

**The Methodist Church of New Zealand
Te Hāhi Weteriana O Aotearoa**

**Administration Division
P O Box 931
Christchurch 8140**

**Information Leaflet No. 153
(revised March 2025)**

**LAY PREACHER CANDIDATES
Provisions & Guidelines of the
Methodist Church of New Zealand
Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa**

The ministry of Lay Preachers in the Methodist Church of New Zealand is, like every ministry of the Church, a spiritual gift, exercised at God's call. A Lay Preacher in Training must be on the membership roll of a congregation of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, Union or Co-operating congregation or another negotiating denomination (Anglican, Christian Churches of New Zealand, Congregational or Presbyterian). Those who feel led to offer for training as a Lay Preacher should share their sense of call with the Parish Meeting, normally through the Superintendent Presbyter, in order that the call may be clarified and tested. The Parish Meeting will include in its considerations:

- a) the candidate's skill in oral communication or his/her potential to develop such a skill, and
- b) the candidate's readiness to accept prescribed training.

When the Parish Meeting or corresponding body considers the time to be appropriate, it will formally designate the candidate as a Lay Preacher-in-Training and convey this designation to the Synod Secretary.

National Accreditation

After becoming a Lay-Preacher-in-Training, the candidate will be expected to undertake and succeed in the course of study approved by Trinity College, such as the Certificate in Lay Preaching, details at:

<https://trinitycollege.ac.nz/study/programmes-of-study/certificate-in-lay-preaching/>

Those who already possess other academic qualifications should forward their academic record via the Parish Superintendent for approval by: The Principal, Rev Dr Nāsili Vaka'uta, contact details below.

The rules for the accreditation of Lay Preachers are set out in the Methodist Law Book, Section 1-8.1 to 8.9.

Further qualifications for accreditation include:

- (a) a demonstrated commitment to the life of the Church, and
- (b) a theological understanding acceptable within the Methodist Church.

In addition to academic requirements, a candidate for accreditation or local recognition must have conducted, or taken a leading part in conducting, at least 10 services of worship in a Methodist, Co-operating or Union Parish.

When the Parish Meeting considers that a Lay Preacher-in-Training may be ready for accreditation:

- It will advise the Synod Superintendent who will appoint three hearers (normally one presbyter, one lay person from the congregation and one lay preacher) to evaluate a service of worship led by the candidate. They will also explore with the candidate issues of personal faith and theology and his/her sense of call and commitment to the Methodist Church of New Zealand, including its Mission Statement and bicultural journey.
- A report on the Lay Preacher-in-Training's readiness will go first to his/her Parish Meeting. Once the Parish Meeting has assured itself of the candidate's suitability as a Lay Preacher, the report is forwarded to the Synod Secretary.
- When accreditation has been approved by the Synod, the Parish will apply for a certificate to be issued by the ecumenical New Zealand Lay Preachers Association (NZLPA) and presented during a service of worship. Application forms for certificates should be completed by the Parish Superintendent and are available from the NZLPA website at <https://nzlpa.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/nzlpa-application-for-membership.pdf>
The certificates are currently issued in English.
- The form should be sent to the NZLPA Registrar, with the fee of \$25 paid by internet banking, details on application form.

Financial Membership of the NZLPA

- All accredited Methodist Lay Preachers are encouraged to join the NZLPA for an initial fee only of \$25 which includes the cost of a certificate upon accreditation and NZLPA membership.
- The magazine *Word & Worship* is not being published at present.

Lay Preaching in English-speaking Congregations

Parishes may recognise and use the preaching skills of those who do not undergo the training for national accreditation and include them in their parish preaching plan.

Local recognition *[still to be formalised]*

Preachers who wish to be locally recognised are strongly encouraged to have a mentor and undertake some form of training such as the two-year course *Lead Worship* over at least 2 years. More information from the **Methodist Lay Preachers Network** email: methlpn@gmail.com

Preaching Opportunities and Continuing Education

- Whilst accreditation is for life, the ‘recognition’ of Lay Preachers – whether accredited or not – as currently competent to conduct worship, is at the discretion of the Parish Meeting.
- All Lay Preachers are expected to be accredited, active, and upskilled (“AAU”) having led no fewer than 3 services and undertaken no less than 8 hours on-going training each year.
- All recognised Lay Preachers should expect to be given preaching opportunities regularly and may wish to consult the Parish Superintendent or Synod Superintendent if this is not happening.
- An annual return (sent by Lay Preachers or their Parish to the Methodist Lay Preachers Network Convenor Viv Whimster, email: vjwhimster@gmail.com) enables the list of Lay Preachers included in the Methodist Yearbook to be accurate and current.

Lay Preachers accredited in English from other cultures

- Consideration must be given to Lay Preachers qualified in English who come from other cultures. Such Lay Preachers are encouraged to spend some time in Aotearoa New Zealand congregations, study a course in the bicultural church or undertake a recognised course in Māori studies (e.g. through te Wānanga) and must seek approval of the Parish or Leaders’ Meeting.

Accreditation in English as a second language

The guidelines below were discussed informally at Conference 2014 with Mission Resourcing and the Superintendents of the cultural Synods. They apply to those who have been accredited in one language and then seek accreditation in English as a second language.

- **Study**
The team may recommend consulting with Trinity College for advice on further study.
- **Congregational Life**
Attend a minimum of 6 Leaders’ Meetings of an English-speaking congregation in order to understand the structure and regulations of an English-speaking Methodist, United or Co-operating Parish.

• **Worship**

- Gain experience through leading worship (prayers, liturgy, sermon) for English-speaking congregations over 2 years;
- Lead a service that is evaluated by a team appointed by the English-speaking geographical Synod; team to consist of:
 - * one lay person from the English-speaking congregation,
 - * an accredited Lay Preacher from the English -speaking/ geographical Synod and
 - * a presbyter from the English-speaking/ geographical Synod.
- This team will conduct an interview with the Lay Preacher to ask about his/her faith journey and ensure that s/he has an understanding of the bicultural journey and adequate English language skills.

Contact Information **Trinity College**



The Principal, Rev Dr Nāsili Vaka'uta
Trinity College, Private Bag 28 907, Remuera, Auckland 1541
email: nvakauta@trinitycollege.ac.nz

Or for more information contact:

The Administrator: Barbara Lu'isa Maile
ph 09 528 9216, email: bmaile@trinitycollege.ac.nz

Methodist Lay Preachers Network

Methodist Lay Preachers' Network

<https://www.methodist.org.nz/tangata/ministers-lay-and-ordained/methodist-lay-preachers-network/>

email: methlpn@gmail.com

Convenor

Viv Whimster
email: vjwhimster@gmail.com

Co-convenor

Ngaire Southon
email: ngaire@southon.net

New Zealand Lay Preachers Association

<https://nzlpa.org.nz>



President

email: president@nzlpa.org.nz

NZLPA Registrar

email: membership@nzlpa.org.nz