

# Uniting Church Review of the Ministry of Lay Preacher Survey of Church Councils

This survey is for **Church Councils** 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 part of the second of three steps in the review. It is designed to gather information from Church Councils on their perceptions of the 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 15-25 minutes to complete. It should be completed ONCE only by each Church Council: either by an individual representing the Council or you could complete the ONE form together as a group.

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](mailto:mec@unitingcollege.org.au)

An on-line version of this survey is available at  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/ChurchCouncil>

**PLEASE RETURN BY  
2 SEPTEMBER**

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 2 September**

Thank you for your participation.



## A: YOUR CONGREGATION

1. Synod: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Presbytery: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Please enter the postcode of the location in which your congregation gathers for worship  
  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Is this congregation or worshipping community part of a 'cluster' or linked with other congregations in terms of ministry?  
 Yes     No     Don't know
5. IF YES, How many congregations, including this one, are part of this 'cluster' or arrangement?  
  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. In what location/s is your congregation, agency or "cluster" of congregations (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)
7. Language/s used in the worship services  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Are there any other significant characteristics of these worshipping communities (eg culture, age, style)?  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. 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                       20-49  
 50-74                                       75-99  
 100-149                                    150-199  
 200-349                                    > 350 people
10. Approximately how many lay people regularly preach and/or lead worship in your congregation/s? (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: \_\_\_\_\_

## B: 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.*

11. Do the accredited 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  
 Teaching or education role  
 Organisational or administrative role  
 Other (please specify):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. If you ticked any of the boxes in Q11, 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) \_\_\_\_\_
- Gifts or skills of the particular Lay Preacher/s
- Lack of other suitable lay leadership
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

13. Please indicate your response to the following statements in relation to the ACCREDITED Lay Preachers in your congregation/s.

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

14. Please indicate how frequently, on average, lay leaders are involved in the following in your congregation/s:

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

## C. RECRUITMENT

15. In the past 5 years, approximately how many people have commenced as candidates for the ministry of Lay Preacher from your congregation/s?

- 0                       10-14  
 1-4                     15 or more  
 5-9                     Don't know (GO TO Q 17)

16. 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):  
 \_\_\_\_\_

17. In your view, how important is the role of an ordained Minister or Pastor in encouraging people to become accredited Lay Preachers?

- Very important  
 Important  
 Moderately important  
 Of little importance  
 Of no importance

*Please explain your views briefly:*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

18. 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)**

- Very important  
 Important  
 Moderately important  
 Of little importance  
 Of no importance

*Please explain your views briefly:*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

19. 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):  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## D. TRAINING

20.	How familiar are you with the <b>current</b> training and approach offered for Lay Preacher accreditation in your synod?	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
	By education providers in your synod					
	On behalf of the Assembly by Uniting College, SA (distance education) – new in 2011					

21.	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?	Not at all satisfactory	Slightly satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory	Very satisfactory	Extremely satisfactory	NA
	By education providers in your synod						
	On behalf of the Assembly by Uniting College, SA (distance education) – new in 2011						

22. If you see the training as **satisfactory**, indicate the reason/s why this is so (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: \_\_\_\_\_

23. If you see the training as **unsatisfactory**, please indicate the reason/s why this is so (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 (explain briefly)  
\_\_\_\_\_

24. In which of the following areas do your accredited lay leaders <i>most</i> need further training? (choose up to 3 responses in each column)	Accredited Lay Preachers	Other worship leaders / 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:		

*Please make additional comments on Q 22 and 23 here:*

25. How often, on average, do your <b>non-accredited lay leaders</b> access the following kinds of training in relation to worship and/or preaching?	Before beginning	At least monthly	Quarterly	Annually	Rarely/ Never
Training session run by a local minister					
Training session run by a 'cluster' or resource minister					
Training session run by synod staff or agency					
Training event run by a Lay Preacher Association or Committee					
Distance or online training unit offered by the UCA					
Distance or online training unit offered by another institution					
Other training event run by a presbytery, synod, or network					
Other training event run by a non-UCA body					
Other:					
Other:					

## E: FEEDBACK AND REVIEWS

26. Please indicate how often <b>accredited</b> Lay Preachers 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:						

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

28. Please indicate how often <b>non-accredited</b> lay worship leaders and preachers 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:						

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

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

39. Please indicate whether or not you agree with the following statements	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						
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 needs review						

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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

41. If you're willing to name your congregation, please do so here:

\_\_\_\_\_

(Note that you will not necessarily be contacted)  
*If you have ticked the 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.

Tick here if you are willing to be contacted personally by the research team should we seek further information.