Ministerial Training Process

Table of Contents

Ministerial Training in the Great Lakes Region................................................................. 2
Overview of the Ministerial Training Process ..................................................................... 3
Lay Minister ........................................................................................................................... 4
Licensed Minister ............................................................................................................... 7
Ordained Minister .............................................................................................................. 12
Additional Resources ....................................................................................................... 14
Ministerial Training in the Great Lakes Region

“Equipping churches and leaders for multiplication until there is a transforming presence for Christ in every zip code.”

In response to the above vision of the Great Lakes Region (GLR), the Regional Board of Ministerial Development (RBMD) has developed a ministerial training process which involves the Local Church, Region, and Denomination in the process of raising up and training a growing number of dedicated ministers. Our goal is to faithfully prepare leaders who will strategically lead ministries that share the gospel message of Christ in seeking to reach and disciple the 22 million unchurched people who live in the Great Lakes area.

Previous methods of ministerial training, which frequently involved classroom training apart from the ministry context, will no longer provide the numbers of committed and passionate leaders needed in order to make a transforming presence for Christ in every zip code a realistic vision. Studies show that less than 30% of churches have a plan to develop staff members, let alone their volunteers. For volunteers, it is even less, only 1 in 4 churches have any type of plan. As church leaders, we need to refocus our call. Todd Adkins states, “Our call as church leaders is to provide our people with a map for their development, not just a menu of ministry opportunities.” This is a task that will require the collaboration and cooperation of the Local Church, the Region, and the Denomination if we are to reach our full potential.

The RBMD ministerial training process provides a pathway to navigate through a system of developmental strategies preparing leaders to serve at various levels of ministry within the Local Church context, the Region, and the Denomination. The goal is to help facilitate the appropriate credentialing of leaders that will enable them to thrive in ministry as it considers their current context in life and their vocational calling. In order to facilitate a multi-layered ministry training process while maintaining a high degree of competency and experience among ministers, the RBMD is implementing a three-stage process of ministerial training that includes the Local Church, Region, and Denomination in the training of ministers. The following information explains the process of ministerial training using the multi-layered approach utilizing various levels of service in the GLR as well as provides a guideline for how the Local Church, the Region, and the Denomination will collaborate together in this task.
Overview of the Ministerial Training Process

The Great Lakes Region recognizes three levels of credentialing for those who serve in pastoral ministry based upon ministry focus, level of competency, and who is providing the primary oversight of training and appointment. The levels include Lay Minister (LA), Licensed Minister (LM) and Ordained Minister (OM).

**Local Church**

Lay Minister LA

**Region**

Licensed Minister LM

**Denomination**

Ordained Minister OM

*Lay Minister* — Individuals who sense a call to ministry service and begin serving in the Local Church may have their calling and giftedness for ministry officially recognized by their Local Church in becoming a Lay Minister. Lay Ministers may serve as a lay pastors, lay staff pastors, or Lay Minister students pursuing vocational training for ministry. Lay Ministers who complete the required coursework and are approved by their Local Church may remain as Lay Ministers as long as they are serving in their Local Church.

*Licensed Minister* — Individuals who complete the educational requirements for appointment as a Licensed Minister and are recommended by their Local Church are ready for appointment by the Region as a Licensed Minister. These credentials may be granted in the process of moving towards ordination or may be granted on a more permanent basis as a Licensed Ministry.

*Ordained Minister* — Individuals who have demonstrated the gifts, experiences, and competencies required of someone who is called to the service of Christ and the Wesleyan Church may be ordained by the Denomination. Upon ordination they are fully vested with all the privileges and responsibilities of the Christian ministry in The Wesleyan Church.
Lay Ministers in the GLR serve under the authority and leadership of their Local Church who provides credentials as a Lay Minister. They may serve as a Lay pastor, lay assistant pastor, or a Lay Minister student preparing for vocational ministry. Lay Ministers meet with their local pastor and LBA on an annual basis as they begin their educational training for ministry. They receive mentoring from their Local Church as they serve in ministry and begin to develop some of the ministerial competencies expected of one who is a minister.

Lay Ministers are encouraged to register with the Department of Education and Clergy Development. This provides the opportunity for access to resources for those who are preparing for ministry. In addition, the Dept of Education and Clergy Development must certify education in order for Lay Ministers to move to the next level. Lay Ministers are also encouraged to register with the RBMD. This allows the Lay Minister to be listed in the Region as a Lay Minister as well as to receive information regarding training events and opportunities available for ministers.

When Lay Ministers complete the necessary educational requirements and are certified for Licensing, they may be recommended by their LBA for appointment as a Licensed Minister by the GLR. After such appointment, they will come under the oversight of the RBMD.

**Becoming a Lay Minister**

The following process reflects the steps involved in becoming a Lay Minister. A person becomes a Lay Minister in the process of moving through ministerial training to become a Licensed Minister. A person may also remain a Lay Minister if the necessary courses are completed and the Local Church continues to appoint one to that position.

- *Respond to God’s “call.”* When a person senses God’s calling to ministry, he/she is encouraged to discuss the call with the pastor. As the pastor provides guidance, the individual may be affirmed to move forward in the process of becoming a Lay Minister.
• **Discipleship Training and Church membership.** The initial level of training for those who desire to be a Lay Minister is the discipleship training of the Local Church. Here the Lay Minister will learn the basics of Christian living and serving in Christian ministry. Lay Ministers must become members of the Local Church meeting the requirements for leaders before they are ready to interview with the Local Board of Administration and be recommended as a Lay Minister.

• **Affirmed by Pastor and Local Board of Administration (LBA).** After an individual has discussed the sense of call to ministry with the pastor and been approved as a member of the church, then he/she may meet with the Local Board of Administration (or similar leadership oversight board). In this meeting the LBA will review the following:
  a. Salvation experience and desire to continue to grow in grace through ongoing practices of spiritual discipline and appropriate mentoring and accountability relationships.
  b. Testimony of call to ministry.
  c. Agreement to engage in ministerial preparation as a Lay Minister and serve in ministry within the Local Church.
  d. Potential for developing the spiritual, emotional, and leadership competencies that would be expected of one serving in a position as a Lay Minister.

Upon approval of the pastor and the LBA, an individual may become a Lay Minister.

In addition to receiving the recommendation of the LBA and the pastor, a Lay Minister must also complete the next two steps:

• Register with the GLR and pass a Criminal Background Check and Credit History Check provided by the Region. Lay Minister candidates may register at: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Background-CreditChecks](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Background-CreditChecks).

• Register with the Department of Education and Clergy Development (recommended for those serving as a Lay Minister, required for those desiring to move forward to become Licensed Ministers). Lay Ministers and Lay Minister students may enroll at: [https://secure.wesleyan.org/em/enroll](https://secure.wesleyan.org/em/enroll). Select the “Pre-ordination” enrollment track if they plan to pursue becoming a Licensed or Ordained Minister. Otherwise they should select the “Lay Minister” option. This track option may be changed later should the situation warrant it.

Upon completion of the above steps a person will be listed as a Lay Minister both in the Local Church and in the Region. Being listed as a Lay Minister is the beginning of the process. As a Lay Minister it is expected that the following ongoing steps will be completed:

• Complete the academic competencies required of one who is serving as a Lay Minister (see list of classes below). Lay Ministers are expected to complete two class per year in order to continue to be listed by the GLR as a Lay Minister. When a Lay Minister has met the five classes required for continued appointment as a Lay Minister, he/she may remain at that level as long as he/she is serving in the Local Church which made the appointment. Lay Minister credentials can not be transferred from one church to another.
• Continuing to meet with pastor and mentors for ongoing leadership development and training.
• Meeting annually with LBA to renew credentials. The Local Church must recommend annually to the GLR each candidate they are recommending for continued listing as a Lay Minister.

Lay Minister Requirements (LA)

The following academic requirements shall be certified by Education and Clergy Development either through the completion of education or the completion of educational competency formats. Information regarding educational opportunities for completing these classes is available at: https://www.wesleyan.org/Education and Clergy Development/pathways-to-ministry.

The Academic requirements for a Lay Minister are:

- Wesleyan History/Discipline
- Introduction to Theology
- Introduction to New Testament
- Introduction to Homiletics
- Church Leadership/Management

The Department of Education and Clergy Development and the RBMD may develop additional ministry skill competencies for Lay Ministers. As these become available, Lay Ministers will have opportunity to engage in this training as well.

Lay Ministers may be appointed to the following categories of service:
    Lay Minister Student: LA-ST
    Lay Minister Pastor: LA-LP
    Lay Minister Assistant Pastor: LA-A1

Those serving as a Lay Minister Pastor (LA-LP) may be authorized to officiate the sacraments and have voting rights as clergy at District Conference. Lay Minister Assistant Pastors/Students do not have these same privileges. Lay Minister Pastors/Assistant Pastors/Students are not authorized to officiate weddings nor do they typically qualify for tax benefits provided for clergy. Information regarding taxes should be discussed with a competent tax professional.

Lay Ministers who desire to move to the level of Licensed Minister must also complete “Introduction to the Old Testament” in addition to meeting other requirements in order to be appointed by the GLR as a Licensed Minister. Lay Ministers who have completed the five classes required for ongoing appointment as a Lay Minister and continue to be recommended by their Local Church may continue to be appointed as a Lay Minister Pastor or Lay Minister Assistant Pastor.
Licensed Ministers in the GLR remain accountable to their pastor and Local Church and are recommended for appointment as a Licensed Minister to the Region. Licensed Ministers may be appointed to several different categories of ministry both within the local church and serving in parachurch ministries. They may also serve as missionaries, chaplains, and in regional or denominational leadership. They continue to receive mentoring from their pastor and local church while serving in ministry. In addition, they must meet with the RBMD and complete annual reports. Licensed Ministers who are pursuing ordination may be recommended for ordination once they have completed the educational and experiential requirements. Licensed Ministers who complete the necessary coursework may be appointed as a Licensed Minister on an ongoing basis as long as they continue to serve in a category of appointment as a Licensed Minister. Licensed Ministers may transfer to other Wesleyan Churches and Districts. They may not be appointed as retired, on reserve, or without appointment. Persons may also transfer to the Wesleyan Church from another church or denomination as a Licensed Minister.

**Becoming a Licensed Minister**

In order to be appointed as a Licensed Minister in the GLR, a person must complete the following:

- Be certified by the Department of Education and Clergy Development that the necessary courses have been completed for appointment as a Licensed Minister. It is the individual’s responsibility to be aware of the courses required, see that course grades are posted at the Department of Education and Clergy Development, and track his/her progress towards fulfilling the educational requirements. The Department of Education and Clergy Development has developed a portal for students to track their progress and review their transcript. Information regarding submitting transcripts and accessing the portal are available at: [https://www.wesleyan.org/Education and Clergy Development/ministerial-preparation](https://www.wesleyan.org/Education and Clergy Development/ministerial-preparation). When students are certified as completing the coursework required for appointment as a Licensed Minister they are notified via email by the Department of Education and Clergy Development.
• Receive a recommendation from the LBA of his/her Local Church (Church which holds candidate’s membership) for appointment as a Licensed Minister. Information is provided by the RBMD for assisting the pastor and LBA in requesting such an appointment. Please contact the RBMD for more information.
• Interview with a member of the RBMD for a recommendation to the GLR for appointment as a Licensed Minister. When the RBMD receives a notice of certification of completion of the courses for appointment as a Licensed Minister by the Department of Education and Clergy Development and the request for appointment by the student’s LBA or pastor, a member of the RBMD will contact the student to schedule an interview. The purpose of the interview is to review the Licensed Minister candidate’s
  a. spiritual journey,
  b. call to ministry,
  c. ministry experience, and
  d. alignment with the Wesleyan Church and the GLR as it relates to Articles of Religion, Leadership expectations, social and convictional values of the Wesleyan Church and the GLR.
• Completion of a Criminal Background Check and Credit Check through the GLR office, of one has not been completed by the Region within the previous three years.
• Signing of covenant to serve under appointment as a Licensed Minister in the GLR.

Once the above steps have been completed, the Licensed Minister candidate will be recommended to the GLR Board of Administration or the Regional Conference for official appointment as a Licensed Minister.

Upon recommendation of the RBMD, a Licensed Minister candidate may enjoy the following privileges of appointment as a Licensed Minister:

• Counting service in meeting the experiential requirements for ordination.
• Serving the sacraments.
• Receiving a Housing Allowance, if the position is one for which a Housing Allowance is applicable and if the Licensed Minister will be recommended by the GLR Board of Administration or the GLR Conference in the same calendar year in which the RBMD recommends for appointment as a Licensed Minister.

Upon approval of the GLR Board of Administration or the GLR Conference, the Licensed Minister may enjoy all of the privileges of a Licensed Minister and receive pocket credentials from the GLR indicating appointment as a Licensed Minister.

Licensed Minister Requirements (LM)

The following academic requirements must be certified by the Department of Education and Clergy Development in order for someone to be initially appointed as a Licensed Minister.
The following additional academic requirements must be certified by the Department of Education and Clergy Development in order for someone who does not desire to pursue ordination to continue to be appointed as a Licensed Minister. The additional courses must be completed within three years of appointment as a Licensed Minister.

- Methods of Bible Study
- Doctrine of Holiness
- Evangelism/Church Health
- Spiritual Formation

Any two of the following:

- General Church History
- Advanced Theology
- Christian Education
- Global and Intercultural Ministries
- Pastoral Ministries
- Worship
- Expository Preaching
- Pastoral Counseling

The Department of Education and Clergy Development or the RBMD may develop additional ministry skill competencies and assessments for Licensed Ministers. As these become available, Licensed Minister will have opportunity to engage in this training as well.

Licensed Ministers may be appointed to any one of the following categories:

**Pastor and Local Church Service**
- Solo, senior, or lead pastor (PA or PM)
- Assistant pastor (A1)
- Staff pastor—Christian Education (CE)
- Staff pastor—Children’s Minister (CM)
- Staff pastor—Evangelism (EV)
- Staff pastor—Administration (MA)
- Staff pastor—Music (MS)
- Staff pastor—Pastoral Care (PC)
- Staff pastor—Visitation (VI)
- Staff pastor—Youth (YP)

Other Service
- District Ministry (MD)
- Reserve General Evangelist (RE)
- Missionary (MI)
- Chaplain (CH)
- Employed by World Headquarters (IS)
- Interchurch Service (IC)
- Other Service (OS)

In order for Licensed Ministers to meet ordination requirements they must serve a minimum of two years full-time (one-year full time for those with a Masters’ Degree in a Field of Divinity Study) appointed as a Licensed Minister. Candidates may document service experience either by serving in a full-time capacity (30 hours or more per week), serving in a part-time capacity (15-29 hours per week) or maintaining a contemporaneous log of service. The log of service must document that 4,000 hours are served, the kind of ministry provided while serving, and be signed by student’s Supervisor. Time spent completing educational requirements for ordination should not be included in the log of hours served.

Licensed Minister Service must be in a level of leadership comparable to someone who is a director of ministry or serving as a staff pastor. This would include responsibility for or experience in the following aspects of ministry:

- Planning and administration of ministry including understanding of financial policies and procedures.
- Recruitment, training, and oversight of volunteers and/or paid staff.
- Constituency and crisis care.
- Outreach and evangelism.
- Teaching and/or preaching.

If these responsibilities are not included in the Licensed Minister's job expectations, it is expected that the Licensed Minister and supervisor will find opportunities for the Licensed Minister to gain some level of experience in these areas. Candidates may be asked to serve more than the minimum requirements if their level of service does not enable them to gain the level of exposure to the variety of ministry experiences expected by the RBMD for recommendation for ordination.

Licensed Ministers are expected to complete the following on an annual basis:

- Complete a minimum of two classes per year towards the academic requirements for ordination or appointment in an ongoing basis as a Licensed Minister. Failure to complete two classes per year may result in reassignment as a Lay Minister until course work is caught up.
- Annual Service Report (ASR). Instructions for completing this form are emailed to each Licensed Minister in the Spring of the year. It is the Licensed Minister's responsibility to
keep the RBMD informed of current email addresses. Failure to complete the ASR on a timely basis will result in reassignment as a Lay Minister until the ASR is filed.

- Meet with the RBMD. Information regarding meetings will be emailed by the RBMD in the Spring of the year. Failure to meet with the RBMD may result in reassignment as a Lay Minister.
- Receive a recommendation from the LBA of the Local Church where the Licensed Minister is a member for continued appointment as a Licensed Minister.
- Receive a recommendation from the RBMD to the GLR Conference for continued appointment as a Licensed Minister.

Licensed Minister Privileges (Upon appointment by GLR Board of Administration or Conference, Discipline 3044)

- Preach the Gospel.
- When appointed as a pastor or full-time associate or assistant pastor of a Wesleyan Church may administer baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and officiate at weddings depending upon legal requirements of local laws.
- Appointed by the GLR Conference and is considered either as a voting or non-voting clergy delegate based upon service category as defined in The Discipline.
- Transfer from one district to another in The Wesleyan Church.

Licensed Ministers who desire to remain appointed as a Licensed Minister must complete the twelve courses identified above within three years of first being appointed as a Licensed Minister. In order to continue in the appointment as a Licensed Minister, they must also complete the following on an annual basis:

- Annual Service Report (ASR). Instructions for completing this form are emailed to each Licensed Minister in the Spring of the year. It is the Licensed Minister’s responsibility to keep the RBMD informed of current email addresses. Failure to complete the ASR on a timely basis in two consecutive years will result in loss of credentials.
- Serve in a category of appointment as a Licensed Minister and receive a recommendation from the LBA of the Local Church where the Licensed Minister is a member for continued appointment as a Licensed Minister. Failure to serve in a category of appointment or receive a recommendation for continue appointment will result in loss of credentials.

Licensed Ministers who desire to pursue ordination in The Wesleyan Church must be certified as completing the academic requirements and must complete the experiential requirements for ordination within seven years of first being appointed as a Licensed Minister.
Ordained Ministers in The Wesleyan Church remain accountable to their pastor and Local Church and receive appointment through the Great Lakes Region Conference. Their credentials, however, are recognized at the denominational level and allow them all the rights and privileges of Christian ministry in The Wesleyan Church. Ordained Ministers may transfer from one district to another and may hold office at any level in The Wesleyan Church for which ordained ministers qualify. Ministers who are ordained in another church or denomination may transfer that ordination into the Wesleyan Church.

In order to be ordained as a Wesleyan Pastor a person must complete the following:

- Membership within a Wesleyan Church in the GLR.
- Certification by the Department of Education and Clergy Development that the academic requirements and any other required competencies required for ordination are completed (See current Academic Requirements at end.)
- Completion of the service requirements as identified under Licensed Minister above. At least one year of the service requirements must be completed in the GLR.
- Completion of a Criminal Background and Credit Check through the GLR office, if one has not been completed on the regional level within the previous three years.
- Receive a recommendation from candidate’s supervisor or mentor, vice-chair or leading lay leader of Local Church where candidate had membership or served, and at least two other colleagues or lay leaders within the Local Church.
- Complete the Ordination application and any other assessments required by the RBMD.
- Meet with the RBMD with his/her spouse, if married, for an ordination interview and be recommended by the RBMD for ordination.
- Receive approval by the GLR Conference for ordination.
- Participate in the GLR Ordination service.

The privileges of an Ordained Minister include (Discipline 3075):
• The right to preach the gospel, administer baptism and the Lord’s Supper, perform all parts of divine worship, and to officiate weddings.
• To be eligible for election to any office in the Church for which ordained ministers are eligible.
• To contract the pastoral relationship with local Wesleyan churches.
• To be a voting member of the GLR conference (unless classified as “without appointment” or “in process of transfer.”)
• To transfer between districts within The Wesleyan Church.

The expectations of an Ordained Minister include:

• Faithfully serve in the category for which he/she is appointed.
• Faithfully support and maintain membership in The Wesleyan Church where he/she is a member. If an Ordained Minister’s membership is discontinued by the local church, clergy credentials are discontinued as well.
• Complete an Annual Service Report. Information regarding ASRs is provided via email through the GLR office in the Spring. It is the Ordained Minister’s responsibility to keep the office comprised of his/her current email address. Failure to file an ASR for two consecutive years must surrender their credentials.
• Participate in the GLR Conference and other training events provided by the Region.
• Remain in a category of active ministry unless appointed to the category of “retired.” Ordained Ministers who are reported to the GLR Conference for four consecutive years as “without appointment” must surrender their credentials.

There are numerous categories of service for which an Ordained Minister may be appointed in The Wesleyan Church. Please contact the RBMD office for a current list.
**Additional Resources**

The Wesleyan Church provides several different options for completing the educational requirements for ministry. You will find information regarding the various options at the following link: [https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd/pathways-to-ministry](https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd/pathways-to-ministry). You will find a listing of the courses required for ordination by logging into your portal account and reviewing your transcript. For information regarding the portal, please check out the following link: [https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd/ministerial-preparation](https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd/ministerial-preparation).

The Department of Education and Clergy Development also provides answers to many of the questions frequently asked. You will find that information at this link: [https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd/ministerial-preparation-faq](https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd/ministerial-preparation-faq).

Please be aware that the GLR has developed its own process that may be somewhat distinct from that of the Department of Education and Clergy Development.

You may obtain additional information by contacting the RBMD office or one of the RBMD Leaders.

**RBMD Office:**

- **Mailing Address:** 1200 60th St SE, Grand Rapids MI 49508
- **Email:** office@theGLR.org
- **Phone:** 616-827-9450

**RBMD Chair:**

- **Rev. Thomas Schmidt,** Email, Phone: 231-924-3284

**RBMD Directors:**

- **Dr. Michael Black,** Email, Phone: 517-202-1610
- **Rev. Chadrick Brown,** Email, Phone: 989-506-0266
- **Rev. Joshua Howard,** Email, Phone: 309-788-2030
- **Rev. Andrew (Drew) Mills,** Email, Phone: 810-327-6211

We considered it a privilege to serve you and the Local Churches in the GLR as we work together in raising up leaders and pastors who will work together in helping to reach the 22 million people living in our region and provide a *transforming presence in every zip code*. If we can be of service to you, please do not hesitate to give us a call.