



NORTHERN SPIRIT  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
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## Licensed Lay Worship Leaders Policy 2024 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 **\$247.00** for 2024, which covers a full working day, or portion thereof.*
- *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.*
- *Licensed Lay Leaders may conduct up to **18 services per year in one Pastoral Charge** (no more than 3 consecutive services with an exception for seasons of Lent and Advent)*
- *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.*
- *Licensing does not include permission to preside at the sacraments; however, **should a Licensed Lay Worship Leader also be licensed as a Sacraments Elder in their home community of faith, they may act in both roles**; however, should they provide worship leadership in their home community of faith that includes the celebration of one of the sacraments as a Sacraments Elder, they are to be reimbursed for the preparation and leadership of the worship service only.*

### **Introduction and Purpose**

The Northern Spirit Regional Council is grateful to God for the willingness of lay people who come forward to offer their faith, insight and skill as worship leaders in communities of faith. The following document outlines the policy and standards of practice for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders who serve in the Northern Spirit Region. It is the hope of the region that these standards of practice will encourage, honour and inform the



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members of the Laity as they share their gifts and express their faith while meeting the vital need of a community of faith to gather for worship.

The following standards of practice are divided into three sections: Membership; Preparation and Licensing; and Ongoing Support and Guidance. A key resource for these standards of practice is [Licensed Lay Worship Leaders](#), June 2019, The United Church of Canada.

## Membership

The Regional Council may license a person as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader. (*The Manual*, 2023, s. I 1.11.5)

The following requirements apply:

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

A licensed lay worship leader serves under the direction of the Regional Council's Executive through the **Lay Leadership Support Committee**. If a licensed lay worship leader becomes a member of a community of faith in another regional council, that person must be recognized by that other regional council in order to continue serving as a licensed lay worship leader.

## Preparation and Licensing

### ***Educational Requirements***

The lay member completes a preparatory course that extends over at least two years and includes the study of theology, church history, Hebrew and Christian scriptures, preaching, worship, and pastoral skills. The course of study must be approved by the Lay Leadership Support Committee, in consultation with United Church of Canada guidelines and practice.

An approved national Licensed Lay Worship Leader training program is available online through United in Learning on ChurchX. [The national LLWL training program can be found here.](#)



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An individual may be exempt from a preparatory course at the discretion of the Lay Leadership Support committee. An individual's education would be evaluated using the handbook, [Licensed Lay Worship Leaders](#) or future editions.

The lay member must also complete all mandatory workshops (currently: Racial Justice and Boundaries training) and a police records check, according to policy set by the United Church of Canada, prior to initial licensing. These workshops may be completed concurrently with the preparatory course. For those seeking renewal of licenses, a 6-month grace period will be offered to complete the mandatory workshops. The Racial Justice training is only taken once, but the Boundaries Training must be refreshed every 5 years. In addition, an annual declaration of no criminal charges or convictions is required following the initial police records check.

## ***Licensing***

In order to be licensed for the first time, the lay person is required to provide the following:

- a) Written recommendation by the governing body of their community of faith;
- b) Written final evaluation by the facilitator of the preparatory course; and
- c) Verification of completion of mandatory workshops and police records check.

Once these documents are received by the Lay Leadership Support Committee, a temporary one-year license will be issued. After the completion of one year as a licensed lay worship leader, an interview will be scheduled with the lay person. The Regional Council Executive, through the Lay Leadership Support Committee, assesses the lay member's suitability and readiness for licensed lay worship leadership by examining their personal character, doctrinal beliefs, and educational competency. Based on the interview and accompanying documents:

- *affirmation from the community of faith*
- *sample worship service*
- *sample sermon*
- *annual declaration regarding criminal charges/criminal record,*

the Lay Leadership Support Committee will make a recommendation to the Regional Council Pastoral Relations Commission regarding issuing a regular license.



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The Regional Council Pastoral Relations Commission issues a licence to the lay member to function as a licensed lay worship leader within the jurisdiction of the regional council, under the direction of the regional council. A licensed lay worship leader may function in any of the communities of faith in the Northern Spirit Regional Council as well as any of the organizations affiliated with it. A licence is normally valid for two (2) years and may be renewed. The regional council recognizes the licensed lay worship leader at a service of worship, with participation from a member of the Regional Council.

## **Ongoing Support and Guidance**

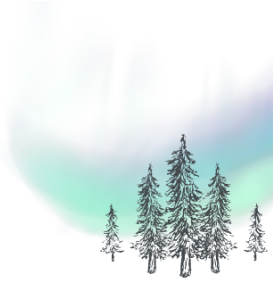
### ***Renewal***

Licensed lay worship leaders require a conversation with the Lay Leadership Support Committee in order for their license to be renewed; the license is normally valid for two (2) years. The Lay Leadership Support Committee, which has been authorised to make recommendations to the Regional Council Pastoral Relations Commission, will determine what reporting is required for the purposes of license renewal. This could include bulletins, sermons, a list of training completed or resources read, as well as the annual declaration regarding criminal charges/ criminal record and the annual worship service tracker (listing which communities of faith have been served and when). An affirmation from the community of faith where the licensed lay worship leader is a member indicating support for their ministry is also required for re-licensing.

The Lay Leadership Support Committee will organize learning opportunities for licensed lay worship leaders from time to time. There are also online training opportunities that the Committee would recommend for support and encouragement. It is hoped that ongoing learning would be supported by the community of faith where the licensed lay worship leader is a member – this could include financial assistance to attend courses or to purchase resources.

### ***Frequency of service, accountability, and remuneration***

Pulpit supply is meant to be an occasional option for communities of faith and guidelines are further articulated in the [Pulpit supply policy of the Northern Spirit Regional Council](#). The definition of occasional and requirements for licensed lay worship leaders in a calendar year is outlined as follows:



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<b>Number of services/ year in one community of faith</b>	<b>Accountability to Committee</b>
<b>18 or less</b> (No more than 3 consecutive services with an exception for seasons of Lent/ Advent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biannual re-licensing conversation</li> <li>• Annual declaration of criminal record check</li> <li>• Annual worship service tracker form</li> <li>• Current mandatory trainings</li> </ul>
<b>18 and above</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active M&amp;P Committee</li> <li>• Requires classification as a <a href="#">Congregational Designated Minister</a> (linked to handbook)</li> <li>• Could remain on Pulpit Supply list as a current LLWL for other communities of faith. Current mandatory training, annual declaration, and triennial re-licensing conversation would be required.</li> </ul>

Any licensed lay worship leader could access the Lay Leadership Support Committee for issues related to worship leadership. This could include specific concerns or general support, as appropriate.

The community of faith is encouraged to remunerate licensed lay worship leaders in accordance with the Minimum Salaries & Reimbursements rate for Visiting Ministry Personnel, including travel, issued by General Council each year. These amounts are listed on the [Minimum Salary and Reimbursement for Ministry Personnel](#) issued annually by The United Church of Canada. When leading multiple worship services for one community of faith, it is recommended that remuneration be offered above the minimum rate for one Sunday, but not necessarily the full rate for each worship service. This additional remuneration would include offering worship in a care home or other facility. If the service(s) is cancelled due to weather, it is expected that the fee would be offered for the work completed; travel and meal costs would not be included.

**\*Note:** The Canada Revenue Agency requires that a T4A be completed for annual aggregate amounts over \$500 paid to an individual, which would be approximately three worship services annually and above.





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## ***Annual worship service tracker form***

It will be the responsibility of the licensed lay worship leader to track the number and location of worship services provided each calendar year. The annual worship service tracker form will be submitted to the Lay Leadership Support Committee in January. Conversations for support will be scheduled accordingly.

## ***Other considerations***

- A licensed lay worship leader may not provide **pastoral care** in a community of faith that is not their own. It is expected that the licensed lay worship leader will refer any requests or requirements for pastoral care (counseling, home visitation, hospital visitation) to the called or appointed ministry personnel, or the pastoral charge/ Community of Faith supervisor for follow-up.
- A licensed lay worship leader who is called to conduct **funeral services** is encouraged to take appropriate additional training. However, the conduct of funerals within a community of faith (including a funeral home), should abide by the funeral policy of the community of faith, and is to be arranged in consultation with the called or appointed ministry personnel or the pastoral charge/ community of faith supervisor of the community of faith. A licensed lay worship leader who conducts a funeral in connection to a community of faith must ensure that the information is entered in the Burial Register of the community of faith. It is the responsibility of the community of faith to provide pastoral care in these circumstances.
- Licensing does not include permission to preside at the sacraments; however, some licensed lay worship leaders are also sacraments elders in the community of faith where their membership rests. (see [Northern Spirit Regional Council Sacraments Policy](#)) Should a licensed lay worship leader provide worship leadership in their home community of faith that includes the celebration of one of the sacraments as a Sacraments Elder, they are to be reimbursed for the preparation and leadership of the worship service only. It is not the practice of the Northern Spirit Regional Council to be reimbursed for officiating the sacraments.
- Licensing does not provide a license to perform marriages.



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- Licensing does not enable Licensed Lay Worship Leaders to wear a stole and a clergy collar, as those are reserved for ministry personnel, called or appointed to a community of faith.
- Failure to abide by this policy may result in the termination of the license.

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*Revised & Approved December 2023.*