

# Registration of Ministry Personnel to Solemnize Marriages

## Within the Northern Spirit Regional Council

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Weddings conducted under the auspices of The United Church of Canada are part of the regular pastoral and outreach ministry of the church. Weddings are also services of worship. Individuals have the right to receive, and Communities of Faith the responsibility to provide, pastoral care during the planning of weddings and afterward as persons live out their marriage.

Ministry Personnel are licensed to solemnize marriages by provincial and territorial governments as authorized by their religious bodies. All jurisdictions served by the Northern Spirit Regional Council require that marriages be recorded in a Marriage Registry, provided by a Community of Faith. All licenses issued to Ministry Personnel are arranged by the Regional Council Office.

The Regional Council is responsible for authorizing licenses for persons to officiate at weddings within its bounds. This authorization occurs automatically for all United Church ordered ministers (ordained and commissioned) and Designated Lay Ministers called or appointed to Pastoral Charges and other special pastoral ministries accountable to the Regional Council (e.g., Chaplains). The Regional Council can also give approval to requests for the right to perform weddings for other persons (e.g., Designated Lay Ministers-in-Training, ordained supply ministers) serving in Communities of Faith where other licensed persons are unavailable. **All Ministry Personnel must have completed mandatory Racial Justice training, be up-to-date with Pastoral Boundaries training, and have completed their annual declaration re Police Record Check.**

Designated Lay Ministers who have completed the prescribed course on sacraments are provided licenses to solemnize marriages and permission to administer sacraments while serving in paid accountable ministry within the Regional Council.

Individuals may be designated by the Regional Council as Honourary Associates of particular Communities of Faith. This designation is requested annually by the Pastoral Charge.

The Northern Spirit Regional Council, in order to honour the Community of Faith focus for weddings, to ensure accountability for both persons solemnizing marriages, and those being married under the auspices of The United Church of Canada, and to comply with provincial and territorial regulations, has adopted the following policy for the issuing of licenses to marry:

1. Permanent licences to perform weddings are issued for the use of Ministry Personnel during the course of their active pastoral ministry within a particular ministry setting. Persons regularly called or appointed to pastoral ministry will be accountable both to their Community of Faith and the Regional Council for the conduct of weddings as part of their pastoral duties and responsibilities.
2. All such weddings conducted by persons in #1 above will be at or part of their ministry in the Community of Faith to which they have been called or appointed, unless appropriate arrangements have been made with, and agreed to, by another Community of Faith.
3. Communities of Faith may request that the Regional Council designate United Church ministers who are not in current ministry positions, including retired ministers, as Honourary Associate Ministers. This is an annual designation, and includes activation of the Honourary Associate Minister's license to perform weddings on behalf of the Pastoral Charge.
4. Communities of Faith may request special temporary licenses for United Church ministers not in Pastoral Charge positions, retired United Church ministers, or qualified ministers from outside the Regional Council to perform specific weddings on specific days for persons whose weddings they wish to host or sponsor.
5. Communities of Faith may request from the Regional Council a special temporary license for a lay member of a Congregation who has received training in the theology and practice of marriage in circumstances where a licensed clergy person is not available within a reasonable distance from the Community of Faith.
6. All weddings performed under the auspices of The United Church of Canada will be in compliance with provincial or territorial regulations, and will be recorded in an appropriate register.

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## **Requesting a Temporary Marriage License within the Northern Spirit Regional Council**

Special temporary licenses are available on request from either the individual who is to perform the wedding or the host or sponsoring Community of Faith. The form below provides the information needed by the Regional Council Office when arranging the license.

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### **REQUEST FOR A TEMPORARY MARRIAGE LICENSE WITHIN THE NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL**

*Please complete this form and forward it to the Regional Council Office using the address below.*

Marriages performed under the auspices of The United Church of Canada are normally conducted in a church sanctuary. If the wedding is not held in a United Church, a request must be made of a Community of Faith close to the venue, and the resident Ministry Personnel, to sponsor the marriage. As a function of ministry, the person officiating is always acting on behalf of The United Church of Canada, and the marriage must be recorded in the registry of the local Community of Faith.

**To be completed by the Ministry Personnel or Community of Faith making the request, at least four weeks prior to the date of the marriage.**

**Minister's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Status:** (check one)    Ordained:    Active \_\_\_\_\_ Retired \_\_\_\_\_ Retained \_\_\_\_\_  
                                  Diaconal:    Active \_\_\_\_\_ Retired \_\_\_\_\_ Retained \_\_\_\_\_  
                                  DLM:        Active \_\_\_\_\_ Retired \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership:** \_\_\_\_\_ Regional Council

**Province/Territory** within which the marriage is to be conducted: \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Marriage:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Names** of those being married: \_\_\_\_\_

**Location of Marriage:** at or near the \_\_\_\_\_ Pastoral Charge

**Venue Name and Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location of United Church Register** where the Marriage is to be recorded:

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A letter from the Office of Vocation Minister for the appropriate Regional Council (if applying from outside the Northern Spirit Regional Council), confirming that the Minister is in compliance with United Church standards for Ministry Personnel, must be forwarded to our Office.

**By Mail to: Northern Spirit Regional Council, 13535 122 Ave. NW, Edmonton AB, T5L 2V7**

**By E-Mail: scan and send to [NorthernSpirit@united-church.ca](mailto:NorthernSpirit@united-church.ca)**

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