

Called by Name



Ministry in the
Uniting Church

☞☞ The Uniting Church affirms that every member of the Church is engaged to confess the faith of Christ crucified and to be his faithful servant.

It acknowledges with thanksgiving that the one Spirit has endowed the members of Christ's Church with a diversity of gifts, and that there is no gift without its corresponding service: all ministries have a part in the ministry of Christ.

The Uniting Church, at the time of union, will recognise and accept the ministries of those who have been called to any task or responsibility in the uniting Churches.

The Uniting Church will thereafter provide for the exercise by men and women of the gifts God bestows upon them and will order its life in response to God's call to enter more fully into mission. ☞☞

Basis of Union, Paragraph 13

From the Moderator

Christian ministry in whatever form it takes, like so much of our prevailing Western culture, in the 2020s is very different from what prevailed for an earlier generation. For some, there is the sadness that what was once familiar, settled, and secure is rapidly disappearing. Emerging in its place are forms of ministry that may be unfamiliar, yet the core message remains the same, *“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever”*.



The challenge for ministry 45 years on from church Union is to remain faithful to the core traditions that brought the Uniting Church into being, yet always seeking how God might be speaking to us in a time when much of what we affirm is regarded with indifference, even disdain, by much of the society in which we live.

The Uniting Church has several forms of specified ministry: Minister of the Word, Deacon, Lay Preacher and Pastor. Those who feel a sense of call to one of these ministries are encouraged to put that call to the test in what is known as a Period of Discernment (POD).

A call to the ministry, whilst it may be deeply personal, also needs the church at large to be satisfied that an intending candidate understands the nature of the theological and pastoral requirements of the Uniting Church, expressed in ministry. In addition to ascertaining if the candidate wishes to offer their life and skills in service and engagement.

The Ministry Expo is an occasion to give free expression to one's sense of call. Specified ministries are not for everyone, but the Expo is an important opportunity to see if God is calling you to explore more deeply the promptings to service and witness that will simply not go away.

May the Holy Spirit guide you and direct you on your exploratory journey.

With God's richest blessing,

Susy Thomas
Moderator, Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of Western Australia

How do you know that God is calling you?

- How do you know what gifts God has given you?
- How do you know which form of service is the best way to use these gifts?
- How do you know how best you can enter more fully into the mission of the church?

The Period of Discernment (POD) is a process approved by the National Assembly of the Uniting Church to enable the church and individuals to discern together God's call on their life for future ministry. It may be:

- within your local congregation or the wider Uniting Church,
- in your workplace or the community, or
- within one of the specified ministries of the Uniting Church, which are Lay Preacher, Pastor, Deacon or Minister of the Word.

No ministry is more important or more holy than any other. Whilst everyone considering offering as a candidate for ordained ministry (Deacon or Minister of the Word) must participate in the POD, it is available for all people. There are no predetermined outcomes.

In the past, participants in a POD have discerned callings to be a congregational lay leader, pioneer a new ministry, become a Lay Preacher or Pastor. Some engage in a POD as they navigate changes in career or other major life changes.

A POD usually lasts a year, but it can be longer. During that time the person meets with a Mentor appointed by the Candidates for the Ministries Committee (CMC).

Opportunities are provided to experience the practice of ministry, engage in some theological study, become familiar with the *Code of Ethics* and the *Basis of Union* of the Uniting Church, deepen your relationship with God and complete a portfolio of reflections on the experience.

The Church believes that call is not simply an individual conviction, but a call which needs to be affirmed within the fellowship of God's people of faith.

The Presbytery of Western Australia has a Period of Discernment Handbook which explains how to apply to begin a POD and what is involved in the process.

The handbook is available online or from the Chair of the Candidates for the Ministries Committee (CMC).

More information

The *Period of Discernment Handbook* can be found at - unitingchurchwa.org.au/workwithus/candidating/

Or email the **Chair, Candidates for the Ministries Committee (CMC)** candidates.ministry@wa.uca.org.au

A privilege and a responsibility

Through the combination of mentoring, study, research, practical experience and connecting to others also exploring ministry, the Period of Discernment (POD) has proven to be just that: a process that has helped me discern God's call to serve God (and God's people) in a specific way, using the gifts God has graciously given.



Participating in a POD feels like both a great privilege and a responsibility. There is discipline as well as accountability involved, which are good things. I have greatly valued and been encouraged through the broad range of activities a POD offers and recommend the process to anyone seeking clarity on serving God, the church and the community.

Mike Roberts

Wesley Mission, Fremantle

Where is God leading me?

Reflecting on my faith, I believe I have grown in so many ways in recent years. I am hoping that during this Period of Discernment (POD), I would be able to know the answer to what I have been searching for. I would also be able to hear God's voice to where God is leading me in the church and to what ministry God has in place for me to utilise God's calling in my life.



I am hoping to grow deeper in my relationship with God and also broaden my knowledge with the skills in serving the community through the compassion and love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Senirewa Nawanawa

Fijian Uniting Church Fellowship and Mandurah Uniting Church

Is God calling you to be a leader in your congregation?

The Uniting Church is the priesthood of all believers. The possibilities to serve God and God's people are numerous! You may already be doing some or even all of these. A congregational leader may be responsible for: leading worship; Bible studies; youth or children's ministry; pastoral care; engaging in mission in the local community; or managing finance or property resources of the church.

Those elected as Elders or Church Councillors are "responsible for building up the congregation in faith and love, sustaining its members in hope, and leading them into a fuller participation in Christ's mission in the world." (*Basis of Union Paragraph 15a & b*)

You might be called to be a leader in your congregation.

Increasing numbers of Uniting Church congregations in Western Australia are led by lay people. For those who sense the call for lay leadership, the Church provides training in:

- leading worship services, including preaching, leading prayers and music selection
- pastoral care
- pioneering ministry and church planting such as *Mission Shaped Ministry* courses
- family ministries such as *Messy Church* and *Godly Play*
- development of peer support groups for disaster preparedness and response
- *Safe Church* to ensure that all children and vulnerable people are protected from harm, and
- understanding the theology and government of the Uniting Church as set out in the *Basis of Union*.

Presiding at the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist requires not only special training, but also being licenced by the Presbytery.

Congregational leaders are supported by their congregational minister and by the Presbytery, who provide training, support and encouragement for their ministries.

Lay Leadership - a wonderful journey

As a child, I knew God existed and had many names. Jesus came knocking on my door so loudly I could not ignore him and had to open it when I was 28.



Since then, I have been following Jesus nonstop. Lay leadership happened gradually and almost accidentally. God uses everyone and everything in the most wonderful ways. God brings people together and draws talents and gifts out to do God's work.

At the time, we needed people to take on ministerial work for our church. So, I took on the task bit by bit. Jesus is still calling and inviting me to his adventures both inwardly and outwardly. At a personal level, I am called here to build my personal relationship with Jesus. By doing so, I hope I help others around me to build a wonderful relationship with Jesus too.

I ask God to fill me with the Holy Spirit consistently and I am learning how to see the world from God's perspective more and act on it.

I am really just doing my bit together with others who are also called to follow Jesus. I am glad I am taking this journey. I am discovering the depth and richness of God's unconditional love and the joy of sharing it.

Yuko Tonai-Moore

Member, Worship leading team
Chairperson, Bridgetown Uniting Church Council
Treasurer, Warren Blackwood congregations

Is God calling you to preach and lead worship?

The ministry of Lay Preacher is a lay specified ministry in the Uniting Church.

You might be called to the ministry of Lay Preacher if you:

- are keen to study and reflect on God's word and to share it with others
- have good communication and leadership skills
- are passionate about the worship of God and the mission of the church
- can connect to the spiritual needs of people around you, and
- are willing to make yourself available to the church for this ministry.

Lay Preachers have a vital role in helping people encounter God in worship and to hear and respond to God's word. They serve their local congregation and other congregations at the invitation of local church councils or ministers. They are responsible to the whole church for the faithful preaching of the Word of God in today's challenging context.

If you believe that God may be calling you to the ministry of Lay Preacher, your first step is to talk to a Minister who knows you well. Tell them about your sense of call and find out if they affirm both your calling and your gifts for this ministry.

Secondly, talk to your Church Council to ensure your calling is affirmed by leaders in the church. The Church Council will meet with you to hear the story of your faith journey, and to test your sense of call: you need to be able to tell of the conviction of God's call to preach and lead worship. The Church Council will also assess whether you have suitable character, personality and spiritual maturity to fulfil this ministry.

If others affirm your call, then you can apply for candidature using the Lay Preacher Handbook found on the *Becoming a Minister* page of the Uniting Church WA website.

The Candidates for the Ministries Committee (CMC) will refer you to the Commission for Education for Discipleship and Leadership (CEDAL) for assessment of your competencies in preaching and leadership of worship and determine what extra studies are needed.

CMC will also appoint a Mentor to guide your formation for this ministry. You will also be asked to demonstrate your competencies by leading worship and preaching.

Once you have demonstrated your competencies and completed your formation you will be presented to the Presbytery for commissioning as a Lay Preacher.

More information

The *Lay Preacher Handbook* can be found at - unitingchurchwa.org.au/workwithus/candidating/

Or email the **Chair, Candidates for the Ministries Committee (CMC)** candidates.ministry@wa.uca.org.au

Building bridges of understanding

If you are a lay person, you may have a strong sense of calling to share, to care, to love, to pray and to be involved in other forms of service. I invite you to spend a few moments to also think about leading worship and preaching. Leading worship is daunting for most people. It was for me. Even in my early days as a lay preacher, I knew that I was doing something which was valuable and needed. The bonus was that my own faith strengthened and my understanding deepened. God's presence now means more to me than it ever did. Lay preaching is a challenging and rewarding privilege, providing a bridge of understanding between theological scholarship and people's daily lives. Please consider it, and join in the enjoyment and the deep challenges of our training courses.



Doug Burtenshaw

Experienced Lay Preacher

It makes my heart sing!

Is God calling you? Is God knocking on your door? Well, about six years ago God knocked on my door and called me by name. It was after a talk at a *Summer Spirit* event, that I just knew I was to be a Lay Preacher.



Did God call me because I was good at preaching or public speaking? No! I am constantly learning, growing and improving as God equips and moulds me.

Our role could, in modern terms, be described as an “influencer” as we proclaim the Gospel and bear witness to God's love. What a privilege it is to serve God in this way. It makes my heart sing!

Shirley Francis

Leeming Uniting Church

Is God calling you to a particular lay ministry?

The ministry of Pastor is a lay specified ministry in the Uniting Church. Pastors carry out one or more of the following roles:

- teaching the beliefs and practices of the Uniting Church
- pastoral oversight of members and/or groups operating under the auspices of the Uniting Church
- leadership of worship in congregation or faith communities of the Uniting Church
- evangelism or service beyond a gathered congregation which is exercised under the auspices of the Uniting Church.

Pastors may be employed by the Church in a range of roles, such as family, children or youth worker in a congregation; pastoral and worship leadership of a congregation or faith community; leading an evangelistic outreach; or as a chaplain in a school, prison or hospital.

Pastors may serve full-time or part-time and under some circumstances may be volunteers. Pastors are only recognised as Pastors as long as they are in their current ministry location.

The ministry of Pastor is not intended as a lifelong ministry.

You might be called to the ministry of Pastor if you:

- feel called to serve God in a ministry position in a congregation or agency
- have good communication and leadership skills
- are keen to study and reflect on God's word and to share it with others
- are passionate about the mission of the church, and
- accept the doctrine and oversight of the Uniting Church.

To become a Pastor, you must be a confirmed member or member in association in the Uniting Church. You will need to apply for a specific position advertised by a congregation, agency, Presbytery or Synod and be selected for that position.

Before you can be commissioned as a Pastor, you will need to attend courses and demonstrate competency both in your understanding of the theology of the Uniting Church as set out in the *Basis of Union*, as well as in your understanding of the *Code of Ethics* and *Ministry Practice* of the Church.

Pastors are under the oversight of the Presbytery and are required to abide by the *Code of Ethics* and *Ministry Practice*.

More information

Contact the Pastoral Relations Committee of the Presbytery of WA to find out what Pastor positions are currently available.

Live out the Gospel

It has been my privilege to serve a small church in a complex community with a wide range of needs and issues. Carnarvon is very ethnically diverse and has large indigenous and Vietnamese populations, as well as people with many other backgrounds. Issues of poverty, alcohol and drug abuse, and domestic violence are real for many people. I am involved with a range of community initiatives and organisations seeking to provide practical and pastoral support. My role has recently been extended to become a Frontier Services Bush Chaplain in the wider Gascoyne region. The challenge in ministry continues to be, to live out the Gospel of Christ in word and deed.



John Tomkins

Ministry of Pastor, Frontier Services Bush Chaplain, Gascoyne Region

A Privilege and a Challenge

I'm not sure if I was called to the position or the position called me! However it happened, it is with a great sense of 'call' ... which is always (well in my life anyway) followed by a great act of trust and obedience. In my position as Youth Pastor at Lighthouse Church Geraldton, I am part of overseeing and facilitating the 'Uniting Generations' ministries of the church and out into our community. What a privilege (and challenge) it is to serve God in this way. Leading, mentoring, supporting and nurturing young people in their love, dedication and knowledge of God and in a life of integrity, hope and purpose. The ancient African proverb, "It takes a whole village to raise a child" comes to mind. Our focus is on intergenerational relationships and engagement, to empower, encourage and grow people in their journey with God and in understanding their place and value in our community.



Chelsie Bunter

Youth Pastor, Lighthouse Church Geraldton

Is God calling you to serve with people on the margins?

You may be called to the Ministry of Deacon if you:

- are a bridge builder, linking the needs of the world with the life of faith
- are caring and able to relate to people on the margins
- are passionate about seeking peace and justice for all of creation
- are prepared to take risks and pioneer new ministries
- are enthusiastic about the church's mission
- have leadership qualities and skills in communication
- are prepared to commit to life-long learning and formation for ministry, and
- accept the doctrine and oversight of the Uniting Church.

Deacons are ordained ministers who are called to offer leadership among the people of the Uniting Church in a ministry of service to the world. All Christians are called to service in the world, particularly among those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged. Deacons are called to embody this ministry in their life and work and to equip and enable the diaconal ministry of all church members.

Deacons are pioneers who help the church to seek justice for all people through compassion, advocacy and education. They build bridges between the church and the community in the name of Christ.

Deacons are carers who stand with people who struggle and suffer, offering encouragement and support. Deacons serve in ministry with elderly people, refugees, homeless people, youth and people with disabilities. Being a Deacon is about helping others to be compassionate and caring.

Deacons are prophets who help educate the whole church about the issues of justice, peace and the environment, and encourage others to challenge injustice and work for peace and protection of creation.

Deacons may serve in community service agencies, schools, prisons, congregations, and other settings. They may celebrate the sacraments in the context of their ministry and are accepted as equal colleagues with Ministers of the Word.

If through your Period of Discernment, you believe God may be calling you to be a Deacon, then you need to fill in the Application Form for ordained ministries and submit to the Candidates for the Ministries Committee who will seek references from your minister, Church Council and other referees and then interview you. If they affirm your calling for this ministry they will refer your application to the Synod Selection Panel, who will make the final decision on your application.

If you are accepted as a candidate for ordination, you will then enter the Perth Theological Hall for theological study, field education and ministerial formation. Normally, formation takes three years, but may be longer or shorter depending on individual circumstances.

The process of formation is tailored for the individual needs of each candidate.

More information

The *Application to Candidate* form can be found at - unitingchurchwa.org.au/workwithus/candidating/

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Being a Bridge Builder

Much of what I do involves making connections, bridge building, and fostering authentic relationships. In my context, I am called to building a multicultural community with people from all walks of life and to be a presence in the community that demonstrates 'all are welcome'. I constantly remind this community of our call to a life of worship, witness and service. The symbol of the bowl and towel reflects what is intrinsic to who I am as a Deacon - a servant leader, standing alongside and journeying with the congregation, educating, empowering, loving, and caring for and reaching out to the poor and marginalised. I am grateful for the privilege to preach, administer the sacraments, and witness lives being transformed through the love of Jesus and a loving church community.



Rev Judy Sanderson

Deacon, St Stephens Church Applecross

Making a Real Difference

I work as a Deacon in a traditional church setting and I love the combination of congregational and community responsibilities. The church is called to be the “hands and feet” of Jesus in the world and Deacons are well placed to make sure those hands and feet are where they need to be – alongside the marginalised and broken!



My role is to help guide and inspire people in this work. It is so inspiring and energising to see the real difference our congregation is making in the community.

Rev Andy Broadbent

Deacon, Wesley Mission Fremantle

Is God calling you to disciple and care for God's people through word and sacrament?

The ministry of Minister of the Word is a specified ministry in the Uniting Church.

You might be called to be a Minister of the Word if you:

- are passionate about sharing the gospel with others and helping them to grow as disciples
- value the worship and sacramental life of the church
- are keen to build up the body of Christ and equip members for their ministries
- have a deep sense of pastoral care for all God's people
- are enthusiastic about the church's mission
- have leadership qualities and skills in communication
- are prepared to commit to life-long learning and formation for ministry, and
- accept the doctrine and oversight of the Uniting Church.

Ministers of the Word are communicators. They lead worship and preach the gospel, lead Bible studies and prepare people for baptism, confirmation and marriage. In local congregations and agencies of the Church, they teach the faith and give theological leadership in a secular world.

Ministers of the Word are celebrants. They regularly celebrate the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion within congregations and other settings and are authorised to marry couples.

Ministers of the Word are pastors. They provide pastoral care to people in congregations, chaplaincy settings or the wider community. They guide people in their Christian discipleship and offer them spiritual counsel.

Ministers of the Word are leaders. They help discern gifts in others, offering education and training in their particular ministries. They provide leadership in the missionary challenges of our time.

They work with a team of local leaders including the Elders and Church Councillors.

Ministers of the Word may serve in congregations, chaplaincy, and other settings. They are accepted as equal colleagues with Deacons.

If through your Period of Discernment (POD), you believe God may be calling you to be a Minister of the Word, then you need to fill in the Application Form for ordained ministries and submit to the Candidates for the Ministries Committee who will seek references from your minister, Church Council and other referees and then interview you. If they affirm your calling for this ministry they will refer your application to the Synod Selection Panel, who will make the final decision on your application.

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The heart of my ministry is relational

Planning and leading worship, preaching, teaching and resourcing, collaborating with and mentoring lay leaders, exercising pastoral care, community outreach and service, organisational leadership, strategic planning - these are parts of my role as a Minister of the Word, within a gathered faith community (like a school or a church). I enjoy doing all these things. However, the heart of my ministry is relational - being welcoming and available, meeting people where they are, listening and journeying with people through joys and sorrows, encouraging and supporting people in their faith and their gifts for ministry and mission. What I do grows from the relationships formed with those I serve.



Rev Claire Pickering

Minister of the Word, Mount Pleasant Uniting Church

Enormously Rewarding

As a Minister of the Word in country Australia, I get to live in the type of community where popping down to the IGA supermarket often turns into four or five conversations. We live close to one another and so we are affected when life is good and when it is not. My work permits me the enormous privilege of witnessing life and death; I get to be present in times of conflict and reconciliation; I mark growth and weep over loss.



I am tasked with encouraging and equipping fantastically gifted partners on the adventure of life. Together with members of the community, we constantly discover that God is always working 'behind the scenes' and we meet Jesus in the strangest places. It is enormously challenging, and it is enormously rewarding. It really is the best thing I can think of to do with my life.

19

Rev Stephen van Schalkwyk

Minister of the Word, Wagin Uniting Church

God, what are you asking me to do?

This might be the question in your mind as you read through these pages. It is a question asked by millions of people over thousands of years. For its members, the Uniting Church offers a Period of Discernment (POD). At the heart of this process is the understanding that all who have been baptised are called into the ministry of Jesus Christ. The essence of the Period of Discernment is to discern where that ministry lies. It aims to:

- develop your relationship with God and your understanding of yourself as a disciple
- give you opportunities to understand God's ministry and mission in the church and the world, the variety of ministries within that ministry, and the nature, function and responsibilities of these ministries
- recognise, affirm and build upon your skills, knowledge and experience that you bring to the church, and
- enable both you and the church to discern confidently your gifts and graces for ministry, and the type of ministry in which these may be expressed in the life of the church and the wider community.

To participate you need to be a confirmed member, member in association or adherent in good standing in a congregation or faith community in the Uniting Church in Australia. If you want to embark on this journey of discovery, here are the steps to take:

- Read the Period of Discernment Handbook at unitingchurchwa.org.au/workwithus/candidating/.
- Register for participation in the Period of Discernment through your minister or Church Council any time of the year.
- The Candidates for the Ministries Committee (CMC), in consultation with you, will appoint a Mentor.
- In consultation with the Mentor, you will develop a Discernment Plan. That plan is lodged with the Candidates for the Ministries Committee.
- CMC will appoint a Contact Person for you who will keep in touch with you to monitor your progress on the Period of Discernment.
- When you have completed your POD you lodge a Portfolio Statement which summarises your learnings with CMC and they will arrange to meet with you. After this a Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of POD will be issued.

Request for information

I would like to receive more information on the following:
(please tick all boxes that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training for Lay Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Becoming a Deacon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Becoming a Lay Preacher | <input type="checkbox"/> Becoming a Minister of the Word |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Becoming a Pastor | <input type="checkbox"/> Period of Discernment |

Specifically, I would like to know:

I am requesting prayers and support in discerning what steps to take.

- I am exploring a call and would like to talk to someone about it
- I know someone whom I would like to encourage to consider a call
- My congregation needs assistance in helping members discern their gifts and calling

Name: _____

Congregation/Faith Community: _____

Postal Address: _____

Phone No: _____

Email Address: _____

Please scan and email to: candidates.ministry@wa.uca.org.au

Directory

Commission for Education for Discipleship and Leadership (CEDAL)

Chair: Rev Claire Pickering

Phone: 0418 930 824

Email: clairepick7@gmail.com

Director of Education and Formation and Principal of Perth Theological Hall

Contact: Rev Dr Anne Wright

Phone: 0434 578 015

Email: anne.wright@wa.uca.org.au

Personal Assistant to the Director of Education and Formation

Phone: 9260 9800

Email: pa.education@wa.uca.org.au

Candidates for the Ministries Committee

Chair: Rev Bev Fabb

Phone: 0429 777 992

Email: candidates.ministries@wa.uca.org.au



Uniting Church in Australia
Western Australia

📍 85-89 Edward Street, Perth WA 6000 ☎ (08) 9260 9800

✉ reception@wa.uca.org.au 💻 unitingchurchwa.org.au