

The New York Annual Conference



Handbook For Local Church Lay Leaders

New York Annual Conference
The United Methodist Church

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JEREMIAH J. PARK
RESIDENT BISHOP

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

NEW YORK AREA

20 SOUNDVIEW AVENUE
WHITE PLAINS, NEW YORK 10606
TEL: 914-615-2221 • 888-696-6922
FAX: 914-615-2246
www.nyac.com
E-mail: bishop@nyac.com

New York City Office
TEL: 212-870-3092

DENNIS R. WINKLEBLACK
ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP

EVELYN R. BRUNSON
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
TO THE BISHOP

Dear Lay Leaders of the New York Annual Conference:

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, Prince of shalom, Healer of our brokenness, and Hope of the world!

Paul writes to the church in Philippi: "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now." (Philippians 1: 3-5)

This is also my experience as I think of the Lay Leaders of the churches of the New York Annual Conference. You bring me such joy as we labor together in the vineyard of the Lord and I give hearty thanks to God for each one of you. Indeed, unto you has been given a mantle of leadership that in our Methodist tradition is so very crucial. You are called to be the leader of leaders working in concert with your pastor and serve as an example to the people of God in your local church how to serve the church and the world in the name of Jesus Christ. Your devotion to this calling inspires and encourages me greatly.

As you know, the Methodist (and United Methodist) church has always been a lay-led movement. Accordingly, many believe that the next movement forward (some even are calling it a "great awakening") will be laity inspired and laity led. I do not doubt this for a minute.

I believe you will find this "Handbook for Lay Leaders" to be most helpful in the fulfillment of your responsibilities. I am so grateful for the leadership of the Board of Laity of our Conference led, by our Conference Lay Leader, Mrs. Renata Smith, who has produced this exciting resource. It will immensely bless our laity, our Church and our Conference. Please be assured of my ongoing prayerful support of you as you continue to share the gospel as a Lay Leader of a United Methodist Church.

In Christ,

Jeremiah J. Park

Conference Vision Statement

“The New York Annual Conference, by the grace of god, embodies a beloved community of hope, building up a healthy body of Christ, with heart warmed United Methodists in mission for the transformation of the world.”

Conference Mission

In mission we:

- Bring hope to survivors of natural and human-created disasters and help rebuild their homes and lives.
- Bring hope to starving children and help provide shelter, food and clean water.
- Bring hope to victims of social and economic violence and comfort them.

Who Are We?

We are a diverse people. As United Methodist people of the New York Annual Conference, we trace our ancestry to all but one of the seven continents of the world: North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. We have significant ethnic constituencies from South America, Africa, Central America, the Caribbean, Korea and China.

Our conference provides opportunity not only for cross-cultural pastoral appointments, but also opportunity for the laity to gather in multi-cultural settings for a diversity of worship experiences and traditions.

Our music varies from traditional and classical to experimental, praise and gospel. Our prayers are always from the heart, be they formal or spontaneous.

We are a people of the Bible, reading many translations and basing our life decisions on Scripture, tradition, experience and reason. We cherish our 255-year-old heritage initiated in 18th century England by John Wesley. Our faith vision focuses on the future God has opened for the people called United Methodist.

Conference Lay Leader’s Message

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a crowd of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of God.” – Hebrews 12:1-2 NRSV

The Christian journey is often described as a race. Hebrews 11 reads like a hall of fame for those who have victoriously crossed the finish line. And the list goes on in our lifetimes of men, women, boys and girls . . . of lay people – just like you and I – who are running the race of life with Jesus Christ as our head. For Olympians and for laity, or anyone running the Christian race, becoming a world class athlete requires discipline, training, positive influences and keeping your eyes constantly on the prize.

The laity of the New York Annual Conference has been given a mandate by our bishop, one based on that given by Jesus Christ, “the author and perfecter of our faith.” (Matthew 28:18-20). Bishop Park is

asking that 1200 lay speakers show up at annual conference in 2009, and then return in 2010, bringing with us those whose lives have been transformed for Jesus because of our ministry. What a challenge! Here are some suggestions that will help in the preparation:

Let the Word of God dwell in you richly. (Colossians 3:16) Engage in systematic individual and corporate Bible study. Consider using the Life Journal.

Apply your heart to instruction. (Proverbs 23:12) We receive so much teaching and instruction as laity. How about putting in writing and applying the things you learn each week? (From the Bible, sermons, training events and etc.)

Invite the poor, the crippled, the lame the blind. (Luke 14:13) How about being more intentional in inviting to Christ's table not those who are already 'churched' or those who can afford the tickets to our "events," but those who are the least and the lowest. And how about really making them feel welcome?

Take time to pray. (Philippians 4:6) Tell what the Lord has done for you. Let us develop the habit of sharing our faith. Practice makes perfect.

You are LAITY and your ministry matters!

One of the duties of the conference lay leader is gathering the concerns of the laity, and advocating for them. Please send your comments and questions, as well as your "hoorays" via email to renata10553@yahoo.com, or call 914-664-2622.

Be the change you want to see and God bless you all!

By: [Renata Smith](#)

Scriptural Guidelines

"I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love," (Ephesians 4:1-2 NRSV)

"So, my son, throw yourself into this work for Christ. Pass on what you heard from me—the whole congregation saying Amen!—to reliable leaders who are competent to teach others." (2 Timothy 2:1-2 *The Message*)

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20 NRSV)

"But whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mark 10: 43b-45 NRSV)

"If any of you wants to serve me, then follow me. Then you'll be where I am, ready to serve at a moment's notice. The Father will honor and reward anyone who serves me." (John 12:26 *The Message*)

Laity are Called

All of God's people, in all places and at all times, are called to love and serve. (Ministry of the Laity) We rejoice in God's Call to be disciples of Jesus Christ. Claimed by baptism and nurtured by God's redeeming love and grace, we are compelled to live under the direction of the Holy Spirit. We are called to an every-moment ministry.

Ministry of the laity is:

- Living faithfully as disciples of Jesus Christ in our everyday life.
- Responding to God's gifts of grace and call to serve.
- Using our gifts and resources to serve others.
- Loving our neighbors
- Living out the Gospels in all our relationships – at home, at school, at work, at play, in our communities and in our world.
- All of the above and more

As described in the Gospels, Jesus Christ calls all persons to do a variety of things. You are called to be in lay ministry as a Lay Leader.

***The Book of Discipline* —The Role of the Lay Leader**

Part V, Chapter 1, Section VI

¶ 251. Duties of Leaders and Members

1. Out of the professing membership of each local church (¶ 126), there shall be elected by the charge conference a lay leader who shall function as the primary lay representative of the laity in that local church and shall have the following responsibilities:
 - a) fostering awareness of the role of laity both within the congregation and through their ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world, and finding ways within the community of faith to recognize all these ministries;
 - b) meeting regularly with the pastor to discuss the state of the church and the needs for ministry;
 - c) membership in the charge conference and the church council, the committee on finance, the committee on lay leadership, and the committee on pastor-parish relations or staff-parish relations, where, along with the pastor, the lay leader shall serve as an interpreter of the actions and programs of the annual conference and the general Church (to be better equipped to comply with this responsibility, it is recommended that a lay leader also serve as a lay member of annual conference);
 - d) continuing involvement in study and training opportunities to develop a growing understanding of the Church's reason for existence and the types of ministry that will most effectively fulfill the Church's mission;
 - e) assisting in advising the church council of opportunities available and the needs expressed for a more effective ministry of the church through its laity in the community;
 - f) informing the laity of training opportunities provided by the annual conference. Where possible, the lay leader shall attend training opportunities in order to strengthen his or her work. The lay leader is urged to become a certified lay speaker.

In instances where more than one church is on a charge, the charge conference shall elect additional lay leaders so that there will be one lay leader in each church. Associate lay leaders may be elected to work with the lay leader in any local church.

Your Role and Responsibilities

You were chosen by your church at the Charge Conference to be the Lay Leader of your congregation. Your mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ and your mission goals are the same as those of the New York Annual Conference which are:

- Provide Effective Leadership
- Become Servants Like Jesus
- Help Children and Youth to be Disciples
- Establish New and Renewing Communities of Faith

Specific responsibilities are required to accomplish those mission goals:

• **Become a partner in ministry with your pastor** by praying, visioning, sharing, and working together. This involves frequent communication no less than weekly. Listen to the congregation and provide objective input to your pastor. You and your pastor are a team and teaming means sharing responsibilities. Know your pastors' schedule and when your pastor has to be out help make sure the ministry of the church continues and worship services are lead by another clergy or lay speaker. Work with your pastor to actively promote, plan and implement Laity Sunday to assure laity involvement and that the church is educated on the many lay ministries in your church and throughout the New York Annual Conference and the General Church. Make yourself available and share responsibilities and events with your pastor, such as assisting in visiting the sick, homebound, and visitors to your church. Don't be territorial and remember your pastor's and your ministry are about God and Jesus Christ—not about us. Your pastor has a responsibility to make sure the congregation knows you are partners and a team working to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

• **Become a partner with your congregation**, communicate with them and make sure they know you are there to help them and the church. Listen to congregational concerns and issues and communicate those to the pastor, while providing information to the congregation that may alleviate their concerns. If your church has more than one service and different type services, such as traditional and contemporary, consider having an Associate Lay Leader to assure a Lay Leader is attending all services and each service is aware of their Lay Leader. (see section on Associate Lay Leaders)

• **Be involved in your churches stewardship emphasis** and assure the emphasis is ongoing throughout the year. Promote giving by keeping the congregation educated on all the ministries involved in your church and our connectional system. Learn and educate your congregation on how their apportionments are used in ministry throughout the world. Help identify your congregations' gifts and graces and allow those with a passion to serve to fulfill their ministry without facing bureaucratic obstacles and roadblock. Never let "that is not the way we do it" or "it is not in accordance with the discipline" stand in the way of making disciples of Jesus Christ by new ministry and outreach.

• **Educate yourself on the United Methodist Church**, the connectional system, and the New York Annual Conference. It is recommended the Lay or Associate Lay Leaders be the representative for your church at Annual Conference. Become familiar with the training and ministries available to your church and laity through the General, Jurisdictional, and Annual Conference and assure your church takes advantage of them. Learn how delegates to General and Jurisdictional conferences are elected, identify those in your congregation that have a passion to be delegates to those conferences, and help them nominate themselves for that service. Identify people in your congregation that have a passion to serve in ministries of the New York Annual Conference and provide the necessary information to your District Lay Leader to nominate them.

- **Continue your Christian education and leadership skills** and encourage your church laity to do the same. Become involved in Disciple, Emmaus Walk and Cluster Groups, Lay Speaking Program and training (see the section on Lay Speaking) and others that promote outreach and discipleship.

- **Promote the use of teams in your church** to identify new ministries and areas of outreach and as that ministry is implemented allow teams to move on to other new areas. While many of our committees are necessary for the operations and functions of the church they sometimes get too involved in the operational element and loose sight of our vision which is “Every Church challenged and equipped to make disciples of Jesus Christ by taking risks and changing lives.” As a Lay Leader you can never let your church forget that and establishment of “*special onetime ministry*” teams may be the best approach.

- **You are a voting member on the charge conference** and the church council, the committee on finance, the committee on lay leadership, and the committee on pastor-parish relations or staff-parish relations. It is recommended that you or the Associate Lay Leader be present at each meeting, along with your pastor, to serve as an interpreter of the actions and programs of the annual conference and the general Church—a good reason for the Lay Leader/Associate Lay Leader to be the Church lay member of Annual Conference.

- **Promote effective relationships between you and your pastor**, which begins with open minds and mutual respect. This starts with an understanding that the Church is God's Church and only by His Grace and Love we can be a part of this great ministry. Congregations respond in a positive way to Pastor-Lay leadership when they see that both are spirit filled and working in harmony for effective ministry. This kind of partnership ministry, with the whole congregation involved, becomes very important when pastoral leadership changes.

- **Identify and work with those laity that are called** to Licensed or ordained ministry You, your pastor and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee have an awesome responsibility to identify and work with those laity that are called to Licensed or ordained ministry. (please see the section on Laity Called to Ordained Ministry in this hand book) This may be the most important job you have as a Lay Leader, which is to help others heed God's call, and you are encouraged to be aware of that job and the process involved.

- **Actively support** the work of the United Methodist Men, Women, Youth, Children, and other organized lay groups.

- **Serve with love, with joy, and enthusiasm**; with courage to move as God directs; and with guidance from the Holy Spirit through daily prayer. Length of service for Lay Leaders is recommended to be three years where you are elected annually. However many churches have specific and different requirements which may warrant a change to the three year rule and that may be determined by each church.

You can always get help to better perform your role and responsibilities by contacting your District Lay Leader, Conference Lay Leader, referring to the Book of Discipline, or and probably most importantly, from the partnering relationship you have with your pastor.

Associate Lay Leader

The Book of Discipline provides that “Associate lay leaders may be elected to work with the lay leader in any local church.” Election of Associate Lay Leaders is encouraged in churches with multiple services and where traditional and contemporary services are held in the same church. Each service should have a Lay Leader/Associate Lay Leader attending to help accomplish the roles and

responsibilities of Lay Leader. Lay Leaders and Associate Lay Leaders should establish good communications meet periodically and form a partnership with the church pastor(s). Associate Lay Leaders should have the same basic responsibilities as the Lay Leader and assure a Lay Leader is represented in church ministries and attendance at all meetings where the Lay Leaders are involved. However, if the Lay Leader and Associate Lay Leader(s) are attending the same meeting as Lay Leaders there should only be one vote for Lay Leadership representation.

District Lay Leader's Ministry

¶ 658

1. The district lay leader is the elected leader of the district laity and shall be a professing member of a local church. The district lay leader shall provide for the training of local church lay leaders for their ministries in the local churches in relation to ¶ 249. The district lay leader shall have responsibility for fostering awareness of the role of the laity both within congregations and through their ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world in achieving the mission of the Church, and supporting and enabling lay participation in the planning and decision-making processes of the district and the local churches in cooperation with the district superintendent and pastors.
2. The district lay leader shall be elected as determined by the annual conference for a term of not less than four years. The method of nomination and the maximum term of office shall be determined by the annual conference. There may be one or more associate district lay leader(s) within a district. The associate district lay leader(s) shall be elected as determined by the annual conference. The method of nomination and the maximum term of office shall be determined by the annual conference. The district lay leader and the associate district lay leader(s) may be reimbursed for their approved expenses.
3. The district lay leader will meet regularly with the district superintendent to discuss the state of the district, the Church, and the needs for ministry both locally and globally.
4. The district lay leader is a member of annual conference (see ¶ 32).
5. The district lay leader shall be a member of the conference board of laity or equivalent structure.
6. The district lay leader shall work with the District Superintendent to ensure that there is a district director of Lay Speaking Ministries and shall serve on the district committee on Lay Speaking Ministries.
7. The district lay leader is a member of the district conference and shall be a member of the district council on ministries or alternative structure and its executive committee. The district lay leader shall also be a member of the committee on district superintendency of the district.
8. The district lay leader may serve as a lay member of the district committee on ordained ministry (or equivalent agency) and the district board of church location and building (or equivalent agency).
9. The district lay leader shall relate to the organized lay groups in the district such as United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, and United Methodist Youth and support their work and their activities.
10. The district lay leader may designate persons to serve as proxy in any of the above groups except the annual conference, the district conference, district council on ministries, and the district council on ministries executive committee, district committee on ordained ministry, and the district board of church location and building.
11. This legislation shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the 2004 General Conference.

Conference Lay Leader's Ministry

¶ 603

- a) The conference lay leader is the elected leader of conference laity and is an officer of the annual conference. The conference lay leader shall participate in annual conference sessions as a partner in ministry with the Bishop.

Business of the Conference

¶ 605

1. The session shall open with a period of devotion, followed by a call of the roll, including the roll of the local pastors.
2. The annual conference, to expedite the transaction of its business, may adopt an agenda as a basis of its procedure. Such agenda shall be prepared by the bishop, the district superintendents, the conference lay leader, and such others as the conference may name and shall be submitted to the conference for adoption.
3. Members of all standing committees, boards, and commissions of the annual conference shall be selected in such manner as the Book of Discipline may specifically require or as the annual conference may determine. Attention shall be given to inclusiveness (¶¶ 124, 138).
For the purpose of adjusting tenure, a certain number of members may be elected or appointed for particular terms. Members shall hold office until their successors are elected. For the annual conference agencies provided for by the Discipline, See ¶ 609.1; and for the agencies established by the annual conference itself, See ¶ 609.2.
4. The business of the annual conference shall include receiving and acting upon reports from district superintendents, officers, standing and special committees, boards, commissions, and societies and also making such inquiries as the Council of Bishops shall recommend by the provision of a supplemental guide.
5. The agenda of the annual conference shall provide time for an address or report that shall be the responsibility of the conference lay leader.

The Conference Lay Leader—

1. The conference lay leader is the elected leader of conference laity and will have responsibility for fostering awareness of the role of the laity both within the congregation and through their ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world in achieving the mission of the Church and for enabling and supporting lay participation in the planning and decision-making processes of the annual conference, district, and local church in cooperation with the bishop, district superintendents, and pastors.
2. The conference lay leader shall relate to the organized lay groups in the conference such as United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Youth, and Scouting Ministries, encourage and support their work and activities. The conference lay leader shall also have the general responsibility in: (1) developing the advocacy role for laity in the life of the Church; (2) increasing the participation of laity in the sessions and structure of the annual conference; and (3) encouraging laypersons in the general ministry of the Church.
3. The conference lay leader shall chair the conference board of laity or equivalent structure, shall be a member of the annual conference, the conference council on ministries or equivalent structure, the executive committee, if any, of the conference council on ministries, the conference committee on nominations, the conference committee on episcopacy, and the committee planning annual conference sessions; and may be designated by virtue of office to membership on any conference agency by the annual conference.
4. The conference lay leader shall be responsible for presenting a report to the annual conference.
5. The conference lay leader may serve on the conference board of ordained ministry and will participate in the Service of Ordination at annual conference.
6. The conference lay leader shall meet with the cabinet when matters relating to the coordination, implementation, or administration of the conference program, or other matters as the cabinet may determine are on the agenda.
7. The conference lay leader will meet regularly with the bishop to discuss the state of the annual conference, the Church, and the needs for ministry both locally and globally.

8. The conference lay leader shall ensure that the annual conference has a conference director of lay speaking ministries filled in the manner determined by the annual conference and the conference lay leader shall participate in Lay Speaking Ministries.
9. The conference lay leader shall be elected for a term of not less than four years by the annual conference as the annual conference may determine. The method of nomination and term of office shall be determined by the annual conference. Associate lay leader(s), to work with the conference lay leader, may be elected by the annual conference as it may determine. The conference lay leader and associate lay leader(s) will receive reasonable reimbursement for approved dues and expenses necessary for their ministry.
10. The conference lay leader shall be a member of the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders.

Certified Lay Ministry

The 2004 General Conference affirmed the Certification of Lay Ministers in The United Methodist Church. This form of ministry follows the early Methodist tradition of lay preachers and class leaders who served in Christian community.

Today, Certified Lay Ministers (CLM) are vital to the mission and ministry of churches that:

- are small and may be struggling to afford traditional pastoral leadership. CLMs may be assigned effectively for longer pastorates.
- have been on multi-point charges or parishes sharing clergy leadership. CLMs may serve as part of a pastoral team, increasing continuity of leadership.
- experience numeric growth and can benefit from a pastoral team. Larger churches can have a CLM as a pastoral associate.
- serve multi-cultural or cross-cultural groups by developing indigenous leadership.

From *The Book of Discipline*

¶ 271. Certified Lay Minister—In order to enhance the quality of ministry to small membership churches, expand team ministry in churches and in deference to an expression of gifts and evidence of God's grace associated with the lay ministry of early Methodism, the certified lay minister is to be recognized and utilized.

1. The certified lay minister shall preach the Word, provide a care ministry to the congregation, assist in program leadership, and be a witness in the community for the growth, missional and connectional thrust of The United Methodist Church as part of a ministry team with the supervision and support of a clergy person.
2. A certified lay speaker or a person with equivalent training as defined by his/her district or conference may be certified as a lay minister by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry after he/she has:
 - a) Been recommended by the pastor of the local church where he/she holds membership and by vote of the church council or charge conference.
 - b) Completed courses relevant to his/her assignment including preaching and exegesis, the care of the congregation, and other courses as recommended by the General Board of Discipleship and General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in consultation with leaders in the annual conference, and other appropriate agencies and organizations.
 - c) Demonstrated appreciation of the history, polity, doctrine, worship and liturgy of The United Methodist Church through service in his/her local church.
 - d) Been recommended by the district superintendent after completion of appropriate screening.
 - e) Made application in writing to the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.

- f) Appeared before the District Committee on Ordained Ministry for review and approval.
3. The certified lay minister is to apply in writing for recertification biannually to the District Committee on Ordained Ministry upon:
 - a) Ministry review by church council or charge conference from the congregation of which he/she is a member.
 - b) Satisfactory completion of an approved continuing education event, and
 - c) Recommendation of the district superintendent.
4. The certified lay minister under assignment is to appear biannually before the District Committee on Ordained Ministry for recertification after:
 - a) Ministry review by church council or charge conference where assigned,
 - b) Satisfactory completion of an approved continuing education event, and
 - c) Recommendation of the district superintendent.
5. Transfer of Certification by Certified Lay Ministers
 A certified lay minister who moves may transfer certification to the new district upon receipt of a letter from the previous district's Committee on Ordained Ministry confirming current certification.
6. The certified lay minister is a layperson and as such is not eligible for support by equitable compensation funds or pension that are provided for clergy members. The local congregation is encouraged to provide appropriate compensation.

Lay Speaking Ministries

From *The Book of Discipline*:

Section XI. Lay Speaking Ministries

¶ 267. Lay Speaking

1. A lay speaker (local church or certified) is a professing member of a local church or charge who is ready and desirous to serve the Church and who is well informed on and committed to the Scriptures and the doctrine, heritage, organization, and life of The United Methodist Church and who has received specific training to develop skills in witnessing to the Christian faith through spoken communication, church and community leadership, and care-giving ministries. An applicant must be active in the support of the local church or charge.
2. Lay speakers are to serve the local church or charge (or beyond the local church or charge) in any way in which their witness or leadership and service inspires the laity to deeper commitment to Christ and more effective discipleship, including the interpretation of the Scriptures, doctrine, organization, and ministries of the church.
3. Through continued study and training a lay speaker should prepare to undertake one or more of the following functions, giving primary attention to service within the local church or charge.
 - a) To take initiative in giving leadership, assistance, and support to the program emphases of the church.
 - b) To lead meetings for prayer, training, study, and discussion when requested by the pastor, district superintendent, or committee on lay speaking.
 - c) To conduct, or assist in conducting, services of worship, and present sermons and addresses when requested by the pastor, district superintendent, or committee on lay speaking.
 - d) To relate to appropriate committees and ministry areas in providing leadership for congregational and community life and fostering care-giving ministries.
4. Lay speaker training courses shall be those recommended by the General Board of Discipleship or alternates approved by the conference committee on lay speaking. Such training should enable ministries with all language and cultural groups as appropriate.
5. It is recommended that a service of commitment be held for persons recognized as local church or certified lay speakers.

¶ 268. Local Church Lay Speaker

1. A candidate may be recognized as a local church lay speaker by the district or conference committee on lay speaking after the candidate has:
 - a. Made application in writing to the appropriate committee and has been recommended by the pastor and the church council or the charge conference of the local church in which membership is held. The district superintendent shall be responsible for reporting the names of applicants to the appropriate committee.
 - b. Completed the basic course for lay speaking.
2. The local church lay speaker shall serve the local church in which membership is held by witness of the spoken word, vital leadership service, and care-giving ministry (See ¶ 267.3).
3. To maintain status, a report and reapplication with recommendations must be submitted annually and a refresher course approved by the Conference Committee on Lay Speaking Ministries must be completed once in every three years. (See ¶ 247.11).

¶ 269. Certified Lay Speaker

1. A candidate may be recognized as a certified lay speaker by the district or conference committee on Lay Speaking Ministries after the candidate has:
 - a) Made application in writing to the appropriate committee and has been recommended by the pastor and the church council or the charge conference of the local church in which he or she holds membership.
 - b) Completed both basic and one advanced training courses for lay speaking.
 - c) Had his or her qualifications reviewed and approved by the appropriate committee (See ¶ 259.2 f [9]).
2. The certified lay speaker shall continue to serve the local church in the witness of the spoken word, vital leadership service, and care-giving ministry (See ¶ 267.1). In addition, the certified lay speaker may serve in the district and conference and in local churches other than the local church in which membership is held.
3. Recognition as a certified lay speaker shall be renewed annually by the district or conference committee on Lay Speaking Ministries after the certified lay speaker has:
 - a) Requested in writing the renewal of certification.
 - b) Submitted an annual report to the charge conference and the committee on Lay Speaking Ministries, giving evidence of the satisfactory performance of lay speaking service.
 - c) Been recommended for renewal by the pastor and the church council or charge conference.
 - d) Completed at least once in every three years an advanced course for lay speakers.

¶ 270. Transfer of Certification by Certified Lay Speakers

A certified lay speaker who moves may transfer certification to the new district upon receipt of a letter from the previous district's committee on Lay Speaking Ministries confirming current certification and the date of completion of the most recent advanced course taken. Further renewal of certification is in accordance with ¶269.

Structure of The United Methodist Church—in the USA

“The structure of the United Methodist Church is to center around Missions and Ministry for Christ.”

Local Churches 34,892 (2003 Reports)

In the New York Annual Conference 474 (2008 Reports)

Districts 504 (2003 Reports)

In the New York Annual conference there are 6 Districts

Annual Conferences (63)

Jurisdictions (5) We are in the Northeast Jurisdiction.

General Church The General Conference meets every 4 years..

Annual Conference

The annual conference of the New York Annual Conference is held every year in June on the Campus of Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York. It is required that some business must be conducted, but the focus of our Conference becoming more of an uplifting and worshiping celebration. The Annual Conference generally starts on Wednesday afternoon and concludes on Saturday evening. This will allow many to attend that could not get time off from work schedules. All clergy are members of the Annual Conference and each charge is allowed to elect one or more lay member. All United Methodists are invited to attend Annual Conference, but only the members of the Annual Conference are allowed to vote during the business sessions. As listed in the roles and responsibilities, one of the Lay Leaders responsibilities is to serve as an interpreter of the actions and programs of the Annual Conference and the General Church. Whether you are the Lay Member of Annual Conference or not, you will find Annual Conference beneficial and spiritually rewarding. It will help acquaint you with the work of the church. You will be proud you are a United Methodist.

Support Team

Conference Lay Leader

Renata Smith

(H)914-664-2622

(C)914-391-3998

renata10553@yahoo.com

Conference Director of Lay Speaking Ministries

Peter O'Neill.

631-750-3488

poppao@optonline.net

Episcopal Office 888-696-6922

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|---------|
| Jeremiah J. Park..... | Resident Bishop, New York Annual Conference | Ext 221 |
| Dennis Winkleblack..... | Assistant to Bishop | Ext 234 |
| Evelyn Brunson..... | Administrative Assistant to Bishop | Ext 221 |
| Ann A. Pearson..... | Director, Connectional Ministries..... | Ext 230 |
| Ross Williams | Treasurer/Director, Administrative Services & Finance | Ext 212 |
| Joseph Ewoodzie..... | Mission Outreach/Disaster Preparedness & Response..... | Ext 233 |
| Jean Strong | Administrative Assistant to Connectional Ministries | Ext 228 |

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------|
| Robert Miller | Conference Secretary | Ext 231 |
| Lynda Gomi | Children's Ministries Consultant | Ext 219 |
| Neal Bowes | Youth Ministries Consultan | 203-241-4051 |
| James Stinson | Older Adult Ministries | |
| Arturo Maine | Hispanic Ministries Consultant | |
| The Learning Center | | Ext 119 |
| Sam Rosenfeld | Controller | Ext 214 |
| Fran Collins | Accounts Receivable | Ext 233 |
| Heman Persaud | Accounts Payable | Ext 215 |
| To be hired | HealthFlex and Retirement Accounts | Ext 232 |
| Pat Perruccio | Relationship Associate | Ext 229 |
| Beth Patkus | Archivist | Ext 128 |
| Keith A. Muhleman | Executive Director, UM Frontier Foundation | Ext 238 |
| Sally Evans | Office Manager, UMFF | Ext 239 |
| George Engelhardt | Stewardship Consultant | |
| Joanne Utley | Editor, <i>The Vision</i> | |
| Barbara Eastman | nyac.com Webmaster | |

DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS

CATSKILL HUDSON

Name: Rev. James W. Moore
Phone: 845-679-3650
Email: cathudnyac@aol.com

CONNECTICUT

Name: Rev. Kenneth Kiefer
Phone: (203) 288-0286
Email: ccnyac@aol.com

LONG ISLAND EAST

Name: Rev. Adrienne Brewington

Phone: 631-366-2396
Email: lienyac@aol.com

LONG ISLAND WEST

Name: Rev. Kenny Kang Yi
Phone: 516-333-9868
Email: liwnyac@aol.com

METROPOLITAN

Name: Rev. Noel N. Chin
Phone: 212-870-2045
Email: mnnyac@aol.com

NEW YORK / CONNECTICUT

Name: Rev. Jeannette Bassinger-Ishii
Phone: 203-348-9181

DISTRICT LAY LEADERS

CATSKILL HUDSON

Name: Margaret Howe
Phone: 845-255-8111
Email: howemarge@aol.com

Name: Gerald Rosenberger
Phone: 845-633-0776
Email: grosenberger@hvc.rr.com

Name: Fran Reed
Phone: 607-538-1512
Email: Pegall40@yahoo.com

Name: Toni Vessey
Phone: 607-363-7363
Email: ajvessey@hotmail.com

CONNECTICUT

Name: Mitch Underwood
Phone: 860-747-9829
Email: mitch@underwoods.org

Name: Ximena Varas
Phone: 203-278-1568
Email: xvaras@gmail.com

LONG ISLAND EAST

Name: Lorraine Leak
Phone: 516-997-6958
Email: lorrainl@optonline.net

Name: Janet Barr
Phone: 631-288-5539
Email: jbarr@suffock.lib.ny.us

LONG ISLAND WEST

Name: Seymour Thomas
Phone: 718-451-2523
Email: SGladT@aol.com

METROPOLITAN

Name: Mary Morton
Phone: 914-969-0936
Email: marmor1@optonline.net

Name: Evelyn Brunson
Phone: 914-997-1570 x 221
Email: ebrunson@nyac.com

Name: Inday Day
Email: indayday01@aol.com

NEW YORK/ CONNECTICUT

Name: Henry McCarter
Phone: 845-258-4361
Email: hmcarte@optonline.net

DISTRICT DIRECTORS OF LAY SPEAKING

CATSKILL HUDSON

Name: Margaret Howe
Phone: 845-255-8111
Email: howemarge@aol.com

Name: Eugene Knoth
Phone: 845-688-5901
Email: Knothheat@yahoo.com

CONNECTICUT

Name: Mary Brevigleiri
Phone: 860-307-4611
Email: mbrevigleiri@perrytechnology.com

LONG ISLAND EAST

Name: Peter O'Neill
Phone: 631-750-3488
Email: poppao@optonline.net

LONG ISLAND WEST

Name: Marie Davis
Phone: 718-723-2892
Email: roses4him777@yahoo.com

METROPOLITAN

Name: Sue Gill
Phone: 914-843-5820
Email: suegill@optonline.net

NEW YORK/ CONNECTICUT

Name: Elaine Winward
Phone: 845-661-6331
Email: ewinward@optonline.net

Resources

The Bible

The Book Of Discipline Available from Cokesbury

Guidelines for Leading Your Church, Leading as Lay Leader Available from Cokesbury

The Interpreter (monthly magazine) Order through your church from the United Methodist Communications, Inc.

The New York Annual Conference Journal

Available online: <http://nyac.com/pages/detail/1756>

Connecticut District Directory Available at: [http://www.gb-gm-umc.org/ctcentral/CT.%20District%20Directory%202009-2010\(10-31-09\).pdf](http://www.gb-gm-umc.org/ctcentral/CT.%20District%20Directory%202009-2010(10-31-09).pdf)

United Methodist Laity Website <http://www.unitedmethodistlaity.com>

General Board of Discipleship

Sandy Zeigler Director Lay Leader Development, szeigler@gbod.org <http://www.gbod.org/laity/>

This document has been adapted from "Hand Book for Local Church Lay Leaders" by the North Alabama Conference, 2006