



Ministerial Training Process

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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.”**

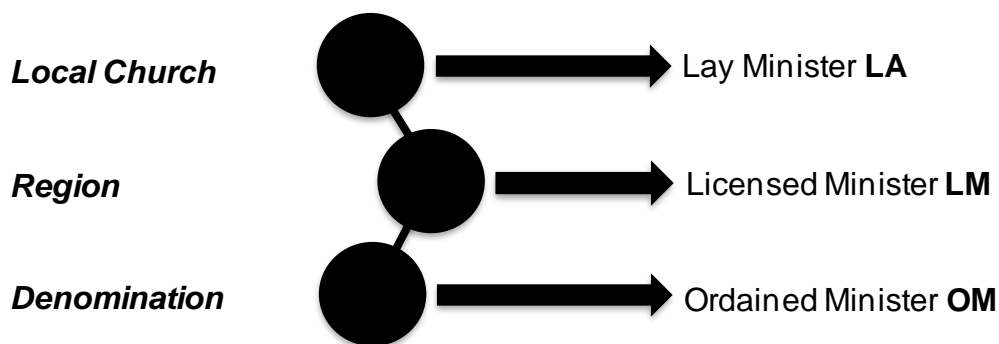
In response to the above vision of the Great Lakes Region (GLR), the Regional Board of Ministerial Development (RBMD) has developed a ministerial training process which involves the local church, Region, and Denomination in the process of raising up and training a growing number of dedicated ministers. Our goal is to faithfully prepare leaders who will strategically lead ministries that share the gospel message of Christ. Our passion is to work together 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 this multi-layered approach. Our aim is to collaborate together with the local church and the Denomination in developing spiritually anointed and competent ministers to serve the church for today and the future.

Overview of the Ministerial Training Process

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

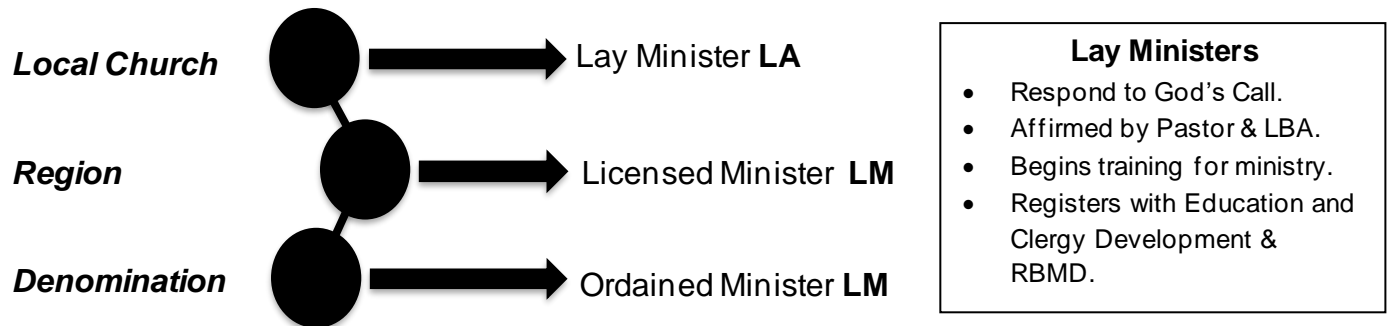


Lay Minister — Individuals who sense a call to ministry service and begin serving in the local church may have their calling and giftedness for ministry officially recognized by their local church in becoming a Lay Minister. Lay Minister credentials are provided by the local church making the recommendation to Lay Ministry. Lay Ministers may serve as lay pastors, lay staff pastors, or students pursuing vocational training for ministry. Lay Ministers completing the required coursework may continue as Lay Ministers as long as they are serving in their local church and continue to receive the recommendation of 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 as a Licensed Minister. Licensed Ministers are appointed by the GLR. 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 Minister



Lay Ministers in the GLR serve under the authority and leadership of their local church. The local church provides their credentials. They may serve as a lay pastor, lay assistant pastor, or 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 (ECD). 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 through applying for background checks. 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. Someone may serve a pastoral capacity in a local church as a Lay Minister or may begin at this level of credentialing in the process of preparing for ordination. Lay Ministers may remain at this level of credentialing by the local church if the necessary courses are completed and the church continues to appoint them to that position.

- **Step 1: Discuss with the pastor one's call to ministry.** 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.
- **Step 2: Complete Discipleship Training and Church membership required for leaders in the local church.** 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 interviewing with the local Board of Administration and be credentialed as a Lay Minister.
- **Step 3: Receive credentials as a Lay Minister from the local Church.** 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 be credentialed as a Lay Minister.

- **Step 4: Register with the GLR.** Registration includes passing a Criminal Background Check and Credit History Check provided by the Region. The application for the background checks serves as the registration form for Lay Ministers with the GLR. Lay Minister candidates may register at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Background-CreditChecks>.
- **Step 5: Register with the Department of Education and Clergy Development.** This is recommended for those serving as a Lay Minister and 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>. **Select the "Pre-ordination" enrollment track if planning to pursue becoming a Licensed or Ordained Minister.** Otherwise they select the "Lay Minister" option. This track option may be changed later should the situation warrant it.

Continuing as a Lay Minister

Once a person receives credentials as a Lay Minister it is expected that the following ongoing steps will be completed:

- **Expectation 1: Complete academic requirements for Lay Ministers.** Classes are listed below. Lay Ministers are expected to complete two classes 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 cannot be transferred from one church to another. A Lay Minister who does not complete at least two courses each year, until the 5 required courses are completed will no longer be listed with the GLR as a Lay Minister.
- **Expectation 2: Continue to meet with the pastor and mentors** for ongoing leadership development and training.
- **Expectation 3: Meet annually with LBA to renew credentials.** The local church must recommend annually to the GLR each candidate recommended for continued listing as a Lay Minister.

Additional Information for Lay Ministers

The following additional information regarding the Lay Minister category is provided to help those who are serving in this category of ministry.

Lay Minister Academic Requirements

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.

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

Information regarding educational opportunities for completing these classes is available at:

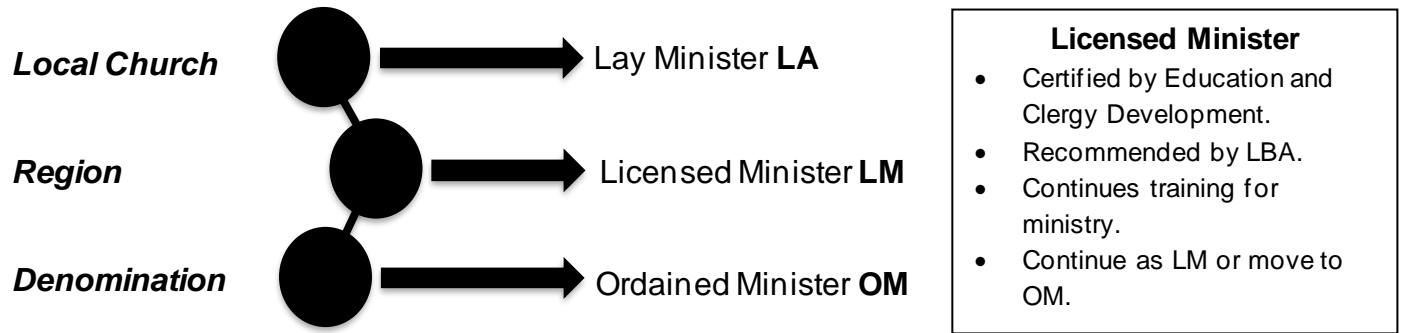
[https://www.wesleyan.org/Education and Clergy Development/pathways-to-ministry](https://www.wesleyan.org/Education%20and%20Clergy%20Development/pathways-to-ministry)

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 Minister Ministry Privileges

- Serve in leadership and teaching ministries under direction of local church.
- May serve in a lay capacity as a pastor, staff pastor, or student pursuing ministerial credentials.
- If serving as the lead or solo pastor of a church in the region may be a voting delegate at the Regional Conference and be authorized to serve the sacraments. May not officiate weddings.

Licensed Minister



Licensed Ministers in the GLR are recommended for appointment by the GLR after completing the educational requirements LM appointment and receiving a recommendation from their local church and pastor. Licensed Ministers may be appointed to several different categories of ministry both within the local church as well as 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 submit reports on an annual basis. Licensed Ministers pursuing ordination may be recommended for ordination once they have completed the educational and experiential requirements. Licensed Ministers may remain at the category of Licensed Minister upon the completion of the additional coursework required and as long as they continue to serve in a category of appointment available to 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:

- **Step 1: Be certified for licensing by ECD.** ECD will review coursework and make the determination as to when credit is received. They also provide email notification when a person is academically ready 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 EDC, and track his/her progress towards fulfilling the educational requirements. ECD 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> .
- **Step 2: Be recommended for appointment by local church.** The LBA of the local church which holds the LM candidate's membership must recommend to 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.
- **Step 3: Interview with a member of the RBMD for a recommendation to the GLR for appointment as a Licensed Minister.** When the RBMD receives notice of academic readiness for appointment as a Licensed Minister 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.
- **Step 4: Completion of a Criminal Background Check and Credit Check through the GLR office.** If background checks were completed by the GLR within the previous three years, additional background checks are not required.
- **Step 5: Complete additional assessments as may be required by the RBMD.** The RBMD will provide information regarding any assessments to be completed.
- **Step 6: Submit the LM Covenant.** The LM Covenant must be signed by both the LM candidate and the LM candidate's supervisor. It is then submitted to the GLR.

Continuing as a Licensed Minister

After appointment as a Licensed Minister it is expected that the LM shall complete the following on an annual basis.

- **Expectation 1: Complete at least two classes meeting academic requirements.** The LM must complete at least two courses each year meeting the academic requirements for ordination or completing the coursework towards a permanent appointment as a LM. Class requirements are listed below. Failure to meet the two-class requirement automatically results in the LM being re-categorized as a Lay Minister.
- **Expectation 2: Continue to serve in and be mentored by the local church.** LM's must serve in ministry in an ongoing basis in order to maintain their appointment. If a LM is released from a position for which appointment was made, the LM automatically becomes a Lay Minister until another appointment is made.
- **Expectation 3: Complete an Annual Service Report (ASR).** The ASR is completed online through the portal. Information is sent via email automatically to the LM each year regarding reports. *It is important that the LM keep the information on the portal current in order to receive these emails.* Allowances are not made for failure to report because information was sent to the incorrect email. Failure to file an ASR for two consecutive years result in the automatic loss of all ministerial credentials.
- **Expectation 4: Meet with the RBMD.** Each year LM candidates meet with a member or members of the RBMD. In these meetings the RBMD checks on several issues related to personal and family health, both physically and spiritually, as well as academic achievement and progress towards meeting the requirements for ordination. Failure to meet with the RBMD may result in the LM candidate not being recommended for continued appointment.
- **Expectation 5: Receive a recommendation each year from supervising pastor or LBA for continued appointment as a LM.**

Additional Information for Licensed Ministers

Licensed Minister Academic Requirements (12 total academic classes)

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.

- **Introduction to New Testament**
- **Introduction to Old Testament**
- **Introduction to Theology**
- **Wesleyan History and Discipline**
- **Introduction to Homiletics**
- **Church Leadership and Management**

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 must be completed within the three-year requirement:

- **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.

Privileges of a Licensed Minister

Licensed Ministers enjoy the following privileges as a Licensed Minister:

- Serving in ministry and teaching or preaching under the authority of the local church.
- Serving the sacraments if appointment is to the category of pastor or serving full-time as a staff pastor. See categories of appointment under Pastor and local Church Service listed below.
- Officiating weddings if appointment is to the category of pastor or serving full-time as a staff pastor. See categories of appointment under Pastor and local Church Service listed below. LMs should wait until after the GLR Conference in which the appointment is approved before taking advantage of this privilege.
- Appointment 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.
- Receiving a Housing Allowance, if the position is one for which a Housing Allowance is applicable. LMs may claim this privilege beginning in the year in which the GLR Conference approves the appointment as a LM. Please check with your tax advisor for additional information regarding claiming a Housing Allowance.

Licensed Minister Categories of Appointment

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)

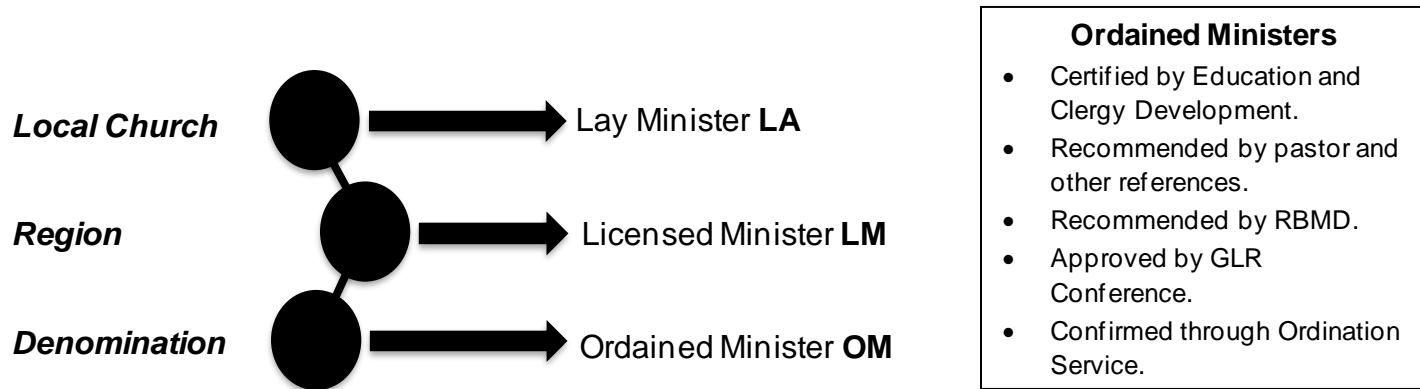
Licensed Minister service which meets the service requirements for ordination must be in a level of leadership comparable to someone who is a director of ministry or serving as a staff pastor. This would include responsibility for or experience in the following aspects of ministry:

- 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.

Experience requirements as a Licensed Minister may be met in any of the following ways:

- Serving two years full-time appointed as a LM. One year full-time if person has a masters degree in a field of divinity study.
- Serving part-time or a combination of full-time and part-time that meets the above requirements. Part-time is considered 15 or more hours per week. Full-time is considered 30 or more hours per week.
- Maintain a log of ministry experience appointed as a LM which documents 4,000 hours of service. The log must be contemporaneous with service, include the kinds of ministry that was completed and be signed by the LMs supervisor. Time spent completing educational requirements may not be counted towards experience requirements for ordination.

Ordained Minister



Ordained Ministers in The Wesleyan Church remain accountable to their pastor and local church while receiving appointment by 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.

Becoming Ordained

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

- 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 is a member or serving, 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.
- Receive approval from the General Superintendent for ordination.
- Participate in the GLR Ordination service.

Continuing as an Ordained Pastor

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 portal. It is the Ordained Minister's responsibility to keep the portal information current. Allowances are not made for failure to report because information was sent to the incorrect email. Failure to file an ASR for two consecutive years results in a report to the next Regional Conference that the minister has voluntarily surrendered his/her credentials and withdrawn.
- 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.

Additional Information for Ordained Ministers

Privileges of an Ordained Minister

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.

Categories of Appointment for Ordained Ministers

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.

Transfer of Credentials

The process of transferring credentials between Districts and from another denomination or church to The Wesleyan Church varies depending upon the level of credentialing. For additional information please contact the RBMD office.

Lay Ministers/ Students:

Lay Minister credentials do not transfer within the Wesleyan Church. Students who are Lay Ministers in the GLR may request a transfer as students to another district by sending an email requesting transfer to the District Superintendents of both the District transferring to and the District transferring from. The DSs will then provide direction regarding next steps.

Licensed Ministers and Ordained Ministers:

Licensed Ministers and Ordained Ministers may transfer between Districts within The Wesleyan Church. The process involves sending an email requesting transfer to the District Superintendents for both the District transferring from and the District transferring to as well as an email to the General Superintendent. Upon approval of the General Superintendent and both District Superintendents, the transfer is completed. Please contact the RBMD office for additional information on where to send transfer requests.

Transfer from another Denomination or Church:

Transferring from another Denomination or Church requires several steps in completing the process.

- Step 1: Request a transfer by completing the transfer request form and providing information requesting in the transfer form to the RBMD office.
- Step 2: Interview with the RBMD Director or person he or she designates.
- Step 3: Receive approval from the RBMD, the District Superintendent and the Regional Superintendent.
- Step 4: Complete any educational requirements identified by the Department of Education and Clergy Development within the first year after being approved for denominational transfer.
- Step 5: Complete the application and interview process for completion of transfer of ordination. This is similar to the process for those who are in the ordination process.
- Step 6: Receive approval from the Regional Conference.
- Step 7: Participate in the ordination service.

The RBMD office will provide additional information regarding the forms to be completed as well as meeting dates and times for the various steps in the process.

Additional Resources

Information on Traditional Students enrolled full-time at one of our colleges/universities/seminaries

Definition of traditional student: A Traditional Student is defined as one who is enrolled full-time in one of our accredited Colleges, Universities, and/or Seminaries, and is *living in proximity* to the campus.

1. This person will still go through all of the steps to become a Lay Minister at their home church as prescribed above, but will not be required to participate in ministry opportunities at their local church so a ministry description will not be required. However, it is highly recommended that the Lay Pastor find a local church near their campus and begin to volunteer there.
2. A person from the Local Church oversight team will need to make contact with Lay Pastor to allow conversations and opportunities for accountability as they deem necessary.
3. Lay Pastor will still need to receive a recommendation from their supervisor and/or pastor, local church LBA and Local Church Conference for continued listing as a Lay Minister. For yearly meetings with Lay Ministers Team or LBA, please see Supervisors of Lay Ministers document located on the GLR website.
4. If they desire to apply for Ministerial Loan Grant, they must be approved as a Lay Minister from their Local Church first. Then, an email can be sent to slaurence@thegl.org requesting a form for the GLR Ministerial Loan Grant. That form will have further instructions.

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>. 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>.

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>

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](tel:616-827-9450)

RBMD Chair:

Rev. Thomas Schmidt, [Email](#), Phone: [231-519-5939](tel:231-519-5939)

RBMD Directors:

Dr. Michael Black, [Email](#), Phone: [517-202-1610](tel:517-202-1610)

Rev. Chadrick Brown, [Email](#), Phone: [989-506-0286](tel:989-506-0286)

Rev. Ron Gormong, [Email](#), Phone: [715-520-3873](tel:715-520-3873)

Rev. Andrew (Drew) Mills, [Email](#), Phone: [810-327-6211](tel: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.

Updated 10/04/2019