

# Authorisations to Preside at Holy Communion Policy

<b>Prepared By:</b> MPPC	<b>Governance Board Review Date:</b> April 2022
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## **1. Introduction, Purpose and Scope**

In normal circumstances it is ordained ministers of the Methodist Church in Ireland who are authorised to preside at Holy Communion.

In addition, the current policy of the Methodist Church in Ireland is that in order to alleviate deprivation, probationers may preside at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper within the Circuits to which they have been stationed. They do this under the direction of their Circuit Superintendent.

It is the policy of the Methodist Church in Ireland that in certain circumstances a fully accredited Local Preacher of the Methodist Church in Ireland may be granted authorisation to preside at Holy Communion.

The key features of this policy and the procedures involved are set out below.

## **2. Responsibility**

This policy is subject to review by the Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee but is managed by the Connexional Team.

## **3. Key Features of this Policy**

A Circuit which considers that any of its churches or a significant number of church members are deprived of reasonably frequent and regular celebrations of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper through lack of ordained ministers, may apply in writing for the authorisation of fully accredited Local Preachers to preside at that sacrament when appointed to do so on the plan of that circuit, or on other occasions within the circuit when authorised by the Superintendent in consultation with the District Superintendent. Such deprivation may not solely be geographical but may also occur in contexts where missional initiatives are functioning as worshipping communities with a fully accredited Local Preacher as their main leader. In such cases, the Circuit may seek the leader's authorisation.

The authorisation shall be related to a named person for a specific place and for a prescribed period of time.

The authorisation shall be renewable annually. If the District Advisory Committee is satisfied that the person authorised remains suitable and the circumstances of the Circuit have not changed, it may, on the request of the Circuit Executive, recommend a renewal of the authorisation for a second or third year, and the Connexional Team shall support any such recommendation without further investigation. A letter of authorisation signed by the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland shall be issued annually to the person so authorised. If renewal is sought beyond the initial or any subsequent period of three years a full application must take place as set out below.

Once granted, an authorisation shall cease to be valid on cessation of membership or on removal from the Circuit plan.

Persons so authorised shall, unless already instructed in presidency at the Lord's Supper, be so instructed by the District Superintendent or by a minister appointed by her/him, the forms of service authorised by the Conference being used as a basis of instruction.

In emergencies arising after the meeting of the Conference by the death of an ordained minister or otherwise, the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, in consultation with the District Superintendent and Connexional Team, may grant an authorisation having immediate effect and continuing until the 30<sup>th</sup> June following.

#### **4. Application Procedure**

Applications, with reasons for making them and the consent of the nominee, shall be submitted by the Circuit Executive for consideration by the District Advisory Committee. The Superintendent Minister shall be responsible for the transmission of the request to the District Superintendent, stating the result of the voting of the members of the Circuit Executive.

Local Preachers nominated for authorisation to preside at the Lord's Supper shall normally be members in the Circuit. The Circuit Executive shall provide the District Advisory Committee with information as to the needs of the circuit and the suitability of the person(s) nominated.

All applications shall be sent, with the recommendations of the District Advisory Committee, to the Connexional Team. The Connexional Team shall report directly to the Representative Session of Conference, which shall grant such authorisations as it thinks fit, to take effect from the beginning of the following Connexional year. Appeals against the Connexional Team's recommendations shall be heard by Conference.

#### **5. Policy Review**

This Policy was first adopted in July 2020 and reviewed in March 2022. It is intended to review and update this Policy by July 2024. Revised versions of the Policy shall be agreed by the Governance Board, reported to Conference, and published on the MCI Teams Application.