



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich

Exploring your ministry

All Christians are called to use their gifts to serve God and others in the name of Christ. Some do this through authorised ministries that serve the ministry and mission of the whole church and work collaboratively at all levels.

God creates each of us for a purpose and gives us a unique place in the world. Christians describe this as our calling or 'vocation'. Vocation is about the whole of human life, not just what we do in church.

Discovering what God is calling us to be and to do is a life-long process, as we grow individually and the needs around us change. We have a variety of different roles in the Diocese and this leaflet outlines all of them.

With prayer, reflection and conversations with your parish priest and friends you will be able to find a ministry that suits you.



Children's and Families' Ministers

Family Ministry is the intentional building of relationships between church congregations (expressed in a variety of ways) and families within the local community. It is also a Ministry that enables parents to be the primary disciple-makers of their children.

A Children's and Families' Minister will already be working alongside their church and community with toddler groups, children's clubs, Messy Church, Baptism families, with young people in church or exploring their journey, or similar.

Many work as part of a Ministry team (including Readers, Elders, Pioneers, Evangelists and Youth Ministers) and are supported by the Incumbent.

Enabling inter-generational connections is a focus of any activity, and Children's and Families' Ministers will have some experience of establishing creative ways to engage.

Elders

Lay Elders began in our Diocese in the late 1960s as a pioneering experiment in lay ministry in a North Suffolk Deanery. Their ministry was developed and expanded so that by now there are nearly 500 Elders, spread across the whole Diocese.

Elders are chosen by the local Church and authorised by the Diocesan Bishop for ministry in the local Church and community. They work mainly in the area of pastoral care and/or leading worship.

Their Commissioning takes place at any appropriate date in their parish Church. They serve initially for a maximum of three years and may be re-commissioned for further periods of up to three years.

Evangelists

Evangelists are people who have a passion for sharing faith with those outside the church and are also encouragers and enablers for those within the church to do likewise.

An Evangelist will work from within a church base, either a traditional church or a Fresh Expression of church, working as part of a ministry team that may

include Readers, Elders, Pioneers, Youth and Children's and Families' Ministers.

Evangelists are one of the primary Biblical ministries and have been recognised within the Church of England for many years. Many dioceses have Evangelists, in parish volunteer settings or in stipendiary ministry in partnership with Church Army.

We are not looking for a new Billy Graham or a street preacher! But you are probably already someone who can speak about your faith to those outside the church and want others to do the same. An Evangelist will be someone wanting to see people come to faith in Jesus Christ and become part of wider Church.

Evangelists may not always seem to fit, yet have a love for the whole of the Church and want to see it grow.



Ordained Ministers

Priests and Deacons are called to represent the church in the wider world. They lead the church's mission and ministry through worship and prayer, preaching and teaching, community engagement and pastoral work.

Some are parish-based, while others serve in schools, hospitals, prisons and elsewhere as chaplains.

Some ordained ministers are self-supporting and serve locally, and some are stipendiary.

Clergy who are paid via a stipend receive a package of benefits that enable them and their families to undertake a commitment to their church and its community.



If you are interested in becoming a priest, the first step is to talk to your vicar or equivalent, or to the Diocesan Director of Ordinands (DDO) or a member of his team. If your call seems to point clearly towards ordained ministry, you will start working with diocesan staff.

This part of the process is one of preparation and formation, and can therefore take a long time. It is rarely less than a year.

Time spent discerning your vocation is a time of personal growth. You will be increasing in self-awareness, developing a disciplined prayer-life and building your knowledge.

Self-Supporting Ministers' (SSM) main duties are broadly similar to stipendiary clergy: to reconcile the divided, heal the broken, and restore the lost, but they choose to exercise their ministry without being paid a stipend.

People choose SSM because they already have a full-time job in another profession, or they choose to be more flexible in their lifestyle, for example they may work shorter hours for the church than a full-time minister might do. For some of them this means that their parish is their place of work, for others it is where they live. Some are only licensed to a particular benefice or deanery while others are deployable by the Bishop wherever their skills might be needed most.

"I have always enjoyed engaging with people and the local community and my appointment (as an SSM) has enabled me to expand the privilege of serving others in a variety of church and secular settings together with learning more about myself and the love of God through Jesus Christ for all people." - Mike Birt

The pathway to ordination is the same for all clergy, and involves a discernment process which usually begins within your own congregation and conversations with your own priest.

We will work with you to identify what type of ministry is right for your unique gifts and talents. This process of discernment may take from one to three years. Once agreed on a path towards ordination you can train at a theological education institution or through our Bishops' Auxiliary Ordination Pathway (AOP).

Distinctive Deacons

Do you believe God is calling you to serve as distinctive deacon? To be become a deacon you must first be ordained, having been through the process of discernment with the DDO's team. A deacon's ministry is marked

by mission through service. Deacons are outward moving and community minded.

Deacons prefer to be out and about, building relationships, identifying and meeting needs, and creating stepping-stones between God and the world. Deacons are radical in their outlook and ready to try new ways of serving God in the community – they have a particular concern for poverty and justice, seeking to be the voice of the voiceless, advocating for those on the margins, and loving those in need.



As ambassadors, deacons take the gospel into the community, bringing its needs back to the church for intercession and practical action. Deacons read the Gospel, assist the priest, encourage intercession, and send out the congregation, going with them as we all play our part in God's mission.

Lay Pastors

Lay Pastors are called to:

- Challenge the Church to care for the world as Christ does
- Undertake specific tasks of pastoral care
- Enable the church to express Christ's ministry of healing
- Use different liturgical forms in support of this work

The ministry of Lay Pastor is currently under review by the Lay Ministries Council with a view to offering training again in this highly valued vocation.

Lightwave Leaders

Facilitate, guide and care for groups who pray, study the Bible and see themselves on mission with Jesus as a group. The group may form a core team for a fresh expression of Church for those new to faith. Training for leaders is undertaken via a six-session course covering values, vision, leadership skills, healthy small groups, all involved and growth. Ongoing coaching and support is offered to each leader and further training will be signposted as needed, for example, the mission shaped ministry course (Central or Flexi). Lightwave leaders are normally commissioned by one of the Bishops in the Cathedral.

Pioneers

Pioneer is a new licensed ministry in the Diocese affirming the pioneering ministry of leading teams that develop Fresh Expressions of Church for the 95% of people who are not a regular part of a local church.



Since 2004 the Church of England, in partnership with other denominations, has witnessed the growth of a wide variety of forms of church; for example, Messy Church and Café Church.

"We continue to look for opportunities to shape a community of people toward serving each other and the wider community, intentionally influenced with the love of Jesus." - Diane Grano

Pioneers are people called by God who are the first to see and creatively respond to the Holy Spirit's initiatives with those outside the church; gathering others around them as they seek to establish new contextual Christian community. They combine the ability to see a new future with the skills and gifts to make the future accessible now.

Readers

Reader Ministry is a nationally recognised lay ministry which makes a vital contribution to the ministry of the Church. They 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.

"Over 15 years, God has given me a varied ministry: taking services, preaching, teaching, extended communion, baptism, confirmation preparation and pastoral care. Sustained through God's grace!" - Ian Levett

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.

Youth Ministers

Youth Ministers are a new Licensed Lay Ministry in our Diocese who will lead and work as part of teams working with 11-18+ year olds in our Diocese - to develop those young people personally, socially and spiritually.

"Youth ministry is about participating deeply in young peoples' lives as we await together, in suffering and joy, the coming of God in our lives." - Andrew Root



Youth Ministers are those people who can see not just the future potential in young people, but the God-given advantages and skills that young people have now. Youth Ministers want to help young people see and investigate their own qualities in light of their relationship with God for themselves and in community with the wider church family.

For more information

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Alternatively, you may also email the following people regarding each ministry:

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Growing in God

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