



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
SUFFOLK

Lay Pioneers

Use your gifts to serve God and others in the name of Christ





Pioneering is about firsts. Being the first to lead ministry into new places for and with others. Pioneer ministers connect with people who are not yet part of any church, creating new ways of doing Church together in their community.

Better known Fresh Expressions include Messy church, café church and Wild church but Pioneers will create with local people something that helps them to follow Jesus.

They are leaders of innovation, with a gift for seeing what God is doing and responding creatively to it.


Growing in God

What are Pioneers?

Pioneers are people called by God who are the first to see and creatively respond to the Holy Spirit's initiatives with those outside the church; gathering others around them as they seek to establish new contextual Christian community.

Becoming licensed as a Pioneer brings:

- Affirmation of God's call by the wider church
- Tailored training and on-going support for your ministry
- Accountability for your vocation from your local church and/or the Lightwave community
- A learning community of others doing the same thing
- Opportunity to reflect as you go
- Financial support for training and on-going support.

Are you called to be a Lay Pioneer?

Maybe God is inviting you to join him in a mission adventure in your locality or community. Your starting point is to meet with your own vicar, chaplain or Lightwave leader to talk and pray with them about your sense of calling. Here are some areas to help you think about God's call to pioneer:-

Prayer

You are aware of relying on God and listening to God. You have a rhythm of personal prayer, worship, community and study which will enable God to sustain you in pioneering situations.

Innovation

You already respond to opportunities for mission around you, and this has already led to starting something new.

Making disciples

You share your faith with those outside the church and help them to grow in faith

Taking risks

Although you might sometimes feel afraid –you are willing to step out in faith to follow God’s call

Teamwork

You work collaboratively, creating or working with a team, equipping others and sharing responsibility.

Leading by example

Your way of life and your relationships reflect the grace of God, especially when you are dealing with uncertainty, conflict or challenging situations.

Faithful to the wider Church

You care about the wider church even while you are creating new forms and you are loyal to those in authority.

Learning

You are aware that you have lots to learn and are keen to learn more as you go, studying or reflecting with others on what God is showing you.

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My ministry is to pioneer and shape new relationships with the unchurched in the community with a hope to make church relevant to the community entrusted into our care.

I do this by encouraging and supporting the Church family to be mission and outward focused and alongside this I build relationships with the community and then bring the two together.

Diane Grano

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A Shared Discernment Process

If you want to explore further, arrange to meet with the pioneer vocations team below:- We will talk and pray about your current pioneering activities and begin more formal parts of the discernment process including:

- Support and frameworks you may need in current or future pioneering work
- What training, study or coaching may be helpful – the Church Army mentoring programme 'Envoy' joining the 'Formational Community for Churchplanters and Pioneers' and making an application on the lay licensed ministers form with references both from your Incumbent or Lightwave leader and from a participant in your pioneering role
- Receiving the support of your PCC
- Formal interview with either the Bishop of Dunwich, Archdeacon for Rural Mission or Director of Mission and Ministry after which a three-year renewable license (Canon E8.4) will be recommended if appropriate.
- DBS check and complete Safeguarding training, in line with Diocesan Safeguarding policy.

Training

Training is really important, but discernment is needed in finding the best kind of training for each pioneer. Remaining in context and ministry is important so that training can happen in dialogue with ministry. Training will not primarily be academic, but formational, helping the pioneer instill the practices of prayer, discernment, theological reflection and leadership that form the basis of this ministry. Each Pioneer gets a training allowance to support them.

In preparation for licensing, you will be supported in developing a Ministry Training Plan to continue in life-long training. This will help you identify appropriate tools to develop reflective practice and engage in learning with peers as well as receiving coaching and taught modules.

Initial training may be through the eight week Pioneer Envoy Community, focusing on the mission of God, understanding 'church' and building a team.

After licensing, you may want to engage in further learning for example specialist modules from CMS, or a learning community. All Licensed Ministers need to have a current Training plan, revised and adapted as you go.

Support and Accountability

Support and accountability is really important for pioneers. If your Pioneering ministry is contained within a Benefice you will normally be part of the Benefice Ministry team and supervised by your Incumbent. If the context is network-focussed over a wider area, the Bishop's Mission Order for Lightwave will provide an alternative framework.

Locally, you will write a working agreement with your supervisor to clarify expectations to help your ministry to flourish. This and your licence will be reviewed and considered for renewal every three years.

Opportunities to reflect with other pioneers will be provided through the Formational Community for Churchplanters and Pioneers. You will also have opportunities to learn and reflect with your pioneering team through one of the peer learning communities.

On occasions you would be expected to support the promotion of Pioneer Ministry and Fresh Expressions of Church in the Diocese.



For more information

Please visit our website pages for exploring your Christian calling available [here](#), where we also have a list of [key dates](#).

Or contact one of the Pioneer vocations team:

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