

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

THE LAY SPEAKER ¹

I. INTRODUCTION

The lay speaker proposal grows out of a renewed interest in lay involvement in the ministry of the church with particular reference to preaching. Persons have declared their availability for the first degree of the ministry, namely licensed ministry, as a means of offering their service in preaching and pulpit supply without interest in pursuing the pastoral function or preparation for ordination. Recognizing that preaching has always been open to lay people, the lay speaker designation would recognize the commitment of individuals for preaching after training and development of skills have taken place.

II. PURPOSE

The lay speaker designation is introduced in an attempt to . . .

- A. Distinguish between lay leadership and ordination;
- B. Provide training for lay leaders who wish to regularly assist in preaching;
- C. Provide an office/calling for lay preachers who have no desire or intention to prepare for ordination.

It is hoped that lay people who desire to fulfill their ministry in occasional speaking and preaching assignments will continue to be free to make their witness.

III. ADMINISTRATION

The lay speaker ministry shall be administered by the District Board. The board would be responsible for recruiting, training, supervising, and evaluating all lay speakers. In addition, the board would administer the ThreeYear Reading Course as outlined by the Office of Ministry of the General Board as a means of training for all lay speakers and conduct an annual retreat for all participants.

IV. QUALIFICATIONS

1. Approved by 1977 Annual Conference.

- A. An active and supportive leader of the local church
- B. A commitment to the larger church (community, district, denomination, and worldwide)
- C. A willingness to study and read under supervision
- D. A desire to grow spiritually
- E. An expressed official support from the local church

V. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

- A. Each lay speaker will complete the Three Year Reading Course within three years.
- B. Each lay speaker will attend the annual retreat for fellowship and training;
- C. Each lay speaker will participate in district/denominational events as schedule permits.

VI. DUTIES

- A. Provide pulpit supply in the absence of a pastor.
- B. Assist in the preaching schedule of yoked parishes to enable weekly preaching in all meeting places.
- C. Provide interim pulpit supply during a pastoral change.

VII. TERM

Term of service shall be for three years (expiration date December 31) and shall be renewable at the recommendation of the District Board following review and consultation with the lay speaker.

VIII. COMMISSIONING SERVICE

An appropriate service of commissioning shall be held for each lay speaker in his or her local church under the direction of a representative of the District Board in consultation with the pastor.

IX. IMPLEMENTING STEPS ²

- A.** The lay speaker ministry shall be administered by the District Board through the commission on ministry. The commission would be responsible for recruiting, training, supervising, and evaluating all lay speakers. In addition, the commission would administer the Three Year Reading Course as outlined by the Office of Ministry of the General Board as a means of training for all lay speakers and conduct an annual retreat for all participants.
- B.** A person may become a candidate for the lay speaker by any of the following ways:
 - 1. Personal initiative
 - 2. Congregational selection
 - 3. Challenge of others in district

Regardless of the avenue through which one becomes a candidate, the person shall be recommended to the District Ministry Commission by vote of either congregational business meeting or the church board of the congregation where she/he is a member. This recommendation shall be in writing and include a description of the candidate's qualifications as outlined by Annual Conference.

- C.** The District Ministry Commission shall act upon the request and inform the congregation of their decision. The commission may request an interview with the candidate at its option.
- D.** After a person has been accepted for the lay speaker program, the District Ministry Commission shall arrange an appropriate commissioning service in the congregation where she/he is a member.
- E.** The District Ministry Commission shall choose a supervisor for each lay speaker for regular support and counsel during the training period.
- F.** Each lay speaker enrolled shall fulfill training requirements as outlined in the Annual Conference action.
- G.** The term of service shall be for three years and shall be renewable, or nonrenewable, at the recommendation of the District Ministry Commission following review and consultation with the lay speaker. Individuals may discontinue the program by notifying the District Ministry Commission.

1/2000

2. Developed by the District of Southern Ohio.

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