

GUIDELINES ON LAY PRESIDENCY AT THE SACRAMENTS

These Guidelines are a revised edition of the Guidelines approved by the Assembly Standing Committee in September 1995 (ASC minute 95.69.01) and only reflect changes in nomenclature and regulation numbers that have come about since 1995.

ASC Minute 13.322: It was resolved to approve the following guidelines for use by presbyteries in carrying out their responsibilities pursuant to Regulation 3.1.3 (p):

"1 Ministry with Congregations

A presbytery may authorise a lay person to preside at the sacraments when the following conditions have been met:

- 1.1 With respect to the Eucharist, a desire to celebrate on a more frequent or appropriate basis than is presently possible is expressed by a congregation which is under the care and oversight of the presbytery.
- 1.2 With respect to baptism, there is an ongoing worshipping community under the care and oversight of the presbytery which is able to nurture candidates, whether or not this community is a congregation as defined in the Constitution.
- 1.3 There is a recognised and suitably gifted lay person who has or shares primary pastoral responsibility for the congregation.
- 1.4 The presbytery has reviewed the situation in consultation with the congregation, the Church Council and minister (as appropriate) affirming:
 - 1.4.1 that Christian worship comprises both word and sacrament;
 - 1.4.2 that appropriate administrative structures exist for maintenance of baptismal records;
 - 1.4.3 that it is impractical or inappropriate to redeploy ordained people for this purpose;
 - 1.4.4 the gifts of the proposed presider and their acceptance by the persons with whom they are in ministry.

2 Ministry in settings other than congregations

The Assembly recognises that worshipping communities meet in contexts where they are not necessarily a "congregation" as defined by the Constitution, and that it may be appropriate that a lay person preside at the sacraments in these contexts.

- 2.1 The Presbytery may therefore authorise an appropriate and suitably gifted lay person to preside at the sacraments in such situations, including but not limited to:
 - 2.1.1 ministry with youth
 - 2.1.2 camps, conferences, retreats, etc
 - 2.1.3 hospitals, nursing homes, etc
 - 2.1.4 prisons
 - 2.1.5 educational institutions
 - 2.1.6 workplace situations
 - 2.1.7 other communities of faith not recognised as congregations

3 Preparation for Authorisation

Presbytery shall require that any lay person it intends to authorise to preside at the sacraments satisfactorily undertake a course of preparation. This course need not be unduly long or complicated and should be appropriate to the

person's background and experience and ministry. The course, as far as possible, should include:

- 3.1.1 the biblical witness to the sacraments,
- 3.1.2 theologies of sacrament and worship,
- 3.1.3 the Uniting Church's doctrine of baptism and the Lord's Supper,
- 3.1.4 the role of symbols in human existence,
- 3.1.5 the structure of worship in the UCA, with particular attention to "the service of the Lord's Day" and the baptismal liturgies set out in Uniting in Worship 2,
- 3.1.6 practical reflection on the art of presiding in consultation with an approved supervisor,
- 3.1.7 reflection on the above issues in the context of the presider's own community.

4 The following procedures are recommended once the above conditions are met:

- 4.1 Authorisation to be given in the first instance for a period of 12 months, with the option of re-authorisation for a specified period at the end of that time.
- 4.2 Authorisation clearly to specify:
 - 4.2.1 at which sacrament or whether at both sacraments the person is authorised to preside,
 - 4.2.2 within which community the person is authorised to preside.
- 4.3 In the case of authorisation being given to a person in congregation or group of linked congregations where there is an ordained minister in placement, the lay presider shall be under the supervision of that minister and the Church Council, and under the discipline of presbytery.
- 4.4 In the case of authorisation being given to a person in a congregation or group of linked congregations where there is no ordained minister in placement, the lay presider shall be under the supervision and discipline of presbytery and accountable to the Church Council.
- 4.5 In the case of authorisation being given to a person in a non-congregational situation, the lay presider shall be under the supervision and discipline of the presbytery.
- 4.6 The lay presider shall use the appropriate liturgies published in Uniting in Worship 2, or orders of service with similar components and which are approved by the supervisor as specified in 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 above.
- 4.7 Any presbytery authorising a lay person to preside at the sacraments under the conditions stated in 4.4 and 4.5 above shall be required to establish or ensure that there exists a suitable form of supervision of those so authorised.
- 4.8 Any presbytery authorising a lay person to preside at baptism in the conditions stated in 4.5 above is to ensure that adequate pastoral administrative structures are in place for the approval and continuing nurture of candidates for baptism and for the maintenance of baptismal records.
- 4.9 The presbytery authorising the lay person shall recognize him / her in a service of worship in the community in which his / her responsibility is to be exercised, or in the case of a lay chaplain, at his / her commissioning service. At this service of worship the authorised lay presider will declare his / her willingness to accept the discipline of the church."

Approved by the Assembly Standing Committee, July 2013.