**Is God calling you to be a**

**Licensed Lay Minister (Reader)**

**in Portsmouth Diocese?**





**What is an LLM (Reader)?**

Around the Church of England, authorised lay ministers are sometimes known as LLMs, sometimes Readers, sometimes both! In this document we refer to them as LLMs. Modern authorised lay ministry began in 1866 and there are now over 10,000 LLMs in the Church of England. They are trained and authorised to national standards, and once licensed can minister within their own team or benefice, or with permission, in the wider diocese. It is one of the few ministries in the Church of England, which is voluntary, nationally accredited, episcopally licensed and governed by canon.

LLMs are lay people, from all walks of life, who are called by God, theologically trained and licensed by the Church to preach, teach, lead worship and assist in pastoral, evangelistic and liturgical work. Although nationally authorised, the scope of ministry and roles undertaken by LLMs differs across the dioceses. Additionally, each diocese provides its own programme of initial and continued training, which are moderated nationally to ensure consistency in preparing LLMs for their office, supporting them and helping to keep them up to date.

**What do LLM (Readers) do?**

The ministry of an LLM is focused on supporting the work of the mission of parishes in preaching, teaching, and leading or assisting in the public worship in church. However, an individual’s ministry will be influenced by the local pastoral and educational needs. They can be involved in schools, in study and prayer groups, parish visiting, baptism and confirmation preparation, as well as conducting funerals and caring for the bereaved. Many are now finding fresh opportunities for mission, ministry and witness in their workplace and in the wider community, including chaplaincy roles and work with voluntary organisations. LLMs do not preside at the Eucharist or officiate at baptisms or weddings. When robed, they can be distinguished from their ordained colleagues by their distinctive blue scarf.

**What Qualities are needed?**

There are several qualities that candidates need to inhabit. These are:

**Love for God** The candidate is reliant on God, and lives out an infectious, life-transforming, everyday- focussed faith. Is rooted in Scripture, prayer the worship of the Church and wholeheartedly engages with God’s world.

**Call to Ministry** The candidate responds to the call of Christ to be a disciple. Understands and is excited by the nature of LLM (Reader) ministry and is committed to public ministry rooted in God’s world.

**Love for People** The candidate welcomes Christ in others and follows Jesus’ example in listening, valuing and respecting others. Builds healthy relationships, is self-aware and seeks to serve their community.

**Wisdom** The candidate is open to life-long learning, reflection and growth. Can work collaboratively and embrace difference. Is a person of integrity and emotional stability, open to feedback.

**Fruitfulness** The candidate shares God’s story in a way that encourages others to follow Jesus’ call in their lives. Can share their faith imaginatively, relevantly and well.

**Potential** The candidate has potential to grow in faith and to be open to navigating the future in the company of Christ. Can lead collaboratively as part of a local team, seeing where God is working in the world and spot opportunities to respond. Is adaptable, imaginative and creative.

**What training is required?**

From 2023 recommended candidates for LLM ministry will train on a two-year course of study at Sarum College in Salisbury leading to a 120 credit certificate. Students study at home and have a one-hour weekly, online tutorial. Four residential weekends take place at Sarum College and there will also be a monthly local gathering hosted by our own diocesan staff. Students are rooted in their own sending churches, where they integrate their study and training with the reality of belonging to a local congregation. This gives students greater range and depth in their spiritual formation for ministry.

As well as the strong bonds formed with fellow LLMs from across the region, students will also be training alongside ordinands, adding a rich diversity to the student body. Connecting with these diverse networks of people will help build an appreciation of distinct vocations and will prepare all students for collaborative ministry in the future.

**Could it be you?**

If you feel a desire to help others deepen their Christian faith through public preaching and teaching along with providing pastoral care to people wherever you are, then God may be calling you to Licensed Lay Ministry. To be an LLM (Reader), you will need to the support of your incumbent and PCC, meet with members of the diocesan vocations team who will help in discerning a call and finally be recommended for training at a Diocesan LLM Selection Panel. Your training will build on the qualifications, skills and life experiences you already have and enable you to relate these to the Gospel message, helping others to do the same.

**What can I do next?**

**PRAY** Ask God in prayer how you may become all that he intends you to be and how best you may serve him. Listen for his leading.

**THINK** Reflect on your gifts, talents and enthusiasms. Are you able to engage with people and share your faith? Do you enjoy reflecting on Scripture and sharing what you learn with others? Do you enjoy teaching? Does the idea of leading God’s people in worship excite you? Are you someone with caring skills and a willingness to support others?

**READ** There are some excellent books on vocation generally and LLM/Reader Ministry in particular, three helpful publications are mentioned below. Visit the National Reader website [www.transformingministry.co.uk](http://www.transformingministry.co.uk)

**TALK** Firstly, talk to your parish priest or chaplain who will be able to advise you and be a sounding board. Talk to another LLM (Reader) so you can get an idea about the practicalities of training and ministry.

**MAKE CONTACT** You are also welcome to contact Canon Peter Hall, our Diocesan Director of Vocations and Ordinands with responsibility for LLM (Reader) selection, for a general conversation about calling, vocation and training. peter.hall@portsmouth.anglican.org or 02392-210283

**Useful Books**

***God Calls Everyone*** by Derek Walmsley (Authentic Media 2020)

***Reader Ministry Explored*** by Cathy Rowling & Paula Gooder (SPCK 2009)

***Exploring Missional Reader Ministry*** by Liz Shercliff (Grove Books 2018)