



The Bishop of Moosonee

Ministry of Healing by Lay Persons Policy

As Christians we are called to be whole in body, mind and spirit. Through Christ, we are enabled to minister to one another. The healing ministry recognizes the role we all have through prayer and sacramental ministry in helping to bring about that wholeness.

1. Every minister of God's word and sacraments needs to be aware of the many ways in which God's healing power may be communicated. In particular, all clergy should be aware of the provisions in the *Book of Common Prayer* and *The Book of Alternative Services* (laying-on-of-hands, anointing, confession and absolution as and when requested) for ministering to the sick. It is important that time be taken for proper preparation and counseling so that both those who are sick and those ministering to the sick are clear about the role of prayer and sacrament in encouraging healing and wholeness. It must be understood that prayer and sacrament are meant to open us to the healing power of God, and are intended to support (rather than replace) accepted medical treatment. The *Book of Common Prayer* and *The Book of Alternative Services* are the church's appointed means of ministering to the sick, and the Eucharist is the fullest sacramental communication of God's grace for wholeness in humanity.
2. Every Christian is called to minister to the sick, the bereaved and the troubled through intercessory prayer, and to pray as well for those who minister to the above. One of the easiest ways to support those who are sick, bereaved or troubled is to include their names (and those who minister to them) in the prayers of the people. This enables the parish to be more aware of the needs of individuals within the parish and to pray as a community for them.

Lay Anointers

1. The permission of the Bishop is required for lay people to anoint the sick with consecrated oil. For a lay person to be involved in this ministry, he/she must be licensed by the Bishop and must have completed a training program offered by The Diocese of Moosonee. The lay anointer will function under the supervision of his/her parish priest.
2. Those who become licensed lay anointers may minister to the sick through prayer and sacramental anointing with oil. *They may **not** minister to the sick through sacramental laying on of hands.* Sacramental 'laying on of hands' is the placing of both hands on the head of the person being prayed for in the same way you see a bishop laying hands on a candidate for confirmation. It does not refer to touching a person's hand etc. during a prayer for healing, (always with the permission of the one being prayed for.)
3. Lay persons wishing to be involved in this ministry need to be recommended by their clergy, be acceptable to the congregation, and be communicants in good standing. The role of the lay anointer is classified as a high risk ministry in that lay anointers will, in the course of their ministries, have contact with people in vulnerable situations. Therefore, lay persons must regularly complete police records checks as required by the Diocese of Moosonee and all necessary training prior to their being recommended by their clergy. This includes a police records check and Sexual Misconduct Policy training.

4. The lay anointers' training program will include the biblical, historical and theological background of this ministry, as well as pastoral and listening skills and the practice of prayer. **Clergy are encouraged to attend the portion of the training that covers supervision, direction, and support of lay anointers each time a candidate from his/her parish takes the training program.**
5. Lay anointers are required to attend regular refresher programs when offered by the Diocese.
6. It will be the incumbent's responsibility to make certain that every lay anointer has completed the necessary requirements for this ministry before presenting the candidate for licensing.
7. After having successfully completed their preparation and having been licensed by the Bishop, it is recommended that lay anointers be commissioned in a public service, similar to the annual licensing of Lay Readers. This will help the congregation to understand the role of the lay anointer within the context of the parish community. Lay anointers typically function in two ways within a parish. Lay anointers may support the priest in his/her pastoral duties by anointing those in nursing homes, hospitals or at home. They may also join the priest in a public healing service anointing those who come forward for prayer and anointing with oil. The role each lay anointer takes within the parish community is to be negotiated with the parish priest and a lay anointer must have his/her parish priest's permission before anointing anyone.
8. It is recommended that when a parish wishes to include healing in a service, it be included as part of the regular Eucharistic liturgy, typically during the intercessions or following the confession. Although this may lengthen the service a little, it allows the congregation to support the ministry by praying for those who come forward for anointing and is therefore preferable to anointing done privately during the service. It is not recommended that people be anointed when they come forward for communion because it can detract from the Eucharist which should be the primary focus during this time. *The practice of anointing by proxy is not permitted.* If a person is not present then specific prayer for his/her well being may certainly be offered. However anointing is intended to address the needs of those present at the service.
9. It is strongly recommended that clergy who wish to have lay anointers ministering within their parishes educate their parishioners so that they understand the ministry of healing within the Christian Church and the role of the lay anointer within that ministry.
10. Clergy are required to provide supervision, direction and support for their lay anointers. The frequency and style of supervision will vary according to what the lay anointer is doing and the particular needs of each individual lay anointer.
11. Lay anointers are typically licensed for a three-year period. The Bishop may revoke a licence at any time if a lay anointer is unable or unwilling to follow the guidelines or attend training and refresher programs. A licence may also be revoked if the incumbent is unable or unwilling to provide the necessary supervision and support. Licences may be renewed providing lay anointers have attended refresher programs, when available, and have been faithful to the guidelines presented here. It is the clergy's responsibility to approach the bishop to have a licence renewed. When an incumbent leaves the parish the lay anointer's licence continues under the supervision of the Priest in Charge during. The lay anointer's licence ceases when s/he leaves the parish.
12. The lay anointer's licence continues under a new incumbent until the next re-licensing date.
13. Lay anointers who move to a new parish may (on the recommendation of the incumbent) be licensed in the new parish. If it has been some time since the lay person has functioned as a lay anointer, then the lay person may be required to complete training prior to being licensed in the new parish.

Licensing of Laity for Anointing with Oil

When a lay person has completed the training program offered by The Diocese of Moosonee, he/she may, with the recommendation of the incumbent, apply to the Bishop to be licensed. The lay person will send a letter of application to the Bishop of Moosonee at Box 735, Cochrane ON P0L 1C0 addressing the following: date of training, how the person feels called to this ministry, what the healing ministry means to the person and how s/he understands her/his role. The letter of application should be accompanied by a letter from the incumbent stating that s/he supports the application by the lay person, how supervision will take place, how the parish has been prepared for this ministry and any other comments s/he deems appropriate.