



*Lay Servant/Speaking Ministries*  
Pensacola District of the Alabama-West Florida Conference



August 18, 2014

Dear Fellow Lay Servants and Lay Speakers,

I will keep this as short and simple as possible. I apologize if this letter becomes too wordy. All the information below comes directly from the 2012 *Book of Discipline*, Section XI. Lay Servant Ministries, paragraph 266, pages 210 and 211. I encourage you to read this for yourselves for clarification and to get a better understanding should any confusion still exist after reading this letter.

Our ministry program has undergone some recent changes that I would like to bring to your attention. In March of 2013 the Alabama-West Florida Conference Board of Lay Speaking Ministries, of which I am a member, met and discussed this very topic. Helen Edwards, our Conference Director, stated that the name change was approved at the 2012 General Conference to LAY SERVANT MINISTRIES. Lay Servant ministries have two separate tracks: Lay Servant/Certified Lay Servant and Certified Lay Speaker.

When you complete the Basic course you become a **Lay Servant**. You still must have your pastor's approval to begin. That has not changed. You can lead Bible studies, teach church school, assist your pastor and visit nursing homes but cannot preach.

When you complete the Basic Course and one Advanced Course you can request an interview with the district board of Lay Servant Ministries to become a **Certified Lay Servant**. Duties are the same as a Lay Servant with one difference. You can conduct, or assist in conducting, a worship service and present a sermon when requested by your pastor. **You can only deliver a message in your church**, not the district.

A **Certified Lay Speaker** will complete a Basic Course and the following Advanced Courses: Leading in Worship, Leading in Prayer, Discovering Spiritual Gifts, Preaching, United Methodist Polity (new course) and a United Methodist Heritage course and then request an interview with the district board of Lay Servant Ministries. **You can deliver a message in your church and the district.**

What has not changed is that everyone must take an Advance Course every three years to keep certification/status current. Also, an Annual Report must be completed each year and turned into your church's charge conference for approval to continue in this ministry.

Now, for those of you that have been a Certified Lay Speaker for awhile, we, the Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries, have decided to grandfather you in for a period of three (3) years beginning 2013. You must have taken a Basic Course and at least three of the six Advanced Courses mentioned previously with one being a "Preach" course. The other Advanced Courses must be taken over the next three years to complete all six required courses; otherwise, you will be moved to a status of Certified Lay Servant.

Peace & Blessings,

Bruce Knecht  
Pensacola District Director  
Lay Servant Ministries