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## **An Invitation to Explore Certified Lay Ministry**

### **Introduction**

The outlook was not good! Most were pessimistic at best. The surrounding community was in serious need of discovering God's love and mercy. That was evident by watching the neighboring residents' daily actions toward one another, as well as in the discovery that others living in the area were in dire need of life's basic necessities. So much to do! How would it all be accomplished, and who could be trained quickly enough to engage in successful ministry?

With a characteristic determination, the ministry leader assigned the assembled group of missionaries their tasks and sent them off two by two into the wilderness of the community at large. Only a short time passed until stories of healings, conversions, and marvelous experiences were shared by the travelers as they returned. Telling changes had become evident in the people of the surrounding communities. God's mission was being accomplished!

Who were these individuals, and who was their leader? Who indeed! This is the story of the first ministry team effort sent by none other than Jesus himself. Jesus responded to the needs in the countryside by sending forth seventy-plus laity to minister in his name. The success of that ministry effort has resounded throughout history!

Hear the Gospel account from Luke 10:1-3a, 17:

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go on your way." ...The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, in your name, even the demons submit to us!"

Does the description of the needs of the communities in the opening paragraph strike a resonant chord within you as you reflect upon the needs of your community? Are you being called to respond to such needs? Does the thought of working in concert with others toward ministry goals excite you?

The Certified Lay Minister (CLM) Candidate Program is a vehicle for engaging dedicated laity and church leaders in valuable service to congregations and communities. The fields of involvement are varied and almost limitless: pastoral guidance for congregations, youth leadership, visitation, evangelism, worship and liturgical leadership, mission field-related programs, covenant discipleship, and study group leadership, to name just a few. The arena of mission and ministry is as diverse as the needs in your specific geographic location. The world is truly in need of discovering God's plan (*missio Dei*) of loving mercy toward it. We need to discover new ways to present it. You are now an important part of a wonderful opportunity!

David Bosch, South African theologian and missions scholar, says the following about salvation and our response to God's work in the world:

The integral character of salvation demands that the scope of the church's mission be more comprehensive than has traditionally been the case. Salvation is as coherent, broad, and deep as the needs and exigencies of human existence. Mission therefore means being involved in the ongoing dialogue between God, who offers his salvation, and the world, which—enmeshed in all kinds of sin—craves that salvation. Mission means being sent to proclaim in deed and word that Christ died and rose for the life of the world, that he lives to transform human lives and to overcome death.

The Certified Lay Minister Program will help you, the candidate, understand God's plan by offering explicit training in biblical concepts accepted by The United Methodist Church and expressed in *The Book of Discipline*. It will explain our common Wesleyan heritage and our response to the world con-

veyed by *The Social Principles*. You will receive guidance and instruction concerning worship practice, preaching skills, faith formation, congregational care, and our connectional structure. The plan for study has been prepared to cover most aspects of ministry to be encountered by a candidate. You, along with the local church mutual ministry team, will consult and covenant with your district superintendent and/or appointed CLM mentor to engage directly in the ministry of a local church family. Under the direction of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry, you will be supported and encouraged in ways that will enhance your ministry effort and experience. A CLM mentor will be appointed to assist you in this endeavor.

The ongoing covenant approach to this program is crucial to the success of the ministry to be carried out by the CLM. It will be necessary for all the above-named groups to work cooperatively and cohesively to ensure this outcome. The attendant-covenanting process will be outlined and clarified for the mutual ministry team, and the covenant will be presented to the congregation for acceptance and approval. The underlying premise of a cooperative sharing of ministry responsibility and intentional covenanting is central, and it draws directly from the scriptural account presented in Luke's Gospel. The team approach to ministry, as authorized by Jesus, conducted relevant ministry and overcame difficulties resulting in success and triumph. May you be able to claim the same success in the name of and for the sake of Jesus!

## **Module One: Call and Covenant for Ministry**

### **Purpose**

To provide a basic overview of the call to ministry, theology, and ordering of ministry in The United Methodist Church; to explain the role of Certified Lay Minister; to support the formation of a Mutual Ministry Team for learning and leading in the congregation; and to develop a ministry covenant to guide mission.

### **Learning Goals**

At the end of this module, the participant will be able to:

- discuss ministry in The United Methodist tradition and its various expressions,
- demonstrate the diverse forms and distinctions of ministry and how they relate,
- describe and discuss spiritual gifts and their use in shared ministry with the church and community, and
- write a mutual ministry covenant and present it to the congregation or ministry setting for acceptance.

### **Facilitator's Guide**

NOTE: The Facilitator may be the CLM mentor or the person teaching the course in a classroom setting.

### **Preparation for Leading This Module**

Read the facilitator and student materials carefully before the session, and make notes about any questions you need answered before the session.

- Pray for each participant about how God will continue to use their lives in ministry
- Select the location and time for the session, and be

sure that all participants know this information. If possible, phone people or send them e-mails welcoming them to the program.

- Gather the materials necessary for the learning time, including:
  - ◆ Bible(s),
  - ◆ *The 2016 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church,*
  - and
  - ◆ Copies of *CLM: Module One* for each participant.
- Invite someone to attend the session who can explain to the group the importance of the ministry covenant and who is able to help local church leaders develop their own agreement to guide mission and ministry.
- Make provisions for group life. Decide how the learning group will share devotions, refreshments, and communications. Try to work as a team, and involve everyone in these tasks. It is recommended that you have a sign-up sheet at the first meeting and let people select when they will serve in each category.
- Option: If time allows, you may invite various guests to attend the session as part of a discussion panel on the ordering of ministry. This panel may include an elder, licensed local pastor, deacon, Certified Lay Servant, Sunday school teacher, and district superintendent. These individuals should be prepared to share their call stories and how they live out their discipleships as leaders in the church today. Allow time for questions and answers. (This activity works well with refreshments.)

**Resources: (For use prior to or during Module 1)**

*Introduction to Lay Ministry: The BASIC Course* (Leader's Guide and Participant's Book), Sandy Zeigler Jackson and Brian Jackson  
*Discover Your Spiritual Gifts* (Leader's Guide), William J. Carter  
*Each One a Minister* (Gifts' Class Participant's Book), William J. Carter

## **Understanding Ministry in The United Methodist Tradition**

**CLM:** Complete the Lay Servant Ministries course, *Introduction to Lay Ministry: The BASIC Course*.

**Facilitator:** Discuss with the CLMs their interpretation of ¶126 and review the categories of Ministry chart found at <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/introduction-to-lay-ministry-the-BASIC-course>

## **Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts Advanced Course**

**CLM:** Complete the Lay Servant Ministries advanced course *Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts*.

**Facilitator:** Review the gifts assessment and be prepared to discuss with the CLMs the definitions of each of the spiritual gifts and how those gifts might be connected to ministry opportunities.

## **Discerning God's Vision for Me As a Ministry Leader**

**Facilitator:** This section encourages the CLMs and the Mutual Ministry Team to look at spiritual gifts as ways God has prepared persons for ministry. Understanding the spiritual gifts of the group will allow its members to work out of their gifts. Therefore, it is important to schedule time with the ministry team to complete this section with the CLMs.

## **Recognizing Ordering for Ministry**

**Facilitator:** As you work with the CLMs in this section, it is important to emphasize that all are called to ministry. In this section, spend time discussing how each category of ministry relates to each other.

**CLM:** As you prepare to complete this section, schedule time to meet with persons in your conference who serve in each of these ministry areas. Your district superintendent or module

leader can help identify persons who will work with you. As you meet with these persons, listen to their call stories, and discuss how they view their ministry roles in the conference. Be attentive to how they relate to the conference's goals and ministry objectives as ordained, licensed, and lay leaders.

### **Process of Certified Lay Ministry**

**CLM:** Read ¶268 in *The 2016 Book of Discipline*. Discuss with your district superintendent, CLM mentor, and Mutual Ministry Team the timeline you will follow to complete the necessary training to become a Certified Lay Minister. Be sure to include this process in your ministry covenant.

### **Ministry Covenant**

**CLM, D.S., CLM mentor, and Mutual Ministry Team:** Working together, develop a covenant that addresses the ministry expectations of the CLM, defines the role of the CLM mentor, and specifies the role of the Mutual Ministry Team in supporting the work of ministry in the church and community. This covenant will also include the basic decisions for worship and sacrament, administrative tasks, connectional life, budget, and learning plan. At the completion of this section, the covenant should be prepared and presented to the congregation or ministry setting for acceptance.

## Participant's Guide

(For use by the Certified Lay Minister, Mutual Ministry Team, and CLM mentor.)

### Understanding Ministry in The United Methodist Tradition

Ministry in The United Methodist Church is defined in *The 2016 Book of Discipline* as “the expression of the mind and mission of Christ by a community of Christians that demonstrates a common life of gratitude and devotion, witness and service, celebration and discipleship” (§126). All Christians are called through their baptism to some form of servanthood. The type of ministry is as diverse as the people being called. A calling from God comes out of the specific understanding one has with God spiritually in response to the gifts given to each in order to relate faithfully to others as Christian disciples. Through this calling, God instructs, encourages, and equips people for service. Scripture is a witness to the many ways God calls persons to fulfill God’s plan for a particular group of people.

#### *Introduction to Lay Ministry*

Complete the "Introduction to Lay Ministry: The BASIC Course" from Lay Servant Ministries.

Discuss with your CLM module facilitator your interpretation of §126 and review the "Categories of Ministry Chart" found at: <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/introduction-to-lay-ministry-the-BASIC-course>.

### ***Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts***

As you begin to discern God's vision for your ministry, it is important to understand what your spiritual gifts are. By understanding how God has gifted you and others in your ministry setting, you will be able to work as a team, utilizing the specific gifts God has given each of you.

Complete the Lay Servant Ministries Advanced Course, *Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts*" and discuss your gifts assessment with your facilitator for this module.

### **Discerning God's Vision for Me As a Ministry Leader**

Ministry is the work of all Christians. One of your essential goals as a Certified Lay Minister is to discern how God is calling you to be part of God's great mission. God has blessed you with specific gifts, talents, and passions. By finding the place where these areas intersect, you are likely to find the unique vision God has for you in ministry.

In the United Methodist Church, people live out God's call to be in specific ministry in many ways. Each ministry is valid and essential to the church. When we look at the church as the body of Christ, we understand that the body is only complete when all of the parts are used to their best potential. The important thing to remember is that God calls and equips each of us for ministry.

### **Recognizing Ordering for Ministry**

Within The United Methodist Church, there is an understanding that there are those, both lay and clergy, who are called to

servant leadership. As mentioned earlier, these callings are evidenced by special gifts and confirm God's grace. While the call to servant leadership is an inward experience, we live out that call in various ways and in specialized ministries in the church. This section will identify these specialized ministries of the church.

### *1. Ordained Ministry*

Ordained ministers are called by God to "interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world and the promise of God for creation" (§137). Within this specialized ministry, there are deacons who are called to ministries of Word and Service, and elders called to ministries of Service, Word, Sacrament, and Order. Traditionally, our ordained clergy have received training at Seminary.

### *2. Licensed Pastoral Ministry*

Licensed Pastoral Ministry consists of persons who are not ordained, but who are licensed to preach, conduct divine worship, and perform the duties of a pastor. The first step toward licensing is attending licensing school. The following individuals attend this school:

- licensed local pastors,
- deacons,
- probationary elders,
- associate members, and
- transferees from other denominations without proper qualification.

Those who intend to become a licensed local pastor continue their training by attending Course of Study classes.

In The United Methodist Church, the bishop appoints our clergy (elders and licensed local pastors) to serve in the capacity of pastoral leader in a congregation.

### 3. Lay Ministry

The work of the laity is essential for effective ministry to happen both in the church and local community and in a ministry setting. As in the other orders for ministry, Lay Ministry consists of persons who are not ordained or appointed but are called to “witness to the Christian faith through spoken communication, to lead within a church and community, and to provide caring ministry.” (§266, 2016 BOD). These persons serve the church in a variety of ways:

- **Certified lay servants** are persons who have completed the *Introduction to Lay Ministry: The BASIC Course* and an advanced Lay Servant Ministries course to become certified. This training may have been received either through district or conference lay servant ministry schools or through a lay academy or institute program approved by the Annual Conference. Certified Lay Servants assist their pastoral leader in the total ministry of the church.
- **Professional lay ministers** are persons professionally trained in a specialized ministry area after completing designated coursework, certified by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and recognized by their Annual Conference. Most of these individuals provide leadership for specialized ministries, such as youth, education, spiritual formation, camping and outdoor ministries, and evangelism. Many are hired as staff of a local church.

These laypersons feel a full-time call to ministry, but do not feel a calling to be ordained. (Note: Clergy may also complete certification classes and can serve as a pastoral staff specialist in their chosen area.)

- **Diaconal ministers** resemble deacons in their focus on bringing together the church and community. Many diaconal ministers are hired as educators in local churches. They have completed foundation studies and have been consecrated for service by a bishop. (Note: This area of ministry has been closed, with no new diaconal ministers consecrated after 2008.)

- **Deaconesses and Home Missioners** are laywomen and laymen who serve as missionaries in a variety of places, both domestic and internationally. They are commissioned workers. Some church and community workers are also deaconesses or home missionaries.
- **Certified lay ministers** are persons who feel a calling to be involved in more intentional ministry as a lay congregational or specialized ministry leader, but do not sense a call to be ordained. In many cases, CLM will be bivocational, deriving their livelihoods outside the congregation and serving in assignments less than full time. These persons also serve in their ministry settings as part of ministry teams that develop a covenant for ministry. Because this is a lay position, this person is not eligible for pension benefits or clergy compensation from the church. The district superintendent, in consultation with the bishop, assigns each CLM to a ministry setting.

### **Process of Certified Lay Ministry**

As you prepare to become a certified lay minister, it is important to take some time to review the necessary information from *The 2016 Book of Discipline*, ¶268.

"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 clergy person." (¶268) .

Certified lay ministers are laypersons, and as such may not consecrate the elements at communion, perform weddings, receive new members, or perform baptisms.

The CLM, however, may perform all of the other duties of a pastoral leader within the ministry setting he or she is assigned. It is important that as a CLM, you consult with your CLM mentor or district superintendent to ensure that there are no state laws that would prohibit you from performing any civil ceremonies such as funerals.

As mentioned earlier, the key support model utilized in churches served by certified lay ministers is the Mutual Ministry Team. The development of the ministry team is to take place in conjunction with the district superintendent working with the church and the CLM to provide a cohesive, comprehensive ministry plan in the church. The team will consist of the following persons:

- Certified lay minister,
- CLM mentor (designated by the district superintendent),
- Lay leader, lay member to the Annual Conference, or lay servant,
- District superintendent or designate (*i.e.*, DCOM member, retired clergy, or someone trusted to support the CLM and process objectively), and
- 3-5 persons from the local church, a member of SPRC/PPRC would be helpful

**Note:** The team should not have more than eight members. Every member must be present for a review of the training process and evaluation. Each member's role is guided by the ministry covenant.

This team will work with the CLM to develop the ministry covenant, assist with general oversight, provide learning support to the CLM, and provide leadership to and participation in the daily ministry of the church. The success of this new form of ministry relies on the ability of this team to regularly meet, plan, and oversee the entire ministry of the congregation or ministry setting.

Your role on the ministry team as the certified lay minister is

to be the team leader. As a leader in your ministry setting in conjunction with your CLM mentor, you need to work with the team to develop a ministry covenant and assist in setting goals for the mutual shared ministry that will occur in the church or other ministry setting.

The CLM mentor is an ordained elder or licensed pastor--this will usually be the supervising pastor of the local church/charge where assigned or the district superintendent. As a member of the team, he or she is responsible for having an ongoing working relationship with both the CLM and the Mutual Ministry Team. It is the role of this person to oversee the sacramental life of the church and consult with the team and CLM in matters of the ministry setting's administration and outreach. This person must meet regularly with the both the Mutual Ministry Team and the CLM.

The pastor parish relations committee members and lay leader are responsible for encouraging the participation of the congregation in this new shared ministry opportunity. These persons, as members of the ministry setting, need to be on the front lines of disseminating information from the team to the congregation and garnering support and participation of the congregation in the day-to-day ministry of the church or ministry setting. Because the CLM is not a traditional pastor, there will be adjustments for the congregation as it makes the transition into a local shared ministry, where each person is claiming and learning to use his or her gift in ministry, instead of expecting the pastor to "do it all." This form of ministry calls forth the very best of our discipleship.

### **The Ministry Covenant**

Throughout Scripture, you will find covenants between God and God's people. The word covenant comes from the Hebrew *berit*, meaning covenant, league, or confederacy. Most likely, this word is derived from an Akkadian root meaning "to fetter."

Covenants have been made between individuals throughout much of history. A covenant is a mutual agreement between individuals or groups of people that sets out rules for shared relationships. The ministry of a certified lay minister is accomplished through shared ministry opportunities. The ministry covenant defines the framework of the shared ministry. It is a

**Covenant Recipe**

- One part love
- One part kindness
- Two parts tolerance
- A dash of the Holy Spirit

Knead together gently using a variety of hands.

Serve as often as possible!

mutual agreement between the certified lay minister and the leaders in the congregation where they are assigned.

Because the certified lay minister is a layperson and, by discipline, is not eligible for clergy compensation or pension, the ministry covenant may set any stipend, mileage reimbursement, or benefits for the certified lay minister. It describes the role each member of the ministry team will have in the ministry setting. The covenant will also include a brief description of the ministry setting, the three or four specific ministry goals, and the expectations of the certified lay minister's duties with and for the church. Since the ministry covenant is the groundwork by which a shared ministry will take place, it is crucial that it be developed immediately upon receiving an assigned CLM.

All persons in leadership need to have methods by which feedback and accountability are effectively monitored. Since the church and the certified lay minister have entered into a shared ministry agreement, the concept of mutual accountability suggests that the certified lay minister and the church establish a process in which each is held accountable for upholding the covenant terms. The Mutual Ministry Team is responsible for ensuring that there is a method of accountability in place. The ministry covenant must address the process by which mutual accountability will be maintained in the ministry setting.

## **Process of Forming a Covenant**

As you begin to develop the ministry covenant, you must remember that it should address all aspects of ministry in the setting in which you are being assigned. Some of the issues include salary, hours, responsibilities for ministry, mileage reimbursement, church's responsibilities for sharing ministry, the membership on Mutual Ministry Team, and a process for mutual accountability and sharing to occur. It should also include the roles and responsibilities of each person on the ministry team.

As the lay minister may be in the process of completing the modules necessary for certification, the ministry covenant should include a plan to assure that the required training is completed and that additional continuing education is sought and undertaken. While this is not an exhaustive list, it does include many of the items that need consideration and should be addressed in the covenant.

The church and lay minister should have first been in conversation with the district superintendent to discuss any prior conversations or agreements made with the church or CLM. Following this initial conversation, the CLM, Mutual Ministry Team, and district superintendent (or designate) should begin with a time of sharing and prayer. If this is the first time the group has met, be sure that you know one another and what brings everyone to the meeting. Consider a brief Bible study on a passage that describes either a covenant, a team, a calling, or the church.

After this time of listening to God, the team should list items relevant to their ministry setting. After compiling the list, the team should begin to write a covenant that addresses the items. (See page 51 for more information on writing a covenant.)

The covenant could take many forms. The design of the final draft may vary in each ministry setting, but it is important to remember that this covenant will be the basis on which the shared ministry will occur. It will also be the basis for completing the congregation's ministry and the CLM evaluations.

Once a draft of the ministry covenant is complete, share the covenant with the congregation or ministry setting for com-

ments or revisions. Let people know how and when the congregation will accept the covenant. Make any revisions necessary before presenting it for acceptance to the congregation at a public event like worship.

The covenant should be signed by the district superintendent, the certified lay minister, and each of the members of the Mutual Ministry Team (including the pastor parish relations chair and lay leader, the CLM mentor, and the chair of the administrative council/board). The covenant should also be reviewed and changed if necessary each year. All necessary persons in the ministry setting should sign the reviewed or revised covenant.

### **Ministry Relationships**

Ministry is always dependent on relationships. This is particularly true when certified lay ministers are working in mutual ministry settings.

These relationships begin with a relationship with the district superintendent. As a person feels God's call to certified lay ministry, he or she needs to meet with the district superintendent to discuss this call and possible settings to live out the call. The district superintendent will suggest possible settings for ministry. Additionally, the district superintendent will meet with congregations and faith communities to ascertain their willingness to be in mutual ministry with a CLM. The superintendent, in consultation with the bishop and the cabinet, will assign the certified lay minister to a local congregation.

Other ministry relationships need to be developed in order for effective shared ministry to occur. The certified lay minister must work and meet with the congregation, SPRC, Mutual Ministry Team, and the CLM mentor at regular intervals to ensure that effective ministry and accountability occur. Additionally, these relationships will support both the development of mission and ministry and the candidate through the process of becoming a certified lay minister.

## Communication

Communication is essential for effective ministry. Communication between the district superintendent and the local ministry setting needs to address the nature of the shared ministry, as well as the expectations for the ministry setting to support and/or reimburse the CLM. A free sharing of information between the Mutual Ministry Team, the CLM, and the congregation needs to be an ongoing priority.

When communication lines break down, effective ministry usually does not occur. As a CLM, you must continually work to ensure that there is two-way communication occurring between those involved in training and in the ministry setting.

Congratulations on completing this first module of training for certified lay ministers. The training is designed not only to give you information that will be necessary for your ministry, but also to encourage growth and discovery in your shared leadership within the church. As you move on to the next module, remember to continue to work on getting to know your Mutual Ministry Team and CLM mentor. Do not be afraid to ask questions, even ones that seem insignificant or trivial. As mentioned earlier, communication is essential for effective ministry!

Philippians 4:13 reminds us that we can “do all things through Christ who strengthens us.” May the God of strength be with you as you continue in the great new opportunity to serve God and the church.

## Biblical Reflections for Module One

### Ephesians 3:14–4:7

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. **I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.** I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, **so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**

Now to him who **by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine**, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beg you to **lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.** There is one body and one Spirit, **just as you were called to the one hope of your calling**, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

**But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift.**

## Reflection Questions

Paul's prayer is offered on bended knee. It is prayer that enables us to hear God's words of direction and act on it. How do you bow your knees in prayer before the Father? (Seek spiritual focus.) How have you heard God's voice in the past? In what ways are you listening for God's voice during this process?

Spend time thinking about the power you receive through the Holy Spirit. How does the power of Christ's love fill you with the fullness of God? How is that love being lived out in your life?

Reread Ephesians 4:1-3. Think about the ways you are living, or can more fully live, a life worthy of your calling. What areas need improvement?

## **Appendix: The Ministry Covenant**

### **Practical Considerations: Developing a Covenant for Congregations with a Certified Lay Minister**

Julia Kuhn Wallace

- 1. What is a ministry covenant?**
- 2. Why is a covenant essential to the CLM process?**
- 3. Who should be involved in developing the covenant?**
- 4. How can people prepare for the covenant session?**
- 5. What should be included in the covenant?**
- 6. How should the covenant be presented for approval by the congregation?**
- 7. What are some ways to help us keep the covenant?**
- 8. When should the covenant be reviewed or revised?**
- 9. What happens if the covenant isn't working?**
- 10. What does a covenant-making session agenda look like?**
- 11. Is there a covenant worksheet to help us get started?**
- 12. Should this document be signed and if so, by whom?**
- 13. What is the role of the district superintendent?**

The early Christians were well known by their love for one another. They were clear on how they came together for ministry, what leadership roles were necessary in the community, and how decisions were made. Acts 2 provides a vivid snapshot of this life together.

Looking carefully at the Bible and through Christian history since the beginning of the church, we learn that ministry covenants have been an important part of a strong faith community life. One can also be a vital part of your ministry today.

Let's look at the practical questions associated with developing a successful ministry covenant. It is our prayer that by following this material, you can have a strong start in ministry together as certified lay ministers and congregations being served by this new leadership form and supported by others associated with the process, including the district superintendent and equipping clergyperson.

### **1. What is a ministry covenant?**

A ministry covenant is simply an agreed promise between people in the congregation, the district superintendent, and those assigned to the Mutual Ministry Team. It explains how they will live their lives in relationship to God and each other. Often confused with a contract (which has legal language and punitive clauses), a covenant is relational and provides an accountable understanding for life together as Christian disciples.

### **2. Why is a covenant essential in the CLM process?**

We believe a ministry covenant is important to anyone serious about being effective in ministry today. It removes the guesswork from understanding what a congregation values and how it operates and makes decisions. It also provides a powerful process for a fresh beginning in ministry.

Because certified lay ministry is a new form of leadership in The United Methodist Church, a ministry covenant helps bring to light expectations and questions early in the process so that they can be clarified and agreed upon. This removes any unintentional conflict that could arise later.

Some congregations seem to go on autopilot—simply repeating what they've always done. This cycle will not work with the assignment of a CLM. This leadership role is different from the ordained or licensed pastors you may have had appointed in the past. For one thing, they must serve as part of a ministry team. This means they are not to “do” ministry for the congregation—they are to be “in ministry” *with* the congregation.

Another reason the covenant is so crucial is because no two congregations are alike, and each church in this process has the opportunity to choose its own pattern for ministry. New leadership presents new opportunities. Taking the time to develop a ministry covenant supports the congregation's task in asking the questions necessary for a good start in this new form of ministry—and to provide the team support necessary for it to work!

(NOTE: It is strongly recommended that every congregation have a ministry covenant when they have a certified lay minister serving within the context of that congregation or other ministry setting.

This unique feature of the CLM resource is essential because at the very heart of this form of ministry is a Mutual Ministry Team that shares a mission locally. There are no solo ministers in the process. The CLM is part of a ministry team. The covenant guides the mission and the ministry.)

### **3. Who should be involved in developing the covenant?**

This is the easy part. Everyone who represents the key partners in this form of ministry should be part of the conversation that shapes this ministry covenant. (Let's be fair about this, however. If you help shape the covenant, then you bear a responsibility for keeping it as you help the congregation live it faithfully.)

It is important to involve the following people in developing the covenant: the CLM(s), four to six leaders from the congregation (including the administrative council chair (or equivalent), lay leader, pastor parish relations chair, finance chair, the district superintendent, the CLM mentor/supervising clergyperson.

This list is not meant to be restrictive, but permissive. Having the right people at the table is important. The group size should be no larger than twelve.

**4. How can people prepare for the covenant session?**

Distribute the following reflection questions before the session as a way of getting people to think about what will be discussed during the meeting. Have people pray for the ministry of the church as they answer these questions for themselves.

1. What has deeply moved you spiritually in your life? What was it in you that responded? Why were you moved? What does this imply for what this congregation might do or for what you might offer to others in the congregation?
2. Why do you attend this church? Why are you here?
3. How has this specific congregation helped you grow faithfully as a disciple of Jesus Christ? What is it you yearn for others to experience through the ministry of this church? Who is being served?
4. If this church were not here, what would be missing in your life? What does that imply for what our congregation should offer others?
5. What do you understand to be the core purpose of this congregation? What is your fundamental purpose or reason for being?
6. What are you neglecting or ignoring as a congregation that might be important to your future life together?
7. Given your answers to the previous questions, what is the leadership model essential for your continued existence? Pastor in charge? Lay ministry team? Visiting pastor? Other? Why? Is there an option that may be more appropriate given your circumstances today?
8. Congregations form around the kinds of promises made to each other and God. What are the basic areas of those promises as you understand them? How do you perceive them to be true?
9. A ministry covenant is essentially a promise given by

the people in the congregation to support ministry relationships between people. How relational is the congregation, really? Should it be more or less relational?

10. What are our perceived needs and hopes of the wider community, and how might this congregation achieve those goals? What do we have to offer others?

## 5. What should be included in the covenant?

The content of the ministry covenant should be short enough to capture the important details and long enough to cover the basics that guide ministry. It should be able to fit on two sheets of paper. Resist the temptation to draft a long, complex document. Keep it simple.

### Consider the following content:

Look over the Covenant Worksheet (page 35) for more detail.

Basically, your covenant should include:

- A short mission statement or description of the congregation (Why do you exist?)
- The purpose of choosing a CLM
- The congregation's ministry plan, consisting of:
  - ◆ Two to three ministry goals
  - ◆ Leadership roles and expectations for the:
    - Certified lay minister
    - CLM mentor/supervising clergy person
    - District superintendent
    - Congregation
    - Mutual Ministry Team
    - Others as necessary
  - ◆ Congregational life and practice with the CLM:

- When worship and sacrament happen
  - Administrative meetings
  - Discipleship
  - Congregational and community care
  - Others as determined
- CLM learning plan
    - ◆ Training
    - ◆ Support
    - ◆ Supervision
    - ◆ Accountability
  - Stewardship
    - ◆ Conference apportionments/mission shares annual contribution
    - ◆ Financial responsibilities to CLM
    - ◆ Local mission
  - Ministry assessment and evaluation
    - ◆ CLM
    - ◆ Mutual Ministry Team
    - ◆ Charge conference

**6. How should the covenant be presented for approval by the congregation?**

It is vitally important that the ministry covenant be developed with the right people participating who represent both the congregation and the connection. The covenant guides the ministry of the church, not just those in ministry!

Once the covenant has been drafted by a smaller group of leaders, it is crucial that members of the congregation

receive it for reflection. Mail, e-mail, or simply distribute copies at gatherings like worship or a fellowship meal. The important thing is to get it to everyone who participates in the life of the church in advance of seeking approval. Offer the opportunity for people to ask questions they may have related to its contents or this new form of ministry. Without this interaction and feedback, the covenant isn't worth the paper it's written on.

After the covenant has been distributed and a time of reflection given, the congregation should have the opportunity to express support or revise it. This may be done in a worship service as part of an offering or at a special meeting. In any case, make this occasion special.

## **7. What are some ways to help us keep the covenant?**

The ministry covenant can be a helpful tool to guide the total ministry of the congregation. It should be placed where people can easily locate and distribute it. Here are some ideas to keep the covenant before the congregation and its leaders:

- ◆ Host an annual celebration, such as a ministry covenant renewal service.
- ◆ Read the covenant together at a church meeting.
- ◆ Offer a study on covenants in the Bible and what they tell you about God, people, and faith. Include a study on your church covenant in this series.
- ◆ Look for a key phrase in the covenant that is important to your church. Place these words on bulleting covers, banners, and displays.
- ◆ Invite different people in the congregation to talk about the various parts of the covenant and why it is important to them.
- ◆ Others?

**8. When should the covenant be reviewed or revised?**

The covenant should be reviewed often. Certainly during the first year, church leaders should keep a copy handy and consult it often.

An annual evaluation of the church's ministry should include an assessment of how well everyone is living out the covenant. This should include the CLM, the congregation, the mentor/supervising clergy, the DS, etc. This conversation should be done in a way that allows everyone to participate in an honest, candid review.

Remember, any changes in the covenant must go through the approval process again.

**9. What happens if the covenant isn't working?**

The covenant probably won't work perfectly at first, especially if this practice is new to the congregation. Difficulties usually arise from people not understanding the covenant or how issues are addressed relationally.

Danger signals to watch for include sharp drops in worship attendance, less leadership participation at church meetings, and increased "mumblings" that indicate unease.

If a simple covenant review and discussion don't help resolve the situation, you may need to revise the covenant for the ministry style appropriate for you.

**10. What does a covenant-making session agenda look like?**

Here is a suggested Covenant Development Workshop, which should last two and a half hours:

- 1. Gathering.** Invite people who are instrumental in the ministry and mission of the church. Welcome them as they arrive.
- 2. Devotion.** Provide a time of centering with one of the biblical stories of covenant. Read the text, and ask people:
  - a. What does this passage tell us about God?

- b. What does it tell us about faithful leaders?
- c. What does it say to us today as disciples living in this place?

Close this study with a time of prayer.

- 3. Explanation.** Explain the purpose of the ministry covenant in this process as a way to support the ministry and mission of the church under the pastoral leadership of a certified lay minister. Stress the importance of clear expectations, responsibilities, and support for the CLM's success at the start of session. Remind people that this form of leadership functions best in a team environment, and the leaders present are an important part of the team.

You may share examples of a ministry covenant, but be sure to let people know that this document has been developed by leaders in another congregation to support mutual ministry.

- 4. Discussion.** Talk about certified lay ministry and its purpose in the life of a church. (Have copies of Paragraph 268 from *The Book of Discipline* ready for people to review.) Explain the importance of a ministry covenant to guide the relationships between the CLM, the Mutual Ministry Team, and the congregation so that mission and ministry happen. Be clear that this covenant does not resemble a wish or task list, but instead accurately reflects the congregation's call to ministry and the relationships necessary for this ministry to happen.
- 5. Expectations.** Surface the group's values on ministry by leading an Achieve-Preserve-Avoid (APA) Exercise (page 50.) Distribute copies of the handout to everyone. Explain that the APA is a way to share those things that are important to the life of the congregation by answering three questions:
- a. In order to be a faithful church, what must we achieve or accomplish together?
  - b. In order to be a faithful church, what must we continue or preserve of our tradition together?

- c. In order to be a faithful church, what must we avoid or not allow to happen here?

Allow time for people to independently answer each question. Encourage them to write at least two responses per question. After people have had enough time, call them back together, and ask each question to the group. List the responses on newsprint.

Do this without judgment. Ask for clarity if you do not understand a response. After you have completed this process for each question, invite the group to look at the APA chart closely.

- ◆ What do our responses say about who we are as a church?
- ◆ What do our responses say about the role of the minister? The leaders? Ourselves?

- 6. Drafting the Covenant.** Distribute copies of the Covenant Worksheet to participants. Review the various sections of the covenant. Answer any questions participants may have. Remind everyone that the covenant is simply a promise about how you will work together as partners in ministry (the CLM, church members, and the district superintendent. Be clear that the group is being asked to shape the content for the congregation to review.

Chose one of the options below to draft your covenant:

- a. Have people in the congregation work on the various parts in advance, and bring their contributions to the session. This allows preparation and involvement.
- b. Have the participants move into small groups and work on various sections, including a description of the church's ministry, the CLM's responsibilities, the congregation's responsibilities, etc. When this has been completed, have a person from each group report on the group's work, and invite reflection. Remember, you are not working for perfection here, but simply including important content.

- c. Name a smaller group to take the brainstorming ideas and write a draft for the group to consider at a later time.

- 7. Appreciation.** Close the meeting with appreciation for everyone's contribution during the session. Ask participants to keep the development of this covenant in prayer as it is refined and presented to the entire congregation. Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the group's accomplishments and its continuing ability to shape the ministry of the church through clear, honest relationships.

After the session, follow up on any assignments given during the meeting. Be clear on who is doing what and by when. If another session is necessary, plan for that meeting. Be sure to get the various parts of the covenant from the appropriate individuals, and compile them into one document for review or revisions.

#### **11. Is there a worksheet to help us get started?**

Yes. It is provided on page 30. Remember these are suggested categories for you to include. You may add other items that you believe will help strengthen the ministry of the church. The important thing here is not the length, but the discussion on ministry support and expectations.

Use the suggested outline as a way to shape your covenant, but also personalize it so it is a true intent of your ministry in the church.

#### **12. Should this document be signed and, if so, by whom?**

The covenant should be signed by the key participants in this ministry: the CLM, the DS, the supervising clergyperson/mentor, and key leaders in the church. Signing the document acknowledges support of the content and acceptance of representational leadership on behalf of the congregation.

**13. What is the role of the district superintendent?**

The involvement of the district superintendent is extremely important to the CLM process. The DS is responsible for naming pastors and their places of service. He or she is the person who officially assigns the certified lay minister to a congregation. As a connectional leader, your DS wants to see your congregation succeed in ministry.

During the certification process, the DS must recommend a person to be a CLM. The DS is also a liaison with the District Committee on Ministry, which interviews and recommends the lay minister for certification by the Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries, or its equivalent.”

## Covenant Development Worksheet

Developing a ministry covenant is an essential task to complete for all congregations utilizing a certified lay minister. This covenant helps guide the CLM, the congregation, and district leaders toward mission and ministry by clarifying pastoral expectations, stating ministry priorities, and deciding leadership support.

Leaders (pastoral, congregational, and connectional) are invited to meet together to consider items related to this “fresh start,” which are crucial to the success of this form of leadership. Use this form to consider the various categories recommended in a ministry covenant. Add any items pertinent to your context. Use language that invites partnership (mutual respect and support), not parenting (telling someone what to do—or else).

### Covenant Categories to Consider

1. **Local Church Statement of Mission.** A brief description of the congregation and its commitment to mission and ministry
2. **Mutual Ministry Team.** The group formed to support the CLM process that includes the CLM, the DS, the CLM mentor/supervising clergy person, and three members of the local congregation
  - a. Role
  - b. Membership
  - c. Meeting/process
3. **Expectations.** Specific responsibilities
  - a. Duties clarified
  - b. Amount of time per week or month
  - c. Learning plan: certification studies and continuing education
  - d. Time away (vacation, learning, etc.)

4. **Review Process.** How to assess this form of ministry annually
  - a. When it is to happen?
  - b. How it to be accomplished?
  - c. Who will be involved?
  - d. What will be assessed?
5. **Financial Support.** The commitment the congregation is making to support the CLM
  - a. Compensation
  - b. Reimbursed expenses
  - c. Benefits
    - i. Use of church house/housing
    - ii. Others as agreed upon
6. **Process for Reconsideration.** Steps to change the ministry covenant as necessary
7. **Closing Statement of Mutual Support and Encouragement**

### **Part One: Local Church Description**

Remind one another of the background of the congregation. Include the forming story, when it was established, its location, its distinctions, and why it exists today (purpose). Write a synopsis of the description and missional purpose of the church in two to three sentences. Be brief.

### **Part Two: Compensation**

Usually, compensation is based on the years of experience and the specific gifts a person brings to a particular job, but certified lay ministry is different from other forms of pastoral leadership. For one thing, CLM is not intended to be a career or a primary job with a salary package. It is a calling from with-

in your church membership or another place near your residence. Therefore, salary is not to be compared to clergy compensation.

Stipendiary support may be important for individuals who travel a distance to your congregation to provide leadership and ministerial service. Use the chart below to calculate fair reimbursement.

**CLM**

Experience (in years)

Current  
Proposed\*

\$ \$

\*Proposed should be less than clergy costs. May include mileage, honoraria, when compensated, etc.

**Mentor/Supervising Clergy**

Experience (in years)

Current  
Proposed

\$ \$

This budget item may be used to assess fair reimbursement of clergy associated with the Mutual Ministry Team. Costs may cover salary if the equipper is the lead pastor in a charge or parish, or they may cover mileage if the clergy drives a distance to be part of the ministry team. Some congregations provide an allowance toward the compensation of the equipper if this person is a special appointment to this style of ministry.

**Note:** These compensation packages should be less than the cost of a traditional pastor model, where compensation usually consists of salary plus housing and utility allowances, as well as Social Security supplements and other support.

**Rationale for Amount**

1. Cost of Living or Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation calculator of the Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, provides the rate of inflation for your area.
2. Conference standards
  - a. Minimum salary level
  - b. Type of leader. Again, a CLM is a lay minister and is not intended to compare to clergy costs.
3. Local church budget. Calculate last year's pastoral salary support or reimbursement.
4. Other
  - a. Hours expected to work
  - b. Distance
  - c. Miscellaneous factors related to location or individual

**Part Three: Reimbursed Expenses**

The following items may be reimbursed:

- a. Mileage/auto allowance. To be reimbursed at the IRS standard rate of reimbursement.
- b. Supplies. Allowance for purchases made for the ministry of the church (office supplies, books, etc). Should include information on how items are approved.
- c. Costs for attending district or conference meetings if required.

**Part Four: Benefits**

- a. Vacation time. The number of Sundays a CLM is not expected to be in service. Name provisions for pulpit supply if necessary.

2. Study leave.
3. Time for training/coursework for \_\_\_ weeks, with an expense allowance of \$\_\_\_\_\_ annually, accumulative for three years.
4. Renewal time. Support for ongoing spiritual development, such as retreats, etc.
5. Contextual items. Considerations made for office space, moving costs, etc., if applicable.

### **Part Five: Annual Review**

The church council will establish a review process annually. Members of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee should be involved in this process, along with the district superintendent, the mentor/supervising clergyperson, and the Mutual Ministry Team. This group should meet with the CLM every twelve months to accomplish the following:

- Review the ministry covenant
- List the congregation's expectations of the CLM and discuss how well he or she is meeting those expectations
- List the CLM's expectations of the congregation and discuss how well it is meeting those expectations
- Discuss the adequacy of compensation/support
- Review the certification (or recertification) progress
- Decide whether to continue or end the covenant relationship.

**Important:** All CLMs are to follow the guidelines for certified lay ministry in their districts and conferences. This includes any additional courses or events required.

## Covenant Worksheet

Ministry Covenant

Between \_\_\_\_\_ (CLM)

And \_\_\_\_\_ (Congregation)

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

### 1. Local Church/Ministry

**Setting Description and Mission** Remind one another of the background of the congregation: the forming story, when it was established, its location, its distinctions, and why you exist today (purpose). Write a synopsis of the description and missional purpose of the local church in two or three sentences. Be brief.

### 2. Members of the Mutual Ministry Team (MMT)

This section clarifies the roles and relationship of this key group. Briefly describe their roles, when they will meet, etc. Name each person specifically with the function they have on the MMT. Be clear about the involvement of the MMT in the certification process, especially training.

#### Membership

- a. CLM
  - i. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. Responsibilities
- b. Mentor/Supervising clergy (assigned by DS)
  - i. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. Responsibilities
- c. District superintendent
  - i. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. Responsibilities
- d. Congregation members (names/roles)

- i. \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_
- iv. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Others as agreed
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Expectations of Certified Lay Minister** This section provides clear, specific responsibilities of the CLMs and what the parameters of their ministry will be.

- a. **Duties clarified, *i.e.***, leading worship, teaching, visitation, etc.
- b. **Amount of time required.** Weekly or monthly service expectations
- c. **Learning plan.** Accomplishing certification studies and continuing education as required by *The Book of Discipline*; define the process, method, and time commitment.
- d. **Time away.** List allowances for time away and how this time will be determined. Include vacation, completing coursework, and emergency situations. Define the procedure for adjusting time (notification, etc.)
- e. **Renewal.** Any provision for retreats, worship, etc.

**4. Congregation’s Support of Certified Lay Ministry**

- a. **Financial support.** The commitment the congregation is making to support the CLM prayerfully, financially, etc.

1. Compensation. Amount of stipend or salary where provided and when disbursed
  2. Reimbursed expenses. List what is allowed as reimbursable expense and how the CLM will be reimbursed.
  3. Benefits. In this section, name anything that the church is offering in support of the CLM beyond stipend. Check with your conference treasurer to be sure that any benefits provided do not negatively affect the CLM's taxes. For example, the CLM's use of the parsonage may be counted as income for tax purposes.
    - i. Use of church housing. If granted, what is covered by the church, and what is the CLM's responsibility?
    - ii. Certification/training costs. Financial support to assist the CLM in getting certified or recertified. Costs may include registration fees, books, mileage, etc.
    - iii. Others as agreed upon
- b. Support of CLM Development.** What will be done, and by whom?
- i. Training
  - ii. Support
  - iii. Supervision
  - iv. Accountability
- c. Stewardship**
- i. Conference apportionments/mission shares annual contribution
  - ii. Financial responsibilities to mentor/supervising clergy person
  - iii. Local mission goal

## 5. Review Process

This section explains how the congregation and the CLM will assess this form of ministry for effectiveness annually. It should include:

- a. When the review is to happen
- b. How it will be accomplished
- c. Who will be involved
- d. What will be assessed
- e. Any plans for improvement
- f. Whether to celebrate mutual accomplishments

## 6. Provision for Covenant Reconsideration

This section provides steps to release and/or change the ministry covenant as necessary. These should include a clear process for amending the covenant so it remains accurate and valid. This section should also include situations that would be cause for dismissal.

## 7. Closing Statement

End with a promise of mutual support and encouragement. Don't forget to mention the words "with God's help." Remember, this covenant is a promise made between partners in ministry before God.

## 8. Signatories

This covenant is agreed to this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_  
in the year \_\_\_\_\_ of our Lord Jesus Christ, as witnessed to by our signatures.

\_\_\_\_\_

Church Council Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_

District Superintendent

**Approvals**

This covenant is supported and approved by the connection (District Committee on Ministry and Conference leadership) on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ in the year \_\_\_\_\_ of our Lord Jesus Christ, as witnessed by the signatures below.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 District Committee  
 on Ministry Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Mentor/Supervising  
 Clergyperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Conference CLM Staff/Leadership

This is to certify that I have received and accepted the terms of this covenant to serve as certified lay minister of \_\_\_\_\_ United Methodist Church. It is understood by me and all parties represented by the above signatories that as the certified lay minister, I will serve as part of a Mutual Ministry Team that includes members of the congregation and an equipping clergyperson assigned to guide my leadership. Further, I will complete the certification process and/or recertification courses and participate in additional events as required by the district superintendent.

As a layperson I understand that I am not ordained with sacramental authority or eligible for clergy compensation or rights.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Certified Lay Minister

Also signed by those covenanting for faithful ministry on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) on behalf of the mission and ministry of \_\_\_\_\_ (congregation).

**Mutual Ministry Team:**

\_\_\_\_\_

Position

\_\_\_\_\_

Position

\_\_\_\_\_

Position

\_\_\_\_\_

Position

\_\_\_\_\_

Lay Leader

\_\_\_\_\_

Staff-Parish Chair

**Other Witnesses:**

**Example of Relationship Covenant  
between  
Covenant Community Church, UMC  
and  
Dottie Lloyd, Certified Lay Minister  
with Sarah Evans, Equipper**

The relationship between a congregation and a certified lay minister (CLM) is guided by *The Book of Discipline, 2016* (§268). The hallmarks of this relationship are respect, collegiality, mutual support, open communication, and commitment to mission. The following covenantal provisions are intended to deepen the relationships of the members of Covenant Community Church (CCC) and its CLM, Dottie Lloyd, by establishing clear ministerial boundaries in the UMC context. To this end, we will:

1. Honor and affirm each other's call to ministry.
2. Encourage authentic relationships with members and friends of CCC to participate fully in the life of this congregation.
3. Welcome Dottie in situations requiring pastoral care and respect Sarah's role when additional pastoral care is required.
4. Treat Dottie as our pastoral leader, seeking her guidance for the well-being of the congregation.
5. Support a clear working relationship between Dottie and Sarah and allow them to work out this arrangement so the ministerial needs of the congregation are appropriately met.
6. Invite Sarah to lead workshops and facilitate other experiences at CCC that require her expertise.
7. Respect Dottie's schedule and leadership limitations and work to share ministry with her, rather than expect her to do ministry for us. For the sake of self-care, Dottie is encouraged not to get too deeply involved in too many CCC activities.
8. Issue an invitation for Sarah to preach at CCC at least four times per year. Dottie will be our regular worship leader.
9. Affirm Dottie's interest in community ministry and urge members and friends of CCC to cultivate a similar interest in and support for our shared ministry.
10. Expect Dottie and Sarah to address questions or issues to each other and not others.
11. Support Dottie's certification process by forming an active Mutual Ministry Team.
12. Review and revise this covenant as necessary.

---

 Dottie Lloyd, CLM

Date

The Rev. Sarah Evans, Supervising Clergy

Date

## **Covenant for Ministry**

Quimbly United Methodist church of Port Only, PA, hereafter Quimbly, and \_\_\_\_\_, as Certified Lay Minister, hereafter CLM, jointly enter into this Covenant for Ministry, effective \_\_\_\_\_. This covenant agreement is subject to the ministerial assignment by our District Superintendent, and acceptance by the Minister.

### **1. Intention**

The intention of this Covenant is to set forth the responsibilities, authority, and obligations of the CLM and of Quimbly to be in ministry together as we seek to grow together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to serve one another and the larger community. We recognize that no matter how carefully this agreement is written and observed, the relationship between Quimbly and the CLM must be grounded in respect, open communication, mutual trust, good faith, and fair process on both sides.

### **2. Commitment to Mission**

Quimbly is committed to offering a place or worship that accepts all people and welcomes them through the grace of God. We will practice the means of grace (worship, study, singing, bible study, Christian conferencing, and fasting), as well as engage in acts of compassion to our neighbors (providing food, clothes, shelter, support, advocate for justice, and resolve conflict). Two Ministry goals in the coming year are:

1. Enhance the quality of worship
2. Participate in the Community Shared Compassion Project

### **3. Duties and Responsibilities**

#### **3.1 Shared Leadership**

The CLM and Quimbly share responsibility for the leadership and ministry of the congregation. Achievement and maintenance of this collaborative relationship will likewise be shared. It is to be a relationship of discovery (of both self and other) in a context of mutuality.

The congregation looks to its CLM for: a) spiritual leadership and initiative, b) assistance in setting and articulating its vision, c) worship leadership, and d) oversight of the missional outreach of the church in collaboration with the Church Council.

#### **3.2 Development of Leadership Goals**

Within the first year of ministry, the CLM, Church Council, and Staff Parish will engage in a retreat for the purpose of sharing leadership, power and responsibility, name goals for the coming year, and a plan for periodic review and renewal of the ministry of the church.

### **3.3 Worship Services**

The CLM will be responsible for worship services on 30 Sundays during the period from September 1 to mid-June, as well as the Christmas Eve and other seasonal services. Services will be planned and carried out in conjunction with the Nurture Committee and the Supervising Clergy person, but the CLM will assume overall responsibility for these services. On some of these services, the CLM may elect to exchange pulpits with another pastor. The services during the remaining 10 Sundays, and during the summer months, will be the responsibility of the congregation under the Supervising Clergy person and the Nurture Committee.

The CLM will strive to honor Quimbly's desire for a diversity of worship service experiences.

### **3.4 Other Obligations**

The CLM will serve members in their needs for pastoral care, including crisis intervention and visitation of the homebound, sick, dying, and bereaved, both directly and in conjunction with Quimbly's own pastoral care program. The CLM will maintain awareness of his/her own limitations and will refer people for professional counseling and other specialized services as appropriate.

In addition, the CLM will provide community services, funeral leadership, and counsel to members of Quimbly without fee or honorarium. When such services are provided to non-members, such fee or honorarium may be set by and is the property of the CLM.

The CLM will provide guidance to the Church Council and other committees to assist them in sharing ministry.

The CLM will collaborate with the Church Council in:

- fostering the growth and quality of the education program for all ages, especially children and youth,
- leading some adult education classes as time permits,
- participating in orientation sessions with new or prospective members,
- contributing regularly to the newsletter, and
- attending all Church Council meetings and submitting an annual written report to the Staff Parish Relations Committee.

The CLM will actively guide Quimbly during all major fundraising activities. Participation will include, but need not be limited to, addressing the financial aspects of ministry from the pulpit.

### **3.5 Relationship to Board of Trustees**

Although the Church Council is responsible for the establishment of goals and policies on behalf of the congregation, it will strive at all times to establish these goals and policies in a

partnership with the CLM. Essential to the well-being of Quimbly is a respectful and harmonious relationship between the Council and the CLM.

The CLM and the Council will share the responsibilities for administration. The CLM will attend and participate in the meetings of the Board, of which he/she is an ex-officio nonvoting member. He/she will have a regular place on the agenda for reporting on ministerial activities, thoughts, and concerns and will submit an annual written report to the Charge Conference.

The CLM's participation in Council meetings is from a special vantage point, for he/she is responsible for the implementation of certain Council decisions and will wish to ensure that these decisions are wise. The CLM needs to express his/her concerns about the relationship between Quimbly's stated mission and its people so that they become vital parts of the Council's consideration. Appropriately, the CLM's participation will vary from an enabler to advocate, from a resource person to an advisor.

### **3.6 Relationship to the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC)**

The purpose of the SPRC is to strengthen and assess the quality of ministry within the congregation by serving as a liaison between the CLM, Council, and the congregation. The CLM will work with the SPRC towards this purpose.

During the first year of the CLM's service, up to four members of the congregation will serve on the Mutual Ministry Team. This group has responsibility for moving through the required coursework for the successful certification of the lay minister.

### **3.7 Relationship to Other Committees**

The CLM is invited to participate as an *ex-officio*, nonvoting member of all committees and task forces created by the Council. The CLM will determine the proper level of involvement in such groups to ensure that ministries of the church are consistent with Quimbly's stated mission and goals.

### **3.8 Relationship to the Community**

The CLM is encouraged to act in the community beyond the congregation on behalf of mission and to inform Quimbly of such action through periodic reports. When the CLM speaks in public and chooses to take a stand on a major issue, he/she must indicate that this stand does not necessarily represent the congregation, unless the Council has otherwise authorized it.

### **3.9 Office Hours and Days Off**

The CLM will determine and communicate office hours or times of availability flexible enough to meet the needs of the congregation. The CLM will maintain a balance between service and rest by establishing time free of all responsibilities and one additional day/month devoted to study and writing. We recognize and encourage the CLM to set reasonable hours for service, as well as self-care.

### **3.10 CLM's Conduct**

The conduct of the CLM will be in accordance with *The Book of Discipline and Social Principles of the United Methodist Church*.

### **3.11 Evaluation of the CLM**

An assessment of the work of the CLM will be conducted annually, following a congregational survey/review with the SPRC. The assessment will be based on this covenant and the ministry goals of the congregation.

## **4. Compensation and Benefits**

### **4.1 Compensation Package**

The congregation will provide to the CLM a Compensation Package of \$12,000 (Total Cost of Ministry), including mileage, reimbursements, and stipendiary costs.

The SPRC will review the CLM's compensation annually in consultation with the Church Council and District Superintendent and will recommend adjustments to the church, taking into consideration such factors as merit in meeting or exceeding expectations, increases in the cost of living, changes in the cost of benefits, and the financial means of Quimbly. Quimbly will consider such recommendations as a part of the normal budgeting process and will act upon them at the annual Charge Conference held for this purpose in the fall.

### **4.2 Annual Leave**

The CLM will be relieved of regular responsibilities and may be absent from the area for a total of eight weeks per year. The CLM will advise the SPRC of scheduled absences and provide contact information at least 30 days in advance. The CLM is expected to be considerate in taking time away and not request holidays such as Christmas or Easter off.

Up to 2 of these weeks will be taken as vacation, anticipating that most will be taken during the summer months. During vacation, should an emergency arise requiring the minister's return, all costs of such return will be borne by Quimbly.

The remaining time will be taken as study leave. The CLM is strongly encouraged to complete certification or maintain an active certificate. During study leave, lay members of the church will cover pastoral responsibilities.

### **4.3 Sick/Disability Leave**

The CLM will continue to receive full compensation during periods of temporary illness or disability, up to 8 days per year. Illnesses of longer duration will need to be addressed.

### **4.4 Family Leave**

The CLM is entitled to a period of up to 6 weeks of family leave in a year. The reasons for taking family leave are: a) to care for the CLM's child after birth, or for adoption of a child 6

years old or younger; b) to care for spouse, son, daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition; c) for a serious health condition that makes the CLM unable to perform his/her job. The Council will determine appropriate compensation or support if available.

Medical complications during or after pregnancy will be treated as a disability under Section 4.3, and not as family leave. The minister will be granted a reasonable time by the SPRC in the event of a death in his/her immediate family, not to exceed 2 weeks of the 6 weeks.

#### **4.5 Death of the Minister**

In the event of the CLM's death, salary and housing benefits will be paid to his/her spouse for 90 days.

#### **4.6 Sabbatical Leave**

The CLM will use sabbatical leave for study, education, writing, meditation, and other forms of religious growth. Sabbatical leave accrues at the rate of one month per year of service, with leave to be taken after five but before seven years of service. The SPRC must approve the dates of the sabbatical plan at least one year in advance. Compensation is set at the discretion of the congregation.

In the event of the CLM's resignation, termination, retirement, or death, unused sabbatical leave is not compensable.

The CLM agrees to serve for at least one year after returning from a sabbatical leave.

The CLM agrees to take no action on ministerial tenure during a sabbatical leave.

#### **4.7 Jury Duty**

The minister will receive leave as necessary to fulfill jury duty and will receive normal compensation and benefits during the period.

### **5. Resignation and Termination**

The term of this covenant is indefinite. It will continue until the CLM provides Quimbly with at least 60 days' notice of intent to resign or retire, or until Quimbly provides the CLM with at least 60 days' notice of intent to dismiss, or until the long-term disability or death of the CLM. In the event of resignation or termination, the CLM will be compensated only for actual service performed. Unused study leave pay and unused professional expense allocation will revert to the Fellowship upon notice of resignation or termination. Unused accrued vacation pay will be negotiated between the Council and the CLM.

#### **5.1 Resignation**

The CLM may resign by sending written notification to the Church Council Chair. Unless withdrawn, the resignation becomes effective on the 60th day following receipt of the notifi-

cation. The CLM and the SPRC may set any other effective termination date by mutual agreement.

**5.2 Termination**

The CLM may be dismissed only by action of Quimbly at a congregational meeting. A decision to dismiss the minister will be by majority vote of all members of the congregation present and eligible to vote at a meeting called for that purpose at which a quorum is present.

Termination becomes effective on the 60th day following the meeting. During the 60-day period, the Church Council will determine the duties and responsibilities of the CLM. The CLM and the SPRC may set any other effective termination date by mutual agreement.

**5.3 Dismissal for Cause**

The CLM may be dismissed with less than 60 days' notice if the CLM is convicted of a felony, has his/her certified ministerial relationship with the UMC terminated or suspended, is found by the Council to have engaged in physically or sexually abusive acts, is found by the Council to have grossly neglected his/her ministerial responsibilities under this agreement, and/or to have engaged in activities that bring Quimbly and/or the UMC into disrepute in the community. In this case, the Council may, at its discretion, immediately suspend the CLM, without pay, and call a congregational meeting for the purpose of voting on termination.

**6. Future Evolution of This Covenant**

The CLM is called by Quimbly for a definite term of service and serves at the will of the Council. This Covenant is not an annual contract, but is a perpetual, evolving agreement as to the terms and conditions of service.

A thorough review of the Covenant for the Ministry will occur annually, guided by Council policies and district requirements, and following a congregational survey and evaluation of the CLM. The terms of this Covenant may be changed with the mutual consent of the CLM and the Council to reflect changes in policies, goals, and actual practice.

This Covenant is subject to the laws of the State of \_\_\_\_\_ and the Discipline of the United Methodist Church. It has been drawn up in the spirit of the Principles and Mission of the United Methodist Church.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

\_\_\_\_\_  
Church Council Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Accepted

\_\_\_\_\_  
Certified Lay Minister

## **Compensation for Ministry**

The Total Cost of Ministry (TCM) includes stipend, weekend housing allowance, mileage, and training expenses. For (year), the TCM shall total \$500/month, on a twelve-month basis.

The specific components of the TCM package are:

- Salary
- Weekend Housing Allowance
- Ministerial Expenses, including mileage, books, subscriptions, office expenses, continuing education, and attendance at required District or Conference meetings or events.

The allocation of the compensation package into the above categories will be completed prior to the call of the CLM. Funds not expended within one category may be allocated to others upon mutual agreement of the CLM and the Council.

Social Security and Medicare payments are to be withheld as a lay staff person of a church or ministry.

Salary and housing allowance will be paid in twelve equal monthly payments on the 15th of each month. Ministerial expenses will be paid promptly upon receipt of expense voucher by the CLM in accordance with our Accountable Reimbursement Plan, developed jointly by the CLM, Church Council Chair, and SPRC Chair. For major expenses over \$100, the Church Treasurer may provide the minister with an advance. This plan will be in compliance with IRS standards.

## **Ministry Review/Evaluation Suggestions for Ministerial Review/Evaluation**

### **To the Quimbly Church Council From District Committee on Ministry**

#### **Date**

The CLM Review and Evaluation responses were gathered and studied by the SPRC during the fall. Based on these replies, the following developed:

- I. Affirm regular evaluation of ministry:
  1. Because the ministry of the CLM is understood as a shared ministry within a ministry team, both the CLM and the congregation will be reviewed annually for ministry accomplishments.
  2. The review of the congregation's ministry should determine what is going well, what needs improvement, and what new goals and directions are emerging in the congregation, as well as how the CLM, church leaders, and congregation can continue to grow together in mutual ministry.
  3. The review of Quimbly's ministries is inclusive of: 1) the CLM, 2) lay leaders, 3) committees, and 4) the congregation, as it ministers to members and the larger community. Ministry is and must be mutual. Therefore, no individual's performance in ministry can be reviewed with fairness apart from the whole. This does not, however, exclude the individual personnel reviews of ministry staff done by the Council.
  4. Evaluation will be done by the congregation's members and friends who identify themselves and should not be done anonymously.
  5. The review process by the congregation should not to be tied to compensation issues.
  6. Feedback from the review/evaluation should be given to the congregational members and friends. Focus needs to be on the positives, as well as negatives.



## **Module One: Call and Covenant for Ministry**

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