

## Policy Regarding licences to administer the Sacraments

POLICY NAME: Policy regarding Licences to Administer the Sacraments	Date Approved:
	Review date:
Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to clarify expectations regarding licences to administer the Sacraments. The Manual 2021 Sections I.2.4 and I.2.5.2 b	

### Preamble

This document outlines the East Central Ontario Regional Council's policy regarding licences to administer the Sacraments.

### Policy

#### 1. General Policy

The Regional Council may grant a licence to administer the sacraments to

- a) a designated lay minister, candidate supply, diaconal supply, ordained supply, or retired diaconal minister;
- b) lay people who were serving as a designated lay minister at the time of their retirement and who had been recognized by the regional council as a designated lay minister; and
- c) members of communities of faith without a called or appointed member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister. A member holding a licence to administer the sacraments is called a "sacraments elder." There are policies for the qualifications, assessment, and education of lay people to be sacraments elders

#### 2. Diaconal Ministers

The Regional Council must grant a diaconal minister a licence to administer the sacraments when the diaconal minister is serving in a call or appointment, or are employed in another ministry position. The licence will be for the duration of the call, appointment, or other ministry position.

#### 3. Process

The Regional Council is responsible for making a decision on whether to grant a person a licence under section I.2.4.1 above. The community of faith may initiate the process by making a request to the Regional Council that a licence be granted.

In the case of a candidate supply, a letter from the training institution/professor/instructor/mentor noting the completion of a course of study on the sacraments is required and a full year of experience with the requesting community of faith. The rationale is that based upon the Candidacy Pathway: Policy Handbook (January 2019), there are three different training paths for ministry. The focus for each is initially on the theoretical and theological. Page 18 "*Acceptance into the Designated Lay Ministry Diploma Program is contingent on approval of an appointment.... Each candidate for ordained and designated lay ministry must satisfactorily complete a Supervised Ministry Education program that involves learning goals based on the Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership, reflection on the practice of ministry, and regular supervision and evaluation.*"

Practical experience only happens once appointed to a community of faith, and based on learning goals. There are many concrete lessons to be learned, and relationships to be developed. Therefore, the Regional Council requires the first year to focus on the administrative and pastoral responsibilities of leadership to a community of faith.

#### 4. Terms of Licence

- a) A designated lay minister who has been recognized by the regional council may administer the sacraments within the bounds of the regional council where they are a member for the duration of the appointment.
- b) A candidate, once having fulfilled the academic and year-of-experience requirements (as explained in Process above), or a diaconal supply who has been appointed to a community of faith may administer the sacraments in that community of faith for the duration of the appointment.
- c) A member who was serving as a designated lay minister at the time of their retirement, and who had been

recognized by the regional council as a designated lay minister may administer the sacraments within the bounds of the regional council who is granting the licence. They must act in co-operation with the governing body of the community of faith where they are administering the sacraments.

- d) A Sacraments Elder may administer the sacraments in their community of faith for a 12-month term that may be renewed. The licence automatically ends if a member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister is called or appointed to the community of faith.

The requirements to name and licence a lay person as a sacraments elder can be found in the Sacraments Elder Handbook: [https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/handbook\\_sacraments-elders.pdf](https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/handbook_sacraments-elders.pdf)

#### The Regional Council:

1. Recognizes that the office of Sacraments Elder was intended for exceptional circumstances, such as the community of faith being considered remote, in that there are no other ministry personnel available with a reasonable distance of the community of faith who are able and willing to administer the Sacraments. *(From Minimum Salaries & Reimbursements for Ministry Personnel (2021) A location is considered remote if at least one of the following apply: • No all-weather road access, and no/very limited scheduled air or rail passenger services; • All-weather road access, however, over 250 km (or 2.5 hours' drive via Mapquest) from a population centre more than 5,000.)*  
The absence of a settled, called or appointed minister on a community of faith does not, in itself, trigger the licensing of a Sacraments Elder.
2. The Covenant Support Team confirms the need for a Sacraments Elder and the suitability of the proposed person before the training takes place. The Regional Council Assembly of Elders may not concur with the recommendations.
3. The Sacraments Elders Workbook will be the principal guide for instruction on the administration of the sacraments. The Pastoral Relations Minister shall be responsible to provide the training. The training is approximately 16 to 20 hours, timing to be divided between two to four modules with sufficient time between them for reflection.
4. The Covenant Support Team will recommend appointing an ongoing mentor, potentially the pastoral charge supervisor.
5. Upon completion of this process, the Covenant Support Team will bring a motion to the Regional Council Assembly of Elders for action.