

# Lay Readers (2016)

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## *Canon 8 of the Diocesan Canons is the effective regulation regarding Lay Readers in the Diocese of Huron*

While we recognize that the range of responsibilities undertaken by the lay readers varies greatly, the following considerations should be kept in mind:

- i) The Anglican Church supports and encourages baptismal ministry and lay assistance in church services should not be restricted to one or two people.
- ii) Duties assigned to the lay reader:
  - Officiate at the Office when the priest is unavailable.
  - Assist in recruitment and guiding of other laity to participate in the service (and as such, it is their responsibility to engage in ongoing education).

The position of lay reader is in part symbolic, acting to remind the congregation of their identity as the Body of Christ, and as such, the lay reader should not be set apart in such a way as to create an unnecessary distinction between the lay reader and other members of the parish.

### 1. Issuing of Licences

When a Rector/priest-in-charge desires the services of a lay reader, application should be made to the bishop through the Diocesan Chaplain to Lay Readers. The prospective lay reader will prepare for his/her licencing under the direction of the Rector/priest-in-charge, and as set out in the appended policy. No fixed examinations are set by the diocese because of the variety of circumstances from which the lay readers come and the scholastic ability of the persons themselves.

A letter from the Rector/priest-in-charge requesting the licencing of a lay reader(s) should be sent to the Chaplain to the Lay Readers stating that he/she has the concurrence of the congregation in the matter and including a copy of the ministry covenant signed by the Rector/priest-in-charge/Priest-in-Charge and the prospective Lay Reader.

### 2. Renewals of Licence (see below)

Lay readers are licensed to a particular rector/priest-in-charge in a particular parish. A licence lapses (1) if the lay reader moves to another parish, (2) a rector/priest-in-charge leaves a parish, or (3) a rector/priest-in-charge informs a lay reader that their services are no longer required.

In case (1) the lay reader may approach the rector/priest-in-charge of their new parish and ask to be considered for relicensing after six months in the new parish. If the rector/priest-in-charge wishes to have the person licensed, they will negotiate a “covenant” and forward same to the chaplain. The chaplain ordinarily will recommend licensing to the appropriate Bishop, but may request an interview of the candidate and rector/priest-in-charge by a senior priest before coming to a decision.

In case (2) the lay reader may be licensed to the territorial Archdeacon and continue to



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function during the time the parish is without a rector/priest-in-charge, subject to the permission of the Bishop, the territorial archdeacon, and any interim priest-in-charge appointed. Six months after a new rector/priest-in-charge is appointed to the parish, the rector/priest-in-charge may request that the lay reader be re-licensed, following the procedure outlined in the previous paragraph.

In case (3) the rector/priest-in-charge may request the re-issuance of a license if the services of the lay reader are again required, or a subsequent rector/priest-in-charge of the parish may do so six months after being appointed to the parish, following the procedure above.

### 3. Change of Rector/priest-in-charge

- i) It is undesirable to ask for the licencing of a lay reader if the incumbent is expecting to move to another parish in the near future.
- ii) **The licence of a lay reader expires when the Rector/priest-in-charge moves from the parish.** The new rector/priest-in-charge should request a new licence to be in force under his/her supervision if he/she desires the services of the lay reader. It must be remembered that a lay reader is licensed to serve only under the Rector/priest-in-charge who at that time is in charge of the parish.

### 4. Lay Reader Emeritus

Provision has been made for a certificate to be issued to lay readers who have given devoted and faithful service over a number of years but because of age are no longer able to perform their duties. The request from an incumbent for such a certificate should be made to the bishop.



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## REGULATIONS ON THE LICENSING OF LAY READERS

The Diocesan Chaplain to the Lay Readers is appointed by the Diocesan Bishop. It is the duty of the chaplain, to develop and maintain training standards and programmes for the lay readers of the Diocese. Upon successful completion of the training programme, the chaplain recommends candidates to the appropriate Bishop for licensing.

### **Becoming a Lay Reader**

An adult communicant member of a parish, who is interested in being licensed as a lay reader should speak to their rector/priest-in-charge. Alternately, a rector/priest-in-charge may approach suitable persons in their parishes, suggesting they consider licensing. Candidates for the office of lay reader must be persons of good character, regular worshippers and communicants, and active participants in the support and mission of their parish church.

Rector/priest-in-charges must approve the candidacy of persons studying for licensing in their parishes, and notify their Wardens and Parish Council. They then request that the chaplain to lay readers forward necessary information and requirements for licensing to the candidate. It is the responsibility of rector/priest-in-charges to supervise their candidates in the required course of reading and to train them in the practical aspects of their ministry.

When rector/priest-in-charges are satisfied that a candidate is fully prepared for licensing they will negotiate a “covenant” with them, and apply to the Chaplain for licensing. In some circumstances, the chaplain may wish to interview the candidate or may request an experienced priest in their geographical area to interview the candidate before any decision on licensing may be made.

### **Re-licensing of Previously Licensed Lay Readers**

Lay readers are licensed to a particular rector/priest-in-charge in a particular parish. A licence lapses (1) if the lay reader moves to another parish, (2) a rector/priest-in-charge leaves a parish, or (3) a rector/priest-in-charge informs a lay reader that their services are no longer required.

In case (1) the lay reader may approach the rector/priest-in-charge of their new parish and ask to be considered for relicensing after six months in the new parish. If the rector/priest-in-charge wishes to have the person licensed, they will negotiate a “covenant” and forward same to the chaplain. The chaplain ordinarily will recommend licensing to the appropriate Bishop, but may request an interview of the candidate and rector/priest-in-charge by a senior priest before coming to a decision.

In case (2) the lay reader may continue to function during the time the parish is without a rector/priest-in-charge, subject to the permission of the Bishop), the territorial archdeacon, and any interim priest-in-charge appointed. Six months after a new rector/priest-in-charge is appointed to the parish, the rector/priest-in-charge may request that the lay reader be re-licensed, following the procedure outlined in the previous paragraph.

In case (3) the rector/priest-in-charge may request the re-issuance of a license if the services of the lay reader are again required, or a subsequent rector/priest-in-charge of the parish may do so six months after being appointed to the parish, following the procedure above.



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## **The Duties of Lay Readers**

The ministry of a lay reader in a parish is one of liturgical assistance to the rector/priest-in-charge. This may consist of officiating at non-sacramental services in the absence of the rector/priest-in-charge, preaching at the request and with the permission of the rector/priest-in-charge, and taking non-sacramental parts of services at the request of the rector/priest-in-charge. All such liturgical assistance is at the discretion of the rector/priest-in-charge, and lay readers have no “entitlement” or right to lead any part or parts of the worship of the church. Lay readers must always respect the ministry of all baptized people, and must not expect to read lessons, or lead prayers when other lay leadership is available. In particular, lay readers may assist with the distribution of Holy Communion only when no other lay administrators of Holy Communion are present at a service or when regularly scheduled.

Lay readers may not function outside their own parishes without the permission of their rector/priest-in-charge, or, in the absence of the rector/priest-in-charge, the territorial archdeacon. In the event that a parish is without a rector/priest-in-charge, permission to officiate outside the parish must always be obtained from the territorial archdeacon. While it is expected that lay readers have ministries within the parish and within the community and world other than liturgical assistance to their rector/priest-in-charge, such ministries are the responsibility of all baptized people, and are not a part of the ministry of a lay reader.

## **Liturgical Dress and Seating for Lay Readers**

The liturgical dress of lay readers, and where lay readers will be seated during services is at the sole discretion of the rector/priest-in-charge of the parish.

The following is offered as a guideline:

When officiating in the absence of the rector/priest-in-charge, preaching, or when assisting the rector/priest-in-charge in a service, the appropriate vesture for a lay reader is a cassock and surplice, or an alb, with a lay reader's medallion, and it is appropriate for the lay reader to be seated in the chancel of the church. It is not appropriate for a lay reader to wear such vesture and/or sit in the chancel when not participating in the service. A lay reader's licence is not an entitlement to wearing special clothing or having a special seat in church when not actually functioning as a lay reader. Lay readers shall not wear a cross over their vestments when vested.

## **The Covenant Between Rector/priest-in-charge and Lay Reader**

Each lay reader shall negotiate a written covenant with their rector/priest-in-charge prior to licensing, outlining precisely the liturgical and preaching responsibilities of the lay reader. It is important that the covenant provide for periodic review of the relationship between the lay reader and the rector/priest-in-charge, and that it include some commitment to further study and growth. A sample covenant is available from the Chaplain, although lay readers and rector/priest-in-charges are encouraged to modify this to suit their own specific situation.

## **Course of Study for Lay Readers**

Training of a candidate lay reader is the responsibility of his or her rector/priest-in-charge. No specific course of study is provided for lay readers, it being expected that rector/priest-in-charges will develop individual programmes based on the needs of the parish and on the abilities and needs of their candidates. It is expected that candidates read and gain practical experience in the five areas



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outlined below. A reading list is available from the chaplain, but such list is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive, and it is expected that rector/priest-in-charges will provide their candidates with reading from their own libraries or with material from their own experience.

### **Biblical Theology**

Candidates are expected to be familiar with the Bible. In addition, it is expected that they will have an appreciation for the development of the biblical texts, some familiarity with the different literary types of biblical texts, and some understanding of the various types of biblical criticism. Familiarity with, and the ability to use various non-biblical reference materials, such as concordances, commentaries, Bible dictionaries and atlases, and theological lexicons is expected. Candidates should also have some understanding of the difficulties of translating an ancient text into modern English, and the interpretational bias inherent in various English translations.

### **Systematic Theology**

It is not expected that lay readers be dogmatic theologians; however, they ought to have an understanding of various areas of systematic theology somewhat beyond that acquired in confirmation class. While not exhaustive, most if not all of the following areas ought to be included: doctrine of creation, doctrine of humanity (theological anthropology), sin and evil, doctrine of God, doctrine of the Trinity, revelation, Christology, redemption, atonement, the Holy Spirit (pneumatology), doctrine of the Church (ecclesiology), the means of grace, the Christian life (morals and ethics), last things (eschatology). It is important that candidates discover and clarify their own understanding in these areas of classical theology, as well as gaining some appreciation for differing and conflicting points of view. It is also important that candidates discover the spectrum of Anglican theology in these areas, and find and become comfortable with their own place in the continuum of Anglican beliefs, rather than seeing themselves as possessors of the only permissible "truth."

### **Church History**

It is expected that lay readers understand the historical processes by which the church to which they belong and in which they serve came to be. Candidates are expected to read church history and gain understanding of most of the following: the Jewish background to Christianity, the founding of the Church of the disciples at Pentecost, the early (New Testament) Christian communities, Paul's importance, the development of the threefold ministry, the important Christian heresies, the early Fathers, the Constantinian establishment, the first ecumenical councils, the christological heresies, the great schism between Latin and Greek Christianity, monasticism, Celtic Christianity, Roman christianization of Europe and the British Isles, the Church in the Middle Ages, the European reformations, the English Reformation from Henry VIII to the Glorious Revolution; the English Commonwealth, Presbyterianism, and Puritanism; the Counter Reformation, the Methodist revival, the Evangelical Revival, the Oxford Movement, Anglican missionary activity, the Church in Canada, the development of the Anglican Communion, Vatican II and its influence on all churches, the Faith and Order Movement of the World Council of Churches, bilateral and multi-lateral ecumenical dialogues. There is no expectation that candidates become church historians, only that they gain an understanding of the church as a community with a history, and particularly an understanding of Anglican history.



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## **Liturgy**

Candidates will be expected to read in the areas of liturgical development and liturgical leadership. Without becoming liturgical experts, it is expected that candidates will gain an understanding of how the Eucharistic liturgy developed from the Last Supper of Jesus and the disciples into the present Holy Eucharist. They also ought to gain understanding of the history and development of the various prayer offices. As a goal, candidates ought to be able to explain to others, in some detail, why we do what we do on Sundays. This understanding should extend to being able to plan a service for a particular Sunday, including selecting readings, other propers, prayers, and hymns, and being able to explain their choices. On the practical side, candidates should learn to use their voice in liturgical leadership, the use of liturgical gestures appropriate to their parish, and generally become comfortable and familiar with officiating at an Office or assisting at a Holy Eucharist. Familiarity with all current Anglican liturgies, even those not used in their own parish is expected, as is some familiarity with the breadth of liturgical custom in Anglicanism.

## **Preaching**

Candidates are expected to learn the exegetical and hermeneutical techniques required to produce and preach a sermon from a given text. Doing this will draw on the candidate's learning from the previous four areas of study, thus it is recommended that preaching be tackled near the end in the sequence of learning. It is expected that the sermons produced will be faithful to the biblical text, consistent with accepted Anglican theology and the traditions of the candidate's parish, and will be relevant to the needs of the hearers, the parish, and the world. Above all, a sermon should be "good news" for the hearer, not a riding of the preacher's own theological, psychological, or sociological hobby horse! It is also expected that candidates learn some of the techniques of good sermon construction, and of oral delivery. Instruments for sermon evaluation are available from the chaplain, and may be used with practice sermons in the parish.

## **The Licence**

When a rector/priest-in-charge and candidate agree that the candidate is ready to be licensed, the rector/priest-in-charge will request a licence through the Chaplain to the Lay Readers. The chaplain must receive a description of the training that has been undertaken as well as a copy of the proposed covenant. The chaplain may also require the candidate of to meet either with the chaplain or with a senior priest in the local area for an interview. This interview is structured and pastoral in nature, and is intended to deal with any outstanding questions as well as generally assessing the readiness of the candidate for licensing.

Following satisfactory completion of the above, the chaplain recommends the candidate for licensing to the Bishop.

## **SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

The lay reader is licensed to, responsible to, and under the care and supervision of the rector/priest-in-charge. The license is at the pleasure of the rector/priest-in-charge. In particular this is a covenant relationship between the rector/priest-in-charge and the lay reader which must be in writing, and be open to the changing needs of the Parish, the assistance required by the rector/priest-in-charge, and the growth of the lay reader.

The lay reader, in supporting the rector/priest-in-charge, must remember that the rector/priest-in-

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charge is in a unique position of ministry, and must not discuss matters which violate or undermine the rector/priest-in-charge's ordained priesthood position.

The position of licensed lay reader is one of service and servant to the parish, but in no way replaces or takes the place of any of the rector/priest-in-charge's responsibilities. Furthermore, evaluation of the rector/priest-in-charge's responsibilities and performance are not the responsibility of the lay reader; they rest-solely with the Bishop.

In case a dispute arises between the lay reader and the rector/priest-in-charge, an attempt should be made between the rector/priest-in-charge and the lay reader, at an appointed time, to resolve the dispute.

If the dispute cannot be resolved the lay reader may request a meeting of appeal with the rector/priest-in-charge and the chaplain to the lay readers. If the dispute cannot be resolved at this level, the rector/priest-in-charge will ask the lay reader to surrender the license. Should the lay reader refuse to surrender the license it will then be revoked in writing, and the territorial archdeacon and bishop notified with cause for the decision. It must be clearly understood that, since the license is at the pleasure of the rector/priest-in-charge, final decision to license, request surrender, or revocation of the license must also be the responsibility of the rector/priest-in-charge.

### **SUGGESTED READING LIST**

Boundaries – Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend.

The Once and Future Church - Loren B. Mead.

Where's A Good Church - Donald C. Posterski and Irwin Baker

Homeletic - David Butterick

Introduction to Christian Workshop - James F. White

Boundaries will help the candidate lay reader recognize and set proper boundaries both at home and in their work in the church. The book will help the candidate understand why development of a written covenant and adherence to the same is necessary.

The Once and Future Church will give some understanding of the development of the church throughout the ages.

Where's a Good Church will help to gain an understanding of the church as it finds itself in the Canadian setting today.

Homiletic will give some understanding of development for sermons but should not be viewed as the only book on the subject.

Introduction to Christian Worship will help to equip the lay reader for the ministry of worship leader, but needs to be supplemented with the rector/priest-in-charge's teaching. This list is by no means exhaustive and needs to be supplemented by the lay reader's rector/priest-in-charge and tailored to the unique situation in their own parishes.



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Anglican Church of Canada

Diocese of Huron

### COVENANT BETWEEN RECTOR/PRIEST-IN-CHARGE AND LAY READER

(Model suggested for use as a guide.)

We \_\_\_\_\_ (Rector/priest-in-charge) and

(Lay Reader)

with the help of God, as ministers of \_\_\_\_\_ (Parish)

in the Diocese of Huron, agree to hold to the teachings and practices of the Anglican Church of Canada, as found in the Holy Bible, the Book of Common Prayer, the Book of Alternative Services, and the Canons of the Church.

We agree to the Rule of Life found on page 555 of the Book of Common Prayer and the Baptismal Covenant page 627 in the Book of Alternative Services.

While we acknowledge all members of the Church as ministers of Christ, the ministry of Rector/priest-in-charge and Lay Reader must be one of close relationship and particular function.

We agree that a covenant relationship between Rector/priest-in-charge and Lay Reader must be open to review in terms of the changing needs of the parish, the assistance required by the Rector/priest-in-charge, and the growth of the Lay Reader.

The Lay Reader in supporting the Rector/priest-in-charge must remember that the Rector/priest-in-charge is in a unique position of ministry, and must not discuss matters which violate the Rector/priest-in-charge's priesthood.

The Rector/priest-in-charge will acknowledge the unique position of the Lay Reader, and will assist him/her in developing a ministry to the glory of God. (This ministry will include liturgical functions, and at least one of visiting, counseling, teaching, administration, or such other ministry as agreed to by Rector/priest-in-charge and Lay Reader:

In this ministry the Lay Reader agrees to:

Date:

Lay Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

Rector/priest-in-charge: \_\_\_\_\_

