DIOCESE OF
LONDON
KENSINGTON AREA

# EXPLORING YOUR CALLING

## A practical guide to Christian vocation

**Everyday Life • Community • Church • Lay • Licensed • Ordained**

*Companion guide to Nurturing the Call — Parish Toolkit*



**PRAY • EXPLORE • TRY • REFLECT • DISCERN**

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

# Start with the next faithful step

You do not need to read this guide from beginning to end. Begin with the opening pages, then explore the forms of vocation that raise questions for you. Pray, talk with others, try something appropriate and return to the reflection questions. This is not a checklist, and there is no timetable: the purpose is to help you discover the next faithful step.

**FOR PRINT AND SCREEN:** In the digital copy, use the contents links and live resource names. In print, use the page numbers and QR codes.

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WELCOME

# You do not need to know the destination before you begin

Christian vocation is larger than a church job. It is the shape of a life responding to God — in work, family, neighbourhood, church, public life, service and, for some, authorised or ordained ministry.

The Diocese of London explicitly describes vocation as the response of our whole lives to God, not simply becoming a priest or deacon. The Church of England likewise encourages people to explore both lay and ordained forms of service.

**THIS GUIDE IS FOR EXPLORATION, NOT SELECTION.**

Use it prayerfully. Try things. Talk with wise people. Notice what bears fruit. You are not required to decide on a role before you begin, and a faithful outcome may be “not now”, “something different”, or a clearer calling in everyday life. You do not need to know the destination: the next faithful step is enough.

## Five movements for discernment

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **PRAY** | Bring the question to God before trying to solve it. |
| 2 | **EXPLORE** | Learn about several forms of service, not only the one you first imagined. |
| 3 | **TRY** | Take a safe, bounded opportunity to serve and see what happens. |
| 4 | **REFLECT** | Pay attention to joy, resistance, fruit, feedback, limits and cost. |
| 5 | **DISCERN** | Test what you are hearing with the Church and agree the next faithful step. |

ROLE EXPLORER

# There is more than one way to respond to God's call

These are not rungs on a ladder. Lay ministry is not a waiting room for ordination, ordained ministry is not a "higher" vocation, and a season of waiting is not failure. Explore the forms of service that fit the gifts God is growing in you, the people you are being drawn to serve and the needs of the world around you.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **EVERYDAY LIFE** | **Work • family • neighbourhood • public life** | Where faith shapes how you live and serve every day |
| **PARISH LEADERSHIP** | **Churchwarden • PCC • treasurer • safeguarding • administration** | Governance, stewardship, organisation and local mission |
| **CHILDREN & YOUTH** | **Volunteer • youth/children leader • apprentice • paid ministry** | Discipleship, formation, schools and mission with younger people |
| **PASTORAL & CHAPLAINCY** | **Pastoral care • visiting • lay or ordained chaplaincy** | Presence, listening, spiritual care and accompaniment |
| **TEACHING & WORSHIP** | **Small groups • worship leadership • Licensed Lay Ministry** | Teaching, preaching, worship, formation and pastoral care |
| **MISSION & PIONEERING** | **Evangelist • pioneer • missionary** | Sharing faith and creating new Christian community |
| **RELIGIOUS LIFE** | **Traditional • new monastic • dispersed community** | Prayer, community, service and a rule of life |
| **ORDAINED MINISTRY** | **Distinctive deacon • priest • self-supporting ministry** | Public, accountable ministry of word, sacrament, service and mission |
| **WAITING & FORMATION** | Prayer • learning • recovery • deeper discipleship | A faithful season of preparation can itself be part of vocation |

START HERE

# A gentle way to begin: five movements

Discernment is not a timetable. Return to these movements as often as needed. Begin not with "Which title fits me?" but with "Where is God already at work, and what might be the next faithful step?"

| Movement | A first step |
|---|---|
| **1 PRAY — Listen** | Bring the question to God. Pray with 1 Samuel 3:1–10, John 10:27 or Romans 12:3–8, and note what keeps returning. |
| **2 EXPLORE — Ask** | Speak with people who know you in different contexts. Ask what gifts and fruit they see, and learn about more than one form of service. |
| **3 TRY — Practise** | Choose one safe, bounded opportunity to serve, with clear supervision and freedom to stop or change direction. |
| **4 REFLECT — Review** | Notice what gave life, what was difficult, what others received, what feedback you heard and what you are learning. |
| **5 DISCERN — Next step** | Test what you are hearing with the Church and agree the next faithful step — including waiting, redirecting or stopping. |

GROUNDING

# Vocation begins with God

You do not have to manufacture a vocation. Christian discernment is not a hunt for the perfect title; it is a way of becoming more attentive to the God who already knows, calls and sends. Your part is to listen, pray, test what you are noticing, receive the wisdom of others and take the next faithful step.

**A LIBERATING TRUTH**

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." — 1 Corinthians 3:6

Vocation is God's work before it is ours. Curiosity, uncertainty, waiting and redirection can all belong within faithful discernment.

## Theological companions

Rowan Williams, in Being Christian, roots Christian identity in the ordinary practices of baptism, Scripture, Eucharist and prayer. Discernment begins in discipleship before it becomes a question about a role.

Gordon T. Smith's Consider Your Calling encourages discernment that attends to what God is doing, who you are, your stage of life, your circumstances, cost and fear — the whole texture of a real life.

## A prayer for discernment

God who calls,
you created us, know us, love us,
and call each one of us by name.

Help us to hear your voice
amidst the noise and busyness of life,
to trust that your grace is enough,
and to say yes to wherever you may lead.

Give us eyes to recognise your gifts in others,
words that offer courage and encouragement,
and patience to walk alongside those
who are wondering what you might be asking of them.

Make us generous in releasing one another
to become the people you have called us to be,
so that the whole people of God
may see your Kingdom come,
and serve your world with joy.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Prayer by the Rt Revd Dr Emma Ineson, Bishop of Kensington*

DISCERNMENT

# A vocation compass: eight questions worth returning to

1. Where do I notice God drawing my attention repeatedly?
2. What gives me deep energy or “holy restlessness”, even when it is demanding?
3. What gifts do other people consistently recognise in me?
4. Who am I especially drawn to serve — and whose needs move me to action?
5. Where have I already seen fruit rather than simply enthusiasm?
6. What responsibilities can I carry reliably, collaboratively and safely?
7. What would this calling ask of my work, relationships, family, time and finances?
8. If a particular title disappeared, what kind of service would I still feel called to offer?

## Who can help me discern?

| God & Scripture | Trusted Christians | Parish / church community | Mentor / spiritual director | Diocesan / specialist adviser |
|---|---|---|---|---|

No one voice owns your vocation. Look for convergence across prayer, community, real experience and wise counsel.

## A simple reflection after any ministry experience

- What happened?
- What gave me energy or joy?
- What was difficult or draining?
- Where did I notice God at work?
- What did other people receive?
- What feedback did I hear?
- What should I try next — more, less, differently, or not again?

ENCOURAGEMENT

# When someone sees something in you

Many vocations begin because another Christian notices something before we have language for it ourselves. Their encouragement matters — but it is evidence to explore, not a verdict you have to obey.



*Vocation is often recognised in ordinary service, relationships and shared life.*

## Receive encouragement with curiosity

- What exactly did the person notice — character, fruit, skill, desire or the way others respond to me?
- Have other people, in different parts of my life, noticed something similar?
- Did their words bring freedom and curiosity, or did I feel pressured to fulfil someone else's expectation?
- Where have I already seen evidence of this gift in practice?
- What is one small, safe way I could explore it further without deciding the outcome in advance?

**REMEMBER**

A trusted person may help you hear God more clearly, but no one person owns your vocation. Healthy discernment welcomes several voices, real experience, prayer and freedom.

REAL LIFE

# Vocation has to be lived in a real life

Calling is never discerned in the abstract. Relationships, caring responsibilities, work, finances, health, disability, geography, immigration status, stage of life and church context can all shape how a vocation is explored and lived. A practical difficulty is not automatically evidence that you are not called. Sometimes discernment includes discovering what support, timing or form of vocation makes a faithful response possible.

**Relationships & caring**

Who else is affected by this possibility? What needs to be discerned together?

**Work & finances**

What would change practically? What can be tested before a major decision?

**Health, disability & access**

What support or reasonable adjustments would help you explore and serve well?

**Place & legal status**

Do geography, travel, housing or immigration arrangements shape the possible route?

**Stage of life & timing**

Is this a season to act, prepare, wait, recover, learn or deepen existing responsibilities?

**Church & community**

Which trusted voices can help you test whether the call is fruitful and recognised?

## Let the Church's calendar create space to listen

The calendar can offer natural moments for prayer without turning discernment into a deadline. Vocations Sunday (the Fourth Sunday of Easter) invites the whole Church to reflect on God's call. The traditional Ember Days are also set aside for prayer for lay and ordained ministries and for vocations. Pentecost, Advent and Lent can provide further seasons for listening, surrender and renewed attentiveness.

**NOT A DEADLINE**

Use these seasons as invitations to pray, listen and talk — not as dates by which you must have reached certainty. God's call is not governed by an application calendar.

# 1. Everyday vocation — your calling may already be where you are

The Diocese of London stresses that vocation is usually broader than a recognised church role. Your workplace, family, profession, neighbourhood, volunteering, creativity, citizenship and relationships can all become places where your discipleship takes visible shape.

### Everyday faith and public discipleship

**Work • home • community • profession**

**What it may involve:** Living as a Christian in the places where you already spend your life; serving the common good; noticing how your skills and convictions meet real human need.

**Try before you decide:**

- Keep a one-week "where did I notice God?" diary.
- Ask how your work or community involvement could become more intentionally life-giving.
- Take one practical action beyond your job description that serves people or builds justice, peace or flourishing.

**Talk to:** A trusted Christian, workplace mentor, small-group leader or vicar

**Official resource:** Church of England: Everyday Faith

# 2. Parish leadership and governance

### Churchwarden and PCC leadership

**Lay leadership • governance • mission • stewardship**

**What it may involve:** Churchwardens are senior lay representatives in parish life; PCC members share responsibility for the whole mission of the parish. Other roles include secretary, treasurer, safeguarding and administration.

**Try before you decide:**

- Shadow a churchwarden through a typical month.
- Attend an appropriate PCC discussion or help with a defined mission/building/stewardship project.
- Ask a current role-holder what gives life, what is difficult, and what accountability the role carries.

**Talk to:** Your vicar, churchwardens and current PCC officers

**Official resource:** Church of England: Churchwarden & parish officer

# 3. Children, young people and families ministry

You may be drawn to help younger people encounter Christ, grow in faith and find their own voice and calling. This can begin as a parish volunteer and develop into paid ministry, apprenticeship, schools work, youth leadership or a wider CYPF vocation.

## Children & youth ministry

**Volunteer • team leader • schools ministry • apprentice • paid role**

**What it may involve:** Creating safe, relational environments where children and young people can belong, explore faith, participate, serve and grow as disciples.

**Try before you decide:**

- Join a team through the parish's safer recruitment process.
- Shadow an experienced leader and help plan one age-appropriate session.
- Ask young people what helps them feel known, heard and able to contribute.

**Talk to:** Your vicar, safeguarding lead and parish CYPF leader

**Official resource:** Church of England: Youth and children's minister

### Two structured routes worth knowing

The Church of England's Future Youth strand sits alongside MES for 18–29s who want to explore children, young people and families ministry. In London, the Apprentice Programme helps churches raise up and train new children and youth workers from within their communities.

**Diocese of London: Children, Young People and Families**

**Diocese of London: Growing Younger**

**Church of England: Ministry Experience Scheme / Future Youth**

**Safeguarding is part of vocation, not an add-on**

Roles involving children, young people or adults at risk must follow local safer recruitment, training, supervision and DBS requirements where applicable. Never "try out" a regulated role informally.

**Diocese of London safeguarding links** — current guidance and role resources

# 4. Pastoral care and chaplaincy

Some vocations are recognised by a steady desire to be present with people in joy, crisis, transition, illness, grief, institutions or places where the church is not otherwise visible.

## Pastoral care

**Listening • visiting • bereavement • prayer • accompaniment**

**What it may involve:** Serving people with attentiveness, confidentiality and appropriate boundaries, usually as part of an accountable parish or chaplaincy team.

**Try before you decide:**

- Join a pastoral team with proper role definition and supervision.
- Shadow an experienced pastoral minister where appropriate.
- Reflect on whether people experience you as calm, trustworthy and able to listen without taking over.

**Talk to:** Your vicar, pastoral lead or chaplain

**Official resource:** Diocese of London: Non-ordained ministry roles

## Chaplaincy

**Schools • universities • hospitals • prisons • workplaces • armed forces and more**

**What it may involve:** Offering pastoral and spiritual care and a visible Christian presence within an institution or community. Chaplains may be lay or ordained.

**Try before you decide:**

- Speak to a chaplain in a setting that interests you.
- Ask whether observation, volunteering or an introductory visit is possible.
- Explore the professional or denominational requirements for that context.

**Talk to:** A practising chaplain, your vicar and the relevant institution

**Official resource:** Church of England: Chaplaincy

**Diocese of London: Chaplaincy** — London-specific overview and links

# 5. Licensed Lay Ministry and other lay ministries

Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs, historically called Readers) are trained and licensed by the bishop. In London they may serve in preaching, worship, adult formation, pastoral ministry, mission, youth and children's ministry, workplace ministry, chaplaincy and other specialisms.

## Licensed Lay Minister (LLM)

**Licensed public lay ministry**

**What it may involve:** Teaching and training others in the Christian faith; preaching and worship; leadership in mission and ministry; pastoral care and specialist contexts.

**Try before you decide:**

- Lead intercessions, a short reflection or Bible study and seek feedback.
- Observe an LLM in more than one setting.
- Consider the St Edmund's Courses if you want to deepen faith and theological understanding before or alongside discernment.

**Talk to:** Your vicar and the Area Warden of LLMs

**Official resource:** Diocese of London: Licensed Lay Ministry

### What the London process looks like

The formal LLM route normally begins with an informal conversation with your vicar, followed by contact with the local Area Warden, discernment, assessment and — if recommended — training. The diocesan site carries the current process and candidate documents.

**Current LLM discernment process and training**

**St Edmund's Courses and faith exploration**

**Church of England: Lay Minister / Reader**

# 6. Evangelism, pioneer ministry and missionary calling

If you are repeatedly drawn to people beyond existing church life, to sharing faith naturally, or to creating something new rather than maintaining what already exists, explore mission-shaped vocations.

## Evangelist

**Sharing the good news • helping others begin following Jesus**

**What it may involve:** Connecting the gospel with people's real lives through conversation, public communication, relationships, invitation and equipping others to share faith.

**Try before you decide:**

- Join or observe a parish evangelism initiative.
- Practise explaining your faith story simply and listen to someone else's questions.
- Explore Church Army or diocesan mission training if the call persists.

**Talk to:** Your vicar, a recognised evangelist or mission lead

**Official resource:** Church of England: Evangelist

## Pioneer ministry

**New Christian community • experimentation • listening • innovation**

**What it may involve:** Connecting with people beyond existing church and forming fresh expressions of Christian community. Pioneer ministry may be lay or ordained.

**Try before you decide:**

- Choose one community or network and spend time listening before starting anything.
- Run one small, time-bounded mission experiment with accountability.
- Ask what God is already doing there, rather than importing a ready-made model.

**Talk to:** Your vicar and a diocesan pioneer or mission adviser

**Official resource:** Diocese of London: Pioneer Ministry

**Church of England: Pioneer ministry**

**Church of England: Missionary work** — for local and overseas mission exploration

# 7. Religious life

Religious life is a vocation to prayer and service lived within a committed community or rule of life. It can include traditional communities, newer monastic communities and dispersed forms of commitment; members may be lay or ordained.

### Religious life

**Prayer • community • simplicity • service • rule of life**

**What it may involve:** A sustained pattern of attending to God and others through prayer, community commitments, hospitality and service. Different communities have different charisms and admission processes.

**Try before you decide:**

- Make a retreat or visit more than one community as a guest.
- Ask about an “alongsider” or residential guest opportunity where available.
- Notice whether the pattern of prayer and community feels like a deepening call rather than an escape from ordinary life.

**Talk to:** Your vicar or spiritual director and members of religious communities

**Official resource:** Church of England: Religious Life

### Give this time

Religious communities expect discernment to unfold slowly. Visiting, praying and experiencing the rhythm of a community are normally more illuminating than deciding from a website alone.

# 8. Ordained ministry — service, word, sacrament and mission

Ordination is one form of Christian vocation. In the Church of England, people may be called to the distinctive diaconate or to priesthood; some ordained ministers are stipendiary and others self-supporting. Chaplaincy and pioneer ministry may also be exercised by ordained people.

**THE FIRST STEP IN LONDON**

Speak with your parish priest, chaplain or equivalent. If they believe you are ready to explore ordained ministry formally, they may refer you into the diocesan discernment process. Do not self-select a training route before the Church has helped you discern the nature of the call.

## Four patterns to explore

| Path | What may be central | A useful experiment |
|---|---|---|
| **Distinctive deacon** | Service, presence at the margins, connecting Church and world, practical proclamation. | Serve in outward-facing ministry; read the diaconal sections of the Ordinal; speak with distinctive deacons. |
| **Priest** | Word, sacrament, pastoral oversight, leading and equipping communities in mission. | Shadow parish ministry; preach or teach with feedback; observe pastoral and sacramental ministry. |
| **Self-supporting priest** | Ordained sacramental and pastoral ministry integrated with employment, local context or another primary life setting. | Talk with SSMs about time, boundaries and workplace witness; test how ministry would integrate with the rest of life. |
| **Ordained chaplain / pioneer** | Ordained ministry expressed primarily in institutions, networks or new Christian communities. | Explore the actual context first; many chaplaincy and pioneer roles are also lay, so discern whether ordination is intrinsic to the call. |

PRACTICE

# Ways to test a gift — try something before a big decision

Vocation becomes clearer through real, bounded experience. Choose opportunities that genuinely serve others, include supervision and feedback, and can be stopped or changed without shame.

### Worship

Read, lead intercessions, welcome, plan one element of worship

### Teaching

Share testimony, facilitate discussion, lead a short Bible reflection

### Pastoral

Join an accountable team, shadow appropriately, learn listening and boundaries

### Mission

Join a community project, faith-sharing initiative or listening exercise

### Children & youth

Serve within safer recruitment arrangements, help plan and lead one session

### Leadership

Shadow a churchwarden/PCC officer, own a small project, report back

### Chaplaincy

Meet a chaplain, visit a context, volunteer where appropriate

### Pioneering

Run a small experiment after listening to a community or network

Workplace / everyday vocation
Ask a trusted Christian colleague or mentor to reflect with you on where faith, gifts and responsibility already meet in your daily life.

Governance / stewardship
Shadow a churchwarden, treasurer or PCC officer; take responsibility for one defined task and review what you learned.

**MISSION AND THE WHOLE BODY**

Lesslie Newbigin's mission theology reminds us that the Church exists within God's mission to the world, not for itself. John Stott's reading of Ephesians similarly resists a privatised faith and points to the Church as a community in which the whole body is built up for life and service. Try gifts where they can genuinely serve God's world and strengthen others.

## Afterwards, ask

- What did I learn about God, myself and other people?
- Was there fruit — not merely adrenaline or affirmation?
- What limits or formation needs became clearer?
- What did my supervisor or team notice, and is the next step to deepen, redirect, pause or stop?

# Questions to ask someone already doing the role

1. What first made you wonder that this might be your calling?
2. What does an ordinary week actually look like — including the unglamorous parts?
3. What gifts matter most in this ministry?
4. What do people often misunderstand about it?
5. What is life-giving? What is costly?
6. How did the Church test and confirm your calling?
7. What training, safeguarding, accountability or licensing is required?
8. How does this ministry affect family, work, money, time and relationships?
9. What would you recommend I try before taking a formal step?
10. Looking at me, what questions would you encourage me to explore?

### Interview across traditions and contexts

Do not build your picture from one person. If you are exploring priesthood, for example, speak with priests from different church traditions and settings. If you are exploring youth ministry, speak with a volunteer, a paid worker and someone in schools or community ministry.

## Questions to take to prayer

- What am I asking God to confirm because I have already decided?
- What outcome am I afraid of?
- Where is my desire becoming freer and more truthful?
- What form of service would remain faithful even if no title or status followed?

# What might indicate a call is becoming clearer?

- A desire that persists through prayer and ordinary life, rather than only at moments of excitement.
- Growing fruit: others are helped, strengthened, taught, cared for or drawn towards Christ.
- External recognition from people who know you well and are willing to be honest.
- A willingness to learn, receive feedback and change.
- Increasing realism about the cost, limits and accountability of the role.
- A deeper love of God and people rather than a stronger attachment to a title.

## Reasons to slow down and seek counsel

- You feel pushed into a role mainly because the church has a vacancy.
- You feel unable to say “no”, “not now” or “something else”.
- Exploration is becoming a promise of outcome rather than a genuine discernment process.
- Family, health, work, safeguarding or financial realities need proper attention.
- The role seems attractive chiefly because of status, escape or recognition.
- There is no opportunity for supervision, accountability or honest feedback.

### A pause can be faithful

Discernment is not a race. Stopping, waiting or discovering a different vocation can be a mature response to God.

YOU BELONG IN THE CONVERSATION

# Your story belongs in the Church's discernment of vocation

Your age, culture, ethnicity, class, disability, neurodivergence, education, accent, family circumstances, previous career or church tradition should not exclude your story from the Church's discernment of vocation. Practical barriers may need attention, but they should not be confused with the absence of calling.

### Ministry Mentor Directory

The Church of England provides an open-access mentor directory for people from historically under-recognised groups who are exploring or journeying towards lay or ordained Anglican ministry. Mentors are separate from the formal discernment process and are there to accompany you.

*The gifts of the whole people of God are discovered across ages, backgrounds and forms of service*

### BELONGING BEFORE ROLE

You do not need to resemble the people who currently hold a role in order to explore whether God may be calling you. Ask what support, mentoring or adjustments would help you participate freely and well.



Explore the Ministry Mentor Directory

## If you need adjustments or support

Name what would help you participate well. Ask early about accessibility, communication, learning needs, caring responsibilities or other practical barriers. Formal processes should be discussed with the relevant diocesan team rather than guessed at in advance.

# Stories can widen the imagination

The national Church's vocation pages include stories from lay and ordained ministers, including self-supporting clergy, distinctive deacons, chaplains and people in younger-ministry pathways. Use stories as windows, not templates: your vocation does not have to look like someone else's.

**Church of England vocation stories and resources**



*Use stories as windows, not templates.*
*Your calling does not have to look like someone else's.*

## Four questions to carry into someone else's story

- What part of their story resonates with something I am already noticing in my own life?
- What is different about their context, personality, responsibilities or route?
- What helped them test the call in practice rather than simply imagine it?
- What does their story free me to explore — without assuming I should copy their path?

**STORIES ARE FOR DISCERNMENT, NOT COMPARISON**

A faithful vocation may include waiting, resistance, redirection, ordinary work, hidden service or a form of ministry you had not first imagined. Let stories widen possibility rather than narrow it.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

# What am I noticing?

Use this page as a journal prompt, bring it to a mentor or spiritual director, or return to it after trying something new. You are not trying to prove a call. You are gathering what helps you listen faithfully.

**What keeps returning in prayer?**

**What gifts are other people naming?**

**What have I actually tried?**

**Where have I seen fruit?**

**What gave life — and what drained me?**

**What challenge, limit or formation need is becoming clearer?**

**Who else should I speak to?**

**What is my next faithful step?**

### THE NEXT FAITHFUL STEP IS ENOUGH

You may discover clarity, a need to wait, a different direction, or a call to deepen the life you are already living. Discernment is fruitful when it leads to greater truthfulness, freedom, love of God and service of others.

NEXT STEPS

# Who should I speak to next?

### EXPLORING WITH YOUR CHURCH?

Nurturing the Call is the companion resource for clergy, PCCs and parish leaders. It helps churches notice gifts, have healthy vocational conversations, create safe opportunities and accompany people without predetermining the outcome. Ask your parish leader to use it alongside this guide.

| Exploring | First conversation | Likely next step |
|---|---|---|
| **Everyday / workplace / community vocation** | A trusted Christian, mentor, small-group leader or vicar | Keep discerning through prayer, practice and reflection; no formal licence is required to live your baptismal vocation. |
| **Churchwarden / PCC / parish officer** | Your vicar and current role-holder | Learn the role, local election/appointment process, governance and any training requirements. |
| **Children & youth ministry** | Vicar, safeguarding lead and CYPF leader | Enter through safer recruitment; then explore training, apprenticeship, MES/Future Youth or paid roles as appropriate. |
| **Licensed Lay Ministry** | Your vicar, then Area Warden of LLMs | Use the current London LLM discernment and training process. |
| **Chaplaincy** | A practising chaplain and your vicar | Clarify whether the role is lay or ordained and what professional/institutional requirements apply. |
| **Pioneer / evangelist / mission** | Vicar and diocesan mission/pioneer contacts | Test the call through mission practice and explore lay or ordained routes only if needed. |
| **Religious life** | Vicar or spiritual director, then communities | Visit, retreat, pray and experience community before formal commitment. |

| Exploring | First conversation | Likely next step |
|---|---|---|
| **Ordained ministry** | Your vicar or chaplain | If they believe you are ready, they may refer you into the diocesan ordination discernment process. |

**Kensington Area**

For current Kensington Area contacts — including the Area Director of Ordinands and other diocesan officers — use the Kensington Office page rather than relying on an old printed email address.

**Current Kensington Area contacts**

OFFICIAL RESOURCES

# Start with these hubs

These links were checked against the Church of England and Diocese of London websites on 29 September 2026. Online pages can change, so the hubs below are the best starting points for current information. In the digital copy, click the resource names; in print, scan the QR codes. This guide does not replace formal eligibility, safeguarding, training, selection, licensing or ordination requirements.



**London Vocations**



**Church of England Vocations**



**London non-ordained roles**



**London parish ministry**



**MES / Future Youth**

## Useful starting points

| Diocese of London | Church of England |
|---|---|
| Vocations hub | Vocations |
| What is a Vocation? | Ministry Experience Scheme / Future Youth |
| Non-ordained ministry roles | Ministry Mentor Directory |
| Licensed Lay Ministry | Everyday Faith |
| Children, Young People and Families | Role pages: lay, chaplaincy, pioneer, religious and ordained |

## Four theological companions for deeper reflection

- Rowan Williams, Being Christian — baptism, Bible, Eucharist and prayer as the ordinary grammar of Christian life.
- Gordon T. Smith, Consider Your Calling — discernment attentive to God's action, identity, life stage, circumstances, cost and fear.
- Lesslie Newbigin, The Open Secret — Christian vocation located within God's mission to the world.
- John Stott, The Message of Ephesians — the gospel forms a community in Christ, not merely private spirituality.

A FINAL WORD

# Your next faithful step is enough

Vocation rarely becomes clear all at once. Often it emerges through prayer, responsibility, the needs of others, the encouragement of the Church and the patient testing of gifts over time.

You do not need to manufacture certainty. Bring what you have heard to God. Name what you have noticed. Take one proportionate step. Invite others to discern with you. Then pay attention to what grows.



**A prayer for discernment**

*Faithful God, you call each of us by name. Give me ears to hear, courage to explore, humility to receive wisdom, and freedom to follow wherever Christ leads. Show me the gifts you have entrusted to me and the people you are asking me to serve. Give me grace to take the next faithful step. Amen.*

Prepared for the Kensington Episcopal Area, Diocese of London. Designed to complement — not duplicate — the official Church of England and Diocese of London vocation resources.

**Revd Canon Folli Olokose | Lead Area Director of Ordinands**