

Licensed Lay Ministers – What are they?

LLMs (formerly called ‘Readers’) are lay people who come from all walks of life, licensed by the bishop to a teaching and preaching ministry. LLMs often have a role in equipping other Christians to grow as disciples in their daily lives. They work together with ordained and lay colleagues, usually serving within a ministry team.

They are –

‘Licensed’



LLMs at the 2016 Licensing Service

LLMs are the only nationally licensed and internationally recognised lay ministers in the Anglican Communion whose licenses are transferable between dioceses.

- They complete a rigorous and nationally accredited training programme in both theology and Biblical studies. Training includes a placement at a church that is different from the student’s home church, and it happens alongside others whose shared journey is itself an essential part of the training.
- On account of this training, LLMs are formally authorised, licensed by the Bishop and accountable to their incumbents.

‘Lay’

An LLM is specifically called to serve the Church as a lay person; ‘lay’ means that the calling is not to a sacramental ministry.

- While historically the office of Reader was designed to serve the local church, e.g. in preaching, teaching and leading worship, today the LLM’s position as being licensed *and* lay provides an opportunity for the Reader to be a bridge between the worlds of church and ‘outside’, especially as new forms of church develop and take place outside the traditional confines of church.
- An LLM’s ministry is exercised within a parish, having roots in a particular faith community, and contributes to the community’s spiritual life through his/her theological training but also enriched by the secular world.
- An important aspect of the distinctiveness of Licensed Lay ministry is seen in its being exercised not only within the congregation and the parish, but in many cases also in a work place or wider community.



Geoff Andrews volunteers as a Street Angel in Camberley

'Ministry'

LLMs are called to serve the church as a whole and its parts, e.g. by equipping the people of God for their role in the world; but by virtue of being lay, the Lay Minister has a ministry not limited to the parish – it is service to the church and beyond.

- The recognition that LLM are ministers of the church allows them more easily to be accepted into positions of trust both within and outside of the church (e.g. conducting funerals, developing and delivering courses for the Diocesan Education Centre, being a school, hospital or hospice chaplain).
- Accountability is a key distinctive element in Licensed Lay Ministry and is expressed in a system of annual and quinquennial reviews, the willingness to continue in ministerial training and development and readiness to develop/participate in new ways of ministry.

This analysis underlines why it is helpful for Readers to be known as Licensed Lay Ministers. Though the acronym LLM is cumbersome, 'Licensed Lay Minister' is a better description of their distinctive role than the simple word Reader.



Berwick Curtis serves as a Chaplain