

THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF FREDERICTON



A Layreader Guide

*Worshipping together as followers of Jesus —
sharing hope and help in our communities and beyond*



Exploring a Call to Layreader Ministry



The main purpose of layreaders as worship leaders is to set a ‘tone of grace.’ In doing so, they support the congregations’ worship and the ministry of the clergy. Being part of the layreader ministry provides an opportunity to serve the church, experience personal spiritual growth and connect the worship experience with those in attendance. As such, in order to set a ‘tone of grace,’ those in the layreader ministry owe it to God, each other, and the church community to take the responsibility seriously, prepare well, and minister boldly.

Layreader Duties

The duties of a layreader vary according to parish needs and are at the direction of the local cleric. Typically layreaders read lessons, lead the prayers of the people, assist with communion, and after being appropriately trained, prepare and officiate services of Morning and Evening Prayer. For some layreaders, this may also include preparing and giving a homily or sermon. Layreaders are also active members in the parish, taking on leadership roles in Sunday school, Christian education, parish events, committees, training sessions or taking home communion to the sick or shut-ins with the bishop’s permission. First and foremost, layreaders are part of the parish team ministry and as such are also lay leaders.

What is ‘Team Ministry?’

Everyday, people are called to many different types of activities in a church community. In the Diocese of Fredericton, there are vocational deacons whose primary role it is to represent the ‘church to the community’ and the ‘community to the church.’ There are also readers or lectors who read scripture during services, chalice bearers who have been trained by clergy to assist with communion, and lay eucharistic assistants approved by the bishop to take home communion to shut-ins.

The parish priest or incumbent leads the ministry team in a parish. Their prime responsibilities include the spiritual concerns of the parish, overseeing the provision of worship services, and supervising and directing the team members.

What does that mean for you ?

We are all called to serve in many different ways, and part of exploring your lifelong journey with Jesus is discerning what you are called to do. You can do that by talking with your parish priest who can help you focus your call to God’s service.

Team Ministry

“Each parish functions as a unique unit but is also a significant partner within the greater dynamic ...the Diocese. Team ministry is an opportunity to identify the spiritual gifts of each lay person and clergy and to work together to the glory of God. “

Bishop David Edwards

“And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, and those with gifts of healing, helping, administration, and various tongues”.

1 Corinthians 12:28

Layreader-in-Training

A layreader-in-training is someone who, under the direction of the parish priest or archdeacon, has completed a time of discernment and been given the okay to start the layreader training process to become either a parochial or diocesan layreader. During training, this person is also licensed to begin learning the physical and spiritual duties of a layreader which include reading scriptures, officiating at services, administering the chalice, leading the prayers of the people and any other liturgical activities at the discretion of the parish priest.

Parochial Layreader

A parochial layreader is licensed in a parish by the bishop and offers layreader duties under the direction of the parish priest following an appropriate application and training process.

Diocesan Layreader

A diocesan layreader is licensed in the diocese by the bishop to offer layreader duties including leading services and delivering a homily or sermon. If required, they may be asked to travel to parishes requiring assistance with the approval of their parish priest, incumbent or archdeacon.



Layreader Licencing

A layreader is a layperson authorized by the bishop in the diocese to officiate at services of worship or take a leadership role in certain parts of a service. As with many things that we accomplish in life, a period of training is necessary, and with that, an approval process by a licensing body — the Diocese of Fredericton. Anglican layreaders are licensed by the bishop to a particular parish (parochial) or the diocese at large (diocesan) for a one-year term.

Layreaders licences are renewed annually following review and recommendation by the parish priest or archdeacon. The Warden of Layreaders provides administrative support for layreader applications for licencing and for annual renewals. The Warden of Layreaders also looks after the layreader training program developed for the diocese.

Layreader Training

Layreader training is part of an ongoing process as we continue to learn and grow spiritually in our lifelong journey with Jesus. If you are thinking about becoming a layreader or are already a layreader and wish to grow in your ministry, education modules are offered through the diocesan website nb.anglican.ca/layreaders. Start by talking with your parish priest or incumbent to develop a plan for your training and ongoing education.

The core elements of layreader education must include training in how to read scripture and liturgy in public, Anglican worship, biblical foundations, Christian doctrine, church history, leadership, and basic sermon preparation. You may already have studied some of these topics in other settings or your parish clergy may have developed training modules that cover these topics, both of which will fulfill the Diocese of Fredericton training requirements for licencing.



Frequently Asked Questions

As a layreader, what do I wear when assisting with services?

What is worn in each parish varies. Street clothes, white albs, as well as cassocks and surplices are all appropriate. Layreader medallions with varying coloured ribbons are worn by layreaders but not necessary when wearing street clothes unless so desired. A layreader scarf may be worn by a diocesan layreader. Follow the recommendation of your parish priest or incumbent.

How can I take the training courses?

Your parish priest may have a study program they prefer you to follow, or alternatively you may take the diocesan study modules (or both). At times, the diocese will offer continuing education days; otherwise you can access training modules on the diocesan website at nb.anglican.ca/layreaders. Small group training is encouraged or you can study by yourself.

Every layreader is a member of the ministry team in their parish.

Continuing to grow and learn spiritually is part of your lifelong journey with Jesus.



Layreaders from the Parish of Richmond at a diocesan layreaders workshop.

Talk to your parish priest or incumbent about discerning your call to service.

For information about the Diocese of Fredericton Layreader training program, or for other information, contact the Synod Office or the Warden of Layreaders at:

Diocese of Fredericton
Phone: 506-459 1801
office@anglican.nb.ca
<https://nb.anglican.ca/layreaders>

