

Policy on Lay Preaching in the Yorkshire Synod

Introduction

Worship is central to the life of the church and the service which lay preachers give has long been recognized as crucial. This has become increasingly so as the number of ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament has decreased. The importance of ensuring worship of high quality, week by week, cannot be stressed too strongly and the training, recognition and support for Lay Preachers is a key element of this provision. This policy has been agreed by the Synod Ministries Committee to provide a framework for maintaining consistently high standards for the training and recognition of newly qualified Lay Preachers.

Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers

1. Qualifications

There are two recognised routes:

- i) those who have undertaken the United Reformed Church recognized route, successfully completing the TLS Foundation Course, followed by the TLS Gateways into Worship Course including a final assessed service and a satisfactory CRB check.
- ii) by other routes - normally for those from other denominations having already completed some training as the equivalent to the United Reformed Church lay preachers e.g. Methodist Local Preachers or Anglican Readers

2. The process for recognition of lay preachers who have successfully completed their training.

- i) for TLS Students:

The Synod Lay Preaching Commissioner will

- receive confirmation of successful completion from TLS
- bring that information to the Synod Ministries Committee for approval, commendation and recognition subject to a CRB check which will be undertaken by the Assembly Secretary for Ministries.
- ensure that a Commissioning Service is organised - normally in the candidate's home church but always attended by a Synod representative who will take some part in the service.

- ii) for those coming by other routes

It is expected that the following steps will to be undertaken in consultation with the Lay Preaching Commissioner to ensure consistency and fairness in the process:

- Training and qualifications held by the candidate. Application is made to the Assembly Education and Learning Committee to determine whether these were deemed to be appropriate and to what extent there are reciprocal arrangements between the denominations.
- A Support Network will be set up. This should consist of 3 or 4 people willing and able to attend and comment on two services led by the candidate and to attend and comment on the final assessed service.
- Introduction to the URC. The candidate would be expected to attend this short course run by the Development Officer.
- Final Assessed service. To be attended by a Synod assessor and the final report produced in conjunction with members of the Support Network.

The Synod Lay Preaching Commissioner will

- bring a recommendation to the Synod Ministries Committee for approval, commendation and recognition subject to a CRB check which will be undertaken by the Assembly Secretary for Ministries.
- ensure that a Commissioning Service is organised - normally in the candidate's home church but always attended by a Synod representative who will take some part in the service.

Locally Recognised Lay Preachers

- i) Those who were previously District Recognised Lay Preachers will now be designated 'Locally Recognised Lay Preachers'
- ii) In future those designated as Locally Recognised Lay Preachers will have - with the backing of their Church Meeting - undertaken the TLS Lite units detailed below, followed by an assessed service:

- 'Getting to Grips with the Bible' (5 units, *plus one assignment and one study day*);
- 'Theology - Talking about God' (5 units, *plus one assignment and one study day*);
- 'Preaching - God's Word for Today' (5 units, *plus one assignment and one study day*);
- 'Leading Worship' (10 units, *plus one assignment and two study days*).

(Giving a total of 25 units, 4 assignments and 5 study days.)

- iii) On recognition on satisfactory completion of the course, a certificate will be presented at a service in the candidate's home church.

This policy was adopted by the Yorkshire Synod at its meeting on 10th October 2009
Val Morrison - 12/11/2009