



CUMBRIA
CHRISTIAN
LEARNING

Growing disciples for mission

Reader Ministry

**A challenging Lay Ministry for men and women
in the Church of England**

What is a Reader?

Readers (Licensed Lay Ministers) are lay people called by God, trained by the Church, and licensed by their Bishop. They lead worship, preach and teach about Jesus and the Christian faith, and also encourage effective pastoral care and evangelistic ministry. Reader serves in a team of clergy and ministers in their parish, deanery and Mission Community.

A Reader is a theologically trained Christian, exercising a voluntary lay ministry alongside his/her job and everyday life. In church, a Reader often wears robes and a distinctive blue scarf.

The office of Reader began in its present form in 1866. Today there are around 10,000 active Readers across the Church of England - more than the number as full-time clergy. They are therefore a major, valuable & vital resource within Christ's Church.

What does a Reader do?

- preaching
- teaching
- leading worship
- assisting at Holy Communion
- pastoral work

This list is not exclusive and Readers may also be involved in many other activities such as:

- leading house groups
- teaching in various contexts
- baptism
- confirmation & marriage preparation
- school assemblies; ecumenical work
- visiting
- bereavement care
- hospital & prison chaplaincy

They may be additionally authorised to officiate at funerals and Holy Communion by Extension.

Some Readers have exercised pioneer ministries, such as planting new congregations, and creating vital bridges between the Church and their workplace or community.

Could it be you?

If you long to serve God more fully, this could be the way forward for you.

To be a Reader you must be:

- a baptised, confirmed and regular communicant member of your local Anglican church
- keen to communicate your Christian faith
- willing to train for this ministry.

To start exploring Reader Ministry

Pray that God will help you to know whether you are being called to this ministry.

Consider the demands on your life and the training involved.

Talk with your vicar or minister to explore your calling. You will need the support and agreement of your vicar and your PCC to proceed. Your parish or Mission Community will be expected to sponsor you thereafter.

Discuss your ideas and feelings with your family, friends, and other members of your church.

Contact one of Cumbria Christian Learning's Vocations Co-ordinators:

vanorth@cumbriachristianlearning.org.uk

vawest@cumbriachristianlearning.org.uk

vasouth@cumbriachristianlearning.org.uk

Your call from God will be discerned through a Diocesan selection process involving attendance at a day panel.

The Training Programme

Training is usually spread over 3 years, part-time. Most people do the “Called To Serve” foundation course followed by two years of further study with Cumbria Christian Learning. Readers often study alongside ordinands.

Carlisle diocese has its own programme of training which is moderated by the National Ministry Division of the Archbishops’ Council.

The training covers important areas such as Biblical study, Christian belief, Pastoral studies, Prayer and Worship. It is intended to develop both theological understanding and practical ministerial skills, and includes a parish placement.

Individual circumstances and prior learning will be taken into account. Your course fees will be paid by the diocese/church.

Those who successfully complete the training programme are awarded the Church of England Readers’ Certificate. This means that your ministry will be recognised in other dioceses if you move. Successful candidates would also usually gain a Certificate of Higher Education (equivalent to the first year of a degree course).

After admission and licensing Readers are expected to pursue Continuing Ministerial Development, and to be involved in their local Readers’ support networks and Diocesan Reader events.

For further information, please contact:

Carlisle Diocesan Warden of Readers, Prof. Annie Garden:

c/o Church House, 19-24 Friargate, Penrith, CA11 7XR.

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