

Transforming Lay Ministry

All God's people have a ministry through their baptism. This is the foundation on which all discussion of ministry, lay and ordained, is built. Many churches in the diocese are examining what this means in their present lives as they address the challenges of *Transforming Presence*. Ideas and resources are being developed to assist each person in their growth as disciples. The aim is to encourage the proliferation of all kinds of ministry.

Some people have a more specific ministry, acting as preachers, evangelists, or spiritual directors, for example. They will be identified by their local church, trained and resourced locally and authorised to minister amongst those who have called them. Training and resources will need to be less centralised and more accessible so that more people can benefit from them.

And some people will have a **licensed, lay ministry** that has diocesan and national recognition. The review of lay ministry, which began in February 2012, has highlighted the distinctive features of licensed, lay ministry. A lay person, holding the Bishop's licence, is trained to national standards, has national accreditation and transferability, *and* is a focus and beacon for all forms of lay ministry.

Discernment of the future needs of the diocese has identified the role of *Lay Theologian* as essential for the Church as it becomes a *Transforming Presence*. To signify this change in emphasis, our intention is to end the selection and training of Readers and to introduce Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs). This leadership role may be expressed in a number of ways, all of which can include the aspects of ministry currently associated with Readers:

- as an adult educator, encouraging, training and mentoring other lay ministries, *or*
- as one who contributes skills of leadership in local churches and deaneries, *or*
- as a co-ordinator and trainer of Christian nurture, such as children's work and enquirer's groups, *or*
- as one who attends to the connection between faith and daily life, worship and witness.

Existing Readers may choose to continue as they are, without any change in their ministry, or they may offer themselves for consideration as LLMs or locally deployed ordained ministers. Readers who don't move to being an LLM or a locally deployed priest will continue to have a valuable and important ministry.