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# LICENCE TO ADMINISTER SACRAMENTS POLICY

## HUMAN RESOURCES COMMISSION

### WESTERN ONTARIO WATERWAYS REGIONAL COUNCIL

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*In company with the churches  
of the Reformed and Methodist traditions,  
we celebrate two sacraments as gifts of Christ:  
baptism and holy communion.  
In these sacraments the ordinary things of life  
— water, bread, wine —  
point beyond themselves to God and God's love,  
teaching us to be alert  
to the sacred in the midst of life.  
- A Song of Faith*

#### **Process for requesting licence**

In instances where the governing body is responsible for requesting a licence to administer the sacraments:

- 1) The governing body of a community of faith discerns whether or not a licence to administer the sacraments is appropriate. This request must come from an official meeting of the governing body. The Human Resources Commission (HR Commission) may initiate the conversation.
- 2) The governing body sends a letter or e-mail to the Human Resources Commission which includes:
  - stating the request,
  - the type of ministry,
  - the date of the meeting of the governing body approving the request.

In instances where the request comes from the individual (eg: retirees)

- 1) The applicant sends a letter or e-mail to the Human Resources Commission. The Human Resources Commission may initiate the conversation.

#### **Licences by orders of ministry**

##### **Candidate Supply**

The Human Resources Commission will grant a licence upon receiving a request from the governing body of the community of faith. The licence is for the length of the appointment within the bounds of the community of faith. A letter from the training institution/professor/ instructor/mentor noting the completion of a course of study on the sacraments is required. This prerequisite may be met through working with a mentor assigned by the Human Resources Commission and working through the training found in the *Sacrament Elders Handbook*.

##### **Designated Lay Minister**

The Human Resources Commission will grant a licence upon receiving a request from the governing body of the community of faith. The licence is for the length of the appointment within the bounds of the regional council.

### **Designated Lay Ministers While In Training**

The Human Resources Commission will grant a licence upon receiving a request from the governing body of the community of faith. The licence is for the length of the appointment within the bounds of the region. A letter from the training institution/professor/instructor/mentor noting the completion of a course of study on the sacraments is required. This prerequisite may also be met through working with a mentor assigned by the HR Commission and working through the training found in the *Sacrament Elders Handbook*.

### **Designated Lay Ministers Without An Appointment**

*The Manual* does not grant the Regional Council permission to grant a licence to designated lay ministers without an appointment.

### **Lay Members Retired From Designated Lay Ministry**

The Human Resources Commission will grant a licence upon receiving a request from the retiree. The member needs to have been recognized by the region as a DLM at the time of their retirement. The licence is for five years within the bounds of the region. The member must show proof of an up to date police records check as per United Church policy and completion of the mandatory training required by ministry personnel. Please contact the Human Resources Commission for more information.

### **Diaconal Ministers**

The Human Resources Commission must grant a licence to a diaconal minister in a call or appointment. The licence is for the duration of the call or appointment and will be granted upon receiving the call or appointment form. A letter from the governing body is not required.

### **Diaconal Supply**

The Human Resources Commission will grant a licence upon receiving the appointment form for the duration of the appointment.

### **Diaconal Minister Outside of a Pastoral Relationship**

*The Manual* does not grant the Regional Council permission to grant a licence to diaconal ministers outside of a pastoral relationship.

### **Retired Diaconal Minister**

The Human Resources Commission will grant a licence upon receiving a letter from the retiree. The licence is without geographical limitations and is for five years, renewable. In order to carry out the functions of ministry the retiree must be a Volunteer Associate Minister with a congregation (*The Manual*, 1.2.5.3) and must abide by the requirements set out in *The Manual: section 1.2.5.4 "Requests—Previous Pastoral Relationships"* (See Appendix).

### **Ordained Minister**

A licence is not required in order to preside over the sacraments. They must abide by the requirements set out in *The Manual: section 1.2.5.4 "Requests—Previous Pastoral Relationships"* (See Appendix).

### **Ordained minister outside of a pastoral relationship**

A licence is not required in order to preside over the sacraments. In order to carry out the functions of ministry the minister must be in a “formal association” with a community of faith as stipulated in *The Manual, section 1.2.5.3* (See Appendix). Please contact the Human Resources Commission for more information. The minister must also abide by the requirements set out in *The Manual: section 1.2.5.4 “Requests—Previous Pastoral Relationships”* (See Appendix)

### **Retired Ordained Minister**

A licence is not required in order to preside over the sacraments. In order to carry out the functions of ministry the retiree must be a Volunteer Associate Minister with a congregation (*The Manual, 1.2.5.3*) and must abide by the requirements set out in *The Manual: section 1.2.5.4 “Requests—Previous Pastoral Relationships”* (See Appendix).

### **Sacraments Elder**

The requirements to name and licence a lay person as a sacraments elder can be found in the *Sacraments Elder Handbook*. The Human Resources Commission will fulfill the roles of “presbytery” and “conference” as outlined in the handbook. It is important that the community of faith approach the Human Resources Commission at the beginning of the process to name a sacraments elder. The Human Resources Commission requires that the mentor have a conversation with the governing body in order to form a deeper understanding of the role, responsibilities, and limitations of sacraments elders.

The handbook can be found at:

[https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/handbook\\_sacraments-elders.pdf](https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/handbook_sacraments-elders.pdf)

## Appendix

### The Manual Sections

- 1) Theological Understandings Of The Sacraments:  
*The Manual, 2019: Section 2.3.16, 2.4.10, 2.6 line 245-289*
- 2) Regional Council's right to grant licences:  
*The Manual, 2019: Section C.2.9*
- 3) Who may be granted licences and terms of licence:  
*The Manual, 2019: I.2.4.4 Terms of Licence*

**Note:** Ministry personnel, whether active, between calls/appointments or retired, are required to file an annual police declaration and keep their mandatory training current in order to maintain their eligibility to perform the functions of ministry.

**I.2.5.3 Functions of Ministry—Outside Pastoral Relationship**

At any time that ministry personnel are not called or appointed to a community of faith, they may carry out the functions of ministry in the United Church only if

- a) they have a formal association with a community of faith, are acting on behalf of that community of faith, and have the approval of the community of faith's governing body; or

*An example of a "formal association" with a pastoral charge would be where the minister has been designated as a "voluntary associate minister" or "honorary associate minister" by the community of faith or its governing body.*

- b) they have been appointed to a community of faith to exercise the functions of ministry associated with it.

**I.2.5.4 Request—Previous Pastoral Charge**

If a ministry personnel is asked by a member or adherent (or their families) of a community of faith where they had previously served to preside at a baptism, communion service, wedding, or funeral, the ministry personnel

- a) must refer the request to a member of the order of ministry who is currently serving under call or appointment to that community of faith; and
- b) may preside only with the approval of the community of faith's governing body.

**Please note:**

- 1) For retired ministry personnel the "formal association" will be through designation as a Voluntary Associate Minister (VAM).
- 2) For ministry personnel between calls the "formal association" will be through a process entitled VAM (Voluntary Associate Minister). Please contact the Human Resources Commission for more information.