter of recommendation from your pastor.

8. Obtain a letter of recommendation from the Church Council or Church Conference where your church membership is held.

9. Obtain a letter of recommendation from your District Superintendent.

10. Obtain a letter of recommendation from your District Director of Lay Servant Ministries.

11. The CLM applicant submits completed form and recommendations for review by the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries for referral to the district committee on ordained ministry for interview and recommendation. This board will provide their recommendation to the Conference Committee on LSM which has the authority to certify individuals as a CLM.

12. Submit application (form 3) and documentation to the Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries for review and approval.

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Renewal

Certification renewal is required every two years.

Renewal requires the CLM to:

1. submit annual reports and renewal request (form 6) to the church council or church conference and to the Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries giving evidence of satisfactory performance,

2. obtain a ministry review every two years by the committee on pastor/staff parish, church council, church conference or supervisory board of the ministry setting where assigned,

3. complete a lay servant ministries advanced course or approved continuing education in the last two years,

4. obtain recommendation from the District Superintendent,

5. be sure your Protection Policy (Safe Gatherings) approval is up to date (renewal every 3 years),

6. submit renewal form and recommendations to District Committee on Ministry for interview and recommendation,

7. submit completed renewal form and recommendation from District Committee on Ministry recommends to the Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries for final approval of renewal.

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Appendix A – Requirements in ¶268 *The Book of Discipline of The UMC – 2020/2024*.

¶268. Certified Lay Minister—

1. A certified lay minister is a certified lay servant, certified lay missioner, 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.

3. One may be recognized by the conference committee on lay servant ministries, or equivalent structure, as a certified lay minister after he or she has:

    a) been certified as a lay servant, lay missioner, or equivalent as defined by his or her central conference;
    b) obtained written recommendation from the pastor and the church council or charge conference of the local church in which he or she holds membership;
    c) completed a track of study for certified lay ministers relevant to the candidate's assignment as defined by the General Board of Discipleship, or the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry in collaboration with the General Board of Discipleship, and the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries or equivalent structure;
    d) received a letter of recommendation from his or her district superintendent;
    e) had all requirements for certification, including appropriate screening and assessment as defined by the annual conference, reviewed by the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries, or equivalent structure, for referral to the district committee on ordained ministry for examination of persons who have applied in writing to be certified lay ministers and to make recommendation for certification (see ¶ 666.11). After the district committee on ordained ministry interviews the candidate, the district committee on ordained ministry will make a recommendation to the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries for final certification by that committee.

4. Recognition as a certified lay minister may be renewed every two years by the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries, or equivalent structure, after the certified lay minister has:
    a) submitted an annual report to the charge conference or church council where membership is held and to the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries, or equivalent structure, giving evidence of satisfactory performance as a certified lay minister;
    b) obtained a ministry review by the committee on pastor-parish relations, church council, or charge conference from the congregation of which he or she is a member, or when under assignment, from the committee on pastor-parish relations, charge conference, or supervisory board of the ministry setting in which he or she is assigned;
    c) completed a Lay Servant Ministries advanced course or approved continuing education event, as defined by the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries or equivalent structure in the last two years;
    d) obtained recommendation for recertification from the district superintendent;

e) had all requirements for recertification reviewed by the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries, or equivalent structure, for referral to the district committee on ordained ministry for examination of persons who have applied in writing to be renewed as certified lay ministers and to make recommendations for recertification (see ¶ 666.11). After the district committee on ordained ministry interviews the certified lay minister, the district committee on ordained ministry will make a recommendation to the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries for final recertification by that committee.

5. A certified lay minister may transfer certification to another district or conference upon receipt of a letter from the previous conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries, or equivalent structure, confirming current certification and the completion date of the most recent advanced course taken. Further renewal is in accordance with ¶ 268.4.

6. A certified lay minister is not eligible for support by equitable compensation funds or pension funds that are provided for clergy. If a certified lay minister is a lay staff member of a church, circuit or cooperative parish, the local congregation is encouraged to provide compensation and withhold taxes appropriate to a layperson.

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Appendix B
Certified Lay Minister (CLM) Course Materials: https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/clm-courses
Modules 1-4

Discipleship Ministries and The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry have worked together to develop the basic coursework to prepare leaders for this form of ministry. In this case, certification provides a layperson with the training, support, supervision, and accountability needed to lead a congregation that either does not have a traditional clergy appointment or one that is developing team ministry.

Remember: Certification is intended to be an ongoing process, not an end in itself. So, you could honestly say that certification takes a lifetime and begins with a placement!

Where can a person get the training to become a certified lay minister?
The conference or district may offer this training. Those interested are encouraged to check with the district superintendent for available opportunities.

The coursework (4 modules) provided by the Discipleship Ministries as downloads can also be used as a group-study with the supervision of a clergyperson and the support of a mutual ministry team (key leaders) of the congregation being served by the CLM.

Whatever the format chosen, it should include work/interaction with people in the local congregation being served.

The required coursework has four modules:

1. Call and Covenant for Ministry
   Description: Understanding of theology and call for ministry, exploring spiritual gifts, and developing a ministry covenant. Minimum Time: 30 hours
2. The Practice of Ministry
   Description: Four Sections: Leading Worship, Preaching/Sharing Faith, Discipleship Ministries, and Caring for a Congregation. Minimum Time: 8 hours per section
   Additional Resources:
   What Every Teacher Needs to Know
   Faith Sharing Initiative Participant's Guide
3. Organization for Ministry
   Description: Focus on the leader's task of organizing a congregation for mission and ministry. It provides specific guidance on topics central to a congregation's health. Minimum Time: 8 hours
4. Connection for Ministry
   Description: United Methodist theology, practice, and polity are explained with the roles of the local congregation district, conference, and general church. Minimum Time: 8 hours

(Please carefully preview each PDF product description. These products are available only as PDF downloads and are non-discountable, non-refundable and non-returnable.)

(Please note: This coursework is not intended to compare with traditional training, such as certified lay servant schools/courses, licensing school, course of study, or even seminary. It is designed to prepare a CLM for effective pastoral service as part of a ministry team that should include leaders who have completed traditional training or theological education.)

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Appendix C
Comparison of CLM and Licensed Local Pastor
Certified Lay Ministry Guidelines, Jodi Cataldo, Discipleship Ministries - 2017

	CLM	Licensed Local Pastor
Intent of this category of ministry	Fills an ongoing need for congregational leadership as part of a ministry team	Fills an ongoing need for congregational leadership as a clergyperson while under appointment
Training	• CLM Modules 1-4 • 1 Advanced Course every 2 years	• Licensing School • Course of Study
Supervision	• Supervising Clergyperson • Mutual Ministry Team • Conf./District Committee on LSM	District Committee on Ordained Ministry
Support	• Clergy Mentor • Mutual Ministry Team • dCOM • Conf./District Committee on LSM	Clergy Mentor
Accountability	• District Superintendent • Local Church/Ministry Review • Mutual Ministry Team for Covenant • dCOM • Conf./District Committee on LSM • Conf. requirements for background checks and/or psychological assessment • Conf. requirements for Boundaries / Protection Policy Training	• District Superintendent • dCOM • Conf./District Committee on LSM • Candidacy requirements for background checks and psychological assessment • Conf. requirements for Boundaries / Protection Policy Training

Questions should be directed to the Michigan Conference Director of Lay Servant Ministries, Colleen Croxall at ccroxall@emich.edu.