



Licensed Lay Worship Leaders Policy 2023 Update

(As recommended by the Lay Leadership Support Committee,
and approved by the Regional Council Executive)

Highlights:

- *The minimum rate for Worship Leadership is set at \$150.00. for one worship service. If a Pastoral Charge requests more than one service on a Sunday the rate is to be increased with an additional \$ 75.00.*
- *Where travel is required the minimum travel reimbursement is set at \$ 0.55 per kilometre.*
- *Communities of Faith are also required to reimburse any meal or accommodation expenses as needed.*
- *The Licensed Lay Worship Leader may cover three consecutive Sundays a month, to a maximum of ten services per year, in one Pastoral Charge.*
- *Alternatively, the Licensed Lay Worship Leader may lead services for one complete month in a six month period in one Pastoral Charge.*
- *Communities of Faith must issue a T4A Income Tax slip when the accumulated amount in honoraria it pays to an individual exceeds \$ 500.00 in a calendar year.*

Introduction and Purpose

Northern Spirit Regional Council appreciates the willingness of lay people who come forward to offer their faith, insight and skill as worship leaders in congregations. The Regional Council is grateful to United-in-Learning for the support they provide to lay worship leaders through an educational program which offers resources and enhances understanding of worship practices in The United Church of Canada. 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 congregations to gather for worship.

The following Standards of Practice describes how the Licensed Lay Worship Leadership program is implemented in Northern Spirit Regional Council. It intends to build on the Licensed Lay Worship Leader policies and resources of the General Council of The United Church of Canada, including those found in most current version of The Manual of The United Church of Canada. If there are any discrepancies, The Manual is authoritative.

Northern Spirit Regional Council Standards of Practice

Preparation and Licensing

In Northern Spirit Regional Council, the licence of a Licensed Lay Worship Leader shall be renewed each pastoral year (July 1 to June 30) at the discretion of the Lay Leadership Support Committee. In Northern Spirit Regional Council, the course of study which prepares individuals for Lay Worship Leadership is that provided through United-in-Learning.ca. Individuals may also choose to take the Lay Worship Leaders program for personal interest only.

Required Training in Boundaries for Church Leaders and Racial Justice

Lay Licensed Worship Leaders are required to take boundaries training, such as the Personal and Professional Boundaries for Church Leaders course offered by United in Learning. In Northern Spirit Regional Council, Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are also required to complete racial justice training, such as the Racial Justice Training program offered by United in Learning.

Authorization by Regional Council

The Lay Leadership Support Committee is responsible for determining whether individuals who have completed other courses of study for Lay Worship Leadership have acquired appropriate preparation for licensing in Northern Spirit Regional Council.

The Regional Council Pastoral Relations Commission, on recommendation from the Lay Leadership Support Committee, has responsibility for licensing an individual as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader. The Lay Leadership Support Committee will assume primary responsibility for support and coordination of the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders program.

An individual is recommended for licensing, or subsequent renewal of licensing, after an application and interview process conducted by the Lay Leadership Support Committee, including a determination of the person's understanding of the ethos and theology of The United Church of Canada.

Good Standing and Suitability

When seeking licensing or renewal, individuals are asked to provide confirmation from their home congregation's Local Governing Body (Official Board or Church Council) affirming their membership in good standing and suitability in this role within the wider church.

Screening

The Lay Leadership Support Committee will exercise due diligence by requesting to see a police information check completed within the past 6 months before granting initial license, and thereafter requesting an Update of Police Record Check annually.

Continued on page 3...

For their own awareness and protection, Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are encouraged to review the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures (November 2020) of The United Church of Canada found at this webpage:

<https://united-church.ca/sites/default/files/2021-01/sexual-misconduct-prevention-response-2020.pdf>

For liability insurance purposes, the Licensed Lay Worship Leader is covered by the Regional Council for their worship service leadership only.

Ongoing Support and Renewal of Licensing

The Lay Leadership Support Committee will arrange annual meetings with Licensed Lay Worship Leaders to provide support and opportunity to discern if renewal of the license is appropriate.

A current license remains valid while a Lay Worship Leader remains a member of any Pastoral Charge within the Regional Council. When the Licensed Lay Worship Leader transfers membership to a Pastoral Charge in another Regional Council, they will not function as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader until recognized by that Regional Council.

The Lay Leadership Support Committee is expected to provide opportunity for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders to be engaged in ongoing learning.

Stewardship of Lay Worship Leadership Resources

Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are encouraged to assist the 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 in the Regional Council so that a number of Pastoral Charges can benefit from their leadership.

Availability

The Licensed Lay Worship Leader may cover three consecutive Sundays a month, to a maximum of ten services per year, in one Pastoral Charge. Alternatively, the Licensed Lay Worship Leader may lead services for one complete month in a six-month period in one Pastoral Charge. If asked to lead worship for more Sundays, the Licensed Lay Worship Leader is to seek the approval of the Regional Council Pastoral Relations Commission before agreeing to do so.

In order to exercise stewardship of Licensed Lay Worship Leadership, at the time of renewal of the license, the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders is asked to provide the Lay Leadership Support Committee with a complete list of the dates and locations of services of worship led in the past year (including end of life services).

Minimum Rate for Worship Leadership

The Pastoral Charge is expected to remunerate Licensed Lay Worship Leaders in accordance with the rate determined by the Regional Council's Lay Leadership Support Committee each year. It is to be noted that this rate is a minimum. When leading worship on a multi-point Pastoral Charge, it is intended that the Licensed Lay Worship Leader would receive above the minimum rate, but not necessarily the full rate for each worship service.

For the 2023 calendar year the minimum rate is set at \$150.00. If a Pastoral Charge requests more than one service on a Sunday (leading worship for two congregations on the Pastoral Charge) the rate is to be increased with an additional \$ 75.00. Where travel is required the minimum travel reimbursement is set at \$ 0.55 per kilometre. Communities of Faith are also required to reimburse any meal or accommodation expenses as needed.

Expectations of Honorarium when Leading Worship in Home Congregation

When leading worship in the Pastoral Charge where their membership is held, it is expected that Licensed Lay Worship Leaders receives the same honorarium as any other lay member of the Pastoral Charge who leads worship. If an honorarium is provided to members of the Pastoral Charge, it is not subject to the current *Salary and Allowances Schedule* issued by General Council each year; it is set at the discretion of the Official Board of the Pastoral Charge.

Pastoral Charge Supervision

The Licensed Lay Worship Leader is not, by virtue of the role, permitted to serve as Pastoral Charge Supervisor or Regional Council representative at Official Board/Church Council meetings. They are only permitted to take this role when specifically appointed to do so by the Pastoral Relations Commission.

Requirement to Refer Requests for 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. 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.

Funeral Services

Like any person, a Licensed Lay Worship Leader may conduct a funeral. However, the conduct of funerals within a Pastoral Charge (including a funeral home located within the bounds of a Pastoral Charge), is to be arranged in consultation with the called or appointed Ministry Personnel or the Supervisor of the Pastoral Charge. If the Licensed Lay Worship Leader conducts a funeral, s/he may suggest to the family of the deceased that the information about the service be entered in the Burial Register of the Pastoral Charge for archival purposes. The wishes of the next of kin are to be followed.

Sacraments and Marriages

Licensing does not include permission to preside at the sacraments or license to perform marriages.