

# Lay Ministry

THE  
DIOCESE  
OF BLACKBURN  
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN LANCASHIRE

7 VISION2026  
HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES



Opportunities  
for You in  
Blackburn Diocese



# Foreword

As we seek to build healthy churches transforming communities, it is important to acknowledge so many of those who minister in our local churches and communities are lay ministers. It is therefore vital we recognise, support and invest in a wide variety of lay ministry vocations and training as a Diocese.



I am greatly encouraged to see the implementation of the Lay Majority Ministry framework across Lancashire, and I warmly affirm all the opportunities this booklet highlights. I encourage everyone to consider how God might be calling them to use their gifts in his service to the Body of Christ.

*The Rt Revd Julian Henderson, Bishop of Blackburn*



Trainer Churchwarden  
Family Pastoral Visitor  
Funeral Minister Visitor Staff Dean  
Safeguarding Musician Pastoral Assistant Educator  
Evangelist Student Minister Healing Minister Preacher  
Mothers Union Prayer Ministry Vocational Discernment  
Worship Assistant Chaplain Church Army Evangelist  
Synod Member Communion by Extension Administrator  
Environmental Ministry LLM Diocesan staff with faith requirement  
Spiritual Director Small Group Leader Worship Facilitator  
Digital Church Chorister Parochial Church Council  
Parish Assistant Legal Worship Leader Outreach  
Focal Minister Sidesperson Community MDR Facilitator  
Welcomer Virger Verger Reader Children  
Pioneer Canon  
Youth

# The Importance of Lay Ministry in the Body of Christ

***Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.***

*1 Corinthians 12, 27*

When St Paul wrote those words, he was addressing every single member of the church in Corinth.

Not just the clergy or the Readers or the Churchwardens, but each individual. They were like a body, he told them. So they could only function properly if each played the part allotted to them by God according to their gifts.



If the Church is indeed a body, then today we are a bit of a lopsided one! Some churches have an unhealthy dependency on their priest. Some priests are wary of letting go of control to their people. Many laypeople struggle to work out how God is calling them to serve. Others are content to sit back and let others do all the work.

Vision 2026 challenges us to be 'healthy churches.' And in a healthy church, just like a healthy body, every member is playing their part. Every Christian is able to live out the baptism that unites us all by using their gifts in service for the church and for the world.

We hope that this booklet will play a part in helping more and more people in our diocese to discern the part they are being called to play. If you are an incumbent or involved in leading a church, it points to a rich set of resources that will help you to develop the gifts of those in your church whom God is calling. And if you are yourself discerning that call, maybe what you read here will be a step along the way. In the Church everyone is equal, every gift equally precious, every contribution equally necessary.

So, in prayer and in the company of others, listen to God's call in your own life. And then delight to use your gifts in his service.

*The Rt Revd Philip North, Bishop of Burnley*

# Informal Lay Ministry

## What is Informal Lay Ministry?

Informal lay ministers are those members of our churches who exercise a specific ministry with less formal training in areas such as pastoral care, children's ministry, community outreach, toddler groups, and leading small groups. Informal lay ministers are the lifeblood of our churches, the majority of lay people who, for example, teach our children, care for the elderly and vulnerable, outwork their faith on the frontlines of their workplaces and communities, and lead various types of small groups and organisations. Some have faithfully served in our churches and communities for many years, some are new to faith and others are growing in faith and want to be used in the Kingdom of God.

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***"We are passionate about helping all God's people to discern where God is calling them to play their part in the Body of Christ."***

*Revd Nick McKee, Director of Vocations, Diocese of Blackburn*

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## Is Informal Lay Ministry something I can do?

- Are you enthusiastic about a particular area of ministry in the Church or the community?
- Do you have gifts and talents that you can use in God's service?
- Do you want to sharpen your skills and build your knowledge through ongoing training?
- Are you ready to jump in and get started?

## What training is available?

Training for such roles is provided locally in the parish, or through a diocesan program or parachurch organisation. Training to equip informal lay ministers typically lasts six to eight sessions and is unassessed. Informal lay ministers have the opportunity to sign up for Authorised Lay Ministry Elective modules (see ALM pages in this booklet) in their area of ministry.



If you are already an ALM or LLM and would like to access ongoing training to sharpen or widen your skills in ministry, you are also most welcome to attend our informal lay ministry training modules as they are taught across the year and throughout the Diocese. If you would like to get involved in any area of Informal Lay Ministry, please chat to your incumbent. For more information on what informal lay ministry courses are coming up, visit our website: **[blackburn.anglican.org/informal-lay-ministry](https://blackburn.anglican.org/informal-lay-ministry)**

# Authorised Lay Ministry

## What is an Authorised Lay Minister?

ALMs are people who feel called to a specific area of ministry, who are recognised and supported by their incumbent and PCC. They will be authorised for ministry in their local context for a period of three years, following completion of the relevant training modules. Our aim is to train people to minister and lead in their local context, who have a firm foundation of faith in Christ, expressed in daily life, and who are skilled in their specific areas of calling and gifting.



## Is it for me?

- Do you feel called to serve your local church context in a specific area of ministry? This could include Children's or Youth Ministry, Small Group Leadership, Pastoral Care, Preaching, Worship Leading, Administration, Mentoring, the Ministry of Technology, Community Engagement, or perhaps other ministries.
- Do you want to be nurtured in your journey of faith while being equipped to serve?
- Are you able to commit to completing the ALM training program, including a Core and Elective module?



*Our first Core Module took place online, and we intend to offer both in-person and online training in future.*

## How do I train?

The ALM training pathway includes a formational Core Module and a ministry-specific Elective Module.



The **Core Module** is designed to nurture spiritual formation through personal discipleship and worship in the local church.

- These run over 10 weeks of evening sessions, held at different locations around Blackburn Diocese or online.
- Much like the 'core' of the physical body needs to be strengthened in order for the whole body to be strong, this core module is designed to strengthen the whole body of Christ as individuals embrace spiritual formation and see how this connects to the worship of the local church.

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***"You will learn a lot and it will enable you to reflect upon your faith in depth."** Jen Palfrey, ALM Core Module participant*

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Each **Elective Module** is designed to equip people with the specific skills needed to serve and lead in a particular ministry field.

- These are taught by those with leadership knowledge and experience in each area of ministry.
- They run over approximately 6-8 sessions, however the design of these sessions, including length and placement, is crafted around the best way to deliver skill-specific training.

In addition, each ALM candidate is assigned a **mentor** who will accompany them on their training journey, providing space for reflection and discussion, along with prayer support and valuable wisdom.

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***"The course is enjoyable, do-able, not too basic, challenging but not too academic, and thought provoking."** Mel Clarke, Assistant Warden of Lay Ministry*

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If you think the ALM pathway may be for you, please speak to your incumbent. You can download an application form for the ALM pathway on our website here: [blackburn.anglican.org/authorised-lay-ministry](https://blackburn.anglican.org/authorised-lay-ministry)

# M:Power

## What is M:Power?

M:Power is a lay ministry training program designed to train new leaders in a way that equips, empowers, and transforms them, without taking them out of their context. Run by a small, dedicated team, our aim is to give participants confidence, ability, and enthusiasm to support their parish in mission and evangelism with a focus on the urban church. M:Power graduates will be authorised as Urban Mission ALMs in their local parish.

URBAN  MINISTRY

**M:POWER**  
TRAINING

## Is it for me?

- Are you somebody who has a passion to bring people to a living faith in Jesus Christ?
- Do you want to develop your leadership potential?
- Do you have a burning desire to help your church reach the lost and see your community transformed?

If the answer is yes to these questions then M:Power may be for you!



## How do I train?

We run 2 hubs in different locations across the Diocese each year starting in September and there are 30 sessions in total. We meet one evening a week (term times) and three Saturdays spread throughout the course. Teaching sessions use a variety of adult learning styles and are varied and interactive. There is no requirement to have any academic qualifications to attend the program.

The program is designed around 3 Modules:

- **Personal Transformation –**  
To examine our lives and enable people to actively live in a life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ.
- **Mission and Evangelism –**  
To understand what mission and evangelism means and how practically we can use it to transform our communities.
- **Leadership –** To understand and examine different leadership styles, to define leadership in a church context and to develop leadership potential in individuals.



## Our Commitment

- To provide the best possible training and personal development to help participants reach their potential.
- To tailor the support to individuals required to meet the objectives of the program.
- To provide mentors and pastoral support to help deal with any issues raised through the program content.

For more information contact the M:Power team at:  
**[mpowertraininghub@gmail.com](mailto:mpowertraininghub@gmail.com)**

# Licensed Lay Ministry

## What is a Licensed Lay Minister?

Licensed Lay Ministers (previously Readers) are local people who are key members of their congregations. They are often active members of the PCC, leaders of homegroups, missionally focussed, preachers and teachers, discipleship coordinators and trainers, and they can encourage, train and mentor other lay ministries. At the heart of licensed lay ministry is the call of God to teach the faith, enable mission, and lead in church and society – reflecting the light and love of Christ wherever they are. Licensed Lay Ministers are licensed by the Bishop of Blackburn to exercise their ministry in their parish, and this license is renewable every three years.



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***“God knows what we can do. In ten years as a Christian, God has used me different ways in lay ministry, from preaching to teaching, to leadership and outreach. Most recently, I have led a team that fed the homeless in Blackpool during the first lockdown. God calls us, it’s for us to hear and respond.”***

*Greg Doughty BEM, Assistant Warden of Lay Ministry, Licensed Lay Minister, The Trinity Parish, Layton and Staining*

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## Could this be me?

God calls and equips all sorts of people for this ministry – and the focus is on the following personal qualities - a love for God, a call to ministry, a love for people, wisdom, fruitfulness and potential. *To find out more about these qualities go to the LLM pages of the Blackburn Diocese website.*

## What training will I need?

LLMs are trained at Emmanuel College – two years part time training with weekly term time evening sessions and some Saturdays at the Blackburn teaching centre, Clayton House, Blackburn. There is also a 4-month placement in another parish.

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***“Training at Clayton House was a stimulating experience with interesting and lively classes taught by several tutors with good resources available.”***

*Annie Riley, Licensed Lay Minister, All Hallows, Bispham*

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## What do I do first?

Talk to your incumbent and/or contact the Director of Vocations at Blackburn Diocese (**[nick.mckee@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:nick.mckee@blackburn.anglican.org)**). There is then a process of discernment before being accepted for LLM training.

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***“Why did I decide to train as a Licensed Lay Minister? Well, simply because I believed that God was nudging me to do so. Simple in one way, but I came out of it with a profoundly different perspective on ministry.”***

*Diane Otto, Licensed Lay Minister, St John the Evangelist, Ellel*

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We encourage people from a wide range of educational and ethnic backgrounds to consider whether this is God's calling for them.

***Could this be your calling?***



# Church Army Evangelists

Church Army are Christians on a mission to change lives. They are a group of evangelists passionate about transforming communities through faith shared in words and action. They are part of the Anglican Church across the UK and Ireland. Church Army Evangelists are passionate about helping people encounter God's love, often through pioneering ministry, social action initiatives, community groups, and fresh expressions of Church.



Nurture your calling as an evangelist and gain access to the expertise and wisdom of our tutors and frontline practitioners by exploring training with Church Army and joining the Mission Community.

The vocational journey begins with initial conversations to discern if training as a Church Army Evangelist is the way forward for you. If it is, you'll begin 3 years of part-time study with regular weekend residentials and tutorials. Your studies will focus on formation, theology, and mission and evangelism practice, and can be accredited by Durham University.

Find out more at: [churcharmy.org/vocations](https://churcharmy.org/vocations) and [blackburn.anglican.org/church-army](https://blackburn.anglican.org/church-army)  
Or contact [Peter.Tomkinson@Blackburn.Anglican.Org](mailto:Peter.Tomkinson@Blackburn.Anglican.Org)



# Frequently Asked Questions

| FAQ                                                                 | LLM                                                                                      | ALM/M:Power                                                       | Informal                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Is there an age limit?</b>                                       | Yes, training should start by age 61.<br>Lower age limit of 18.                          | No upper age limit.<br>Lower age limit of 18.                     | No                                                                     |
| <b>Are there any entry qualifications required for the courses?</b> | No                                                                                       | No                                                                | No                                                                     |
| <b>Are there any written assignments?</b>                           | Yes, there are written and/or practical assignments for each module.                     | No, but a Learning Diary is to be kept while training             | No                                                                     |
| <b>How much work is involved?</b>                                   | Around 10 hours a week should be put aside for preparation and assignments.              | Some light preparation tasks for most sessions.                   | Depends on the training course.                                        |
| <b>Where the training is based?</b>                                 | Emmanuel Theological College – Blackburn Centre                                          | Various locations around the Diocese and online                   | Various locations around the Diocese and online                        |
| <b>What support is there for those with additional needs?</b>       | Emmanuel Theological College will offer additional support for all those who require it. | Our Lay Training Officer will offer support, along with a mentor. | Course leaders should be notified so appropriate support can be given. |
| <b>How much does it cost?</b>                                       | The Diocese will cover the cost.                                                         | Free                                                              | Free                                                                   |
| <b>What happens at the end of training?</b>                         | Licensed for 3 years*                                                                    | Authorised for 3 years*                                           | Start or continue ministry in your context                             |
| <b>Who do I speak to for further information?</b>                   | Our Diocesan Director of Vocations                                                       | Our Lay Training Officer                                          | Our Growing Leaders Administrator                                      |

\* Able to be renewed following a review process.

## Next Steps

If anything in this booklet has stirred you to use your gifts in the service of God in and for his Church, here are some things to do next:

- Pray about how God is leading you.
- If you would like to talk to someone about your calling to ministry, please speak to your incumbent. Talking with trusted mentors, friends and Christian leaders is a great way of exploring your calling further.
- If you want to find out more about any of our lay ministry opportunities, visit our website **[blackburn.anglican.org/lay-majority-ministry-framework](https://blackburn.anglican.org/lay-majority-ministry-framework)** and click on the ministry links to learn more.
- If you would like to apply for any lay ministry courses advertised on our website, please contact our Growing Leaders administrator on **[rosie.strachan@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:rosie.strachan@blackburn.anglican.org)**
- To find out how to apply for ALM, M:Power, LLM or Church Army pathways, please see the details on the relevant pages of this booklet.

Lay ministry is at the forefront of the advance of the Kingdom of God, because God pours out his Spirit on all people. There is much buried treasure in Lancashire. Our lay ministry programs help unearth and catalyse those gifts and callings so we can bring influence for Jesus in all spheres of society.

*The Rt Revd Jill Duff,  
Bishop of Lancaster*





## Opportunities for You in Blackburn Diocese



# Lay Ministry

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OF BLACKBURN  
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN LANCASHIRE

 **VISION2026**  
HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES