



READER HANDBOOK

Community theologians
who teach, preach, and
enable everyday faith

MARCH 2023



DIOCESE OF TRURO
DISCOVERING GOD'S KINGDOM
GROWING THE CHURCH

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READERS/ LICENSED LAY MINISTERS (LLMs)

Readers/Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs) are women and men from a variety of backgrounds and occupations who have heard God's call.

They are theologically trained; they are communicators, story tellers and teachers who can shape the minds, hearts and souls of people and congregations around the good news of Jesus Christ, the story of Scripture and the wisdom of our tradition so that they can live out their calling as disciples in everyday life.

They are people who by their presence and words provoke the conversation, trigger and enable God talk in the midst of life, and in the midst of the wider community where they live, work and minister.

The office of Reader in the Church of England is voluntary, nationally accredited, episcopally licensed and governed by Canon Law (Canon E4-E6

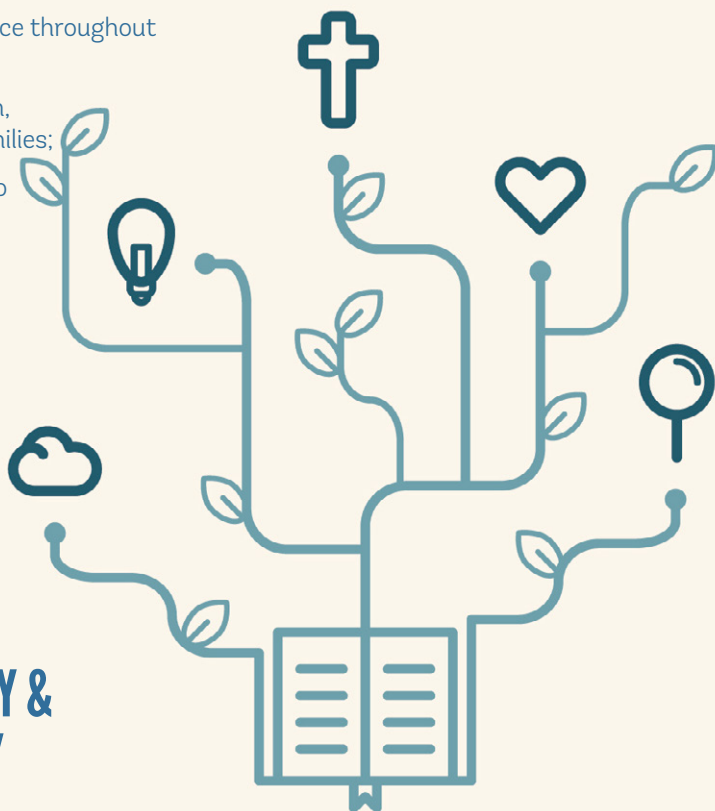
which can be found here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/legal-services/canons-church-england/section-e>)



READERS - IN THE MIDST OF LIFE

Readers are involved with:

- Preaching and teaching;
- Leading God's people in worship;
- Helping people to follow Jesus;
- Being a caring presence throughout people's lives;
- Working with children, young people and families;
- Supporting those who are lonely, elderly or bereaved;
- Providing Chaplaincy within a work place, school or college;
- Offering prayer and spiritual direction;
- Presiding at funerals and cremations.



ACCOUNTABILITY & RESPONSIBILITY

Licensed Lay Ministry is a vocation before God and carries significant responsibilities of service to the people of God in a local context. Readers/ Licensed Lay Ministers are member of their benefice team of lay and ordained ministers, led by the Incumbent or Priest-in-Charge.

Readers are accountable to their Incumbent, and as such the relationship

between the Reader/LLM and their Incumbent/Priest-in-Charge is an important one based on trust and openness.

LLMs are required to adhere to all policies and practices agreed by the team/benefice with special regard to the promotion of safeguarding and safeguarding training.

SENSING A CALL TO READER MINISTRY?

Those who sense a call to Reader Ministry should first speak to their Incumbent for assistance in discerning whether this is a call from God.

Calls can also come in other ways, for example someone else suggests that they might consider training for Reader ministry. Alternatively they may have been encouraged through participation in the Foundations in Christian Ministry course.

Informal conversations with the incumbent, the Diocesan Chaplain to Readers, another Reader, or the Licensed Ministry Officer responsible for Reader Ministry may also assist in the discernment process.

Most people will be encouraged to attend the **Foundations in Christian Ministry Course** here: <https://trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/ministry/foundations/> if they have not done so already.

The Foundations Course provides an introduction to the Bible and Theology, Pastoral Care and Spirituality, working with small groups and Ministry for Mission, and runs over a period of about nine months.

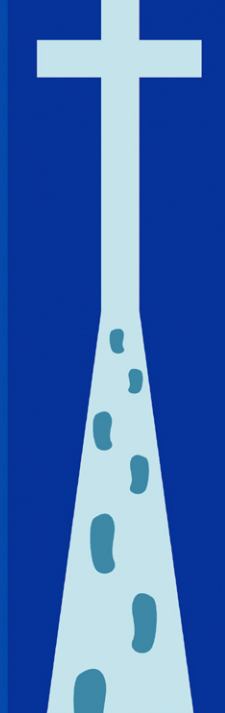
Towards the end of the Foundations course, those continuing to discern a call to Reader ministry meet with the Deputy Warden of Readers for a more formal vocational conversation, and are then invited to complete an **Application Form**, including providing the names for two referees (one of which will be their Incumbent), and confirmation that the relevant PCC(s) support their application.

Applicants to train for Reader Ministry must satisfy the following criteria:

- be baptised, and episcopally confirmed
- be regular communicants of the Church of England
- be familiar with its traditions and practices.

Candidates are invited to attend a Reader Selection Conference which includes:

- Completing a task e.g. tell a story to illustrate a talk for all-age worship
- Lunch and conversation with the Warden's Group
- An interview of 45-60 minutes with the Interview panel (usually the Warden & Deputy Warden, the Chaplain and the Licensed Ministry Officer).



The Selection Conference is not a competitive process, rather it is designed to enable the panel to assess the following aspects of each of the candidates:

- vocation and faith
- spirituality and worship
- personality and character
- relationships
- attitude to safeguarding
- potential for training.

Candidates are informed of the outcome on the day which may be to go forward to train, or to postpone with tasks to fulfil or with advice on where and how else they might explore their vocation.

Appropriate pastoral care is provided for those candidates who are not recommended for Reader training.

TRAINING FOR READERS/ LLMs

Following the completion of the Foundations in Christian Ministry course, the usual pattern of training is:

- 2 years Certificate course with **SWMTC** here: <https://swmtc.org.uk/study/training-for-readers/studying-with-theordinands>, including
- Residential weekends at Plymouth MARJON University
- Weekly study groups in Truro
- Written tasks to be submitted electronically.

- A post licensing year including:

- A practical skills programme based on participants' development needs
- A mentor
- A reflective journal

At the end of the post licensing year there will be a review to decide whether the Reader should be licensed for a further three years.





LICENSING & RE-LICENSING

Following the initial one year license for new Readers, all Readers/LLMs (regardless of age) are licensed for a period of three (3) years, in line with the date of their three yearly Enhanced DBS disclosure.

Requirements for Licensing and Re-Licensing

To be licensed or re-licensed all Readers are required to have:

- A current Working Agreement, developed with their incumbent or equivalent using the diocesan template here: <https://trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/ministry/lay-ministry-readers/readers/resources-readers/> (This is to help clarify the roles and responsibilities of Readers, encourage good communication between Readers and clergy and provide a regular space for

discernment and discussion.)

- A Disclosure and Barring System (DBS) enhanced check.
- Renewal of Safeguarding to 'Leadership Level' (Three yearly)
- A minuted PCC motion of sponsorship from the parish or Benefice in which the Reader is based
- The support of the incumbent.

The Request for Renewal of License form is here: <https://trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/ministry/lay-ministry-readers/readers/resources-readers/>

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding is a foundation of church life and is part of our commitment to a culture in which everyone is welcome and safe. Safeguarding is an integral part of ministry and a basis for good discipleship.



As leaders in the church, Readers actively seek the knowledge and skills to keep God's people safe, and also have a key role in encouraging others in their church and community to do likewise.

All Readers are expected to renew their Safeguarding Leadership training every three years and when involved in recruitment of volunteers in church to complete the online safer recruitment training. Along with ordained ministers they must also do the **"Domestic Violence" course** here: <https://trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/safeguarding/training-safeguarding/>

Readers themselves may be vulnerable adults, or become vulnerable to harm for a variety of reasons, including:

- Being a victim or survivor of abuse
- Lone working
- Concern for a parishioner or their incumbent
- Someone disclosing abuse in conversation.

The Chaplain's team is committed to supporting Readers and ensuring good safeguarding practice to keep everyone safe.

WORKING AGREEMENTS

Readers are required to have a written **Working Agreement** with their incumbent or minister which details the Reader's duties, taking into account:

- the particular focus of the individual's ministry;
- the role of the Reader in the local ministerial team and in relation to the PCC;
- the balance between their commitments as a Reader and the requirements of their family, work and leisure;
- the arrangements for reimbursement of expenses incurred through performance of their duties.
- the arrangements for regular meetings between Reader, clergy and other staff.

The agreement should be regularly reviewed by Reader and incumbent together, normally once a year, and at the time of the renewal of licence (every three years).

A suggested review process is here:
<https://trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/ministry/lay-ministry-readers/readers/resources-readers/>

Readers should keep a record of services led, sermons preached, training attended

and other ministry exercised, and, when requested, report to the Warden's Team.

As a matter of courtesy Readers should consult their incumbent before accepting engagements outside their own parish or benefice.

Readers are not automatically ex officio members of the PCC; each parish should decide (at an Annual Parochial Church Meeting) its policy for Readers as regards membership of the PCC. Readers may be ex officio or co-opted members (or, where there are several Readers one or two may represent the others) or may be elected by the APCM as one of the parochial representatives.

The usual dress of Readers for liturgical duties is cassock, surplice, hood of degree (where appropriate) and plain blue scarf. However, a cassock alb may be worn at Holy Communion (if this is the custom of the parish), and in some circumstances (for example less formal acts of worship) robes need not be worn. If unsure of local practice, Readers should seek advice from the Incumbent or Churchwarden.

Deaneries are encouraged to invite Readers to chapter meetings unless the nature of the subject matter under discussion means that it is inappropriate for them to attend.



Public worship with Communion by Extension

In June 2021, the Bishop of Truro announced that he would permit Public Worship with Communion by Extension in certain circumstances and a **Policy and Procedure document** was published here: <https://trurodiocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/CbE-in-DoT-policy.pdf>

Readers may preside at a Service of Public Worship with Communion by Extension, provided that the Policy and Procedure has been followed and the written permission of the Bishop of Truro obtained.



FINANCE

Readers are voluntary unpaid ministers and do not accept fees for their services.

Readers should be reimbursed for travelling and other expenses incurred through the performance of their duties.

In the case of expenses relating to duties undertaken in the parish where the Reader is licensed, arrangements for their payment should be clearly indicated in the Working Agreement as detailed above. Mileage should be paid by the parish at the diocesan rate.

In the case of expenses incurred through serving elsewhere, the parish using the

services of Readers should ensure that they are fully reimbursed.

When Readers conduct a funeral, they may receive 80% of the proportion of the funeral fee payable to the Diocesan Board of Finance (TDBF). Those who receive reimbursement from fees will be expected to declare this income to HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC).

CONTINUING MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT

As ministers of the gospel, which invites us into a life-long discipleship journey, Readers continue to learn and develop their skills throughout their ministry.

Readers are invited to Bishops' Study Days and the Diocesan CMD programme. More information about the current programme is available here: <https://trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/ministry/cmd/>

Readers are also encouraged to identify learning needs during regular review conversations with their Incumbent, and should inform the Diocesan Ministry Team who will seek to meet the need.

The Annual Diocesan Readers' Day is an important opportunity for Readers to meet together and to explore new developments within the diocese or within Reader ministry generally.

Readers are automatically included on the mailing lists for **Ministry Matters** here: <https://trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/ministry/ministry-matters/> and Worship Matters, but can decide not to receive these publications.

Transforming Ministry here: <https://transformingministry.co.uk/> is the quarterly magazine for Readers/LLMs published by the Central Readers' Council. It features a wealth of articles about the rich diversity of Reader ministry across the Church of England, and is available in print and/or electronic format.

READER EMERITUS

Readers who choose not renew their licenses for any reason are identified as Reader Emeritus and will remain on the Diocesan CMS Database system. They will be sent occasional emails, including details of the annual reader service.

Should Readers Emeritus decide to resume their reader duties they will need to be re-licensed and follow the procedure outlined previously.



COMMUNICATIONS

Readers are expected to be computer-literate, to use email and to be able to use online resources such as ZOOM.

Readers are included in the Truro Diocese Directory subject to GDPR regulations, and can indicate the amount of information about them on the diocesan website (e.g. name only etc.)

Communications from Church House will usually be via email and the Chaplain to Readers also sends regular communications.

The chaplain's website is www.readers-chaplain.org.uk

RELATIONSHIP ISSUES

The relationship between the Reader/LLM and their Incumbent/Priest-in-Charge is an important one based on trust and openness, however, sometimes things go wrong and the relationship is damaged or breaks down completely.

In this situation, the following procedure should be adhered to:

- The Incumbent or Reader should seek to involve the advice and mediation of the Churchwardens, representing the PCC.
- The Reader should approach the Local Reader Chaplain, the Chaplain to the Readers, or the Deputy Warden to Readers who will advise, mediate and keep the Warden informed.
- If difficulties persist the Incumbent, Reader and Warden (or Deputy Warden) should meet in order to try to resolve the difficulties and find ways forward.
- In some circumstances it is necessary to involve an independent, qualified Mediator. In this situation, the Head of Ministry should be approached to make the arrangements.
- If prayerful and committed attempts at reconciliation fail, then the Warden and the Rural Dean should arrange to transfer the Reader to another parish.

CARE FOR READERS

The Chaplain to Readers, provides direct support and pastoral care to Readers when needed. He can be contacted [here](#).

He works with a team of local Reader Chaplains to share responsibility for the pastoral care of Readers, to discuss

issues relating to the wellbeing and care of individual Readers and to provide a forum for support, mutual learning and discussion for those providing pastoral care to Readers.

THE WARDEN OF READERS TEAM

The Rt Revd Hugh Nelson, the Bishop of St Germans is the Warden of Readers for the Diocese of Truro. He, in partnership with the Warden's Team, has responsibility for leadership and oversight of Reader ministry.

The Warden's Team meets four times a year and is responsible for:

- ensuring Reader ministry is embedded in the life and ministry of the diocese;
- considering issues relating to the wellbeing of Readers;
- considering issues relating to the relationship between clergy and Readers, and between Readers and others in recognised lay ministries;
- overseeing the planning of Reader events (Annual Reader Day and the Annual Service celebrating Reader ministry).

The membership of the team includes:

- The Warden to Readers
- The Deputy Warden to Readers
- The Chaplain to Readers
- Reader Minutes Secretary
- Reader Events Coordinator
- Licensed Ministry Officer
- The Head of Ministry & the Ministry Programmes Coordinator attend as necessary

DEPLOYMENT & TRANSFERS

In appropriate circumstances Readers may be seconded or redeployed to new areas of ministry either in a different parish or parishes or to a specialised (sector) ministry.

It is good practice for Readers who are moving to a new area or diocese to contact the Warden concerned as soon as possible and to discuss where they might most usefully be deployed.

When Readers move to another parish or place within the diocese of Truro, they should inform the Warden. After a sufficient period, normally of six months, the incumbent of the parish or minister in charge of the place where the Reader worships, in consultation with the Reader and with the agreement of the PCC, should contact the Warden to ask that the Reader's licence be transferred, or a new licence prepared.

When Readers move to another diocese the following procedure should be followed:

- The Reader notifies the Warden of the move to another diocese, in advance if possible.

- On arrival in the new diocese, the Reader should contact the incumbent or minister in charge of the parish where s/he intends to worship regularly.
- After the Reader has worshipped at the new location for a sufficient period, normally six months, the incumbent or minister should apply to the Warden of the diocese, in consultation with the Reader and with the agreement of the PCC to ask that the Reader be licensed.
- The Warden of the diocese to which the Reader has moved should contact the Warden of the diocese which the Reader has left asking if the Reader is in good standing or if there is any reason why a new licence should not be given.



A PRAYER

God our Father,
We offer our lives to do your work
in your Church and in the world.
Help us by your Holy Spirit
to hear more clearly your call to
deeper commitment
to your service,
and give us grace to respond with
gladness:
For the glory of Christ our Lord,
Amen.



CONTACT US

For more information about Reader/
Licensed Lay Ministry training, please
contact:

Dr John Ievins

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The Rt Revd Hugh Nelson

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Revd Canon Paul Arthur

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