

Dear Church Secretary

March 2017

Here is the information you need to know about Lay Presidency and what your pastoral committee needs from you.

The Background:

Last Year General Assembly passed a Resolution to change the guidance on Lay Presidency at the Sacraments, to make it easier for churches to arrange for Lay Presidency when no Minister of Word and Sacraments is available.

Under this guidance, Church Meetings can ask Synod to authorise elders of the local church, and accredited lay preachers regularly conducting worship there, to preside at the Sacraments.

The Resolution reads "Authorisation for such presidency by the synod, normally of members from within the congregation concerned, should be for an initial period of three to five years (according to synod judgement), including a probationary year on first appointment, with the possibility of renewal."

This should prove a much simpler system than the current one of specific authorisation for every occasion that an elder or lay preacher presides.

What you need to do:

For an elder or lay preacher to be authorised to preside at the Sacraments at your church you need to:

- Bring the names of those people to Church Meeting for approval.
- Give the names to the convener of your Synod Pastoral Committee for authorisation and to Ruth Heine at the Synod Office.

The Synod Pastoral Committee will write to the Church Secretary and the person named giving authority after consideration. Authority will normally be for three years in the first instance (renewable). The Synod will normally authorise up to three people per church.

There is an expectation that those authorised to preside will participate in the Lay Presidency training which the Synod provides.

You should keep a record of how often each authorised person presides in order to report this in your annual return in future.

Should you not have anyone suitable to be authorised in this way you may still apply to your Synod Pastoral Committee in the case of Pastoral Necessity on an ad hoc basis with the name of a suitable person.

If you have any questions about Lay Presidency and what you need to do, contact your Pastoral Committee Convenor.

Yours sincerely

Phyllis Williams

Convenor
Ministries & Learning Committee

Pastoral Conveners details overleaf...

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