

Uniting Church Review of the Ministry of Lay Preacher Survey of Ordained Ministers

This survey is for Ordained Ministers of the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA). It is part of the Uniting Church in Australia's national review of the ministry of Lay Preacher. The survey is conducted by the Assembly Ministerial Education Commission (MEC). This review will help the UCA shape the ministry of Lay Preacher for the future and also help the church discern how to resource other lay leaders.

This survey is the second of three steps in the review. It is designed to gather information from Ministers of the Word on their perceptions of ministry lay people exercise in Uniting Congregations.

The review is considering the following areas about lay leaders:

- Roles and responsibilities
- Selection, training and accreditation
- Continuing education and resourcing
- Supervision and support

This survey will take 10-15 minutes to complete.

Data will not be personally identifiable in published findings. Information gathered under the auspices of this project will be held and protected by the Ministerial Education Commission.

Questions about this review can be directed to

MEC Lay Preacher Review

c/- Uniting College

34 Lipsett Terrace

Brooklyn Park SA 5032

Tel: 08-8416 8420

Email: mec@unitingcollege.org.au

An on-line version of this survey is available at

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/XXXXXXXXXXXXXX>

While we prefer you to complete the on-line version, if you are unable to, please complete this form and **return it to the above address by DATE**

Thank you for your participation.



A: PERSONAL DETAILS

1. Gender
 - Male
 - Female
2. Age
 - 20-29 years
 - 30-39 years
 - 40-49 years
 - 50-59 years
 - 60-69 years
 - 70+ years
3. Synod: _____
4. Presbytery: _____
5. What is the main language that you speak at home? (eg English, Korean, Tongan, etc)

6. What culture, race and/or language groups do you belong to?

7. Please enter your postcode _____

B: YOUR MINISTRY PLACEMENT

8. For how long have you been an ordained minister in ANY Uniting Church placement?
 - Less than 1 year
 - 1-2 years
 - 3-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-20 years
 - More than 20 years
9. For how long have you been in your current placement?
 - Less than 1 year
 - 1-2 years
 - 3-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-20 years
 - More than 20 years
 - I am retired from ministry (please indicate if you will complete this survey in regard to
 - your most recent placement OR
 - your current worshipping community)

10. What is the nature of your current placement OR if retired, what is the nature of your most RECENT placement?
 - Congregational
 - Chaplaincy in agency, residential facility or school (please specify) _____
 - Presbytery role
 - Synod role
 - Other (please specify) _____
11. If you are in a presbytery or synod role, please indicate briefly the nature of the role, and whether you serve a particular geographic region.

12. If you are resourcing more than two congregations within your presbytery, please indicate how many congregations you are serving:

13. In what location/s is your congregation, agency or "cluster" of congregations (if applicable) (Tick as many as apply)
 - City centre
 - City suburb
 - Regional centre (population 20,000+)
 - Large rural centre (popn 10,000-20,000)
 - Rural service centre (popn 2000-10,000)
 - Small rural town (population 200-2000)
 - Rural area (popn less than 200 people)
14. Language/s used in the worship services

15. Are there any other significant characteristics of these worshipping communities (eg culture, age, style)?

ANSWER QUESTIONS 16 AND 17 ONLY IF YOU ARE IN A CONGREGATIONAL OR CLUSTER PLACEMENT:

16. Average weekly worship attendance in each of the congregations in which you minister. (If more than one congregation, you may tick more than one box.)
- < 20 people
 - 50-74
 - 100-149
 - 200-349
 - 20-49
 - 75-99
 - 150-199
 - > 350 people
17. Approximately how many lay people regularly preach and/or lead worship in these congregations? (By "regularly" we mean at least every three months. By "lead worship" we mean leading most or all of the worship service.)
- Accredited Lay Preachers: _____
- Other lay people: _____

ANSWER QUESTIONS 18 AND 19 ONLY IF YOU ARE IN A PRESBYTERY PLACEMENT:

18. Average weekly worship attendance in each of the congregations over which you have oversight. (You may tick more than one box.)
- < 20 people
 - 50-74
 - 100-149
 - 200-349
 - 20-49
 - 75-99
 - 150-199
 - > 350 people
19. Approximately how many lay people regularly preach and/or lead worship in these congregations? (By "regularly" we mean at least every three months. By "lead worship" we mean leading most or all of the worship service.)
- Accredited Lay Preachers: _____
- Other lay people: _____

C: ROLE OF LAY WORSHIP LEADERS AND PREACHERS

The UCA Regulations define the ministry of Lay Preacher as follows:

2.8.2 A Lay Preacher is a member of the Church who is authorised to conduct services of worship in the Congregation in which such Lay Preacher holds membership and in any other Congregation to which the Lay Preacher may be invited by the Minister thereof.

20. Do the Lay Preachers who serve in your congregation/s, agency or presbytery perform additional duties as part of their role? If so, please indicate below. (tick all that apply)
- Provide pastoral care
 - Preside at sacraments
 - Conduct funerals
 - Celebrate weddings
 - Offer a teaching or education role
 - Organisational or administrative role
 - Other (please specify): _____
- _____
21. For what reasons are these additional duties expected or required. Tick as many as necessary.
- No ordained minister/s in close proximity
 - Ordained minister/s not readily available for other reasons (please specify) _____
 - Expectations of congregation or agency (please specify) _____
 - Expectations of wider community beyond the church (please specify) _____
 - Particular gifts of Lay Preacher/s
 - Lack of other suitable lay leadership
 - Other (please specify): _____
- _____

22. Please indicate your response to the following statements in relation to the accredited Lay Preachers with whom you share in ministry in your congregation/s or presbytery.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Our Lay Preachers are highly valued by the congregations whom they serve						
Our Lay Preachers are competent in worship leading and preaching						
Our Lay Preachers have a good understanding of Uniting Church theology						
Our Lay Preachers are competent in using a range of preaching styles						
Our Lay Preachers keep up to date with recent biblical scholarship						
Our Lay Preachers regularly involve other church members in planning worship						
Our Lay Preachers regularly involve other church members in leading worship						
Our Lay Preachers are skilled in using media technology in worship appropriately						
Our Lay Preachers attend relevant training events annually						
Our Lay Preachers have access to a good, current library of resource materials						
Our Lay Preachers display a good understanding of the local community which they serve						
Our Lay Preachers welcome guidance or direction from ordained minister/s						
Our Lay Preachers welcome constructive feedback from the congregation						

23. Please indicate how frequently, on average, lay leaders are involved in the following across all of the congregation/s with which you minister:

	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	Less frequently	Never
Accredited Lay Preachers:							
Preaching							
Leading all or most of a worship service							
'Non-accredited' Lay leaders							
Preaching							
Leading all or most of a worship service							

D. RECRUITMENT (Questions for ministers in congregations and clusters only)

24. In the past 5 years, approximately how many people have commenced as candidates for the ministry of Lay Preacher from the congregation/s in which you currently serve:

- 0
- 1-4
- 5-9
- 10-14
- 15 or more
- Don't know (GO TO Q 26)
- Not applicable (GO TO Q 26)

25. Who have been the primary people responsible for encouraging these people to become candidates? (choose up to two responses)

- The candidates themselves
- Friends
- Church Council
- Ordained Minister/s or (lay) Pastors
- Other lay leaders
- Other (please specify):

26. In your view, how important is the role of an ordained Minister or Pastor in encouraging people to become accredited Lay Preachers? (please circle appropriate number)

1 2 3 4 5

No importance

Very Important

Comments (please explain your views briefly)

27. In your view, how important is the role of an ordained Minister or Pastor in encouraging lay people to offer leadership in worship or preaching? This question is about lay leadership in general, not specifically accredited Lay Preachers (please circle appropriate number)

1 2 3 4 5

No importance

Very Important

Comments (please explain your views briefly)

28. Thinking now JUST about non-accredited lay leaders... Who have been the primary people responsible for encouraging these people to offer leadership in worship? (choose up to two responses)

- They offer themselves
- Their friends
- Church Council
- Ordained Minister/s or (lay) Pastors
- Other lay leaders
- Other (please specify): _____

E. TRAINING

29. How familiar are you with the **current** Lay Preacher training curriculum and approach offered in your synod?

(a) by your synod

1 2 3 4 5

No knowledge

Very familiar

(b) on behalf of the Assembly by Uniting College, SA (distance education) – new in [2011](#)

1 2 3 4 5

No knowledge

Very familiar

30. If you are familiar with the training, to what extent do you see this training curriculum and approach as satisfactory for your local lay leaders?

Your synod's training

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all satisfactory

Very Satisfactory

Distance education provided on behalf of the Assembly by Uniting College

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all satisfactory

Very Satisfactory

31. If you see the training as **satisfactory**, please indicate the reason/s why this is so (please tick all that apply)

- Depth of teaching
- Practical examples
- Use of media (eg. DVD)
- Engaging teachers
- Feedback from teachers
- Interaction with other learners
- Reading and resource materials
- Theological foundations
- Relevance to my congregation
- Online resources
- Other: _____

32. If you see the training as **unsatisfactory**, please indicate the reason/s why this is so (please tick all that apply)

- curriculum at too high an academic level
- curriculum too 'theoretical'
- quality of resource materials
- style of teaching / presentation
- mode of delivery (please explain briefly)
- theology of curriculum seen as unsuitable (please explain briefly)
- insufficient training in practical skills
- cultural aspects of training (please explain briefly)
- length of training
- curriculum seen as 'dated' or irrelevant
- other (please explain briefly)

33. In which of the following areas do your Lay Preachers and worship leaders *most* need further training? (choose up to 3 responses in each column)

	Accredited Lay Preachers	Other worship leaders and preachers
Preaching approaches/styles		
Biblical background		
Theology		
Preparing prayers and liturgy		
Music		
Visual arts		
Multimedia & technology		
Church Year/Seasonal Celebrations		
Funerals/other pastoral services		
Contemporary worship		
Alternative worship		
Other:		

Don't think we want to ask this: see word doc	At least monthly	Quarterly	Annually	Rarely/Never
Reading				
Internet				
DVDs or CDs				
Weekend / short course				
Lay Preacher gatherings				
Bible study group				
Formal study				
Other:				
Other:				

F: FEEDBACK AND REVIEWS

34. Please indicate how often lay leaders in your congregation receive review or feedback on their ministry.

	Every time they lead	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	Less frequently	Never
Formal review by Church Council						
Informal feedback from Congregation members						
Informal feedback from other leaders						
Feedback from minister or resource minister						
Formal review by Presbytery						
Other:						
Other:						
Other:						

35. In what way/s could this feedback be improved?

36. Please indicate how often, on average, your 'non-accredited' lay worship leaders and preachers receive each of the following forms of feedback and evaluation:

	Every time they lead	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	Less frequently	Never
Formal review by Church Council						
Informal feedback from Congregation members						
Informal feedback from other leaders						
Feedback from minister or resource minister						
Formal review by Presbytery						
Other:						
Other:						
Other:						

37. In what way/s could this feedback be improved?

G: THE FUTURE

38. In your view, why don't more people seek to become candidates for the ministry of Lay Preacher. Please tick the three most important reasons.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The amount of study involved for accreditation | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of confidence in their own abilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The perceived academic difficulty of study involved | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of knowledge or understanding of ministry of Lay Preacher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cost of training or study | <input type="checkbox"/> Perceived unsuitability of training (for cultural, theological or other issues) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accreditation isn't required for local leadership of worship | <input type="checkbox"/> Perceived lack of local support during training process |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulties in accessing or attending suitable training | <input type="checkbox"/> Questioning the need for any accreditation by denomination |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry of Lay Preacher seen as outdated or irrelevant | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain): |

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The specified ministry of Lay Preacher is vital for the Uniting Church at this time						
The specified ministry of Lay Preacher is vital for the life of small/isolated/rural congregations at this time						
The specified ministry of Lay Preacher needs significant reform						
The Uniting Church should do away with accreditation of Lay Preachers						
Lay Preachers should only be licensed for a limited period, and then be subject to review						
Congregations should <i>encourage</i> all lay worship leaders and preachers who lead regularly to become accredited Lay Preachers						
The Uniting Church should <i>require</i> all lay worship leaders and preachers who lead regularly to become accredited Lay Preachers						
The Uniting Church should consider some form of local accreditation for lay worship leaders and preachers						
Church Councils should have a stronger role in overseeing and evaluating the ministry of the Lay Preachers who serve them						
Training in worship leading and preaching should be available to all suitably gifted and called persons regardless of whether they seek accreditation						
The current training and assessment of Lay Preacher candidates requires review						

Ordained ministers in congregations should actively be encouraging gifted lay people to participate in worship leading and preaching						
Ordained ministers in congregations should actively be encouraging gifted people to become Lay Preacher candidates						
Ordained ministers in congregations should regularly be involved in mentoring / coaching lay leaders in worship leading and preaching roles						
Ordained ministers in congregations should regularly be involved in conducting formal training sessions for lay leaders in worship leading and preaching roles						
Ordained ministers in congregations should regularly be involved in evaluating lay leaders in worship leading and preaching roles						

40. We are interested to hear if there are other issues you would like to raise regarding the ministry of lay preachers and worship leaders. What else would you like to tell the review team?

Tick here if you are willing to be contacted personally by the research team should we seek further information. (Note that you will not necessarily be contacted)

If you have ticked the above box, please enter your contact details. (Your contact details will not be used for any purpose in accordance with UCA privacy policy)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Suburb/Town: _____

Postcode _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Thanks so much for taking part in this process. If you would like to make any further comments, you are welcome to contact us.