of providing an independent reference with respect to your suitability for this ministry.

All authorisations (whether initial or renewals) are also dependent upon you holding a valid Basic DBS Disclosure, and upon recent completion of the Church of England's 'Leadership' Safeguarding training.

After initial training

Following successful completion of your initial training requirements, the bishop's authorisation becomes renewable on a regular basis, every few years. This is conditional each time upon (i) the continued support of incumbent and PCC; and (ii) up-to-date DBS and safeguarding training (Leadership and Domestic Abuse Awareness). While further ministry-based training does not need to be *evidenced* for future renewals, ongoing learning is certainly encouraged.

What next?

First, explore things with your Incumbent. If they are happy to support you in exploring this ministry they will then need to (i) arrange a discernment conversation for you with a vocations adviser or area dean (as above), (ii) satisfy themselves that you will enjoy the support of your congregation and (iii) obtain formal approval of your PCC(s). At the same time, you should ensure that you have a current Basic DBS and are up to date with your Leadership safeguarding training.

Once all this is in place, your Incumbent will then be able to write to your area bishop asking for you to be authorised, at the same time confirming PCC approval, required safeguarding checks and that a satisfactory report from an external referee has been received. We wish you God's blessing as you explore this new area of ministry.

Further information

- authorised.ministry@oxford.anglican.org 01865 208257
- an Authorised Ministry Handbook is available on the diocesan website at: https://www.oxford.anglican.org/ministry/lay-ministry/authorised-ministry/

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DIOCESE of OXFORD
A Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world

Is God calling you to share in the ministry of your Local Church by

Preaching on a regular basis?

Want to learn more so you can grow in faith, discipleship and ministry?

DIOCESE of OXFORD
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Emerging patterns of Ministry

As the church grows and responds to needs of mission and ministry, more and more people are becoming involved in leading worship, and in preaching. In light of these welcome changes, the bishops are looking to respond to growing requests for greater local flexibility combined with appropriate Anglican order. So, in seeking to encourage and support both new and more established preachers, the diocese is committed to equipping all those engaging in this important ministry – whether in formal worship contexts, giving a talk at an 'All-age', 'Intergenerational' or 'Family' service or anything in-between.

Why 'authorised'?

Preaching has always been at the heart of the life of the church and a focus for its unity and its mission. With this comes a significant level of responsibility. This kind of ministry is not something you do on your own, but as part of a team of ministers led by and accountable to your Incumbent.

While the 'cure of souls' is shared between your incumbent and the bishop, your incumbent will have been discerning a preaching gift in you and encouraging you to develop this. The bishops wish to be linked with you in a real way as you begin to share this ministry in the church. They wish to offer you encouragement and support by giving you their blessing and authorising you to such ministries.

Authorisation is needed because preaching in Anglican churches is governed by Canon Law and normally restricted to those who hold a bishop's licence. So, while someone who preaches once or perhaps twice on a very occasional basis is fine, if you preach more often or more regularly than this, formal authorisation is needed in order to remain legal.

What will authorisation mean?

At first, you would receive a letter from your bishop giving you permission to preach in your parish or benefice for an initial period of up to two years. This means you can preach legally while also engaging with some initial training. During this time, you would become part of a team of ministers led by your Incumbent, to whom you would also be accountable.

Is training provided?

Absolutely! Preaching matters and we owe it to each other to fan the flame of God within us and nurture the gifts and skills with which we have been entrusted. However, the requirements for those authorised to preach are consciously designed for maximum flexibility and minimal burden.

The bishop's initial authorisation releases you to begin the training you need to complete. Essentially, this amounts to:

- attendance at an approved preaching course (with the option for an 'all age preaching' focus as appropriate)
- a 1500-word (or equivalent) assignment on preaching
- three sample sermons, with constructive feedback on each of these from a selection of people in your church
- completion of the Church of England's *Awareness of Domestic Abuse* safeguarding module (diocesan or online).

Sometimes training is best undertaken before starting a new ministry; but it can often be more beneficial when you have a little experience already under your belt. In this way you can learn *from* your experience and, also, at the same time, apply your learning *to* your experience.

How does all this fit in with the Parish?

While it is the bishops who authorise you to preach in your parish, they do so only at the specific request and agreement of both Incumbent and PCC(s). Your bishop will need to know that you have this level of support and that you will be part of a team with other ministers in your church. This team may also include associate or retired clergy, for example, or Licenced Lay Ministers. These will all have undergone significant training and, often, will be licensed to minister in various ways, not only in the parish but also more widely within the diocese.

Wider accountabilities

At the same time, the exercise of a public ministry of this nature brings with it accountabilities to the wider church. It is for this reason that you will be asked, as part of your selection for authorised ministry, to meet briefly with a vocations adviser or area dean (someone external to your parish or benefice) by way