

Celebration of Lay Ministry

Sunday 18 October 2026

The Celebration of Lay Ministries is an opportunity to recognise the service of Lay Ministers in your parish or context and offer them support and encouragement in their ministries. Lay Ministers contribute to the vibrant life of the parish community and often inspire others to discern how God might be calling them to offer themselves.

This year, we have offered two opportunities in our diocese to celebrate our Lay Ministers. The first of these was on Sunday 1 February 2026 on Candlemas and the second is on Sunday 18 October, to follow the licensing and commissioning service for Lay Ministers is being held on Saturday 11 October at Southwark Cathedral.

There are resources and materials available on our website, which we hope will help you to celebrate your laity and all that they do in your church.

You will find:

- 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, although we hope that you will feel encouraged to use them on 18 October as an opportunity to welcome and pray for your new lay ministers.

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.

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 + Welcome to those newly commissioned or licensed

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.

(If you have a newly commissioned or licensed minister you might like to welcome them now)

Welcome to Newly Commissioned and Licensed Ministers

Name..... has been commissioned / licensed as our new **Reader/
Commissioned Pastoral Lay Minister, Licensed Pastoral Lay Minister/ Children youth
and Family minister / Pioneer** within the parish and diocese. We welcome you into this

role, and we pray that God's blessing will be upon you as you begin your ministry with us.

Let us pray

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.**

If you are using this opportunity to publicly affirm those in your parish to different roles you could also use this sample liturgy.

Affirmation of Lay Ministries

The officiant etc says in these or similar words.

For ministries predominantly within the church community

Brothers and sisters in Christ,
we are all baptised by the one Spirit into one body, and given gifts for a variety of ministries
for the common good.

OR

For ministries predominantly in the wider community

Brothers and sisters in Christ,
in the mission of Jesus Christ
we are constantly brought together and sent out. We are gathered by God's word and table,
and we are sent out to do God's work of healing, justice, and peace.
Today that rhythm unfolds in our midst:

Our purpose today is to affirm and bless these people as they serve God in [name of ministry].

The archdeacon/area dean/incumbent/chaplain describes the ministry and then continues

Do you believe that God has called you to this ministry within this church/community?

Candidate(s) **I believe that God has called me.**

Will you be faithful in your own prayer and study so that you are better equipped for this ministry?

Candidate(s) **With God's help, I will.**

Will you try to share the good news of Jesus Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit live your life according to Christ's teaching?

Candidate(s) **With God's help, I will.**

Officiant Will you, as long as you are engaged in this work, perform it with care, to the honour of God and the benefit of the Church?

Candidate(s) **With God's help, I will.**

The officiant addresses the congregation.

Minister Will you encourage, support, and pray for N (or NN) in this ministry?

Candidate(s) **We will.**

The officiant continues,

Let us pray.

Blessed are you, gracious God, our creator and redeemer.

In every age you call people to minister in your name.

May the work of this your servant so build up your Church,
that we may faithfully serve you and show your love in all the world.

Blessed are you, O God,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

Symbols appropriate to the ministry may be presented.

The officiant may say,

N (or NN), the Lord bless you, enable you, and uphold you in this ministry.

The prayers may conclude with this collect.

Almighty God,
by your grace alone
we are accepted and called to your service. Strengthen us by your Holy Spirit
and make us worthy of our calling;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **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 18th October [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.

Attend our next **Zoom Lay Taster Evening is 25th November or 20th January from 7:30-8:30pm** 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.

At this taster session you can also 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.

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

carol.coslett@southwark.anglican.org