

MANUAL OF LAWS

LOCAL PREACHERS

4G.01 A Local Preacher is a member of the Church, recognised as qualified and called to preach the Gospel, though not “separated” from her/his ordinary business.

4G.02 Superintendent Ministers shall give special attention to suitable men and women in their circuits, and, in co-operation with other Ministers and Local Preachers, as far as possible, assist in preparing them for this office.

4G.03 The Superintendent Minister shall have the responsibility of nominating, to the Local Preachers’ Meeting, or where no such meeting is held to the Circuit Executive, as candidates for appointment as Local Preachers, persons who:

- (a) have been truly converted to God,
- (b) give evidence of genuine piety,
- (c) are zealous in promoting the work of God,
- (d) have the ability to express themselves with sufficient readiness and clearness,
- (e) intend to complete the course of study prescribed by Conference in the time allocated.

If the Local Preachers’ Meeting is satisfied that a candidate is suitable, he/she shall be recommended to the Circuit Executive.

If the Circuit Executive is satisfied that a candidate is suitable, he/she shall be received as a Local Preacher on trial.

4G.04 The Superintendent Minister shall:

- (a) immediately after the Circuit Executive forward the candidates’ names, ages, addresses and date of acceptance on trial to the Lay Connexional Local Preachers’ Secretary.
- (b) appoint suitable persons as Local Tutors who shall supervise and teach the prescribed course as defined in the Minutes of Conference, and forward the name of the tutor for each student to the Ministerial Local Preachers’ Secretary, stating full address and telephone number.
- (c) in December of each year submit a written report on each local preacher on trial to the Ministerial Local Preachers’ Secretary.

4G.05 Local Preachers on trial are required to:

- (a) study, with the assistance of her/his local tutor, the course as prescribed by Conference and submit to a satisfactory standard such assignments as are required therein.
- (b) study diligently the Word of God.
- (c) keep a portfolio of practical experience.
- (d) each year conduct a service in the presence of at least two Ministers, and where possible, two Local Preachers, in addition to members of the Circuit Executive.
- (e) read John Wesley’s Standard *Forty-four Sermons* and his *Notes on the New Testament*.
- (f) read at least four books from the list published in the current Minutes of Conference.

4G.06 The period on trial shall normally not be less than one year and not more than four years, at the end of which the local preacher on trial shall:

- (a) conduct an appraisal service, as arranged by the Superintendent Minister.
- (b) present to the Local Preachers’ Meeting, or Circuit Executive, her/his portfolio of practical experience.
- (c) undergo, in the Local Preachers’ Meeting or Circuit Executive, an oral examination conducted by the Superintendent Minister or under her/his direction, in which questions will be asked relating to her/his:
 - (i) religious experience,
 - (ii) knowledge of and loyalty to Methodist doctrine in particular and Christian doctrine in general,
 - (iii) willingness to submit to Methodist discipline.

4G.07 When the candidate has satisfactorily completed the requirements in paragraphs 4G.05, and 4G.06, the Superintendent Minister shall report accordingly to the Circuit Executive and if the candidate's general effectiveness in preaching and in Christian work and her/his personal character are considered satisfactory by a three-fourths majority of those present, the candidate shall be received as a fully-accredited Local Preacher.

4G.08 If a candidate has not completed the requirements set out in paragraphs 4G.05 and 4G.06 above by the end of the four-year period, he/she may apply through the Local Preachers' Meeting to the Circuit Executive to be kept on trial for an extended period, renewable annually. This renewal will be on the recommendation of the Circuit Local Preacher's Meeting and with the approval of the Circuit Executive. The applicant shall be required to explain why the requirements have not been met. Only in exceptional circumstances, and with the consent of the Connexional Local Preachers' Committee, shall the total period on trial exceed eight years. If after this further period the requirements are still not completed, he/she shall cease to be regarded as a Local Preacher on trial.
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4G.09 Each Local Preacher is required to:

- (a) attend frequently fellowship meetings of the Church and the Lord's Supper.
- (b) affirm in writing each March to the Circuit Executive that he/she continues to believe and preach our doctrines and to observe the discipline of the Church. If such assurance is not forthcoming, he/she shall give the same assurance in writing to the Superintendent Minister, who shall report to the Spring District Synod. If the reply to the questions is in the negative, this will result in the name of the Local Preacher being removed from the Circuit Preaching Plan and the Connexional list of Local Preachers. In a case where the Local Preacher in question replies in the affirmative but the Circuit Executive has reason to doubt this, the matter shall be reported to the District Synod which shall then arrange to convene a District Disciplinary Committee.

4G.10 If a Local Preacher behaves in a manner considered by the Circuit Executive to be inappropriate or a charge is made against a Local Preacher, he/she will be subject to the Disciplinary Procedures set out in Chapter 5.

4G.11 A Local Preacher removing from one Circuit to another shall, on production of her/his certificate as a Local Preacher, together with a letter from the Superintendent Minister stating that he/she is in good standing, be placed on the plan of the latter Circuit.

4G.12 Circuit and Society Treasurers shall be responsible for the payment of traveling expenses to all Local Preachers who conduct services on their Circuits.

4G.13 When a Local Preacher has resigned because he/she has been unable to subscribe to Methodist doctrine and discipline and seeks to be reinstated as a Local Preacher he/she shall:

- (a) make application through the Superintendent Minister to the Circuit Executive. Such application shall not be made until two years have elapsed from her/his readmission to Membership of the Methodist Church, or if membership has not ceased, until two years from the date of her/his resignation.
- (b) be examined at the Circuit Executive. Re-instatement shall require a two-thirds majority in favour of the application of those present and voting.

4G.14 When a Local Preacher has been asked to resign, or been removed, due to behaviour thought to be inappropriate for anyone called to be a preacher of the Gospel, and seeks to be re-instated he/she shall:

- (a) make application through the Superintendent Minister to the Circuit Executive. Such application shall not be made until five years have elapsed from her/his readmission to Membership of the Methodist Church, or if membership has not ceased, until five years from the date of her/his resignation or removal.
- (b) have her/his application for re-instatement referred to the District Disciplinary Committee, the report from which shall be considered before the application proceeds to the Circuit Executive.
- (c) be examined at the Circuit Executive. Re-instatement shall require a two-thirds majority in favour of the application of those present and voting.

4G.15 No person who has been suspended or expelled from the Ministry shall be employed as a Local Preacher without the consent of the Conference.

[2009]