

## *A New Way Forward*

In September 2020, Bishop Shane Parker joined members of the Diocesan Licensed Lay Readers' Association in an online meeting, to discuss a new way forward for this ministry.

Beginning in 2021, there will be a new starting point for this ministry. A parish will determine a need for the ministry of a Licensed Lay Reader, which may include two or more of the following roles: leading worship, continuing education, pastoral care, and administration.

Once the parish has determined the need for the ministry of a Licensed Lay Reader, and has prepared a description of what that ministry would entail in their parish, the incumbent writes to the Bishop to seek permission to have a lay reader. With the permission of the Bishop, the parish will seek to identify a candidate who has the gifts to fulfil their description of the role of a Licensed Lay Reader in their context.

It is important to note that Licensed Lay Readers are commissioned not ordained. It is not a lifetime appointment. It is an office or ministry for which the parish has discerned a need, in consultation with the Bishop, and in which a candidate is commissioned to serve for a specific time.

Before relicensing a Lay Reader (every 5 years), the parish will do a review of the position to determine if this ministry is still needed, and / or how the nature of this ministry has changed to meet the current needs of the community.

If the parish, in consultation with the parish council, determines there is still a need for a Licensed Lay Reader, the incumbent priest will ask for the Bishop's permission to renew an individual's license, or to recruit a new candidate.

The Lay Reader Manual has been updated and revised to reflect the new way forward for the ministry of Licensed Lay Reader in the Diocese of Ottawa. It is provided as a helpful guide and resource in your studying, training and practicing for this very rewarding ministry.