

## PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMISSION: VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATE MINISTER MARRIAGE POLICY

This policy outlines the regulations regarding marriage licences for Voluntary Associate Ministers (VAMs) in Shining Waters Regional Council.

Date Approved: December 12, 2018	Review date by Pastoral Relations Commission: 2021
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### ELIGIBILITY

#### a) Permanent licences

Those eligible to hold a permanent licence to conduct a wedding within the Province of Ontario are:

1. Ministry personnel in a covenanted relationship with a ministry recognized by a regional council of The United Church of Canada within the Province of Ontario.

#### b) Temporary licences

Those eligible to hold a temporary licence to conduct a wedding within the Province of Ontario are:

1. Ministry personnel in good standing who are not in an on-going covenanted relationship with a ministry recognized by a regional council of The United Church of Canada.
2. Ministry personnel from other regional councils within The United Church of Canada who are in good standing and reside outside Ontario.
3. Ministry personnel from other communions, which are recognized by the Canadian Council of Churches or the World Council of Churches.

### Notes

- i) Retired Designated Lay Ministers are not eligible to be licensed because they are not in an appointment.
- ii) A marriage licence will be valid for six months after the end of an appointment or call. If a minister has not entered into another appointment or call, or into a Voluntary Associate Minister covenanted relationship within this six month period, then their licence will be cancelled.

### PROCEDURES

#### a) Permanent licences

1. All ministry personnel in a covenanted relationship with a community of faith will be authorized by the regional councils to apply for a marriage licence.
2. A covenanted relationship for those not called or appointed to a community of faith will consist of a joint statement from the ministry personnel and a community of faith indicating a mutual agreement that conducting weddings is part of the duties of the ministry personnel. Ministry personnel will have a valid police records check in accordance with General Council policy and have completed any other training required by General Council policy, currently boundaries and racial justice training.

In Shining Waters Regional Council, this joint statement is included in the Voluntary Associate Minister form, which must be signed by the ministry personnel and the community of faith, and approved by the Pastoral Relations Commission. Shining Waters Regional Council will depend on

The United Church of Canada's Church Hub to verify police records check and mandatory training requirements. This means anyone applying for Voluntary Associate Minister status must be registered on [www.ChurchHub.ca](http://www.ChurchHub.ca).

3. The regional council will periodically determine whether a covenanted relationship continues to exist between a ministry personnel and a community of faith.
4. All marriages shall be registered in a marriage register kept by a United Church of Canada community of faith or regional council recognized ministry.

#### **b) Temporary licences**

1. Ministry personnel without a permanent licence for conducting weddings will contact the marriage registration governing official requesting a temporary licence.
2. The governing official will confirm the ministry personnel's standing by checking the Office of Vocation Church Hub.
3. Ministry personnel requesting a temporary licence shall supply a letter of support from the ministry personnel serving the United Church of Canada community of faith in which the wedding is taking place.
4. For "off-site," non-church weddings, ministry personnel shall provide a letter from a United Church of Canada community of faith whose marriage register is being used to register the marriage.
5. All marriages shall be registered in a marriage register kept by a United Church of Canada community of faith or regional council recognized ministry.
6. Temporary licences for weddings to be conducted on the premises of other denominations shall be requested through the governing official of the other denomination.
7. The maximum number of temporary registrations to be authorized for any individual in any calendar year is three. Those wishing to conduct more than three weddings per calendar year will be required to enter into a covenanted relationship with a community of faith or regional council recognized ministry.
8. Ministry personnel applying for a temporary licence must have a valid police records check in accordance with General Council policy and have completed any other training required by General Council policy, currently boundaries and racial justice training.
9. Ministry personnel from another denomination applying for a temporary licence must have a police records check valid within the last six months.
10. Whatever personal record the officiant makes of the event, it must be entered into the marriage register of a congregation according to #4 or #5, above.

#### **c) Ministry Personnel who are not recognized by The United Church of Canada**

Ministry personnel of a denomination that is a member church of the Canadian Council of Churches or the World Council of Churches will provide a letter of standing from their denomination of accountability. The ministry personnel would be subject to #1 and #3-10 above.