

## **Appendix 1: Changes to the Manual for the Order of Supportive Lay Ministries**

### **.1 Changes to 10.27(h)**

From:	arranges for and supervises the training of those offering themselves as Lay Preachers, and admits them and sets them apart to the Order of Lay Preachers (see Section 10 below);
To:	(i) receives applications from sessions for members who wish to be recognised as members of the Order of Supportive Lay Ministries, (ii) forwards these to the Administrator for the Order of Supportive Lay Ministries, (iii) assists in any training and formative processes that are applicable, and (iv) holds a service of recognition and blessing when a candidate is accepted into the Order. (The Order of Supportive Lay Ministries is covered in detail in Section 12 of Chapter 16 and should be consulted by Presbyteries)

### **.2 Changes to Section 10 of ch.10**

Section 10 and paras 10:85-92 have already been deleted in the 2013 revision.

### **.3 Changes to the Intro of ch.16**

From:	Ministers have a special role in enabling the Church to proclaim the Gospel. They are called and ordained to preach the Word, to administer the Sacraments, to care for all those in their charge, and, with the Elders, to rule. To emphasise their teaching role, they are often referred to as Teaching Elders, thus distinguishing them from Ruling Elders. This division in terminology is not wholly satisfactory because the main functions of Ruling Elders are also functions of Ministers by virtue of their Calling to share in the obligation to rule. Ministers form a key leadership group in the Church, with special responsibility for its life at the local level in Congregations; at a regional level where all Ministers in pastoral charges and others, such as Ministers Emeriti, have seats on the Presbytery and the Synod; and throughout the Church in their opportunities to be commissioned as members of General Assembly and to serve on Commissions and/or Committees.
To:	The Priesthood of all Believers is an important Reformation Principle. The Church has, however, always recognised the need for Ordained Ministers who are called, trained, equipped and ordained to preach the Word, to administer the Sacraments, to care for all those in their charge, and, together with the Elders, to rule. Ministers form a key leadership group in the Church, with special responsibility for its life at the local level in Congregations; at a regional level where all Ministers in pastoral charges and others, such as Ministers Emeritii, have seats on the Presbytery and the Synod; and throughout the Church in their opportunities to be commissioned as members of General Assembly and to serve on

Commissions and/or Committees.

In recent years the Church has recognised that members of congregations can and are contributing significantly to the life and work of local congregations and that much of this service has become specialised in the areas of administration, pastoral care, youth work, music and leadership. These "lay ministries" do not replace the need for Ordained Ministry but they can play a vital supporting role, and so the Assembly has brought the Order of Supportive Lay Ministries into being which recognises, celebrates, supports and regulates those who offer themselves for service in this way. The Order is dealt with in the final section of this chapter.

#### **.4 Changes to Section 12 of Chapter 16 (16.166-173)**

The heading needs to be changed to "The Order of Supportive Lay Ministries"

Paragraphs 16.166-173 should be **deleted** and replaced as follows:

16.166 The Order of Supportive Lay Ministries (hereafter OSLM or "the Order") is an Order within the Church that:

- (a) Celebrates a diversity of forms of service (ministries) within the church, among others these could include:
  - (i) Lay Preachers,
  - (ii) Pastoral Visitors and Caregivers,
  - (iii) Youth Leaders,
  - (iv) Choir Directors / Worship Leaders,
  - (v) Pastoral Administrators,
  - (vi) Association Chairpersons,
  - (vii) And others which may come to our attention.
- (b) Strives to equip, prepare and train lay people who offer themselves in these forms of service by preparing documents and training courses with regard to the appointment, preparation and ongoing development of the above-mentioned service opportunities.
- (c) Recognises individuals as belonging to the Order who have:
  - (i) been properly interviewed by the Session and, in some cases, the Presbytery;
  - (ii) undergone a the "OSLM Foundations Course" (An introductory course in Presbyterian Identity, Ethos and Spirituality) and prescribed courses related to area they are serving in.
  - (iii) been appropriately appointed at their congregations when these are paid positions (whether full or part-time) and
  - (iv) been recognised and blessed in a Presbytery service.
- (d) Provides access to ongoing training for individuals in the order to improve their skills in the areas they serve.
- (e) Provides fellowship and support opportunities for those in the order.
- (f) Provides material to assist congregations with regard to the interviewing and appointment of staff in a part or full-time capacity whether paid or unpaid.

16.167 Membership of the Order does not confer status, authority or position apart from the parameters that the actual appointment at a local congregation

provides. Belonging to the Order does not grant an individual access to any of the councils of the church or allow the individual any rights that accompany Ordained Ministry. If a candidate is considering the Ordained Ministry, they are advised to follow ch.17.

- 16.168 All current members of the previous Order of Lay Preachers, shall automatically become members of the OSLM.
- 16.169 Membership of the Order is always defined by the specific area of service in which an individual is currently serving. (For example, a youth worker in the OSLM does not have the privileges or responsibilities of a lay preacher.)
- 16.170 Membership of the Order provides the following:
- (a) For the Member:
    - (i) A deeper understanding of the nature and ethos of work and service in the Church.
    - (ii) A grounding in servant leadership and renewed understanding of the Gospel's call to mission and service.
    - (iii) A space in which to grow in service and commitment to the Church and have a level of accountability to the Order.
    - (iv) An opportunity to hone skills through courses and training opportunities.
    - (v) Credibility in the sense that the Church considers properly dedicated members of the Order to be trustworthy and competent in their area of service.
  - (b) For the Congregations and Presbyteries the OSLM provides a framework that surrounds those who serve our congregations in specialised capacities with structure, support, training and the recognition of having gone through a well-defined process.
- 16.171 The Order will be administered by a sub-committee of the Mission and Discipleship Committee of General Assembly. The sub-committee's responsibilities are as follows:
- (a) Supervise the work of the OSLM Administrator.
  - (b) Define the requirements for various forms of ministries.
  - (c) Create, maintain and administer the OSLM Foundations Course
  - (d) Collate material to assist congregations with the legalities and practicalities of appointing staff.
  - (e) Maintain a portfolio of affordable short-courses that will be recommended to candidates.
- 16.172 The Order will be administered at General Assembly by the OSLM Administrator which is a part time position appointed by the Church Office Committee. The Administrator will:
- (a) Provide guidance and advice to the Sessions of those seeking to become members of the Order.
  - (b) Maintain a database of those who are members of the Order and conduct a 24 monthly review of the database by getting reports from members of the Order.
  - (c) Guide each candidate through the prescribed process of admission to the Order.
  - (d) Administer the OSLM Foundations Course

- (e) Provide, on request, details of courses, guidelines of appointment and other material to congregations and Presbyteries.
- 16.173 At Presbytery level the Order will be the responsibility an appointed Presbytery Committee. Its duties will be to
- (a) receive applications from individuals via their sessions;
  - (b) review applications, and forward them to the OSLM Administrator;
  - (c) undertake any ad-hoc work required for the requirements to be fulfilled by candidate for a specific service opportunity. (A lay preacher, for example, must do a trial service and be evaluated by a Presbytery Committee or representative);
  - (d) interview the candidates who have completed the requirements; and
  - (e) at set Presbytery meetings, recognise and bless new members of the Order
- 16.174 The pre-requisites for applying to the Order are as follows:
- (a) The applicant must be a member of a congregation of UPCSA
  - (b) The applicant should have been a member for at least a year. Exceptions to this requirement will be made when a person has been sought, interviewed and appointed to the congregation in a formal position. (Which, for example, is often the case with youth workers)
  - (c) The applicant should not have undergone discipline in the courts of the church for at least five years
- 16.175 When a person in a congregation feels called to serve the Church in a specific form of service and wishes to become part of the Order, the process is as follows:
- (a) The person applies to the Session of the Congregation.
  - (b) The Session Clerk consults the OSLM Administrator and obtains the applicable requirements for the form of service the candidate wishes to perform.
  - (c) The session interviews the candidate, working through the following issues:
    - (i) Ensuring that the motive for application is a desire to serve with humility and excellence.
    - (ii) Reviews the the requirements outlined for the candidate by the OSLM Administrator and ensures the candidate is able to complete the tasks/courses/assignments laid out in the requirements.
    - (iii) Considers appointing an elder mentor to encourage and support the candidate.
    - (iv) Considers assisting with the costs of some of the courses the candidate may be required to do.
  - (d) If the session is comfortable after the interview, it fills in the "Application to Presbytery Form" provided by the OSLM Administrator and sends it to the Convener of the Appointed Presbytery Committee.
  - (e) The Convener of the Appointed Presbytery Committee brings the application to a stated Presbytery Council Meeting where it will be declined or forwarded. Valid grounds for declining would be:
    - (i) Concerns about the applicant's conduct, doctrine or reputation
    - (ii) Concerns about the suitability or capability of the applicant in relation to the form of service they wish to offer.

- (f) If the Presbytery approves, it forwards the Application to the OSLM Administrator who:
  - (i) Writes to the Presbytery, Session and Applicant outlining the requirements applicable for the area in which the Applicant wishes to serve.
  - (ii) Guides the Applicant through the OSLM Foundations Course.
  - (iii) Assists the Applicant with relevant information with regard to the requirements.
- (g) The Applicant completes the various steps of the process, taking responsibility for the costs of courses and procurement of necessary resources to complete the requirements. If the Presbytery needs to provide assistance (for example: a trial service for a lay preacher) the Applicant arranges this with the Convener of the Appointed Presbytery Committee.
- (h) On completion of all the requirements, the Applicant provides proof thereof and writes to the Session Clerk and the Administrator of the OSLM. If both parties are satisfied that the requirements have been met, the Administrator will write to the Convener of the Appointed Presbytery Committee recommending the Applicant.
- (i) On receiving the recommendation, the Convener of the Appointed Presbytery Committee will arrange for a small committee of 3 or 4 presbyters to interview the candidate to reflect on their journey and to report to Presbytery which, if satisfied, will arrange a service of recognition and blessing at one of its stated meetings. The convener will communicate this to the OSLM Administrator.
- (j) The Candidate's name is placed on the database of OSLM Members.
- (k) The Candidate will be encouraged to participate in fellowship and training events in the Order as far as can reasonably be expected within the constraints of time and cost.

16.176 A Member of the Order will be removed if:

- (a) They have not been serving in their area of service for more than two years.
- (b) They have been subject to discipline in the courts of the church.
- (c) They have shown no interest in ongoing activities of the Order and have failed to respond to a 24 monthly review form sent by the Administrator.