

Chapter 4

SPECIAL LAY MINISTRIES

A. Lay Minister

3400. Identification. A lay minister is a lay member of The Wesleyan Church whom the local church conference, or the local board of administration if so delegated, has licensed to preach or serve (655:7), under the pastor's direction and as opportunity affords (725:28), thus providing for the employment and development of gifts and usefulness.

3410. Granting a Lay Minister's License. A covenant member of a local Wesleyan church who applies for a license as a lay minister or who is presented as a candidate for such license by the pastor shall be examined by the local board of administration. If the local board of administration is satisfied that the candidate shows promise of the proper gifts and usefulness, it shall recommend to the local church conference the granting of a license (782:19), unless the local church conference has delegated such authority to the local board of administration. When the license has been authorized (650:6; 655:7), the pastor and local church secretary shall issue the license on the approved form (6200; cf. 725:28; 830:3).

3420. Renewing a Lay Minister's License. A lay minister's license is effective for one year only, and authority to preach or serve under such a license shall cease unless it is renewed annually by the authorized body. The authorized body may renew the license if its holder has served satisfactorily under the pastor's direction, if personal gifts and graces give promise of continued usefulness, and if the annual report of the Ministerial Study Course Agency shows that the lay minister has completed two courses in the study course for lay ministers (3210:4) during the year, or if the lay minister holds a certificate from the Ministerial Study Course Agency showing that the study course has been completed.

3430. Duties of a Lay Minister. A person holding a lay minister's license shall be responsible:

(1) To enroll in the course of study for lay ministers under the Ministerial Study Course Agency (3210:4), and to pursue it with all diligence until completed, either through a program of ministerial training at one of the Wesleyan educational institutions or through correspondence courses from the Ministerial Study Course Agency. Any training taken outside The

Wesleyan Church shall be carefully evaluated by the Ministerial Study Course Agency which shall have authority to determine to what extent it may be credited toward the prescribed study course (3170:4).

(2) To assist the pastor as directed (725:28), preaching as often as opportunity affords, including the holding of evangelistic services in neighboring churches with the pastor's approval or serving in other ways befitting the lay minister's gifts and local needs.

(3) To report the progress of studies and the nature and extent of labors to the pastor and the local board of administration as they shall require (782:4) and to the local church conference annually (650:5; 655:5).

3440. Regulations for a Lay Minister.

(1) A lay minister has no authority to solemnize marriages or to administer the sacraments, except as provided for in 3260:2, nor any vote in the local board of administration nor in the district conference unless elected thereto.

(2) A lay minister is amenable to the local church conference, and the license may be revoked by the authorized body for cause or when the best interests of the church so require (655:7; 782:19).

(3) A lay minister who transfers membership may also ask for a letter of standing as a lay minister (6220), and present it to the pastor of the church to which transfer is sought for consideration by the local board of administration there in issuing a new license.

B. Special Worker

3450. Function. A special worker is a lay person with a sense of divine leading to serve the Church as a director of music, director of Christian education, youth director, song evangelist, chalk artist, children's worker, spouse in ministry, lay evangelist, social worker or in some other special capacity, and who has been authorized to carry on such work by a district conference.

3460. Licensed Special Worker. A covenant member of The Wesleyan Church may be granted a special worker's license by the district conference (1180:29e) provided that the candidate has been recommended for such license by the local church conference, or by the local board of administration if so delegated (655:8; cf. 782:20), that the candidate promises to pursue the course of study for the particular field of service (3210:5), and that the candidate has been recommended for such license by the district board of ministerial development after careful examination concerning Christian

experience, gifts, calling and experience in the particular field of service (1390:5). The license shall be issued and signed by the district superintendent and district secretary (6360; cf. 1310:23; 1332:4). The license may be renewed annually by continued qualification as above, if the candidate completes two courses in the course of study as attested by the Ministerial Study Course Agency, and if service is satisfactory, including the proper filing of reports. If a licensed special worker fails to file the annual service report (1402), unless such failure is due to illness, injury or a similar emergency, the license shall not be renewed (cf. 1390:8). The licensed special worker shall be amenable to the district (1233:38), and the license may be revoked between sessions of the district conference by judicial process as set forth in 5200:3; 5206. A person from another denomination holding a district license as a special worker or its equivalent may be received into The Wesleyan Church subject to the regulations which govern the reception of a minister (3104).

3470. Commissioned Special Worker. A licensed special worker may be commissioned by the district conference provided that the worker has completed the course of study (3210:5) or its equivalent (3170:4) as certified by the Ministerial Study Course Agency (6410), has served satisfactorily under a district special worker's license for at least two years, and has been recommended for commissioning by the district board of ministerial development after careful examination concerning Christian experience, gifts, calling and experience in the particular field of service (1390:5). The commissioning shall include the affirmative vote of the district conference (1180:29e), a solemn act of consecration as set forth in 5855 (cf. 1405; 3091), and the issuance of a commission signed by the General Superintendent over the district, the district superintendent and the district secretary (6380; cf. 1310:23; 1332:4; 1935:15). The commission shall be continuous until such time as the worker ceases to be active in the particular field of service and files the commission with the district superintendent, or unless deprived of the commission by judicial process (5200:3; 5206). A commissioned special worker who fails to file the annual service report (1402) for two successive years, shall be notified by the district board of ministerial development and requested to report at the next session of the district conference. A commissioned special worker who then fails to report, shall be declared withdrawn from the district, and the special worker's name shall be so entered upon the minutes of the district conference (cf. 1390:8). A person from another denomination holding a commission as a special worker or its equivalent may be received into The Wesleyan Church subject to the regulations which govern the reception of an ordained minister (1233:36; 1390:3; 3104).

3480. General Regulations for Special Workers. A licensed or commissioned special worker shall be a covenant member of a local church within the district which authorizes the service, and shall serve under the direction of the pastor, or upon the call of local churches, or under a district or general agency, as the case may be. The special worker shall be a nonvoting member of the district conference (1090:5), and shall report annually to the district conference (1390:7). The special worker may be granted a letter of transfer or standing (6440-6460). The license or commission of a special worker may only be restored in keeping with the provisions of 5230-5251.

C. Lay Missionary

3490. A lay member who has been appointed to service under the General Department of World Missions, or under the General Department of Evangelism and Church Growth, shall be commissioned by the district conference (1180:29f) as a lay missionary. The commissioning shall include a solemn act of consecration as set forth in 5855 (cf. 1405; 3091), and the issuance of a commission signed by the General Superintendent who relates to the involved department, the district superintendent and the district secretary (6400; cf. 1310:23; 1332:4; 1935:15). The commission shall be continuous with the period of service. The missionary shall be a nonvoting member of the district conference (1090:6). The missionary shall be amenable in keeping with the provisions of 2272.