

Welcome to the session

Who's in the room?

The course leader introduces her or himself and invites others to introduce themselves

Reading

The course leader or another person reads the reading

Romans 12: 1 – 12

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.

Prayer

The course leader prays for everybody present and for the churches from which they come, asking for a spirit of wisdom and discernment

Then we pray together

Almighty and everlasting God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed
and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your
faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they
may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your
name;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you, in the
unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and
for ever. Amen.

Why are we here?

The course leader invites people to share briefly why they felt moved to come along to the 'taster' session. What questions are we bringing?



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The Church's ministry

Lay Worship Leader ministry is one of a number of different ministries which make up the whole pattern of the Church's ministry. Some of these are common to the wider Church, not just the Church of England. Some are common to the Church of England but take different forms from one Diocese to another. Some are specific to the Diocese of Salisbury.

The ministry of the whole people of God

In any discussion about ministry, baptism is our starting point. All baptised people are members of Christ's body. As Christ's disciples we are called to share in God's mission to his world, by using our God given gifts, skills, experience and resources in his service. Lay Christians offer ministry in many different ways – in a variety of authorised roles and also as Churchwardens and foundation governors, as active members of churches, as volunteers in the community or simply as good neighbours.

Ordained Ministry

At the heart of the Church's ministry is the threefold ministry of Bishop, Priest and Deacon. These orders of ministry originated in the life of the early church and are shared with both the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches. Our understanding of what these ministries are and what they are for can be found in the Ordinal – the services for ordaining people.

Licensed Lay Ministry

Readers, known in some Dioceses including our own as Licensed Lay Ministers, are the form of licensed lay ministry that people in this country are most likely to be familiar with. They exercise a ministry of preaching and teaching in a pastoral context. Reader/ LLM ministry is a nationally recognised ministry – people are discerned and trained in accordance with national guidelines and can be licensed to exercise their ministry anywhere in the country. Other forms of licensed lay ministry that you may come across are deaconesses, lay workers, evangelists and Church Army Officers.

Commissioned Lay Ministry

In the Diocese of Salisbury, we have two expressions of commissioned lay ministry, Lay Pastoral Assistant (LPA) and Lay Worship Leader (LWL). These ministries are resourced by the Diocese through training and ongoing support and are recognised by the giving, in the context of a public service, of the bishop's 'commission'. Commissioned ministries are exercised collaboratively in the context of a ministry team and under the supervision of the incumbent or another minister. They are locally discerned – it is for each church to decide whether these ministries are needed and to call out people for them.

Exercise: What ministry does your church have?

- **What does ministry look like where you are?**
- **Is the church you come from a single parish or is it part of a Team or Benefice? Describe the area which your church serves – what are the main features, pastoral needs and challenges?**
- **What ministry personnel does your church already have?**

You may like to jot notes or do a diagram or mindmap.

If time, the group may like to share and discuss these findings.

Is God calling you to be an LWL?

Discerning a vocation is a delicate task. It may take time and patience to understand what God is calling us to do and be. Our sense of vocation may change throughout our life as we grow and mature. We should always be open to the possibility that God is calling us in new ways.

There are three tried and tested indicators that can help us decide whether God is calling someone to a particular role at a particular time – is there a sense of **inner call**, is that sense of call **affirmed by others** and is there **a need for this ministry**?

Inner call

The sense of inner call that an individual has is very important. It would be strange to embark on ministry without some personal feeling that this is what God wants for us. We may arrive at this sense through reading or study which broadens our understanding of the possibilities open to us, through reflecting on what we have learned, and of course through regular prayer.

Questions to ask might include:

'Does LWL ministry 'feel right' for me? Can I put into words why?'

'When I think about LWL ministry do I feel positive and joyful, even if also a bit daunted?'

'Is this something I want for myself or do I feel under pressure – if so from whom, and why?'

'How will this impact on my family and anyone else who depends on me?'

'Have I got time to give – both for training and for the demands of ministry? What might I need to give up?'

'Is there anything else that I need to be realistic about?'

Affirmed by others

Once we feel the stirrings of a sense of call we may well feel prompted to talk it over with others – our friends and families but also those who can be more objective about us. Your incumbent or another minister in your church should always be among those you talk to. The Diocesan Vocations Coordinator is always available to talk with anyone who wishes.

Questions to ask might include:

'Could you see me in this role?'

'Do you think others would welcome me in this role?'

'Do I have the right personal attributes (or could I develop them)?'

'Do I have the right skills (or could I learn them)?'

Be open to the possibility that others may NOT see you in the role – and that their intuition may be the right one. Listen carefully and indicate that you really do want an honest opinion – not everybody finds it easy to give feedback. And be of good cheer – you already know that you are called by God. The only question is, to what?

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A need for this ministry

God does not call us to exercise a ministry if there is no need for it. It would be a pity to waste our energies when there are so many other important things that we might be able to do for God. So a key question to ask is:

What does my church actually need at the present time?

We are often inspired by the ministry we see someone else offering – is their ministry sufficient for now or will they soon be in need of a successor? Or if there is no immediate need for another Lay Worship Leader in your own church, is there perhaps somewhere nearby which would be glad to have you in that role?

Exercise: What ministry does your church need?

Building on the previous exercise, where are the gaps in ministerial provision in your church? Consider immediate needs but also potential longer term needs. Can you think of other people in your church with untapped gifts and what might each of you most helpfully offer? If time, the group may like to share and discuss these findings



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What is the ministry of a Lay Worship Leader in the Diocese of Salisbury?

It may be possible to invite one or more existing Lay Worship Leaders to come along and share their experiences, including their experiences of training, and answer any questions

When can lay people lead worship?

Throughout the Church it is common to find lay people leading worship in their churches. The Canons of the Church of England set out various ways in which lay people may be authorized to lead worship.

Sometimes they do so because they have been authorised for a role which includes leading worship. So for instance Canon E4 '*Of readers*' authorises Readers/ Licensed Lay Ministers to lead Morning and Evening Prayer (apart from pronouncing the absolution) and to preach. They may also distribute the sacrament and with the bishop's additional permission may take funerals. Canons D1 '*Of the order of deaconesses*' and E7 '*Of lay workers*' extend the same authority to other forms of licensed lay ministers including e.g. Evangelists and Church Army Officers. Supplements to the Canons also list other forms of service in addition to Morning and Evening Prayer which are authorised for use in the Church of England.

Another category of lay persons with authorisation to lead worship is Churchwardens. Canon B11 '*Of Morning and Evening Prayer in parish churches*' sets out that if no licensed minister is available e.g. during a vacancy or for some other reason it falls to the Churchwardens to lead Morning and Evening Prayer or invite another suitable person to do so.

The permissions relating specifically to preaching can be found in Canon B18 '*Of sermons in parish churches*' which state that the sermon should be preached by a minister, deaconess, reader or lay worker duly authorized in accordance with Canon Law or by anyone else who has the bishop's permission to do so, either for a single occasion or more generally. Those lay people whose ministry is not licensed under canon, such as Lay Worship Leaders, do not preach unless particularly invited to do so by the bishop.

It is important for Lay Worship Leaders to understand the legal situation regarding their ministry so that they are clear themselves about the scope of their responsibilities and can also explain them to others.

Some churches do things differently – why?

The Church of England is a diverse church with a wide variety of practice in worship as in other things. It includes some churches where worship is only ever led by clergy and others where lay people lead worship very informally including preaching and teaching. It is usually right for this kind of decision to be made locally by those who best understand the needs, including the missional needs, of their own context. Different Dioceses too will have their own guidelines.

In the Diocese of Salisbury, we warmly encourage the participation of lay people in all aspects of the Church's mission and ministry including leading worship where appropriate. We also want anyone who leads worship, whether lay or ordained, to do it excellently. For some people who come along to a service this may be the first encounter they have had with a particular church, or it may even be the first time they have been in a church at all. For others, sharing in the worship of their local church is central to their spiritual life. This places a great responsibility upon the person leading worship. With this in mind we offer training, commissioning and ongoing support for Lay Worship Leaders so that they can feel as confident as possible in the ministry that has been entrusted to them.

What qualities do I need to become a Lay Worship Leader?

The following is a brief 'specification' for the kind of person who might be right to become a Lay Worship Leader. Does this describe you?

A LWL should be:

- baptised and confirmed and a regular worshipper and communicant in their home church
- rooted and grounded in their local community (e.g. not very recently arrived or likely to move away in the near future)
- widely known and trusted by a range of local people and groups
- someone with an appropriate ministerial 'presence'
- able to undertake an initial 10 session course of study plus Concluding Session
- willing to engage in appropriate continuing ministerial development
- prepared to work under the supervision of their incumbent and alongside licensed colleagues both lay and ordained
- able to handle the projections and expectations of others

Exercise: Where am I now in my thinking?

What have I learned about Lay Worship Leader ministry in this session? What do I still need to find out? Who might I talk to? Buzz in pairs or threes and write down any questions or actions on a sheet of paper

The next step

Once you have decided that you would like to pursue the possibility of becoming a Lay Worship Leader the next step is to talk formally to your incumbent. They should already have access to this Taster Session and may wish to discuss with you some of the vocational questions that we have just been exploring. They may also wish to consult others, including possibly the PCC.

If you and your incumbent agree that it is appropriate for you to attend a course you need to register via the Learning Hub on a link that you will have been given.

You will need to apply for an **enhanced Child Workforce** DBS clearance *without a check against the barred lists* and will also need to attend Safeguarding Training.

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It is your responsibility to book onto the online **Basic Awareness** (C0), **Foundation** (C1), and **Awareness of Domestic Abuse** courses (<https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>), and remember **you cannot be commissioned without having completed this training and a valid DBS certificate**.

Initial training for Lay Worship Leader ministry consists of ten study sessions, plus a Concluding Session, each about 2 hours long. The sessions are usually two weeks apart so that some tasks and activities can be completed in between. For each session it can be helpful to do some preparatory work and make some notes – typically a side of A4. These go into a folder as a record of your learning which you keep.

Remember that participation in the course is part of the discernment process and does not guarantee that people will be recommended for commissioning.

Once you have been commissioned as a Lay Worship Leader it is hoped that you will want to take part in the Diocesan CMD programme which offers a range of different ways of deepening your learning or developing specialisms.

Any
Questions?

The course leader may like to lead the group in prayer at the end of the session, concluding with the Grace or a blessing