

Le Synode Montréal & Ottawa
de l'Église Unie du Canada



The Montreal & Ottawa Conference
of The United Church of Canada

Licensed Lay Worship Leader

Policy & Guidelines

Synode Montreal & Ottawa Conference

(November 2016)



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Introduction

Purpose of this Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to outline the policy of Synode Montreal & Ottawa Conference and each of its presbyteries regarding Licensed Lay Worship Leaders.

The Synode Montreal & Ottawa Conference appreciates the willingness of lay people who come forward to offer their faith, insight and skill as worship leaders in congregations. 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.

Section One provides the policy guidelines approved by the Synode Montreal & Ottawa Conference Executive, and for use throughout the Synode Montreal & Ottawa Conference to ensure that expectations regarding the practice of Licensed Lay Worship Leadership are consistent among the Presbyteries of the Conference.

Section Two and **Section Three** of this document quote information about Licensed Lay Worship Leadership from the General Council handbook *Licensed Lay Worship Leaders* and *The Manual of the United Church of Canada (2013)*.

The contents of this document does not replace, but is meant to complement, the policies for Licensed Lay Worship leaders as outlined in *Licensed Lay Worship Leaders*, The United Church of Canada, August 2013.

June 7, 2014 – Meeting of the Executive of Synode Montreal & Ottawa Conference

MOTION (Ruda/Lee)

That having received responses from each presbytery to the June 16, 2014 questions regarding sharing of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders across the Conference geography,

and that whereas Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWL) are trained, accredited and held accountable each to their own presbytery,

and whereas there are times when due to geography or language, it would be in the best interest of the ministry site requiring worship to be able to have leadership from a LLWL of another presbytery,

the Executive requests that the presbyteries indicate agreement of circulating the names annually of their LLWL for the benefit of all, and of welcoming a LLWL from another presbytery in the Synode Montreal and Ottawa Conference to conduct worship. At all times, the Licensed Lay Worship Leader would remain accountable to their own presbytery, and there would continue to be a regular review/assessment and licensing conducted by the presbytery.

Carried

Section One:

Synode Montreal & Ottawa Conference Standards of Practice

- based on *Licensed Lay Worship Leaders*, The United Church of Canada, August 2013
- approved by the Executive of Synode Montreal & Ottawa Conference, November 6, 2015
- subsequently approved by each Presbytery within the Synode Montreal & Ottawa Conference

Preparation and Licensing

Annual Renewal In the Synode Montreal & Ottawa Conference, the license of a Licensed Lay Worship Leader shall be renewed each year at the discretion of the Presbytery.

Course of Study In the Synode Montreal & Ottawa Conference, each presbytery is responsible for setting out the prescribed course of study which is based on the requirements set out by The United Church of Canada.

Presbytery LLWL Committee Each Presbytery within the Conference shall appoint a “*Licensed Lay Worship Leader Committee*” to oversee the program for the initial and ongoing training of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, as well as the support and supervision of the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders themselves.

LLWLs from outside the Presbytery Each Presbytery is responsible for determining whether individuals who have completed courses of study for Lay Worship Leadership offered by Presbyteries outside of their presbytery or the Synode Montreal & Ottawa Conference have acquired appropriate preparation for licensing in that Presbytery.

Licensing Each Presbytery has responsibility for licensing an individual as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader.

Ethical Standards Those participating in a Licensed Lay Worship Leader educational program are expected to observe accepted educational standards with respect to the work involved in becoming a Lay Licensed Worship Leader. This includes, but is not limited to, attendance at all events for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, participation in all required components of the course, the timely completion of required assignments, an acceptable quality of assignments submitted, and the appropriate use of resources, including being aware of the risk of plagiarism. Any action deemed to be a breach of accepted educational standards may jeopardize the successful completion of the course and subsequent licensing.

Recommendation for Licensing An individual is recommended for licensing, or subsequent renewal of licensing, after an interview process conducted by the appropriate committee of the Presbytery, including a determination of the person’s understanding of the ethos, theology and practice of The United Church of Canada.

Letter from Home Congregation When seeking licensing or renewal, individuals are asked to provide a letter from their home congregation’s Session, Official Board or Church Council affirming

their membership in good standing in their home congregation and suitability in this role within the wider church.

Police Records Check Presbyteries are required to exercise due diligence by requesting to see a Police Records Check (Vulnerable Sector) issued within the past 6 months before granting initial license, and every 6 years subsequently. Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are expected to meet the same standard as Ministry Personnel. <http://www.united-church.ca/files/handbooks/police-records-checks.pdf> Failure to provide a current Police Check at the appropriate intervals will result in non-renewal of one's license.

Presbytery – Annual Licensing At first licensing and then on an annual basis, Licensed Lay Worship Leaders will be recognized at a public service to be held under the direction of the Chairperson of the Presbytery. The criteria for annual renewal shall be based on the policy contained in this resource.

Ongoing Support and Renewal of Licensing

LLWL meets regularly with each LLWL The appropriate committee of the Presbytery will arrange, at least bi-annually, a meeting with each Licensed Lay Worship Leaders to provide support and opportunity to discern if renewal of the license is appropriate. Annual renewal shall be assessed based on the policy contained in this resource.

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

Ongoing Learning The appropriate committee of the Presbytery is expected to provide opportunity for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders to be engaged in ongoing learning. Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are expected to participate in Continuing Education events on a regular basis.

Attending Home Congregation In addition to being a full member of The United Church of Canada, when not conducting a service it is expected that Licensed Lay Worship Leaders will regularly attend worship and other congregational activities at their sponsoring congregation.

Stewardship of Licensed Lay Worship Leadership Resources

Offering Leadership throughout the Presbytery Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are encouraged to assist the Presbytery 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 Presbytery so that a number of Pastoral Charges can benefit from their leadership.

Frequency of Worship Leadership The Licensed Lay Worship Leader may cover two Sundays a month, to a maximum of ten services per year, in one Pastoral Charge. If asked to lead worship for more Sundays than this, the Licensed Lay Worship Leader and the Pastoral Charge must seek the approval of the appropriate committee of the Presbytery before doing so.

Offering Leadership Outside of Home Presbytery In the event that a Licensed Lay Worship Leader is invited to lead worship in a congregation outside of their home Presbytery or outside of the Synode Montreal & Ottawa Conference, it is expected that they will function within the guidelines of that particular presbytery and/or conference.

Submission of Annual Preaching Log Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, prior to the annual renewal of the license, are required to provide the Presbytery with a complete list of the dates and locations of all services of worship led in the previous year, including those services led outside of the bounds of the Licensed Lay Worship Leader's home Presbytery. As well, included in this report will be a list of continuing education events attended. Individuals may also wish to submit a list of relevant books that were read as part of their ongoing education as a Lay Licensed Worship Leader.

Congregational Evaluation of LLWLs As a part of Presbytery's oversight of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, occasionally congregations may be asked to provide the appropriate committee of the Presbytery with an evaluation of the leadership offered by Licensed Lay Worship Leaders.

Mentors for Newly Licensed LLWLs Following initial licensing, the Presbytery will assign Licensed Lay Worship Leaders a mentor for a minimum of one year in order that they might reflect together on their role and effectiveness. The Presbytery may, at its discretion, assign a mentor to a Lay Licensed Worship Leader at any time should it feel that this is necessary.

Following Local Practices and Traditions Licensed Lay Worship Leaders lead worship at the invitation of a local congregation or pastoral charge. It is expected, therefore, that when preparing for worship, Licensed Lay Worship Leaders respect the congregation they are serving with regard to local traditions and practices, worship format, hymnody, language and style of worship leadership.

Remuneration for LLWLs The Pastoral Charge is expected to remunerate Licensed Lay Worship Leaders appropriately. The "Worship Leadership and Preaching" rate, including travel, in the current *Salary and Allowances Schedule* issued by General Council each year may be used as a guide. When leading worship on a multi-point Pastoral Charge, the Licensed Lay Worship Leader may receive above the minimum rate, but not necessarily the full rate for each additional worship service. Each Presbytery has the right to set its own rates of compensation

LLWLs Preaching at Home Congregation Each congregation which annually sponsors a Licensed Lay Worship Leader is expected to invite their Licensed Lay Worship Leader to lead worship, and remunerate them appropriately, at least once each year as a sign of support of the Licensed Lay Worship Leader. When leading worship within one's home congregation, it is expected that the Licensed Lay Worship Leader be paid in accordance with the rate set by the presbytery.

Limitations to Role of LLWLs The Licensed Lay Worship Leader is not, by virtue of the role, permitted to serve as Pastoral Charge Supervisor or Presbytery representative at Official Board/Church Council meetings. Neither are they permitted to apply to or fill pastoral vacancies.

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 or individual members of a congregation. 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.

Funerals Presiding at funerals for members or adherents of a Pastoral Charge (including at a funeral home) shall be done only at the invitation of the called or appointed minister, the Pastoral Charge Supervisor, the governing body of the pastoral charge or the presbytery. Conversation with the called or appointed Ministry Personnel or the Supervisor of the Pastoral Charge must happen prior to making any agreement with a family, an individual or a funeral home. If the Licensed Lay Worship Leader conducts a funeral, they must ensure that the information about the service is properly entered in the Burial Register of the Pastoral Charge.

Relationship between LLWLs and Funeral Homes The conduct of funerals, other than as noted above, is not within the purview of the Licensed Lay Worship Leader. Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are not to be “on call” with local funeral homes. All funerals require competency in the area of pastoral care for which Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are not normally trained. Therefore, keeping in mind the duty of care by which all Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are bound, conducting funerals as a side business may be grounds for non-renewal of one’s license.

Sacraments and Marriages Licensing does not include permission to preside at the sacraments or license to perform marriages. In keeping with the ethos and practice of The United Church of Canada regarding the laity, Licensed Lay Worship Leaders may not seek to be recognized by or affiliated with outside organizations in order to perform these functions. Doing so may result in non-renewal of one’s license.

Use of Social Media Individual Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are not permitted to advertise their services or solicit invitations to lead worship through the use of any social media or on the internet, except via appropriate venues designed by the Presbytery or Conference for such purpose.

Prevention of Sexual Misconduct Policy For their own awareness and protection, Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are encouraged to review on a regular basis the Sexual Abuse Policy of The United Church of Canada. (see: *Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response: Policy and Procedures*, The United Church of Canada, August 2013)

Mandatory Workshops In the Synode Montreal & Ottawa Conference, all Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are required to have completed the Sexual Abuse Awareness/Boundaries workshop and the Racial Justice workshop offered by The United Church of Canada.

Liability Insurance For liability insurance purposes, a Licensed Lay Worship Leader is covered by Presbytery for their worship leadership services only.

Governance of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders

Each Presbytery shall appoint a “Licensed Lay Worship Leader Committee” to oversee the program for the initial and ongoing training of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, as well as the support and supervision of the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders themselves.

Composition of Presbytery LLWL Committee Each Presbytery Licensed Lay Worship Leader Committee shall consist of five (5) members: two (2) active Ministry Personnel [OM, DM, DLM]; two (2) lay people [not a LLWL]; and one (1) Licensed Lay Worship Leader. Quorum for this committee will consist of three members, one of whom must be Ministry Personnel.

Collection and Circulation of Names of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders Each Presbytery shall, on an annual basis, forward to the Synode Montreal & Ottawa Conference the list of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders licensed within the bounds of the presbytery. These names shall be circulated within the Synode/Conference as those who are approved to preach throughout the Synode/Conference.

Section Two:

Role and Characteristics of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders

(from: *Licensed Lay Worship Leaders*, The United Church of Canada, August 2013)

In 1925, when the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregationalist churches joined to form The United Church of Canada, lay preachers, as a leadership designation, became a part of this union. Today, rather than the designation “lay preachers,” the term “Licensed Lay Worship Leader” is used to designate those who offer occasional worship leadership that continues to be part of our life as a church.

Specifically, a **Licensed Lay Worship Leader** is a person who:

- has completed a course of study and, after appropriate recommendation and evaluation processes by presbytery, is licensed to offer occasional worship leadership and preaching within the bounds of that presbytery.
- conducts worship at the invitation of the called or appointed minister, the Pastoral Charge Supervisor, the governing body of the congregation or the presbytery when the appointed or called minister is away due to illness, continuing education course work, or vacation.
- is a member in good standing in a local congregation who has been determined by his/her home congregation and local presbytery to have gifts for worship leadership and preaching. Through participation in a presbytery-approved course of study, these gifts are developed further, giving both the Licensed Lay Worship Leader and the congregation confidence that worship leadership is built upon a theological and biblical foundation consistent with the ethos and practice of the United Church of Canada.

Many lay people in a congregation participate and give leadership in worship, but those who choose to participate in a Licensed Lay Worship Leadership program are choosing to develop their leadership gifts further. They are **not** entering an order of ministry. The term “licensed” indicates that an individual has engaged in a course of study and is considered suitable for this work by a congregational session, board, or council as well as that congregation’s presbytery/district. Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are not eligible for appointment to any paid accountable ministry personnel position, although they may receive standard remuneration for conducting individual worship services on the basis of the “Worship Leadership and Preaching” rate, including travel, in the current *Salary and Allowances Schedule* issued by General Council each year. They are not eligible, by virtue of licensing, to preside at sacraments or to wear stoles or vestments of any kind.

Prior Assessment

Before expressing interest in participating in a Licensed Lay Worship Leader course, and before requesting recommendation to such a course by a congregational session, board, or council, an individual has gifts and experience that lend themselves to a ministry of worship leadership and preaching.

Some people may bring transferable skills from their life and workplace experience, such as written and oral communication, public speaking, and teaching.

In addition, some may indicate budding gifts for worship leadership through such congregational activities as facilitating adult study groups and prayer groups, making presentations at committee

meetings, and contributing thoughtful and reflective writing to church newsletters or other publications.

Of course, an individual may clearly demonstrate worship leadership through leading prayers and liturgy, preaching, and conducting entire services.

Personal Qualities

In affirming that an individual has the potential to participate in a Licensed Lay Worship Leaders program, a session, board, or council is saying that this individual has demonstrated a commitment to the ethos of the United Church and is comfortable with that ethos as it is manifested at the levels of pastoral charge, presbytery, Conference, and General Council.

Such an individual may possess a prayerful and integrated spirituality, openness to ongoing development and learning, and a desire to share a relevant faith informed by Christian hope and God's Spirit. Other personal qualities may include:

- the ability to relate sensitively to a wide range of people
- be discreet and trustworthy
- engage with ideas in an open and non-judgmental fashion

Clear written and oral communication skills, as well as organizational skills, are additional assets. While none of us is fully formed, and an individual interested in being a Licensed Lay Worship Leader will not have all the necessary competencies at the beginning of her or his course of study, evidence of budding gifts that can be further honed is part of the assessment process.

Competencies

During a Licensed Lay Worship Leaders course of study, competencies will be explored such as:

- developing knowledge of the scriptural basis for Christian faith
- understanding theological themes
- exploring United Church history and polity
- recognizing and respecting different congregational contexts
- organizing and preparing worship liturgy
- understanding and writing prayers
- becoming familiar with United Church hymnody as singing our faith
- preparing and delivering sermons
- practicing public speaking and presentation

Section Three:

The United Church of Canada Policy on Licensed Lay Worship Leaders

(from The Manual of The United Church of Canada (2013), 1.1.8.4)

The Presbytery shall make enquiry as to the ability, character, and doctrine of a person recommended by a Session or Church Board or Church Council to be licensed as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader, and shall conduct a written examination on the course of study required by the appropriate General Council working unit. Upon successful completion of these requirements, the Presbytery shall issue a licence to the person on the prescribed form. The Licensed Lay Worship Leader shall be recognized at a public service to be held under the direction of the Chairperson of the Presbytery.

Presbytery Direction. The person licensed as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader shall function under the direction of the Presbytery.

Transferability. A Licensed Lay Worship Leader transferring membership in the United Church from one Pastoral Charge to another Pastoral Charge in the same Presbytery shall continue to be recognized as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader. A Licensed Lay Worship Leader transferring membership to a Pastoral Charge in another Presbytery shall not function as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader until recognized as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader by that Presbytery.

Renewal of Licence. The licence of a Licensed Lay Worship Leader shall be renewed each year at the discretion of the Presbytery within the jurisdiction of which such Licensed Lay Worship Leader is a member in good standing of a Congregation.