



## Emerging patterns of Ministry

As the church grows and responds to needs of mission and ministry within our communities, more people are becoming involved in lay funeral ministry. In light of these welcome changes, the Bishops are looking to respond to requests for greater local flexibility combined with appropriate Anglican order. In seeking to encourage and support both new and more established lay funeral ministers within the parishes, we are committed to equipping all those engaging in this important work.

## Why Authorised?

Funerals are at the forefront of the Church's pastoral ministry and public witness. With this comes a significant level of responsibility and visibility. This kind of ministry is not something you do on your own, but as part of a team of ministers led by and accountable to your Incumbent.

While the 'cure of souls' is shared between your Incumbent and the Bishop, your Incumbent will have been discerning pastoral gifts in you and encouraging you to develop these. The Bishops wish to be linked with you in a real way as you begin to share this ministry in the church. They wish to offer encouragement and support by giving you their blessing and authorising you to such ministries.

## What will Authorisation mean?

To begin with, you would receive a letter from the Bishop giving you permission to participate in funerals in your parish, benefice or crematorium when asked to do so by your Incumbent. This first (initial) authorisation would normally permit you to participate in funerals alongside a Licensed minister for a period of 6-12 months and, thereafter (again, with the explicit agreement of your Incumbent) to start taking other funerals for a further 12-18 months (up to a maximum of 2 years from the date of initial authorisation).

During this time you would become part of a team of ministers led by your Incumbent, to whom you would also be accountable.

## Is training provided?

Absolutely! Funerals matter; and we owe it to ourselves and others to responsibly nurture the gifts and character we need for meaningful and compassionate ministry.

The Bishop's initial 2-yr authorisation releases you to begin the training and learning you need to do. This amounts to:

- attendance at an approved Lay Funeral Ministry training course (usually run annually, over two Saturday mornings)
- attendance at an approved Pastoral Care course (formal diocesan courses run in alternate summer terms (2021, 2023...) over 10 weekday evenings; deaneries and parishes also run approved courses from time to time)
- a 2500-word assignment on pastoral ministry (from the pastoral care course)
- a 2500-word assignment on funeral ministry
- reflecting on feedback from other ministers in your team on funeral ministry in which you have participated.

## After initial training

On successful fulfilment of these training requirements within the initial 2-yr period, the Bishop's authorisation then becomes renewable on a regular basis, every few years. This is conditional each time upon (i) the continued support of incumbent and PCC; (ii) a review of your working agreement and your parish's pastoral care policy; (iii) engagement with ongoing relevant training as agreed with your incumbent.

All authorisations (whether initial or renewal) are also dependent upon you holding a valid Enhanced DBS Disclosure, and upon completion of appropriate Safeguarding training (currently the 'Leadership' safeguarding module which replaced 'C3' in 2020).

## How does all this fit in with the Parish?

First, while it is the Bishops who authorise you to conduct funerals in your parish, they do so only at the specific request of both Incumbent and PCC(s). As such, the Bishop will need to know that you have the support of your PCC; and, for this