

THE COMMISSIONING OF LOCAL LAY-PASTORS

INTRODUCTION

Lay persons appointed by a Circuit to the office of Local Lay-Pastor care for, enable, lead and represent one or more local churches and represent the wider Church to them. They provide a focused and recognised presence among a congregation or gathered community and in the wider community. It is a form of ministry complementary to but distinct from the ministries of presbyters, deacons and other lay officers in enabling the Church's mission for the sake of the world.

NOTES

- 1 *The Commissioning of Local Lay-Pastors* should normally take place after the sermon during a celebration of *Holy Communion*. Any appropriate order may be used, but that for *The Day of Pentecost and Times of Renewal in the Life of the Church* (*The Methodist Worship Book*, pp.174-184) is especially suitable. Otherwise, *The Commissioning of Local Lay-Pastors* should take place after the sermon during a preaching service.
- 2 If a Local Lay-Pastor is to be commissioned during a Welcome Service (*The Methodist Worship Book*, pp.355-366), nos. 1-6 of this service are inserted immediately before no. 18 in the Welcome Service.
- 3 It would be appropriate for relevant ecumenical, community, and civic representatives to be invited to attend the service.
- 4 The readings of the day may be used or the following may be considered:

Isaiah 55:1-11 *or* Jeremiah 1:4-10
Ephesians 4:7-16 *or* Colossians 4:2-7
Luke 6:20-26 *or* Luke 10:1-2 *or* Luke 10:38-42

THE PREFACE

- 1 **The presiding minister says to the people:**

People of God, Local Lay-Pastors care for, enable, lead and represent one or more local churches and represent the wider Church to them. They provide a focused and recognised presence among a congregation or gathered community and in the wider community. They share with other lay officers, and with presbyters and deacons in enabling the Church's mission for the sake of the world, each with their distinctive ministry and gifts.

Local Lay-Pastors are appointed by and accountable to the Circuit Meeting. With the presbyter exercising pastoral charge and others, they share pastoral responsibility for the church or churches in which they are appointed to serve.

THE COMMISSIONING

2 The Local Lay-Pastor stands.

The presiding minister says to the people:

I present to you *N*, whom the Circuit has appointed to serve as *a* Local Lay-Pastor in ...
Church. *N*'s work is especially in the areas of ...

Here the presiding minister will summarise the *role* of the Local Lay-Pastor using words and/or symbols appropriate to the congregation.

3 Let us pray.

Eternal God, in your love
you pour out upon us gifts of your Spirit
for the service of the Gospel:
look now on your *servant, N*,
whom we are to commission in your Name
for the office and ministry of a Local Lay-Pastor;
may *she/he/they* make your grace and glory known
among those people to whom *she/he/they is/are* called and sent;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

4 All stand.

The presiding minister says to the Local Lay-Pastor:

N, we rejoice that you are to exercise this ministry as part of the life and mission of the Church. As you know, the demands of this ministry upon you and those close to you are great, yet in it all, the Holy Spirit will sustain you in the rhythms of grace.

Do you believe that you are called by God to share in this Circuit's mission and ministry as *a* Local Lay-Pastor?

Answer: I do.

Will you accept the discipline of the Church, and work with us in its mission and ministry?

Answer: With God's help I will.

Will you faithfully fulfil the responsibilities entrusted to you by the Methodist Church in the office and ministry of a Local Lay-Pastor?

Answer: With God's help I will.

Will you be a sign of God's call to holy living, rooted in the Gospel and faithful in prayer, taking time to listen as well as to speak, to reflect and to retreat as well as to act?

Answer: With God's help I will.

Will you work with others to support the Christian community, so that together you may grow as disciples of Jesus Christ?

Answer: With God's help I will.

- 5 **A Circuit Steward says to the *presbyter* exercising pastoral charge of the local *church* in which the Local Lay-Pastor has been appointed to serve:**

A, do you commit to work collaboratively as, together with *N*, you share in the mission and ministry of ... *Church*?

Answer: I do.

The Circuit Steward says to the Local Lay-Pastor:

N, do you commit to work collaboratively as, together with *A*, you share in the mission and ministry of ... *Church*?

Answer: I do.

- 6 **The presiding minister says:**

Let us pray.

Faithful God, we thank you
that *N* has offered *herself/himself/themselves*
as a Local Lay-Pastor in your Church.
Uphold *her/him/them* by your grace
and enable *her/him/them* by your Spirit,
that through *her/his/their* ministry
your love may be shared
and your name may be glorified;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

- 7 **A Circuit Steward says to the people:**

People of God,
will you welcome *N*
and will you offer *her/him/them*
your friendship, support and prayers
as we join together in the work
to which God has called us?

With God's help, we will.

- 8 **A representative of the local *church* in which the Local Lay-Pastor has been appointed to serve may say:**

I welcome you in the name of ... *Church*.

- 9 **Welcomes may then be given by circuit and ecumenical representatives, community and civic leaders, and other appropriate persons.**

10 Each newly-appointed Local Lay-Pastor may reply briefly in *her/his/their* own words and/or as follows:

I thank you for your welcome.

I will work with you and pray for you.

11 The service continues.