

Ordained Ministry

At the service for the Ordination of Priests the Bishop reminds us that we are all part of a royal priesthood by virtue of our baptism. God has called some to serve this royal priesthood through ordained ministry. Within ordained ministry there are three orders of Deacon, Priest and Bishop.

Deacons

Are a reminder to the Church of the call to service, both within the Church and in the wider community. Christ is the pattern of their calling and their commission; as he washed the feet of his disciples, so they must wash the feet of others. A deacon assists the priest in the ministry of Word and Sacrament: they lead worship, preach, teach, visit the sick, conduct baptisms and funerals. Deacons are generally ordained priests at the end of one year, although some may feel called to remain lifelong distinctive deacons.

Priests

Priests are ministers of Word and Sacrament. It is a ministry of leadership and mission, encouraging all Christian people to realise their potential and gifts. They fulfil the same duties as the deacon and, in addition, are given the authority at ordination to declare God's forgiveness of sins and to preside at the celebration of Holy Communion.

Bishops

Bishops have oversight of the Church in geographical areas called Dioceses. They have the responsibility of maintaining the unity of the church and guarding its faith. They ordain new deacons and priests and support and guide them in their ministry

Forms of Ordained Ministry in the Diocese of Lichfield

Within the Diocese of Lichfield candidates are able to offer for selection and training for ordained ministry under a number of categories:

Ministry with Incumbent Responsibilities

This would be a candidate who has the potential to exercise ministry as an incumbent. The candidate could be widely deployable within the diocese and, if he or she moved from the diocese, could be readily deployable in another diocese. Such a person would most usually serve in a stipendiary capacity.

The majority of stipendiary priests serve in parishes, others serve in various forms of chaplaincy or as sector ministers.

An Assistant Ministry

This would be a candidate who it was discerned would be unlikely to exercise ministry at incumbent level but would rather be in a supportive ministry. The candidate could be widely deployable within the diocese and, if he or she moved from the diocese, could be readily deployable in another diocese. Such a person most usually serves in a non-stipendiary (self-supporting) capacity.

The Church of England distinguishes between the parish focus and the work focus of self-supporting ministry:

1. **Parish Focus:** Within the Diocese of Lichfield, SSMs are deployed in parishes on a flexible basis. Some may continue to serve in the parishes where they worshipped prior to being ordained. More usually they are deployed within commuting distance of their homes. Both the individual's ministerial development and the needs of parishes are taken into account in decisions about where an SSM should serve.

The fact that SSMs can be deployed *flexibly according to need* makes them a particularly strategic resource.

2. **Work Focus:** Whilst all SSMs are licensed to parishes, many are also involved in secular employment. For some SSMs, their work can be the primary focus of their ministry. This is where there is a clear and defined ministry in their workplace, which would normally be negotiated and agreed with their employer.

The Church of England calls this form of ministry *Ordained Ministry in Secular Employment* (MSE) and defines it as *a pastoral ministry amongst colleagues and a prophetic ministry to structures*. MSEs also have an important role (alongside experienced laity, Readers, etc.) in encouraging others within the Christian community in their secular discipleship.

Permanent Deacon

Permanent Deacons are those who feel called to a permanent diaconal ministry. It is a ministry that has three distinct foci:

Within church – principally pastoral, catechetical and liturgical;
Within the community - Bringing the pastoral ministry of the church to those in need, the forgotten and the marginalised;
On the Boundary – presenting the world to the church and the church to the world.

Chaplaincy

While nearly all ordained ministers begin their ministry in a parish on completion of a curacy some may move in to specialist ministry as chaplains to hospitals, prisons, schools, universities and colleges, industry or the armed services.

Ordained Pioneer Ministry

Some candidates for ordained ministers feel called to 'fresh expressions' of church, working in pioneering ways which are complementary to traditional parish structures. An OPM would normally have a track record and experience of leading or involvement in a fresh expression of church.

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