



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

**Diocese of St Edmundsbury  
and Ipswich**

## Reader Ministry

Reader Ministry is a nationally recognised lay ministry which makes a vital contribution to the ministry of the Church. Readers are lay people, called by God, trained and licensed by the Church to preach, teach, lead worship and assist in pastoral, evangelistic and liturgical work, providing a bridge between the Church and the world.

### What are Readers?

Readers are:

- called and licensed to a benefice by the Bishop to serve God in his world and his Church;
- theologically trained with a particular ministry of preaching, teaching and leading worship;
- engaged in appropriate pastoral work which can be in a variety of contexts including the community, work places, hospitals or taking funerals;
- members of ministry teams working alongside other staff within the accountability structures of the parish and diocese.



To become a Reader, you will engage in thorough initial theological and practical training and formation over two years before being licensed to the role. Once licensed, you will engage in ongoing continuing ministerial development which, for the first three years, follows a structured programme for newly licensed Readers. You will be equipped to:

- preach and teach the word of God;
- connect Christian faith and theology with everyday experiences;
- lead worship well, understand the liturgy and lead prayers;
- respond as a licensed lay minister;
- serve in your benefice and be licensed by the Bishop.

## Are you called to Reader ministry?

Reader ministry may be for you if you:

- think God is calling you to serve him more fully in ministry;
- are being called to a teaching and preaching ministry.

### **You may wish to consider:**

- your Christian witness in everyday life, how you pray and study the Bible?
- talking over the possibility of being a Reader with your family and friends – how do they feel about your sense of vocation?

### **General qualities of a potential Reader:**

- a communicant member and regular worshipper in the Church of England;
- spiritually well-rounded, based on a regular prayer life informed by reading and study of scripture and other Christian literature;
- a heart for sharing the gospel;
- a good communicator, reflecting your faith in everyday life;
- wise and mature Christian and able to function as a team member;
- experienced in the Church's life and ministry;
- able to respond to a demanding training programme and open to ongoing learning and continual ministerial education;
- known and trusted by Incumbent and congregation;
- motivated to contribute actively to the life worship and leadership of the church.

## Ian Levitt – Reader

I'm an unlikely candidate for Reader ministry. Nonetheless, I was licensed as Reader at the Cathedral 21 years ago to St George's Church, Bury St Edmunds.

I ministered at St George's for four years - a busy time - I'd call it 'full on' ministry. I was also involved at the same time with Highpoint Prison chaplaincy with Kairos ministry. Needing God's grace and his people supporting me. Two years later in the Chelmsford Diocese, I was licensed to the benefice of Rayne with Panfield. Two differing rural parishes, a new experience and three great years! After returning to Haverhill, Suffolk, God had other plans for me and I was licensed to HMP Highpoint.

Over 15 years, God has given me a varied ministry: taking services, preaching, teaching, extended communion, baptism, confirmation preparation and pastoral care for both inmates and staff.

Sustained through God's grace!

## Discernment

If Reader ministry seems the right course of action for you then you will need to talk to your Incumbent to gain their support and for the PCC to support your application and agree to your nomination.

All candidates will need a DBS check and to complete a C3 Safeguarding training course.

Contact the Diocesan Office (Lesley Steed at [lesley.steed@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:lesley.steed@cofesuffolk.org) or phone 01473 298510) to arrange initial meetings with the Deputy Warden of Readers and the Discipleship and Ministry Development Officer. You will also have opportunity to meet with a Vocations Advisor which will help you to discern your ministry and whether Reader Ministry is for you.

If it is, you will attend a discernment day to explore your calling against the national selection criteria (please see: [www.readers.cofe.anglican.org/u\\_d\\_lib\\_pub/p264.pdf](http://www.readers.cofe.anglican.org/u_d_lib_pub/p264.pdf)).

These include:

- Vocation: a personal conviction, commitment and confirmation.
- Faith and mission: your personal commitment to Christ and capacity to communicate the Gospel.
- Spirituality: evidence of spiritual discipline involving individual, corporate prayer and worship sustaining everyday life.
- Relationships and personality: a person of integrity sufficiently mature to sustain the demands of a minister, relationships, change and pressure in a flexible way and able to develop personal and pastoral relationships.
- Potential for training: capable of undertaking a course of study and ministerial preparation with an open and enquiring mind.

The Central Readers' Council is dedicated to serving the ministry of Readers in the British Isles and Europe.



## For more information

For general enquiries about new Readers and their initial or ongoing training please contact:

Ruth Dennigan  
Discipleship and Ministry Development Officer  
[ruth.dennigan@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:ruth.dennigan@cofesuffolk.org)  
Phone: 07468 474252

To register an interest or for further enquiries regarding discernment please contact:

Mrs Barbara Hill  
Deputy Warden of Readers  
[deputywarden.readers@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:deputywarden.readers@cofesuffolk.org)

For administrative matters (for example, applications, CMD allowance) please contact:

Mrs Lesley Steed  
Mission and Ministry Team Senior Administrator  
[lesley.steed@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:lesley.steed@cofesuffolk.org)  
Phone: 01473 298510

The logo for 'Growing in God' features the words 'Growing in God' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. A small green sprout with two leaves is positioned above the letter 'o' in 'Growing'.

Produced by Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich  
Updated October 2019.