



NORTHERN SPIRIT  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA



**NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
***DESIGNATED LAY MINISTERS POLICY***  
**from the Pastoral Relations Commission,**  
*approved December 2023*

1. When a person who is recognized by the Northern Spirit Regional Council as a Designated Lay Minister (DLM) is not in a pastoral relationship, including those who retired as a DLM:
  - a. the Northern Spirit Regional Council will add them to the lay Membership Roll of the region as per C.1.2.b of The Manual; and
  - b. the Northern Spirit Regional Council will grant them license to administer the sacraments as per I.2.4.1.b of The Manual;as long as the DLM resides within the region.
2. When a person under section 1 above:
  - a. provides *pulpit supply* to a Community of Faith within the Northern Spirit Region, they are to be compensated as a “Visiting Ministry Personnel” as per the *Minimum Salaries & Reimbursements for Ministry Personnel* policy.
3. When a person under section 1 above:
  - a. desires a license to marry they are to follow the same *honourary associated ministry* process as retired ordered ministers.

**C.1.2 Lay Members**

The lay members of the regional council are members of the United Church who are not ministry personnel and who are

- b) additional lay members as determined by the regional council if necessary to respect a balance of ministry personnel and lay members who are not ministry personnel in the membership of the regional council.

**I.2.4 Licences to Administer Sacraments**

**I.2.4.1 Policy**

The regional council may grant a licence to administer the sacraments to

- b) lay people who were serving as a designated lay minister at the time of their retirement and who had been recognized by the regional council as a designated lay minister;



## RATIONALE

Most people in Communities of Faith do not distinguish between DLMs and Ordered Ministers.

Many/most DLMs feel called to lifelong vocational ministry.

Currently when a Designated Lay Minister is in a pastoral relationship, they are considered *Ministry Personnel* with similar responsibilities and benefits as Diaconal and Ordained Ministers. When they are not in a pastoral relationship, they are not considered Ministry Personnel, but lay members of the congregation where their Membership resides. In most cases, the DLM has not been active in their *home* congregation for many years.

This regional policy proposal (section 2) arose out of a concern that there was no clear guidance about what a DLM should be paid when offering pulpit supply given that neither the Salary and Allowance Schedule or the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders policies apply to DLMs.

This regional policy proposal (sections 1 and 3) is a response to General Council 44 (at its meeting on October 21, 2023) approving proposals:

1. recognizing the lifelong vocational call of many DLMs and honouring and valuing their many years of faithful service to the church; and
2. creating a process for DLMs or DLM Candidates who have discerned a lifelong vocational call to ministry to be considered qualified and ready for Ordained or Diaconal Ministry; and
3. requesting regional councils permit currently recognized DLMs and current DLM students who do not request ordering to move to different Communities of Faith; and
4. encouraging the Office of Vocation to direct people without an undergraduate degree, who are discerning a call to lifelong church wide ministry, towards ordered ministry preparation and formation (fyi: most UCCan theological schools do not require an undergraduate degree for entry into degree and diploma programs leading to commissioning or ordination); and
5. **strongly encouraging regional councils to consider granting license to administer sacraments and membership in the regional council to those who retired as DLMs and reside within the region; and encouraging regional councils to review their policies on voluntary associate ministry and eligibility to practice other functions of ministry as may apply to those who have retired as DLMs.**