

Funding

Students on the TLS course can apply for help with funding – details available from the Synod Development Officer.

The cost of TLS Lite courses is borne locally but if students need help with cost of books, travel etc, this can usually be arranged.

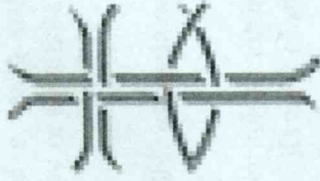
Questions

If you have any questions or want more details, please contact your ACT Lay Preaching Co-ordinator or the Synod Lay Preaching Commissioner:

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United Reformed Church
Southern Synod



Becoming a Lay Preacher

A guide for individuals

Introduction

As is common in much of the URC, churches in the Southern Synod are relying more and more on lay people to conduct worship each Sunday. Their contribution is becoming increasingly important and is very much valued.

Do you feel that God is calling you to be a lay preacher? This leaflet outlines the way in which you can set about discerning the way forward. It also gives a brief explanation of the various training schemes available to you.

Testing your calling – the steps to follow

1. Speak to your minister or church leader
2. Seek affirmation from Church meeting
3. Make contact with your ACT Lay Preaching Co-ordinator
4. Complete & return the form you will be sent
5. Attend informal interview with ACT Lay Preaching Co-ordinator

Assembly Accreditation

The preferred route for Lay Preaching training is to take the excellent URC course, Training for Learning and Serving (TLS). This is a three year course run nationally with a fair amount of theoretical and practical work to be done. It involves local study, meeting fortnightly with a small group and a tutor, and four weekends away each year. Students are required to submit several pieces of written work each year and lead a service which will be assessed. Successful completion leads to Assembly Accreditation as a lay preacher.

Local Recognition

It is understood, however, that not all those who are called to lay preaching are able to give the time commitment necessary to complete TLS. Accordingly, a less intensive course has been developed which will lead to Local Recognition when completed successfully.

The essential elements of this training are set out below. The timings etc are very flexible and can be adapted to suit individuals. The training year can begin at any time but the start may be slightly delayed until a small group can be formed.

1. TLS Lite 'Talking about God' (5 Units, 1 Study Day)
2. TLS Lite 'Getting to grips with the Bible' (5 units, 1 Study Day)
3. TLS Lite 'Leading Worship' (10 Units, 2 Study Days)
4. TLS Lite 'God's Word for Today' (5 Units, 1 Study Day)
5. Synod Sacraments Course (3 Units)

Each Unit is designed to take about an evening's home study to complete. All the above courses also involve meetings with a small group and a tutor. There are also assignments to be completed for each course.

Alongside this study, students work for at least a year gaining practical experience in leading worship and preaching. An experienced preacher will act as a mentor giving help, guidance and encouragement. Each student will also have a Support Partner to give feedback on the worship led by the student.

When the student feels ready (but not before 12 months after the start of the course) an assessed service will be arranged. Successful completion of this will allow the student's name to be brought to the Synod Pastoral Committee for Recognition.

There is room for flexibility in this scheme to take account of a student's prior learning and experience.