

Safer Recruitment of Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Lay preachers are an integral part of the church. Along with the other recognized ministries in the United reformed Church, Lay preaching affirms that ministry is the work of the whole people of God.

“The Lord Jesus Christ continues his ministry in and through the church, the whole people of God called and committed to his service equipped by him for it..... For the equipment of his people for this total ministry, the Lord Jesus Christ gives particular gifts, and calls some of his servants to exercise them in offices duly recognised within his Church.”

Schedule A paragraph 19 and 20 (page 6) of The Basis of Union

https://urc.org.uk/images/the_manual/A_The_Basis_of_union_23_01_2020.pdf

- 1.2 Among the offices so recognised by the United Reformed Church is that of a lay preacher.

“The worship of the local church is an expression of the worship of the whole people of God. In order that this may be clearly seen, the United Reformed Church shall (a) take steps to ensure that so far as possible ordained ministers of the Word and sacraments are readily available to every local church; (b) provide for the training of suitable men and women, members of the United Reformed Church, to be accredited by synods as lay preachers.

Schedule A paragraph 25 (page 6) of The Basis of Union

https://urc.org.uk/images/the_manual/A_The_Basis_of_union_23_01_2020.pdf

- 1.3 The provisions of paragraph 25 are intended to establish the principle that worship should be led by representative persons recognised by the wider church as well as by the local church.

- to do and to bear his will all the days of their life.

- a) Schedule B (page 4) of the Manual Details the functions of the elders' meeting which can be found at https://urc.org.uk/images/the_manual/B-The_Manual_-_Section_B-2019.pdf

2. Safer Recruitment

- 2.1** The United Reformed Church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all within our church communities. The United Reformed Church recognises the importance of carefully selecting, training and supporting all those with any responsibility within the Church.
- 2.2** Those thinking of becoming an Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher should, where possible,
- a) attend an Enquirer's Event organised by the Ministries Office and normally held in February and October each year via Zoom;
 - b) be a church member for at least one year;
 - c) be given copies of the leaflet 'Become a Worship Leader, even a Lay Preacher' <https://urc.org.uk/your-church/taking-a-role-in-your-church/become-a-worship-leader-lay-preacher/>;
 - d) have a conversation with the Synod Lay Preaching Commissioner;
 - e) have a conversation with their minister/interim moderator;
 - f) agree for their names to go forward to Church Meeting.
- 2.3** The applicant should contact the Ministries Office for a registration form plus copies of
- a) The Marks of Ministry of an Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher
 - b) URC Guidelines for the Conduct and Behaviour of Lay Preachers
 - c) A course outline
- 2.4** The Synod Lay Preaching Commissioner should ensure the Ministries Office receives:
- a) The application form
 - b) A Church meeting minute that the church meeting approves of the candidate going forward;
 - c) Two references – one being the minister of the church or the interim moderator where there is no minister;
 - d) Should these not give cause for concern then the Ministries Office would organise the DBS (can't do PVGs for lay preachers so they are all DBSs); if there is a blemish this is followed up by the Secretary for Ministries and the URC Designated Safeguarding as per the usual process;
- 2.5** Any concerns during training come back to the Ministries Office where the concerns would be dealt with.

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