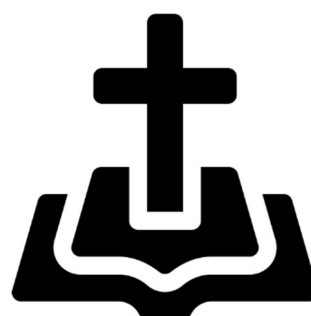




**Synod Lay Preaching and Worship
Leading Policy**
for all worship leaders



Preface

In accordance with the URC's General Assembly Lay Preaching and Worship Leading policy, the Yorkshire Synod recognises two routes through which Synod supports and recognises the ministry of those who serve the local church in leading worship: Locally Recognised Worship Leaders, and Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers.

Locally Recognised Worship Leaders

Some United Reformed Church members wish to offer themselves to lead prayers, to preach, to lead services in their own church community. They are a vital resource for our churches. There is an increasing number of people who feel called to offer themselves for this service and, as such, it needs to be recognised and valued as a ministry in its own right and a place to grow from. Such people may work individually or as part of a team.

Training will be offered by the Synod for the exploration of worship leading. We will provide opportunities to learn, to apply learning, to practice skills and to reflect on experience. Synod encourages such people to become Locally recognised Worship Leaders.

Recommended training

- The potential Worship Leader (or group from a local church context) contact(s) the Synod Lay Preaching Commissioner.
- Church Meeting gives approval for training;
- The Synod ensures that everyone has a DBS check and completes a Safeguarding course before starting training;
- The person / group register(s) for Stepwise and embark(s) on their learning journey, supported by the synod through the Lay Preaching Commissioner and the Stepwise Co-ordinator.
- A portfolio is developed during the learning journey, including Stepwise extension tasks.
- A final presentation, or 1000 word essay, is given / submitted
- An assessed service takes place, arranged by the Lay Preaching Commissioner.

This leads to Synod Recognition as a Locally Recognised Worship Leader, approved by the Synod Ministries Committee, or a recommendation made to continue with a further time of study to continue to develop skills.

For those to be recognised as a locally recognised worship leader there will be a Commissioning service, in the local context, arranged by the Lay Preaching Commissioner and with representation from the Synod Ministries Committee.

Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers

Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers remain a formally recognised ministry within the URC. These are people who feel a call to wider service in the synod by offering themselves as a more itinerant preaching resource and one that is more widely recognised and transferable if a person moves within the United Reformed Church.

Recommended Training: Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers:

Training will take place through the Resource Centres for Learning (RCLs), taking account of prior learning and individual needs.

This programme led by the Resource Centres for Learning (which would take approximately two years and would have specific times of the year for beginning study) covers:

- Section one – personal development
- Section two – crafting worship
- Section three – the Word
- Section four – the theology of the URC
- Section five – contextualising

A Synod Mentor will be appointed by Synod Ministries Committee. The mentor will regularly feed back to the RCL. In addition there will be regular assessed worship (or elements of worship building up to full act).

The role of the Synod

A candidate approaches Synod Lay Preaching Commissioner and meets with them to explore call and complete paperwork, if appropriate. LP Commissioner contacts Secretary for Ministries.

Church Meeting gives approval for training.

The Synod offers a Mentor, ideally an experienced Lay Preacher to meet regularly with the student to:

- a) reflect with them on their course
- b) be present when they lead worship (parts of worship) and feed back to them.
- c) reflect on extracts from journal with student to help them develop as reflective practitioners.

The Synod Mentor will talk to the RCL Tutor on a six-monthly basis and to raise any concerns with the RCL, if necessary, in between times. The Lay Preaching Commissioner is responsible for arranging, or taking on, this role.

The Synod ensures that everyone has a DBS check and completes a Safeguarding course before starting training

The candidate attends the History and Ethos course.

The Lay Preaching Commissioner liaises with RCL about Safeguarding, Funerals and Sacraments training either already provided to the student, or the Synod may prefer to offer such training if they already have training planned.

The Lay Preaching Commissioner keeps in contact with Lay Preacher in training.

The candidate prepares a portfolio: journaling, book reviews, reflection, preparation of prayers, worship material, service preparation, work with mentor, written assignments,

intergenerational experience, optional reflection on sacraments and funerals.

There will be a final assessed service, to be attended by a Synod assessor and the final report produced in conjunction with the Synod mentor. The Synod Lay Preaching Commissioner will bring a recommendation to the Synod Ministries Committee for approval, commendation and recognition.

The Commissioning Service will be organised by the Lay Preaching Commissioner, normally in the candidate's home church but always attended by a Synod representative who will take some part in the service.

Agreed by: Ministries Committee

Date: September 2021