

Lay Servant Ministry 2017 Update

There were several proposed legislative petitions addressing paragraphs 266-271 of the Book of Discipline submitted to the 2016 General Conference by the Discipleship Ministries Board of Directors. These paragraphs dealt with Lay Servants, Lay Speakers, Lay Missioners and Certified Lay Ministers. The rationale for submitting these legislative petitions was to bring about clarity, consistency and collaboration. The adopted legislation of 2016 streamlines and simplifies the process into three categories; Certified Lay Servant, Certified Lay Speaker, and Certified Lay Minister, which can be found in the Book of Discipline 2016-2019 paragraphs 266, 267, 268 and 270.

With these changes the category of "Local Church Lay Servant" was removed. It was found that local church lay servants are most often taking an advanced course for renewal rather than a refresher course, and therefore, were fulfilling the requirements for Certified Lay Servant.

Both Local Lay Servants and Certified Lay Servants serve the local church through ministries of leading, caring, and communicating. The difference between the local and the certified lay servants is that the Certified Lay Servant may also serve beyond the local church. Being a Certified Lay Servant, however, does not require service in the district or conference, or in other local churches beyond the local church where membership is held.

A local lay servant can still serve in the local church after completing the BASIC course, but in order to be certified as a Certified Lay Servant he/she will need to take an additional Lay Servant Ministries' advanced course and be approved by their local church and their District Committee on Lay Servant Ministries.

In addition, the category of "Local Lay Servant" will not be available on the 2017 Charge Conference Report. Current Local Lay Servants in the Baltimore Washington Conference must complete an advance lay servant course by fall 2017 charge conference and have submitted their application to their District Committee on Lay Servant Ministries requesting certification as a Certified Lay Servant before their 2017 local church charge conference. The application for Certified Lay Servant and the contact information for the District Directors are available at www.bwcumc.org/ministries/ministry-of-the-laity/

If you need more information or have any questions please feel free to contact your District Director on Lay Servant Ministry or myself at julieflinchum@gmail.com