

FUNERAL MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Good funeral ministry matters to people. Bereaved people know that a funeral service is of fundamental importance, but often the purpose and meaning of the ceremony is unclear to them, and they don't understand the nature of the church's involvement.

Good funeral ministry will help people reflect on their own funeral wishes, balance tradition and formality with warmth and accessibility, helping to anchor the relevance of the church into people's everyday lives, being seen as people to trust – both by bereaved families and by funeral directors.

Good funeral ministry demonstrates the love and care of Christ to bereaved families and friends, supporting them in their immediate grief, and in the months and years which follow.



Might God be calling you to
Lay Funeral Ministry

For more information about Lay Funeral Ministry
please contact: training@rochester.anglican.org



The Church of England has been helping people to mark the end of lives for many generations.

The funeral itself is a very significant event for a bereaved family, and planning it sometimes prompts big questions about life and death.

After the funeral, when life returns to normal for the rest of the world, the bereaved family may need opportunities to talk about their loved one, and to remember him/her with others.

Bereavement and funeral ministry is part of the work of many clergy, but there are trained lay people who are licensed by the Bishop for this ministry too.

Some of them are already Licensed Lay Ministers or Readers in the CofE, but if you think that supporting people at this difficult time is something God might be calling you to, it is now possible to train as a Lay Funeral Minister in Rochester Diocese.



Edith Wills, Pastoral Assistant from St Stephen's, Tonbridge (with Archdeacon of Tonbridge, the Ven Julie Conalty). First Lay Minister permitted to take funerals in the Diocese of Rochester.

Lay Funeral Ministers will be expected to do the Bishop's Certificate course in Christian Ministry, over five terms at the St Benedict's Centre at West Malling. At the end of the first year there will be the opportunity for students to Candidate for Lay Funeral Ministry as an alternative option to training for Licensed Lay Ministry.

Candidates will take part in a selection process, and the approval of their own incumbent will also be expected.

Selection for Lay Funeral Ministry will also be open to those people who have already successfully completed the Bishop's Certificate, or who are experienced Pastoral Assistants or Evangelists.

After successful completion of the Funerals and Bereavement training module, a Lay Funeral Minister will be licensed specifically as a Volunteer Lay Funeral Minister, but with a Licensed Lay Worker License.

The new Lay Funeral Minister will be licensed initially for a year, followed by a review, then their licence will be renewable for 5 years.

Bereaved families are at a very vulnerable point and the Bishop's Licence (like a Diocesan Kitemark) is a reassurance that they can trust the minister to have been trained and nominated, and have the backing of the Diocese.

Lay Funeral Ministers will usually be licensed to their own parish and we would anticipate that will primarily take funerals for that parish, but they could be available for other funerals in the deanery.

[The regulations about expenses not payments for funerals will apply to Lay Funeral Ministers in the same way that they do for Readers and LLMs.]