

## **A MINISTERIAL 4 Lay Preaching**

1 It is important that those who regularly lead worship in their own and/or neighbouring Churches undertake at least a basic training and are formally recognised.

2 Some people sense a call to lead worship, and express a desire to do so, without any previous experience. In order to test their sense of call, they will require opportunities to share in leading worship alongside experienced worship leaders. If they and their call are affirmed by the congregation, training should follow.

3 Initially, candidates should speak to their own Minister(s) (Interim Moderator, Pastoral Advisor or Church Secretary in a vacancy) who should ensure that the candidate has had experience of leading worship, in a group or alone, and secure an introduction to the ALPC/AWLC. The following procedure and practice are accepted by the North Western Synod.

### **Before a person commences any training:**

4 The candidate should have been a member in good standing of a congregation within the United Reformed Church for at least one year.

5 The ALPC/AWLC should hold a meeting with the candidate and the candidate's minister, with a view to discerning the appropriate programme of training, the level of support available from the congregation, and the candidate's likely level of commitment to such training.

6 If it is deemed that a satisfactory outcome to this meeting has been achieved, the ALPC/AWLC will inform the appropriate Pastoral Committee accordingly, and also the Synod TLS Co-ordinator, specifically with regard to the training that the candidate has decided to undergo.

7 If the candidate elects to train for Assembly Accreditation, the normal application procedures for Training for Learning and Serving, or such other course denominationally approved for this purpose, will be followed. If the candidate elects to seek Local Recognition, he or she will be directed to the most convenient Course available (currently TLS LITE), and the possibility of support and mentoring explored. It is of great importance that the best possible support and mentoring is put in place.

### **During Training**

8 With both training scenarios, the undesirability of an excessive frequency of worship leadership will be emphasised, the priority being successful completion of the Course. Generally, the ALPC/AWLC is available for consultation in case of difficulties that may arise.

9 In the case of Local Recognition, arrangements will be made for two Assessed Services to be undertaken, normally at the middle and end of the Course. TLS Classic (the denominationally preferred route to Assembly Accreditation) has its own arrangements. Regard will be had to the guidance of the Ministries Department of the URC when planning and setting up the Services and the Assessment Panels.

10 Upon completion of the Course for Local Recognition, it will be for the Synod Educational and Learning Committee, on recommendation from the ALPC/AWLC, and on receipt of a resolution of commendation, as a Lay Preacher, from the student's own congregation, to authorise Local Recognition, or otherwise. With this category of Lay Preacher, as also with those achieving Assembly Accreditation, consideration will be given to an appropriate service of celebration.

11 All Lay Preachers are encouraged to undertake appropriate in-service training. This is

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available through many routes, including the URC's own activities, College of Preachers, University Departments, private reading. Situations and commitments vary, but it is essential that Lay Preachers seek and find a sustainable programme of personal development in this area.

12 Both categories of Lay Preacher will be included in the Synod Year Book, but only Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers are included in the Assembly Year Book.

### **GUIDELINES FOR FUNDING TLS CLASSIC – Foundation Course and subsequent courses.**

13 The TLS administration bills the student for the year's fees. A £100 reduction is given to students whose study is supported by their church meeting. Of the total amount, the Synod expects the student to contribute one third, which covers the cost of residential accommodation at TLS weekends. Another third should come from the students' pastorate. The remaining third will come from the Synod.

14 **The student's contribution.** The Synod TLS Organiser, who is able to make a special application to the Synod for additional assistance, will contact students during the application process to discuss their contribution.

15 **The pastorate's contribution.** The Synod believes that the pastorate will wish to contribute financially in order to help church members to develop their gifts and skills for the work of mission and the Synod TLS Organiser will contact the pastorate on the student's behalf.

16 **The Synod's contribution.** To access the Synod grant an application form should be filled in. These forms should be countersigned by the applicant's minister, or, in the case of those undertaking the course for the specific purpose of becoming an Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher, by the Synod Area Lay Preaching Commissioner / Worship Leadership Co-ordinator. The Synod TLS Organiser will arrange for this to be done.

17 **One-year courses.** People taking one of the one-year courses without having done the Foundation Course are not automatically eligible for a Synod grant. Enquiries about the possibility of a similar grant should be addressed to the Synod Training and Development Officer (Elders and members).

18 **Book Grants.** The Synod gives a £50 book grant each year to Synod-funded TLS students. This comes as a gift, without the need for an application, and is usually distributed in the autumn.