



Preface – Licensed Lay Readers Manual

The ministry of Licensed Lay Readers (LLRs) has long been an integral part of parish life in our Diocese, and we are confident it will continue to develop in new and meaningful ways in the years ahead.

Well-prepared Lay Readers—licensed to offer liturgical, pastoral, educational, and administrative support to clergy—remain a vital expression of ministry within our church. In both large Area Parishes and small congregations, LLRs help clergy resources to be used more effectively and shared more equitably, to the benefit of the whole community.

It is essential that each parish carefully discern and define its need for this ministry, and that those called to serve as Lay Readers receive thorough training and ongoing support throughout their service. This manual has been designed to provide clear guidance, practical instruction, and wise counsel for a ministry that continues to be deeply valued across our Diocese.

BYLAWS -B.4.10 LICENSED LAY READERS (REVISED - August 21, 2025)

1. A person may be licensed by the Bishop to serve in a parish under the direction of the Incumbent thereof and to hold office as a Licensed Lay Reader for five years or such period as the Bishop may determine.
2. There shall be a Warden of Licensed Lay Readers who shall be a priest on the Clergy List of the Diocese, and who shall be appointed, be responsible to, and hold office at the pleasure of the Bishop.
3. The Bishop, in consultation with the Warden of Licensed Lay Readers, will establish policies specifying the procedures to be followed concerning:
 - a) the approvals required to establish a Licensed Lay Reader position or positions in a parish; and
 - b) the selection, training and licensing of a candidate or candidates to serve in a parish.
4. The Warden of Licensed Lay Readers shall implement and oversee the policies concerning Licensed Lay Readers; and shall prepare materials for the training and evaluation of Licensed Lay Readers.
5. Each Licensed Lay Reader shall receive their licence from the Bishop in a rite of commissioning approved by the Bishop and performed by the Incumbent of the Parish or the Warden of Licensed Lay Readers.
6. There shall be a Licensed Lay Readers' Association, of which all Licensed Lay Readers shall be members, of which the Bishop shall be the Patron, and the Warden of the Licensed Lay Readers the Chairperson. The Association shall appoint a Secretary and may appoint such other officers as it shall deem advisable. The Warden of Licensed Lay Readers, in consultation with the Secretary of the Association, shall be responsible for the review of those licences that are about to expire, and the evaluation of individual Licensed Lay Readers if renewal by the Bishop is being contemplated.
7. There shall be an Annual Gathering of Licensed Lay Readers, and other gatherings from time to time, arranged by the Warden of Licensed Lay Readers in consultation with the Bishop.



Anglican
Diocese of
Ottawa

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OVERVIEW - Licensed Lay Reader Ministry

The ministry of Licensed Lay Reader has evolved as the needs of our parishes have changed. When a parish has determined that a lay reader position is desirable, there are four areas of ministry that a lay reader may be asked to undertake in their parish:

- (a) assisting in and/or conducting services of public worship on a regular basis under the direction of the incumbent, including conducting or assisting in worship in hospitals and nursing homes.
- (b) pastoral responsibilities such as visiting the sick, aged, shut-in or bereaved.
- (c) educational responsibilities such as preparing persons for baptism, confirmation, reception and reaffirmation of baptismal vows, as well as leading Bible studies and other parish educational activities.
- (d) administrative responsibilities as may be required from time to time.

The focus of Licensed Lay Reader ministry also changes depending upon the parish and its local mission context.

Why do we need a Licensed Lay Reader?

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. (I Corinthians 12:4-6)

Lay reader ministry is a particular and historic pattern of service within our church.

Sometimes Licensed Lay Readers perform the same activities as other Anglicans using similar gifts (e.g., publicly reading the scriptures or leading the Prayers of the People). Sometimes Licensed Lay Readers do some of the same activities that clergy do, using similar gifts (e.g., preaching or planning and conducting a worship service). However, even if the gifts Licensed Lay Readers use or the activities they may be engaged in at any particular time are similar to that of other members of the body of Christ, there is a distinctive pattern to their service.

Licensed Lay Readers are called upon to function as worship leaders on a regular basis, as opposed to a one-time, ad hoc or occasional basis (which any lay person may be called upon to do).

Lay readers are licensed by the Bishop because of the level of responsibility, commitment and training which this form of ministry requires. Licensing also provides greater consistency across the Diocese in how lay readers function and train.

In many parishes, Licensed Lay Readers function primarily as worship leaders. They serve the church by assisting in and/or conducting services of public worship on a regular basis under the direction of a priest. However, the pastoral, educational, and administrative responsibilities Licensed Lay Readers may also be asked to undertake are of equal importance.

Diversity of Roles

Even within this regular pattern of service, you will find great diversity in the scope and focus of Licensed Lay Reader ministry and the nature of the activities in which Licensed Lay Readers are engaged across our Diocese.

Parishes have called upon the gifts of many of their members to read and lead the intercessions during worship. There may also be a team of parish visitors. When the person assigned to a particular role in worship is absent, the Licensed Lay Reader can step in to fulfill those responsibilities.

As more individuals learn to participate in the Sunday liturgy, Licensed Lay Readers may also be called upon to work with the incumbent to teach others Intercessory and Reading skills.

In some parishes, particularly those with multi points, a Licensed Lay Reader may be called upon to preach and prepare and lead liturgies on a regular basis. They will probably also be invited to visit the sick and those who are shut in, and work closely with the incumbent to minister to these individuals. Some parishes still expect regular visits from the parish priest.

Some Licensed Lay Readers in our Diocese are also exercising ministry on behalf of their parish or the diocese within institutions. Some regularly lead services of the Word and provide forms of pastoral care in institutions such as nursing homes or hospitals, thereby freeing up clergy for other activities.

Licensed Lay Reader Bylaws

B.4.10 LICENSED LAY READERS (REVISED - August 2025)

8. A person may be licensed by the Bishop to serve in a parish under the direction of the Incumbent thereof and to hold office as a Licensed Lay Reader for five years or such period as the Bishop may determine.
9. There shall be a Warden of Licensed Lay Readers who shall be a priest on the Clergy List of the Diocese, and who shall be appointed, be responsible to, and hold office during the pleasure of the Bishop.
10. The Bishop, in consultation with the Warden of Licensed Lay Readers, will prepare a policy document specifying the procedures to be following concerning: a) the approvals required to establish a Licensed Lay Reader position or positions in a parish; and b) the selection, training and licensing of a candidate or candidates to serve in a parish.
11. The Warden of Licensed Lay Readers shall implement and oversee the policies concerning Licensed Lay Readers; and shall prepare materials for the training and evaluation of Licensed Lay Readers.
12. No one shall be presented to the Bishop to be licensed as a Licensed Lay Reader unless the position has been approved by the Bishop and they have been recommended by the Incumbent and churchwardens of the parish of which they are a member, and such recommendation has been approved by the Warden of Licensed Lay Readers; and unless such Licensed Lay Reader has taken such courses of study as the Bishop may require, or has otherwise fully met the standards required by the Bishop for this office.
13. A Licensed Lay Reader shall receive their license from the Bishop in a rite of commissioning approved by the Bishop and performed by the Incumbent of the Parish or the Warden of Licensed Lay Readers.
14. There shall be a Licensed Lay Readers' Association, of which all Licensed Lay Readers shall be members, of which the Bishop shall be the Patron, and the Warden of the Licensed Lay Readers the Chairperson, and which shall appoint a Secretary and may appoint such other officers as it shall deem advisable. The Warden of Licensed Lay Readers, in consultation with the Secretary of the Association, shall be responsible for the review of those licences about to expire, and the evaluation of individual Licensed Lay Readers if renewal by the Bishop is being contemplated.
15. There shall be an Annual Gathering of Licensed Lay Readers, and other gatherings from time to time, arranged by the Warden of Licensed Lay Readers in consultation with the Bishop.

QUICK REFERENCE - Policies and Procedures

1. Becoming a Licensed Lay Reader

- A parish identifies the need for a lay reader.
- The incumbent requests permission from the Bishop.
- Get approval from Parish Council with warden signoff (see Parish Endorsement form in Appendix 1)
- Get all the forms filled out (Application, police check in Appendix 1)
- Send forms to the Lay Reader (LR) Warden
- LR Warden sends to Bishop for approval
- Once approved LR Warden assigns license number
- The candidate undergoes selection and training.
- When all competencies have been signed off on, the incumbent lets LR Warden know to advise Bishop for approval.
- When approved, a commissioning occurs. (Commissioning in Appendix 1)
- Licensing is granted for a five-year term, subject to renewal.

2. Responsibilities of a Lay Reader

- Lead worship services and assist in public worship.
- Engage in pastoral care and visitations.
- Conduct educational activities such as Bible studies.
- Perform administrative duties as required.

3. Supervision and Support

- Lay readers report to the incumbent.
- The Warden of Licensed Lay Readers provides oversight.

4. Training Requirements

- Core training includes Christian ministry, lector skills, Anglican tradition, and worship leadership.
- Liturgical Leadership training is required for leading complete services.
- Continuing education is mandatory, with two approved workshops every two years.

5. License Renewal Process

- Licenses expire after five years and must be renewed.
- Requires incumbent and Parish Council approval.
- Must complete continuing education requirements.
- A current Police Records Check is required.

6. Lay Reader Conduct and Boundaries

- Maintain confidentiality and personal boundaries.
- Comply with diocesan policies on sexual misconduct and harassment.
- Abide by all ethical and professional standards.

STEP BY STEP Policies and Procedures

PHASE 1 - Selection and Licensing Process

1. **Identifying the Need:** A parish determines the necessity for a lay reader role.
2. **Request to the Bishop:** The incumbent writes to the Bishop for approval.
3. **Candidate Selection:** Parish identifies a suitable candidate.
4. **Training & Development:**
 - Core training (parish orientation, Christian ministry, lector skills, etc.).
 - Liturgical leadership training for advanced roles.
 - Participation in Diocesan workshops and courses.
5. **Licensing:**
 - Upon completion, the Bishop issues a five-year license.
 - The Incumbent commissions the Licensed Lay Reader(s) at a public commissioning.
6. **Renewal:**
 - Conducted every five years.
 - Requires performance review and continued education.
 - Requires updated police records check.

PHASE 2 - Roles and Responsibilities

- **Worship Leadership:**
 - Assist in leading worship services, including reading scripture and leading prayers.
 - Conduct non-Eucharistic services when required.
- **Pastoral Duties:**
 - Visit the sick, aged, and shut-ins.
 - Offer pastoral support under the guidance of clergy.
- **Educational Leadership:**
 - Lead Bible studies and preparation for sacraments.
 - Support Christian education programs.
- **Administrative Responsibilities:**
 - Participate in parish meetings and planning.
 - Maintain records of worship leadership and training.

3. **Supervision and Support**
 - Lay readers report directly to the parish incumbent.
 - The Warden of Licensed Lay Readers provides oversight and coordination.
 - Lay Readers should meet regularly with their incumbent for guidance and performance review.

4. Training and Development

- Lay Readers are expected to maintain ongoing theological and pastoral education.
- Training includes:
 - Biblical foundations and interpretation.
 - Liturgy, preaching, and public speaking.
 - Leading prayers and administering the sacraments.
- Workshops and courses should be approved by the Diocese.

5. Code of Conduct and Ethical Guidelines

- Personal Integrity: Lay readers must model Christian values and behavior.
- Confidentiality: Maintain privacy in pastoral care settings.
- Sexual Misconduct Policy: Strict compliance with diocesan policies on harassment and misconduct.
- Inclusivity and Respect: Promote a welcoming and respectful environment in all ministry settings.

6. License Renewal and Transfer

- Renewal: Lay Readers must apply for renewal every five years, subject to review.
- Transfer:
 - A license lapses when moving to a new parish.
 - New licensing must be requested by the incumbent of the new parish.

7. Worship Leadership Guidelines

- Leading Worship:
 - Follow the Book of Alternative Services (BAS) or Book of Common Prayer (BCP).
 - Adapt services as necessary under clergy supervision.
- Preaching and Public Speaking:
 - Develop homiletic skills through training.
 - Work with the incumbent to ensure scriptural accuracy and appropriate messaging.

8. Vestments and Appearance

- Official attire of Lay Readers consists of an Alb or cassock and surplice along with a Diocesan supplied Lay Reader's Medallion.

9. Risk Management and Screening

- Position is designated as high risk under the Screening in Faith policy.
- Requires Vulnerable Sector Check every five years.
- Must comply with Diocesan policies on child protection and vulnerable adults.

10. Continuing Education Requirements

- Must complete two approved workshops or courses every two years.
- Suggested topics:
 - Advanced liturgical leadership.
 - Preaching and homiletics.
 - Pastoral care techniques.

QUICK REFERENCE -

Training Program and Skills

1. Training Pathway for Lay Readers

- **Phase 1: Core Training (At the discretion of the Incumbent)**
 - Parish Orientation & Training
 - Christian Ministry Foundations
 - Personal Scripture Study & Prayer Life
 - Lector Skills & Public Speaking
 - Understanding the Anglican Tradition
 - Conducting Worship I
- **Phase 2: Liturgical Leadership Training**
 - Conducting Worship II
 - Biblical Interpretation & Exegesis
 - Preaching & Homiletics
 - Assisting in Sacramental Worship
 - Worship Music & Service Planning
- **Phase 3: Specialization & Continuing Education**
 - Pastoral Care & Hospital Visitations
 - Teaching & Christian Education
 - Advanced Liturgical Leadership
 - Administration & Church Governance

2. Competencies Required for Licensing

- Worship Leadership: Ability to lead services, read scripture, and deliver prayers.
- Theological Knowledge: Understanding of biblical themes, Anglican doctrine, and church history.
- Preaching Skills: Ability to prepare and deliver sermons effectively.
- Pastoral Care: Competence in visiting and ministering to the sick and shut-ins.
- Administrative Skills: Record-keeping, service planning, and team coordination.

3. Continuing Education Requirements

- Two approved workshops every two years.
- Participation in diocesan training events.
- Ongoing study in scripture, theology, and pastoral care.

STEP BY STEP

Training Program and Skills

PHASE 1 - Core Training

(Worship Assistant Level - in Appendix 2)

Parish Orientation & Training

- Understand parish structure, worship customs, and clergy-lay relationships.
- Learn to navigate the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) and Book of Alternative Services (BAS).
- Develop familiarity with lectionary use and seasonal liturgical variations.

Christian Ministry Foundations

- Study the Baptismal Covenant and Anglican Creeds.
- Explore spiritual development through structured Christian formation.
- Engage in small group Bible study.

Personal Scripture Study & Prayer Life

- Establish a disciplined prayer life and personal devotional study routine.
- Participate in structured Bible study courses.
- Learn basic exegesis (interpreting scripture in its context).

Lector Skills & Public Speaking

- Develop voice projection, articulation, and pacing.
- Understand how to read scripture with expression and clarity.
- Gain experience reading lessons, psalms, and prayers in public worship.

Understanding the Anglican Tradition

- Study Anglican history, theology, and the Worldwide Anglican Communion.
- Explore different worship styles (e.g., High Church, Low Church, Evangelical, Anglo-Catholic).
- Understand the role of sacraments in Anglican practice.

Conducting Worship I

- Assist in leading Morning and Evening Prayer.
- Prepare and lead the Prayers of the People.
- Gain familiarity with church music, hymn selection, and liturgical flow.

PHASE 2 - Liturgical Leadership Training

(in Appendix 3)

Conducting Worship II

- Plan and lead full worship services.
- Select appropriate intercessions, readings, and hymns.
- Work with musicians, servers, and clergy to coordinate services.

Biblical Interpretation & Exegesis

- Learn how to study and interpret scripture for teaching and preaching.
- Explore different translations and commentaries.
- Apply contextual interpretation to modern ministry settings.

Preaching & Homiletics

- Develop sermon structure and content.
- Deliver at least four sermons, with feedback from clergy.
- Practice speaking with confidence and engaging congregations.

Assisting in Sacramental Worship

- Assist in preparing and administering the Eucharist.
- Understand the theology and liturgical practice of Baptism, Holy Communion, and Funerals.
- Learn the proper handling of sacred vessels and altar preparation.

Worship Music & Service Planning

- Select hymns and music to complement the liturgical theme.
- Collaborate with choir, musicians, and music directors.
- Understand the integration of contemporary and traditional worship styles.

PHASE 3 -

Specialization & Continuing Education

Pastoral Care & Hospital Visitations

- Learn best practices for visiting the sick, elderly, and homebound.
- Offer spiritual support and guidance in hospital and nursing home settings.
- Develop active listening and compassionate communication skills.

Teaching & Christian Education

- Lead Bible study groups and discussion forums.
- Teach classes for baptism, confirmation, and discipleship.
- Develop lesson plans and educational resources for various age groups.

Advanced Liturgical Leadership

- Lead services in multi-point parishes or in clergy absence.
- Participate in diocesan events and special liturgies.
- Assist in the planning of regional church services and seasonal celebrations.

Administration & Church Governance

- Understand diocesan policies, canons, and bylaws.
- Participate in church council meetings and decision-making processes.
- Maintain service records and assist in church operations.

Competency Framework for Lay Readers

Worship Leadership

✓ Leading services with confidence and reverence. ✓ Assisting in the preparation and conduct of sacraments. ✓ Coordinating lay participation in liturgy.

Theological Knowledge

✓ Understanding key doctrines of the Anglican faith. ✓ Ability to teach and explain Christian beliefs. ✓ Engaging in ongoing theological study and reflection.

Preaching and Teaching

✓ Preparing sermons with biblical and liturgical integrity. ✓ Leading educational programs within the parish. ✓ Using engaging and effective communication methods.

Pastoral and Community Engagement

- ✓ Providing spiritual care to individuals and families. ✓ Engaging in hospital and home visitations. ✓ Facilitating pastoral counseling and support.

Administrative and Organizational Skills

- ✓ Planning and coordinating church activities. ✓ Maintaining worship records and reports. ✓ Supporting church governance and decision-making.

Continuing Education and Development

- Participation in diocesan workshops and conferences.
- Enrollment in theological courses or training programs.
- Ongoing mentorship with clergy and senior lay readers.



Appendix 1 - Lay Readers Raising Resources

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- Dedication / Acknowledgments
- Parish Endorsement of Application
- Licensed Lay Reader Application Form
- Sample Police Check Letter
- Official Licensed Lay Reader
Commissioning



Dedication / Acknowledgments

Lay Readers Raising Resources

The Diocese of Ottawa Licensed Lay Readers' Association gratefully acknowledges the many individuals and groups whose contributions have shaped this Manual:

- **The Lay Readers' Association of the Anglican Diocese of Ontario**, who graciously permitted us to use and adapt their Lay Readers' Manual to meet the needs of our own Diocese. While significant revisions have been made to processes and requirements, their pioneering work provided the foundation of this training resource. Their user-friendly format, enabling clergy to sign off on training milestones and allowing Lay Readers to track their own progress, has proven invaluable, and we remain deeply indebted to their example.
- **Bishop Peter Coffin**, at whose request the work of redefining the ministry of Licensed Lay Readers for a new stage in our diocesan life began in 2005. He oversaw the development of clear training standards for licensing, approved the position description, and introduced the five-year license renewal and screening requirements in 2006. These were launched at the first gathering of Licensed Lay Readers in many years, held at St. Paul's, Kanata-Hazeldean.
- **Bishop John Chapman**, who strongly supported the continuation of this work. His dedication to maintaining high standards for training—particularly in biblical foundations and homiletics, led to the first diocesan Licensed Lay Reader homiletics workshop, held in May 2008 at St. James', Carleton Place.
- **Bishop Shane Parker**, whose ongoing commitment to excellence in training has renewed and lifted up the ministry of Licensed Lay Readers in our Diocese.
- **Members of previous Lay Reader working groups**, who faithfully developed and revised earlier versions of this Manual.
- **The Rev. Matthew Brown**, along with others who provided thoughtful suggestions for the most recent updates.
- **The volunteer Lay Reader Manual Committee**, whose work in revising and developing these materials has been invaluable:
 - The Rev. Bob Albert (Warden of Lay Readers)
 - Meredith Brophy
 - Marilyn Brownlee
 - Paul Dumbrille



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Diocese of Ottawa Licensed Lay Readers' Association

Parish Endorsement of Application

Please Print Clearly

Name of Applicant: _____

We, the corporation of the parish _____, attest that the above applicant has been selected to begin training for role of Licensed Lay Reader in the Parish.

We also attest to the character and fitness of the above named applicant for the office of Licensed Lay Reader in the Diocese of Ottawa for the following reasons:

Signed by: _____

Incumbent

Date: _____

- New Application
- Transfer
- Renewal

Licensed Lay Reader Application Form

Please return or email the completed application form to:

The Reverend Bob Albert
Warden of Lay Readers
1892 Rocklane Drive Kanata ON K2W 1B5
warden-layreaders@ottawa.anglican.ca

Name: _____
First _____ *Initial* _____ *Last* _____

Address: _____
Number _____ *Street* _____ *Apt. #, Unit #, R.R#, PO Box* _____

City/Town _____ **Prov.** _____ **Postal Code** _____

Contact Information:

Primary Phone: _____ **Alternate Phone (if any)** _____

Email: _____ **Alt Email (if any)** _____

Best time to call? **Morning** **Afternoon** **Evening**

Baptism **Year:** _____ **Place:** _____ **Church:** _____

Confirmation **Year:** _____ **Place:** _____ **Church:** _____

Received **Year:** _____ **Place:** _____ **Church:** _____
into the Anglican Communion

Reaffirmation **Year:** _____ **Place:** _____ **Church:** _____
of Baptismal Vows

Please use extra pages, if necessary, to answer the following questions.

Describe your Christian faith and experience.

In what areas of ministry have you been asked to serve? (Please check any and all applicable boxes)

Worship Assistant *Preaching* *Leading Services*
 Pastoral Care *Administration*
 Religious Instruction (e.g. Baptism or Confirmation) *Other*

Why do you want to serve in these ministries? How do you hope to benefit?

What experience, skills and qualifications do you bring to these ministries?

This area left blank for further notes by applicant

Licensed Lay Reader Screening Form

Please read carefully. A checked box indicates agreement.

- I understand that ministry is a privilege, not a right, and that my desire to serve must, at all times, be affirmed by the church through its screening process.
- I understand that an appointment as a Licensed Lay Reader requires that I provide three references and acquire a Police Records Check as part of the screening process.
- I understand that in accepting a ministry position, I am committing myself to act in compliance with the beliefs, values, policies and processes of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa.
- I have received a copy of the Licensed Lay Reader position description, and understand the responsibilities associated with it. I am aware of the policies that affect this ministry.
- I understand that training and accountability are key support for my position. Therefore, I will attend training, as required by the position, and meet regularly with the leader responsible for the ministry to which I am being appointed.
- I know that the Parish or Diocese will maintain a file on persons filling medium and high-risk positions, in compliance with the Diocese of Ottawa Screening in Faith Policy. This information is private and will be kept in a secure location. Upon request, I shall be given access to that information and be able to challenge the accuracy and completeness of the information and have it amended as appropriate

Signature of Applicant

Date

This Application Form must be submitted by the Incumbent, along with the Endorsement Form and the applicant's Police Records Check (original, not a photocopy). The Police Records Check will be returned to the applicant.

*Please place this completed document in the applicant's file in a locked filing cabinet.
Record the completion of this step on the applicant's Screening Checklist Form.*

Licensed Lay Reader Reference Check Permission Form

I, _____, give the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa permission to contact the references listed below and representatives of the churches and ecclesiastical jurisdictions listed in my application form to discuss my suitability as a *Licensed Lay Reader*.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

List three persons who have knowledge of your qualifications. Your references should be people you know through different relationships and/or situations. For example: a family member, a friend and an employer (paid or volunteer position). Ideally the three references that you provide should come from each of these categories. Please ensure that one of the two non-family references has known you for at least 5 years.

If you have moved from another parish within the last 12 months, please provide one reference from your previous parish. If you have moved from another diocese or jurisdiction please provide a reference from your worshipping community and, if applicable, from your supervisor or person(s) who oversee this type of ministry in that place.

Use the back of this form if additional space is required.

Reference One

Name:

First

Last

Address:

Number

Street

Apt. #, Unit #, R.R#, PO Box

City/Town _____ Prov. _____ Postal Code _____

Primary Phone: _____ Alternate Phone (if any) _____

Email: _____ Alt Email (if any) _____

Best time to call? Morning Afternoon Evening

Relationship to the applicant: _____ Length of Relationship: _____

Reference Two

Name:

First

Last

Address:

Number

Street

Apt. #, Unit #, R.R#, PO Box

City/Town _____ Prov. _____ Postal Code _____

Primary Phone: _____ Alternate Phone (if any) _____

Email: _____ Alt Email (if any) _____

Best time to call? Morning Afternoon Evening

Relationship to the applicant: _____ Length of Relationship: _____

Reference Three

Name:

First *Last*

Address:

Number *Street* *Apt. #, Unit #, R.R#, PO Box*

City/Town *Prov.* *Postal Code*

Primary Phone: *Alternate Phone (if any)*

Email: *Alt Email (if any)*

Best time to call? *Morning* *Afternoon* *Evening*

Relationship to the applicant: _____ **Length of Relationship:** _____

Sample Police Check Letter

<<Date>>

RE: Vulnerable Sector Check Police Record Check for «First» «Last»

To whom it may concern,

«First» «Last» is applying to join our Licensed Lay Reader team. Licensed Lay Readers serve the church by acting as worship leaders, by assisting in and/or conducting services of public worship on a regular basis under the direction of the incumbent and including conducting or assisting in worship in hospitals and nursing homes. They may also visit the sick, aged, shut-ins or the bereaved. Other possible ways they may serve the church include preparing persons for baptism, confirmation, reception and reaffirmation of baptismal vows, as well as leading Bible studies and other parish educational activities, and carrying out administrative responsibilities as may be required from time to time, such as preparing a roster of readers or intercessors.

This is an unpaid volunteer position that will require that «First» obtain a “Police Records Check for Service with the Vulnerable Sector” due to possible interactions with the vulnerable. This letter is offered as proof that the candidate for Licensed Lay Reader is requesting a police check as a volunteer with the Parish of Prescott-North Glengarry, and Calumet and Grenville as part of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa.

If you require any additional information or have any questions concerning this submission, please contact me at the coordinates below.

Sincerely,

The Reverend <<Incumbent Name>>
Incumbent
The Parish of <<Parish Name>>
[Email](mailto:<<Email>>) <<Email>>
Phone <<Phone>>

THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF OTTAWA

Rite for the Commissioning of Licensed Lay Readers

Authorized by the Bishop July 30, 2025

To be administered by the Incumbent or Warden of Lay Readers when authorized by the Bishop.

Presentation and Examination

The Incumbent says:

Dear friends in Christ, Christ calls us to minister according to our gifts and to be instruments of his love in the world. Lay Readers are called to assist clergy in the ministries of worship, pastoral care, education, and administration, and to help the whole Church participate in God's mission to the world.

The Churchwardens present the candidates.

{Name of Incumbent} we present to you NN to be commissioned as Licensed Lay Readers in our Diocesan Church.

The Incumbent responds:

Are they of sound faith and character, and have they been sufficiently prepared for the duties of this office according to the practice of our diocese?

The Churchwardens reply:

He/she/they have.

The Incumbent addresses the candidate(s):

Do you believe that you are called to this lay ministry in our Church?

I believe I am so called.

Will you be obedient to my direction as the Incumbent of this parish, and diligent in taking your part in the ministries of worship, pastoral care, education, and administration here or in other places you may be asked to serve?

I will, by the grace of God.

The candidates turn and face the congregation. The Incumbent asks them and any other parish clergy:

Will you work collaboratively with *this/ these* Licensed Lay Reader(s), encouraging them to use and develop their gifts for ministry, and commanding them to the people they will serve in this parish?

We will.

Will you uphold and support NN in their ministry with you?

We will.

Commissioning

The Incumbent says:

NN, Bishop N has licensed you to exercise the ministry of Lay Reader in the Diocese of Ottawa, and, on behalf of our Bishop, I now formally commission you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who has given you the will to do this ministry give you the grace and power to perform it. Amen.

Let us welcome the newly licensed Lay Readers.



Appendix 2 - Lay Readers Resources

- Training Programs and Skills
- Training Pathway For Lay Readers
- Phase 1 - Core Training
(Worship Assistant Level)



Training for Lay Readers

A substantial amount of training happens in a parish setting. The parish orientation is an opportunity to work out the specifics of the working relationship between clergy and the lay reader.

In order to be licensed, trainees, and those wishing to have their licenses renewed, will be expected to participate in additional training, particularly in the areas of biblical interpretation (exegesis) and preaching (homiletics). This additional training may be offered either in the form of diocesan sponsored or approved workshops, or through courses offered by recognized seminaries or colleges either in the classroom or through distance learning.

Trainees or lay readers who participate in approved workshops offered by other dioceses, or seminary / theological college courses will need to ask the organizers for a letter, certificate or transcript which indicates they have participated in and successfully completed the workshop or course.

The primary training for lay readers is provided by the incumbent within the parish setting, as laid out in this Manual. In addition, training is complemented and augmented by appropriate courses offered within the Diocese of Ottawa by the Lay Readers' Association, and beyond the Diocese of Ottawa. Diocesan workshops are only intended to complement and augment what can be offered at the local level and to provide opportunities for group learning. Leadership for diocesan training events will come from both clergy and lay leaders.



Christian Ministry Foundations

Lay Readers in Training shall demonstrate an understanding of the Baptismal Covenant and the Creeds.

Lay Readers in Training should read and discuss with the Incumbent book that are appropriate for training for Christian Ministry.



Personal Scripture Study & Prayer Life

This is an ongoing and essential part of Christian formation.

The Lay Reader needs to:

- be familiar with the major biblical themes
- read the scriptures regularly
- become familiar with the various types of passages (e.g., parables, miracle stories, etc.)
- develop a disciplined prayer life

The Rule of Life (BCP Page 555)

Every Christian should from time to time frame for themselves a RULE OF LIFE in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel and the faith and order of the Church; wherein they may consider the following:

- The regularity of their attendance at public worship and especially at the holy Communion.
- The practice of private prayer, Bible-reading, and self-discipline.
- Bringing the teaching and example of Christ into their everyday life.
- The boldness of their spoken witness to their faith in Christ.
- Their personal service to the Church and the community.
- Monetary offerings according to their means for the support of the work of the Church at home and overseas.

Lay Readers in Training shall demonstrate an understanding of the Baptismal Covenant and the Creeds.

Lay Readers in Training should read and discuss with the Incumbent book that are appropriate for training for Christian Ministry.

■ ■ ■ Lector Skills & Public Speaking

Lay Readers in Training should work to improve their skills and ability to read Scripture in corporate worship. Our collective experience of worship is greatly enhanced when the Word of God is read clearly, confidently, and with conviction. Reading effectively in a worship service requires the development of specific knowledge and skills which you may not have had the opportunity to develop previously.

Scripture is given a more prominent role in Anglican Liturgy than in the liturgy of almost any other denomination. The prayers, versicles, litanies and services are full of scriptural phrases, sentences and sections. This prominence reflects the Anglican church's emphasis through the centuries on the primacy and authority of the scriptures.

The following are some general guidelines to help you improve your skills:

Preparation - The translation used for public readings of scripture should be consistent from one reading to another. Follow the practice of the Parish/Congregation. Some translations “read” better out loud than others.

Pray - invite the Holy Spirit to help you prepare.

Practice - Read the passage aloud to find the appropriate pace, rhythm, volume, intonation and phrasing.

Practical Preparation:

- Become familiar with the physical setting in which you will be reading. Consider practicing in the worship space, with a friendly adviser present.
- If there is no sound system, you will need to project your voice so that it reaches the back of the space.
- If there is a sound system, arrange to practice using the microphone in advance. Know how close you need to be for the microphone to best project your voice. There are different types of microphones with different characteristics.

- Know where to stand to read. If a lectern Bible is used, locate the reading in the Bible and insert a removable marker (such as a ribbon or a sticky note) before and after the passage to be read. Some churches use Bible extracts or bulletin inserts.
- Sit in a location that is near the lectern or the place where the readers stand to read, so that the flow of the worship is not interrupted when you move to the place from which you are to read.

Delivery:

- Keep the focus on the scriptural message. It is not a performance.
- You often have little control over the environment but eliminate as many distractions as possible.
- Be neat, tidy, and appropriate in your attire.
- Do not fidget, sway backwards and forwards, or jingle keys, coins, etc. in your pocket.
- Before turning on the microphone, or starting to speak, adjust the microphone position if necessary. After the microphone is positioned correctly, turn it on and start to speak.



Understanding the Anglican Tradition

Study the Anglican Communion, the history of the Anglican Church and understand the structure of the Church.

Be aware of, and understand, the diversity of Anglican worship styles today (such as Anglo- Catholic, Formal/Informal, Eucharistic/Morning Prayer, Choral/Congregational Music, Contemporary/Traditional, Theologically Liberal/Conservative, Rural/Urban)

Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of the Worldwide Anglican Communion and the major issues in the ‘news’.



Conducting Worship I

Purpose

- To participate in the planning of worship in the Parish.
- To develop an awareness of what a Lay Reader may do in a worship service.
- To begin leading worship in the Parish.
- To experience and to reflect on various styles of Anglican worship.

Helpful Tools

- a) Experience a variety of worship styles within the Anglican Communion by visiting at least two other Parishes.
- b) Participate in planning a worship service in the Parish.
- c) Read scripture lessons, or lead the Psalm, in regular worship services.
- d) Prepare and lead the Prayers of the People / Intercessions.
- e) Function as a worship assistant in each one of the different types of services normally conducted in the Parish (e.g. Eucharist, Baptism, Morning Prayer).
- f) Be aware of what a Lay Reader may do and may not do in any worship service.
- g) Be able to perform the duties of a server and crucifer in a variety of services.

Pointers to assist you in conducting worship

Personal Preparation:

- study and pray.
- adopt an attitude of sharing.
- focus on worship (not on self).
- use all opportunities for ongoing training in the Liturgy.

Practical Preparation:

- Understand the structure, purpose and meaning of the Liturgies in use.
- Practical training and practice.
- No surprises!! If you are doing something different, be sure those working with you know about it.
- Be sure that any innovations are enriching, comfortable, carefully introduced and approved by the Incumbent.

Deportment:

- Be a team player - follow the preside
- Clean and tidy, appropriate dress (vestments help to deflect attention from self)
- Voice articulation, projection, pronunciation
- Be organized - papers, markers (thorough, but discreet)



Appendix 3 - Lay Readers Resources

- Training Programs and Skills
- Training Pathway For Lay Readers
- Phase 2 - Liturgical Leadership Training



Conducting Worship II

Purpose

1. To improve skills in leading worship by planning and leading complete worship services in the Parish.
2. To practice those parts of the liturgy that a Lay Reader may do in a worship service.
3. To practice the selection of the appropriate intercessions, psalm, readings, hymns etc. for a worship service.

Recommendations

The following steps are recommended on a regular basis:

Discuss the purpose of each service and any special requirements with the Incumbent;

Plan the service, using an appropriate form in the BCP or BAS as a basis, incorporating any special requirements;

Identify required participants and resources, and any important timing or co-ordination needs; Discuss the plan with the Incumbent, organist, and any special players;

Make arrangements for space, participants (i.e., who sits/stands where?);

Ensure all participants (don't forget crucifers, acolytes, chaplains) understand their parts in the proceedings. For a normal Sunday morning service, the co-ordination needs should be minimal, for a special occasion a rehearsal might be advisable;

Participate in leading worship;

In discussion with the Incumbent, develop an understanding of, and sensitivity to, the meaning, purpose and form of public worship services, and the needs and traditions of the congregation;

Select the appropriate type of service - morning prayer, evening prayer, compline, night prayer, Services of the Word etc.;

Select readings, psalm, canticle, collect, responses from the appropriate Lectionary or Proper; Select and adapt litanies or prepare suitable prayers of the people to suit the service and local needs; Confer with music leaders regarding music for the service;

Incorporate special events (example: blessing of food hampers, commissioning of new ministries) into the appropriate point in a service;

Arrange for readers, intercessor, preacher, servers, cantor, to be available and prepared;

Plan and co-ordinate choreography and liturgical movement, particularly for new participants or special occasions (e.g., preparation of the Paschal candle, processions, presentations);

May act as the facilitator at a service where there is a visiting Incumbent, or in the absence of the Incumbent;

May act as the Bishop's Chaplain during Episcopal visits to your Parish.



Biblical Interpretation & Exegesis

Purpose

As a Lay Reader, you are expected not only to believe, but to study, proclaim, teach and preach, to learn and understand scripture, and to help others to learn.

Each lay reader is expected to complete a minimum of two (2) approved workshops, courses, or training events within a two-year period to fulfill the Bishop's requirement that all clergy and lay readers take part in Continuing Education programs.

Recommendations

1. Reading for Study and Interpretation - participate in a personal study of scripture. At this Liturgical Leadership level, you are now expected to not only continue that practice, but to study with a view to deeper reflection, considering that you will be expected to teach, preach, lead, and guide others in the study and understanding of scripture.
2. Reading for Preaching - Check the lectionary, check with the Incumbent, check with the readers, to make sure that all are preparing the correct readings for the service. Reading scripture is a significant part of that process: Read the text, read and understand, absorb, read a different translation, read and pray, listen, read and think, read and discuss (combine with a study group or Parish focus group, ...), understand your intended message and the direction of your preaching plan, prepare an outline, consult commentaries (at this point, not before), reread the text.
 - A Lay Reader should access at least two different translations of the Bible, at least one of which should be NRSV with Apocrypha.
 - Courses could be broad (e.g., New Testament), narrower (particular book e.g., Gospel of Mark), or particular writer (e.g., Pauline). The importance of the course is to learn how to read, understand, interpret, analyze.
 - Utilize available on-line resources.



Preaching and Homiletics

Purpose

To develop and practice the skills required to interpret, proclaim and make the word of God relevant to a worshipping community.

Recommendations

- Understand the Fundamentals of Good Public Speaking ;
- Read books on how to write a sermon and already prepared sermons;
- Your Incumbent should provide constructive feedback on your sermons;
- Where possible, continue to attend bible studies or Parish studies on scripture and faith;
- Develop a routine of sermon preparation that works for you;
- Any other sources of training must be approved by the Warden of Licensed Lay Readers.

Your reading and study should become a combination of reflection and questioning - looking for God's message, how the Spirit is moving within the passage, seeking to understand the human experience that inspired the text, the context in which it was written, what the author is trying to get across, how the passage would be understood by the original audience, and what it means for us in our current context.

Your study should now be supplemented by the reflections and commentary of other scholars and theologians.



Assisting in Sacramental Worship

Purpose

To develop the skills necessary to prepare for and assist in Sacramental Worship.

Recommendations

1. Lay Readers are often called upon to assist the Incumbent in administering the Sacraments as part of their duties, or in the absence of Servers. They may be required to:
 - assist in preparing the elements for the Eucharist
 - administer the Chalice (and sometimes the Bread) during the Sunday services
 - Taking communion to shut-ins is contained in the section on Pastoral Ministry.
2. A Lay Reader should have a good working knowledge of services of Holy Communion in both the Book of Common Prayer (p. 67) and the Book of Alternative Services (pp.185 & 230). The Lay Reader and the Incumbent need to meet and discuss the customs and preferences of the Incumbent regarding the preparation of the Elements for the service of Holy Communion.
A training session should be arranged to cover:
 - the preparation and presentation of the Elements
 - the handling and administering the chalice
 - the care and keeping of the Reserved Sacrament
 - the preparation of the altar and sanctuary for the Eucharist
3. A member of the Altar Guild will also be a good resource to explain the various vestments and linens used in the services.
4. A Lay Reader should have a good working knowledge of the Baptism Service in the BAS (p. 151). In particular, the parts of the liturgy suitable for the Lay Reader to do (e.g., the Prayer for the Candidates and the Baptismal Covenant) and any other ways that the Lay Reader may be of assistance.
5. A Lay Reader should have a good working knowledge of the Funeral Service in the BCP (p. 591) and the BAS (p. 576 with the Eucharist and p. 589 for use in church or funeral home). The Lay Reader should have knowledge of local customs (e.g., flower placement, use of Funeral Pall, casket or urn, service when the remains are not present, etc.). The Lay Reader should be able to take the appropriate parts of the service including Gospel, Creed, Intercessions and other prayers. The Lay Reader should be aware of the adaptations appropriate for use in church settings and non-church settings (e.g., Legion Hall, School Auditorium, funeral home chapel, etc.)



Worship Music & Service Planning

Purpose

1. To develop an awareness and foster an appreciation of the use of music in a liturgical context.
2. To encourage the development and use of musical skills in leading worship.

Recommendations

1. A Lay Reader should understand enough about music to work with the music leader in the selection of hymns, psalms, canticles and music to complement the worship service and reflect the theme(s) of the readings.
2. Hymns and songs of praise should reflect the demographics of the Parish (traditional to modern), seeking to support, encourage and build up the church community.
3. Traditions within each Parish vary depending on the locality (rural/urban), availability of organist/ guitarist/musicians/choristers, the direction of the minister and worship committee, and the musical traditions and wishes of each Parish or congregation. In some cases, the words, of the hymns are projected onto a screen. Sometimes, the music is from recorded tapes and/ or disks.
4. A Lay Reader should be able to and willing to, when it is necessary, make use of alternative music sources to enhance the worship service.
5. Lay Readers should be familiar with the Hymn and Songs of Praise books in their Parish. Many hymnals, particularly the new blue book, are equipped with numerous cross-references to assist in selection of hymns for a service.
6. The hymns and songs of praise set the tone of worship from beginning to end and frame the message proclaimed in the readings and the sermon.
 - Processional or Opening Hymn Praise - Familiar
 - Gradual/Office Hymn Prayerful or Meditative
 - Offertory Hymn Thankful, theme-oriented or seasonal
 - Post Communion Prayerful or Meditative
 - Recessional or Closing Hymn Uplifting, inspirational

7. The common books available are:

- a) 1998 - Common Praise
- b) 1996 - The Hymnal for Worship and Celebration - various colours
- c) 1996 - Voices United - Hymn book of the UCC
- d) 1987 - Songs for a Gospel People - green soft-cover or spiral bound
- e) 1971 - The Hymn Book of Canada - red ACC/UCC book
- f) 1938 - The Book of Common Praise - the old blue book
- g) With One Voice - Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada

8. Be aware of, understand and comply with copyright licensing requirements.

The two most common agents for church music are One Licence and CCLI.

Things to consider in hymn selection (not necessarily in order of importance)

- Type of Service (e.g., Communion, MP, Funeral)
- Liturgical Season (e.g., Christmas, Advent, Easter, Lent)
- Readings being used (e.g., Psalm 23 as a lesson vs the Hymn version)
Position in service (e.g., Opening, Offertory, Gradual, Communion, Closing)
- Function or Liturgical action (e.g., to cover departure/arrival of Sunday School children)
- Length (# of verses)
- Tempo
- In Hymn Book or on an Insert
- Have the words been altered? Recently?
- Alternate tunes (learn to use these - you may be able to introduce a new hymn using a tune the congregation already knows)

Congregation

Familiarity with particular hymns Local Custom

Visitors

When did we sing it last? Was it done well?

Music Resources (the following are valuable resources)

Choir

Organist / Musicians - including what they may know and be capable of.

Available online, or recorded on disk

(don't forget to check that all technical requirements are available on site - hydro, WiFi, etc.)