

### Section XI. Lay Speaking Ministries

- ¶ 266. Lay Speaking—1. A lay speaker (local church or certified) is a professing member of a local church or charge who is ready and desirous to serve the Church and who is well informed on and committed to the Scriptures and the doctrine, heritage, organization, and life of The United Methodist Church and who has received specific training to develop skills in witnessing to the Christian faith through spoken communication, church and community leadership, and care-giving ministries. An applicant must be active in the support of the local church or charge.
2. Lay speakers are to serve the local church or charge (or beyond the local church or charge) in any way in which their witness or leadership and service inspires the laity to deeper commitment to Christ and more effective discipleship, including the interpretation of the Scriptures, doctrine, organization, and ministries of the church.
3. Through continued study and training a lay speaker should prepare to undertake one or more of the following functions, giving primary attention to service within the local church or charge.
- To take initiative in giving leadership, assistance, and support to the program emphases of the church.
  - To lead meetings for prayer, training, study, and discussion when requested by the pastor, district superintendent, or committee on lay speaking.
  - To conduct, or assist in conducting, services of worship, and present sermons and addresses when requested by the pastor, district superintendent, or committee on lay speaking.
  - To relate to appropriate committees and ministry areas in providing leadership for congregational and community life and fostering care-giving ministries.
  - To assist in the distribution of the elements of Holy Communion whenever celebrated upon request by the pastor of the church of which the lay speaker is a member.
4. Lay speaker training courses shall be those recommended by the General Board of Discipleship or alternates approved by the conference committee on lay speaking. Such training should enable ministries with all language and cultural groups as appropriate.
5. It is recommended that a service of commitment be held for persons recognized as local church or certified lay speakers.
- ¶ 267. Local Church Lay Speaker—1. A candidate may be recognized as a local church lay speaker by the district or conference committee on lay speaking after the candidate has:
- Made application in writing to the appropriate committee and has been recommended by the pastor and the church council or the charge conference of the local church in which membership is held. The district superintendent shall be responsible for reporting the names of applicants to the appropriate committee.
  - Completed the basic course for lay speaking.
2. The local church lay speaker shall serve the local church in which membership is held by witness of the spoken word, vital leadership service, and care-giving ministry (see ¶ 266.3).
3. To maintain status, a report and reapplication with recommendations must be submitted annually and a refresher course approved by the Conference Committee on Lay Speaking Ministries must be completed once in every three years. (see ¶ 247.11).
- ¶ 268. Certified Lay Speaker—1. A candidate may be recognized as a certified lay speaker by the district or conference committee on Lay Speaking Ministries after the candidate has:
- Made application in writing to the appropriate committee and has been recommended by the pastor and the church council or the charge conference of the local church in which he or she holds membership.
  - Completed both basic and one advanced training courses for lay speaking.
  - Had his or her qualifications reviewed and approved by the appropriate committee (see ¶ 258.2 f [9]).
2. The certified lay speaker shall continue to serve the local church in the witness of the spoken word, vital leadership service, and care-giving ministry (see ¶ 266.1). In addition, the certified lay speaker may serve in the district and conference and in local churches other than the local church in which membership is held.
3. Recognition as a certified lay speaker shall be renewed annually by the district or conference committee on Lay Speaking Ministries after the certified lay speaker has:
- Requested in writing the renewal of certification.
  - Submitted an annual report to the charge conference and the committee on Lay Speaking Ministries, giving evidence of the satisfactory performance of lay speaking service.
  - Been recommended for renewal by the pastor and the church council or charge conference.
  - Completed at least once in every three years an advanced course for lay speakers.
- ¶ 269. Transfer of Certification by Certified Lay Speakers—A certified lay speaker who moves may transfer certification to the new district upon receipt of a letter from the previous district's committee on Lay Speaking Ministries confirming current certification and the date of completion of the most recent advanced course taken. Further renewal of certification is in accordance with ¶ 267.