



**CONSEIL RÉGIONAL
DE L'OUTAOUAIS ET DE L'EST DE L'ONTARIO
EASTERN ONTARIO OUTAOUAIS
REGIONAL COUNCIL**

Licensed Lay Worship Leader

Policy & Guidelines

April 2019

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Introduction

Purpose of this Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to outline the policy of the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council of The United Church of Canada regarding Licensed Lay Worship Leaders within its bounds.

The Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council (EOORC) appreciates the willingness of lay people who come forward to offer their faith, insight and skill as worship leaders in Communities of Faith. The Licensed Lay Worship Leadership program is intended to honour and encourage members of the laity to share their gifts and express their faith while meeting the vital need of Communities of Faith to gather for worship.

Section One provides the policy guidelines approved by the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council Executive, and for use throughout the Regional Council to ensure that expectations regarding the practice of Licensed Lay Worship Leadership are consistent.

Section Two and **Section Three** of this document quotes information about Licensed Lay Worship Leadership from the General Council handbook: *Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (2016)* and *The Manual of the United Church of Canada (2019)*.

The contents of this document does not replace, but is meant to complement, the policies for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders as outlined in *The Manual (2019)* and *Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (2016)*.

This policy handbook governing Licensed Lay Worship Leaders within the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council was approved on April 23, 2019.

2019-04-23_75 MOTION (B. Paterson/K. Heath) that having reviewed the work and recommendation of the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders Committee, the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council Executive approves the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders Policy Handbook (April 2019). **Carried**

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Section One:

Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council Standards of Practice

- based on *Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, The United Church of Canada, October 2016*
- approved by the EOORC Executive, ADD DATE

Preparation and Licensing

Initial Licensing: Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council has the responsibility for licensing an individual as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader.

Course of Study: Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council is responsible for setting out the prescribed course of study which is based on the requirements set out by The United Church of Canada. The Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council is responsible for determining whether individuals who have completed courses of study for Lay Worship Leadership offered beyond the boundaries of the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council meet the requirements to be licensed.

Educational Standards: Those participating in a Licensed Lay Worship Leader educational program are expected to observe accepted educational standards with respect to the work involved in becoming a Lay Licensed Worship Leader. This includes, but is not limited to, attendance at events for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, participation in all required components of the course, the timely completion of required assignments, an acceptable quality of assignments submitted, and the appropriate use of resources, including being aware of the risk of plagiarism. Any action deemed to be a breach of accepted educational standards may jeopardize the successful completion of the course and subsequent licensing.

Educational Oversight: Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council shall appoint a “*Licensed Lay Worship Leader Committee*” to oversee the program for the initial and ongoing training of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, as well as the support and supervision of the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders themselves.

Readiness to Serve: An individual may be recommended for licensing, or subsequent renewal of licensing, after an interview process conducted by Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council’s Licensed Lay Worship Committee, including a determination of the person’s understanding of the ethos, theology and practice of The United Church of Canada.

Initial License and Re-Licensing: The Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council shall have the authority to license of a Licensed Lay Worship Leader shall be renewed every two years at the discretion of the Regional Council.

Community of Faith Support: When seeking licensing or renewal of a license, individuals shall provide a letter from their home Community of Faith's governing body (Session, Official Board or Church Council) affirming that their membership in good standing in their home Community of Faith and their suitability in this role within the wider church.

Police Checks: Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council shall exercise due diligence by requesting to see a Police Records Check (Vulnerable Sector) issued within the past 6 months before granting initial license, and every 6 years subsequently. Failure to provide a current Police Check at the appropriate intervals will result in suspension of one's license.

Ongoing Support and Renewal of License

Regular Check-in: The Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council *Licensed Lay Worship Committee* will meet, at least bi-annually, with each Licensed Lay Worship Leader to provide support and opportunity to discern if renewal of the license is appropriate. Renewal shall be assessed based on the policy contained in this resource.

Jurisdiction: A current license remains valid while a Lay Licensed Worship Leader remains a member of any Pastoral Charge within Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council.

Transferability: A Licensed Lay Worship Leader transferring membership in the United Church from one Community of Faith to another Community of Faith in the same regional council shall continue to be recognized as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader. If a Licensed Lay Worship Leader transfers their membership to a Community of Faith in another Regional Council, they must be recognized by that Regional Council in order to continue serving as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader.

Continuing Education: The Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council LLWL Committee is expected to provide opportunity for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders to be engaged in ongoing learning. Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are expected to participate in Continuing Education events on a regular basis.

Personal Worship: In addition to being a full member of The United Church of Canada, when not conducting a service it is expected that Licensed Lay Worship Leaders will regularly attend worship and other Community of Faith activities at their sponsoring Community of Faith.

Stewardship of Licensed Lay Worship Leadership Resources

Meeting Regional Needs: Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are encouraged to assist the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council in meeting the needs of all Pastoral Charges which are without ministry personnel. It is therefore intended that Licensed Lay Worship Leaders will circulate within the Regional Council so that a number of Pastoral Charges can benefit from their leadership.

Frequency of Preaching: The Licensed Lay Worship Leader may cover up to five out of eight Sundays in any two month period, up to a maximum of ten services per year, in any one Pastoral Charge. If asked to lead worship for more Sundays than this, the Licensed Lay Worship Leader

and the Community of Faith must seek the approval of the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council LLWL Committee before doing so.

Preaching in another Regional Council: In the event that a Licensed Lay Worship Leader is invited to lead worship in a Community of Faith outside of the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council, it is expected that they will seek the permission of and function within the guidelines of that particular Regional Council.

Accountability: Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are required, on an annual basis, to provide the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council LLWL Committee with a complete list of the dates and locations of all services of worship led in the previous year, including those services led outside of the bounds of Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council. Included in this report will be a list of continuing education events attended. Individuals may also wish to submit a list of relevant books that were read as part of their ongoing education as a Lay Licensed Worship Leader.

Evaluation: As a part of Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council oversight of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, occasionally Communities of Faith may be asked to provide the LLWL Committee with an evaluation of the leadership offered by Licensed Lay Worship Leaders.

Mentorship: Following initial licensing, the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council LLWL Committee will assign Licensed Lay Worship Leaders a mentor for a minimum of one year in order that they might reflect together on their role and effectiveness. The Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council LLWL Committee may, at its discretion, assign a mentor to a Lay Licensed Worship Leader at any time should it feel that this is necessary.

Respect for local practices: Licensed Lay Worship Leaders lead worship at the invitation of a local Community of Faith or Pastoral Charge. When preparing worship services, Licensed Lay Worship Leaders shall respect the Community of Faith that they are serving with regard to local traditions and practices, worship format, hymnody, language and style of worship leadership, following the direction and instructions of the local Community of Faith, Pastoral Charge, or ministry personnel.

Remuneration: The Pastoral Charge/Community of Faith shall remunerate Licensed Lay Worship Leaders appropriately. Communities of Faith must pay the minimum reimbursement and travel rates set by the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council. The “Worship Leadership and Preaching” rate in the current *Salary and Allowances Schedule* issued by General Council each year **must be used**. ~~When leading worship on a multi-point Pastoral Charge, the Licensed Lay Worship Leader will receive the minimum rate set for a multi-point worship leadership.~~ All monies earned must be declared as taxable income. A T4A tax form must be issued by the Community of Faith to an individual for any amount in excess of \$500 per year.

Local support: Each Community of Faith which annually sponsors a Licensed Lay Worship Leader is encouraged to occasionally invite their Licensed Lay Worship Leader to lead worship, and to remunerate them appropriately, as a sign of support of their Licensed Lay Worship Leader.

Preaching in one's own Community of Faith: When leading worship within one's home Community of Faith, it is expected that the Licensed Lay Worship Leader be paid in accordance with the rate set by Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council.

Representing the Regional Council: A Licensed Lay Worship Leader may not represent the Regional Council at their local church meeting, by virtue of their role as LLWL. The representative of the Regional Council at a Council/Board meeting shall be either the ministry personnel called or appointed to the Pastoral Charge or a duly appointed Pastoral Charge Supervisor. A Licensed Lay Worship Leader is not, by virtue of the role, permitted to serve as Pastoral Charge Supervisor for their own pastoral charge. Neither are they permitted to apply to or fill pastoral vacancies.

Representing one's own Community of Faith: A Licensed Lay Worship Leader may be duly elected by their Community of Faith to represent that Community of Faith at Regional Council meetings as the Lay representative.

Pastoral Care: Although it is recognized that there is an element of pastoral care in worship leadership, the Licensed Lay Worship Leader is not, by virtue of the role, permitted to enter an ongoing relationship of pastoral care with the Pastoral Charge or with individual members of a community of faith. It is expected that the Licensed Lay Worship Leader will refer any requests or requirements for pastoral care (counselling, home visitation, hospital visitation) to the called or appointed Ministry Personnel or the Pastoral Charge Supervisor for follow-up.

Sacraments: Licensing as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader does not include permission to preside, under any circumstance, at the sacraments (Baptism and Communion). Celebrating the sacraments through arrangements with a non-United Church of Canada agency may result in the loss of one's license to serve as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader.

Funerals: Presiding at funerals for members or adherents of a Pastoral Charge (including at a funeral home) shall be done only at the invitation of the called or appointed minister of that Pastoral Charge, the Pastoral Charge Supervisor, the governing body of the pastoral charge or Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council. Conversation with the called or appointed Ministry Personnel or the Supervisor of the Pastoral Charge must happen prior to making any agreement with a family, an individual or a funeral home. If, after following all the above-noted steps, the Licensed Lay Worship Leader conducts a funeral, they must ensure that the information about the service is properly entered in the Burial Register of the Pastoral Charge.

Relationship with Funeral Homes: The conduct of funerals, other than as noted above, is not within the purview of the Licensed Lay Worship Leader. Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are not to be "on call" with local funeral homes. All funerals require competency in the area of pastoral care for which Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are not normally trained. Therefore, keeping in mind the duty of care by which all Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are bound, conducting funerals as a 'side business' may be grounds for non-renewal of one's license.

Advertising: Individual Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are not permitted to advertise their services or solicit invitations to lead worship through the use of any social media or on the internet, except via appropriate venues designed by Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council for such purpose.

Duty of Care: For their own awareness and protection, Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are encouraged to review on a regular basis the Sexual Abuse Policy of The United Church of Canada. (see: *Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response: Policy and Procedures*, The United Church of Canada, January 2019)

In the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council, all Licensed Lay Worship Leaders must have completed the Sexual Abuse Awareness/Boundaries workshop and the Racial Justice workshop offered by The United Church of Canada., as well as completing refresher courses as required.

Liability: For liability insurance purposes, a Licensed Lay Worship Leader is covered by Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council for their worship leadership services only.

Governance of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders

Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council shall appoint a “*Licensed Lay Worship Leader Committee*” to oversee the program for the initial and ongoing training of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, as well as the support and supervision of the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders themselves.

Composition of the LLWL Committee

The Licensed Lay Worship Leader Committee shall consist of seven (7) members:

- two (2) active Ministry Personnel [OM, DM, DLM];
- two (2) lay people [not a LLWL]; and
- three (3) Licensed Lay Worship Leaders.

Quorum for this committee will consist of four members, one of whom must be Ministry Personnel. The Regional Minister for Pastoral Relations shall be an ex-officio member of the committee.

Collection and Circulation of Names of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders

Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council shall, on an annual basis, circulate the names of those who are approved to preach within the Regional Council.

Section Two:

Role and Characteristics of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders

(from: *Licensed Lay Worship Leaders*, The United Church of Canada, October 2016)

In 1925, when the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregationalist churches joined to form The United Church of Canada, lay preachers, as a leadership designation, became a part of this union. Today, rather than the designation “lay preachers,” the term “Licensed Lay Worship Leader” is used to designate those who offer occasional worship leadership that continues to be part of our life as a church.

Specifically, a **Licensed Lay Worship Leader** is a person who:

- has completed a course of study and, after appropriate recommendation and evaluation processes..., is licensed to offer occasional worship leadership and preaching within the bounds of a regional Council.
- conducts worship at the invitation of the called or appointed minister, the Pastoral Charge Supervisor, the governing body of the congregation or the Regional Council when the appointed or called minister is away due to illness, continuing education course work, or vacation.
- is a member in good standing in a local community of faith who has been determined by his/her home congregation and Regional Council to have gifts for worship leadership and preaching. Through participation in an approved course of study, these gifts are developed further, giving both the Licensed Lay Worship Leader and the congregation confidence that worship leadership is built upon a theological and biblical foundation consistent with the ethos and practice of the United Church of Canada.

Many lay people in a congregation participate and give leadership in worship, but those who choose to participate in a Licensed Lay Worship Leadership program are choosing to develop their leadership gifts further. They are *not* entering an order of ministry. The term “licensed” indicates that an individual has engaged in a course of study and is considered suitable for this work by a congregational session, board, or council as well as that congregation’s Regional Council. Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are not eligible for appointment to any paid accountable ministry personnel position, although they may receive standard remuneration for conducting individual worship services on the basis of the “Worship Leadership and Preaching” rate, including travel, in the current *Salary and Allowances Schedule* issued by General Council each year. They are not eligible, by virtue of licensing, to preside at sacraments or to wear stoles or vestments of any kind.

Prior Assessment

Before expressing interest in participating in a Licensed Lay Worship Leader course, and before requesting recommendation to such a course by a congregational session, board, or council, an individual should exhibit gifts and experiences that lend themselves to a ministry of worship leadership and preaching. Some people may bring transferable skills from their life and workplace experience, such as written and oral communication, public speaking, and teaching.

In addition, some may indicate budding gifts for worship leadership through such congregational activities as facilitating adult study groups and prayer groups, making presentations at committee meetings, and contributing thoughtful and reflective writing to church newsletters or other publications. Of course, an individual may clearly demonstrate worship leadership through leading prayers and liturgy, preaching, and conducting entire services.

Personal Qualities

In affirming that an individual has the potential to participate in a Licensed Lay Worship Leaders program, a session, board, or council is saying that this individual has demonstrated a commitment to the ethos of the United Church and is comfortable with that ethos as it is manifested at the levels of Pastoral Charge, Regional Council, and General Council.

Such an individual may possess a prayerful and integrated spirituality, openness to ongoing development and learning, and a desire to share a relevant faith informed by Christian hope and God's Spirit. Other personal qualities may include:

- the ability to relate sensitively to a wide range of people
- be discreet and trustworthy
- engage with ideas in an open and non-judgmental fashion

Clear written and oral communication skills, as well as organizational skills, are additional assets. While none of us is fully formed, and an individual interested in being a Licensed Lay Worship Leader will not have all the necessary competencies at the beginning of her or his course of study, evidence of budding gifts that can be further honed is part of the assessment process.

Competencies

During a Licensed Lay Worship Leaders course of study, competencies will be explored such as:

- developing knowledge of the scriptural basis for Christian faith
- understanding theological themes
- exploring United Church history and polity
- recognizing and respecting different Community of Faith contexts
- organizing and preparing worship liturgy
- understanding and writing prayers
- becoming familiar with United Church hymnody as singing our faith
- preparing and delivering sermons
- practicing public speaking and presentation

Section Three:

The United Church of Canada Policy on Licensed Lay Worship Leaders

(from The Manual of The United Church of Canada (2019), I.1.11.5)

Licensing: The regional council may licence a person as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader. The following requirements shall apply:

- the person must be a member of a Community of Faith in that regional council; and
- the license must be for a specified term, which may be renewed.

Regional Council Direction. The person licensed as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader shall serve under the direction of the Regional Council.

Transferability. A Licensed Lay Worship Leader transferring membership in the United Church from one Pastoral Charge to another Pastoral Charge in the same regional council shall continue to be recognized as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader. A Licensed Lay Worship Leader transferring membership to a community of faith in another regional council, the person must be recognized by that regional council in order to continue serving as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader.

Renewal of Licence. The licence of a Licensed Lay Worship Leader may be renewed at the discretion of the regional council within the jurisdiction of which such Licensed Lay Worship Leader is a member in good standing of a Community of Faith.