

ST ALBANS DIOCESAN SYNOD

19 OCTOBER 2019

Proposed Restructuring of Lay Training

The purpose of this proposal is to enable the provision of lay training that is accessible and relevant both to the needs of the diocesan strategy of *Living God's Love* and also to the life circumstances of lay people.

Why are we changing the training?

- There is a risk that by not offering training in the essentials of Christian discipleship and ministry, we are failing to build up the confidence and skills of those who might otherwise be of service to the mission and ministry of the Church;
- There is a risk that by not drawing on the full range of gifts of lay people, and by training people in only a partial range of ministries, we are limiting our capacity to deliver the three strands of *Living God's Love*;
- There is a risk that by making the training requirements for ministry – especially Reader ministry – too demanding, that we are drawing in to ministry only a narrow range of people; and
- There is a risk that by not equipping people for Pioneer Ministry, we are limiting our ability to reach new people with the gospel.
- Currently, the relatively short period of discernment for Reader ministry can mean that prospective candidates have not had sufficient time to discern their calling to Reader ministry. Likewise, as a Diocese we may not have had sufficient time to make an assessment of the candidate's suitability, which could inform the selection panel.

What are we hoping the new training will achieve?

We are aiming for:

- Parity between pioneer and other lay training pathways
- An improved discernment process for Reader ministry
- A Reader training course that is more accessible to more people
- More people from more diverse backgrounds receiving training that equips them for a wider range of ministries. This includes:

- a. Those interested in reaching new people with the gospel in new ways
- b. Time poor people, who can't regularly commit to face to face training but could access the more flexible arrangements of the new courses
- c. Those without a university education who may be less daunted by non-accredited training

What form will the new training take?

Under this proposal there would be 2 new 1 year non-accredited courses. Both would be standalone courses that would lead to commissioned ministry in the local benefice. Both would also act as a prerequisite year for Reader training (although this prerequisite year could be bypassed for reasons of prior theological qualification, significant previous ministerial experience, or age). Those enrolled on the training would have access to a Vocations Adviser throughout to enable them to discern whether God is calling them to commissioned, Reader or ordained ministry. The 2 new courses are as follows:

- a. New course to be delivered by the Eastern Region Ministry Course (ERMC), with the delivery mode being predominantly online with 4 gathered sessions across the year. There would be 3 modules (1 per term): Reading the Bible; Christian Beliefs and Living; Practical Ministry which involves a choice of one of 3 areas of focus each relating to a strand of Living God's Love, which are *Teaching the Faith* leading to commissioning as a Discipleship Enabler (Going Deeper into God), *Mission and Evangelism* leading to commissioning as a Mission Enabler (Making New Disciples), and *Community and Pastoral Care* leading to commissioning as a Pastoral Enabler (Transforming Communities). There would be 1 assignment per module.
- b. The Church Mission Society (CMS) course in Pioneer Mission would lead to commissioning as a Pioneer Enabler. This would be taught in different locations around the diocese both in all-together and small group sessions with online accessibility being offered where necessary. There would be 6 modules (1 per half term): Pioneer Mission, Reading the Bible, Doing Theology, Mission spirituality, Mission Shaped Church, Transforming Communities.

Reader training would be reduced to 2 years, by removing the non-accredited modules from the course. There would also be the availability for training as a Pioneer reader, which would include 2 bespoke pioneer modules, and a pioneering options in assignments for other modules. Pioneer readers would be those who would principally minister in fresh expressions and other pioneering contexts, whereas other Readers would principally minister in inherited forms of church.

Who will be able to do the new training?

The training will be available lay people who have the permission of their incumbent and PCC. Prospective ordinands would also be able take a module or a whole course if recommended by the vocations team in preparation for a bishop's Advisory Panel (BAP).

How is this being resourced?

- The use of external agencies (ERMC and CMS) would reduce the resource requirement upon the diocese, and therefore is manageable within existing resource structures.
- Of the training courses being offered in this proposal:
 - a. The Eastern Region Ministry Course (ERMC) have provided a quote of £12,000 per year for 25 students with a fee for additional students of £80 per term, and therefore this option has been fully costed within the Ministry Development Team 2020 and 2021 budgets
 - b. A reallocation of Pioneer training funds means that the Church Mission Society (CMS) course is also fully costed within the budget.

**The Revd Phil Bryson
Lay Ministry Officer
Weds, 25th Sept 2019**

New Lay Training Flowchart

