

Celebration of Lay Ministry, Candlemas,

Sunday 1 February 2026

The Celebration of Lay Ministry is an opportunity to recognise the service of Lay Ministers in your parish or context and offer them support and encouragement in their ministries. This celebration will raise awareness of the role of Lay Ministers and how they contribute to the vibrant life of the parish community, and inspire others to discern how God might be calling them to offer themselves.

We have put together resource material to assist you in making this celebration a special event to give thanks for all those volunteers who serve our parishes, as members of our congregations as well as Affirmed, Commissioned or Licensed Lay Ministers.

Below you will find a list of resources we have provided to get you started.

Ideas on how to celebrate Lay Ministry

Service outline for thanksgiving for the gift of Lay Ministry

Re-commitment pledge for Lay Ministers to be used during the service

General intercessions for Lay Ministry

Communications/ Announcements to advertise the theme of the day.

These materials can be used at any time that fits into your parish diary and we encourage your parish to celebrate at some point. But it would be really good if you could celebrate on 1 February or during February.

Members of the Discipleship and Ministry team and Lay Ministers can be available to come to preach at a special service throughout February. Contact Helen Medland on helen.medland@southwark.anglican.org to enquire.

Suggested Ideas for the Celebration of Lay Ministry

- call the Lay Ministers serving in your parish forward for the recommitment pledge and blessing for the work that they do for the parish and/or diocese.
- you might consider giving them a small token of appreciation e.g. pin, prayer book marker, etc.
- after the service, host refreshments to continue the celebration in their honour.
- have a table set up at reception with resource materials on Diocesan Lay Ministry.
- the homily/sermon and intercessions can carry the themes of baptism, ministry, service and relationship to Jesus.

- Consider focussing the homily on Lay Leadership, through their baptismal call to serve, sharing their gifts with the Church Community and encouraging others to follow suit.
- invite a member of the Discipleship and Ministry Team, or Licensed lay Minister to come to preach and speak about their ministry and wider lay ministry.
- include intercessions for Lay Ministry in the Prayer of the Faithful.
- print or have available the Lay Ministry fliers for people to pick up as they come into church. (Email helen.medland@southwark.anglican.org to request fliers.)
- do a display on Lay Ministry for the entrance or coffee area.

Suggestions for Liturgy to Celebrate Lay Ministry

Introduction

Through baptism, God welcomes us into the fellowship of the universal Church. All Christian people are called to ‘proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light’. (1 Peter 2:9)

As a Diocese, we celebrate all that lay people bring to the life of the church and to their community. We gather to celebrate the lay people nominated in this *parish/benefice* in recognition for their faithful witness and ministry within our community and their encouragement of the ministries of all God’s people, as the Spirit distributes gifts among us all.

Collect for the Celebration of Lay Ministry

Everlasting Father,
Your Son came to earth to do your will,
and in baptism you call us to love and serve you.
Help us to discern what you now ask of us,
and give us grace to respond in joyful obedience.
In union with your beloved Son;
Who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit
One God, now and forever.

Amen

Renewal of Commitment to Lay Ministry

All those Affirmed, Commissioned, Licensed, and congregations are invited to stand as they are able

My brothers and sisters, through baptism, we are all made bearers of the light of Christ in the world. I pray for God’s continued blessing upon you and invite you now to renew your commitment to the respective vocation and ministry entrusted to you.

Therefore, I ask: Will you engage with the Scriptures and the Church’s teachings in your ministries and life?

All: With God’s help, I will.

Will you work collaboratively and serve with humility, integrity, love and devotion, persevering in prayer while working for justice?

All: With God’s help, I will.

Will you, in the strength of the Holy Spirit, continually stir up the gift of God that is in you to make Christ known to all?

All: With God's help, I will.

Almighty God, who has given you the will to undertake these things, give you also the strength to perform them, that he may complete that work that he has begun in you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

We say together

**God our Father,
we offer our lives to do your work in your Church and in the world.
Help us, by your Holy Spirit,
to hear more clearly your call to deeper commitment to your service,
and give us grace to respond with gladness;
for the glory of Christ our Lord. Amen.**

General Intercessions

Lord, we give you thanks for those who respond to your call and generously offer their skills, gifts and ministries, acknowledging their work for the building up of your Kingdom and their faithful witness among us.

We praise you for the gifts your Spirit has given to these your servants, so that that they may, in turn, place them at the service of the Church.

Bless them and the ministry they undertake to spread the Gospel of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to all who long to experience your love in their lives. **Amen.**

Below is a list of possible general intercession options for the Celebration of Lay Ministry.

That all the baptized will humbly welcome the word which has been planted in us and live it in loving service as volunteers and lay pastoral leaders, we pray to the Lord. . . .

For the Church that God will raise up men and women of faith who will put out into the deep and say “Here I am; send me,” when called, we pray to the Lord. . . .

That the gifts God has given us in Baptism will be used in gratitude to serve with joy and courage, we pray to the Lord. . . .

That we will confidently place our trust in the Lord and allow the Spirit to guide our hearts in discerning a call to lay leadership, we pray to the Lord. . . .

In gratitude for the many persons who serve this parish community as volunteers and lay pastoral leaders, we pray to the Lord. . . .

For each of us, that we will offer our lives and all our deeds in service to our God, we pray to the Lord. . . . (Josh 24) .

That those who have responded to the call to serve as lay ministers will know the goodness of the Lord, we pray to the Lord. . . . (Psalm 34)

For those in need today, that the thirsts of their souls and bodies will be quenched through the ministry of those who serve in the name of Jesus, we pray to the Lord. . . . (Psalm 34) .

That each of us, disciples of Christ, will hold strong to our faith and manifest our belief in faithful service, we pray to the Lord. . . . (Eph 5)

Notices/ Communications/ Announcements

Below are suggested announcements for use in your parish notice sheets to be used on the Sundays prior to the Celebration of Lay Ministry.

Sunday 1 February [or other date] will be an opportunity to affirm and celebrate the many dedicated lay women and men who give tirelessly of their time and talent in service to others and to the Church as Lay Ministers, [add or delete as needed: PCC members, church wardens, Eucharistic ministers, worship leaders, flower arrangers], and so many other ways. Please join us for a special celebration honouring these dedicated staff/volunteers at the _____ Service. A reception will follow in the_____.

Are you open to the call to serve as a Lay Minister?

If you are thinking about how to use the gifts God has given you, then come find out more about Lay Ministry. At this taster session you can ask commitment-free questions about the different ministries, including Reader (teaching) ministry, Pastoral ministry, Pioneer (missional) ministry, ministry with Children and Young People, and Evangelist (outreach) ministry. This is

Attend our **Lay Taster Day on Saturday 31 January at Trinity House 10–2pm** for a chance to hear some stories of people who have experienced these roles and been through training, and how you might begin exploring your own vocation. Can't make it? Our next **Zoom Lay Taster Evening is 25th February from 7:30-8:30pm**.

For more information, visit the Diocesan website:

<https://southwark.anglican.org/mission-ministry/ministry/discipleship-ministry/>

We encourage you to contact the Discipleship, Lay Ministry and Continuing Ministerial Education Department at Trinity House for promotional materials for Lay training, commissioning and licensing and for details on all the courses offered including the Bishop's Certificate.

Contact: Carol Coslett, Assistant Director of Lay Ministry

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Celebration of Lay Ministries 2026