SPOTLIGHT

Anastasia Obeng

After completing the Bishop's Certificate course, Anastasia was commissioned as a Children and Young People's Minister in October 2025. She is based at St Paul's, Newington, where she regularly runs the Sunday school and youth activities. She has also recently helped to organise youth trips to Iona over the summer.

Next steps

If you think you might be called to serve God in one of these ways, the first step is to talk to your incumbent or chaplain. They will be able to help you explore more fully. You might also like to attend one of our regular vocations forums. Details of these can be found on the events section of our website.

If you would like to have an informal conversation about your sense of call to lay ministry, please email layministry@southwark.anglican.org and someone from the Discipleship and Ministry Team will contact you. They will tell you more about training and guide you through the discernment process.

For information about the discernment process for commissioned and licensed ministries, please visit our website.

FIND OUT MORE

What is my vocation?

The discernment process

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The Diocese of Southwark

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LAY MINISTRY

Have you ever wondered if God is calling you?

Christ Centred

Outward Focused

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As Christians, each of us is called to be both a disciple and a minister. As disciples, we try to follow Christ in every part of our lives and reflect the love of God to others we encounter every day. In baptism, we are also given gifts to serve God in ministry. Often we use those gifts informally, helping with administration or offering hospitality. But sometimes we are called to more formal lay ministry roles.

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

In Southwark there are three pathways for these more formal lay ministry roles:

Affirmed Lay Ministers

Affirmed Lay Ministers are chosen within the local parish where they will serve. Training usually happens within the parish or in the deanery, and they are prayed for and affirmed in the parish as they begin their ministry.

Commissioned Lay Ministers

Commissioned Lay Ministers serve in their parish or local community. They are recommended by their parish, and then go through a discernment and selection process run by the Diocese. The Diocese also provides training, which usually takes two years part-time. These ministers are commissioned by the Bishop after a years training, then complete year two as a Commissioned Pastoral Lay Minister (CPLM). If they move parishes within the Diocese, they can usually continue their ministry in another parish.

Licensed Lay Ministers

Licensed Lay Ministers serve in their parish, across a group of parishes, or in the wider community in a leadership role. Like Commissioned Lay Ministers, they are recommended by their parish, and then go through a discernment and selection process run by the Diocese. Training usually takes four years part-time, and may include attending a theological college. These ministers are licensed by the Bishop after two years training, then complete post-licensing training over the remaining two years as a Licensed Pastoral Lay Minister. If they move away from Southwark, can usually continue their ministry in another diocese.

Within each of these pathways, there are different focuses.

- **Readers**, who are licensed to preach, teach, lead worship and assist in pastoral, evangelistic and liturgical work in the local church and community
- **Pastoral Ministers**, who may be affirmed, commissioned, or licensed, help to develop caring and pastoral work on behalf of the Church (this may take place within the local church, or in the wider community)
- **Church Army Evangelists**, who are licensed, work to transform lives and local communities and help people to come to faith
- **Children's, Youth and Family Ministers**, who may be affirmed, commissioned, or licensed, nurture and encourage young people and families in their Christian faith and support them in the local community
- **Lay Pioneers,** who may be affirmed, commissioned or licensed, connect with people outside the Church, creating new contextual ways of doing church together in their community.

You can find out more about these ministry focuses on our website and in the other brochures in this series.

Note that all those discerning a call to lay ministry will have to undergo a DBS check and safeguarding training.