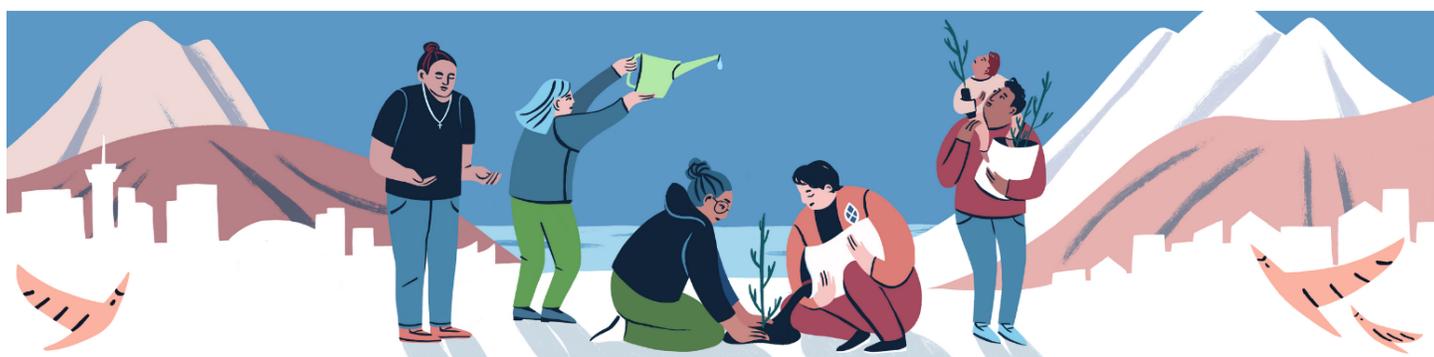




# Licensed Lay Worship Leader Policy, Practice and Procedure

Lay Leadership Support Committee

February 2021



[PACIFICMOUNTAIN.CA](http://PACIFICMOUNTAIN.CA)

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# INTRODUCTION

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## Purpose of this Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to outline the policy of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council of The United Church of Canada regarding Licenced Lay Worship Leaders within its bounds to ensure that expectations regarding the formation and practice of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are clear and consistent.

Each Licensed Lay Worship Leader has the responsibility to ensure these requirements are met as outlined in the current Manual, UCC Licensed Lay Worship Leader handbook and this handbook.

Pacific Mountain Regional Council appreciates the willingness of lay people who come forward to offer their faith, gifts, and skills as worship leaders in communities of faith. 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 communities of faith to gather for worship.

*The contents of this document do not replace, but are meant to complement, the policies for Licenced Lay Worship Leaders as outlined in The Manual (2019) and Licenced Lay Worship Leaders (2019)<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.united-church.ca/leadership/entering-ministry/licensed-lay-worship-leaders>

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# PACIFIC MOUNTAIN REGIONAL COUNCIL STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

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## Governance of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders

### Oversight

The Lay Leadership Support Committee, as part of the Pastoral Relations Council of Pacific Mountain Region, is responsible for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, providing support, supervision, and oversight.

## Preparation and Licensing

### Licensing

Pacific Mountain Regional Council has the responsibility for licensing an individual as a Lay Worship Leader.

### Prior Assessment

Those who have discerned a call to this leadership, have the support of the governing body of their community of faith, and intend to pursue licensing will contact the Lay Leadership Support Committee before beginning a course of study. Responses to screening questions and participation in an orientation meeting is required.<sup>2</sup>

### Course of Study

Pacific Mountain Regional Council is responsible for authorizing the course of study based on the requirements of the United Church of Canada, and for determining whether individuals who have completed courses of study for Lay Worship Leadership offered beyond the boundaries of Pacific Mountain Regional Council meet the requirements to be licensed.

### Educational Requirements

Those participating in a Licensed Lay Worship Leader educational program will observe accepted educational standards with respect to the work involved in becoming a Licensed Lay Worship Leader (LLWL). This includes, but is not limited to, attendance at 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 licencing.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://form.jotform.com/PMR-UCC/LLWLApplicant>

## Educational Program

Pacific Mountain Regional Council authorizes the Licensed Lay Worship Leader program offered by United in Learning<sup>3</sup> which is the United Church of Canada's distance learning platform for church leaders. Any other course of study must be submitted to the Lay Leadership Support Committee for approval before beginning the program.



## Readiness to Serve

An individual may be recommended for licensing, or subsequent renewal of licensing, after a documentation and interview process conducted by the Lay Leadership Support Committee, including a determination of the person's understanding of the ethos, theology and practice of The United Church of Canada.<sup>4</sup>

## Initial License and Renewal

The Lay Leadership Support Committee shall have the authority to license Lay Worship Leaders for a specific period to be renewed at the discretion of the Committee.

## Community of Faith Support

When seeking licensing or renewal of a license, individuals will provide a letter from their home community of faith's governing body affirming membership in good standing and their suitability for this role within the wider church.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.united-in-learning.com/index.php/llwl-online-training-program>

<sup>4</sup> [https://form.jotform.com/PMR-UCC/LLWL\\_Application\\_Renewal](https://form.jotform.com/PMR-UCC/LLWL_Application_Renewal)

### Police Records Check and Annual Declaration

Pacific Mountain Regional Council shall exercise due diligence by requesting a Police Record Check (Vulnerable Sector) issued within the past 6 months before granting the initial license. For the duration of the license period and before license renewal, an annual declaration certifying the preceding year has been free of criminal charges must be submitted. Failure to provide a current Police Record Check or to complete the annual declaration will result in suspension of the license. Annual declarations are submitted to the Lay Leadership Support Committee between June 1 and June 30 of each year.<sup>5</sup>

### Racial Justice and Boundaries Training

Pacific Mountain Regional Council requires the completion of Racial Justice Training and Boundaries Training before granting or renewing a license. Racial Justice Training and Boundaries Training may be completed through United in Learning. Boundaries Training must be refreshed every five years to maintain licensing.<sup>6</sup>

### Documentation

The Lay Leadership Support Committee may request additional documentation prior to licensing, including but not limited to letters of reference.<sup>7</sup>

## Support and Practices

### Regular Check-in

The Pacific Mountain Regional Council Lay Leadership Support Committee will meet with each Licensed Lay Worship Leader prior to the expiration of their license to provide support and opportunity to discern if renewal of the license is appropriate. Renewal shall be assessed based on the policy contained in this resource.

### Jurisdiction

A license is valid for the duration of the licensing period while the Lay Licensed Worship Leader remains a member of any community of faith within the Pacific Mountain Regional Council.

### Transferability

A Licensed Lay Worship Leader transferring membership in the United Church from one community of faith to another in the same regional council shall continue to be recognized as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader. If a Licensed Lay Worship Leader transfers their membership to a community of faith in another Regional Council, they must be recognized by that Regional Council to continue serving as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://form.jotform.com/PMR-UCC/AnnualDeclarationPRC>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.united-in-learning.com/index.php/webinars/upcoming-webinars>

<sup>7</sup> <https://form.jotform.com/PMR-UCC/LLWLReferenceForm>

### Personal Worship Practice

In addition to being a full member of The United Church of Canada, when not conducting a service, Licensed Lay Worship Leaders will regularly attend worship and participate in the life of the sponsoring community of faith.

### Meeting Regional Needs

Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are encouraged to assist the Pacific Mountain Regional Council in meeting the needs of all communities of faith which are without ministry personnel. It is therefore intended that Licensed Lay Worship Leaders will circulate within the Regional Council so that a great number of communities of faith can benefit from their leadership.

### Participation in the Governing Body of the Community of Faith

Licensed Lay Worship Leaders may demonstrate gifts for leadership through such congregational activities as facilitation of adult study groups and prayer groups, making presentations at committee meetings, and contributing thoughtful and reflective writing to church newsletters or other publications.

Licensed Lay Worship Leaders will not take on multiple leadership roles within the community of faith, so as not to exercise undue influence, limit the participation of other lay leaders or contribute to a concentration of power and authority in their role or person, respecting the conciliar understanding of governance and leadership in UCC ethos. Licensed Lay Worship Leaders will respect the boundaries of their license and maintain a clear distinction between their role and the role of ministry personnel.

Licensed Lay Worship Leaders will follow the UCC Conflict of Interest Policy.<sup>8</sup>

### Frequency of Preaching

Licensed Lay Worship Leaders may lead worship up to a total of five out of eight Sundays in any two month period, with no more than two consecutive in any one community of faith, and up to maximum of ten services per year in their own community of faith. In any case, a Licensed Lay Worship Leader may not lead more than 26 worship services per year, unless receiving the prior written consent of the Lay Leadership Support Committee.

If the Licensed Lay Worship Leader is requested to lead services or a community of faith discerns a need for service leadership from any one LLWL more frequently than this limit, prior written consent of the Lay Leadership Support Committee must be received before proceeding.

### Preaching in another Regional Council

In the event a Licensed Lay Worship Leader is invited to lead worship in a community of faith outside the Pacific Mountain Regional Council, it is expected that they will seek the permission of, and function within the guidelines of, that Regional Council.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/conflict-of-interest-policy.pdf>

## Accountability

Licensed Lay Worship Leaders will, on an annual basis, provide the Lay Leadership Support Committee 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 Pacific Mountain Regional Council, and a list of continuing education events, practices and engagement undertaken as part of their ongoing education and development.<sup>9</sup>

## Evaluation

As part of the process of oversight, at a minimum of once each year, a Licensed Lay Worship Leader will request an evaluation from one of the communities of faith in which they have offered leadership, to be submitted directly to the Lay Leadership Support Committee.<sup>10</sup>

## Mentorship

The Lay Leadership Support Committee may, at its discretion, assign a mentor to a Lay Licensed Worship Leader for a defined period to provide guidance and support.

## Respect for Local Practices

Licensed Lay Worship Leaders lead worship at the invitation of a local community of faith. When preparing worship services, Licensed Lay Worship Leaders shall respect the community of faith in which they are serving regarding local traditions and practices, worship format, hymnody, language and style of worship leadership, following the direction and instructions of the local community of faith, Pastoral Charge, or ministry personnel.

## Remuneration

The community of faith shall remunerate Licensed Lay Worship Leaders appropriately. The remuneration will be consistent with the rate for 'Visiting Ministry Personnel' found in the current Minimum Salaries & Reimbursements for Ministry Personnel.<sup>11</sup> All monies earned must be declared as a taxable income. A T4A tax form must be issued by the community of faith to an individual for any amount exceeding \$500 per year.

## Preaching in one's own Community of Faith

When leading worship within one's home community of faith, it is expected that the Licensed Lay Worship Leader be paid in accordance with the rate set out listed for Visiting Ministry Personnel found in the current Minimum Salaries & Reimbursements for Ministry Personnel. Each community of faith that sponsors a Licensed Lay Worship Leader is encouraged to occasionally invite their Licensed Lay Worship Leader to lead worship. The limits on frequency of worship leadership shall be followed.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://form.jotform.com/PMR-UCC/LLWLLog>

<sup>10</sup> <https://form.jotform.com/PMR-UCC/LLWLEvaluation>  
<https://form.jotform.com/PMR-UCC/LLWLCoffEvaluation>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.united-church.ca/leadership/church-administration/compensation-and-benefits/compensation-ministry-personnel-0>

### Representing the Regional Council

A licensed Lay Worship Leader may not represent the Regional Council at their local church meeting, by virtue of their role as LLWL. The representative of the Regional Council at a governing body meeting shall be either the ministry personnel called or appointed to the community of faith or the duly appointed Pastoral Charge Supervisor. A Licensed Lay Worship Leader is not, by virtue of the role, permitted to serve as Pastoral Charge Supervisor for their own community of faith. Neither are they permitted to apply to or fill pastoral vacancies.

### Representing one's own Community of Faith

A Licensed Lay Worship Leader may be duly elected by their community of faith to represent that community of faith at Regional Council meetings as the lay representative.

### 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 a community of faith or with individual members of a community of faith. It is expected that the Licensed Lay Worship Leader will refer any request or requirements for pastoral care (counselling, home visitation, hospital visits) to the called or appointed Ministry Personnel or the Pastoral Charge Supervisor for follow-up.

### Affiliation with other Religious Organizations

A lay person, who is recognized as ordained or commissioned by any other body, denomination, or church organization is not eligible to become a Licensed Lay Worship Leader.

### Sacraments

Licensing as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader does not include permission to preside, under any circumstance, at the sacraments (baptism and communion). Celebrating the sacraments through arrangements with a non-United Church of Canada agency may result in the loss of one's license to serve as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader.

### Vestments and Titles

Licensed Lay Worship Leaders will not wear vestments: stoles, clerical collars, albs, gowns. Licensed Lay Worship Leaders will not use "the Reverend" or "Pastor" or any title that designates professional, paid, accountable ministry in the United Church of Canada, nor use the letters LLWL as an academic degree credential.

### Funerals

Presiding at funerals for members or adherents of a community of faith (including at a funeral home) shall be done only at the invitation of the called or appointed minister of that community of faith, the Pastoral Charge Supervisor, the governing body of the community of faith or the Pacific Mountain Regional Council. Conversations with the called or appointed ministry personnel or the supervisor of the community of faith must happen prior to making any agreement with the family, an individual or funeral home. If, after following all the above-noted steps, the Licensed Lay Worship Leader conducts

the funeral, they must ensure that the information about the service is properly entered in the Burial Register of the community of faith.

### Relationship with 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 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 result in the loss of one’s license.

### Advertising

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 approved by the Lay Leadership Support Committee for such purpose.

### Duty of Care

For their own awareness and protection, Licensed Lay Worship Leaders are encouraged to review on a regular basis the United Church of Canada *Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures* and the *Workplace Discrimination, Harassment and Violence Prevention and Response Policy*<sup>12</sup>. In Pacific Mountain Regional Council, all Licensed Lay Worship Leaders must have completed the Boundaries training and Racial Justice training offered by The United Church of Canada as well as completing refresher courses as required.

### Liability

For liability insurance purposes, a Licensed Lay Worship Leader is covered by Pacific Mountain Regional Council for worship services only.

### Collection and Circulation of Names of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders

Lay Leadership Support Committee shall, on an annual basis, circulate the names of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders approved by Pacific Mountain Region. Licensed Lay Worship Leaders may also be on the Regional Council’s list of those who are approved to preach within its bounds.

### Ending and Celebration

If a Licensed Lay Worship Leader has discerned that they no longer want to serve in this particular way and it is within the period of the license, they will notify the Lay Leadership Support Committee so that the license may be cancelled. A Licensed Lay Worship Leader may choose not to seek renewal of their license. In both these cases the ending of the lay ministry may be celebrated through a liturgy within the home community of faith.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/sexual-misconduct-prevention-response.pdf>  
<https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/2020-10/harassment-policy-2020.pdf>

## Appendix A Forms

Prior Assessment: <https://form.jotform.com/PMR-UCC/LLWLPriorAssessment>

Application/Renewal of Application: [https://form.jotform.com/PMR-UCC/LLWL\\_Application\\_Renewal](https://form.jotform.com/PMR-UCC/LLWL_Application_Renewal)

Annual Declaration: <https://form.jotform.com/PMR-UCC/AnnualDeclarationPRC>

LLWL Evaluation of Service: <https://form.jotform.com/PMR-UCC/LLWLEvaluation>

Community of Faith Evaluation of Service: <https://form.jotform.com/PMR-UCC/LLWLCofFEvaluation>

Reference Letter: <https://form.jotform.com/PMR-UCC/LLWLReferenceForm>

Service Log: <https://form.jotform.com/PMR-UCC/LLWLLog>

## Appendix B

### LLWL Introduction to Communities of Faith

(also available as PDF at [www.pacificmountain.ca](http://www.pacificmountain.ca))

#### **Licensed Lay Worship Leader (short introduction)**

Good morning, thank you for inviting me here today. As you have probably noticed I have been introduced as an LLWL. Those letters – LLWL - stand for Licensed Lay Worship Leader. A Licensed Lay Worship Leader is a lay person who, after a program of study, has been licensed by Pacific Mountain Regional Council to prepare and lead worship in communities of faith. Please see more information about the role of the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders in the handout. Thank you for inviting me here today.

#### **Handout**

All Licensed lay Worship Leaders are members in good standing in the United Church of Canada. We discerned a call to lead worship, and to preach, and are supported in this work, and recommended for this role, by our own community of faith. We completed a two-year program of study, were interviewed, and completed all requirements and processes, to be licensed by Pacific Mountain Regional Council.

We have ongoing requirements which must be met to continue to be licensed. We are accountable to Pacific Mountain Regional Council's Pastoral Relations Council through the Lay Leadership Support Committee. The Lay Leadership Support Committee supports the work of LLWLs ensuring accountability for our leadership. The licenses we hold are regularly reviewed and renewed as appropriate.

We are trained to lead worship and preach, ensuring a community of faith can continue to worship when their regular minister is away or during a pastoral relations search for a new minister. We like to work with someone in your congregation when preparing a service, so that we know some of the basics and can create and lead a service that respects your traditions and your community culture.

There are limits to what we can do. We are not ordained, commissioned, or designated and cannot be called or appointed to fill a pastoral relations vacancy for a minister. We are not trained to provide pastoral care, act as pastoral charge supervisors, or represent the Region at congregational meetings. In short, we are not paid, accountable ministry personnel in the United Church of Canada, and cannot undertake the work of a minister.

The Lay Leadership Support Committee, which has oversight of LLWLs, is available to communities of faith, who may have questions about LLWL presence, practices, and procedures. Please direct queries to Linda Ervin, [lindamervinlls@gmail.com](mailto:lindamervinlls@gmail.com) Chair of the Lay Leadership Support Committee.

Following worship, I look forward to answering any questions you have about LLWLs.

## Appendix C

### Liturgy to Decommission an LLWL

#### Celebration of a Ministry

#### LITURGY TO DECOMMISSION A LICENSED LAY WORSHIP LEADER

The following liturgy may be used at the occasion of the decommissioning of a Licensed Lay Worship Leader (LLWL). It expresses recognition and thanksgiving for the blessings of work and prayers for God's continued direction. This service may be adapted for use in the local Community of Faith.

Because the place of the work of Lay Licensed Worship Leaders is primarily in their own local Community of Faith, this is where the service of decommissioning should be held at a time, soon after the intention to end the ministry leadership is announced. The service is also a recognition of a commitment to disengage from offering licensed lay worship leadership. The public declaration of a willingness to end brings the issue of closure to the surface. It is important that the LLWL consciously consents to this act of leaving by making a public declaration. It is also important that the Community of Faith accept the decommissioning of the ministry and no longer call on the decommissioned LLWL for any more assistance with worship leading after that.

#### Notes about the service:

- Choose Scripture or other readings particularly meaningful to the person or occasion.
- Similarly, work with the Lay Licensed Worship Leader on choices of hymns or songs
- the service is meant to be a celebration of a ministry – include aspects that reflect that (there may be short notes of gratitude to read from the congregation, the sermon may reflect the subject of service, gratitude and calling, there may be a special tea afterwards)
- there may be an appropriate gift given (a special candle, mug, book voucher) as a token of appreciation

Within a normal service of public worship within a local Community of Faith please adapt the following material for use:

**Leader:** Dear friends, today we have gathered in the presence of God to give thanks for the accomplishments of work and to celebrate the gifts we have received. When God had accomplished the work of creation, God looked upon the completed work, proclaimed that it was very good, and instituted Sabbath rest. The Sabbath rest of God is a pattern for a decommissioned LLWLs entering a new phase of life.

We rejoice in the work God has given to us to do; but we also affirm that the time may come to lay that work aside. Our work always is a means of joining in God's creative purpose for life. Yet the promise of a Sabbath from the calling to Lay Licensed Worship Leadership is not the end of usefulness in God's work. Release from this task calls for commitment to redirecting life to the service of God, humanity, and creation.

**Name** has come today to celebrate the decommissioning of their ministry as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader.

With the ending of one kind of service, there may be fresh opportunities to offer service to God.

**Leader addresses the Lay Licensed Worship Leader:**

**Name**, release from this service is a moment of giving up the ministry of Licensed Lay Worship Leadership. Will you redirect your life to new ways of serving God?

**The LLWL being decommissioned responds:**

I will, with God's help.

**The Leader then addresses the congregation, saying:**

Will you who witness this commitment support **Name** in ending their ministry of Licensed Lay Worship Leadership and redirecting their life to new service?

**People:**

We will.

**Leader: (prayer of gratitude)**

Let us pray.

Loving God, we give you thanks for the life and ministry of **Name** who has served your church in this place as a Lay Licensed Worship leader. We thank you for the gifts they have shared and all they have brought to continue and enhance worship in this place. Continue to bless **Name**, even as they move away from this service and bless us, **Name of Church** as we respond to your call and proclaim your kin-dom here.

**Leader: (Giving of Gift)**

**Lay Licensed Worship Leader:**

*there may be personal words of response the person may wish to add here*

**All: (Blessing)**

May God bless you and keep you;  
May the light of God's presence shine upon you.  
May God's grace go with you in your retiring,  
and give you peace. Amen.

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Leader is the preside and may be the ministry personnel or Pastoral Charge Supervisor of the (home) community of faith.

*Main Source: Based on Services of Closure in Celebrate God's Presence*