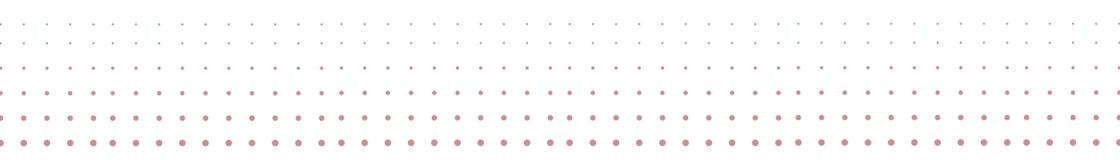




Called by Name



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



If you're reading this you are probably contemplating ministry options in the Uniting Church. Ministry is unlike any other profession as it is described as a calling. Young or old, that sense of call will keep you fixed on your goal because the journey can be rather challenging.



Nearly 50 years ago I received a call to ministry in rather exceptional circumstances. That experience set me on a path to ordination. I was 20 years old. The call came at a time in my life of great upheaval. My mother had been killed in a motor vehicle accident several months before. My local Methodist Church held a confirmation class which I decided to participate in which had a profound effect on me. And I had a rather extraordinary, deeply moving experience I could not ignore.

Alone in my room I had an overwhelming sense of God's presence which propelled me to ask the minister of my local church about becoming a Minister in our denomination.

The way ahead for me was made so clear that there was no other option. I remember being asked by the interviewing panel at the age of 21 what I would do if I was not accepted. My reply would shape me for the rest of my life – call it brash youth or arrogance – I was so sure of the pathway I was to take that there was never any thought I would be refused.

Not every person has such a profound call to ministry. This was my pathway. It was not necessarily straightforward either. My early life experiences were much like the call of Moses.

Moses' birth story was something of a miracle. His was born at a time of persecution of the Jewish slaves in Egypt.



They were flourishing as a people so much so that their success became a threat to the powers that be. Out of fear the rulers purged the Hebrews by setting about to kill all the infants. Moses escaped murder by a crafty deception by his family. Brought up in the royal household as a royal he saw first-hand the excesses of the brutal suppression of the Hebrew people.

Out of anger he lashed out at a guard beating a Hebrew slave to death. Moses had to flee for his life escaping death.

Fast forward to his 70's, Moses is in the wilderness tending sheep when he encounters a burning bush. Out of that bush came the voice of God giving Moses a task he tried very hard to avoid – return to Egypt and demand the release of the Hebrew slaves. Moses objects that he was a fugitive from justice, that he had a terrible stutter and, by the way who are you to send me? All these excuses were each dismissed and Moses was set on a quest to rewrite history.

For me, there are never any chance encounters. God's call on our lives is deliberate and intentional.

The Uniting Church provides for a 12 month period of discernment which allows that call to be tested and validated. You are given time to contemplate your journey, to test your call, to raise objections and to duck and weave with all the excuses under the sun.

At the end of that process you will know if this is God's call on your life. Take the plunge, risk the challenges to test whether this is right for you.

You will not be disappointed.

Rev David Jackson
Moderator, Synod of Western Australia

How do you know 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 engage in 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. Your ministry may be:

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

No ministry is more important 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, or 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 a call is not simply an individual conviction, but that it needs to be affirmed within the fellowship of God's people of faith.

The Presbytery of WA has a Period of Discernment Handbook which explains how to apply to begin a POD and what is involved in the process. This can be found on the Exploring Ministry page of the UCWA website at

<https://unitingchurchwa.org.au/education-formation/exploring-ministry/> or email the Chair of CMC - candidates.ministry@wa.uca.org.au

A stimulating and humbling experience



Over the last year, I have had many opportunities to reflect on my faith, the church, and the future of Christianity, while learning from ministers, lay leaders, and members of several Uniting Church congregations. This has been a spiritually stimulating experience.

I'd strongly encourage anyone else interested in deepening their faith to undertake a Period of Discernment with the Uniting Church. As I consider the sincere faith and wisdom of those around me I feel humbled, and I'm quite confident that I still have a lot to learn. But this period has furnished me with new tools, knowledge and a strong passion to serve the church. Though I cannot know what lies ahead, I am ready to embrace the opportunities that God presents to me.



Conrad Dixon

Completed POD 2025

Swept off in unexpected directions!



I began my Period of Discernment (POD) not knowing what to expect. The only thing I felt certain of was that I did not see myself being ordained. Yet the Lord swept me off my feet, surprised me, and carried me in unexpected directions, even as I now offer myself up for candidature for ordination! During the POD, I was

extremely blessed to have a mentor who was always available to listen, pray, share stories, offer insights and broaden my thinking without pushing me towards any direction. I also appreciate the POD retreats which offer spaces for us to focus our reflections, as well as to connect with others on this journey of discovery and being surprised by God.



Jun Yi (Kevin) Koay

Completed POD 2025

Where is God leading me?



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 and evangelism 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
- providing pastoral care
- developing mission programmes, church planting, and nurturing disciples of Christ
- 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
- 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 licensed by the Presbytery.

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

Called to serve



God's caring love and faith have been part of my life from the day I was born. But when I was about 12 years of age, I had a very extreme experience that taught me that God is indeed close to me and can speak clear language if necessary. That had such a profound impact on me that I chose a more conscious path in faith, following Jesus.



At the end of my high school years, my father gave me the advice that people with a title are better recognised in this world. As a rebellious teenager, I knew better. I still believe, status and wealth alone do not make a better person. A humble service in faith has nothing to do with my own ego. I see my life more as a servant.

I believe everybody has gifts from God and there is a purpose in everybody's life no matter what the ability. The question is, do we hear God's call and if we do, do we want to follow it? Can I truly let go of my own agenda and wishes?

Following God's call is interesting, very rewarding and gives my life a purpose and hope. Sharing God's love and help others finding their path makes it even better.

Together, we are the body of Christ. And together, we are much stronger.

Monika Cowell

Elder and Church Councilor of Spearwood Uniting Church

Leader of mission activities of the congregation

Passionate about Fresh Expressions of church

Member of Thrive Mission Committee

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
- 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 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*.



The Candidates for Ministries Committee (CMC) will refer you to the Uniting Centre for Education and Formation (UCEF) who will advise you what courses you need to undertake to develop your skills for preaching and leadership of worship. 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.

For more information

The Lay Preacher Handbook can be found on the Exploring Ministry page of the UCWA website - <https://unitingchurchwa.org.au/education-formation/exploring-ministry/> or email the Chair, CMC - candidates.ministry@wa.uca.org.au

Email Rev Andy Broadbent from the Uniting Centre for Education and Formation to find out what courses are offered for Lay Preachers - andy.broadbent@wa.uca.org.au



Helping people to encounter God



I have found the most wonderful and meaningful experience of being a Lay Preacher is the awesome privilege of sharing with people encountering God through His eternal words. To know that people are being comforted, encouraged and challenged through hearing the gospel. Maybe you too have a passion for the proclamation and hearing of God's word? A desire to serve God in a new way that will bless others? What are others saying to you about this? Through the high responsibility of lay preaching I have constantly seen and deeply valued God's loving provision for all that needs to be prepared and delivered. I have truly learned that everything God calls us to, He also equips us for.



Michael Roberts

Lay Preacher, Fremantle Uniting Church

Diving deeply into the word of God



One of the things I most love about being a Lay Preacher, apart from meeting awesome people at different congregations, is the opportunity it provides to dive deeply into the word of God. Preparing a service gives me an amazing chance to learn and grow within myself as a Christian. It brings me closer to God and hopefully that comes out in the worship I prepare to help others to move closer to God also. It is great personal blessing to be engaged in serving the church in this ministry. I get to meet amazing people across the different congregations I go to and I love the opportunity it gives me to do this.



Carolyn Ebell-Taylor

Lay Preacher, Kalamunda Uniting Church

Is God calling you to be a Pastor?



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; as a Bush Chaplain with Frontier Services; 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 if they are in their current ministry location. The ministry of Pastor is not intended as a lifelong ministry.

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. You will also need to sign a Learning Agreement about your ongoing education.

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

For more information

Contact the Pastoral Relations Committee of the Presbytery of WA to find out what Pastor positions are currently available - pmpastoral@wa.uca.org.au

Six years on...



It's hard to believe I'm now in my sixth year serving as a Pastor with the Uniting Church in Western Australia. What a journey it's been - full of joy, sorrow, growth, and grace. I'm so grateful for the privilege.



Early on, I thought Pastors mainly preached sermons and led church services. While that's part of the role, I've come to see it's far more. Jesus never meant the church to be confined to four walls. We are the church - called to be out in the community, walking with people through every season of life.

Some moments are deeply joyful. Others are heartbreaking. I led my first funeral just two months into this role. It was daunting, but God gave me strength - and has continued to, again and again.

Pastoral work is everywhere. When I go into schools, I bring joy through music. When I visit nursing homes, I bring comfort through presence. Preaching is a small part of the calling. The heart of it is living with compassion and purpose - encouraging those in the church, and reaching out to those still searching.

“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.”

Jeremiah 3:15 (KJV)

Lindsay Ginn

Pastor

**Bush Chaplain with Frontier Services
Goldfields Patrol, based in Kalgoorlie**

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
- 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 develop new ministries. They build bridges between the church and the community, spreading the good news of Christ in the community.

Deacons are carers who stand with people who struggle, offering encouragement and support. Deacons serve in ministry with elderly people, refugees, homeless people, young people and people with disabilities. Being a Deacon is about reaching out to others with compassion.

Deacons are prophets who name and challenge injustice and prejudice, take a stand against hatred and violence, promote peace and reconciliation, and educate and inspire the whole church to work for justice, peace and care of the environment.



Deacons may serve in community service agencies, schools, universities, prisons, hospitals, 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 begin formation with the Uniting Centre for Education and Formation (UCEF). This will involve academic theological study, practical ministry placements, 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.

For more information

The Application to Candidate form can be found on the Exploring Ministry page of the UCWA website - <https://unitingchurchwa.org.au/education-formation/exploring-ministry> or email the Chair, Candidates for the Ministries Committee (CMC) - candidates.ministry@wa.uca.org.au



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 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 Uniting Church Applecross

Re-building hope and meaning amid brokenness



I work as a hospital chaplain at King Edward Memorial Hospital, supporting individuals and families grieving pregnancy loss due to miscarriage, stillbirth, and other complications. Each encounter holds sacred weight, as I offer comfort, presence, and non-judgmental listening in moments of profound sorrow.

Working outside the church allows me to meet people who are diverse in belief, background, and experience. I strive to honour each story, helping to rebuild meaning and hope amid brokenness. I also walk with medical staff as they navigate the emotional and ethical complexities of their work and personal lives. In this scattered community, I witness strength, vulnerability, and the quiet power of human connection beyond traditional spiritual boundaries.



Rev Ana Lea'aetua, Deacon

Chaplain, King Edward Memorial Hospital

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



You may 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
- 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 other settings, 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.

If you are accepted as a candidate for ordination, you will then enter the Uniting Centre for Education and Formation for academic theological study, practical ministry placements 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.

For more information

The Application to Candidate form can be found on the Exploring Ministry page of the UCWA website - <https://unitingchurchwa.org.au/education-formation/exploring-ministry> or email the Chair, Candidates for the Ministries Committee (CMC) - candidates.ministry@wa.uca.org.au



Called to grow disciples and care for God's family



As a Minister of the Word, I am conscious of where people are in their faith journey. It has been an incredible, rewarding privilege to prayerfully journey alongside these people to encounter Jesus and deepen their relationship in a way meaningful to them as led by God's spirit.



Creating a safe worship space, discipling others, empowering people for their God given ministry, and pastoral care is the heart of most of what I do in my current placement. Moreover, sensitivity to people's pastoral needs and making intentional connections for people to feel as part of God's family is the heart of God's ministry I have been called into, and this for me is achieved through prayer, discernment and teamwork. I believe we are all called into God's ministry, and He is always waiting to hear your *"Here I am Lord."*

Rev Samuel Annan
Minister of the Word, Rockingham Uniting Church

Each day is a celebration of God's call and grace



You know, sometimes, we don't always know what God is doing with our lives. Well, at least that's how I quite often feel! Especially as I drive off from home, heading out to the far reaches of the Midwest supporting in pastoral and spiritual care, or worshipping and serving in my home town of Dongara.



Yet, I have known a deep sense of God's call, grace, and action in my life. Each day is a celebration of that continued journey of honouring God's call, of being who God calls me to 'be', open to joy, service, and adventure. God calls me to where tears, fears, hopes and dreams are spoken of, to celebrate the sacraments, to preach God's Word of love and promise, to grow trust and faith.

We are the means God has chosen to extend his love and grace. There are no boundaries within God's mercy, no one outside God's mercy. This truth has the power to change lives...to give life. To be invited to bear the yoke with Jesus, is an extraordinary compliment, an act of faith in us, on Jesus' part. I am honoured to be serving in ministry.

Rev Erica (Ric) Payne

Minister of the Word, Dongara Uniting Church

Disaster Recovery Frontier Services Bush Chaplain, Midwest WA

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 POD 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
- 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 <https://unitingchurchwa.org.au/education-formation/exploring-ministry>
- Register for participation in the POD at 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 CMC.
- CMC will appoint a contact person for you who will keep in touch with you to monitor your progress on the POD.
- 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.

Directory of Contacts



Candidates for Ministries Committee

Chair: Rev Bev Fabb

Phone: 0429 777 992

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

Uniting Centre for Education and Formation (UCEF)

Education and Resources Co-ordinator: Rev Andy Broadbent

Phone: 0423 316 373

Email: andy.broadbent@wa.uca.org.au

Request for information



I wish to receive more information on the following:

(please tick all boxes that apply)

Training for Lay Leadership

Becoming a Deacon

Becoming a Lay Preacher

Period of Discernment

Becoming a Pastor

Becoming a Minister of the Word

Specifically, I would like to know (please write below):

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

I am exploring a call and wish to talk to someone about it.

I know someone whom I wish 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: _____ Email: _____



Uniting Church in Australia
Western Australia



08 9260 9800



unitingchurchwa.org.au



candidates.ministry@wa.uca.org.au



85-89 Edward St, Perth WA

