

## Guidelines for Certified Lay Ministers: Ministry Covenant

During the first module of the CLM Candidate Training program, you developed your first ministry covenant. The covenant is like a job description for your role as a certified lay minister – but it is also more than that. The covenant encompasses the whole ministry of the church and shows how the CLM fits in as part of the ministry team. It is also an evolving document and should be regularly reviewed and updated.

**From Module 1:** A ministry covenant is simply an agreed promise between people in the congregation, the district superintendent, and those assigned to the Mutual Ministry Team. It explains how they will live their lives in relationship to God and each other. Often confused with a contract (which has legal language and punitive clauses), a covenant is relational and provides an accountable understanding for life together as Christian disciples.

### Some Nuts-and-Bolts Reminders about the Ministry Covenant:

- **Developed with a team:** It should be developed in community with the CLM(s), four to six leaders from the congregation (including the church council chair or equivalent), lay leader, S/PPRC chair, finance chair, DS, and the CLM mentor/supervising clergyperson.
- **Short:** The covenant should cover the basics but does not need to be overly detailed. Many covenants fit on a single page. Under 2 pages is recommended.
- **Basic Suggested Content:** *Note that these are simply suggestions. Each CLM and congregation will decide what is most needed in their context.*
  - Church mission statement or description of the congregation: Why do you exist?
  - Purpose of choosing a CLM: Explain the CLM's role within the church's ministry.
  - The congregation's ministry plan, consisting of:
    - 2-3 ministry goals;
    - leadership roles and expectations of the CLM, CLM mentor/supervising clergyperson, DS, congregation, and mutual ministry team;
    - congregational life and practice with the CLM.
- **Congregational Involvement:** All participants active in the life of the church should be given an opportunity to view the covenant, ask questions, and offer feedback before the covenant is brought to charge conference for approval.
- **Financial Support:** Any financial support offered by the church (compensation, if applicable; travel reimbursement; continuing education funds, etc.) should be outlined.

**Reviewing Your Ministry Covenant (Every Year):** The mutual ministry team should set their own patterns of supervision and support, to suit the needs of their context. As a part of this supervision and support, this team should plan for an annual review of the ministry covenant, updating and revising it as needed. Be sure to include an updated copy of your ministry covenant with your ministry review!

## **#2 Ministry Review (Every Two Years)**

While the mutual ministry team will review the ministry covenant at least annually, the ministry review is a more formal process that happens every two years, in conjunction with the CLM's renewal or recertification. The ministry review is similar to a job review and is a time to evaluate how well everyone is living out the ministry covenant.

### **Three Goals of the Ministry Review**

1. Celebrate what is going well!
2. Determine what needs improvement.
3. Provide a framework for a discussion of new goals and directions that are emerging in the congregation, as well as how the CLM, church leaders, and congregation can continue to grow together in mutual ministry.

### **Some Nuts-and-Bolts for the Ministry Review:**

- **Timing:** The ministry review should happen during the year you recertify and before your interview with the district committee on ordained ministry (dCOM).
- **Participants:** The ministry review is usually conducted by S/PPRC or the church council. The review could also happen during charge conference.
- **Team Ministry:** Remember, CLMs operate as part of a team. Ministry is and must be mutual. Therefore, no individual's performance in ministry can be reviewed with fairness apart from the whole.
- **Congregational Involvement:** The congregation can be invited to participate in the review and evaluation. For example, if the CLM preaches, members may be invited to fill out a form evaluating the CLM's sermon. Congregation members providing feedback should identify themselves on the survey and not submit it anonymously.
- **The Report:** A representative of group who conducts the review should submit a report of the ministry review to the CLM Registrar. We recommend using the form this link to guide your ministry review and submit the report: <https://nccumc.org/laity/certified-lay-minister/ministry-review/report/>