



BOOK OF DOCTRINES & DISCIPLINE

2024 EDITION

Revision Date of January 15, 2025

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

¶ 501. MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH. 1. The church's ministry is derived from the ministry of Christ, who bids all people to receive salvation and follow him as disciples in the way of love. This summons to ministry is to the whole people of God, or laity (*laos*) who are "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession," charged to "declare the praises of him who has called us out of darkness and into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9). Baptism initiates this call to ministry, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

2. With the exception of the offices of bishop and presiding elder, which are reserved for elders, all laity and clergy may serve in various offices. Offices of ministry refer to what followers of Christ do for the general building up of the body of Christ. Offices include, but are not limited to, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, administrators, miracle workers, healers, and helpers (Eph. 4:11–13; 1 Cor. 12:28). The Holy Spirit works in and through a call to ministry and the subsequent discernment and affirmation of that call by the church.

¶ 502. CERTIFIED LAY MINISTERS. 1. A certified lay minister is a professing member of a local congregation who has received special training in Wesleyan doctrine and our denominational polity, and endorsement by the church in order to serve the church as laity. This category encompasses all those who were previously named certified lay servants, certified lay

speakers, certified lay ministers, deaconesses, home missionaries, and lay missionaries. Certified lay ministers may work in any area of the church's ministry, including leading, teaching, proclaiming/preaching, evangelizing, worship, and caring ministry. As laity, a certified lay minister is not subject to the approval or appointment of the bishop or presiding elder, although they may request the lay minister to serve in a ministry capacity outside his or her own local church.

2. *Qualifications.* Persons desiring to be certified lay ministers must fulfill the following qualifications:

(a) Professing member of a local Global Methodist congregation (or its predecessor) for at least two years.

(b) Satisfactory completion of a course in lay ministry, approved by the Ministry and Higher Education Commission, covering the church's doctrine, history, polity, and basic Bible knowledge.

(c) Satisfactory completion of at least one advanced course in lay ministry, approved by the Ministry and Higher Education Commission, on an area of ministry (e.g., preaching, worship leading, caring ministry, etc.). Coursework or training in other settings may be counted to meet this requirement at the discretion of the annual conference board of ministry.

(d) National background check.

(e) Written recommendation by the pastor and endorsement by majority vote of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the charge conference.

(f) Interview and approval by the annual conference board of ministry. A public service of commitment recognizing the certification is recommended.

3. *Renewal of Certification.* Certification for lay ministry may be renewed every three years by the annual conference board of ministry based on the following:

(a) An annual report to the charge conference and annual conference board of ministry outlining what ministry was done during the year and giving evidence of satisfactory performance.

(b) Endorsement by majority vote of the charge conference annually.

(c) Written recommendation for renewal by the pastor.

(d) Completion of an additional national background check every three years.

(e) Satisfactory completion of at least one additional advanced course in lay ministry, approved by the Commission on Ministry, in the last three years.

4. *Conditions of service.*

a. A certified lay minister serves as a volunteer, but an honorarium and expenses for pulpit supply or other specialized ministries outside one's own local church are appropriate. A certified lay minister serving as a lay staff member of a church or other ministry should be equitably compensated for their work.

b. Certification as a lay minister may be transferred to another annual conference if the person relocates. Subsequent renewal in that new annual conference is in accordance with ¶ 502.3.

c. Persons who held active certification in a predecessor denomination shall automatically be received as certified lay ministers in the Global Methodist Church, provided that they have met the requirements of ¶ 502.2b–c through coursework in the predecessor denomination, subscribe to the doctrinal standards and Social Witness of this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, and agree to abide by its discipline. Subsequent renewal is in accordance with ¶ 502.3. Those not meeting the requirements of ¶ 502.2b–c are not certified but may

work toward certification and are not required to repeat coursework they have already completed.

¶ 503. ORDERS OF MINISTRY. Clergy are those who have been called out from among God's people for particular service to his church. A calling from God may take many expressions and come at any age in the life of an individual. Scripture bears witness to both the young (1 Sam. 3) and those who are older (Gen. 12; Ex. 3) being summoned by God into his work, as well as men and women, and those whose encounters with God were sudden and dramatic and those whose call may have been more gradual, naturally unfolding over a period of many years. In addition to those specifically charged with preaching and teaching (1 Peter 5:1-4), the early church also set apart seven disciples who were "full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom" to distribute food to the widows among them (Acts 6:1-6). Individuals such as Stephen, Phoebe, and Timothy served in various ways to benefit the people of God. Whether a deacon or elder, all clergy are required to live lives of integrity and self-control as they hold fast to the mystery of faith (1 Tim. 3:1-13).

Following the historic practice of Methodism, those who serve as clergy within the Global Methodist Church shall be both elected by their peers and ordained by the bishop on behalf of the whole church. Election is the action by which the clergy of an annual conference, after carefully examining the qualifications, abilities, and readiness of a candidate for ministry, incorporate individuals into the membership of the covenant fellowship of those called to serve the church. Election carries with it the right to vote and participate in the business of an annual conference provided the person is under appointment or senior clergy who meet the qualifications of ¶ 520. Under the provisions of ¶ 521.2a, transitional