

Policy regarding Licensed Ministers

Southwest Association, Michigan Conference
United Church of Christ

This policy was approved by the Church & Ministry Committee on October 3, 2019

Whereas the UCC Manual on Ministry published in December 2018 proposes the discontinuance of Licensed Ministerial Standing in favor of the new Lay Ministerial Standing category,

and whereas the creation of Lay Ministerial Standing appears to enshrine and make official the occasional criticism of Licensed Ministerial Standing as a second class ecclesiastical authorization,

and whereas Lay Ministerial Standing carries all the requirements of clergy without some of its rights and privileges and in its very title implies the person is not worthy to be called clergy,

and whereas Lay Ministerial Standing as defined also seems to pressure the Lay Minister to become a Member-In-Discernment when this may not be needed or even appropriate,

and whereas the Manual on Ministry seems to question a church's viability should the hiring of a Lay Minister be needed, thereby implying such a church is something lesser and perhaps not worthy of existing,

the Church & Ministry Committee of the Southwest Association, Michigan Conference shall continue to use Licensed Ministerial Standing instead of Lay Ministerial Standing in its authorization of clergy. Such ministers shall have voice and vote within the Association as required by the Association bylaws and it is requested that they also be granted the full privileges of authorized clergy within the Michigan Conference and other venues of the United Church of Christ as long as they maintain Licensed Ministerial Standing within the Southwest Association.