

The Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Hāhi Weteriana O Aotearoa

**Administration Division
P O Box 931
Christchurch 8140**

**Information Leaflet No. 153
(revised July 2017)**

LAY PREACHER CANDIDATES Provisions & Guidelines of the Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa

The ministry of Lay Preachers in the Methodist Church of New Zealand is, like every ministry of the Church, a spiritual gift, exercised at God's call.

A Lay Preacher in Training must be on the membership roll of a congregation of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, Union or Co-operating congregation or another negotiating denomination (Anglican, Christian Churches of New Zealand, Congregational or Presbyterian).

Those who feel led to offer for training as a Lay Preacher should share their sense of call with the Parish Meeting, normally through the Superintendent Presbyter, in order that the call may be clarified and tested. The Parish Meeting will include in its considerations:

- a) the candidate's skill in oral communication or his/her potential to develop such a skill, and
- b) the candidate's readiness to accept prescribed training.

When the Parish Meeting or corresponding body considers the time to be appropriate, it will formally designate the candidate as a Lay Preacher-in-Training and convey this designation to the Synod Secretary.

The Training Programme

After becoming a Lay-Preacher-in-Training, the candidate will be expected to undertake and succeed in the course of study approved by Trinity College. Those who already possess other academic qualifications should forward their academic record via the Parish Superintendent to the Principal, Trinity College for approval.

In addition to academic requirements, a candidate for accreditation must have conducted, or taken a leading part in conducting, at least 10 services of worship in a Methodist, Co-operating or Union Parish.

Standards:

- a) The Principal shall advise on the approved courses of study.
- b) Any prior learning completed by a candidate must be approved by the Principal.

Accreditation

The rules for the accreditation of Lay Preachers are set out in the Methodist Law Book, Section 1-8.1 to 8.10.

Further qualifications for accreditation include:

- (a) a demonstrated commitment to the life of the Church, and
- (b) a theological understanding acceptable within the Methodist Church.

When the Parish Meeting considers that a Lay Preacher-in-Training may be ready for accreditation:

- It will advise the Synod Superintendent who will appoint three hearers (normally one presbyter, one lay person from the congregation and one lay preacher) to evaluate a service of worship led by the candidate. They will also explore with the candidate issues of personal faith and theology and his/her sense of call and commitment to the Methodist Church of New Zealand, including its Mission Statement and bicultural journey.
- A report on the Lay Preacher-in-Training's readiness will go first to his/her Parish Meeting. Once the Parish Meeting has assured itself of the candidate's suitability as a Lay Preacher, the report is forwarded to the Synod Secretary.
- When accreditation has been approved by the Synod a certificate will be issued by the ecumenical New Zealand Lay Preachers Association (NZLPA) and presented during a service of worship.
- Application forms for certificates are available from the website or the NZLPA Registrar and should be completed by the Parish Superintendent.
The certificates are currently issued in English.
- The form should be sent to the NZLPA Registrar, currently Hugh Williams, 3 Burbank Crescent, Churton Park, Wellington 6037, email: connek@xtra.co.nz, with a fee of \$25 to be paid by the Lay Preacher's church. This covers the cost of production of the

certificate and includes a year's membership to the NZLPA and subscription to the magazine.

Preaching Opportunities and Continuing Education

- Whilst accreditation is for life, the 'recognition' of Lay Preachers – whether accredited or not – as currently competent to conduct worship is at the discretion of the Parish Meeting.
- All Lay Preachers are expected to be accredited, active, and upskilled (AAU) having led no fewer than 3 services, and undertaken no less than 8 hours on-going training each year.
- All recognised Lay Preachers should expect to be given preaching opportunities regularly, and may wish to consult the Parish Superintendent or Synod Superintendent if this is not happening.
- An annual return by Lay Preachers or their Parish to the Methodist Lay Preachers Network (Viv Whimster, vjwhimster@gmail.com) enables the list of Lay Preachers included in the Yearbook to be accurate and current.

Lay Preachers accredited in English from other cultures

- Consideration must be given to Lay Preachers qualified in English who come from other cultures. Such LPs are encouraged to spend some time in Aotearoa New Zealand congregations, study a course in the bicultural church or undertake a recognised course in Māori studies (e.g. through te Wananga) and must seek approval of the Parish or Leaders' Meeting.

Accreditation in English as a second language

These guidelines were discussed informally with Mission Resourcing and the Superintendents of the cultural Synods at Conference 2014. They apply to those who have been accredited in one language and then seek accreditation in English as a 2nd language

- **Worship**
 - Gain experience through leading worship (prayers, liturgy, sermon) for English-speaking congregations over 2 years;

- Lead a service that is evaluated by a team appointed by the English-speaking geographical Synod; team to be comprised of:
one lay person from the English-speaking congregation, an accredited Lay Preacher from the English -speaking/ geographical Synod and a presbyter from the English-speaking/ geographical Synod.
- This team will conduct an interview with the Lay Preacher to ask about his/her faith journey and ensure that s/he has an understanding of the bicultural journey and adequate English language skills.
- **Study**
The team may recommend consulting with Trinity College for advice on further study.
- **Congregational Life**
Attend a minimum of 6 Leaders' Meetings of an English-speaking congregation in order to understand the structure and regulations of an English-speaking Methodist, United or Co-operating Parish.

Financial Membership of the NZLPA

All accredited Methodist Lay Preachers are encouraged to become financial members of the NZLPA (New Zealand Lay Preachers' Association). Membership is currently \$25 per annum (waged) or \$20 (unwaged). This entitles the member to receive the magazine *Word and Worship*.

Fees should be paid to the Treasurer,

Valerie Marshall,
3A Trist Place,
Edgware,
Christchurch 8013.

email: kiwikid1948@gmail.com

Course Information

Course information is available from:

The Principal
Private Bag 28 907
Remuera
Auckland 1541