

Standards of Practice for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders
Shining Waters Regional Council
The United Church of Canada

(approved by the Pastoral Relations Commission, on February 26, 2019)

Introduction and Purpose

Shining Waters 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 congregations. The following document outlines the standards of practice for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders who serve in Shining Waters. It is the hope of the region that these standards of practice will both encourage, honour and inform the members of the Laity as they share their gifts and express their faith while meeting the vital need of a congregation to gather for worship.

The following standards of practice are divided up into three sections: Membership, Preparation and Licensing, Ongoing Support and Guidance. In the three sections, key questions are posed and answers provided.

A key resource for the preparation of these standards of practice is [Licensed Lay Worship Leaders](#), June 2019, The United Church of Canada.

Membership:

What is required to be a Licensed Lay Worship Leader (LLWL)?

The regional council may license a person as a licensed lay worship leader. (The Manual I 1.11.5)

The following requirements apply:

- a) the person must be a member of a congregation 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 Pastoral Relations Commission through the LLWL 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:

What are the educational requirements to be licensed?

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 LLWL Committee.

The lay member must also complete all mandatory workshops and police records checks, according to policy set by the United Church of Canada.

If a layperson has received training outside any training course approved by the region, are they exempt from region approved training, and if so, what criteria covers a decision to be exempt?

An individual may be exempt from a preparatory course at the discretion of the Pastoral Relations Commission. An individual's education would be evaluated using the handbook, Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (October 2016) or future editions.

When seeking licensing, will there be an interview for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders?

Yes. The Pastoral Relations Commission, through the LLWL Committee tests 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, the LLWL committee will make a recommendation to the Pastoral Relations Commission regarding issuing a license.

Ongoing Support and Guidance

Will there be meetings with Licensed Lay Worship Leaders for support?

There is conversation underway about a cluster of Shining Waters LLWLs to meet electronically through a teleconferencing platform like Zoom. This cluster would meet to offer mutual support and guidance.

Will there be interviews for renewal of licenses?

Yes. The Pastoral Relations Commission issues a licence to the lay member to function as a licensed lay worship leader within the jurisdiction of the region, under the direction of the region. The licence is normally valid for 3 years and may be renewed.

What kind of reporting do you require from the LLWL?

The LLWL Committee, which has been authorised to interview and make recommendations to the Pastoral Relations Commission, will determine what reporting is required. It is recommended that you keep bulletins, sermons and a record of what churches you have served in case you are asked for these.

How many Sundays can a Licensed Lay worship Leader lead worship in one community of faith?

The licensed lay worship leader may cover three consecutive Sundays a month, to a maximum of 15 services per year, in one community of faith. 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 a Pastoral Relations Minister before agreeing to do so. The Pastoral Relations Ministers will report these exceptions to the Pastoral Relations Commission.

Are Licensed Lay Worship Leaders expected to provide pastoral care?

No. A licensed lay worship leader may not provide pastoral care in a pastoral charge 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 community of faith's supervisor for follow-up.

May a Licensed Lay Worship Leader conduct a funeral?

Yes. A licensed lay worship leader may conduct a funeral. However, the conduct of funerals within a community of faith (including a funeral home), is to be arranged in consultation with the called or appointed ministry personnel or the supervisor of the community of faith. If the licensed lay worship leader conducts a funeral, they must ensure that the information is entered in the Burial Register of the community of faith.

May a Licensed Lay Worship Leader conduct a marriage and sacraments?

No. Licensing does not include permission to preside at the sacraments or provide a license to perform marriages.

Does the Regional Council require a Police Records Check and mandatory workshops?

Yes. A level two Police Records Check is required for initial licensing, and annual declaration of no criminal charges or convictions thereafter. Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are required to complete the following mandatory workshops: Racial justice workshop and the Boundary workshop (Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy).

May a LLWL wear a stole or clergy collar?

No. A stole and a clergy collar are reserved for those who are ministry personnel, called or appointed to a community of faith.