

Authorized Lay Preacher (ALP) Guidelines

Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley
Adopted by Presbytery on 09/21/2013

ALP = Authorized Lay Preacher
CoLP = Committee on Lay Preaching
COM = Committee on Ministry

PSV = Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley
PCUSA = Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

ALP Defined: An ALP is a Ruling Elder trained and supported to provide worship leadership for local Presbyterian congregations within the PSV.

- ALPs may be invited to be on the pulpit supply lists of neighboring presbyteries as arranged by COM.
- Invitations to lead worship and/or preach in non-Presbyterian churches must be approved by CoLP.
- ALPs may conduct witnesses to the resurrection (i.e. funerals, memorial services, graveside or committal services) and/or nursing home or hospital services after completion of training approved by CoLP and in accordance with ALP Guidelines.

Supervision of ALPs:

ALPs shall work under the supervision of the CoLP of the PSV.

ALP Guidelines for serving churches

Normally churches will obtain the services of an ALP by consulting the up-to-date ALP Pulpit Supply list maintained by the CoLP on the PSV website.

It is responsibility of the ALP to:

- 1) Request appropriate information to prepare a meaningful worship service
- 2) Provide the church with accurate mileage information in advance

Dress: Conservative clothing is appropriate as a ruling elder representing both an ALPs home church and the PSV.

Honorariums are to be the same as the current pulpit supply rate set by COM which currently is \$100 for one service plus mileage at the IRS rate per mile. The honorarium should be given to the ALP on the day of preaching. If there is any confusion about this, the ALP may bring any grievance to CoLP.

Frequency in same church: ALPs may not preach more than eight times in any one church in any one calendar year.

Exceptions to this limit should be requested by the church from the CoLP well in advance and be accompanied by an explanation of the need for the exception.

Pulpit Supply list eligibility: ALPs who have not been renewed by the CoLP are no longer eligible to be listed on the ALP Pulpit Supply list of the Presbytery.

Types of Worship Services and Other Settings

ALPs may lead worship services that include commissioning of church members for particular service (ex. those preparing to represent the church at a triennial gathering or higher Council of the PCUSA -- or going on a mission trip).

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ALPs who have completed training approved by CoLP may lead worship in the following settings:

- 1) Witnesses to the Resurrection (i.e. funeral, memorial, or graveside service)
- 2) Nursing home or hospital setting

ALPs are not authorized to:

- 1) Receive new members
- 2) Ordain and/or install Ruling Elders and/or Deacons.
- 3) Administer the sacraments (i.e. baptism or communion) without explicit training and approval of the Presbytery
- 4) Officiate at weddings

Worship Services for Members of Other Churches

When an ALP is called upon to lead a witness to the resurrection or other service for individuals or families who are not members of his/her congregation, then he/she should ascertain whether they are members of another congregation or denomination. If so, the individual or family should be urged to procure the services of their own pastor. If the persons are members of a Presbyterian Church, the ALP should consult with that pastor before proceeding.

Pastoral Care is not an ALP's calling except as a Ruling Elder and/or Deacon of one's own congregation. If an ALP is asked to provide pastoral care or call on one who is a member of another congregation, the person(s) should be directed to their own pastor (or moderator) and/or Session for appropriate care.

Evaluations: Occasionally the CoLP will ask local churches to evaluate both our lay preachers and the program. CoLP will provide a copy of all evaluations to the ALP.

Renewal of ALP Commissioning will be done on an annual basis by the Committee on Lay Preaching.

Criteria for renewal includes:

1. Leading worship a minimum of three Sundays per year
Report when and where worship leadership took place with the name of a contact person from the churches (ex. Worship Chair or Clerk of Session)
2. Continuing Education a minimum of twelve (12) hours per year
Occasional seminars, classes, or workshops are to be provided and/or approved by CoLP. The core courses outlined above will not be required to be taken again; however it is expected that over a period of time the ALP's continuing education will include: Bible (Old and Testament); liturgy; preaching/sermon preparation; Reformed theology/doctrine; church history; and spiritual development.