

LAY MINISTERS WITHIN THE DIOCESE OF CANBERRA & GOULBURN

Preface

One of the insights that have come about as we emerge into a post-Christendom model of being church is the need to re-appropriate aspects of how the early church operated in the first centuries following the ascension. It is clear that the church recognized the chrism, or spiritual gifting, for particular roles within its life including that of presiding at the Lord's Table (the Eucharist) which over time became regularized in the form of ordination, there were many roles that were exercised by other members of the church where the chrism was recognized but it was felt unnecessary to ordain the person. Roles of ministry were not seen in a hierarchical fashion but as ministries of 'service' either within the community, including the exercise of 'oversight' or episcopate, and to the wider community within which the church existed.

In our reading of the scripture, from a post-Christendom perspective, we can see that a model of, what is sometime referred to as 'Total Ministry', 'Ministry of all the Baptized' and in Australia as 'Ministering Communities', is evident.

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of Him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9)

We are all called to exercise a ministry as members of the 'royal priesthood'. Some among the body-of-Christ are called to exercise particular ministries within the body and are 'set apart' through ordination, not as special and/or more important people but as those who will exercise ministry in a distinctive way on our behalf. Equally among the laity there may be some distinctive ministries that need to be recognized and authorized by the wider body-of-Christ.

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the full measure of the stature of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13)

Baptism is a calling and commissioning for ministry. Every baptized person is a minister of the Christian gospel.

A significant part of the work of the ordained person is the 'equipping of the saints for the work of ministry' and equally the releasing of them for that ministry. It is clear from Ephesians 4:11-13 that ministry is the responsibility, indeed is the 'call' from God for the whole 'body-of-Christ' and not the exclusive domain of the clergy person. A significant part of the life of a layperson is the recognition of not only the privilege of baptism, incorporation into the 'family of God', but also the responsibility to exercise ministry.

While not all need or indeed should receive any further authorisation than that inherent in baptism; for the good order of the Church and for its focus upon Mission it is appropriate that some who exercise the role of leadership or oversight on the one hand, or exercise a representative function on the other (i.e. they act as the 'face of the church' within that ministry), should be authorized and given the authority to do so. (*Individual functions of ministry, including the administration of Holy Communion as a Eucharistic*

Assistant and of 'reading' defined parts of the service of Holy Communion (i.e. Lay Readers), need no further authorisation than the appropriate affirmation and authorisation of the parish/congregation).

Leadership

Another insight, as we move into a post-Christendom model, is that oversight (episcopate) can be a shared and/or delegated ministry. The Bishop shares episcopate with both ordained and lay leaders at a Diocesan level, episcopate is exercised vicariously by the Rector/Incumbent of a ministry unit as noted in the words used by the bishop or his nominee as the licence is handed over: 'this ministry which is yours and mine', and within a ministry unit as the ordained share the role of local episcopate with those with the 'chrism' for the exercise of particular ministries.

It is the responsibility of the clergy in the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn to share leadership with the laity, the local council and other ordained ministers for the mission and ministry of the Church. The ability for all who exercise leadership within a ministry unit to work together collegially as members of a team is of great importance. In some ministry units it may be appropriate to establish a formal Ministry Leadership Team.

The leadership of ministries will reflect both the needs of the local community and the gifts of the person being licensed.

The Bishop's Licence authorises lay ministers in their own local area. They may also minister in other areas of the Diocese if authorized by the Bishop to do so and with the agreement of the leaders of other ministry units that may exercise ministry within that locality.

The Ministry of Lay Ministers

Some Lay Ministers may be specifically licensed to the role of ministry within the context of public worship and may have a license which specifies their role within the context of worship; this could include preaching (N.B. no person should preach without a license) and the conduct of specified services. Due notice should be taken of the sacramental ministries which are the exclusive domain of the ordained.

Any Lay Ministers may be asked to take a role within public worship at the discretion of the clergy person in oversight of them.

When a Lay Minister exercises a ministry within the context of public worship they should dress or be robed according to local custom.

Selection of Lay Ministers

1. Candidates must be **nominated** (see the attached Nomination of a Lay Minister) by the priest and wardens of the parish/chaplaincy/ministry unit to which they are to be licensed. They may be selected by any means the priest and local council deem appropriate.
2. Candidates must be members of the Anglican Church in good standing, having either been confirmed as such or been Received into the Anglican Church, see APBA p. 83.
3. The parish/chaplaincy and the nominated Lay Minister must devise a **Mutual**

Agreement (see the attached document), which outlines ministry goals or objectives and indicates the candidate's expected role and contribution within it.

4. The candidate's gifts and skills for ministry should be evaluated against the background of needs expressed in the **Outline of Mission/Ministry Area** (see Application for Lay Ministers Licence, attached).
5. A **Notice of Intention** must be read in the appropriate church/ministry unit on two Sundays, and the Rector and Churchwardens must send a certificate that no impediment was alleged.
6. The nominee must sign a **Declaration** (see attached Lay Minister's Declaration), which is to be forwarded to the Diocese with the **Nomination of a Lay Minister** (see attached).
7. Selected candidates should **commit themselves** to ongoing training and development.

Training of Lay Minister

The Rector/Incumbent of a Ministry Unit is to arrange for ongoing training/development for the Lay Minister. This may be undertaken before the ministry commences or continue while the ministry is being offered.

In addition arrangements will be made for Diocesan wide and regional training/equipping opportunities to be made available on an ongoing basis. It is hoped that some training can be offered in an online format in time. Opportunities for spiritual development and sharing will be developed for Lay Ministers.

Courses offered will equip the candidates for the particular ministry they have been called to offer, but will also have regard for the person's own spiritual development, personal witness, bible knowledge and understanding of an Anglican ethos.

Once licensed, lay ministers will continue to equip themselves for their ministry. When their licence is renewed, lay ministers should normally expect to attend a workshop to meet others serving in the same area and to share and expand their knowledge and skill.

Licensing of Lay Minister

Before exercising their ministry lay ministers should hold the Bishop's licence and be commissioned by the Bishop or his delegate.

Lay Ministers must be baptized and regular communicants of the Anglican Church of Australia. Christians from other denominations wishing to serve as lay ministers will normally be received into the Anglican Church. Candidates should satisfy that they are suitable in faith, have the necessary ministry skills and are living a Godly life.

A Lay Minister is to be licensed to their home ministry unit, most likely to the parish where they are regular communicant members. It may be useful for a Lay Minister to exercise a ministry within another context; for example within an aged care facility, a hospital or similar under the direct supervision of a clergy person who is not in oversight of their home ministry unit/parish – in those circumstances oversight will be exercised jointly.

All licenses will be to a local ministry unit and are not ordinarily issued across ministry

units except with the Bishop's authorization. Application should be made to the Bishop for any variation.

In order to avoid perceptions of a conflict of interest, Lay Ministers are not to be civil celebrants.

Candidates for the role of Lay Minister should be in good standing within their home ministry unit/parish.

When commissioned the candidates must affirm their baptismal faith and commitment, their assent to Anglican Order and discipline and their commitment to their ministry task. A liturgy for the commissioning of Lay Ministers is attached.

Licences will be subject to renewal every three years.

Lay Ministers who move to another local ministry will not automatically be re-licensed in their new area. Those who move to another Diocese will need to be recognised and accepted under the guidelines prevailing in that Diocese.

A register of all licensed lay ministers will be kept in the Diocesan Registry.

When there is no ordained ministry, lay ministers will continue their ministry under the supervision of an appropriate Archdeacon.

Lay Ministers will submit their resignation to the Wardens and clergy person in oversight of the ministry unit who will notify the Bishop.

The clergy person in oversight, in consultation with the Wardens, may request the Bishop to revoke the licence of a lay minister.

Lay Ministers may exercise oversight of others in the ministry unit/parish in such areas as Pastoral Care, Ministry to children and Young Adults, etc. People who exercise such significant ministries, under the direct oversight of a Lay Minister, should be authorised to do so locally – Local Authorisation (The paper 'Local Authorisation of Ministry' should be read in conjunction with this paper).

Conditions of Service

Lay Ministers should be clearly informed of their duties and receive a copy of this document.

Lay Ministers in most circumstances will be honorary in nature. In most circumstances it is appropriate for the cost of exercising a ministry to be reimbursed. This will need to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis and should be included in the Mutual Agreement.

Some Lay Ministers may hold a position as a Stipended Lay Ministers (SLM). The rate of remuneration is based upon 90% of stipend for Clergy (see the current Administrative Circular for the current rate). Stipended Lay Ministers are entitled to receive travel allowance at the rate determined in the current Administrative Circular. Stipended Lay Ministers are defined as 'Religious Practitioners' under Australian Tax Law and are therefore entitled to access the provision of a 30% salary sacrifice as per Diocesan Guidelines.

MUTUAL AGREEMENT

Preamble

The following guidelines are meant to assist those who are trying to develop an open and clear process in the appointment and accountability of laypersons that accept responsibility for specified ministry work within, or as an outreach of, a community of faith.

For those who accept responsibility for the leadership of worship, this agreement need only be an agreed list of duties and tasks as negotiated with the rector or priest-in-charge of the community of faith.

For those who accept responsibility for leadership in a part-time or full-time capacity (whether honorary or stipended) for leadership in a specifically defined ministry area, the factors listed in the next section should be carefully considered. Examples of the kinds of ministry envisaged here are: young adult program leader, leader of lay pastorate team, leader of visiting team, lay director of music, leaders of major church programs, parish secretaries and so on.

1. Who are the relevant parties to this agreement?

- The Lay Minister
- The Rector or supervisor
- A member of the parish council or ministry unit (particularly where the parish is employing the individual as a Stipended Lay Minister).

2. What is the Focus of this ministry?

- Is there a defined group of people being ministered to?
- What does this ministry action set out to achieve for these people?
- What is the context of this ministry?

3. Statement of Role and Duties

- List tasks to be undertaken by mutual agreement.
- List the responsibilities of the lay minister.
- Describe the lines of communication between the rector/supervisor and the lay minister.
- Give clear guidelines and boundaries for exercising the ministry defined.

4. Shared Expectations

- In this section it is important to include statements which cover the expectations of each party to the agreement. The items listed below are **examples only**.

Lay Ministers might reasonably be expected:

- to be responsible for the list of duties and ministry area defined above.
- to be part of the ministry team and participate in ministry team meetings and activities.
- to report regularly to the rector or supervisor.
- to report annually to the parish.
- to be confidential in the performance of their duties.

The Rector might reasonably be expected:

- to provide spiritual leadership, direction, guidance and support in the areas of ministry defined above.
- to organise and/or facilitate, in consultation with the lay minister, on-going training and ministry formation processes.
- to provide supervisory support to the lay minister.
- to keep the lay minister informed of information relevant to their ministry of which the rector has been advised.

The Parish Council or Community of Faith leadership group might reasonably be expected:

- to take administrative and financial responsibility for the ministry defined above.
- in consultation with the rector and other relevant members of the community of faith, develop guidelines for the specified ministry area.

Special consideration may be given:

- to specific personal needs or requirements of the lay minister as negotiated.

5. Qualifications

What qualifications does the lay minister have that are relevant to this ministry area?

Eg,

specialised training courses, completion of ministry training such as Education for Ministry, specific experiences, tertiary studies.

6. Self-Care and Support Issues

- Is there a specific parish support group which has formed to support the specific ministry and the lay minister?

- Does the lay minister belong to any special peer groups or ministry associations?
- Does the minister belong to any networking group?

7. Resourcing of Ministry (payment of ministry costs)

- Does this ministry require any form of material support?
- If so, how will it be financed? Who pays travel costs, phone costs, out-of-pocket expenses, hospitality expenses, training expenses?
- How will the lay minister be supported for further training? What specific courses of study might be needed? Who will pay?
- Will the lay minister be able/required to attend special seminars and conferences?

8. Links with Diocesan Structures

Is the lay minister involved in Diocesan groups or activities as part of this ministry?

9. Care and Personal Development

- What are the appropriate supervision and support arrangements for this ministry (if they haven't already been spelled out above)?
- Which person will be the lay minister's direct supervisor?
- Are any of the following supports required: spiritual director/adviser, peer supervision and support, mentor/ministry adviser?

10. Special Factors, including length of ministry

- Are there any factors specific to this ministry or the situation or the person which need to be covered?
- What is the mutual understanding regarding the length of this ministry?

11. Review Procedures

- What arrangements are there for the review of this agreement?
- How often will it be reviewed by the parties concerned? (Annually? 6-monthly? Other?)
- Who is responsible for initiating the review process?

12. Nature of the Agreement

Do the parties wish to spell out the nature of this agreement? For example, the parties may include a clause which states something similar to "We enter this agreement, not as a legal document, but as an instrument of trust in God's grace believing that by so doing we will be better able to fulfill the purposes of his kingdom through our joint ministry."