

Discover Your Call: Become a Licensed Lay Worship Leader in the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Region

Are you a member of The United Church of Canada with a deep sense of call to lead worship and preach? Do you feel a courageous pull to share your gifts and serve your community of faith in a profound way? The Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council (EOORC) invites you to explore the rewarding path of becoming a Licensed Lay Worship Leader (LLWL).

What is a Licensed Lay Worship Leader?

A Licensed Lay Worship Leader is a full member of The United Church of Canada who has discerned a call to the ministry of worship leadership and preaching. Through a dedicated course of study and a licensing process by their regional council, LLWLs develop their theological and biblical understanding, ensuring their leadership is consistent with the ethos of the United Church.

It's important to note that while LLWLs offer vital leadership in worship, they are not entering the order of ministry. They are not eligible for appointment to paid accountable ministry personnel positions, nor are they licensed to preside at sacraments or wear vestments. However, their contributions are invaluable to the spiritual life of communities of faith.

The Journey to Becoming an LLWL

The path to becoming a Licensed Lay Worship Leader involves a commitment to personal and spiritual growth, guided by the United Church's comprehensive program. Here's a general overview of the process:

- 1. Discernment and Recommendation:** The journey often begins with a lay member self-identifying a call to worship leadership, or being identified by their community of faith's governing body. A recommendation from your community of faith is a crucial first step.
- 2. Interview Process:** Before commencing coursework, candidates will undergo an interview with the regional LLWL Committee to assess their suitability and

readiness for the program. This ensures a mutual understanding of the commitment involved and alignment with the program's goals.

3. **Preparatory Course of Study:** This extends over at least two years and includes in-depth study of theology, church history, Hebrew and Christian scriptures, preaching, worship, and pastoral skills. Study programs are offered online through United in Learning at CHURCHx, with courses typically starting each September and January. The EOORC can guide you to recommended courses of study for licensing.
4. **Suitability and Readiness Assessment:** The regional council assesses the lay member's suitability and readiness, examining personal character, doctrinal beliefs, and educational competency.
5. **Licensing:** Upon successful completion of the program and assessment, the regional council issues a license to function as an LLWL within its jurisdiction. This license is for a limited time and may be renewed.
6. **Recognition:** Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are formally recognized at a service of worship led by the chair of the regional council.

LLWLs are also required to undertake boundaries training, such as the Personal and Professional Boundaries for Church Leaders course.

Compensation for LLWLs in the EOORC (2025)

While LLWLs are not paid ministry personnel, they may receive an honorarium for conducting individual worship services. For 2025, the proper compensation for LLWLs in the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council is:

- **\$254 for Sunday Worship leadership**
- **\$.55/km for travel** to and from your pastoral charge

Communities of faith are encouraged to have payment ready for the LLWL each Sunday and to provide a T4A slip at the end of the year for individuals paid \$500 or more (excluding travel reimbursement).

Your Gifts are Needed!

The Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council is blessed by the many dedicated lay people who serve as Licensed Lay Worship Leaders. If you feel called to this vital ministry, to share your gifts of leadership and preaching, and to deepen your faith journey, we encourage you to reach out.

For a current list of LLWLs in the EOORC or to learn more about the program and how to begin your journey, please contact Whit Strong, Regional Minister for Pastoral Relations at the EOORC office. Your courageous step forward can make a profound difference in the spiritual life of our communities of faith.